

## Urbanisation and Development in Maharashtra, 1961-91 Some Observations

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### Abstract

*The paper attempts to study urbanisation in Maharashtra in relation to relevant dimensions of development over four decades after its reorganisation on a linguistic basis. It aims at analysing changes, if any, in spatial pattern of urbanisation and other correlates of development. It is observed that major promotional factors in urbanisation of the State continue to be tertiary and manufacturing activities. While social dimensions like literacy are related to urbanisation to a considerable extent, infrastructure is not necessarily focused on it; the latter also reflects on government policy of opening up backward regions to make them more attractive to investment. Despite this, it is sad to note that medium and small towns have not picked up momentum in development process. The authors suggest reinforcing their role to avoid further concentration of both urbanisation and development which is imminent in an era of liberalised economy.*

### Introduction

Inexorable process of urbanisation has become a dominant trend since the adoption of Agenda 21 in 1992 that is changing the parameters of development significantly by impacting social, economic and environmental sustainability (Shafeeu, 1996; Tibaijuka, 2002). It is estimated that the number of people living in urban areas all over the world would touch 5 billion mark by 2025. The phenomenon is intrinsically linked and irrevocably intertwined with the contemporary development process; it has been considered crucial for accelerating the nation's economic development (Curie,

1966). It is through complex system of interaction that the organisation of urbanisation in space responds to the dynamics of development (Misra, 1972). Urbanisation generates economic growth, but also creates inequalities of various kinds within populations and regions (Barkley et al, 1994; 1996). At the global scale, there is a positive relationship between the level of urbanisation and development (Berry, 1961). These trends are replicated at the national level (Verma, 1989). The spatial process of urbanisation is not, however, uniform all over the world and so also the cause-effect relationship between urbanisation and

development (Gugler, 1996); sometimes it is a cause, at others it is an effect. In developing countries, urbanisation is also related to process of development during the colonial period and hence over-concentration of urbanisation is the main problem there.

Traditionally, urbanisation in countries with a colonial background was oriented to administration and quality manufacturing (Kemp, 1983; Stein, 2002). Later on, however, urbanisation was less focused on industrialisation as on tertiary and informal manufacturing sectors (Islam, 1999); of late, quaternary activities have become more prominent. It is difficult to separate urbanisation from the issue of growing population in these countries and the growing pressure of population on local resources is responsible for initiating out-migration and consequent urbanisation through growth of cities. Urbanisation is thus not so much due to appearance of newly emerged towns from the rural base as it is due to growth and sprawl of existing cities. Growth rates of population are high in many urban areas, and in many countries there is a strong trend towards net migration into towns, as a result of both the 'pull' to existing and anticipated economic opportunity in towns and the 'push' from harsh environment and insufficient employment opportunities in rural areas.

When allowed to progress under natural forces this way, it does not show any significant change in its spatial pattern. It is only after some deliberate efforts to develop infrastructure and industries in backward areas, in recent years, that some changes have taken place in both development and urbanisation scenario.

**Table 1 Comparison of the Level of Urbanisation in Maharashtra with that in India - 1961-2001**

Year	Urban Population in Maharashtra (Millions)	Urban Population in Maharashtra (%)	Urban Population (India) (%)
1961	11.163	28.2	17.8
1971	15.711	31.2	19.7
1981	21.994	35.0	23.2
1991	30.542	38.7	25.5
2001	41.020	42.4	27.8

*Source : Census of India*

**Table 2 Correlation among Levels of Urbanisation in Different Census Years**

1961	1971	1981	1991
1961	1		
1971	0.988	1	
1981	0.973	0.990	1
1991	0.934	0.957	0.976

### The Problem

The State of Maharashtra has shown a high level of urbanisation compared to India as a whole in all the census years from 1961 to 1991 and its urban population has shown a steady increase over years in both absolute and relative terms (Table 1). In 1961, i.e. immediately after reorganisation of the State in its present form, the percentage of its population living in urban areas was 28.2% as compared to 17.8% for the country as a whole in the same year. In 1991, it rose to over 38% vis-à-vis the national figure of just over 25%. In 2001, it has reached a level of 42.4% against the national percentage of 27.8. In absolute terms, urban population has gone up from 11.16 m. in 1961 to 30.54 m.

in 1991; in 2001, it has shot up to 41.02 million. The growth in urban population of the State during the period 1961-91 thus works out to be 19.38 m. The increase is more rapid since 1981; the trend continues even in 2001. The growth in the population of the Class I cities for the same period had been 15.69 million. In other words, 90.98% of growth in urban population has been absorbed in Class I cities. One does not find any significant change in the spatial pattern of the level of urbanisation in the State over years (Sita and Phadke, 1984; Phadke and Mukherji, 2004). This has been confirmed by deriving a correlation matrix (Table 2). The correlation is not perfect and the value of the co-efficient is going down with the passage of time suggesting some slow changes over years.

In the light of the above, it was thought desirable to understand the forces that have shaped urbanisation during the period of existence of the state of Maharashtra. The comparable data for the year 2001 is not yet available and hence the analysis is restricted to the period 1961-91.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The study attempts to understand urbanisation in relation to relevant socio-economic dimensions of development and the changes over time, if any. Although the list of indicators selected could have been long, there were constraints on the availability of data, besides time and resources. Hence, it was decided to select some key indicators. The level of urbanisation has been supplemented with contribution to urban population of towns belonging to different size categories such large (Class I), medium (Classes II & III) and small (Classes IV, V & VI).

The analysis with respect to size class of towns was expected to throw light on the nature of urbanisation, particularly in relation to the concentration or otherwise in any particular category. It would also indicate whether a more desirable distribution of urban population is replacing the conditions of primacy. Selection of indicators 1-4 is thus justified (Table 3).

Urbanisation is based on the changes in occupational structure from agriculture to non-agricultural activities; factory manufacturing, trade & commerce and other services are important occupations that promote the process. Construction is an important concomitant activity. Indicators 5-10 have, therefore, been considered for analysis. Modernisation of agriculture has often led to development and irrigation water is the key input in the process. Proportion of net sown area under irrigation thus significantly contributes to development by permitting commercial agriculture in the form of raising non-food crops; this calls for processing and thereby structural changes in economy leading to both urbanisation and development. The indicators 11-12 related to agricultural sector have, therefore, been included.

Socio-economic infrastructure is an essential requisite for structural changes which lead to both development and urbanisation. Availability of transport, faster communication in the form of telephone and dissemination of information through mass-media like dailies, higher level education, including technical and professional, and marketing infrastructure are, therefore, essential. Indicators 13-17 related to these thus deserve their inclusion.

Table 3 Indicators Selected for Study

Sr. No.	Indicator
1	Level of Urbanisation
2	Contribution of Large Towns to Urban Population
3	Contribution of Medium Towns to Urban Population
4	Contribution of Small Towns to Urban Population
5	Percentage of workers in Manufacturing Activities.
6	Percentage of workers in Construction
7	Percentage of workers in Tertiary Activities
8	Percentage of workers in Trade & Commerce
9	Percentage of workers in Transport, Storage and Communication
10	Percentage of workers in Other Services
11	Percentage of NSA under Irrigation
12	Percentage of Irrigated Area under Non- Food crops
13	Percentage of villages with Bus-stop/ Railway station
14	Percentage of villages with Telephone.
15	Percentage of villages with Higher educational Institutions
16	No. of dailies published per lakh population
17	Percentage of settlements with regulated markets.
18	Density of Population.
19	Total Literacy.
20	Female Literacy
21	Females Among the Literate

The socio-economic changes lead to demographic changes like rise in population density, literacy and growth of population at a rapid rate. Growth rate, was, however, not considered for the purpose of analysis as it stands over a duration of time while all other indicators are related to only one point time. Indicators (18-21) related to these have, therefore, been considered essential.

### Unit of Analysis

For a meso level study region such as Maharashtra, district is too large a unit of analysis as it conceals micro-level variations and hence it was decided to use taluka as the unit of analysis. Taluka level urban population was analysed with respect to size class of towns along with other key indicators related to manufacturing, tertiary activities, commercial agriculture, socio-economic infra-structure and demographic structure.

## Urbanisation and Development

The process of urbanisation in Maharashtra has shown a strong linkage to other aspects of development in individual census years (Brahme, 1978). It was, therefore, considered desirable to study the relationship over years to understand the temporal changes, if any. This is expected to throw light on the process of development vis-à-vis urbanisation. The present paper tries to explore into such changes over the period 1961-91.

### Nature of Analysis

The relationship between urbanisation and other indicators of development has been first examined, separately for 4 years, with the help of linkage analysis (Yeates, 1974). All the years, however, do not have the required data and hence the number of indicators linked this way varies from year to year\*; workers in individual tertiary activities were not separately considered. It was expected that typical structures would reflect on relation between urbanisation and other development variables as also the changes therein. However, the typical structures for different years do not reveal any significant differences and the following are the salient common features:

1. The strongest inter-correlation is seen among the literacy indicators viz., overall literacy, female literacy and females among the literate. This is easily explainable. Females among the literate, however, stand low compared to the other two, as this proportion also depends on females among the total population, i.e. sex ratio (Phadke and Mukherji, 2002).
2. The infrastructure facilities like institutions of higher learning, telephone, have a high correlation with density of population; the relation with availability of bus stop and/or railway station is rather poor and becomes more so over years. Higher population ensures meeting of the threshold requirement by placing adequate demand for these facilities, as they were not policy oriented at least in the initial years. Moreover, high density is suggestive of the opportunities and thereby high income and thus it also means higher purchasing power of the people. Association of regulated markets with this group, especially during the recent years, is due to the fact that they facilitate the sale of local surplus and make available various goods and services demanded by the people. This encourages the use of and 1991 - 20.
3. Level of urbanisation is associated with workers in tertiary activities and factory manufacturing; construction shows a poor association in the initial stages but picks up with the passage of time. Initially urbanisation has evolved out of trade & commerce and manufacturing has taken up the reign at a later stage. Of late, construction is booming to provide necessary infrastructure such as housing and transport facilities apart from the public amenities. Liberali-

\* The number of indicators linked for various years are: 1961 - 17, 1971 - 20, 1981 - 14

**Table 4 Strength of relation between Urbanisation and other Indicators**

Sr. No.	1961	Corr. Coeff.	1971	Corr. Coeff.
1	Trade & Commerce Workers	0.920	Trade & Commerce Workers	0.927
2	Tertiary Workers	0.898	Tertiary Workers	0.911
3	Other Service Workers	0.852	Other Service Workers	0.845
4	Manufacturing Workers	0.768	Tr., S. and Communication Workers	0.832
5	Tr., S. and Communication Workers	0.765	Manufacturing Workers	0.729
6	Share of L. Towns in U.P.	0.685	Share of L. Towns in U.P.	0.716
7	Female Literacy	0.684	Total Literacy	0.617
8	Total Literacy	0.665	Female Literacy	0.605
9	Density of Population	0.531	Dailies / Lakh Population	0.568
10	Settlements with H. Ed. Fac.	0.449	Density of Population	0.532
11	Females among the Literate	0.435	Construction Workers	0.489
12	Settlements with Tel. Fac.	0.400	Settlements with H. Ed. Fac.	0.442
13	Share of M. Towns in U.P.	0.394	Settlements with Telephone Fac.	0.435
14	Construction Workers	0.187	Share of M. Towns in U.P.	0.308
15	N S A under Irrigation	0.036	Females among the Literate	0.295
16	G I Area under N-F Crops	-0.020	Settlements with BS and/or Rly. Stn.	0.216
17	Share of S. Towns in U.P.	-0.107	Regulated Markets/1000 sq. km.	0.158
18			N S A under Irrigation	0.131
19			G I A under N-F Crops	0.046
20			Share of S. Towns in U.P.	-0.159

  

Sr. No.	1981	Corr. Coeff.	1991	Corr. Coeff.
1	Share of L. Towns in U.P.	0.758	Trade & Commerce Workers	0.897
2	Dailies / Lakh Population	0.647	Tertiary Workers	0.890
3	Total Literacy	0.599	Other Service Workers	0.856
4	Female Literacy	0.595	Tr., S. and Communication Workers	0.820
5	Density of Population	0.524	Share of L. Towns in U.P.	0.787
6	Regulated Markets/1000 sq. km.	0.425	Construction Workers	0.780
7	Settlements with H. Ed. Fac.	0.411	Manufacturing Workers	0.731
8	Settlements with Tel. Fac.	0.402	Dailies / Lakh Population	0.557
9	Females among the Literate	0.294	Density of Population	0.531
10	Share of M. Towns in U.P.	0.207	Female Literacy	0.498
11	Settlements with BS and/or Rly. Stn.	0.148	Total Literacy	0.486
12	N S A under Irrigation	0.132	Regulated Markets/1000 sq. km.	0.389
13	G I A under N-F Crops	-0.050	Settlements with H. Ed. Fac.	0.362
14	Share of S. Towns in U.P.	-0.182	Females among the Literate	0.294
15			Settlements with Telephone Fac.	0.283
16			Share of M. Towns in U.P.	0.052
17			Settlements with BS and/or Rly. Stn.	0.020
18			Net Sown Area under Irrigation	0.011
19			G I A under N-F Crops	-0.044
20			Share of S. Towns in U.P.	-0.197

sation and associated privatization have really promoted building activity to a great extent as the general feeling is that infrastructure is the key to attracting foreign or even domestic capital. Moreover, government has to shell out only a little capital in BOT and BOOT raj. Contribution of large cities to urbanisation is strong and is becoming stronger. Medium towns play a second fiddle, although in a less significant way; their relation to level of urbanisation is becoming weaker with passage of time. Small towns either do not align with this group or are related to it very poorly. Thus one finds a dominance of large cities in the process of the urbanisation. Publication of dailies is a characteristic of large towns where one finds necessary infrastructure as well as market.

4. Small towns is a characteristic of areas of commercial farming which are also irrigated and this is suggested by a typical structure between small towns and indicators such as net irrigated area as a proportion of net sown area and also gross irrigated area under non-food crops. The correlations of this type are weak; moreover, the relationship is not stable over time.

The foregoing analysis reveals that indicators are grouped into four categories focusing on literacy, population density and infrastructure, urban population along with related non-agricultural activities, and, commercial farming which is practised under irrigated conditions. The purpose of the exercise was, however, to bring out the relationship between urbanisation and other in-

dicators of development. This has not been satisfactorily fulfilled by linkage analysis as it takes into consideration only the highest relationship between any two variables, ignoring other equally high correlation values.

The correlation between urbanisation and other variables grouped into different typical structures was, therefore, examined (Table 4); the workers in tertiary activities were broken into three individual categories to further refine the analysis and understand the situation among the individual categories. All the indicators related to occupational structure and literacy have a high degree of association with urbanisation. Generally, workers engaged in tertiary activities and factory manufacturing stand very high; manufacturing is, however, losing its importance in recent years. Among the literacy variables, total and female literacy show a strong link but this is not the case with females among the literate for the reasons already given. Dailies per lakh population also show a strong relation to urbanisation because of both the supply and demand factors. Contribution of large towns goes strongly with the level of urbanisation and it is becoming stronger with time.

It is observed that the indicators related to infrastructure go with urbanisation in a remarkably uniform fashion for all the years. While the order in terms of strength of relationship to urbanisation is settlements with higher education institutions, telephone connection and access to transport, the last one shows a very weak association; even the strength of relation of the other indicators is falling over years. This is probably because earlier they were demand based and now they are being provided as a part of the

policy of extending infrastructure to less developed areas.

The foregoing analysis confirms that urbanisation is oriented to tertiary activities, particularly trade & commerce and services, followed by manufacturing. Although social aspects of development such as literacy go along with the level of urbanisation, they are not restricted to highly urbanised areas; their ubiquity is due to policy factors. Among the infrastructure facilities, education is first to come and then follow communication and transport. Infrastructure initially goes very strongly with the level of urbanisation, but later on, the relationship fades away quickly due to its diffusion as a part of the policy. Construction is not so important in the initial stages but picks up fast at a later stage. This is primarily because by that time all the available avenues of accommodation in large urban settlements are exhausted or it is time for urban renewal and expanding the existing infrastructure; the change over from joint family to nuclear family as a part of modernization also plays its role in initiating construction activity. Policy changes also encourage construction.

Share of medium towns to urban population shows poor relation to the process and it is becoming poorer over time. Small towns and agriculture related variables are not associated with high urbanisation level.

### **Concluding Remarks**

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that urbanisation in the State is still fueled by tertiary activities, particularly trade & commerce, and manufacturing. It is necessary that urbanisation should focus on some activities other than those on which it appears

to depend; diversification is thus the key. Moreover, while large towns contributing a major share is understandable, it is a matter of concern that their relationship to level of urbanisation is becoming stronger day by day suggesting perpetuation of their role with the passage of time. This tendency of concentration is not a healthy sign and it is necessary to remedy the situation by curbing the growth of large cities. Reinforcing medium and small towns by providing infrastructure to make them suitable alternatives as sites of intervening opportunities is an urgent need. But it seems difficult under the regime of New Economic Policy unfolded since 1991. Under competitive conditions large cities alone attract new activities because of several advantages and whatever little that has been done during controlled socialistic pattern of planned development is likely to be wiped out (Sita, 1997).

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