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# EXPLORING RURAL–URBAN INEQUALITY IN INDIA

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**ABSTRACT----------**
*Indian society has been broadly divided into urban, rural and tribal societies on the basis of their geographical surroundings and socio-cultural characteristics.There have been differences in the urban and the rural areas within the country with regards to the educational institutions, employment opportunities, housing, lifestyle of the people and so forth. Contemporary urbanization in India is marked by what is termed as an urban and rural divide; this aspect began to be initiated some two centuries ago. By the end of the nineteenth century, urban centers primarily became the centers of rural exploitation both in the case of natural and human resources. This pattern not only continued during the 20th century but also was made stronger; so that the positive interdependence existed amongst the rural and urban settlements. The urban areas were over populated with migration of more people in search for better education and employment opportunities and rural areas were remote and less influenced by advancements and developments as compared to urban areas.In the above backdrop , this paper made an attempt to briefly review and identify the disparities in urban and rural areas; the main areas that have been underscored in the paper are rural and urban disparities, further it also critically examines the issues such as rural and urban transformations, urban and rural income differences, changing land utilization and influence upon rural life and urbanization and expansion of large cities.*
**KEYWORDS:** *Urban, Rural, Disparities, Transformations, Growth, Development----------*

## INTRODUCTION

The transformation of an economy from agricultural and primarily rural to industrial and largely urban is a sign of economic development; the urbanization is occurring at a more rapid rate as compared to the rest of the world. Increase in urbanization has led to the urban and rural divide within the country. This area is often therefore,is discussed as how the country‘s two economies, the rural which is referred asBharat and the urban which is referred as India are progressively growing different from each other. The subject has the main objective to discuss some issues regarding the rural- urban disparities, the growth of megacities and other related concerns (urban rural conditions, n.d.).

Indian society has been generally divided into urban, rural and tribal societies on the basis of their geographical surroundings and socio-cultural characteristics. The urban areas comprise ofcities and towns. The urban area is a spatial concentration of people who are working and are employedin non-agricultural activities i.e. urban society is based on non- agricultural occupations such as the industries and the service sector. Urban areas are prepared with all the modern amenities and services; the modern day facilities are broadlyaccessible in the urban areas.A majority of the households in urban areas are acquainted with the technological development. People in urban areas lead an efficiently more established, secure and a comfortable life due to availability of varying and advanced career opportunities. Criterion used to define urban areas can include population size, space, density, services, facilities and economic organizations (urban rural conditions, n.d.).

A society or a community can be classified as rural on the basis of the criterion of lower population density, less social differentiation, less social and spatial mobility, time-consuming rate of social transformation etc. Rural is an area where the people are engaged in primary industry or sector namely termed as agriculture. Rural areas normally possess anagricultural character; though many rural areas are differentiated by an economy based on mining, oil and gas exploration, tourism etc.These are sparselypopulated places away from the control of large cities and towns. Lifestyle in rural areas is different as compared to the urban areas mainly because limited resources are accessiblesuch as public transport, electricity or higher educational institutions, health and medical facilities etc (urban rural conditions, n.d.).

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**Rural and Urban Disparities**

The following areas have been identified that illustrate the disparities between the urban and the rural areas: (Das & Pathak, 2012).

Education – In the urban areas there have been establishment of more advanced and reputed educational institutions for elementary as well as for higher education; whereas in rural areas, the educational institutions have not been very advanced and there are differences in the educational levels of the individuals, more people are educated and qualified in urban areas, whereas in rural areas the rates of illiteracy are higher as compared to urban areas.

Health and Medical –Health and medical facilities are more developed and advanced in urban areas; there have been establishment of hospitals, health and medical centers and number of programs for childhood care. On the other hand, in rural areas, there have been establishment of health and medical facilities, which make provision of healthcare facilities to the rural masses, but in the present world, they prefer to travel to urban areas and seek medical assistance and health care facilities in the city hospitals.

Employment Opportunities – Agriculture is stated to be the main occupation of the people in rural areas, they are engaged in agricultural sector; 60% of the workforce in India is employed in the agricultural sector. Other employment opportunities in rural areas have been setting up of minor tea stalls or other grocery shops, small businesses and people are even employment in small scale industries in order to earn their living. In urban areas, there have been many employment opportunities for people, in urban areas there have been establishment of educational institutions, medical and health centers, offices, industries, organizations, service sector, where people are able to find jobs and employment opportunities.

Housing – In rural areas, people normally reside in huts and thatched roofs, their houses are mostly simple, but there have been provision of housing facilities so that they are able to dwell in a manageable way even in situations like heavy rains, floods or draught. Holistic approach has been adopted in rural areas by integrating into nutrition, sanitation, hygiene and safe drinking water. On the other hand, in urban areas, the houses of the people are constructed with proper technological materials and equipment, advanced construction materials are made use of in order to construct houses.

Lifestyles –In rural areas, people lead a simple lifestyle, they are mostly engaged in their jobs, whether it is the agricultural sector, or industries or ones own business; they are also involved in the rearing of livestock and cattle and normally do not have provision of electricity in their houses and prepare their meals on stoves. In urban areas, the lifestyles of people have much improved, employment opportunities have expanded in urban areas, goods and products of all kinds are being imported and technology has changed the lifestyle of the people in not only urban areas but rural areas also, especially digital technology.

**Rural and Urban Transformations**

The process of developments and transformations tends to produce large scale structural changes of economies as they shift from being mainly agrarian towards more industrial and service oriented actions. A related aspect of thistransformation is how the personnel in such developing economies regulates to the changing macro-economic structure in terms of their labor market selections such as dealings in skillfulness, choices ofprofessions, positions and industry of employment. Indeed, some of the more extensively cited inputs to growth economics have tended to centerpreciselyupon these aspects. The well knownHarris-Todaro model of Harris and Todaro (1970) was centeredupon the procedure through which rurallabor would transfer to urban areas in reaction to the differences in wages while the regularlyreveredLewis model celebrated in Lewis (1954) concentrated on the issue of shifting motivations for employmentbetween rural agriculture and urban industry (Hnatkovska&Lahiri, 2013).

The main focus of this area is upon making an attempt todiscover the relationship between development and inequality between the urban and the rural areas.This concept is related to the subjectof rural-urban dynamics during improvement since the process of structural transformation impliesagreement and expanding sectors which, in turn, implies that the personnel and the employeeshave to be transferredand probablybe retrained. The capability of the organizations in these developing economies to deal with these conditions,requires anessential factor that concludes how effortless or unsettling this procedure will be;evidently, the greater the interruption, the more the possibilities of income redistributions throughunemployment and wage losses due to mismatchedproficiencies.The main questions that are required to get answered are how has the workforce in rural and urban India reacted to these transformative

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aggregate sectoralpatterns? and have these transformations been associated with by broadening of rural-urban disparities or have thedisparities between them been lessening over the period of time? (Hnatkovska&Lahiri, 2013).

**Urban and Rural Income inequalities**

Income inequality that has been prevalent between urban and rural areas is an important characteristic ofthe development of an economy. Very often individuals refer to it for revealing upon the differentiationsin the standardand normalliving between the two areas. Preferably for this principleone requires theapproximations of the personal income in both the areas, which are basically not available in thecountry given the regional accounting framework and predicaments connected with cross borderstreams of goods and services. It is, therefore, extremelyaccepted to utilize consumption expenditures byhouseholds as analternative for the personal income to reveal upon the differentiations in the lifestyle of theindividuals. It apparentlydoes not take into account the differences in the saving behavior of population in the twoareas. Income generated within the geographical boundaries given by the concept ofdomestic produce can serve as asubstitute; particularly because it takes into account the physicaldevelopments, employment level and productive potential of the area. In this context, it becomes particularlypertinent to produceapproximations of urban and rural domestic products within aneconomy (Dholakia, Pandya &Pateriya, 2014).

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The Central Statistical Organization (CSO) then begins to produce these estimates for the country as a whole in different base years for the nationalincome series. Thus, it has practiced and distributed estimates of the urban and rural domesticproducts for the years 1970-71, 1980-81, 1993-94, 1999-00, and 2004-05. Since the proposed new base year for the national income series is2011-12, one can anticipate the next estimate of urban and rural domestic product for that yearbrought out around 2015-16. It is, however, unexpected that a similar attempt is not made at thestate level in spite of the Committee on Regional Account clearly recommending it in its finalreport which was in the year 1976 (Dholakia, Pandya &Pateriya, 2014).

**Changing Land Utilization and Impact on Rural Life**

There has been vast size and population of Indian states along with the differences in terms of culture, languages and social norms and these factors tend to limit the mobility of the labor across the states (Cali, 2007). Land utilizationtransformations effect from the population expansion and migration of poor rural people to urban areas in search for work and economic opportunities;transformations in land use straightforwardlyhas an effect upon the regional air quality, energy consumption, environmental conditions and climate at global, regional and local scales. Land utilization change although necessary for economic development does not come about without any cost. Any transformation in land use decreases the amount of land available for cultivation and agricultural production. Soil erosion, desertification and soil degradation reduces the quality of land resource (urban rural conditions, n.d.).

Urbanization, industrialization, mining and quarrying activities, major irrigation projects and agricultural activities have taken their toll of India‘s cultivable lands and forests. Lands and forests are the main sources of livelihood of rural people; they are continuouslywarned over their land rights, especially in the urban peripheries. In the present existence, this warning has become more apprehensive as the cities are growing at a fast pace than ever in India. The cities have begun to clear over the rural areas. Wealthy people in urban areas have been looking for plots for their recreational activities and second homes all along the highways in different parts of India;this also led to changes in theservices in rural areas. For example the employment in secondary and tertiary industry is on the increase in many parts of Maharashtra, particularly in Konkan area. Industrialization near the rural areas is contaminating the water resources posing a threat to the cultivable land as well as drinking water in many rural parts of India. There have been many developments and advancements that are taking place in the environment and the lives of the tribal as well as the rural people are getting affected; these developments normally take place close to tribal habitats, forcing the tribals to move out, though there is no formal transmission and possession of land (urban rural conditions, n.d.).

**Urbanization and Expansion of Large Cities**

Urbanization is regarded as one of the most prominent human induced land transformations of the present existence. Urbanization is correlated with augmented land utilization for non-agricultural purposes. It is a very up to date phenomenon and directly related with industrial revolution and is associated with economic development. Urbanization is a form of social transformation from traditional rural societies to modern urban communities. It is a progressive concentration of population in urban unit. These transformations marked themselves in the increasing concentration of population in urban settlements greater than the villages, in the increasing participation of the people in the secondary and tertiary production sectors and occupations. Urbanization not only associateswith industrialization, but also is connected with modernization.Urbanization is an increase in a population in cities and

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towns versus rural areas. Urbanization can be defined as the speedy and substantial growth of and migration to large cities. Urbanization is the process by which large number of people becomes permanently settled in relatively small areas, leading to formation of cities. Natural increase of urbanization takes place when natural population growth in cities is larger than in the rural areas (urban rural conditions, n.d.).

The level of urbanization is an indicator of change from traditional to modern existence. It is an instituted generalization that an increase in urbanization which enhances the secondary sector and decreases the reliance on primary sector is considered as a representation of economic growth and development. Economic growth influences the urbanization and urbanization in turn affects the rate of economic growth (urban rural conditions, n.d.). From the middle of 1980s, the Indian Government gradually adopted market oriented reform policies and these policies were associated with the expansionist fiscal strategy that involved additional fiscal allocations to the rural areas and thus balanced the redistributive effects of early liberalization (Pal & Ghosh, 2007).

**Summing up**

There have been disparities in urban and rural areas; education plays an important role in the institution of proper foundation for the overall enhancement of the individuals, in rural areas, 78.6% of the males are educated and females are 58.8%, on the other hand, in urban areas, the males that are educatedaccount for 89.7% and females are 79.9%; therefore, it can be stated that more individuals are educated in urban areas as compared to rural areas. Another area that identifies disparities is health, around 80% of the hospitals are located in urban areas, even though it contains 31% of the population; the availability of medical practitioners and physicians is 11.3 per 10,000 population in urban areas, while in rural areas, it is 1.9 per 10,000 populations. In rural areas, there are 35% of the people who are below the poverty line; they cannot afford any kind of expenditure upon health check up or medicines.

In rural areas, electricity is available in aninconsistent manner, richer and wealthier states are able to provide to the villages with power, whereas other states are facing challenges in implementation of electricity. In urban areas, 92.7% of the population has access to electricity, whereas in rural areas, 55.3% of the population has access to electricity. Another point that leads to differences in the urban and rural areas are, prevalence practice of shifting agriculture in a particular region, increase in the demand for industrial products and industrial goods, construction of roads and dams in forest areas, construction of residential areas and due to occurrences of natural calamities and disasters also there is reduction of natural resources and rural areas.

Rural to urban migration is due to population pressure and lack of resources in rural areas, individuals residing in rural areas are moving towards the cities in search for better education, employment opportunities and to acquire a better living standard. In urban areas, there is availability of advanced education, good health and infrastructural facilities. Another difference is in the family system, when individuals migrate from rural areas to urban, this result in the disintegration of the family system; joint family system gets replaced by the nuclear family system. In the present existence, proper amenities and facilities with regards to education, employment, health, medical, technology, infrastructure and so forth have been developed in rural areas also so that people can improve their living standards and do not continue to reside in the conditions of poverty and backwardness.

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