

Nuances of census towns in India: praxis, trends and spatial patterns of non-statutory urbanisation

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Abstract

Census towns account for nearly half of all urban centres in India. Census towns are large villages that met the census standards for an urban area, but that has not been regarded as urban by the government. Census towns are mostly the outcome of the local populace forcing alteration in hierarchies of the contemporary urban revolution. The present paper is an endeavour to study the puzzle of recent mushrooming of non-statutory towns in India as urbanisation dynamics diverging from metro-centricity to non-statutory settlements. Unprecedented spurt in the number of census towns perhaps reveals a tendency towards what may be termed as subaltern urbanisation in India. This tendency also points towards the trajectory at which the workforce is shifting away from the agriculture sector. Policy intervention is the need of the hour for sustainable urban development.

Keywords: *Urban revolution, census towns, non-statutory urbanisation, subaltern urbanisation.*

Introduction

India is becoming an exciting research area for scholars interested in urban studies as one out of the ten urban citizens of the world is from India, and urbanisation dynamics here seem to diverge from metro-centricity to small urban settlements and non-statutory settlements. The 2011 census indicates a decline in demographic growth in metro cities and mushrooming of census towns (CTs), i.e. settlements under rural administration with robust urban physiognomies. The process of urbanisation is transforming the developing countries from 'countries of villages' to 'countries of cities and towns' under the influence of the forces of economic-cultural globalisation and by the pressures for economic, social and environmental sustainability (Hall

1998). In the post-economic reforms period, accelerated transnational capital investment and trade are disrupting traditional patterns of urban growth, and as a result, newer and smaller cities have been growing at the expense of older and larger ones, upsetting urban hierarchies in many countries of the world including India (Markusen and DiGiovanna 1999). With its population growing at an unprecedented rate in the history of over five millennia, India is undergoing the process of drastic settlement transitions. It is projected that more than 14% of the world's total urban population will reside in India's urban settlements by 2050. Similarly, 50% of the total population of the country in the year 2056 will also become urban with the current exponential rate of growth (Sudhira and Gururaja 2012).

In absolute figures, no other country of the planet has ever witnessed such gigantic urbanisation except China.

Contemporary Urban Revolution

Census of India, 2011 highlighted some very essential changes in the trends of urbanisation taking place in India. It is important to note that the overall population growth rate declined to 17.6% during the 2001-2011 decade which is the lowest since its independence. The overall population growth rate during the intervening two

decades of 1981-1991 and 1991-2001 was 23.9% and 21.3% respectively. It is noteworthy that the proportion of the rural population declined from 72.19% to 68.84%. Rural population growth too registered a decline from 18.1% during 1991-2001 to 12.2% in 2001-2011. This is a clear urban turn, as evident from the demographic analysis of census data for the decade of 2001-2011 (Table 1). Decadal urban population growth however increased only marginally from 31.13% in 1991-2001 to 31.81% in 2001-2011.

Table 1: Trends of Urbanisation in India, 1971-2011

Census Year	No. of Towns	Urban Population (%)	Growth Rate of Urban Population (%)
1971	3126	19.41	38.23
1981	4029	23.34	46.34
1991	4689	25.72	39.19
2001	5161	27.78	31.13
2011	7935	31.20	31.81

Source: Census of India 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011.

Urban India grew more speedily in absolute terms (91 million) than rural India (90.6 million) during the last decade. The slowdown of the overall growth rate of the population is due to the sharp decline in the growth rate in rural areas (-5.9%), while the growth rate in urban areas (0.3%) remained largely unaltered. In India, 31.2% of the total population now lives in urban areas in comparison to the year 2001 that registered 27.8% of the total population residing in urban areas. Therefore, an increase of 3.4 percentage points has been noted during 2001-2011 compared to an increase of 2.1 percentage points during 1991-2001.

This upward trend of urbanisation, however, has not been uniform across states. Table 2 shows that Kerala has grown by over 21 percentage points while there is only a minor change in Himachal Pradesh. The spatial pattern of urbanisation is highly uneven, but economically advanced states of Punjab and Haryana and the states located in and towards the south of Tropic of Cancer show higher levels of urbanisation. The national capital territory of Delhi (97.50%) and the union territory of Chandigarh (97.25%) are mostly urban. The three bottom states are Himachal Pradesh (10%), Bihar (11.3%) and Assam (14%).

Likewise, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand also continue to

have lower levels of urbanisation compared to the national average of 31.16%.

Table 2: Ranking of State/UT by Percentage of Urban Population 2001 and 2011

State/Union Territory#/ India	Percentage of Urban Population			
	2001	Rank	2011	Rank
Jammu & Kashmir	24.81	21	27.21	23
Himachal Pradesh	9.80	35	10.04	35
Punjab	33.92	12	37.49	14
Chandigarh#	89.77	2	97.25	2
Uttarakhand	25.67	19	30.55	19
Haryana	28.92	14	34.79	16
NCT of Delhi#	93.18	1	97.50	1
Rajasthan	23.39	22	24.89	26
Uttar Pradesh	20.78	25	22.28	30
Bihar	10.46	34	11.30	34
Sikkim	11.07	33	24.97	25
Arunachal Pradesh	20.75	26	22.67	29
Nagaland	17.23	29	28.97	21
Manipur	25.11	20	30.21	20
Mizoram	49.63	5	51.51	7
Tripura	17.06	30	26.18	24
Meghalaya	19.58	28	20.08	31
Assam	12.90	32	14.08	33
West Bengal	27.97	15	31.89	18
Jharkhand	22.24	24	24.05	27
Orissa	14.99	31	16.68	32
Chhattisgarh	20.09	27	23.24	28
Madhya Pradesh	26.46	17	27.63	22
Gujarat	37.36	9	42.58	12
Daman & Diu#	36.25	10	75.16	4
Dadra & Nagar Haveli#	22.89	23	46.62	10
Maharashtra	42.43	8	45.23	11
Andhra Pradesh	27.30	16	33.49	17
Karnataka	33.99	11	38.57	13

Goa	49.76	4	62.17	6
Lakshadweep [#]	44.46	6	78.08	3
Kerala	25.96	18	47.72	9
Tamil Nadu	44.04	7	48.45	8
Puducherry [#]	66.57	3	68.31	5
A & N Islands [#]	32.63	13	35.67	15
India	27.81		31.16	

Source: Rural-Urban Distribution of Population – India, Census of India, 2011.

Note: # Union Territory

Interestingly, urban growth is not only spatially uneven, but it is also diversified from the perspective of the urban system. While big cities dominate in Maharashtra; Kerala's urbanisation is largely driven by small and medium-size statutory cities and census towns; IT-based high-tech so-called smart cities are attracting more people from rural areas mainly in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Maharashtra (Nijman 2012). Every census records the details of new towns, and they are not necessarily new in the sense of brand-new human settlements but new in the list of urban centres (Sengupta 1997). The total number of million-plus cities has risen to 53 after getting 18 new entries, but the growth rate of big cities has considerably slowed. For example, Delhi's growth rate slipped from 52.24% to 26.69% during 2001-2011. Urbanisation outside recognised urban local bodies seems to have turned to a corner because the total number of census towns has tripled to a total of 3,894 within a decade. In the case of Kerala, the urban population has nearly doubled to 47.7%, and the number of census towns increased from 99 in 2001 to 461 in 2011. This trend of the contemporary urbanisation is often described as 'urbanisation by implosion'

(Kuruville 2013). This form of urbanisation, a more bottom-up, is a challenge as well as a potential opportunity that demands rigorous research studies.

In a nutshell, the declining urban population growth rate observed during the eighties and nineties seems to have been reversed. Bhagat (2011) ascribes this reversal to rural-urban classification and rural to urban migration. Besides the rise in the number of STs, a massive increase in the number of census towns points towards unacknowledged urbanisation and urban revolution in contemporary India. Data related to urbanisation released by the Indian census of 2011, exhibits significant developments which took place during the last ten years that are likely to have imprinted on the years to come as the contemporary urban turn in the country has repercussions for change in urban order and that it will influence the geopolitical and geo-economics order (Nijman 2012).

Census Towns in Contemporary Urbanisation

The census of 2011 highlighted the phenomenal increase of 2,774 new towns that accounted for an increase of 53.7% during

the last decade. Interestingly, overwhelming 2,552 of these are census towns. These non-statutory towns now account for nearly half (49%) of all urban centres in India, up from 36% in 2001 (Table 3). The increase in the total number of towns in 2011 is six times that of the preceding censuses. The census data also exhibits that the absolute number of STs increased marginally by 243 points, whereas the number of CTs increased by nearly 11 times (2,552) during the last decade. The CTs were not much under the spotlight of academia up to the 2001 census as their share in the total urban population was as low as 7.4%, and their numbers also augmented at a snail's pace (Pardhan 2012). The 2001-2011 decade experienced an urban

population doubling to around 15% in CTs of India (Mukhopadhyay 2013). This increase in census towns have certainly brought about significant changes to the existing urban hierarchies as these are somewhere between the rural and the urban; throwing light on the truth that in these settlements, primary activities, mainly the agriculture, has been replaced by other sources of livelihood, and that the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy is expanding (Thrift 1989). Although the urban population growth rate is higher than the rural, yet 68.84% of India's population is still confined to rural areas. Therefore, the rapid growth of CTs can also be termed as *transition towns* that need the attention of the state.

Table 3: Trends in Growth of Statutory/Non-Statutory Towns (CTs) in India, 1971-2011

Census Year	Statutory Towns	Census Towns	Total Urban Centres	Census Towns to Urban Centres (%)
1971	2345	248	2593	9.56
1981	2758	1271	4029	31.54
1991	2996	1693	4689	36.10
2001	3798	1363	5161	26.40
2011	4041	3894	7935	49.07

Source: Census of India 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011

Objectives and Methodology

The paper aims at an in-depth analysis of the extent, patterns, as well as the socio-economic-spatial characteristics and problems associated with India's contemporary urban revolution with special reference to the implications of an unprecedented rise in the number of census towns. The primary objective of this paper is to find out the recent trends, spatial patterns,

and praxis in the study of census towns. The research questions include the following:

1. Is India witnessing the rapid emergence of a new category of small size and non-statutory urban centres which are the outcome of post-reforms urbanisation or are cities remaining fundamentally unaltered except for some cosmetic changes? Or is the situation somewhere transitional in character?

2. What are the emerging spatial patterns of urban growth after the rapid growth of CTs in India? Are the trends and patterns suggesting by any measure a manifestation of subaltern urbanisation taking roots in India?

The purpose here is to highlight the scale and pace of changing trends in urbanisation happening due to ongoing urban revolution concerning CTs. The census publication is the principal source of secondary data for the study, supplemented by other published scholarly sources. However, primary data has been collected through fieldwork from the three census towns, namely Mullanpur Garib Dass, Rurki Kasba and Talwara from the state of Punjab. Interviews of the local residents (selected through snowball sampling technique) of these three sites were conducted. Participant observations have been made for five months (during the year 2018). Secondary data for a period of forty years (1971-2011) has been analysed to highlight the trends and spatial patterns. Outcomes of the census of 2011, however, have been analysed in far greater detail.

Defining a Census Town in India

In India, the definition of an urban settlement incorporates both demographic and administrative criteria. Urban units in India are classified into three broad categories; statutory Towns, Census Towns, and Outgrowths. Statutory towns are notified under the law by the respective State/Union Territory governments and have local bodies like a municipal corporation, municipality, town *panchayat*, cantonment board, notified town area committee, etc., irrespective of their demographic characteristics. Census towns, on the other hand, are having far

more emerging construct. These CTs are settlements that are classified as urban by the Registrar General of India, as part of the census process, if they satisfy the three-fold criteria of urban features, viz. number of persons (a minimum population of 5,000), density (at least 400 persons per km²) and non-agricultural pursuits of male main working population (at least 75% engaged in non-farm sector). The definition of urban has not been altered in the past fifty years by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India. Only the condition of at least 75% of workers engaged in non-agricultural employment was further narrowed in 1981 to male workers only. Census towns are neither completely rural nor properly urban as these are considered as urban as far as the available amenities and infrastructure are concerned. However, they are statutorily considered as rural. Outgrowths (OGs) are a unit such as a village or part of a village contiguous to a statutory town and possessing the urban characteristics. OGs can be located adjacent to but outside the statutory limits of Statutory Towns but within the revenue limits of a village.

While the Census of India applies the demographic and economic yardstick in identifying urban areas in each census, but it is the government of the respective state that finally decides on the civil status of any settlement. Notably, the classification criterion varies among the states with minor changes. Though the whole procedure of census operations in appearance is an apolitical affair, yet opinionated overtones of various hues invariably colour it. Foucault's views are important in this context. Foucauldian viewpoint highlights

that the production of knowledge and vital information about people and their spaces are intimately connected with power (Foucault 1980). Which sections of the society are to be given priority is strongly influenced by the decision of the political elites (Gill 2007). Likewise, the powerful can easily offset the resistance by the locals through their hegemonic hold over space. In most of the cases, the state considers that the census town ought to be administered as a town, but political setup and its elitist allies keep it rural. The CTs are administratively rural settlements that handle to satisfy the three-fold criteria of size, density and structure of economic activity but are not recognised as urban by the government. Therefore, without recognition by the administrative system, the CTs are not eligible for the government schemes for funding. Many states find small towns should be administered by the *panchayats* (village councils) rather than municipalities so that they can access the largesse from the union government (Sivaramakrishnan 2002). Judgment error is undoubtedly involved in the demarcation of new towns as this procedure is followed before the commencement of actual census operation. Hence, there is always a possibility that the ex-ante and ex-post classification of settlements can differ (Mukhopadhyay 2013). Both administratively and economically, the CTs are not treated differently from villages, although demographically they are budding as fast as big cities due to their higher natural increase and migration from rural areas. Hence, the methodology adopted for identifying a settlement as a census town is neither transparent nor uniform.

Therefore, the mechanical reading of census data justifying the urbanisation trends is questionable (Kundu 2011b; Pradhan 2012).

Factors Responsible for Origin of Census Towns

Urbanisation is generally viewed as an aspiration of the rural people to find work and improve their living conditions within immediate spatial proximity. A small town located in close proximity to the residence of a rural migrant is often the first halt to fulfill his/her urge to be an urbanite. Interpreting the recent census data on urbanisation in India and breaking down the rate of growth in metropolitan as well as for smaller order towns Kundu (2011a), while accepting this urge for an urban relocation by the rural population, however, finds that the large cities, mainly the metropolises, have become less welcoming to the prospective migrants. Due to low-priced land and negligible rural property taxes, the second home buyers prefer to invest in the CTs located near big cities. Similarly, the players of the real estate business also prefer to invest for long term capital gain. The CT of Mullanpur Garib Dass can be cited as one of the best examples of 'speculative urbanisation' in India. The desire to avoid taxation has also been the single most important motive in resisting municipalities; because the creation of municipalities is followed by measures of planning and building laws (Sivaramakrishnan 2002). The conversion of a rural administration system in urban management of any settlement is also an unwelcoming and non-profitable step for the influential and highly resourceful builders' lobby and real estate agents.

Therefore, these non-statutory towns are attractive destinations for ordinary people due to the affordability to buy residential land (Jenkins, Anuja and Gadgil 2012). It has been observed during fieldwork in all the three sites (Mullanpur Garib Dass, Rurki Kasba and Talwara) that CTs hit the property jackpot even after the sharp decline in real estate prices in Punjab since the year 2012. Large villages and CTs situated near the big cities are also fulfilling the rising demand by the affluent buyers for luxury country estates. These farmhouses are used as weekend resorts and lavish amusement landscapes for the Novo rich; these farmhouses also utilise as venues for tax-free business enterprises (Soni 2009). Field data confirms that NRIs of Punjab also prefer to live in big bungalows and farmhouses and they often buy a large piece of land in a census town situated in proximity to their native village.

Increasing environmental problems and congestion in large cities also promotes the growth of CTs. Confederation of Indian Industry and Nielson (2012) in their white paper, highlighted that the smaller Indian towns are leading the demand surge and shopping culture is swiftly and dramatically changing like metros. Similarly, small towns contribute to more than 38% of the Indian FMCG (Fast-moving Consumer Goods) market due to a demographic dividend of a younger generation and heightened aspirations resulting from increasing urbanisation. "Most of the footfall in our showroom is from large villages or small-medium towns of both Punjab and Haryana," said Shoaib, a tailoring master working on the front desk of the Raymond shop in Elante- the largest mall of Chandigarh.

Living in a census town, one can enjoy the proximity to a large city and can easily access its economy, while at the same time escaping its rules and regulations.

Trends, Patterns, and Spatial Patterns

Indian economy is increasingly being shaped in urban areas in sharp contrast to the pre-liberalization phase when the share of the countryside was significant. The importance of urban centres has been rising in the economic development as the contribution of the urban sector to India's GDP has increased from 29% in 1950-51 to 47% in 1980-81, to 62% in 2007, and is estimated to increase to 75% by 2021 (Bhagat 2014). A report by the Mckinsey Global Institute (2011) estimates that India's cities today account for 60% of the country's GDP and that by 2030 this will improve to 70%. However, nearly 30% of the increase in urban populace came from the reclassification of villages into new census towns (Pradhan 2012). The number of cities and towns had increased by barely 2,541 during all the ten decades of the preceding century. Amazingly, it has jumped to 2,774 in just one decade; advocating that the course of urbanisation is marching ahead more vigorously than ever before. Almost all of this growth resulted from a tripling in the number of census towns, intensifying from 1,362 to 3,894.

While analysing the tally of CTs in India, it has been found that 20 such towns have clear urban characteristics. Surprisingly, Navi Mumbai (Panvel, Raigarh) in Maharashtra, Noida and Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh and Kirari Suleman Nagar in Delhi are some of the examples that have more than 100 thousand population each and are renowned for secondary and tertiary

occupation structure of their residents. Table 5 reveals that Noida in Uttar Pradesh is the largest census town of India has a total population of 637 thousand with 153 thousand households and Bokaro Steel City

ranks second with a total population of 414 thousand and with 82 thousand households. Spatially, nine out of the top twenty census towns of the country are located in the National Capital Territory of Delhi.

Table 5: Population of Top Twenty Census Towns of India, 2011

Rank	Name of the Census Town	State	Population (in '000)	Households (in '000)
1.	Noida	Uttar Pradesh	637	153
2.	Bokaro Steel Plant	Jharkhand	414	82
3.	Kirari Suleman Nagar	NCT of Delhi	283	53
4.	Karawal Nagar	NCT of Delhi	224	41
5.	Nanglol Jat	NCT of Delhi	205	39
6.	Bhalswa Jahangirpur	NCT of Delhi	197	38
7.	Navi Mumbai (Panvel, Raigarh)	Maharashtra	195	46
8.	Khora	Uttar Pradesh	190	37
9.	Sultanpur Majra	NCT of Delhi	181	33
10.	Hastsal	NCT of Delhi	176	33
11.	Deoli	NCT of Delhi	169	N.A.
12.	Dallo Pura	NCT of Delhi	154	N.A.
13.	Burari	NCT of Delhi	146	N.A.
14.	Mustafabad	NCT of Delhi	127	N.A.
15.	Gokalpur	NCT of Delhi	121	N.A.
16.	Mandoli	NCT of Delhi	120	N.A.
17.	Dabgram (P)	West Bengal	119	N.A.
18.	Bally	West Bengal	113	N.A.
19.	Neyveli (TS)	Tamil Nadu	105	N.A.
20.	Greater Noida	Uttar Pradesh	102	N.A.

Source: Census of India, 2011

The spatial distribution of the new census towns clearly shows that West Bengal (526), Kerala (346), Tamil Nadu (227), Uttar Pradesh (204), Maharashtra (171) and Andhra Pradesh (137) together have more than 60% of India's CTs. Arunachal Pradesh

and Chhattisgarh are the only states where the number of census towns has declined. In the case of Arunachal Pradesh, all the 17 CTs of 2001 were upgraded/merged with STs in 2011, and one new census town was created. 37.2% of new census towns are located in the

proximity of class I towns. Interestingly, 93% of the total urban growth in Kerala is due to new CTs, while it is only 4% for Chhattisgarh. New census towns of Delhi, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh are located near large towns in contrast to the states of Odisha, Assam and Madhya Pradesh where new CTs are located away from large cities (Pradhan 2012).

This particular development perhaps supports the deepening of the roots of what Eric Denis, Partha Mukhopadhyay and Marie-Helene Zérah (2012) described as ‘subaltern urbanisation’, a notion that points to contributions made by the people on their own by countering the claims of hegemonic narratives of space and identity. It denotes the growth of human settlements that may or may not be classified and treated as urban by any government agency and are autonomous in their interactions with other local and global urban settlements; independent of the nearby metropolis, planned city and traditionally important urban centre. Similarly, subaltern urbanisation engulfs not only the census towns but also unacknowledged spaces too (Denis et al., 2012). This concept is embedded in the theorisation of the subaltern spaces vis-a-vis the ordinary population of such spaces.

The drastic increase in the figure of census towns too echoed acceleration of the rapidity with which the workforce is leaving agriculture as the primary livelihood. Between 1978 and 2005, the share of the working male population in rural India which considered agriculture as their primary employment fell by 13 points to 67% in 2005 and further registered a fall of 12 points to 55% in the year 2010 (Neelkanth 2013). The agricultural sector contributed 17% of India's GDP but employed more than

half of the total workforce which reflects the country's tragically petite productivity in agriculture (Veeramani 2012). Rural-Urban migration has been crucial to the growth of small towns as well as for CTs, and that it is propelled by the weak performance of the agricultural sector in the surrounding rural areas rather than by a pull from enhanced industrialisation in cities (Nijman 2012). This is why Kundu (2011b) argues that the recent rise in the level of urbanisation is more of a ‘census activism’ and not a real increase in the level of urbanisation.

Understanding the Nuances of the Protests

Urban centres are considered as the podium for the democratic urbanism and as well as the epicentre of mass resistance. The local population of census towns usually become uncomfortable and protest either in favour or against the decisions of the state regarding the conversion of rural to urban status and vice versa. During the 2001 census, 14 human settlements within the Greater Mumbai region have withdrawn the status of urban and declared as villages again by the state. Likewise, in the local bodies' election of Maharashtra in 2002, villages situated on the fringe of Thane district boycotted the voting process in order to pressurise the political parties to exclude them from the limits of Municipal Corporation (Sivaramakrishnan 2002). Urban spaces are produced through questionable and contentious actions of the local, national and transnational actors. It is evident from table 6 that 141 urban areas were transformed to census towns in the year 2011, whereas 144 such areas were upgraded or merged with statutory towns in the year 2001. Like Maharashtra, many other states also de-notified several small-

sized municipalities and converted them to village *panchayats* again under the pressure

of local inhabitants who wanted to reap the benefits of being neither rural nor urban.

Table 6: Dynamics of Census Towns in India, 2001 and 2011

State/ Union Territory	CTs 2001	Change in CTs in 2001			New CTs in 2011			CTs in 2011
		De-notified	Upgraded/ Merged	Not Known	Other Urban Area to CT	From Village To CT	Not Known	
Andhra Pradesh	93	6	18	-	22	137	-	228
Arunachal Pradesh	17	-	17	-	-	1	-	1
Assam	45	2	3	-	6	80	-	126
Bihar	5	-	1	-	4	52	-	60
Chhattisgarh	22	2	13	3	-	10	-	14
Goa	30	-	-	-	1	25	-	56
Gujarat	74	1	24	-	21	83	-	153
Haryana	22	-	4	2	8	49	1	74
Himachal Pradesh	1	-	1	-	-	3	-	3
Jammu & Kashmir	3	-	-	-	6	27	-	36
Jharkhand	108	4	23	-	-	107	-	188
Karnataka	44	-	11	-	13	81	-	127
Kerala	99	-	-	-	16	346	-	461
Madhya Pradesh	55	3	4	-	18	46	-	112
Maharashtra	127	11	8	-	-	171	-	279
Manipur	5	-	-	-	-	18	-	23
Meghalaya	6	-	-	-	-	6	-	12
Nagaland	1	-	1	-	-	6	1	7
Odisha	31	1	-	-	-	86	-	116
Punjab	18	3	1	-	5	55	-	74
Rajasthan	38	3	2	1	4	76	-	112
Sikkim	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	1

Tamil Nadu [#]	111	6	-	-	-	227	44	376
Tripura	10	1	6	-	-	23	-	26
Uttarakhand	12	1	-	-	2	29	-	42
Uttar Pradesh	66	4	-	3	2	204	2	267
West Bengal	252	4	4	1	11	526	-	780
A & N Islands	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	4
Chandigarh	0	-	-	-	-	5	-	5
NCT of Delhi	59	3	-	1	-	55	-	110
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	2	-	2	-	-	5	-	5
Daman & Diu	0	-	-	-	-	6	-	6
Lakshadweep	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	6
Puducherry	0	-	-	-	2	2	-	4
India	1362	55	144	11	141	2553	48	3894

Source: Pradhan, 2012.

Note:[#] Including two Townships; Mizoram had no CT in 2011

The socio-cultural aspect is of paramount importance as urbanisation is a process whereby the society in the countryside is swapped by predominantly urban culture. The massive urbanisation in the country prompted Jan Nijman (2012) to infer that "Urbanization is not simply about numbers or quantitative change, for it reflects a much deeper social transformation: restructuring economies and different livelihood, changing class system, refashioning urban fabric, and a new politics...India is very much going it's way, and those old urban theories may have to be discarded". No doubt, India's ongoing spatial transformation will have a substantial bearing on economic efficiency and societal equity.

Conclusion

Census towns are powerful engines for human development, and it should be kept in mind by the policy experts that most of today's large urban centres were comparatively small in the past. Hence one needs to keep in mind the intrinsic vitality and energy of small urban settlements. One of the salient facts of India's urban history is that the majority of the cities and towns have developed on their own over centuries. What makes the difference in the contemporary process of urbanisation is the intensity and complexities associated with census towns. The surge of census towns and their scale is a clear indication of a manifestation of the notion of Subaltern

Urbanisation. The bottom-up trend in Indian urbanisation is a ray of hope for the future and will undoubtedly lead towards the goal of sustainable urban development of both the metropolitan as well as of small towns. State policy regarding the growth and development of census towns is foremost required.

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