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URBANIZATION IN UTTAR PRADESH: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

Ms. Faza Anjum[1], Dr. Balwant Singh[2]
[1]Research Scholar, Department of Applied Economics,
[2]Professor, Department of Applied Economics,
Sri, jai Narain Misra P.G. College, Lucknow.

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ABSTRACT

According to the 2011 census, the most populous state in India, Uttar Pradesh, is among those with moderate urban growth but a sharp increase in the number of census towns. Compared to 2001, the increase was quadrupled. Compared to its more urbanized, commercialized, and industrialized western counterpart, the eastern portion of the state has a greater number of smaller census towns. Despite being run as rural communities, these towns make up 8% of the state's total urban area. Priority should be given by the Ministry of Urban Development to the states to transform these census towns into statutory towns with urban local bodies. The state government appears committed to growing its urban network so that it can serve a sizable portion of the populace with essential services. Only a few hundred census towns have been turned into statutory towns in the past ten years, while about eighty new municipalities have been established. Census towns that are close to statutory towns ought to combine with the current statutory towns. Largely populated census towns in the west should be prioritized for conversion to statutory towns with municipalities.

KEYWORDS: *Urban Growth, Enhanced Revenue, Hidden Urbanisation, Visible Urbanisation and Dimension*

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF UTTAR PRADESH

With 16.4% of the nation's population living in it, Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state. It is also the fourth largest state, with 2,43,290 sq km, or 6.88 percent of the nation's total land area. The state's urbanization process is still in its infancy. Compared to most states in the nation, the rate of urbanization has been slower. Over the past 30 years, the number of urban centers with a population of one lakh or more has slowly increased. On the other hand, the population of urban centers with fewer than 5,000 people has increased more dramatically, and these centers have expanded more widely in the western region of the state.

However, the concentration of the urban population in larger urban centers indicates a heavy-up bias. Additionally, the enormous growth in Census Towns (CTs), which went from 43 in 1991 to 66 in 2001 and then to 267 in 2011 (Census: 2011), has introduced additional but acknowledged management complexities that have not yet been acknowledged by urban policy makers and planners. Table 1 compiles the state's demographic information.

TABLE 1: UTTAR PRADESH: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE, 1901-2011

Year	Population (crore)	Decadal Growth (%)	Urban Population (crore)	Decadal Growth (%)	Level of Urbanization (%)
1901	4.86	_	0.54	_	11.09
1911	4.82	(-)0.97	0.49	(-)8.98	10.19
1921	4.67	(-)3.08	0.49	0.61	10.58
1931	4.98	6.66	0.56	12.81	11.19
1941	5.65	13.57	0.70	26.00	12.41
1951	6.03	6.61	0.86	22.93	14.31
1961	7.38	22.37	0.95	9.90	12.85
1971	8.83	19.78	1.24	30.68	14.02
1981	11.09	25.49	1.99	60.54	17.94
1991	13.21	19.12	2.60	36.63	19.67
2000*	16.62	25.85	3.45	26.82	20.78
2011	19.98	20.23	4.45	28.75	22.28

Source*: Compiled from different Census Reports; Population of Uttar Pradesh retrieved from Statistics Times.com on August 29, 2019.*
**A new state of Uttarakhand (comprising hilly region) was created out of Uttar Pradesh in 2000.*

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According to the 2011 census, Uttar Pradesh has 915 towns, of which 648 are statutory towns (which account for roughly 92% of the state's total urban population) and 267 are community trusts (which house 8% of the state's total urban population). Refer to Table 2. The 630 municipal towns, five industrial townships (which together account for a pitiful 0.21 percent of all urban population or 0.23 percent of all population contained within statutory towns), and thirteen towns overseen by the Cantonment Board make up the statutory towns. Since then, a large number of new municipalities of various kinds have been established, bringing the total number of municipal towns to 707 (as of November 2020). The state government is considering several proposals for the creation of new municipalities. Administratively, eight percent of the urban population living in these state census towns is still subject to rural laws and is not covered by municipal laws.

TABLE 2: TOWNS IN UTTAR PRADESH

Year	Statutory Towns		Census Towns		Total	
	Number	Variation (%)	Number	Variation (%)	Number	Variation (%)
1991	710	_	43	_	743	_
2001	638	(-)10.14	66	53.49	704	(-)5.25
2011	648	1.57	267	304.55	915	29.97

**Including Uttarakhand, created in 2000. Source: Census of India, Town Directory of Uttar Pradesh; Population Statistics 1991, 2001 and 2011.*

EMERGENCE OF CENSUS TOWNS

In India, the term "urbanization" has limited definitions. It is the only nation to combine criteria for population, density, and economic type. Apart from the phenomenon of "hidden" urbanization in India (Mukhopadhyay et al., 2016), the subsequent census reports following the country's independence have brought attention to a novel aspect of its urban transformation: the emergence of settlements designated as Census Towns (CT). The Registrar General of India Census Operations defined an urban area based on three criteria: population of at least 5,000, density of at least 400 people per square kilometer, and workforce of at least 75% male main workers in the non-farm sector (earning their livelihood from non-agricultural activities). Census Towns meet these requirements, making them a part of India's "visible" urbanization (Mukhopadhyay: 2016). Due to changes in the demographics and labor characteristics of the state, a significant number of settlements were reclassified as urban due to the notable increase in the number of CTs between 2001 and 2011. Counties Towns are places with urban characteristics but no urban local body that are not classified as towns by the census operation. According to Kumar (2019), the rise of CTs can be attributed to rural residents' transition from agriculture to non-agricultural industries like manufacturing, trade, and construction. Thus, despite modest urban growth, only Uttar Pradesh has seen the creation of numerous new census towns. It can, however, be partially explained by its sheer size, as it is one of the states with the most districts and people.

The administrative dimension separates villages, which are run by village councils (gram panchayats), from Statutory Towns, which are run by various Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), Cantonment Boards (CBs), and Industrial Townships (ITs). The country's two types of local governments operate according to distinct constitutional amendments, the 73rd (rural) and 74th Acts of 1992. Consequently, among settlements, Census Towns (CT) are a particular subgroup classified as urban by the Indian Census but falling under the purview of rural governance. The current division of these settlements into rural and urban areas is out of step with their actual spatial and economic makeup. There are a number of options that could involve some level of intervention, from developing strategies to make District Planning Committees (DPCs) more effective to more radical approaches like doing away with the decentralized binary status of rural and urban established by the 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendments (Roy & Pradhan: 2019).

The attributes of Uttar Pradesh's census towns

(i)*Location of CT'S* : -There are currently 75 districts in Uttar Pradesh, which serve as administrative divisions. Only 54 of the state's districts have Census Towns, according to the analysis (Table 3). With 34, the eastern district of Varanasi has the highest number in the state, followed by the western district of Ghaziabad and the eastern district of Prayagraj, formerly known as Allahabad. The remaining twenty-one districts (the least urbanized ones) do not have CTs.

(ii)*Classification by economic region:*- The state is commonly separated into four economic regions: Bundelkhand (sparsely urbanized and less developed), Central (urbanized, having large urban centers, industrialized and developed), and Western (most urbanized, industrialized, and developed). After more investigation, it is discovered that the Eastern Zone (about 49%) and the Western Zone (about 41%) have the greatest percentage of census towns, respectively. With a pitiful 2%, Bundelkhand has the least. Varanasi district is at the top in the Eastern zone, while Ghaziabad district is at the top in the Western zone.

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TABLE 3: DISTRICTS WITH CENSUS TOWNS (2011)

No. of CT's & Districts	Name of the Districts
34 (1)	Varanasi
15(2)	Ghaziabad, Prayagraj
13(1)	Agra
12(1)	Aligarh
10(1)	Bareilly
08(4)	Azamgarh, Bijnor, Sonbhadra, Mathura
07(3)	Gautam Buddha Nagar, Mau, Muzaffarnagar
06(2)	Chandauli, Gorakhpur
05(5)	Jaunpur, Mirzapur, Moradabad, Saharanpur, Sultanpur
04(6)	Bulandshahr, Gonda, Kanpur Nagar, Kheri, Meerut, Sant Ravidas Nagar
03(7)	Ayodhya, Barabanki, Ferozabad, Hathras, Jhansi, Kanpur Dehat, Unnao
02(13	Ambedkar Nagar, Auraiya, Ballia, Balrampur, Farrukhabad, Kaushambi, Lalitpur, Lucknow, Pratapgarh, Pilibhit, Rampur, Sant Kabir Nagar, Siddharthnagar
01(8)	Amroha, Bahraich, Chitrakoot, Etah, Kasganj, Kushinagar, Maharajganj, Sitapur
0-no census	21 Districts

Source*: Analysis done on the basis of Town Directory, UP, 2011. Figure in ( ) denotes number of districts*

Kanpur Nagar leads the Central region with four Census Towns, while Jhansi district tops the Bundelkhand region with three (Table 4).

The content-wise analysis, however, is very instructive. Of the total population of these towns in 2011, the western region with the second-highest number of CTs shared more than half (more than 58 percent). This demonstrates the high population density and strong industrial and commercial foundation of the census towns located in the western zone. Its examples are NOIDA and Greater NOIDA. Due to their small size and sparse population, the CTs in the eastern region collectively comprise less than one-third of the total population.

TABLE 4: DISTRIBUTION OF CTs BY ECONOMIC REGIONS (2011)

Economic Region	Number	Population	Percentage Districts		Districts having highest number of CT's in the region
			Numbers	Population	
Eastern	130	1153,463	48.67	32.23	Varanasi(34)
Central	21	300,841	7.89	08.41	Kanpur Nagar(4)
Western	110	2079,513	41.20	58.12	Ghaziabad(14)
Bundelkhand	06	44,318	02.24	01.24	Jhansi(3)
STATE	267	3578,155	100.00	100.00	

Source: Calculated on the basis of Town Directory, UP, 2011. *Details are given in Endnotes of this paper

Because of the state's small agricultural holdings and people's ability to make a living solely from agriculture due to their lack of urbanization and weak commercialized base, the village hamlets there are changing the nature of their livelihood.

(iii) *Classification by Population-size* :- It's an interesting analysis, content-wise. The majority of census towns—roughly 63%—are tiny, with fewer than 15,000 people living there. Remarkably, a number of towns (21 in total) have fewer residents than what the Registrar General of Census Operations considers appropriate for their classification as census towns. It's possible that these compact, little settlements are located apart from the main village. These actually belong in the category of "ignored" CTs. Just 22 towns with 20,000 or more residents make up two-fifths (40%) of all the Census Towns in the state (Table 5).

(iv*) Distribution by Region and Population size :-* Table 6's data shows that the majority of small Census Towns, or roughly 77% of them, with populations of at least 5,000, as required by the Census Operations, are located in the state's eastern region. About 18%, or slightly less than one-fifth, are found in the western region. Remarkably, there are only 757 people living in one settlement in the Ghaziabad district, less than a thousand overall. These tiny communities make up roughly 8% of all CTs. It appears that these settlements are isolated from the main village and rely on sources of income other than agriculture.

Approximately 55% of CTs are classified as being in the 5000–10,000 range. Of these, the majority (53%) are located in the eastern region.

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TABLE 5: DISTRIBUTION OF CTs BY POPULATION SIZE (2011)

Population	Number	Population	Per cent to total numbers	Per cent to total Population
Less than ,5000	22	89,113	08.24	02.50
5000-10000	147	1041,622	55.06	29.11
10000-15000	58	697,207	21.72	19.49
15000-20000	18	316,143	06.74	08.84
more than 20000	22	1433,471	08.24	40.06
STATE	267	3578,155	100.00	100.00

Source: Calculated on the basis of Town Directory, UP, 2011

This makes up over one-fourth (roughly 29%) of the state's total number of Census Towns. Next, with roughly two-fifths of the towns in the category, is the Western Zone.

TABLE 6: DISTRIBUTION OF CTs BY REGION AND POPULATION SIZE

Region	Population Size					Total
	Less than 5000	5000-10000	10000-15000	15000-20000	More than 20000	
Eastern	17	78	21	07	07	130
Central	_	06	11	-	04	21
Western	04	59	25	11	11	110
Bundelkhand	01	04	01	-	-	6
STATE	22	147	58	18	22	267

Source: Calculated from data compiled in Town Directory, UP, 2011

The situation is very different when it comes to higher population brackets. The contributions from the eastern and western regions are nearly equal, with the western zone having a slight advantage. This supports the earlier claim that the eastern part of the state, which is less developed, less urbanized, and less industrialized, has more census towns overall but fewer people living in them. In contrast, the western part of the state, which is more developed, more industrialized, and more urbanized, has fewer census towns overall but more people living in them. Census Towns in the eastern zone are small, while those in the western zone are larger. Because the National Capital Region includes a sizable portion of the western zone, it is more developed and commercialized.

(v) *Existence of Civic Service Since Census Operations* : Census operations distinguish these settlements from rural villages primarily based on the methods by which they earn a living and the density of their population. Since the availability of services there is not a criterion at all, it is assumed that the level of basic amenities would remain very low in terms of service provision. Apart from growing population densities, CTs also seem to be emerging centralities in their respective territories, even in the absence of significant economic transformations. Public investment is required to ensure that higher levels of service provisions, like water and sanitation, are provided in these CTs because they are areas where an increasing number of people live and work. The growth of local markets in these towns has led to demands for better services, like street lighting and solid waste management, which are largely nonexistent now (WB: 2016). It is demonstrated that, though to varying degrees, villages are becoming more urbanized throughout India. The majority of people in Uttar Pradesh (roughly 78%) continue to reside in rural areas. The state exhibits a quantum jump in the number of CTs from 26 in 1981 to 43 in 1991 to 66 in 2001 and even higher to 267 in 2011, despite moderate urbanization. This calls for a thorough investigation and a suitable strategy to address this covert, unacknowledged, and disregarded urbanization in the nation's most populous state.

APPROACH

The discourse surrounding CTs in the future emphasizes the need for greater focus on the processes that contribute to the growth of this population of urban residents under rural administration. Numerous matters hold significance in this context. These areas are changing in terms of society and economy. The provision of infrastructure is one of these key drivers (Asher: 2016). Investment in housing and construction is another thriving activity in these areas. This can be bolstered by supporting rural housing as well as minimizing the disparity in basic services offered to areas that are counted and governed as urban (STs and CTs) and as well as governed as urban.

Undoubtedly, one significant facet of India's urbanization process is the emergence of towns as a result of rural areas undergoing transformation. An inherent component of this transformation process is the increase in population and diversification of activities in rural areas. Nonetheless, there is a lot of evidence to imply that demand side factors are not the only ones driving a significant portion of the activities in the rural non-farm sector. A residual absorption of labor in low-productivity non-farm activities may be caused by a number of factors, including agricultural stagnation, small land holdings, particularly in the eastern part of the state, and the absence of

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opportunities to augment productive employment opportunities in the agriculture sector. The "employment problem" in rural areas appears to have gotten worse due to a lack of industrialization in these areas. On the whole, these census towns do not seem to have emerged in response to agricultural prosperity (Mitra & Kumar: 2015).

India's urban development is heavily influenced by the way these new urban centers—known as census towns—are emerging. Small towns can play a key role in strengthening market-based agricultural activity and the connections between rural and urban areas. They also encourage employment that is not farm-related. The transformation of Census Towns into legally recognized Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) is necessary for planned urban development. The extent of urban areas within a state is given weight in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the Ministry of Finance's Fourteenth Finance Commission. The Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) guidelines stipulate that the number of STs in a state will be given 50% of the total weightage when allocating funds among the states. States are entitled to central assistance upon the conversion of Census Towns into statutory ULBs. The Ministry of Urban Development requested in May 2016 that the states take the necessary steps to turn Census Towns into Statutory Towns.

The letter states that "….timely declaration of a habitat having urban characteristics as a statutory urban local body is the first step towards coordinated infrastructure development, enhancement of revenues and efficient delivery of citizen's services leading to the overall growth of economic activities. The opportunity of planned urban development might get lost if unplanned construction and ad hoc provisioning of infrastructure is allowed to take place over a long time" (in Census Towns). The letter further reiterates that " this (conversion from Census Towns to statutory ones) will not only trigger the process of preparing land use master plans leading towards planned growth but also will support provisioning urban infrastructure by leveraging resources available through various schemes/programmes and devolutionary grant". (MoUD: 2016)

Since granting the former ULB status requires funding for infrastructure development, states typically struggle to designate Census Towns as Statutory Towns. This has led to the haphazard growth of emerging urban centres (Census Towns), and these lack the facilities and services which are present in Statutory Towns governed by ULBs (Kumar: 2019). Opinions among urban scholars and researchers are not uniform. Some believe that the best course of action is to convert all CTs to STs. Each case should be handled separately. States differ in their minimum population content requirements. Therefore, it is unlikely that all CTs will become STs unless states exercise their prerogative power or combine settlements to reach that population threshold. For the planned governance of some of the CTs, especially the larger ones, the conversion of CTs into STs may be helpful. It is quite possible, though, that this specific mechanism will work with all CTs. For instance, it might be more beneficial to merge a CT into the city if it is located on the outskirts of a big city. Similarly, if multiple CTs lie close to each other, they can be combined together to make a larger ST (Pradhan: 2017).

CONCLUSION

The state government appears committed to providing a wide range of people with access to urban basic civic services, either by increasing the geographic scope of already-existing urban local bodies or by turning sizable villages into Statutory Towns with urban local bodies. 14 Census Towns (as of date) have been converted into Statutory Towns with urban local bodies to address growing urbanization and ensure planned development in the state; in contrast, 56 new Nagar Panchayats were established in December 2019, 41 municipalities had their boundaries extended, and two Nagar Panchayats were elevated to Nagar Palika Parishads (Municipal Councils). Further the government has approved to create 28 new Nagar Panchayats. Besides, the area of some 12 Nagar Panchayats and nine Nagar Palika Parishads (Muncipal Councils) and two Municipal Corporations either has also been expanded or under the process (ToI: 2020). It's a positive step. The gravity of having roughly 10% of the state's urban population living under rural laws and without access to basic urban services should be taken into consideration by the state government. The most industrialized and urbanized region of the state is in the west, where there are populous Census Towns. Priority in the conversion process should be given to the Census Towns in this section. On the other hand, smaller CTs in the eastern region should, if feasible, be combined with already-existing STs in the area or merged to form a statutory town with a municipality. When converting them, the government ought to make decisions on an individual basis.

Endnotes

1. Regional Classification of Uttar Pradesh (showing districts having census towns in 2011)
2. Eastern Region Districts: Chandauli, Sonbhadra, Mau, Gorakhpur, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Azamgarh, Mirzapur, Jaunpur, Gonda, Ayodhya, Sant Kabir Nagar, Pratapgarh, Ballia, Ambedkar Nagar, Balrampur, Siddharth Nagar, Bahraich, Maharajganj, Kushinagar, Sant Ravidas Nagar, Sultanpur, Kaushambi
3. Central: Lucknow, Kanpur Nagar, Kheri, Unnao, Barabanki, Sitapur, Kanpur Dehat, Auraiya
4. Western: Ghaziabad, Agra, Aligarh, Bareilly, Bijnor, Mathura, Muzaffar Nagar, Saharanpur, Gautam Budh Nagar, Moradabad, Meerut, Bulandshahr, Ferozabad, Hathras, Rampur, Farrukhabad, Pilibhit, Kasganj, Amroha, Etah
5. Bundelkhand: Jhansi, Lalitpur

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