

PROBLEMS OF URBANIZATION IN PAKISTAN

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A major side effect of the unprecedented speed-up in world population growth today is the ever increasing concentration of population in cities the world over.

Urban growth is a combination of two phenomena viz. (i) Urbanization - the state of population concentration and (ii) Urbanism - the city dwellers ways of life. ¹ Urbanization refers to a change in population patterns whereas urbanism refers to changes in culture, social structure and life style.²

Urbanization produces urbanism - a way of life i.e. do as you like to do in a big city where you are not known. It is the rule of the impersonal under which public opinion has little power to control conduct. Urban ways of life inevitably encourage attitudes of selfishness, exploitation of one's fellowmen and indifference to human suffering, which may lead to the decay of basic moral standards and ultimately to the decline of urban dominated civilization. And the size, density and heterogeneity of population in cities affect the nature, intensity and frequency of contact which influence the nature of the process of socialization and human nature itself. Even the basic social institutions such as family and religion are subjected to forces which modify their structure, their role and their hold on the behaviour of the person.

Despite socio-economic and technological problems, the city and urbanism have paved the way for the great achievements of civilization. They have done more

than to advance technology, increasing productivity and raising levels of living in general and increasing the increased mastery of man over nature.

Throughout the country, urban population represents about 28.3% of the total population of 8.37 crores (1981 census) as against 23% in 1961 and 25% in 1972 as will be evident from the table sub-joined:

YEAR	POPULATION(000)	URBAN %
1961	42880	22.52
1972	65309	25.41
1981	83782	28.28

SOURCE: Census Organization, P.2.
Some Socio-Economic Trends, 1983

The current growth rate of 3% annually is very high in comparison to other developing countries. In addition to this, 45% of the total population is under the age of 15. Thus there is a large potential for further population growth because greater number of families will enter reproductive age every year.

The growth trend of urban areas in Pakistan indicates the emergence of 28 cities with a population of more than one lac (1981 Census) when their number in 1951, 1961 and 1972 was 10, 13 and 24 respectively. Therefore cause of rural urban flow is the concentration of modern activities in urban areas and the poor development of the rural areas.

This pull factor of migration to one particular place or province like Sindh, weakens the economy and creates lot of problems.

Rapid industrialization has led to the expansion of industries. As a result, exploitation of resources creates problems of urbanization, town congestion and destruction of country-side with strands of moral and religious processes having their effects on the family, the structure of social classes and the patterns of social values and behaviour.³

Rapid industrialization has further created opportunities as well as many problems for both rural and urban people due to new technologies. The opportunities include higher education and training that equip them with better occupational skills and a growing awareness and involvement of many urban people in political activities and the modernization process in general contains a long list of problems.

Some urban problems discussed in this paper are as under:

1. HOUSING AND SLUMS

Next to the quest for food, the need of shelter has been paramount. Poor urban housing conditions above all are a social threat. While healthy living environment contributes to the improvement of family life, enhances productivity of labour, increasing population has brought with it the question of providing homes.

The migrants face the problem of housing and settlement. They find their place of living through different approaches such as:

- i) Simply building a hut as a squatter near river banks, near the centre of the city, in the city streets as well as on the outskirts.

- ii) Many people occupy the scattered vacant plots in the inner parts of the cities, that are held vacant by urban investors. The occupants have to face eventual eviction.
- iii) Migrants pay a small rent to the owner of the land.

Problems of housing is further aggravated by some opportunist city dwellers to encroach upon the land. In cities, land is often un-used because it is undesirable or unsuitable for permanent buildings. It may consist of swamp, low grounds subject to flooding refuse dumps or useless land for cultivation or land which is outside the scope of the city water system. So, some better organised groups of workers obtain recognition from the Government of their right of occupancy. In this way, pressure on land within cities has increased and is increasing day by day. Also, rents become exorbitant in relation to incomes, land prices shoot up and poor housing is mixed up with better residential buildings, and human welfare and productivity of the country is affected due to poor health conditions.

A mention had been made in the Fifth Five Year Plan and in Annual Budget 1978-79 that the total backlog of houses in the country was estimated at over one million units. The additional annual requirements of houses due to population increase was estimated at 150000 in the urban areas and about the same in the rural areas. Compared with 3% growth rate, the growth rate for urban areas had been around 5% during 1951-61. There had been an annual increase of 5.1% compared to growth rate of 3.6% for the total population during 1972-81. Also, in 1978, 24% of the urban population was living in conditions which were un-safe and hazardous to health.

2. PROSTITUTION

In spite of existence of State Laws and Social Laws, political instability and the absence of sound economic policy has created a grim situation in Pakistan in which social evils - among others prostitution - have become rampant and social offenders gone uncontrollable. The greedy and professional pimps - living on the earning of the others - exploit the girls/women mainly for their own benefits at the cost of social good.

Prostitution is an old institution. Divorce, desertion, widowhood, economic stress, rise of democracy, great expectations, advancement of education, late marriages, artificial living and mass media etc. are the important causes of prostitution today. Under these circumstances, in our changing society, a professional prostitute has a house, often she possesses status but is devoid of chastity. She is backed by big guns. Adolescent girls particularly become delinquents and suffer from sexual frustration due to lack of parental care and support on one hand, and their association with bad company on the other, become professional prostitutes. In big commercial and administrative cities such as Karachi a city of oblivion, girls and women have adopted prostitution as a profession for livelihood and meeting their wants which according to Economists are un-limited. This approach is very simple, safe and cheap.

This is un-ethical and immoral profession. The after effects of this profession are as under:

- i) It spreads venereal diseases and goes untreated for a long time because of the shyness and unwillingness of the prostitutes to visit a doctor for medical checkup and treatment.

- ii) Frequent abortions occur which go un-registered and un-noticed.
- iii) It affects the health of young girls.
- iv) It creates ill-feelings, unrest and frustration among the neighbours, and pollutes social environment.
- v) It promotes artificial living.
- vi) Sometimes, young girls die due to mishandling by the licentious persons.

3. VAGRANCY

According to James W. Rinhardt (except where defined by statute) vagrancy is, "the behaviour of a person without permanent social attachments, aimless wandering of an individual without visible means of legitimate self support".⁴

The society is undergoing rapid change to new order. Economic principle i.e. scarce means, competition and unlimited wants comes true. Without wealth and power man cannot survive in cities. Majority of people do not make their both ends meet with what they earn. When their immediate wants are not satisfied, some people having lost shyness and feeling of self respect resort to begging and others turn into professional and pimp beggars.

There are four types of vagrants:⁵

Beggar maids-cum-prostitutès.

Vagrant couples with or without children.

Part time beggars.

Sellers/hawkers-cum-beggars.

As to the statistics of vagrants, no exact number can be given because no survey has been made at the country level. However, according to the report of Commission for Eradication of Social Evils, the Commission obtained data relating to beggars from 7 major cities of Pakistan (the then West Pakistan). The total number of professional beggars in these cities was reported to be 15589 which came to 0.3% of the population of these cities i.e., there was about one beggar for every 333 persons living in urban areas of Western Wing of the country (Present Pakistan). Excluding Karachi, the ratio of beggars in other 6 cities came to about one beggar for every 100 persons. ⁶

SOCIAL EFFECTS OF VAGRANCY

- a) It destroys sense of self respect and personal dignity.
- b) It encourages crimes, intoxication and prostitution.
- c) It causes social dis-organization.
- d) It gives birth to illegitimate children.
- e) It gives very bad impression about our National character.

4. EDUCATION

Literacy enriches life and enhances the learning capability of workers. It may be pointed out that literacy ratio in rural areas is very thin which creates impediment to the road of economic and technological advancement. Table 1 indicates that literacy ratio in rural areas is 14.8% as compared to the urban areas i.e. 43.4% although the population of this sector is more than the urban areas. This in-equality creates a large number of illiterate persons in the villages. Again if we analyse the allocations spent by the government during various Five Year Plans in the country as a whole, the position is generally disappointing (Table 2). During First Five Year Plan (1955-60), 5.49% of the total allocation was spent on education in-

cluding man-power and 4.57% of the total allocation during the Fifth Five Year Plan (1978-83).

A number of developing nations around the world have recorded impressive declines in mortality and fertility only through the level of education. China, Korea, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia are the countries of example. A common factor in all these countries has been the increase in literacy and educational enrolment. The most important determinant of decline in mortality and fertility is the level of female literacy. In case of Pakistan overall literacy rate is miserably low which has affected socio-economic development.

5. UN-EMPLOYMENT

The rapid growth of population is one of the most important factors of un-employment in rural areas. During 1951-1961, the population of urban areas increased by 4.8% annually and 1961-72 by 5%. The total growth rate during the same period throughout the country was about 3% and that in the rural areas only 2.4%. According to these figures the annual migration from rural to urban areas covers 0.33 million people on the average. The reasons for migration from rural areas to towns/cities are attributed to under-employment, seasonal un-employment and small earnings in the rural areas, hold of capitalist class and unequal distribution of economic and social opportunities for the broad masses living in the rural sectors. Table 3 shows that as a result of the rapid decrease in the rural population and the insufficient land under cultivation the extent of cultivated land per capita has decreased from 1.11 acres to 0.73 acre. The increase in the cultivated land from 19.09 million hectares in 1971-72 to 20.26 in 1981-82 was because of the use of modern agricultural ma-

chinery and irrigation facilities.⁷ In view of this, rural under-employment and un-employment is widening, and surplus people move to urban areas for employment etc.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Small farmers be given incentives in the form of higher guaranteed prices for food crops, basic amenities of life and marketing facilities to prevent the flow to urban areas.

2. To increase investment in Science and education which will bring changes in fertility behaviour of the people, improve environmental protection and raise quality of people with the aim to create new higher productivity for continuous economic growth.

3. Urban expansion be diverted so as to avoid loss of agricultural lands needed to feed the city people.

4. The equitable distribution of drinking water in cities is a problem. Safe piped water and drainage system be provided to urban people including slums and katchi abadi. Rural sector remains neglected.

5. Poverty is increasing as a result of socio-economic and political factors which foster injustice, oppression and dependence. Arrangements be made to reduce the tempo of inequitable distribution of income and wealth.

6. Industrialization in big cities be de-centralized so as to reduce the pressure of migration to cities by raising the standard of living of farmers and providing them with new employment opportunities and basic services.

7. Prevailing conditions of our cities be improved into efficient, clean, beautiful modern cities with advanced industry, science, culture and foreign trade.

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7. Agricultural Statistics of Pakistan (1982), Government of Pakistan, Karachi, pp.109-112.

TABLE - 1

SHOWING LITERACY RATIO OF POPULATION TEN YEARS & ABOVE SEX, 1981

Pakistan	Urban %	Rural %
Total 23.3	43.4	14.8
Male 31.8	51.5	23.1
Female 13.7	33.7	5.5

Source: Government of Pakistan Economic Survey, 1982-83 Islamabad, p.178, 1983.

TABLE - 2

SHOWING SECTORWISE DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURE OF FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVT.(MILLION RS.)

Sectors	Ist F.Y. Plan 1955-60	2nd F.Y. Plan 1960-65	3rd F.Y. Plan 1965-70	1970 (Ist Year)	5th F.Y. Plan 1978-83
Total Exp. of all Sectors	6927	139500	21595	74291	126891
Edu:& Man	380	947	1378	3442	5806
Power	5.49%	6.79%	6.38%	4.59%	4.57%
Health	145 2.09%	381 2.73%	638 2.95%	2381 3.2%	4396 3.46%
Works Prog & Rural Devpt:			136 0.638%	985 1.33%	2577 2.03%

Source: Pakistan Economic Survey, 1982-83, Islamabad Government of Pakistan. 1983, Statistical Annex p.208.

TABLE - 3

SHOWING RATIO BETWEEN THE POPULATION AND CULTIVATED AREA

Year	Geographical Area	Cultivable (Million hectares)	Total	Cropped Area
1971-72	79.61	19.09 6.07%	16.00	20.125%
1980-81	79.61	20.25	19.22	
1981-82	79.61	20.26 6.128%	19.30	20.625%

Source: Agricultural Statistics of Pakistan (1982) pp.109-112.