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URBANIZATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

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Introduction

Today, half of the world's population lives in urban areas. By 2050, 70 percent of the population will be urban. India has been witnessing massive urbanization. Over the six decades since independence, India's population grew three-fold from 350 million in 1947 to 1027 million in the year in 2001. During the same period, the urban population grew almost 4.6 fold as fast – from 62.4 million to 286 million (Census 2001). Thus, the Independent India has been urbanising very fast. The process of urbanization has been closely linked with pattern of economic development in the country. Although the process of urbanization in India could not be explained fully by the process of economic development, it is positively linked with the latter.¹

Thus, the rapid increase in urbanization and economic development has led to severe environmental degradation that undermines the environmental resource base upon which sustainable development depends. The economics of environmental pollution, depletion and degradation of resources has in fact been neglected as compared to the issues of growth and expansion. India has been no exception to this worldwide phenomenon; rather, the trends in environmental deterioration in India, because of the substantial increase in its population, have been far more prominent as compared to other developing economies.

Urban development in India is presently going through a very dynamic stage, the percentage of population in urban centres itself having increased from 14 per cent in the 1940s to about 33 per cent in 2000². The unprecedented challenge of such an urban shift has resulted in Indian cities degenerating into slums and squatters camps. The rapid expansion of cities has brought with it acute problems of environment resulting in the degradation of quality of life. In order to comprehend the above issues and problems of urbanization and

environment, the National Development Plans have, from time to time, developed certain techniques and solutions in the process of urban and environmental planning policy. The key factor is that, urbanization will continue in India in the foreseeable future and going to place heavier demand on the environment. It is, therefore, important to understand the process of urbanization in different regions and design appropriate policies of urban development. Thus, the five year plans prepared by the Planning Commission of India reflect the aspirations and long-term plans of the central government on all aspects of economy, environment and development. These plans can be helpful in analysing the policy regarding various sectors.

It is in this milieu of the association between urbanization and environmental degradation, the present chapter is devoted to the same issue. The entire chapter is divided into four segments. Second part discusses India's Five Year Plans at a Glance and urban planning and policies in India under different Five Year plans at length. The third part is entirely devoted to environmental awareness programmes,

policies and people's participation. In this segment further the environmental policies and environmental concerns in India's planning under different Five Year Plans are being discussed. The fourth and the last portion draw attention to the lack of integration between environmental policies and economic planning.

1. **Urban Planning and Policies in India, Five Year Plans and Programmes for the Urban Poor**

India began the process of planned economic development with the start of the First Five Year Plan on April 1, 1951. In a broad sense, the basic objectives of planning in India can be grouped under four heads: (a) growth, (b) modernisation, (c) self-reliance and (d) social justice. In one form or another, these objectives, although with varying emphasis, reflect the views of all sections of the population and represent a national consensus on the aims of planning.

A. **India's Five Year Plans at a Glance:**

First Five Year Plan (1951–52 to 1955–56), India faced three formidable problems, viz. severe food shortage, mounting inflation and the influx of refugees in the wake of partition of the country in 1947. The First Five Year Plan had to address these problems on an urgent basis.

The Second Five Year Plan (1956–57 to 1960–61), was formulated and implemented in an atmosphere of economic stability. Agricultural targets fixed in the First Plan had been achieved and inflation had registered a fall. The plan followed the Mahalanobis model, an economic development model developed by the Indian

statistician Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis in 1953. The time was ripe to shift focus from agriculture to industry to give a big boost to the economy on modern lines. Hence, the Second Plan concentrated on the development of heavy and basic industries to lay the foundation for future industrialization of the Indian economy. It is also noteworthy that in 1956, Government announced its Industrial Policy

(called by some as the economic constitution of India) which accepted the establishment of a socialistic pattern of society as the goal of economic policy. The industrial development programme adopted was given by P.C. Mahalanobis. The model was created as an analytical framework for India's Second Five Year Plan in 1955 under the instructions of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, as India felt there was a need to introduce a formal plan model after the successful completion of First Five Year Plan (1951–1956). The First Five Year Plan stressed investment for capital accumulation in the spirit of the one-sector Harrod–Domar model. It argued that production required capital and that capital can be accumulated through investment; the faster one accumulates, the higher the growth rate will be. The most fundamental criticisms came from Mahalanobis, who himself was working with a variant of it in 1951 and 1952. The criticisms were mostly around the model's inability to cope with the real constraints of the economy; its ignoring of the fundamental problems of planning over time; and the lack of connection between the model and the actual selection of projects for governmental expenditure. Subsequently; Mahalanobis introduced his celebrated two-sector model, which he later expanded into a four-sector version.

Third Five year Plan (1961–62 to 1965–66), accordingly, gave top priority to agriculture but it also laid adequate emphasis on the development of basic industries which were vital for rapid development of the economy. In fact, the Third Plan set as its goal in the establishment of self-reliant and self-generating economy.

Planned development efforts were disrupted when the country came under severe shocks such as hostilities with Pakistan (1965), droughts for two successive years (1965–66 and 1966–67), devaluation of the rupee (1966) and inflationary pressure. On account of these adverse circumstances, the draft outline of the Fourth Plan prepared had to be abandoned. Instead, **three Annual Plans (1966–67, 1967–68 and**

1968-69) were prepared and implemented.

The planning process was resumed when the **Fourth Five Year Plan (1969- 70 to 1973-74)** became operational on April 1, 1969. It set before itself two main objectives: (a) growth with stability and (b) progressive achievement of self-reliance.

The Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-75 to 1978-79) was executed when the country was undergoing severe economic strains such as run-away inflation caused by unprecedented increase in international oil prices in the wake of 1973 Gulf Crisis and the failure of the Government to take over the wholesale trade in wheat. The Plan could not complete its five years because it was terminated at the end of the fourth year (i.e. March 31, 1978) by the new Janata Party Government at the Centre.

The political turmoil of the late 1970s witnessed two Sixth Plans. **The Sixth Plan (1978-79 to 1982-83)**, of the Janata Party Government which was abandoned with the change of Government at the Centre in 1980. The new Government led by Mrs. Indira Gandhi introduced its own **Sixth five year Plan (1980-81 to 1984-85)** which successfully ran its full course. It focused on direct attack on poverty.³

The Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-86 to 1989-90) sought to emphasise policies and programmes to increase food grains

production, employment opportunities and productivity.

Eighth Five Year Plan which was to begin on April 1, 1990 covering the period 1990-91 to 1994-95 could not be finalised on time and hence there was a plan gap of two years. It took off on April 1, 1992 covering the period 1992-93 to 1996-97. This was followed by the **Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-98 to 2001-2002)** with the main aim of attaining objectives like speedy industrialization, human development, full-scale employment, poverty reduction, and self-reliance on domestic resources.⁴

The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-03 to 2006-07) envisaged redefining the role of Government in the context of the emergence of a strong and vibrant private sector, need for provision of infrastructure and the need for imparting greater flexibility in fiscal and monetary policies. In November 2006, the Government released the Approach paper to the **Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-08 to 2011- 12)**. The Plan became operative from April 1, 2007. "The broad vision of this Plan includes several inter-related components: rapid growth that reduces poverty and creates employment opportunities, access to essential services in health and education especially for the poor, equality of opportunity, environmental sustainability, recognition of women's agency and good governance".⁵

Table 3.1: Growth Rate Performance in the Various Plans

(In % per annum)

Plan period	Target	Realisation
First Plan (1951-1956)	2.1	3.5
Second Plan (1956-1961)	4.5	4.2
Third Plan (1961-66)	5.6	2.8
Fourth Plan (1969-74)	5.7	3.2
Fifth Plan (1974-79)	4.4	4.7
Sixth Plan (1980-85)	5.2	5.5
Seventh Plan (1985-90)	5.0	5.6
Eighth Plan (1992-97)	5.6	6.5

Ninth Plan (1997-2002)	6.5	5.5
Tenth Plan (2002-07)	8.0	7.8

Source: Eleventh Five Year Plan 2007-2012, Planning Commission, GOI, (Volume -I).

Table 3.2: Population of India by Residence (1951-2001)

Census Year	Total Population	Average Annual Compound Growth Rate	Urban Population	Average Annual compound Growth Rate	Rural Population	Average Annual Compound Growth Rate
1951	361088090	-	62443709	-	298644381	-
1961	439234771	1.97	78936603	2.4	360298168	1.9
1971	598159652	3.1	109113977	3.1	489045675	3.1
1981	683329097	1.3	159462547	3.9	523866550	0.69
1991	844324222	2.1	217177625	3.1	627146597	1.8
2001	1027015247	1.97	285354954	2.8	741660293	1.7

Sources: Various census Report

Table 3.1 shows the growth performance during various five year plans and Table 3.2 reveals that the number of total population has increased from 361 million in 1951 to 1027 million in 2001. During the same period, the number of population residing in urban and rural areas has increased from 62.4 million to 285 million in urban areas and from 298.6 million to 742 million in rural areas. This shows that urban population has increased 4.6 times whereas rural population has increased 2.5 times during the period 1951 to 2001. The table clearly shows that the average annual compound growth rate of urban population was always higher in all the census years. It was 5.65 times during the period 1971-1981. This is clearly a reflection of the pace at which urbanization is taking place in India. The average annual compound growth rate of urban population was 2.4 in 1961. The decades 1971, 1981 and 1991 showed a significant improvement in the growth which has thereafter steadily dropped to 2.8 in 2001. The rural growth has been fluctuating since 1961. The decline in rural population growth was marginal during 1991 and 2001.

B. Urban Policy during the Five Year Plan

Periods for the Urban Poor:

The urban planning techniques and solutions that developed during the course of Plans suggested quite a few measures to tackle the problems of urbanization and urban growth. **In the First Five Year Plan (1951-56)**, the government concentrated on institution-building, on construction of homes for government employees and for weaker sections of society. Interestingly, a good part of the Plan outlay was spent on rehabilitation of the refugees from Pakistan and on building the new city of Chandigarh. An Industrial Housing Scheme was also initiated. Chandigarh, with its obvious modernist edge, in some perverted way became the model for the low-cost yellow buildings that were so ubiquitous during the two decades after Indian independence and continue to remain so today. In the same plan period the National Buildings Organisation and the School of Planning and Architecture were set up in order to improve the quality and efficiency of built environment building, research and develop housing technologies and create a cadre of trained town planners. Furthermore, the central government also set

up the Town and Country Planning Organisation to provide guidance and assistance to central and state governments on urban problems and also to prepare the Delhi Master Plan which was conceived as the model plan which was subsequently to provide a framework for master plans to be prepared for other cities.

The other two issues in the 1st Plan were industrial and employer housing and slums. The Plan noted that “construction of houses by employers in post-war years has fallen short of expectations” (Dwivedi 2007). More importantly, it notes that “the employers have generally taken the stand that not they but the state has the responsibility for providing houses for the working class”. This is in stark contrast to experiments like TISCO in Jamshedpur where the company took upon itself the responsibility of providing housing and other amenities to its workforce and their families. Thus we see that after Independence the private capital increasingly started washing its hands off the issues of reproduction of its workforce.⁶

The Second Five Year Plan (1956-1961), gave priority to set up the industrial towns as the potential centers of urbanization. The preparation of Master Plans of 21 cities was taken up for co-ordinated urban development. The Town and Country Planning Act were formulated to revamp the civic administration. The concept of slum clearance has been revised to achieve slum improvement as slum clearance is not enough unless the slums are re-built and resettle the affected people.⁷

The Third Five Year Plan (1961-1966) laid emphasis on town planning for which the responsibility was shifted from Centre to the States. A Model Town Planning Act was prepared in 1957 by the Town and Country Planning Organisation, Delhi and this led to the enactment of laws in other states. The Third Five Year Plan extends financial support for the preparation of master plans for the development of cities and towns in the states. As a result of such efforts, nearly 400 master plans were prepared. Moreover, the Third Plan

also initiated Urban-Community Development Scheme in selected cities as an experimental scheme to solve social and human problems associated with urban slums.⁸

It was only in the **Fourth Five-Year Plan (1969-74)** that the policies started reflecting growth and concentration of population in cities and the need for a balanced development. Another important aspect was the vision to develop smaller towns with spatial economic activities. These economic activities were aimed at generation of income for the residents of the small towns. Coupled with this, the plan also brought out a Scheme for Environmental improvement of Urban slums, to provide minimum services like water supply, sanitation and street pavements in 11 cities, which were later extended to nine additional locations. The Housing and Urban Development Corporation was established to fund the remunerative housing and urban developmental programmes, aimed at turnovers.⁹

The Fifth five Year Plan (1974-79) was mainly concerned with introducing measures to control land prices in cities; providing a framework for the development of small and medium towns; augmenting basic services in cities and towns; addressing the problems of metropolitan cities with a regional perspective and assist development projects having national significance in metropolitan cities. The priorities expressed in the Plan were based partly on the National Urbanization Policy Resolution of the Town and Country Planning Organisation. In order to evolve a framework for the development of small and medium towns the central government constituted a Task Force on Planning and Development of Small and Medium Towns in 1975. The main objectives of the Task Force, headed by Prof. Bijit Ghose, were to “examine laws relating to local administration and urban development, and to suggest suitable modifications of these laws, keeping in view the need to assist in the planned growth of small and medium towns, and to formulate guidelines and regulations in

the matters such as zoning, setbacks, building control and such other relevant matters"¹⁰. The report of the Task Force was published in 1977 and recommendations included giving priority to the development of existing towns and cities within a population range of 50,000–3,00,000. The framework for the selection and consequent development of small and medium towns consisted of the following recommendations:¹¹

(a) formulation of a national urban policy; (b) urban land policy to ensure proper use of land (c) development of small and medium towns, cities and metropolises with organic linkages to their immediate areas; (d) identification of growth points in the region that may be delineated; (e) evolution of location policies in the context of regional development; (f) provision of inviolable greenbelts around settlements of certain sizes; (g) working out of rational and feasible norms and standards of urban development; and (h) creation of appropriate statutory local government agencies at various levels.

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