

11

Urbanization

Along with the growth of population in the last few decades, there has been a shift in the population from rural to urban areas. The increasing urbanization has led to problems like crime and juvenile delinquency, alcoholism and drug abuse, housing shortage, over-crowding and slums, unemployment and poverty, pollution and noise, and communication and traffic control among others. But if cities are places of tensions and strain, they are also the centres of civilization and culture. They are active, innovative, and alive. They provide opportunities to achieve one's aspirations. If the future of our country is linked with the development of rural areas, it is equally linked with the growth of cities and metropolitan areas. But before analysing these problems, let us understand the basic concepts.

Concepts of Urban, Urbanization and Urbanism

Urban

What is an 'urban area' or a city or a town? This term is used in two senses—demographically and sociologically. In the former sense, emphasis is given to the size of population, density of population and nature of work of the majority of the adult males; while in the latter sense, the focus is on heterogeneity, impersonality, inter-dependence, and the quality of life. The German sociologist, Tonnies (1957) differentiated between rural and urban communities in terms of social relationships and values. The rural *gemeinschaft* community is one in which social bonds are based on close personal ties of kinship and

friendship, and the emphasis is on tradition, consensus and informality, while the urban *gesellschaft* society is one in which impersonal and secondary relationships predominate and the interaction of the people is formal, contractual and dependent on the special function or service they perform. The emphasis on *gesellschaft* society is on utilitarian goals and competitive nature of social relationships. Other sociologists like Max Weber (1961 : 381) and George Simmel (1950) have stressed on dense living conditions, rapidity of change and impersonal interaction in urban settings. Louis Wirth (1938 : 8) has said that for sociological purposes a city may be defined as 'a relatively large, dense and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals'. Scholars like Ruth Glass (1956) have defined city in terms of factors like : size of population, density of population, main economic system, type of administration, and some social characteristics.

In India, the census definition of 'town' remains more or less the same for the period 1901-51; but in 1961, a new definition was adopted. Upto 1951, 'town' included (1) collection of houses permanently inhabited by not less than 5,000 persons, (2) every municipality/corporation/notified area of whatever size, and (3) all civil lines not included within the municipal units. Thus, the primary focus in the definition of town was more on the administrative set up rather than the size of the population. In 1961, certain tests were applied for defining a place as 'town'. These were : (a) a minimum population of 5,000, (b) a density of not less than 1,000 persons per square mile, (c) three-fourths of its working population should be engaged in non-agricultural activities, and (d) the place should have a few characteristics and civic amenities like transport and communication, banks, schools, markets, recreation centres, hospitals, electricity, and newspapers, etc. As a result of this change in the definition, 812 areas (with 44 lakh people) declared as towns in 1951 census were not so considered in 1961 census. The 1961 basis was adopted in the 1971, 1981 and 1991 censuses too for defining towns. Now demographically, areas with population between 5,000 and 20,000 are considered as small towns, those with population between 20,000 and 50,000 are considered as large towns, those with population between 50,000 and one lakh are considered as big cities, and areas with more than 10 lakh people are considered as metropolitan areas.

Sociologists do not attach much importance to the size of the population in the definition of city because the minimum population standards vary greatly. For example, in the Netherlands a minimum

population of 20,000 is required for a place to be designated as urban; in France, Austria and West Germany, it is 2,000; in Japan it is 3,000; in U.S.A. it is 3,500; and so on. As such, they give more importance to characteristics other than the population size. Theodorson (1969 : 451) has defined 'urban community' as "a community with a high population density, a predominance of non-agricultural occupations, a high degree of specialisation resulting in a complex division of labour, and a formalised system of local government. It is also characterised by a prevalence of impersonal secondary relations and dependence on formal social controls." According to Robert Redfield (A.J.S., January, 1942), 'urban society' is characterized by a large heterogeneous population, close contact with other societies (through trade, communication, etc.), a complex division of labour, a prevalence of secular over sacred concerns, and the desire to organise behaviour rationally toward given goals, as opposed to following traditional standards and norms.

Urbanization

Urbanization is the movement of population from rural to urban areas and the resulting increasing proportion of a population that resides in urban rather than rural places. Thompson Warran (*Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*) has defined it as "the movement of people from communities concerned chiefly or solely with agriculture to other communities, generally larger whose activities are primarily centred in government, trade, manufacture, or allied interests". According to Anderson (1953 : 11), urbanization is not a one-way process but it is a two-way process. It involves not only movement from villages to cities and change from agricultural occupation to business, trade, service and profession, but it also involves change in the migrants' attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviour patterns. He has given five characteristics of urbanization: money economy, civil administration, cultural changes, written records and innovations.

Urbanism

Urbanism is a way of life. It reflects an organisation of society in terms of a complex division of labour, high levels of technology, high mobility, interdependence of its members in fulfilling economic functions and impersonality in social relations (Theodorson, 1969 : 453).

Characteristics of Urbanism or Urban System

Louis Wirth (1938 : 49) has given four characteristics of urbanism:

- *Transiency* an urban inhabitant keeps on forgetting his own acquaintances and develops relations with new people. Since he is not much attached with his neighbours, members of the clubs, he does not mind their leaving these places.

- *Superficiality* an urban person has the limited number of persons with whom he interacts and his relations with them are impersonal and formal. People meet each other in highly segmental roles. They are dependent on more people for the satisfactions of their life needs.

- *Anonymity* urbanites do not know each other intimately. Personal mutual acquaintanship between the inhabitants which ordinarily inheres in a neighbourhood is lacking.

- *Individualism* people give more importance to their own vested interests.

Ruth Glass (1956 : 32) has given the following characteristics of urbanism: mobility, anonymity, individualism, impersonal relations, social differentiation, transience and organic type of solidarity. Anderson (1953 : 2) has listed three characteristics of urbanism: adjustability, mobility, and diffusion. Marshal Clinard (1957) has talked of rapid social change, conflict between norms and values, increasing mobility of population, emphasis on material things and decline in intimate interpersonal communication as important characteristics of urbanism. K. Lewis (1953) has highlighted eight characteristics of the urban social system: social heterogeneity (people of different religions, languages, castes, and classes live in urban areas. There is also specialisation in occupation), secondary association, social mobility, individualism, spatial segregation, social tolerance, secondary control and voluntary associations. Louis Wirth (1938 : 1-24) has given four characteristics of urbanism: heterogeneity of population, specialisation of function, anonymity, impersonality and standardization of life and behaviour. Though these characteristics present an exaggerated picture of the urban man and his life, yet their analysis here is necessary.

(a) *Heterogeneity of population* The large population in cities can be largely attributed to migration from different areas which leads to people of different backgrounds and beliefs living together. This mixture of people affects the working of informal controls—mores and institutions—and reliance on formally designed mechanisms for regulating the behaviour of individuals and groups increases. People no

longer share the common sentiments, and being exposed to new ideas imported from other cultures through contacts with migrants, they challenge the outmoded beliefs and practices and adopt such new attitudes and lifestyles which help them in improving their economic status and coping with problems of adjustment. The influence of family and neighbourhood decreases and people come into conflict on the question of what is the 'right' way to behave.

(b) *Specialisation of function and behaviour.* The heterogeneity and the large size of population of a city favour the development of specialisation. Since the city has many facets of life and an individual can participate only in some of them, he becomes choosy and takes interest only in a few fields. Specialisation in function encourages a diversity of life patterns. Doctors, engineers, businessmen, lawyers, bureaucrats, factory workers, teachers, clerks, policemen, for example, have different life patterns, different interests, and different philosophy of life. Each specialist group makes its own contribution to the community and thus a division of labour is created. The cloth merchant sells only cloth, say, and depends on many other specialists to manufacture, process and distribute cloth so that it reaches his shop. Such a division of labour permits an individual to benefit from a broader range of services than his own knowledge and capabilities provide. Each inhabitant in the city becomes dependent on specialists such as physicians, masons, mechanics, shopkeepers, tailors, washermen, and so on. He has not to learn the techniques of each profession.

Specialisation provides to the individual diverse opportunities to act, to express himself and to develop his potentialities. However, the contacts become secondary and formal and the sense of living a common life and having common concerns is destroyed. The relationship between two persons remains for a short duration till they gratify each other's purpose.

In a social order characterised by a heterogeneous population and diversity in behaviour patterns, there is a greater likelihood of confusion among several alternatives for proper behaviour in a given situation. For example, one student finds other student using unfair means and getting first division. He then thinks, should he do the same thing? One person finds another person giving Rs. 10,000 and getting a job of a police sub-inspector. He becomes confused whether he should report the case and get the bribe-taker arrested, or should he adapt an attitude of indifference? These moral, social, and legal dilemmas are overwhelming in the city life.

(c) *Anonymity and impersonality*: High population density in the city erodes a sense of personal identity leading to loneliness and a loss of a sense of belonging. Hundreds of people watch a movie in a picture-house, enjoy and laugh together but when the film ends, the common emotions disintegrate into anonymity and impersonality. On the other hand, this very anonymity is the crux of personal freedom. The lack of interest in others releases the individual from heavy pressures towards conformity. In many cases, his responsibility to others ends with payment. Even when he becomes a member of a voluntary group like a club for instance, his participation could be minimum. He does not have to win the acceptance of other members or to engage in the accommodative process of fitting himself into their expectations. He may observe others but he may not necessarily be carried away by their stimuli.

One advantage of anonymity is that individuals are not judged according to their parents' lower class status but are evaluated on the basis of their appearance and behaviour in casual contacts. The anonymity and impersonality of urban life gives an individual, who aspires for a higher status, a greater opportunity to take advantage of symbols of higher status, like wearing attractive clothing, improving his mode of speech and manner so as to gain the acceptance and to impress persons of high positions, maintaining contacts with them and ultimately achieving the goals he seeks through these contacts.

(d) *Standardisation of behaviour*: The urban life necessitates the individual to standardise his behaviour which ultimately helps him and others (with whom he interacts) to understand each other and make interaction simpler. For example, a shopkeeper finds the same questions being asked by a succession of customers. The customers are then seen as types—the person who haggles over price, the fellow who goes for quality, the man who is merely looking without any intention of buying, and so on. The experienced shopkeeper quickly judges the type of customer he is dealing with and uses the sales strategy he regards as most effective for a particular type of customer. This helps both the shopkeeper and the customer to handle the sales transaction in a simple and quick fashion. Such standardised expectations and behaviour are part of an urban life. Markets, clubs, restaurants, buses, newspapers, TV, radio, and schools/colleges present a largely standardized picture. A person who is unable to fit into such a life finds himself out of step and faces the problem of adjustment. The large size of the city population lends particular force to the standardization of

behaviour. This does not mean that the divergence of individual orientations is not possible.

Sorokin and Zimmerman (1962: 56-57) have identified the following characteristics of the urban social system:

(a) *Non-agricultural occupation*: While agriculture is the main basis of the rural economy, trade, industry and commerce are the chief supports of the urban economy. It is this difference in occupation that ensures that rural people work in natural environments. Urban people on the other hand work mostly in artificial and unnatural environment in which the heat, cold and humidity are controlled by innovative skills. According to James Williams (1958), working in unnatural environment affects people's attitudes and behaviour patterns. It is, thus, because of the occupational differences that in urban areas we find liberals as well as conservatives, modern as well as traditionalists, and unsociables as well as sociables.

(b) *Size of population*: Urban communities are much bigger in size than rural communities. The availability of job opportunities on the one hand and the materialistic as well as educational, medical and recreational facilities on the other hand attract people to cities.

(c) *Density of population*: In villages, people have to live near their fields to supervise the agricultural pursuits but in urban areas, people's residence depends on the location of their offices, market, children's school/college and so forth. This leads to a high density of population in areas which abound in these facilities. In India, the average density of population per square mile in metropolitan cities varies between 3000 and 5000 persons. This high density has its own benefits as well as disadvantages. The advantages are that social contacts multiply, all necessary facilities are easily approachable and selection of friends becomes easier. The disadvantages are that inhabitants have very formal and impersonal relations with each other and their mental stresses increase.

(d) *Environment*: Bernard (1971) has talked of four types of environment: material (climate), biological (animals and plants), social, physio-social (machines, gadgets, instruments) and psycho-social (customs, traditions, institutions, etc.) and composite (economic, political and educational systems). The urban environment is more polluted. Besides, because of being surrounded by educational institutions and hence being more educated, an urban dweller is more rational, secular, and competitive.

(e) *Social differentiation* In urban areas, people are differentiated on the basis of occupations, religion, class, living standards and social beliefs. Yet, they are dependent on each other and act as a functioning whole.

(f) *Social mobility* Urban areas provide opportunities for change in social status because of which, as compared to villages, there is more upward mobility in cities. The mobility may be horizontal or vertical. Besides social mobility, we find geographical mobility too in urban areas.

(g) *Social interaction*: Relations among urban inhabitants are secondary and impersonal. People are more concerned with the status and skills of other persons than with their beliefs and ideologies. Control is also so formal that it many a time creates deviant behaviour.

(h) *Social solidarity* In comparison to mechanical solidarity in rural areas, there exists organic solidarity in urban areas. In such a solidarity, though each person has his own individuality and personality, yet he depends more on others for their specialised roles.

The above description of the characteristics of urbanism as a way of life gives a feeling as if personal relations, primary groups and social intimacy do not exist in the cities. If consciously developed organisations serve the interests of the individuals, the primary groups also admit members through birth. Primary-group members are tied together by a fusion of concerns for one another. Their relations are more emotional and intensive. Within the group, a member performs variety of functions unlike specified functions in secondary groups. For example, in a family, the mother serves as cook, nurse, moral instructor and a manager of tensions for the children and the family members. Although the social change has weakened the bonds of family, neighbourhood and peer groups yet the old kind of functioning of these groups has not completely stopped nor have the primary relations vanished. Performing obligatory roles in the family, maintaining social participation within the neighbourhood, sharing common interests of castes and, acting as a source of support to one's kin and friends continue to be important and significant features of urban life. A number of studies in India (like those of Kapadia, Sachchidanand, R.K. Mukerjee and M.S. Gore) have shown that rural people who migrate to cities continue to maintain links with their families and kins in the village. In cities too, they not only share their problems with persons belonging to the same and adjoining villages but also with members of their caste. This makes their adapting to city life easier.

Growth of Urban Areas

While cities have existed since ancient times, until recently they represented only a relatively small proportion of the population. The lives of the great majority of the people were predominantly shaped by the rural community or village. The massive growth of cities and metropolitan areas, and the shift of a significant proportion of the population to urban areas has been a characteristic feature of past five decades or so. Urbanization was an off-shoot of the industrial revolution which created a demand for a large number of workers at centralised locations.

The growth of cities not only depends on birth and death rates and migration but it also depends on political, religious historical and economic factors. Political centres can be the capital of states (Bhopal, Jaipur, Bombay, Calcutta, etc.) or the areas of political activities (Delhi), or the training centres for the military (Kharagvasla), or centres for defence production (Jodhpur); economic centres are areas which predominate in trade or commerce (Ahmedabad, Surat); industrial towns are places with factories (Bhilai, Singrauli, Kota, Ludhiana); the religious cities are those where people go on pilgrimage (Hardwar, Varanasi, Allahabad); and educational centres have educational institutions (Pilani).

In India, the urban population in 1971 was 109.11 million, in 1981 was 160.1 million, and in 1991 was 217.18 million. While in 1921 the urban population was only 11.3% of the total population of the country; in 1951 it increased to 17.6%, in 1971 to 20.2%, in 1981 to 23.8% and in 1991 to 25.7% (*Census of India*, 1991, Series 1, 2). Again in the 1911-21 decade, the urban population increased by 8.3%, in 1921-31 it increased by 19.1%, in 1931-41 by 32.0%, in 1941-51 by 41.4%, in 1951-61 by 37.0%, in 1961-71 by 38.2%, in 1971-81 by 35.4%, and in 1981-91 by 40.4%. Thus, during the five decades between 1941 and 1991, the growth rate of urban population was between 3.4 and 3.8% every year.

The share of agricultural employment in the total employment of main workers reduced from 72.0% in 1961 to 68.0% in 1981 (*Census of India*). This was likely to further reduce to 64.0% by 1991. By the year 2001, anything between 18 to 20 crore of people would be added to the rural population and of this addition, at least 10 crore of them will come to urban areas in search of jobs. Further, when in 1931, the total number of cities with more than one lakh population was 32, it increased to 107 in 1961, 216 in 1981 and 317 in 1991 (excluding

Jammu and Kashmir). The number of bigger cities with more than ten lakh population increased from two in 1941 to nine in 1971, 12 in 1981, and 23 in 1991. (*Census of India*, 1991, Series 1, Paper 2 : 251). Such growth affects the social, economic and political life of the people.

Of the total number of 4,689 urban settlements (in 1991) in India, Uttar Pradesh has the largest number of towns (704), followed by Tamil Nadu (434), Madhya Pradesh (327) and Maharashtra (307). According to the 1991 census, 65.2% population was living in cities with more than one lakh population, 10.9% in cities with population between 50,000 and one lakh, 13.2% in cities with population between 20,000 and 50,000, 7.8% in cities with population between 10,000 and 20,000, and 2.6% in towns with population between 10,000 and 5,000 (*Census of India*, 1991, Series 1, Paper 2). Four major cities of India with more than 50 lakh population, according to 1991 figures are: Calcutta (109 lakh), Bombay (126 lakh), Delhi (84 lakh), and Madras (54 lakh) (*The Hindustan Times*, May 30, 1991).

Social Effects of Urbanization

The social effects of urbanization may be analysed in relationship to family, caste, social status of women, and village life.

Urbanization and Family

Urbanization not only affects the family structure but it also affects intra and inter-family relations, as well as the functions the family performs. Several empirical studies of urban families conducted by scholars like I.P. Desai, Kapadia, and Aileen Ross, have pointed out that urban joint family is being gradually replaced by nuclear family, the size of the family is shrinking, and kinship relationship is confined to two or three generations only. In his study of 423 families made in 1955-57 in Mahuva town in Gujarat, I.P. Desai (1964) found that 5.0% families were nuclear (residentially as well as functionally), 74.0% were residentially nuclear but functionally and/or substantially (in property) joint, and 21.0% were joint in residence and functioning as well as in property. Of the 95.0% joint families (joint in functioning and/or property, and/or residence), the degree of jointness was *low* in 27.0% cases (that is, they were joint only in functioning), *high* in 17.0% cases (that is, they were joint in functioning and property), *higher* in 30.0% cases (that is, they were joint in functioning, property and residence but were two-generation families), and *highest* in 21.0%

cases (that is, they were joint in residence, functioning and property and were three-generation families). This shows that though the structure of urban family is changing, the spirit of individualism is not growing in the families.

Kapadia (1959) in his study of 1,162 families in rural and urban (Navsari) areas in Gujarat in 1955 found that when in rural areas, after every two nuclear families there were three joint families; in urban areas, nuclear families were 10% more than joint families. Aileen Ross (1961) in her study of 157 Hindu families belonging to middle and upper classes in Bangalore in 1957 found that (1) about three-fifth families are nuclear and two-fifth are joint; (2) of the joint families, 70.0% are small joint (couple+unmarried children+married sons without children, or two or more married brothers with children) and 30.0% are large joint families (parents of unmarried children+unmarried children+married sons with children); (3) the trend today is towards a break away from the traditional joint family form into the nuclear family unit; (4) small joint family is now the most typical form of family life in urban India; (5) there is a cycle of family types; (6) a growing number of people now spend at least part of their lives in single units; and (7) relations with one's distant kin are breaking or weakening.

R.K. Mukherjee (1973) also, on the basis of his study of 4,120 families in West Bengal in 1960-61, has said that replacement of joint family by nuclear family units is *fact accompli*.

Though intra and inter-family relations are also changing, but it does not mean that youngsters no longer respect their elders, or children completely ignore their obligations to their parents and siblings, or wives challenge the authority of their husbands. The important change is that the 'husband-dominant' family is being replaced by 'equalitarian' family where wife is given a share in decision-making processes. The parents also no longer impose their authority on the children nor do the children blindly obey the commands of their parents. The attitude of youngsters is motivated by respect than by fear. I.P. Desai has also maintained that "in spite of strains between the younger and older generations, the attachment of the children to their families is seldom weakened". M.S. Gore (1968) too writes : "even in joint family, the eldest male consults his children and this consultation is not formal". Ross (1961), however, thinks that "the feelings of family obligation and emotional attachment to family members will almost certainly weaken and the authority of the patriarch break down.

When this happens, there will be little left for identity within the larger kinship group". Our own feeling is that family in urban India (and for that matter in whole India) will never disintegrate but it will remain a strong unit.

Urbanization and Caste

Caste identity tends to diminish with urbanization, education and the development of an orientation towards individual achievement and modern status symbols. Urbanites participate in networks which include persons of several castes. According to Rajni Kothari, the structure of particularistic loyalties has been overlaid by a more sophisticated system of social and political participation with cross-cutting allegiances. Andre Beteille (1966 : 209-10) has pointed out that among the westernised elite, class ties are much more important than caste ties.

The educated members of some castes with modern occupations sometimes organise as a pressure group. As such, a caste association competes as a corporate body with other pressure groups for political and economic resources. This type of organisation represents a new kind of solidarity. These competing units function more as social classes than as caste structures.

Yet other change we find today is the fusion of sub-castes and fusion of castes. Kolenda (1984 : 150-51) has identified three kinds of fusion: (i) on the job and in newer neighbourhoods in the city, persons of different sub-castes and of different castes meet. They are usually of approximately equal rank. Neighbourhood or office group solidarity develops. This has been found common in the government colonies in big cities; (ii) inter-sub-caste marriages take place, promoting a fusion of subcastes. This is because it is many-a-time difficult to find a sufficiently educated bridegroom for an educated daughter within her own sub-caste, but one may find it in neighbouring sub-caste; and (iii) democratic politics foster the fusion of sub-castes and of adjacent castes in order for parties of substantial size to form. One example is the Dravida Munnetra Kazagam (DMK) and the Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazagam (ADMK) parties of Tamil Nadu composed of the members of higher non-Brahmin castes.

Urban dwellers do not conform to caste norms strictly. There is a change in commensal relations, marital relations, social relations, as well as in occupational relations. One study of caste system in Bihar has revealed that urbanization has not affected all characteristics of the

caste system uniformly. On the basis of the study of 200 persons belonging to five different castes (Brahmins, Rajputs, Dhobis, Ahirs and Chamars), it was found that all respondents had married in their own castes, though 20.0% of the respondents living in cities (against 5.0% in rural areas) were in favour of inter-caste marriages. As regards occupation, not a single respondent in the city was engaged in his traditional caste occupation, though 81.0% respondents in rural areas were still engaged in their traditional occupations. Likewise, caste solidarity was not as strong in urban areas as in the rural areas. Caste panchayats were very weak in cities. Ghurye (1952), Kapadia (1959), Barnabas, Yogendra Singh, R.K. Mukerjee, Srinivas, Yogesh Atal, and S.C. Dube, have also referred to the impact of urbanization on caste.

Urbanization and Status of Women

The status of women in urban areas is higher than that of rural women. Urban women are comparatively more educated and liberal. Against 25.1% literate women in rural areas, there are 54.0% literate women in urban areas in 1991. Some of them are working too. As such, they are not only aware of their economic, social and political rights but they even use these rights to save themselves from being humiliated and exploited. The average age of girls at marriage in cities is also higher than the average marriage age in villages.

However, in the labour market, women are still in a disadvantaged situation. The labour market discriminates against women and is opposed to equality of opportunity—understood in a comprehensive sense to include equality of employment, training and promotional opportunities. In this sense, change is not possible in the sex segregated labour market whose structures ensure that the career patterns of women will normally be marked by discontinuity, unlike the normal male career patterns which assume continuity. Because of the constraints of the sex segregated labour market, women tend to cluster in a limited range of occupations, which have low status and are poorly paid. Women normally prefer teaching, nursing, social work, secretarial and clerical jobs—all of which have low status and low remuneration. Even those women who have surmounted the hurdle to professional education are disadvantaged as they find it difficult to reconcile to the competing demands of a professional career and home.

It is difficult for women to remain single or to combine marriage with career. Apart from the general expectations that all wives must be housewives, it has been noted that women are called upon to sacrifice

their career when the need arises, thereby subordinating their own career to that of their husbands'. This often creates frustrations among women, leading to psychotic illness in a few cases. Rural women, however, do not have to face such problems.

It has been further found that in the cities of India, the high level education among girls is significantly associated with the smaller family size. Though education of women has raised the age of marriage and lowered the birth rate, it has not brought about any radical change in the traditional pattern of arranged marriages with dowry. Margaret Cormack (1961 : 109) found in her study of 500 university students that girls were ready to go to college and mix with boys but they wanted their parents to arrange their marriage. Women want new opportunities but demand old securities, as well. They enjoy their newly found freedom but wish to carry on with old values.

Divorce and remarriage are the new phenomena we find among urban women. Today women take more initiative to break their marriages legally if they find adjustment after marriage impossible. Surprisingly, a large number of divorces are sought by women on ground of incompatibility and mental torture.

Politically also, urban women are more active today. The number of women contesting elections has increased at every level. They hold important political positions and also possess independent political ideologies. It may, thus, be concluded that when rural women continue to be dependent on men both economically and socially, urban women are comparatively independent and enjoy more freedom.

Urbanization and Village Life

For the past half century, the urban development in our country has led to the centrifugal movement of village people to the urban areas that were located within fairly easy access of public utilities. Many migrated to cities because of the availability of jobs there. Those who continue to live in villages also enjoy many of the conveniences of city life, although they are miles removed from the urban centres. The excellent highways, automobiles, radios, televisions and newspapers keep the villagers in contact with the city culture and civilization. The combination of rural residence and urban employment, and urban residence and rural-contact has resulted not only in certain modifications of social patterns but also in adjustments to a new way of life. The villagers are now more aware of the city lifestyle and they have been influenced by it in such a way that they no longer lay undue

emphasis on caste, creed... They have become more liberal in their approach. They no longer live in isolation. Many cultivators have accepted the new farm practices. Not only have their values and aspirations changed but there is a change in their behaviour too. The *Jajmani* system is weakening and intercaste and interclass relations are changing. There is a change even in institutions of marriage, family and caste panchayats. Instead of depending on traditional methods of treating the diseases, they now use modern allopathic medicine. In elections similarly, they give importance not to the ritual or the social status of the candidate but to his individual potentialities and his political background.

But this also does not mean that traditions are no longer important in villages. Individualism has not been able to replace familism, nor has secularism been able to replace the bond which have with the sacred.

Problems of Urbanization

Urban problems are endless. Drug addiction, pollution, crime, juvenile delinquency, begging, alcoholism, corruption, and unemployment are a few of them. Let us analyse the incidence and prevalence of six crucial ones that are not covered in other chapters of this book. They are: (i) housing and slums, (ii) crowding and depersonalisation, (iii) water supply and drainage, (iv) transportation and traffic, (v) power shortage and (vi) pollution.

Housing and Slums

Housing people in the city or abolishing 'houselessness' is a serious problem. Government, industrialists, capitalists, entrepreneurs, developers, contractors, and landlords have not been able to keep pace with the housing needs of the poor and the middle class people. According to the recent UNI report (*The Hindustan Times*, 9th May, 1988), between one-fourth and half of the urban population in India's largest cities lives in makeshift shelters and slums. At least 15.0% of the nation's families are 'housing deprived', more than 60.0% of the houses have inadequate lighting and air facilities, and 80.0% of the rural and 30.0% of urban population live in mud-houses. Millions of people are required to pay excessive rent, that is, one which is beyond their means. In our profit-oriented economy, private developers and colonisers find little profit in building houses in cities for the poor and the lower middle-class people, though they concentrate instead in

meeting the housing needs of the rich and the upper-middle class. The result has been higher rents and a scramble for the few available houses. Almost half of the population are either ill-housed or pay more than 20.0% of their incomes on rent. In some states, the Housing Boards and the City Development Authorities have tried to remedy the city housing problem with active financial support from the Life Insurance Corporation, HUDCO and such other agencies. They even charge the total housing cost in monthly instalments on an interest varying from 9% to 11.0%. But engineers and contractors profit a lot from these government efforts. They use poor-quality material in construction and finish the houses contravening the laid down specifications. The buyer soon finds that the roof leaks, the plaster peels off, there are cracks in the walls, and the electric fittings break down. Such ventures blacken the name of housing boards and even of a few honest bureaucrats associated with such housing schemes. No wonder, the housing problem in the cities even today continues to be a gigantic problem next only to food and clothing.

The estimated shortage of houses at the beginning of the Seventh Plan was about 25.0 million units, out of which about 6.0 million were required for the urban areas. By 1990, the shortage was expected to grow to 9.7 million units in urban areas. In Delhi alone, which has seen a population increase from 2.0 to 9.0 million between 1957 and 1990, there is an addition of 60,000 people each year who need to be provided with new housing. Almost 70.0% of Delhi's population, according to an UNI report, lives in sub-standard conditions. With the country's slum population of present (1990) standing at nearly 40 million, slum dwellers form 44.0% of the population in Delhi, 45.0% in Bombay, 42.0% in Calcutta, and 39.0% in Madras. The situation is no better in the eight other metropolises of Bangalore, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Kanpur, Pune, Nagpur, Lucknow and Jaipur (*The Hindustan Times*, May 9, 1988). The slum population, governmental efforts notwithstanding, is expected to show a sizable increase by the next decade (that is, by 2000) adding further to the housing problem and the squalor conditions. The order of development in squatter settlements is people, land (sites), shelter and services. The people first select a site which meets their social and economic needs, build shelters and then wait for the services to move in over a period of time. Although the settlements fulfil the needs of the people, they violate city planning regulations. It is, therefore, believed that the current order of development ought to be land (site), people, shelter and services. Now

the government, apart from encouraging the poor for going in for low-cost non-formal housing technologies, has formulated several plans and given many concessions to promote more and better housing. This includes contribution of Rs. 100 crore to the National Housing Bank, setting up a separate Social Security Fund with a corpus of Rs. 100 crore, and creating a National Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation.

Crowding and Depersonalisation

Crowding (density of population) and people's apathy to other persons' problems (including their neighbours' problems) is another problem growing out of city life. Some homes are so overcrowded that five to six persons live in one room. Some city neighbourhoods are extremely overcrowded. Overcrowding has very deleterious effects. It encourages deviant behaviour, spreads diseases, and creates conditions for mental illness, alcoholism, and riots. One effect of dense urban living is people's apathy and indifference. City dwellers do not want to 'get involved' in other's affairs. Persons are involved in accidents, molested, assaulted, abducted, and even murdered while others merely stand by and watch.

Water Supply and Drainage

We have reached a stage where no city has water supply round the clock. Intermittent supply results in a vacuum being created in empty water lines which often suck in pollutants through leaking joints. Cities like Madras, Hyderabad, Rajkot, Ajmer, and Udaipur get water from the municipality for less than an hour a day. Many small towns have no main water supply at all and are dependent on tube wells. Even a relatively planned and serviced city like Delhi has now to reach as far as 180 km to the Ramganga for augmentation of water supply. Bangalore pumps water from far away with a lift of about 700 metre. Most towns and cities which normally get good rain every year, have been undergoing the agony of acute water shortage in the last two three years. What seems to be sadly lacking is a national water policy which would assess the total water resources and then allocate water. This is inspite of the State Chief Ministers' meeting at Delhi in September 1987 which approved the National Water Policy which aimed at giving priority to drinking water requirements.

When we look on the other side of the water supply, that is, drainage, we find the situation equally bad. One of the little known facts about India is that there is not a single city which is fully sewered. Not even Chandigarh can claim this distinction because the unauthorised constructions in and around it lie outside the perview of the main system. Because of the non-existence of a drainage system, large pools of stagnant water can be seen in every city even in summer months. Just as we need a national water policy, we also need a national and regional drainage policy.

Transportation and Traffic

The transportation and traffic picture in all Indian cities is unhappy. A majority of the people use buses and tempos, while a few use rail as transit system. The increasing number of scooters, motorcycles, mopeds and cars make the traffic problem worse. They pollute the air with smoke and noise. The number of buses plying in metropolitan cities like Delhi, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta is not adequate and commuters have to spend about one to two hours to get into the bus, which means leaving the house two hours in advance in the morning to reach their place of work and reaching home two hours late in the evening. The main reason for being in this mess is that the low income of the commuters forces them to live in areas with cheap accommodation which necessitates extensive travel. Further, since our citizens cannot afford to pay high fares for the use of a public transport system, the fares have to be kept very low because of which all city bus services sustain such annual losses that they cannot really expand or maintain a fleet adequate to meet city needs.

Power Shortage

Closely linked with transportation is the question of power shortage. On the one hand, the use of electrical gadgets has increased very much in the cities, and on the other hand, the establishment of new industries and the expansion of the old industries has also increased the dependence on electricity. Most of the states are not in a position to generate the power that they need with the result that they remain dependent on neighbouring states. Conflict over supplying of power between two states often creates severe power crisis for the people in the city.

Pollution

Our cities and towns are major polluters of the environment. Several cities discharge 40% to 60% of their entire sewage and industrial effluents untreated into the nearby rivers. The smallest town contributes its share of garbage and excreta to the nearest waterway through its open drains. Urban industry pollutes the atmosphere by smoke and toxic gases from its chimneys.

Causes of Urban Problems

Following McVeigh and Arthur Shostak (1978 : 198-205), who have linked urban problems in the United States to four factors, we can identify following five major causes of problems of urban life in India: (i) migration in and out of the city, (ii) industrial growth, (iii) apathy of the government, (iv) defective town planning, and (v) vested interest forces.

Migration

As already indicated, people migrate to towns because of the relatively better employment opportunities available there. In India, the migration has four patterns: rural to rural, rural to urban, urban to urban and urban to rural. Though rural to rural migration is by far the most prevalent form of movement but rural to urban and urban to urban migration is equally crucial. The 1981 census figures point out that in 71.3% cases, migration was from rural to rural, in 15.0% cases, it was from rural to urban, in 8.8% of cases it was from urban to urban, and in 4.9% cases, it was from urban to rural (Bose, 1979 : 560). The analysis of intra-district migration (short-distance migration), inter-district or intra-state migration (medium distance migration) and inter-state migration (long distance migration) shows that about 68.0% migrations are short distance, 21.0% are medium distance and 11.0% are long-distance migrations (Bose, 1979 : 187).

The entrance of the rural poor into the city depletes sources of revenue. On the other hand, the rich people today prefer to live in sub-urban areas. This movement of the rich causes financial loss to the city. This migration to the city and away from the city aggravates problems.

Industrial Growth

When urban population growth rate is 4.0% in India, the industrial growth rate is about 6.0% per annum. The Seventh Five Year Plan

postulates an industrial growth rate of 8.0% per annum. This growth takes care of the additional job requirements in the cities. The tertiary sector also provides refuge to the migrants, though their earnings remain at low level.

Apathy of the Government

The administrative mismanagement of our cities is also responsible for the mess in which city-dwellers find themselves. Municipal governments have not kept pace with city growth, either spatially or in terms of management infrastructure. There is neither the will nor the capacity to plan for the future. There is also no skill and capability to manage what exists. Until we improve the capacity of our cities to govern themselves, we cannot emerge from the urban mess. On the other hand, the state governments also put many restrictions on local governments in raising necessary funds for dealing with particular urban problems

Defective Town Planning

A more alarming factor in the general deterioration in the standard of civic services is the growing sense of helplessness of our planners and administrators. From the Planning Commission downwards, there seems to be a fatalistic acceptance of the uncontrolled growth in our metropolitan cities. One member of the National Commission on Urbanization actually stated in one of the meetings of the commission (*The Hindustan Times*, 3 September, 1987) that nothing could be done about cities such as Kanpur.

Vested-Interest Forces

The last cause of urban problems is the vested interest forces that work against people but enhance private commercial interests and profits. The city residents are usually powerless to affect decisions that elites make to enhance their own interests, power and profit. When these powerful elites can make more money, they adopt plans and programmes no matter how many people are hurt in the process.

Solutions to Urban Problems

Some measures have to be adopted if we want to remedy urban problems. We suggest following eight measures:

Systematic Development of Urban Centres and Creation of Job Opportunities

One important solution to our urban problems is the systematic development of the fast growing urban centres and planning an investment programme which, over the next 20 years or so, could give rise to a large number of well distributed, viable urban centres throughout the country. So far we have been focussing attention on programmes for providing wage employment in rural areas through IRDP, NREP and the RLEGP programmes to hold people back in the villages. While there is ample justification for providing rural employment, this by itself is not enough. It is not possible to provide gainful employment in the agricultural sector beyond a certain point. For this purpose, we have to emphasise on programmes which can permit multifunctional activities to sustain people in cities.

Regional Planning along with City Planning

Urban planning is almost city-centred. We have always been talking of town and city planning but never of the planned development of the whole region so that population is logically dispersed and activities are properly distributed. City planning is an ad-hoc solution but regional planning could be a more permanent solution. For example, instead of providing houses to slum-dwellers in cities through city development authorities, if through regional planning migrants could be diverted to other areas which may provide attractive employment, the pace of growth of existing cities could be checked. It is time that at least beginning from the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992), the Government of India helps the states in setting up regional planning organisations and evolving meaningful regional settlement plans.

Encouraging Industries to Move to Backward Areas

Land pricing policy which gives land in large chunks at throwaway prices has to be replanned to encourage industries to move to backward areas/districts. This will also take care of linear development of metropolitan and big cities. A policy of the state taking over potential high value land in and around large cities with a view to exploiting its full cost at a later date also needs serious consideration.

Municipalities to Find Own Financial Resources

People do not mind paying taxes to the municipality if their money is properly utilised to maintain roads, provide sewage system, reduce

water shortage and provide electricity. It is a well known fact that cities suffer from crippling resource constraints. If deterrent punishment is given to the corrupt municipality officials, there is no reason why the municipal corporations should find it difficult in collecting money from the residents of the city. A city must bear the cost of its own development. High financial support from state government is becoming difficult. By revising property, water and electricity taxes, money can be collected and more money per head per annum can be made available for providing necessary amenities. When any new industry or business is located in a city or on its periphery, it could be heavily taxed so that additional money becomes available to the local body.

Encouraging Private Transport

Why should city transport be a public monopoly ? When the transport is handled by state employees it has been noticed that they become too rude and callous. Backing of the trade union encourages them to go on strikes frequently. It is necessary then that private transportation be encouraged. Privately operated bus and tempo services will charge a little more fare but commuters would not mind paying this in view of the better services.

Amendment of Rent Control Acts

Laws which inhibit the construction of new houses or giving of houses on rent must be amended. Which landlord would like to spend Rs. one lakh or so on a two room tenement and give it on rent for Rs. 300 a month or so for the next 10 to 20 years without having the authority to increase the rent or get it vacated on appropriate grounds. Maharashtra has taken a lead in amending the Rent Control Act which has made thousands of houses available for rent. A similar step in other states would be welcome.

Adopting Pragmatic Housing Policy

In May 1988, the Central Government presented the National Housing Policy (NHP) to the Parliament which aimed at abolishing 'homelessness' by the turn of the century and upgrading the quality of accommodation to a fixed minimum standard. Such policy looks to be too ambitious and appears to be a Utopian. It is a dream impossible to accomplish in a span of 12 years by which time the twentieth century

will end. The government policy and planning has to be more down to earth. This is not to say that the concept of NHP is irrational. The NHP strategy is broadbased. It seeks to provide easy access to finance as well as land and materials for building houses at reasonable rates. It also seeks to encourage manufacturers to use new type of building materials. Moreover, it seeks to review the entire gamut of laws relating to land tenure, land acquisition and ceiling to apartment ownership, municipal regulations and rental laws. But these are all thorny issues. The NHP is oriented towards rich developers, landlords and contractors. The NHP has to discourage luxury housing and promote cooperative and group housing societies. It has to develop special schemes for the poor and low-income people. It has also to favour providing incentives to employers to build houses for the employees. It has to increase its authorised capital of Rs. 100 crore which cannot go anywhere near to meeting the financial needs. Unless, a more pragmatic NHP is adopted, it will be impossible to achieve the set goals.

Structural Decentralisation

One proposal by innovative planners and some radicals envisions a structural decentralisation of local self government itself. This could entail the creation of 'neighbourhood-action groups', to be called 'community centres' consisting of representatives of residents and municipality officials. These centres will identify and act upon neighbourhood needs. For example, many new colonies have come to be established in many cities in which as many as 10,000 to 50,000 people reside. Thus, these colonies are small towns by themselves. Some taxes like house tax, road tax, light tax, etc. could be passed on directly to these community-centres instead of giving them to municipalities. The centres would direct the affairs of the neighbourhood without reference to the city municipal corporation and use the collected money in maintaining roads, lights and so forth. The argument for this kind of decentralised structure within the city is that the same system that allows lakhs of people a substantial control over their civic destiny denies them any effective role in shaping the institutions that shape their lives. Community centres will allow them to create their own exclusive environment.

To conclude, it may be pointed out that the effects of urbanization and urbanism and the problems of cities can never be solved until urban planning is modified and radical measures are taken. These should not

be based on the profit motive which would benefit a few vested interests. The use of land, technology, and taxes should be for the benefit of the people and not for the benefit of a few powerful interest groups. City-dwellers have to become politically active and have to organise and agitate to change the existing economic and social systems in the cities.

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