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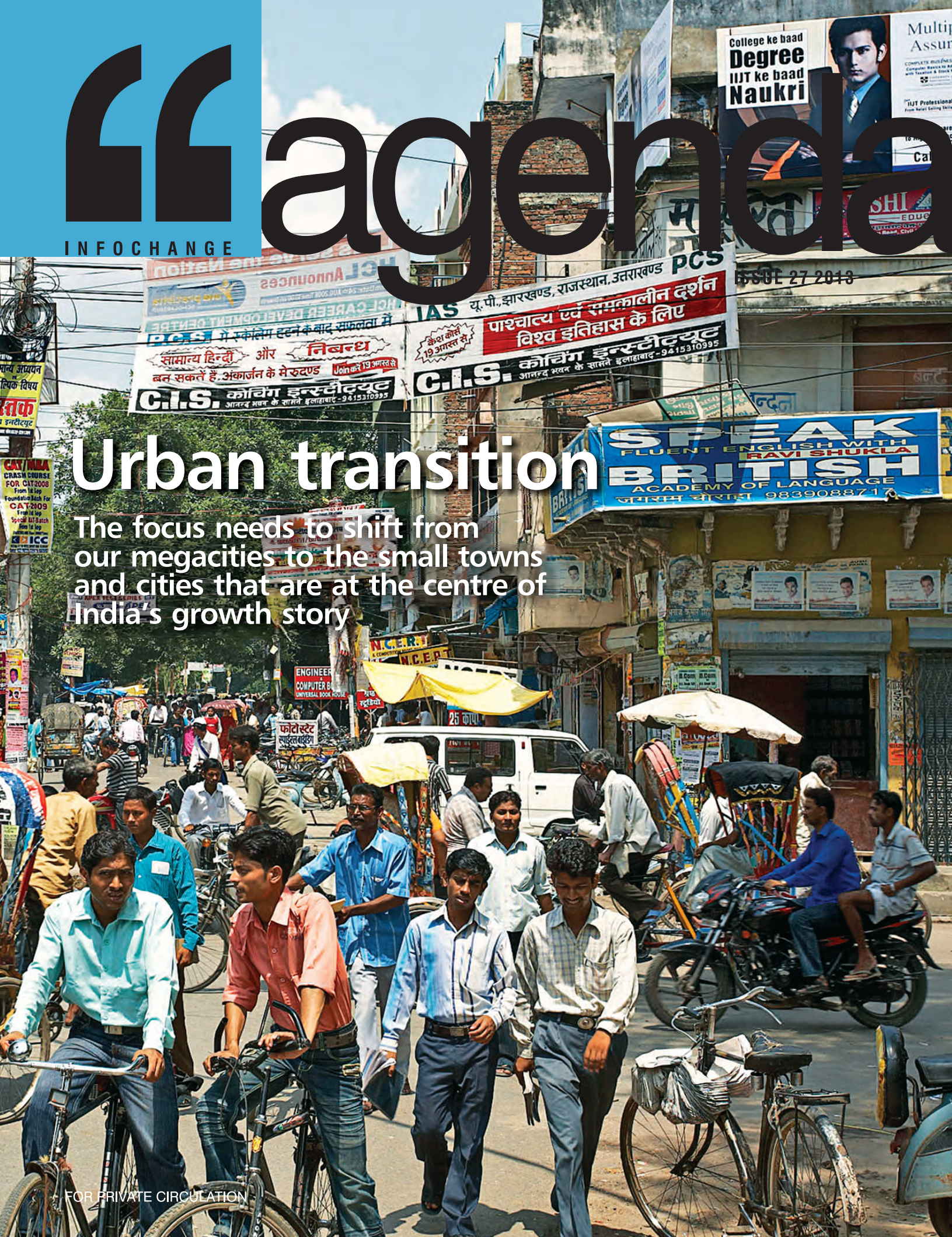
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## Urban transition

The focus needs to shift from our megacities to the small towns and cities that are at the centre of India's growth story



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# Exclusionary cities: The exodus that wasn't

Yes, the urban population increased more in absolute terms during 2001-11 than rural population. But no, this is not because distressed agricultural workers are pouring into cities. It's because census activism has tripled the number of urban centres in Census 2011. In fact, exclusionary policies are discouraging the inflow of rural poor into the mega cities

AMITABH KUNDU

AN INNOCUOUS FACT that urban population during 2001-11 has increased by a larger number than rural population in absolute terms has led to speculation about an alarming pace of urbanisation and distress migration from rural areas to towns and cities in India. The underlying data and emergent concerns need immediate contextualisation and clarification.

It is indeed true that the phenomenon of incremental urban population being higher than that in rural areas has not before been witnessed in the history of India, except during 1911-21. This period was indeed unique as urban population grew at a very low rate of 0.3% per year and yet the increase in population was higher than that in rural areas since both rural as well as total population registered a decline. This has been attributed basically to a virulent influenza epidemic between 1918 and 1920 which killed millions, particularly in rural India, and led to an exodus from there. Besides, World War I killed thousands of Indian soldiers, contributing to the decline in population.

Can one attribute the increment in urban population being larger than rural population during 2001-11 to an equally catastrophic tragedy — the collapse of livelihoods in agriculture and related occupations? The emotional appeal of the thesis of a despair-driven exodus from rural areas is so very strong that it has found immediate acceptability among progressive writers concerned with society (Sainath 2011, Patnaik 2011), without much probing into the empirical issues. It would also be important to determine whether there is indeed a rural exodus, which class of cities is absorbing these migrants, and what the vision for future urbanisation is.

## Components of urban growth

The annual exponential growth rate of urban population during 2001-11 works out to 2.76%, which is higher than the figure of 2.73% recorded in the preceding decade, only in the second decimal point. Urban growth remaining constant and even registering a marginal increase, against the projection of a decline in growth by the registrar general and census commissioner, has prompted experts to attribute this to an accelerated pace of rural-urban (RU)

migration. Unfortunately, they have neither analysed the evidence on migration available or derivable from sources like the National Sample Survey and population census nor have they probed the contributions of the four components of urban growth: (a) natural increase, (b) migration, (c) emergence of new urban centres, and (d) expansion in municipal limits and urban agglomerations, before advancing the thesis of distress-induced urbanisation.

The marginal increase in urban growth cannot be attributed to a spurt in natural growth in population as the latter has declined more or less uniformly both in urban and rural areas during the last couple of decades. In 2006, Census of India projected a deceleration in urban growth until 2020 based on past trends and indications of a continuous fall in natural growth (birth rate less than death rate) from Sample Registration System data — from 17.4 per 1,000 in 1999 to 15.2 per 1,000 in 2009 — since the decline in birth rate has been sharper than that in the death rate. Understandably, the annual growth rate in population in the present decade is 1.62% only, going down from 1.95% in the preceding decade. The increase in natural growth of population can thus be dismissed as an explanatory factor for the rise in urban growth.

Data from the 45th and 64th rounds of the National Sample Survey suggest that migration due to economic compulsions has reduced among rural-urban migrants. Also, the share of adult male migrants in the corresponding adult male population in urban areas has declined from 32% in 1999-2000 to 31% in 2007-08. These undermine the possibility of migration to existing urban centres being a factor in the growth of urban population.

The 'impetus to urbanisation' has undoubtedly come from the last two components of growth noted above, manifest in an increase in the number of new census towns and urban agglomerations in 2011. It may be observed that the total number of urban centres in India has increased sluggishly, at a rate much slower than the urban population, during the 10 decades of the last century. The number had gone up by only 2,541. However, now, in just one decade, the number has shot up by 2,774. The jump in the number of census towns from 1,362 to 3,894 is unprecedented

and is being attributed to census activism, as the office of the registrar general has been under tremendous academic and administrative pressure to review its methodology for collecting data on urban centres (Kundu 2011). The last component of urban growth — emergence of new agglomerations, comprising continuous urban spread over adjoining towns, villages and their outgrowths, too, has contributed to the growth. The number of such outgrowths had not gone up, according to the 2001 census, partly due to the application of a slightly stringent criterion for their identification. In sharp contrast to this, the 2011 census reports 90 new agglomerations that include a large majority of new towns, particularly in the states of West Bengal, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

### Decline in demographic growth in mega cities

The most significant trend emerging from the district- and city-level data released so far from the 2011 population census is that mega cities with a population over 4 million have not grown at a rapid pace. A press release from the Ministry of Urban Development, dated November 30, 2011, suggests that cities with a population between 1 and 4 million have grown at a rate 50% higher than that of 4-million-plus cities. The census, unfortunately, is yet to report the growth rates of different cities and towns during 1901-11, after making adjustments in the base year population for the inclusion of new towns. It is nonetheless possible to draw inferences regarding select large cities based on population figures at the district or regional level. Two predominantly urban regions, the national capital territory of Delhi and the union territory of Chandigarh (with over 90% of their population living in urban areas) have reported their lowest growth rates in history during 2001-11. The decline in demographic growth in districts that fully or partly fall within metro cities or agglomerations further confirms this hypothesis. Mumbai district, comprising the island city, has reported a decline in population in absolute terms by 0.6% per annum during 2001-11, implying substantial out-migration. Mumbai suburb district also records a decline in growth rate from 2.5% to 0.8%. The story is similar in Chennai, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Kolkata and other mega cities, as their central districts have recorded the lowest growth since Independence. Lucknow and Kanpur too report a deceleration in growth rates compared to the preceding decade. The only notable exception seems to be Bangalore. The high demographic growth here has been attributed to substantial area expansion and the rapid growth of the high-tech industry.

The drastic reduction in population growth in most mega cities suggests that the process of 'formalisation' has discouraged in-migration of the rural poor. The thrust of demographic and economic growth can be seen as shifting, to an extent, from mega cities to second-tier cities with populations of between 1 and 4 million and even smaller cities with over 1 lakh population, although the growth

rates of the latter too have declined in recent years. The growth rate of population in cities with a population of between 0.1 and 1 million has declined from 2.96% during 1981-91 to 2.76% in 1991-2001 to 2.45% during 2001-11, but that is less than the decline in mega cities.

### Factors constraining growth in large cities

A process of 'sanitisation and formalisation' seems to be discouraging the inflow of rural poor into many of the million-plus cities, resulting in exclusionary urban growth. This has come in the way of the poor in deprived regions using migration as a window of opportunity to improve their economic wellbeing. In the new system of urban governance, civil society organisations, particularly resident welfare associations, have become active and vocal, with the objective of ensuring the safety of their residents, better delivery of public amenities and more efficient management of development projects. In the process, these organisations, mostly representing the interests of better-off formal colonies, have tried to sanitise their neighbourhoods by removing encroachments, slums, squatter settlements and petty commercial establishments. The courts have taken a serious view of public interest litigations filed by these organisations and other concerned individuals, and have often directed local authorities to remove 'undesirable forms of urban growth'. Such measures have led to an improvement in the quality of life in formal colonies but, in turn, have accentuated disparities in the level of amenities across colonies in cities. This has made life very difficult for the poor and has contributed to a deceleration in rural-urban migration.

Given the resource constraints of urban local bodies (ULBs), financial institutions, international donors and credit-rating agencies have come up with innovative arrangements for resource mobilisation. The system of allowing tradable extra floor area (FSI) has been a convenient method of resource mobilisation. Although the basic idea is to promote greater land-use efficiency, this process has made the absorption of poor migrants much more difficult, promoting spatial segmentation and separation of rich and poor.

A large number of cities have adopted policies of privatisation, partnership arrangements and promotion of community-based projects to lessen the pressure on their budgetary resources. Infrastructural projects sub-contracted to private agencies or launched under public-private partnerships mostly have stipulations of cost recovery, aimed at making the projects financially self-sustaining. However, low-income neighbourhoods find it difficult to meet these stipulations. The same occurs in relation to public sector projects that are becoming increasingly dependent on institutional borrowings and capital markets. These accentuate the gap between rich and poor localities, particularly in the context of water and sanitation facilities, resulting in serious problems of health and hygiene for the

entire city. Growing disparities in the quality of the micro-environment have also contributed to problems of law and order, resulting in violence. All these lead to low population absorptive capacity of the poor in cities.

A massive programme for infrastructural investment through additional central assistance coming to state/city governments as grants, was launched in the Eleventh Plan under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), restricted largely to large cities. The key objective is to get state and local governments to commit themselves to structural reforms. An overview of projects and schemes launched in different cities reveals that most projects have been designed to increase total capacity services such as water supply, sanitation and sewer treatment, as well as roads, with no explicit provision to improve the *delivery* of such facilities in deficient areas. The Mission attempted to improve the living conditions of the poor through integrated housing projects, implemented through state governments and local bodies and with the engagement of private agencies. It provided subsidised dwelling units to groups of people with administrative or political clout or those occupying prime land needed to improve city infrastructure, thus contributing to the 'sanitisation' and protecting commercial interests. Within the framework of such a policy, the diminished inflow of rural poor into large cities is the expected outcome, as manifest in low population growth in JNNURM cities.

#### A vision for the future

By conservative estimates, India will have about 400 million additional people in the labour force by the year 2050. Agriculture and related activities that provide subsistence to around 220 million of the current workforce of 500 million cannot absorb this additional labour without further reducing levels of earnings. There has to be, therefore, a massive transfer of people from primary to secondary and tertiary sectors, and from rural to urban areas. One way of operationalising this transfer would be to adopt more inclusive policies in cities, ensuring that they absorb a large part of the rural-urban transfer by creating industrial and service employment on a large scale. Unfortunately, there will be socio-political resistance to this in many of the million-plus cities. Recent studies show (Ghani 2012) that plants in the formal sector are moving away from mega cities into lower-order cities or rural locations, while the informal sector is moving into these cities. In fact, many chemical and manufacturing plants are being expelled from the core to degenerating peripheries and the share of the organised manufacturing base in a large majority of million-plus cities has gone down due to environmental concerns at the micro level (linked to quality of life of the upper and middle class), scarcity of land, and problems of organised labour. Urban-rural cost differentials have risen because of privatisation of many basic amenities, increase in user charges and stricter bylaws and building norms in

cities, resulting in a pushing out of the poor or their low immigration rate.

It is the non-polluting tertiary activities and growth of select informal sector that are driving the limited urbanisation in million-plus cities, their number going up from 35 in 2001 to 52 in 2011. Given that these cities will remain exclusionary, it would make sense to provide more support to potentially successful small and medium-sized Class I cities, so that they can provide employment at a reasonable level of productivity and earnings for the growing labour force. It is important for Indian policymakers to recognise that much of the current population growth will occur in the unorganised sector in the lower-order cities. This will require a different kind of skill-formation and infrastructural support. Besides, there are over 2,500 new census towns where basic services can be strengthened under a scheme such as JNNURM. This will necessitate a change in mindset for planners working under the paradigm of economies of agglomeration and 'reshaping economic geography'. An inclusionary approach would be more successful in promoting development in these cities by focusing on the informal sector and labour-absorptive technology. The more Indian cities recognise this influx, and design policies and investments to support it, the more effective will be policy interventions. Inclusionary policies must ensure that informal livelihoods are integrated into urban plans, land allocation systems and zoning regulations, and that the unorganised workforce gains access to markets and to basic amenities.

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# Slowdown in urban growth

Population growth in urban India has been decelerating over the last three decades, busting the myth of an urban explosion. Most cities with populations of 100,000-plus have recorded a significant decline in their population growth, more so the million-plus cities, suggesting that they have become less welcoming to migrants

DEBOLINA  
KUNDU

INDIA IS ONE of the fastest growing economies in the world, recording an average growth rate of over 5% per annum during the last two decades of the 20th century. GDP grew at 7.7% per annum during 2001-11. However, most of the growth has been concentrated in a few regions and large cities. Also, only certain sections of the population benefited from it, resulting in accentuation of income and regional disparities over time.

Urban India saw a deceleration in the growth of population during the last three decades, dismissing the spectre of over-urbanisation or an urban explosion. This made policymakers at

the national and state levels concerned about the slow pace of urban growth, particularly at a stage of rapid economic growth that accentuated rural-urban (RU) disparities in the economic and social spheres. The annual exponential growth rate (AEGR) of urban population in the country during the 1950s was 3.5%. This was the highest the country had seen until that time, which led to the emergence of theories of 'over-urbanisation'. Formalisation of the criteria for identifying urban centres in the 1961 census resulted in a dramatic decline in urban growth figures in the 1960s. The 1970s, however, following the same methodology for identification of urban centres, saw a very high urban growth of 3.8%. The growth rate, however, came



**Table 1: Growth rates of urban agglomerations/cities with a population of 1 million and above by common base**

Name of urban agglomeration/City	Population				AAGR	
	2011	1991	2001	2011	1991-01	2001-11
Greater Mumbai UA	UA	12596243	16434386	18414288	2.66	1.14
Kolkata UA	UA	11021918	13205697	14112536	1.81	0.66
Delhi UA	UA	8419084	12877470	16314838	4.25	2.37
Chennai UA	UA	5421985	6560242	8696010	1.91	2.82
Hyderabad UA	UA	4344437	5742036	7749334	2.79	3.00
Bangalore UA	UA	4130288	5701446	8499399	3.22	3.99
Ahmedabad UA	UA	3312216	4525013	6352254	3.12	3.39
Pune UA	UA	2493987	3760636	5049968	4.11	2.95
Surat UA	UA	1518950	2811614	4585367	6.16	4.89
Kanpur UA	UA	2029889	2715555	2920067	2.91	0.73
Lucknow UA	UA	1669204	2245509	2901474	2.97	2.56
Nagpur UA	UA	1664006	2129500	2497777	2.47	1.60
Patna UA	UA	1099647	1697976	2046652	4.34	1.87
Indore UA	UA	1109056	1516918	2167447	3.13	3.57
Vadodara UA	UA	1126824	1491045	1817191	2.80	1.98
Coimbatore UA	UA	1100746	1461139	2151466	2.83	3.87
Bhopal UA	UA	1062771	1458416	1883381	3.16	2.56
Kochi UA	UA	1140605	1355972	2117990	1.73	4.46
Visakhapatnam (GVMC)	MC	1057118	1345938	1730320	2.42	2.51
Agra UA	UA	891790	1331339	1746467	4.01	2.71
Varanasi UA	UA	1030863	1203961	1435113	1.55	1.76
Madurai UA	UA	1085914	1203095	1462420	1.02	1.95
Meerut UA	UA	753778	1161716	1424908	4.33	2.04
Nashik UA	UA	656925	1152326	1562769	5.62	3.05
Jamshedpur UA	UA	478950	1104713	1337131	8.36	1.91
Jabalpur UA	UA	764586	1098000	1267564	3.62	1.44
Asansol UA	UA	262188	1067369	1243008	14.04	1.52
Dhanbad UA	UA	151789	1065327	1195298	19.49	1.15
Allahabad UA	UA	806486	1042229	1216719	2.56	1.55
Vijayawada UA	UA	708316	1039518	1491202	3.84	3.61
Amritsar UA	UA	708835	1003917	1183705	3.48	1.65
Rajkot UA	UA	612458	1003015	1390933	4.93	3.27
Jaipur	Municipal corporation	1518235	2322575	3073350	4.25	2.80
Ludhiana	Municipal corporation	1042740	1398467	1613878	2.94	1.43
Faridabad	Municipal corporation	617717	1055938	1404653	5.36	2.85

*Source: Provisional Population Totals, Census of India 2011*

down to 3.1% in the 1980s. It went down further to 2.73% in the 1990s. Correspondingly, the percentage of population in urban areas has gone up from 17.3% in 1951 to 23.3% in 1981, and then to 27.78% in 2001.

The consistent decline in the growth rate of urban population over the past two decades of the last century led to the Tenth Plan expressing concern over 'the moderate pace of urbanisation'. The Eleventh Plan admitted that 'the degree of urbanisation in India is one of the lowest in the world' and considered planned urbanisation through new growth centres in the form of small and medium towns its major challenge. The Approach Paper to the Twelfth Plan also recognises the need to promote spatially-balanced urbanisation.

The level of urbanisation in the country increased to 31.16% in 2011 and the urban population recorded an annual growth rate of 2.76% during 2001-11. The 2011 census reported a dramatic increase in the number of urban agglomerations (UAs) (1): 91 new UAs came up in the past one decade. The Class I UAs/towns accounted for 70% of the urban population, their number increasing by 74 during 2001-11 from 394 in 2001 to 468 in 2011. The 2011 census also recorded an increase of million-plus UAs/cities from 35 in 2001 to 53 in 2011. These accounted for 42.6% of the urban population. The largest UA in the country is Greater Mumbai followed by Delhi UA. Kolkata UA, which held the second rank in the 2001 census, has been replaced by Delhi UA (Table 1).

It is important to note that the economically developed



Table 2: Level and pace of urbanisation in India

SN	India/State/UT	Level of urbanisation			Pace of urbanisation	
		1991	2001	2011	1991-01	2001-11
1	Jammu and Kashmir	23.83	24.81	27.21	6.87	3.05
2	Himachal Pradesh	7.39	9.80	10.04	2.81	1.45
3	Punjab	24.67	33.92	37.49	3.19	2.29
4	Chandigarh	81.02	89.77	97.25	3.09	2.38
5	Uttarakhand	0.00	25.67	30.55	2.84	3.50
6	Haryana	18.50	28.92	34.79	4.11	3.66
7	NCT of Delhi	61.46	93.18	97.50	4.14	2.36
8	Rajasthan	17.83	23.39	24.89	2.71	2.57
9	Uttar Pradesh	16.62	20.78	22.28	2.84	2.53
10	Bihar	13.70	10.46	11.30	2.57	3.01
11	Sikkim	9.12	11.07	24.97	4.83	9.30
12	Arunachal Pradesh	10.14	20.75	22.67	7.00	3.19
13	Nagaland	10.47	17.23	28.97	5.27	5.15
14	Manipur	21.17	26.58	30.21	1.21	3.56
15	Mizoram	35.68	49.63	51.51	3.27	2.42
16	Tripura	13.22	17.06	26.18	2.53	5.66
17	Meghalaya	18.69	19.58	20.08	3.16	2.70
18	Assam	9.34	12.90	14.08	3.09	2.44
19	West Bengal	23.32	27.97	31.89	1.84	2.62
20	Jharkhand	21.25	22.24	24.05	2.55	2.80
21	Odisha	11.54	14.99	16.68	2.61	2.37
22	Chhattisgarh	17.50	20.09	23.24	3.09	3.49
23	Madhya Pradesh	25.40	26.46	27.63	2.71	2.28
24	Gujarat	27.94	37.36	42.58	2.80	3.06
25	Daman and Diu	30.08	36.25	75.16	1.87	11.58
26	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	8.47	22.89	46.62	14.59	11.53
27	Maharashtra	31.57	42.43	45.23	2.95	2.12
28	Puducherry	53.09	66.57	68.31	2.26	2.71
29	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	26.80	32.63	35.67	4.40	1.54
30	Goa	35.70	49.76	62.17	3.32	3.01
31	Lakshadweep	56.29	44.46	78.08	-0.77	6.24
32	Kerala	24.12	25.96	47.72	0.74	6.56
33	Andhra Pradesh	23.62	27.30	33.49	1.37	3.09
34	Karnataka	26.37	33.99	38.57	2.53	2.72
35	Tamil Nadu	30.72	44.04	48.45	3.56	2.40
	<b>India</b>	<b>25.72</b>	<b>27.78</b>	<b>31.16</b>	<b>2.73</b>	<b>2.76</b>

Source: Provisional Population Totals, Urban Agglomerations and Cities, Class I and above, 2011 and 2001

states have registered the highest level of urbanisation in the country in 2011 (Table 2). These states have also registered the highest growth rates and also the maximum increase in the number of census towns, with the exception of Uttar Pradesh (Table 3). The state of Kerala rapidly urbanised between 2001 and 2011. The share of the urban population increased from 25.96% in 2001 to 47.72%. Urban population in the state grew by 92.6% whereas rural population declined by 25.6%. A detailed analysis of town-level data for the state of Kerala indicates that urban agglomerations/Class I cities account for about 93.74% of the population (Table 4).

Table 3: Number of census towns added in 2011

	India/State/UT	Number of census towns		Number of census towns added
		2001	2011	
1	Jammu and Kashmir	3	36	33
2	Himachal Pradesh	1	3	2
3	Punjab	18	74	56
4	Chandigarh	-	5	5
5	Uttarakhand	12	42	30
6	Haryana	22	74	52
7	NCT of Delhi	59	110	51
8	Rajasthan	38	112	74
9	Uttar Pradesh	66	267	201
10	Bihar	5	60	55
11	Sikkim	1	1	0
12	Arunachal Pradesh	17	1	-16
13	Nagaland	1	7	6
14	Manipur	5	23	18
15	Mizoram	-	-	-
16	Tripura	10	26	16
17	Meghalaya	6	12	6
18	Assam	45	126	81
19	West Bengal	252	780	528
20	Jharkhand	108	188	80
21	Odisha	31	116	85
22	Chhattisgarh	22	14	-8
23	Madhya Pradesh	55	112	57
24	Gujarat	74	153	79
25	Daman and Diu	-	6	6
26	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	2	5	3
27	Maharashtra	127	279	152
28	Puducherry	-	4	4
29	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	2	4	2
30	Goa	30	56	26
31	Lakshadweep	3	6	3
32	Kerala	99	461	362
33	Andhra Pradesh	93	228	135
34	Karnataka	44	127	83
35	Tamil Nadu	111	376	265
	<b>India</b>	<b>1,362</b>	<b>3,894</b>	<b>2,532</b>

Source: Provisional Population Totals, Urban Agglomerations and Cities, Class I and above, 2011 and 2001

Correspondingly, the level of urbanisation in Kerala increased from 25.97% in 2001 to 47.72% in 2011. Also, census towns increased by 362 during 2001-11. However, all Class I towns in Kerala registered a negative growth rate and a resultant decline in their population during 2001-2011, implying essentially substantial out-migration (Table 5). This questions the thesis of migration-led urbanisation in the developed states of India.

The idea of a possible slowdown in urban growth received empirical backing from the population figures of predominantly urban union territories and select metros, released for the 2011 census. Most cities with populations

**Table 4: Growth of urban population in Kerala by size class of UAs/Cities/Towns, 1991-2011**

Size class of UA/ City/ Town	Number of UAs/ Towns			Percentage of population in each size class			Percentage growth	
	1991	2001	2011	1991	2001	2011	1991-2001	2001-11
All Class	109	98	65	100	100	6.26	7.64	92.72
All Class I	14	14	18	66.35	68.84	93.74	11.69	162.42
Class II	9	14	3	7.22	11.37	1.1	69.45	-81.30
Class III	46	35	16	19.07	13.98	3.34	-21.09	-54.00
Class IV	34	26	14	6.78	4.99	1.22	-20.86	-52.88
Class V and VI	6	9	14	0.58	0.82	0.6	52.23	34.12

*Source: Provisional Population Totals, Urban Agglomerations and Cities, Class I and above, 2011 and 2001*

of 100,000-plus for which data is available have recorded a significant decline in their population growth, more so for the million-plus cities, suggesting that they have become less welcoming to migrants. A process of sanitisation and formalisation seems to be discouraging the inflow of rural poor to these cities.

Delhi and Chandigarh, for example, have recorded population growth rates less than half that of the '90s. Mumbai district, comprising the island city, has also reported a decline in population in absolute terms during 2001-11. The story is similar for Delhi where the present population growth is less than that of any decade in the last century. Here, New Delhi zone and central Delhi have lost one-quarter and one-tenth of their populations respectively. Among the large states, Maharashtra, where the percentage of urban population is over 40 and where an influx of migrants is an explosive political issue, has also recorded a significant reduction in its total and urban population growth.

**Table 5: Growth pattern of Class I cities in Kerala (2001-2011)**

Name of city/Town	C status	Annual exponential growth rate (AEGR)	2001 population	2011 population
Thiruvananthapuram (municipal corporation)	Municipal corporation	-1.67	889635	752490
Kochi (municipal corporation)	Municipal corporation	-1.35	688604	601574
Kozhikode (municipal corporation)	Municipal corporation	-3.61	620108	432097
Kollam (municipal corporation)	Municipal corporation	-0.85	380091	349033
Thrissur (municipal corporation)	Municipal corporation	-0.06	317526	315596
Alappuzha (M)	M	-3.18	239384	174164
Palakkad (M)	M	-4.09	197369	131019

*Source: Provisional Population Totals, Urban Agglomerations and Cities, Class I and above, 2011 and 2001*

Computation of population growth rates for Class I cities, keeping common towns for both the initial and terminal years, reveals an interesting pattern, as presented below. The population of cities/towns (municipal corporations and municipalities) only have been considered. The growth rate of 300 cities in 1991-2001 and 441 in 2001-2011 has been calculated by grouping the cities in size classes of 1 lakh to 1 million, 1 million to 4 million and 4 million-plus. Table 6 indicates that the growth rate has come down for all classes of cities in 2011 compared with the previous decade. However, the size class of 1-4 million has recorded the highest growth rate for both the decades. Importantly, the growth rate in the category of 1-4 million is in consonance with the high growth rate in the category of 1-5 million as indicated by the High-Powered Expert Committee projection for the same period. Greater Mumbai Corporation recorded the highest population in both the decades, followed by Delhi. Kolkata was the third populous city in 2001. In 2011, the Bangalore Municipal Corporation occupied the third position displacing Kolkata to seventh position. In fact, the corporation underwent an expansion in its municipal limits, which explains the increase in the share of urban population.

**Table 6: Growth rate of Class I cities in India by common base (1991-2011)**

Size class of city	Annual exponential growth rate (AEGR)	
	1991-01	2001-11
All-India	2.73	2.76
4 million-plus	2.35	1.35
1 million-4 million	3.17	2.18
1 lakh-1 million	2.78	1.31

*Source: Provisional Population Totals, Urban Agglomerations and Cities, Class I and above, 2011 and 2001*

It is important to note that many cities reported a negative growth during 2011, indicating a decline in the population in 2011 as compared to 2001. This trend is most obvious in the state of Kerala, which has reported an increase in the level of urbanisation from 25% to 47.74% and a corresponding increase in the number of census towns. In fact, all Class I cities have reported a decline in their growth rates.

The total number of urban centres in the country has increased at a rate much slower than the urban population during the last century. The number had gone up by about 2,500 in the entire 10 decades. However, it has now gone up by 2,774 in just one decade, against the prediction of an increase of only 1,000 during 2008-30 by McKinsey Global Institute (MGI 2010).

The proposition that urban growth has not decelerated during 2001-11 thus goes against past trends and recent evidence. The important question is whether urban growth has remained high despite a decline in urban fertility because of the existing urban centres receiving migrants. Alternatively, is it due to a reclassification of rural settlements resulting in an increase in the number of new towns? It is evident that the increase in the level of urbanisation in the country is not a result of acceleration in the growth rate of small and medium towns but because of an increase in the number of census towns.

An important feature of urbanisation in India in the past few decades was the relatively small contribution of migration to the increase in urban population in India. Net migration from rural areas contributed about 21% to the increase in urban population in the 1990s, a little less than its contribution of 22.6% in the 1980s. Importantly, natural increase has been by far the largest source of increase in urban population (62.7% in the 1980s and 59.2% in the 1990s). The 2011 census would mark a significant departure, as a substantial amount of increase in the level of urbanisation would be accounted for by reclassification of rural areas into census towns.

India's heavily protectionist trade policy regime until the '90s had encouraged capital-intensive industrialisation in the country. This may be one of the reasons for the decline in the share of migrants. Rigid labour laws and reservation for small-scale units in production also encouraged capital-intensive industrialisation by restricting labour-intensive industrialisation. There was much slower growth in employment in the industrial sector in the past decade. According to the latest employment round (66th round), the share of regular employment in the public sector has registered a decline. The low share of manufacturing, no sizeable shift in workers moving out of agriculture, and the phenomenon of jobless growth have serious implications for migration in India and partly account for the decline in the pace of migration.

Structural transformation is typically associated with reduced dependence of the population on agriculture and increased migration from low-productivity agriculture to high-productivity sectors of industry and services in search of employment. Since these sectors are based in urban areas, rapid economic growth is normally associated with urbanisation. It may be noted that in India, the decline in the agricultural sector's share in employment in the last decade was small.

Also, the industrial sector failed to attract the workforce from agriculture. Indeed, the share of industry in total employment in the economy actually declined as mentioned earlier. The service sector recorded a sharp increase in the share of total employment. Since growth in GDP took place in highly skilled services such as information technology (IT), telecom and banking, or in sophisticated manufacturing industries like engineered goods and pharmaceuticals, it did not draw much labour from rural areas (HPEC, 2010). This may explain the decline in the growth of urban population in the recent decades.

The rural-urban differentials in productivity have widened since 1993-94, indicating that there is considerable scope for migrants to take advantage of the higher-productivity non-agricultural sectors. This, however, would demand higher skills and education levels of migrants in urban areas. The economy seems to be far from reaching saturation point in migration and it is reasonable to expect a hastening in the pace of urbanisation. The McKinsey Report (2010) (2) on India's urbanisation prospects estimates that over the period 2010-2030, urban India will create 70% of all new jobs in India and these urban jobs will be twice as productive as equivalent jobs in the rural sector. These would, however, require higher educational levels and greater skills for migrants. In fact, the latest round of the NSSO (64th round) shows that migration has gone up for educated and better-off sections of the population or those who have attained at least a certain degree of skills.

## Conclusion

There has been growing and disproportionate importance accorded to 'metropolitan' cities in both policy pronouncements and urban research. It is important also to focus our attention on smaller urban centres particularly in the backward states, because of their weak economic base, high incidence of poverty, and lack of access to basic amenities. The central and state governments must recognise the possibility of urban impetus coming from the lower level by according 'statutory town' status to new census towns. They must also design a scheme similar to the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission to strengthen their infrastructure base and promote them as centres of distributed and inclusive growth. This would require revisiting the investment and sectoral scenarios projected for the urban economy in the Twelfth Plan, based on the High-Powered Expert Committee (2011) which proposes a model of urbanisation more top-heavy than that reported by the Provisional Population Census.

*Note: The author is grateful to T C Sharma (NIUA) for his support in the data analysis*

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## Endnotes

1 An urban agglomeration is a continuous urban spread constituting a town and its adjoining urban outgrowths, or two or more physically contiguous towns together and any adjoining urban outgrowths of such towns. The core town, or at least one of the constituent towns, should necessarily be a statutory town and the total population of all the constituent units, that is, towns and outgrowths of an urban agglomeration should not be less than 20,000 (according to the 1991 census)

2 McKinsey Global Institute, 2010

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# The invisible migrant

The city is harsh terrain for the roughly 100 million circular migrants who move around the country in search of livelihoods. The territoriality of policy renders them invisible, denied access to essential services such as housing, subsidised foodgrain and bank accounts. Urban policy needs to be re-imagined to understand the realities of migrants

AMITA BHIDE

THE WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2009 titled *Towards a New Economic Geography* argues that uneven development is a fact that needs to be accepted. Its arguments have strengthened the policy thrust in several developing countries, including India, towards promoting urbanisation as an engine for economic development. This has led to an emphasis on infrastructure development and reform in cities.

Inadequate policy attention has, however, been paid to migration which is the other side of urbanisation.

Globalisation and the advancement of transport and communication technologies have made migration a facet of everyday life. Cities competing with each other for global investment recognise that they need to attract migrants. These are migrants who make critical strategic decisions on location of capital, and who could be anywhere in the world. Attracting migrants is one of the reasons for large-scale investments in improvement of city infrastructure in India through projects like the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). Migration of this category is obviously not just being accepted, it is being welcomed.

There is another category of migrants created by these very forces of development and connectivity. These are poor migrants who come to cities in search of better livelihood opportunities. Deshingkar and Akhtar (2009) estimate that there are roughly 100 million circular migrants in the country, based on a survey of grey literature. A bulk of these migratory movements are directed towards cities in sectors such as textiles, construction, small-scale industry (diamond cutting, leather accessories, etc), rickshaw-pulling, food processing, including fish and prawn processing, domestic work, security services, sex work, small hotels and roadside restaurants/tea shops, and street vending (Deshingkar and Akhtar, 2009). They find refuge in slums which are today being hailed as an 'integral feature of Indian urbanisation'. These migrants who contribute significantly to the city's economy remain on the periphery of society (Kabeer, 2005). A review of existing policy initiatives indicates a bias towards territoriality, rarely acknowledged. This article argues that an acceptance of various forms of migration is concomitant to

the pursuit of urbanisation as a development strategy, and calls for a thorough policy reframing.

## Migrant encounters with cities

The Indian Constitution recognises the right of movement. As such, there are no restrictions on inter-region, intrastate and even interstate movement of people in the country. Similarly, there are no explicit bans or restrictions on entry to Indian cities. However, this is a far cry from the acceptance of migrants as legitimate citizens of cities. Several policies of state and city administrations are territorial in their orientation and discriminate against migrants, depriving them of basic amenities and development opportunities. Further, in recent times, city-level politics have tended to exclude migrants with the son-of-the-soil argument. Migrants therefore find cities extremely harsh terrain in which to survive. While this may seem like a very generalised statement, it holds true in particularistic ways for various groups of poor migrants.

Circular migration, implying the ongoing movement from village to town and city, and vice versa, significantly differs in temporality. Thus, there are those who migrate for a few days or a few months or perhaps a few years. Those who come for a few months are greatly dependent on contractors or local contacts; as they become more familiar they begin to seek footholds in the city. This is where their encounter with territoriality begins. The following is a review of some forms of territorialities experienced in Indian cities.

Services such as subsidised foodgrain, basic amenities and access to bank accounts enabling money transfers are extremely critical for migrants who move away from homes and who support dependants back home. Each of these services is linked to proof of local address.

The ration card is a document that guarantees access to subsidised foodgrain through the public distribution system. As such, it is a critical document for a neo-migrant. In several cases, migration splits the family thereby necessitating access to subsidised foodgrain in two places. The ration card is part of the public distribution system and has a colonial legacy in a controlled food market.

In post-colonial India, it was unofficially elevated to a citizenship document in the absence of other widespread proof of the same and the dependence of a large section of urban citizens on public sector supply of fuel. These legacies are expressed through the protocol of issue of ration cards.

Of late, the ration card has been interpreted as a food entitlement project and there have been attempts to improve its targeting. This has included extending entitlements to several groups with uncertain addresses such as the homeless, destitute women, and migrants. However, these transitions have not been accompanied by changes in protocol. For migrants who may be dependent on their local contacts or employers for shelter, proof of address is not forthcoming. This means that the provisions of government resolutions fall flat in the wake of practices that demand local addresses, proof of the same, and verification procedures.

What is true of the ration card applies in equal or more measure to other services like basic amenities (which are often linked to number of years of stay in the city) and bank accounts (requiring introduction by an account holder). Without access to subsidised foodgrain or fuel, migrants need to seek food options available in the market. Their access to basic amenities is contingent on the nature of shelter provided by their employer, its legal and policy status and the load on these services. Transfers to dependants are irregular and linked to friends or fellow villagers' return visits in the absence of bank accounts. Each of these services is

thus territorial in its orientation and adds burdens to the life of the migrant in the city, rendering him vulnerable.

A major window of opportunity available to migrants in the past was the political route. Migrants formed an important part of political constituency-building. This enabled them to gradually build footholds in the city. In the recent past, however, migrant groups in several cities have been targeted by political mobilisation based on the son-of-the-soil argument. Viewed as being responsible for the denigration of local culture and adding to the load on city infrastructure without contributing to it, migrants in a number of cities have been subjected to violence, harassment and intolerance.

Lack of services and political expulsion make migrants more dependent on their employer who becomes larger than life — provider of a job, route to basic services, and support system in times of crisis. A vicious cycle of invisibility is now created with the migrant absent in crucial city data, the invisibility further resulting in non-access to city services and support systems.

The sole route available to migrants in this environment is the route of subversion. Realising that access to services is contingent upon citizenship to the city, the process of gaining a foothold begins with attempts to create new ration cards and enrolling names in the electoral register. Circular migrants with stakes in two places thus often have two ration cards and two electoral identity cards. This is essential to counter



Rejesh Vora

Sudharak Olive



Migrant market in Ahmedabad

the territoriality of policy. Invisibility is thus countered by a dual visibility. And gaining such a foothold is not an easy process. It requires consistent, positive stake-building and may not be a choice available to all.

### Re-imagining policy towards an acceptance of migrants

Migrants, in particular circular migrants, tend to be invisible in data and policy. Lack of a distinct political voice, an interface with the city overly determined by the employer, and invisibility translate to an overall position of extreme vulnerability with few supports and recourses in times of crisis. The individual struggles of migrants gain significance at a macro level because it also means that migration does not emerge as the balancing factor in uneven development, carrying the gains of urbanisation to 'backward' regions of the country. A positive acceptance of migration, inclusive of poor migrants, is essential for better gains for migrants as well as to manage the unevenness of development.

The core areas of re-imagination are, of course, policies for the improvement of work and living conditions. Current urban policies that seek to rehabilitate slums fail to understand the accommodativeness of these settlements towards migrants. Rehabilitation policies displace migrants; they need to be designed in such a way that they retain these accommodative modes. Labour legislation has consistently failed to reach out to migrants and informal sector workers, both in matters of understanding their realities and in their execution. While several models available in the country illustrate effective modes of improving the work and living conditions of these workers,

there is a need to incorporate the learning of these experiences into the framing of legislation and its protocol.

Another important area for re-imagining policy is to extend basic entitlements such as food, social security and banking interface to people who are mobile. The UID (unique identity) project attempts to give an individual identity to every Indian citizen, irrespective of place of residence. As such, it has the ability to redress the issue of uncertain address and move beyond the limitations of state government schemes faced by interstate migrants. However, it must be understood that the inability to provide services to migrants is only partly linked to address proof or the lack of it. It must be backed by an overhaul of protocol, and the restructuring of services and entitlements at both source and destination to respond to the dynamic realities of households inhabiting multiple places, requiring support at both ends. The actual gains to be made from UID thus remain suspect.

The National Urban Poverty Reduction Strategy which could pioneer such changes is sadly remiss in its understanding of migration and its links with urban poverty. It proposes a safety net for the urban poor comprising food and energy subsidies and wage employment on a geographical basis on the basis of being a slum resident. These could be critical entitlements for migrants, but the likelihood of their exclusion from services as they have no locus standi as residents of slums is high. The links between migration and urban poverty thus need to be appreciated and acknowledged by policy.

### Conclusion

In a context where urbanisation is pursued as a development strategy, acceptance of migration is essential. Migrants form an important component of the urban poor. Current policies are experienced as territorial and enhance the vulnerability of migrants in Indian cities. This blindness of policy is attributed to the invisibility of migrants in data. There is a need to redesign data systems to render them visible and to reframe policies to make them inclusive of migrants. Failure to do so will exacerbate uneven development in the country.

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# The grime beneath the glitter

The official figure for income poverty in urban India is 21%. Multidimensional urban poverty would be more than double that, and the absolute number of urban poor continues to be over 76 million. Why are the numbers so high? Is it because the wealthy enclaves of urban India are being built on the surpluses extracted from this urban labour force, underpaid and housed in extreme deprivation?

C P  
CHANDRASEKHAR

AMONG THE MANY FEATURES attributed to modern development, which includes the diversification of production and employment away from agriculture to manufacturing and then to services, is the creation of urban spaces and a rise in the share in total of urban population, employment and income. The premise often is that since manufacturing based on the factory system involves the centralised and concentrated production of goods for dispersed markets, agglomeration in urban centres is inevitable. By definition too, urban is identified not just by population concentration in agglomerations that are towns and cities, but by a high share of manufacturing activity in production and employment.

There are, however, three problems with this perspective. The first is it presumes that the Kuznets-type trajectory of diversification of economic activity of the kind mentioned above is inevitable. India, with its stunted industrialisation and excessive growth of services, both urban and rural, shows that it is not. The second is that it assumes that industrialisation inevitably furthers urbanisation. A comparison of West Bengal, which was among the early industrialising regions under colonial rule, with Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu today shows how the trajectory of urbanisation (in terms of the number, size and dispersion of cities and towns in the area constituting the state) can vary substantially depending on the trajectory of industrialisation. Urbanisation is limited in terms of the number and dispersion of urban centres in Bengal, whereas it is much more spacially widespread and includes more centres of varying sizes in the other two states. Third, as Amitabh Kundu (*Economic and Political Weekly*, May 14, 2011) has argued, demographic growth in the principal urban centres is slowing down, with conditions in urban centres discouraging migration and making the urbanisation process exclusionary.

The last of these is surprising given the fact that rural India is burdened with un- and underemployed labour, with little to garner from land and willing, we presume, to move to improve their livelihood. If they do not, it must be because the promise of a livelihood is not realised for so many that the probability of finding a livelihood is perceived to be declining. To this must be added that even for those who find a livelihood, earnings are such and access to basic facilities so limited, that they and those still dependent on them have to live in conditions that make the standard

of living gap between rural and urban so narrow, non-existent or even adverse that it discourages in-migration or encourages out-migration.

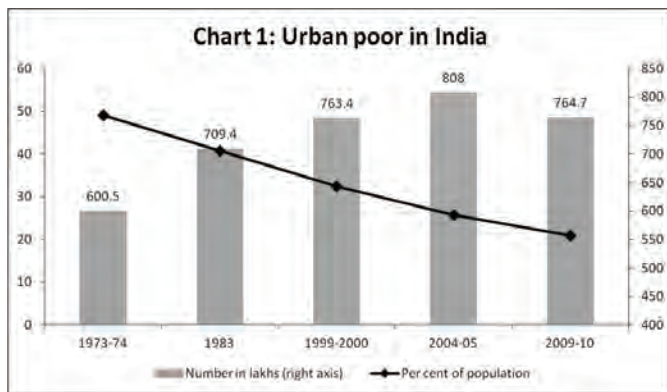
This is surprising, since in the celebrated Lewisian idea of development the backward (rural) sector serves as a near-inexhaustible source of supply of labour for (urban) industry because of the higher wages and better conditions that the modern (urban) sector can offer. Clearly, the attraction of some urban areas is declining. But none can say that urban India is starved of workers because of the conditions there that discourage migration. Rather, a large urban reserve army seems constantly at hand even if it is paid a pittance and is housed in conditions and environments that reek of deprivation. In fact, even India's outsourcing success in IT and IT-enabled services and its services-led growth has been based on access to that reserve army. Firms being outsourced to from abroad can successfully compete because they are themselves outsourcing a range of services — transportation, security and catering, for example — to agencies tapping the cheap reserve army in the urban areas. But overall, urban aggregate and per capita income growth outstrip the rate of growth of urban employment.

The consequence is a high level of urban poverty. It is certainly true that the officially estimated urban poverty ratio (at 21% on average for all of India according to the Planning Commission's poverty estimates for 2009-10) is considerably lower than the rural ratio of 34%. It is also true that — given the still low rate of urbanisation in India — most of India's officially defined poor (nearly four-fifths) live in villages. However, there are grounds for recognising that the nature and extent of urban poverty is severe.

On the face of it, as Chart 1 suggests, urban poverty has been declining in terms of rates as well as (in the most recent estimates) in terms of absolute numbers. It should be noted that the official urban poverty estimates presented in Chart 1 reflect the numbers derived from the Tendulkar Committee recommendations, and therefore are not strictly comparable with the earlier figures. Even with comparable figures, however, the data suggest that the rate of urban poverty has been coming down (although certainly not as rapidly as could be hoped given the aggregate income







Source: Planning Commission Press Note on Poverty Estimates 2009-10, March 2012

increase in the country). However, the absolute numbers of urban poor remain extremely large, at more than 76 million.

One important concern is that these urban poverty figures are quite misleading because they have such a minimalist notion of survival. What is called 'poverty' in India is really extreme destitution, such that a much larger proportion of the population would tend to be classified as poor according to most international standards, even in other developing countries at similar levels of per capita income.

The issue of the official poverty line has generated much debate in recent times, as it became evident to the wider public that both the methodology and the actual lines drawn for estimating the poor were deeply flawed. Until the official estimates for 2009-10, poverty numbers were generated by using the consumer price indices to update a poverty line determined by average monthly consumption expenditure of households whose members consumed (per capita) 2,400 kcal of food per day in rural India and 2,100 kcal per day in urban India in the 1970s. Thereafter, the Tendulkar Committee set up by the government provided another even more arbitrary determination of the poverty line, which did however generate somewhat larger numbers in terms of the incidence of poverty.

Even so, the income poverty lines that are now being officially used are still extremely low, for both urban and rural poverty. Table 1 provides some estimates of these lines across states for 2009-10, as well as the associated urban poverty ratios.

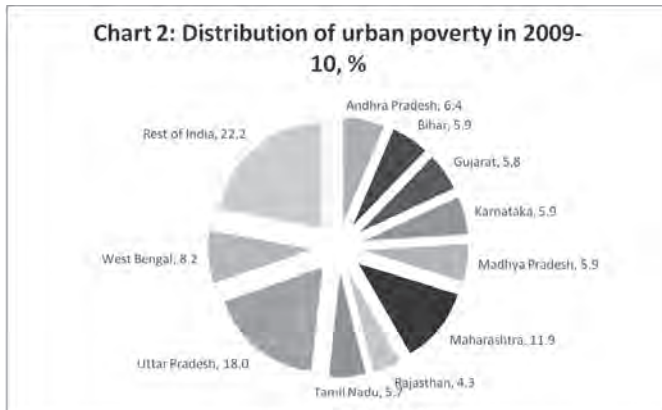
It is evident from Table 1 that the lines for determining urban income poverty remain extraordinarily low, and would not be considered sufficient to describe a household as 'non-poor' in any meaningful sense. In Delhi, for example, the stated daily consumption spending per capita of less than Rs 35 would not have been enough, even in 2009-10, to enable a person to use the public transport system from one end of the city to the other, quite apart from all the necessary items of consumption.

**Table 1: Urban poverty lines and estimates by state, 2009-10**

	Monthly per capita spending (Rs)	Daily per capita spending (Rs)	Poor as per cent of urban population	Urbanisation (per cent)
Andhra Pradesh	926.4	30.88	17.7	33.5
Arunachal Pradesh	925.2	30.84	24.9	22.7
Assam	871	29.03	26.1	14.1
Bihar	775.3	25.84	39.4	11.3
Chhattisgarh	806.7	26.89	23.8	23.2
Delhi	1040.3	34.68	14.4	97.5
Goa	1025.4	34.18	6.9	62.2
Gujarat	951.4	31.71	17.9	42.6
Haryana	975.4	32.51	23	34.8
Himachal Pradesh	888.3	29.61	12.6	10.0
Jammu and Kashmir	845.4	28.18	12.8	27.2
Jharkhand	831.2	27.71	31.1	24.1
Karnataka	908	30.27	19.6	38.6
Kerala	830.7	27.69	12.1	47.7
Madhya Pradesh	771.7	25.72	22.9	27.6
Maharashtra	961.1	32.04	18.3	45.2
Manipur	955	31.83	46.4	30.2
Meghalaya	989.3	32.98	24.1	20.1
Mizoram	939.3	31.31	11.5	51.5
Nagaland	1147.6	38.25	25	29.0
Odisha	736	24.53	25.9	16.7
Puducherry	777.7	25.92	1.6	68.3
Punjab	960.8	32.03	18.1	37.5
Rajasthan	846	28.20	19.9	24.9
Sikkim	1035.2	34.51	5	25.0
Tamil Nadu	800.8	26.69	12.8	48.4
Tripura	782.7	26.09	10	26.2
Uttar Pradesh	799.9	26.66	31.7	22.3
Uttarakhand	898.6	29.95	25.2	30.6
West Bengal	830.6	27.69	22	31.9
<b>All India</b>	<b>859.6</b>	<b>28.65</b>	<b>20.9</b>	<b>31.2</b>

Source: Planning Commission Press Note on Poverty Estimates 2009-10, March 2012 and Census of India 2011

Clearly, determination of the income poverty line leaves much to be desired not least because it ignores the actual elements and rising costs of the standard spending basket of poor households whose members are forced to seek wage employment for survival. Since there is no clearly specified norm for the determination of the line, apart from some 'guesstimates' by 'experts' of the likely necessary consumption of households, there are good reasons for finding this line not only arbitrary but also unrealistic and even unfair. It is quite likely that the lower incidence of urban poverty stems from this insensitivity to the actual requirements and material conditions of a majority of the urban population.



Source: Planning Commission Press Note on Poverty Estimates 2009-10, March 2012

Of course, one basic problem with assessing the incidence of poverty, whether urban or rural, is the continued reliance on the crude single indicator of income. It is quite evident that poverty is multidimensional, encompassing a range of different although typically overlapping deprivations. It comes as no surprise that the UNDP's Multidimensional Poverty Index found the incidence of multidimensional poverty in India to be almost double that of the income poverty rate, and even slightly higher than that for urban India.

The central government has declared that it will use a multidimensional measure, based on data from the ongoing socio-economic census, to determine which households should be classified as poor. But there are still relevant concerns about whether this will actually capture the nature and extent of urban poverty in its various manifestations.

One frequently used indicator to gauge the extent of poverty is the size of the slum population. But it is clearly the case (and also increasingly recognised) that not all the slum-dwelling population is poor; nor do all the poor live in slums. The 2011 census found that around 12% of the urban population in Class I cities lived in slums, with higher rates in the larger cities.

The amenities available to the urban population may provide some further indications of their material status. For example, according to the 2011 census, nearly one-fifth (17%) of the urban population do not live in *pucca* houses. Nearly one-third (32%) of urban households — accounting for around 120 million people — live in a single room, while more than 3% of households have no exclusive room to themselves at all. Around 19% of urban households have no latrine facilities within their premises, while another 10% do not have modern water closets or improved sanitation. Around a quarter of families do not have bathing areas within their homes.

Since these can be interpreted as characteristics of extreme destitution and absolute privation rather than simple

poverty, it is noteworthy that the numbers involved here are slightly more than those described by our official system as urban poor in income terms. Once again, this points to the likelihood that the available income poverty indicators are significantly wanting in their ability to capture the true extent of poverty even in urban India.

Thus, even without any version of a *hukou*-type household registration system, which in China deprives rural migrants to urban areas access to most services that urban 'citizens' are entitled to, India has managed to provide for itself a cheap and underprovided labour force, while putting some restraint on the pace of rural-urban migration. One reason for this is that while a crisis-ridden and increasingly unviable agriculture is in a position to release labour on demand, the rate of expansion of opportunities for employment in urban India as a whole is limited. And to the extent that urban employment is growing it is quite concentrated, since the boom experienced under the post-1991 regime in India has delivered its benefits to a few regions, at a few centres and to a relatively small proportion of the population. One result of this is the Kundu exclusion effect in the form of a relatively slower pace of urbanisation. A related result is evidence of a concentration of urban poverty in India, which is somewhat different from the concentration of rural poverty. Chart 2 shows how just 10 states account for nearly four-fifths of the number of officially defined urban poor in India.

This is not only reflective of larger absolute populations or greater degrees of urbanisation. In fact, in some states urban poverty ratios are as high or even higher than rural poverty ratios, such as in Kerala, Manipur, Punjab and Uttarakhand. In other states like Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, the gap between urban and rural poverty ratios is quite small. Some states like Bihar and Manipur have very high urban poverty rates of 40% or more, even according to this very stringent measure that actually captures extreme destitution.

Thus urban poverty and extreme deprivation, of an extent far greater than captured by income poverty estimates, is the result of the pattern of growth under the neo-liberal regime, wherein a few sectors not only experience high growth but use parasitic dependence on an underpaid labour force to extract the surpluses that finance the glitter and the glamour of the wealthy enclaves of urban India.

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# Accelerating urbanisation widens social divides

By 2030, McKinsey estimates that urban India will generate nearly 70% of our GDP. Urban concentration is therefore viewed as an opportunity for further economic growth and rise in per capita income. This mercantile view is what is driving the focus on infrastructure and services to the exclusion of food and nutrition security of these urban Indians and the increasing inequality both between rural and urban India and within an expanding urban India

RAHUL GOSWAMI

IT IS THE IMMENSE SCALE of demographic movement in the country that is responsible for the optimism about the growth rate of India's gross domestic product (GDP), an optimism that has persisted through most of the decade of 2000-10 and which has only (from late-2011 and particularly in 2012) begun to be tempered. Whether the figure cited was 7% per year or 8% per year, it is a recognition of the increase, from 2001, in the urban population of India that has provided the statistical foundation for the claim that an India growing economically would lead to an India less poor. The increase in urban population between the two censuses — 2001 and 2011 — was from 286.1 million to 377.1 million. There has been rapid addition to the already large group of towns in India, from 5,161 in 2001 to 7,935 in 2011 — an astonishing rate.

Very significant economically is the increase in the number of urban agglomerations (see 'The rise of towns in India', Table 1). For the census, an urban agglomeration is a continuous urban spread comprising one or more towns and their adjoining outgrowths. These have increased in number from 384 in 2001 to 475 in 2011. The central government sees much good in this transformation and foregrounds the economic benefits of this change by employing a one-way lens. "It is well known," said the Approach Paper to the Twelfth Five-Year Plan, "that agglomeration and densification of economic activities (and habitations) in urban conglomerations stimulates economic efficiencies and provides more opportunities for earning livelihoods. Possibilities for entrepreneurship and employment increase when urban concentration takes place, in contrast to the dispersed and less diverse economic possibilities in rural areas."

According to Census of India 2011 as well as calculations by the Indian Institute for Human Settlements, the top 10 cities of India account for almost 8% of India's population, produce 15% of total economic output but occupy only approximately 0.1% of the total land area. Similarly, the 53 million-plus cities are estimated to account for 13% of the population, produce about a third of total economic output, and occupy approximately 0.2% of the land. The top 100 cities are estimated to account for 16% of the population, produce 43% of India's total output and

occupy approximately 0.26% of the land.

These estimates are necessarily rough given the absence of reliable disaggregated data for urban areas, but the emerging economic importance of cities as well as their increasing demographic presence is clear.

Over the period 2010-20, urban India is expected to create 70% of all new jobs in India and these urban jobs will be twice as productive as equivalent jobs in the rural sector, according to 'India's Urban Awakening: Building Inclusive Cities, Sustaining Economic Growth', a report by the McKinsey Global Institute in early-2010. This has projected that the population of India's cities will increase from 340 million in 2008 to 590 million by 2030 — 40% of India's total population. "In short," stated the report, "we will witness over the next 20 years an urban transformation the scale and speed of which has not happened anywhere in the world except in China. Urbanisation will spread out across India, impacting almost every state. For the first time in India's history, the nation will have five large states (Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Punjab) that will have more of their population living in cities than in villages." This is indeed the trend for these states (see Table 3) as it is also for Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Haryana.

The expectation is that as India's cities expand, India's economic profile will also change. In 1995, India's GDP was divided almost evenly between its urban and rural economies. In 2008, urban GDP accounted for 58% of overall GDP. By 2030, according to the McKinsey report's calculations, urban India will generate nearly 70% of India's GDP (see 'Bank deposits and population — three sets of cities', Table 2). Such a transformation, if it comes to pass on the lines that global financial and consumer actors want, as India's major ministries (commerce, industry, finance, food processing, agriculture) and its planning agencies want, is expected to deliver a steep increase in India's per capita income between now and 2030 wherein the number of middle class households (earning between Rs 2 lakh and Rs 10 lakh a year) will increase from 32 million to 147 million. This transformation is at the heart of the infrastructure and services obsession which is reshaping the next version of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM).

Table 1: The rise of towns in India

State	Districts	2001				2011				Change						
		Sub-districts	Number of towns		Villages	Districts	Sub-districts	Number of towns		Villages	Districts	Sub-districts	Number of towns		Villages	Towns
			Statutory towns	Census towns				Statutory towns	Census towns				Statutory towns	Census towns		
JK	14	59	72	3	6652	22	82	86	36	6551	8	23	14	33	-101	47
HP	12	109	56	1	20118	12	117	56	3	20690	0	8	0	2	572	2
PUN	17	72	139	18	12673	20	77	143	74	12581	3	5	4	56	-92	60
CHN	1	1	1	0	24	1	1	1	5	5	0	0	0	5	-19	5
UTT	13	49	74	12	16826	13	78	74	42	16793	0	29	0	30	-33	30
HAR	19	67	84	22	6955	21	74	80	74	6841	2	7	-4	52	-114	48
DEL	9	27	3	59	165	9	27	3	110	112	0	0	0	51	-53	51
RAJ	32	241	184	38	41353	33	244	185	112	44672	1	3	1	74	3319	75
UP	70	300	638	66	107452	71	312	648	267	106704	1	12	10	201	-748	211
BIH	37	533	125	5	45098	38	534	139	60	44874	1	1	14	55	-224	69
SIK	4	9	8	1	452	4	9	8	1	452	0	0	0	0	0	0
ARP	13	149	0	17	4065	16	188	26	1	5589	3	39	26	-16	1524	10
NAG	8	93	8	1	1317	11	114	19	7	1428	3	21	11	6	111	17
MAN	9	38	28	5	2391	9	38	28	23	2588	0	0	0	18	197	18
MIZ	8	22	22	0	817	8	26	23	0	830	0	4	1	0	13	1
TRI	4	38	13	10	870	4	40	16	26	875	0	2	3	16	5	19
MEG	7	32	10	6	6026	7	39	10	12	6839	0	7	0	6	813	6
ASM	23	142	80	45	26312	27	153	88	126	26395	4	11	8	81	83	89
WB	18	341	123	252	40782	19	341	129	780	40203	1	0	6	528	-579	534
JHR	18	210	44	108	32615	24	260	40	188	32394	6	50	-4	80	-221	76
ODI	30	397	107	31	51349	30	476	107	116	51313	0	79	0	85	-36	85
CHT	16	97	75	22	20308	18	149	168	14	20126	2	52	93	-8	-182	85
MP	45	259	339	55	55393	50	342	364	112	54903	5	83	25	57	-490	82
GUJ	25	226	168	74	18539	26	225	195	153	18225	1	-1	27	79	-314	106
DD	2	2	2	0	23	2	2	2	6	19	0	0	0	6	-4	6
DNH	1	1	0	2	70	1	1	1	5	65	0	0	1	3	-5	4
MAH	35	353	251	127	43711	35	355	256	279	43663	0	2	5	152	-48	157
AP	23	1125	117	93	28123	23	1128	125	228	27800	0	3	8	135	-323	143
KAR	27	175	226	44	29406	30	176	220	127	29340	3	1	-6	83	-66	77
GOA	2	11	14	30	359	2	11	14	56	334	0	0	0	26	-25	26
LAK	1	4	0	3	24	1	10	0	6	21	0	6	0	3	-3	3
KER	14	63	60	99	1364	14	63	59	461	1018	0	0	-1	362	-346	361
TN	30	201	721	111	16317	32	215	721	376	15979	2	14	0	265	-338	265
PON	4	10	6	0	92	4	8	6	4	90	0	-2	0	4	-2	4
AN	2	7	1	2	547	3	9	1	4	555	1	2	0	2	8	2

Source data: Census of India 2011, Provisional Population Totals (India, Paper 2), Number of administrative units

The McKinsey estimate is that to meet urban demand, India needs to build 350-400 km of metros and subways every year, and that between 19,000-25,000 km of road lanes would need to be built every year (including lanes for bus-based rapid transit systems), an ambition that denies altogether the impacts on land resources, on the destructive dominance of the automobile industry and proves the lie of India aspiring to a low carbon way of life.

There is another concern that has loomed above the residents of cities and towns since 2007-08, when the

effects of the global food price increases were acutely felt. This is the food and agriculture concern, the feeding of the populations of 7,935 towns and 475 urban agglomerations which will, in the calculations of the food and agri-business industry, ensure that its growth rate will be better than that of the most optimistic GDP growth rate, and will be far above that of the agricultural sector growth rate (estimated at 3.5% to 4% for 2012-17). These projections depend heavily on the fulfillment of conditions required for the next phase of a Green Revolution as envisaged by the crop biotech industry, in which 'better seeds' and

**Table 2: Bank deposits and population — three sets of cities**

City	State	City ranked by bank deposits	Population	Bank deposits in crore rupees	Per capita bank deposits
Vadodara	Gujarat	21	4157568	37023	89,050
Kanpur Nagar	Uttar Pradesh	22	6368043	35115	55,143
Thiruvananthapuram	Kerala	23	3307284	32424	98,038
Nagpur	Maharashtra	24	4653171	31792	68,323
Jalandhar	Punjab	25	2181753	30565	140,094
Ludhiana	Punjab	26	3487882	28535	81,812
Coimbatore	Tamil Nadu	27	3472578	28416	81,830
Rangareddi	Andhra Pradesh	28	5296396	27719	52,336
Surat	Gujarat	29	6079231	27663	45,504
Dehra Dun	Uttarakhand	30	1698560	26866	158,169
		<i>average</i>	<i>4070247</i>	<i>average</i>	<i>87,030</i>
Chittoor	Andhra Pradesh	51	4170468	14740	35,344
Kottayam	Kerala	52	1979384	14706	74,296
Hugli	West Bengal	53	5520389	14634	26,509
Nashik	Maharashtra	54	6109052	14604	23,906
Agra	Uttar Pradesh	55	4380793	14351	32,759
Krishna	Andhra Pradesh	56	4529009	13893	30,676
Haora	West Bengal	57	4841638	13876	28,660
Jammu	Jammu & Kashmir	58	1526406	13549	88,764
Srinagar	Jammu & Kashmir	59	1269751	13472	106,100
Mysore	Karnataka	60	2994744	13405	44,762
		<i>average</i>	<i>3732163</i>	<i>average</i>	<i>49,177</i>
East Godavari	Andhra Pradesh	81	5151549	10404	20,196
South 24 Parganas	West Bengal	82	8153176	10334	12,675
Guntur	Andhra Pradesh	83	4889230	10223	20,909
Jodhpur	Rajasthan	84	3685681	10060	27,295
Kozhikode	Kerala	85	3089543	9828	31,811
Udupi	Karnataka	86	1177908	9647	81,899
Durg	Chhattisgarh	87	3343079	9517	28,468
Paschim Medinipur	West Bengal	88	5943300	9418	15,846
Kannur	Kerala	89	2525637	9325	36,921
Kolhapur	Maharashtra	90	3874015	9156	23,634
		<i>average</i>	<i>4183312</i>	<i>average</i>	<i>29,965</i>

*Source data: (1) Quarterly Statistics on Deposits and Credit of Scheduled Commercial Banks, Reserve Bank of India, December 2011, (2) Census of India 2011, Provisional Population Totals (India, Paper 2)*

more sophisticated agronomy play key roles. The equation uses current crop production as being 100%, estimates that these methods must work on 5% less land (a not unreasonable estimate given urban expansion and rural land use change), estimates gains of 20% from “reduced losses”, further gains of 50% from “better farm practices”, and an additional big jump of 80% in gains thanks to the adoption of plant breeding and biotechnology, all of which, they promise, will raise production two-and-a-half times today’s output.

Where will that increased output go, and where does it go even today? There is a group of inter-related concerns about local needs for food and nutrition. What these cost and for

which categories of consumers, the ability of households to find and buy affordable food staples are matters that continue to be neglected because the coordination this demands is not yet recognised as an outcome, let alone a target. Although in the name of consultation and planning, the Government of India routinely discusses the need for ‘convergence’ between programmes run by ministries, there is scarcely any. The ministries of agriculture, rural development, women and child development and health do not come together to examine districts and blocks and tehsils, rather than each through their own lens, to agree on measures that benefit the households that bear the multiple burdens of high food prices, poor access to food, high burdens of communicable diseases, and suffer from

**Table 3: The decade of urban population growth**

State/UT	Population rural			Population urban			Population added	
	2001	2011	Change %	2001	2011	Change %	Rural	Urban
Andaman & Nicobar	239,954	244,411	1.86	116,198	135,533	16.64	4,457	19,335
Andhra Pradesh	55,401,067	56,311,788	1.64	20,808,940	28,353,745	36.26	910,721	7,544,805
Arunachal Pradesh	870,087	1,069,165	22.88	227,881	313,446	37.55	199,078	85,565
Assam	23,216,288	26,780,516	15.35	3,439,240	4,388,756	27.61	3,564,228	949,516
Bihar	74,316,709	92,075,028	23.90	8,681,800	11,729,609	35.11	17,758,319	3,047,809
Chandigarh	92,120	29,004	-68.51	808,515	1,025,682	26.86	-63,116	217,167
Chhattisgarh	16,648,056	19,603,658	17.75	4,185,747	5,936,538	41.83	2,955,602	1,750,791
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	170,027	183,024	7.64	50,463	159,829	216.73	12,997	109,366
Daman & Diu	100,856	60,331	-40.18	57,348	182,580	218.37	-40,525	125,232
Goa	677,091	551,414	-18.56	670,577	906,309	35.15	-125,677	235,732
Gujarat	31,740,767	34,670,817	9.23	18,930,250	25,712,811	35.83	2,930,050	6,782,561
Haryana	15,029,260	16,531,493	10.00	6,115,304	8,821,588	44.25	1,502,233	2,706,284
Himachal Pradesh	5,482,319	6,167,805	12.50	595,581	688,704	15.64	685,486	93,123
Jammu & Kashmir	7,627,062	9,134,820	19.77	2,516,638	3,414,106	35.66	1,507,758	897,468
Jharkhand	20,952,088	25,036,946	19.50	5,993,741	7,929,292	32.29	4,084,858	1,935,551
Karnataka	34,889,033	37,552,529	7.63	17,961,529	23,578,175	31.27	2,663,496	5,616,646
Kerala	23,574,449	17,455,506	-25.96	8,266,925	15,932,171	92.72	-6,118,943	7,665,246
Lakshadweep	33,683	14,121	-58.08	26,967	50,308	86.55	-19,562	23,341
Madhya Pradesh	44,380,878	52,537,899	18.38	15,967,145	20,059,666	25.63	8,157,021	4,092,521
Maharashtra	55,777,647	61,545,441	10.34	41,100,980	50,827,531	23.67	5,767,794	9,726,551
Manipur	1,590,820	1,899,624	19.41	575,968	822,132	42.74	308,804	246,164
Meghalaya	1,864,711	2,368,971	27.04	454,111	595,036	31.03	504,260	140,925
Mizoram	447,567	529,037	18.20	441,006	561,977	27.43	81,470	120,971
Nagaland	1,647,249	1,406,861	-14.59	342,787	573,741	67.38	-240,388	230,954
NCT of Delhi	944,727	419,319	-55.61	12,905,780	16,333,916	26.56	-525,408	3,428,136
Odisha	31,287,422	34,951,234	11.71	5,517,238	6,996,124	26.80	3,663,812	1,478,886
Puducherry	325,726	394,341	21.07	648,619	850,123	31.07	68,615	201,504
Punjab	16,096,488	17,316,800	7.58	8,262,511	10,387,436	25.72	1,220,312	2,124,925
Rajasthan	43,292,813	51,540,236	19.05	13,214,375	17,080,776	29.26	8,247,423	3,866,401
Sikkim	480,981	455,962	-5.20	59,870	151,726	153.43	-25,019	91,856
Tamil Nadu	34,921,681	37,189,229	6.49	27,483,998	34,949,729	27.16	2,267,548	7,465,731
Tripura	2,653,453	2,710,051	2.13	545,750	960,981	76.08	56,598	415,231
Uttar Pradesh	131,658,339	155,111,022	17.81	34,539,582	44,470,455	28.75	23,452,683	9,930,873
Uttarakhand	6,310,275	7,025,583	11.34	2,179,074	3,091,169	41.86	715,308	912,095
West Bengal	57,748,946	62,213,676	7.73	22,427,251	29,134,060	29.90	4,464,730	6,706,809

*Source data: Census of India 2011, Provisional Population Totals (India, Paper 2)*

low health and human development indices. In its note on 'Issues for the Approach to the Twelfth Plan' (2011 April), the Planning Commission said as much: "There is a perception that government programmes, especially centrally-sponsored schemes, are not sensitive enough to local needs. Also, government works in silos with little effort to achieve convergence and co-ordination across ministries and between Centre and states, even though most problems require inter-governmental and inter-ministerial coordination."

From a reading of the early results of the 66th round of the NSSO, 'Key Indicators of Household Consumer Expenditure in India, 2009-10', for the urban population, in all income

deciles including those that comprise the urban poor, the situation is already grim. Bhiwani in Haryana (population: 197,662), Bhind in Madhya Pradesh (197,332), Amroha in Uttar Pradesh (197,135) and Hardoi also in Uttar Pradesh (197,046) are four urban centres whose populations are at the median of those towns in India whose inhabitants number over 100,000. The average number of children in each (in the 0-6-year age-group) is 23,890. Based on the recommended daily dietary allowance calculated for an Indian vegetarian diet by the National Institute of Nutrition, India, the minimum annual demand of each of these four urban centres is: cereals and millets, 43,124 tonnes; pulses, 9,122 tonnes; milk and milk products (kilolitres), 33,172; roots and tubers, 22,115 tonnes; green leafy vegetables,

## The rise of towns in India

There are 17 states which have more than 10,000 villages and these 17 contain more than 94% of India's 640,867 villages. They range, in terms of the number of villages in states, from 12,581 in Punjab to 29,340 in Karnataka to 106,704 in Uttar Pradesh. As was highlighted by the Census Bureau in 2011 with the release of the provisional population totals, for the first time since Independence, the absolute increase in population is more in urban areas than in rural areas — rural-urban distribution of population is 68.84% to 31.16%; the level of urbanisation increased from 27.81% in the 2001 census to 31.16% in 2011 census; and the proportion of rural population declined from 72.19% to 68.84%.

The question for rural India is, in these 17 states, how has the trend of urbanisation during the decade of 2001-2011 affected rural habitations — have they grown into or become absorbed in urban and urbanising areas, have states experienced a net loss in number of villages?

In two states (Tamil Nadu and Gujarat) the number of villages in 2011 is 2% less than what it was in the 2001 census. In seven states (Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh) the number of villages is 1% less than the number of village habitations in 2001. In six states (Uttarakhand, Assam, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Bihar, Odisha) the number of villages is almost unchanged from the last census. In two states (Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan), there are now more villages than there were 10 years ago.

However, it is in the number of towns (statutory towns and census towns) that the absolute growth and growth rate of the population of urbanising India becomes visible. For the 17 states, the median increase in the number of towns is 142%. During the decade between censuses, Odisha and Assam added towns at a rate of more than eight a year, Gujarat added more than 10 a year, Andhra Pradesh added more than 14 a year while Maharashtra added more than 15 a year, Uttar Pradesh added 21 a year, Tamil Nadu added 26 a year, Kerala added 36 a year and West Bengal added 53 towns a year! This helps explain why, over the 10 years until 2011, the tally of villages rose by 2,279 (on a base of 638,588 villages) while the tally of towns rose by 2,774 (on a base of 5,161).

*Source data: Census of India 2011, Provisional Population Totals (India, Paper 2), Number of administrative units*

11,057 tonnes; other vegetables, 22,115 tonnes; and fruits, 11,057 tonnes. Whether through the lens of municipal services provisioning or as a consumer project, urban administrations rarely plan for the food required by their citizens — its sources, costs and alternatives that can help establish a nutrient cycle between urban consumption and rural producers.

Thus, encouraged by the global food and consumer retail industries, the financial and insurance industry, the infrastructure lobby and the automobile MNCs, supported by the recommendations of the multilateral lending agencies, India's central and state governments are to step up construction of the urban infrastructure needed to bridge the perceived gap between demand for services and their provision. In per-capita terms, India's annual capital spending of US\$ 17 is seen as embarrassingly low compared with China's US\$ 116. Such a nakedly mercantile view ignores entirely the increasing inequality both between rural and urban India and within an expanding urban India.

Detailed income distribution estimates for India were described in the study 'Human Development in India' (2010) and revealed quite high income inequality, with a Gini coefficient of 0.54 — around the same as Brazil. Estimates based on village surveys derive even higher Gini coefficients: on average, 0.645 across households and 0.595 across persons even within villages (as recorded in 'Is India Really a Country of Low Income Inequality? Observations from Eight Villages', *Review of Agrarian Studies 2011*). This is reinforced now by the latest release of consumption data from the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), the provisional results of household consumer expenditure survey of the NSS 68th round (July 2011 to June 2012). Some salient findings of the survey are: the average household monthly per capita expenditure (MPCE) in 2011-12 was estimated at Rs 1,281.45 in rural India and Rs 2,401.68 in urban India. Thus the per capita expenditure level of the urban population was, on average, about 87.4% higher than that of the rural population. The top 10% of the rural population, ranked by MPCE, had an average MPCE of Rs 3,459.77, about 6.9 times that of the bottom 10%. The top 10% of the urban population had an average MPCE of Rs 7,651.68, about 10.9 times that of the bottom 10%. And finally, in urban India, half of the population was living with an MPCE of below Rs 1,759; about 70% of the population had an MPCE of above Rs 1,295.

The rise of urban India has fuelled a limited economic growth in India during the last two decades — and particularly over the 2001-11 period, as captured by the two censuses. They have accelerated fiercely the demand for energy and natural resources related to food, water and land. The current policy framework, heavily and myopically biased towards GDP growth, will not deal with the question of access to resources and fair use of land (even considering the tired clichés of inclusive growth and more equitable development). For city India as for rural Bharat, the social divides caused by accelerating urbanisation are only widening.

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## The 'other' urban India

The most vibrant, people-driven process of urbanisation is occurring outside the large metropolises which dominate popular imagination. It is not directed by the state, as in Chandigarh and Bhubaneswar, nor developed by the private sector, as in Mundhra or Mithapur. It is the result of decisions about livelihood and residence made by thousands of individuals that coalesce to transform a 'village' into a census town

PARTHA  
MUKHOPADHYAY

### BKC and the bazaar

The imagination of the new urban India is dominated by the clumps of glass and steel that have sprung up seemingly overnight in Gurgaon, near Delhi. Pieces of this fantasy also litter the periphery of Bangalore, the IT corridor of Chennai, the sterile bubble of Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) in Mumbai, in the improbably named locality of 'Cyberabad' in Hyderabad, and many other aspiring locations around the country. This imagination knows no political boundaries. In West Bengal, the desperation of the erstwhile Left Front government's attempt is evident in the name it chose for Kolkata's shiny little corner — Nabadiganta (new horizons).

Attracted by these shiny new facades, the people of rural India

are supposed to migrate in their millions to the large cities that generate an increasingly larger share of our national income, much as the millions of Chinese have done, from the Sichuans to the Shanghais and Shenzhens, powering the inexorable Chinese growth machine that our decision-makers envy.

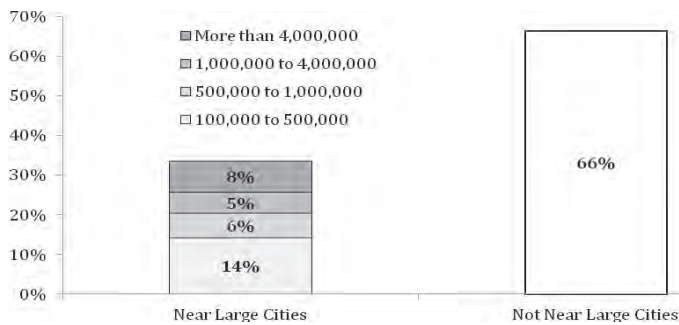
The fact that they are not doing so in large enough numbers causes much handwringing about the slow pace of urbanisation in India and some secret (and not so secret [1]) relief that our overstretched large cities have not yet been called upon to accommodate this horde. Ergo, the frenzied investment in urban infrastructure, qua JNNURM, and the new cities sought to be incubated in private 'special' economic regions like Lavasa, Mundhra, Sri City and the Delhi-Mumbai industrial corridor — a throwback to the times when

Sudharak Olwe





**Figure 1: Share of population of new census towns by proximity to large cities**



Source: Based on Pradhan (2012)

public sector townships like Bhilai, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Durgapur and Salem were to be the new urban India.

This imagination is far removed from the bustling, chaotic, commercial frenzy of the Indian bazaar evoked by earlier characterisations of urban India. Yet, the *janta* who brought the bazaar to life continue their determined march, unseen by the media that remains, with few exceptions, dazzled by the light reflecting off the shiny glass facades of this new urban India.

In the last 10 years, the reclassification of settlements from rural to urban is responsible for almost a third of the growth in urban population, while migration appears to account for less, about a fourth, with the rest being the normal natural increase in pre-existing urban areas. The character of this change challenges many preconceptions, especially simple equations of urbanisation to migration.

#### Is India's urbanisation undercounted?

The Census of India's three-fold definition of urban settlements, by size (more than 5,000), density (more than 400 persons per sq km) and especially structure of economic activity (more than 75% of male workforce in non-farm occupations) is unique. Indeed, only six countries use economic activity as a criterion for defining an urban area (none of the other five also use size and density together). This matters, because in 2001 around 56% of India's villagers lived in settlements that were denser than 400 persons per sq km and 22% of the rural population was in villages of more than 5,000 persons. By contrast, less than 8% of the population lives in rural settlements that meet the economic structure criterion. Thus, the low level of urbanisation in India can partly be attributed to the definition used by the census, in particular the economic criterion.

Further, since the census decides on which settlements are urban before the actual census is conducted, it is possible that the ex-ante and ex-post classification of settlements can differ. It turns out that in 2001, 28.1 million people

(about 10% of the urban population at that time) in 2,375 settlements were urban, but were not recognised as such by the census. So, by the census' own criteria, the urbanisation rate in 2001 was actually 30.5% instead of 27.8%.

The use of criteria other than that of the census can change this perspective considerably. Uchida and Nelson (2008) measured the proportion of people living within an hour's travel time of large (more than 50,000 persons) urban settlements. They found that, in 2001, this turned out to be 52% of the Indian population, as compared to China's 36%. So, by this measure at that time, India was more urbanised than China. Another approach, by Denis and Marius-Gnanou (2011), measured the share of population living in contiguous (defined as less than 200 metres apart) built-up areas of more than 10,000 people, based on satellite images matched geo-spatially with the population of settlements from the census. They found that 37% lived in such closely built-up settlements, as compared to 26% measured by the census (2).

How urban is a settlement that is an hour away from a large town or a settlement of more than 10,000 people living in a closely built-up area? If such settlements are seen as urban, there will be many more small towns in India as compared to those currently acknowledged by the census. But, the census is liberal compared to administrative definitions which ignore about one in seven urban residents that continue to live under rural administration — in census towns.

#### Do settlements want to be urban?

It would be inaccurate to suggest that the lack of urban status is solely a result of denial by the state. There is a reticence in becoming urban, which becomes evident when there is resistance to change in status, for example in Vasai-Virar, where 29 villages protested inclusion into the new Vasai-Virar Municipal Corporation. They were taken out by the government but this exclusion was challenged in the courts by the Vasai-Virar Municipal Corporation. Similarly, in Tamil Nadu, when the urban status of over 500 town panchayats that were previously reclassified into villages was sought to be restored, 28 settlements wished to remain villages (they were not allowed to do so). In addition to incentives to remain rural such as lower taxation, cheaper power and the absence of urban by-laws and regulations, mentioned by Bhagat (2005), there is also the change in political configurations that occur as panchayats are subsumed into municipal corporations. These relate to the change in the personal influence of specific political leaders and the relative autonomy of local government in rural (possibly more) and urban areas (possibly less). There may thus be specific cases where locally powerful elements would prefer the settlement to remain rural.

#### Census towns

Census towns are administratively rural settlements that

manage to satisfy the three-fold definition of the Census of India referred to earlier for being urban but are not recognised as urban by the government for administrative purposes, that is they are still governed by a gram panchayat. In the last 10 years, their share of urban population doubled from about 7% to around 15%. Nor was this growth around the large cities. Figure 1 shows that about two-thirds of the population in the new census towns that were recognised in the census of 2011 were not near even a Class I town (population of more than 100,000). Indeed, only 13% of the population in such towns was near large cities of over a million.

Almost the entire growth in urban population in Kerala, which saw its share of urban population rise to 48%, can be attributed to the recognition of new census towns, and while Kerala may be dismissed as an exception given its unique *desakota* form of settlement, new census towns are responsible for much of the urban growth even in states like Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal. Census towns are responsible for almost all of the growth due to reclassification over 2001-11. Unlike statutory towns, where about a fourth is more than 50,000 in population (almost three-fourths of the urban population lives in these larger statutory towns, a proportion that has declined in the last 10 years), few census towns are that large, though some are. But, since they are sites of spontaneous growth related to the market economy, it is likely that some of these can become quite large, quite soon.

### Small beginnings of large cities

The share of cities that already had more than a million people in 2001 decreased slightly from 25.6% to 24.8%, implying that these settlements grew a little slower than the rest of urban India. However, new million-plus cities emerged and the share of such cities overall grew to 30.7%. A few other cities on the threshold, like Bareilly, Tiruppur, Sholapur and Gurgaon, are likely to cross over soon if they have not done so already. Many of these towns started small. Settlements like Nashik and Aurangabad in Maharashtra, Surat and Vapi in Gujarat and Miryalaguda in Andhra Pradesh have grown by over 10 times in the last 50 years. Such small towns are proto-large towns.

However, not all small towns need to grow in order to be successful and functional. Gobindgarh, a Class II town in Punjab, has functioned as a successful commercial hub of mini-steel mills while small in size (Kundu and Bhatia 2002). Similarly, Harda in Madhya Pradesh has functioned effectively as a market hub while staying a similar size (Krishnamurthy 2011).

### Conclusion

The process of urbanisation reflected in the growth of small towns and census towns is not directed by the state, as in Chandigarh and Bhubaneswar, nor developed by the private sector, as in Mundhra or Mithapur. Instead, it is the result of decisions about livelihood and residence made by thousands

of individuals that coalesce to transform a 'village' into a census town. These settlements are important because they embody a vibrant people-driven, market-centred process, in contrast to the many derelict state-promoted industrial estates that dot the countryside. Many of them will grow into large cities and others will provide quiet but significant support to India's transformation. Ignoring them will not only diminish our understanding of this change, it will also keep our urban policy reactive, rather than proactive, anticipating sites of change and movement.

As urbanisation spreads through the Indian countryside, it will take a myriad such forms, many of them repugnant to the regulations of the town and country planning laws and the visualisations of bureaucrats bedazzled by the orderliness of western societies where urbanism has not just matured, but is well on its way to gerontocratic gentility. They will, in despair, try to hold on to the threatened neatness of Chandigarh and turn to the promised beauty of the Lavasas and such townships, premised on a gated exclusion. At such times, they would be wise to turn for advice to the architect, Le Corbusier. When confronted with the changes that residents had made to his housing project at Pessac, he said (Boudon 1979: 2): "*Vous savez, c'est toujours la vie qui a raison, l'architecte qui a tort.*" (You know, it is always life that is right and the architect who is wrong.)

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### Endnotes

1 Delhi's population growth rate has fallen from over 4% per year in the last four decades to less than 2% in the last 10 years, but one of those still openly worried about migration is its chief minister, Sheila Dikshit. At the 57th meeting of the National Development Council, she is reported as saying: "Delhi's burgeoning population trend is further exacerbated by the continuous and unbridled influx of people from all over the country. Higher wages, better educational and healthcare facilities, more employment opportunities are some of the factors responsible for the continuous influx." (*Times of India*, December 28, 2012) Last accessed December 28, 2012 at [http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-12-28/delhi/36035709\\_1\\_sheila-dikshit-full-statehood-influx](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-12-28/delhi/36035709_1_sheila-dikshit-full-statehood-influx)

2 This is the share of population living in urban settlements of more than 10,000 people, as distinct from the total urban population share of 27.8%

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# Transition towns

The 74th constitutional amendment has on paper devolved power to urban local bodies. But even a cursory look at small towns reveals that elected representatives have little knowledge of their powers or responsibilities, cannot read or frame budgets and fail to generate local resources for planned development. Many of these towns are still transitioning between large village and town, with even basic public services absent, particularly for the poor

KALPANA SHARMA

AS INDIA CONTINUES to urbanise, it is its small towns — whose population is typically around 1 lakh or less — that should become the focus of new research. This is the ‘other’ urban story, one located outside the metropolitan and larger cities that draw most of the attention and funds both in terms of development and research.

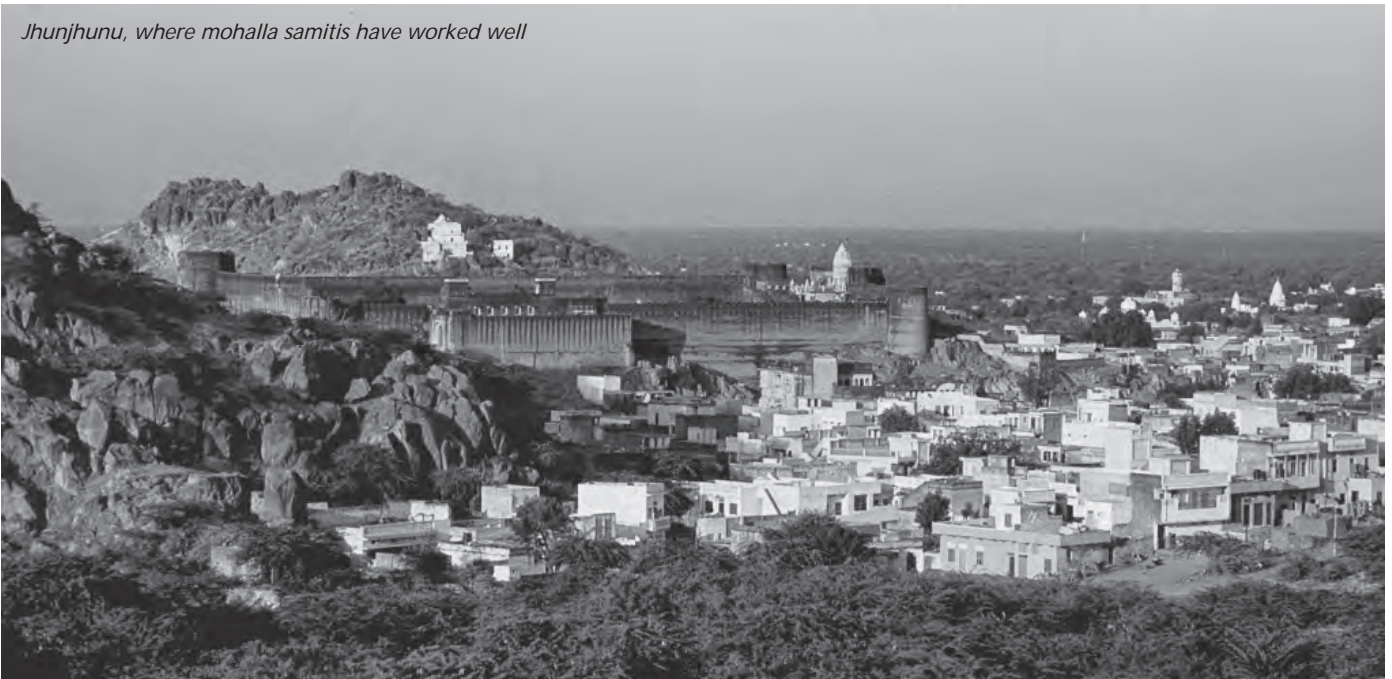
Many small towns are transition points between the urban and the rural. The process of moving from rural to urban throws up unique challenges that require more than standard solutions. This article, based on visits in 2009 to seven small towns in north India — Madhubani in Bihar, Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan, Rajnandgaon and Janjgir in Chhattisgarh, Sehore in Madhya Pradesh, Narnaul in Haryana and Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh (1), attempts to set out the challenges of governing such small towns, and limitations of the existing system.

The definition of small towns used here is urban settlements

with a population of less than 1 lakh although both Jhunjhunu and Mirzapur had populations exceeding 1 lakh. The Census of India differentiates between larger urban agglomerations/towns with populations in excess of 1 lakh and statutory towns and census towns. Statutory towns are places with a municipality, a cantonment board or a notified town area committee. Census towns, on the other hand, are defined as any settlement with a population of at least 5,000, a density greater than 400 persons/sq km, and with over 75% male workers in non-agricultural occupations. These would be large villages that are, in effect, transition towns. The provisional figures for the 2011 census have 4,041 statutory towns, 3,894 census towns, 475 urban agglomerations/towns and 981 outgrowths (defined as areas contiguous to a statutory town but outside the town limits, such as a railway colony, or a university area) (2).

Largely due to imperfect implementation of the 74th amendment, most small towns confront common problems.

*Jhunjhunu, where mohalla samitis have worked well*



These include a finance gap that happens because of a lack of capacity at the local body to raise revenue, inadequate transfer of funds from the state or central government, and the inability to attract investors.

There is also lack of planning because the urban local body lacks the capacity to undertake land use and other forms of planning. In any case, urban planning continues to be centralised with decision-making powers vested in the central and/or state governments.

One consequence of these two shortcomings is the increase of urban poverty in small towns, with the poor being deprived of basic urban services. At the same time, the finance gap also affects the delivery of all urban services and affects poor and rich alike.

### Finance gap

The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 was meant to devolve power to urban local bodies. Yet even a cursory look at the situation in numerous small towns reveals that this has not happened uniformly. On paper, urban local bodies with powers granted under this amendment exist. But, the people elected to them have little knowledge of their powers or responsibilities.

Even where greater political autonomy was granted nominally, it has not translated into financial autonomy. Urban local bodies in small towns are usually unable to collect the few taxes they are entitled to collect such as property tax, water tax, commercial tax, vehicle tax, etc. They simply do not have the manpower for the task. As a result, they depend almost entirely on grants from the state government or centrally sponsored schemes to finance even the delivery of basic services. In turn, the poor conditions prevailing in small towns and dismal urban infrastructure deter private investors from other parts of the country from bringing fresh investment into such towns (3).

Additionally, in many urban local bodies, elected representatives are unable to read budgets. Even in a town like Mirzapur, which in 2009 had one of the most highly educated municipal bodies with four practising lawyers and several post-graduates, elected representatives were unable to formulate projects for their constituency to submit to the urban body (4). As a result, the chairperson of the urban body — who is either directly elected or chosen by elected representatives — and the bureaucrat, the executive officer, take most of the decisions including formulating the budget.

### Centralised planning

The 74th amendment has also devolved power to urban local bodies to undertake planning for their respective urban settlements. But they face several constraints. First, they do not possess the institutional capacity to undertake local



planning. Secondly, the power to plan lies in centralised bodies at the central and state levels.

While state governments have planning bodies that determine the way urban areas grow, at the Centre there is the Town and Country Planning Organisation (TCPO). This is a top-down structure under the Union Ministry of Urban Affairs, which is described as ‘an apex technical advisory and consultant organisation on matters concerning urban and regional planning strategies, research, appraisal, and monitoring of central government schemes and development policies’, (5). Set up in 1962 after the merger of the Town Planning Organisation (TPO) established by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1955 to develop the first master plan for Delhi and the Central Regional and Urban Planning Organisation (CRUPO), which was tasked to plan for the Delhi region as well as steel towns, river valley projects, etc, TCPO became a part of the urban affairs ministry. TCPO also works with state governments and assists them

in policies relating to 'urbanisation, town planning, urban transportation, metropolitan planning, human settlement policies (and) planning legislation' (6).

While this is being done as expertise is not easily available everywhere, particularly in smaller towns, a top-down centralised system does not necessarily serve the needs of small towns where there is no uniform pattern of growth, where there are different historical reasons that determine the way a town has developed, and where the ability to generate local resources for planned development vary. Many of these towns are still in transition between large village and town and hence do not fit into established norms of urban planning.

As required under the provisions of the 74th amendment, district planning committees comprising elected representatives are supposed to have been formed. They are expected to formulate and lay down norms for land use, amongst other things. In fact, it is rare to come across a small town — barring a 'company town' such as Bhilai in Chhattisgarh — where land use has been planned. Many small towns do not even possess an accurate town map.

The absence of planning is especially visible in the handling of urban poverty. Small towns are the first stop for many rural migrants. For many it is a transition point to a bigger city. As in larger cities, rural migrants set up base on any available open land within the town limits, or just outside. In the course of time, some of these settlements get formalised with the residents receiving land *pattas*. Others are shifted to the outskirts of the town. But in the majority of cases, even if some basic services like water and electricity are provided, the town's infrastructure does not *plan* to accommodate these poor. Often, the poor live outside the network of underground sewerage — if and where it exists at all — or the electricity grid. Other services, such as removal of solid waste, also extend only partially to these areas.

### Urban poverty

The incidence of poverty in small towns is often higher than in the big cities due to a combination of lower per capita income, lack of opportunities in the organised sector and fewer secondary activities. According to studies (Kundu 2001) (7), the graph for the incidence of poverty seems to follow the population size of urban settlements — the smaller the population, the higher the percentage of people living below the poverty line. There is also evidence that along with poverty, the percentage of households without adequate access to basic amenities like drinking water, toilets and electricity increases in proportion to population as the size of the town decreases.

Thus, poor management of municipal affairs, linked to finance but also to the capability of those running the urban local body, affects poor communities most. Services such

as sewerage or water supply are skewed in favour of the privileged. Most slum settlements are underserved, or not provided with any of these basic urban services.

The contrast is particularly stark in older towns that have a colonial history. Here the deliberate division between the company town and the *kasbah* remains entrenched despite the end of colonial rule. Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh for example is typical of such towns. The old city is a maze of extremely narrow roads while the *sarkari* area is neat and orderly with prized locations overlooking the river reserved for the bungalows of government officials. Sewerage lines in this part of the town skip the areas where the poorest communities live. An estimated 29% of Mirzapur's population of 205,264 (2001 census) is poor, living in one of the 51 listed slum colonies. Many of these colonies have no water or electricity.

### Delivery of services

Another consequence of poorly managed finance is the failure of municipal bodies to deliver basic urban services. The management of solid waste in small towns is a particularly useful indicator to judge the efficiency of urban local bodies. Metropolitan cities are better provided with both water and solid waste management systems than other urban centres. In fact, only one-third of Class I cities and one-fifth of small towns have sewerage systems. Clearly, as investment levels are higher in the former due to concentration of population, their residents are better served (8).

For efficient solid waste management (SWM), considerable capital investment is needed. In metros, motorised transport is used to collect and dispose of solid waste. There are funds to ensure that these vehicles are well maintained. Some small towns might have vehicles but more often than not these cannot be used because of poor maintenance. As a result, they are dependent on manual collection or using cycle rickshaws.

Many municipal bodies in small towns do not have the funds to transport solid waste to dumps outside the urban area. As a result, waste is dumped within town limits. Hence, while in Mirzapur you see piles of garbage alongside the temples that dot the banks of the river Ganga, empty plots within town limits inevitably become garbage dumps in other towns.

### Experiments in local democracy

Despite the apparent failure of urban local bodies and the crisis in the delivery of services, many smaller towns are throwing up interesting experiments in local democracy. In the 74th amendment, the concept of citizen involvement in running urban areas has been incorporated within the idea of ward committees. However, while ward committees are mandatory in towns with a population exceeding 3 lakh, small towns such as the ones mentioned above do not have

to follow this rule. As a result there is no formal mechanism for citizen participation or consultation.

A number of non-governmental organisations working in small towns have tried to organise people at the neighbourhood level through mohalla samitis. The results have been mixed. This writer observed some of this variation during visits to the seven small towns, where a clear sense emerged of where neighbourhood organisations worked and could be sustained, and where they did not.

In Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan, the mohalla samiti experiment has worked quite well in middle class housing colonies. Here, even though the residents are not a homogenous group in terms of caste, they are largely Hindu and from the upper and middle castes. They also are in the bracket of people who are able to buy their own homes.

With the municipal body unable to keep the neighbourhood clean, a number of localities in Jhunjhunu have set up their own mohalla samitis that pay extra to the municipal sweeper to clean the open drains. In some neighbourhoods, people have turned vacant plots that had become garbage dumps into gardens. The municipal body has now adopted this by contributing 70% of the cost, expecting the neighbourhood group to raise the remaining 30%.

In poorer areas, the mohalla idea has worked where there is already an established group that has come together on an issue. For instance, in Narnaul's Nai Basti, Nari Network, a women's self-help group, already existed. This group has now extended itself to dealing with solid waste and water problems in the neighbourhood. The women's determination has yielded some results, but they are limited by the fact that decisions, such as extending the water network to their mohalla, or laying sewerage lines that exist elsewhere in Narnaul but have not been laid here, are outside their remit.

## Conclusion

There is a lot of untapped potential in small towns. Many of them are the exact size where interventions that are designed to meet their specific needs could transform these urban settlements into ecologically sustainable models of urban development. But for this to happen, research must precede the formulation of urban policies. For instance, ideally, town plans for small towns should be the result of consultation and involvement with all classes of residents. Through such a process, backed by adequate research, a more useful and sustainable town plan could emerge instead of the current tendency of adapting generic town plans for each location.

Another area that needs to be explored is whether and how the 74th amendment is being implemented in small towns, and how the efficiency of the urban local body can

be enhanced. Such research should specifically address the question of the financial health of urban local bodies and how they can generate more income, thereby reducing their current dependence on state and central grants.

Lastly, the efficacy of the provision for citizen participation in the 74th amendment needs a closer look. Has the provision been implemented? Has it worked? Have citizens felt that their voices have been heard? The examples above suggest that for citizen initiatives to be sustained, a system of consultation between the governed and those who govern needs to be put in place. In the absence of such a system, only a few groups — more often than not middle class and educated — will persist while others will inevitably give up.

*(This article is an abbreviated version of a paper that appeared in the Review of Urban Affairs in the Economic and Political Weekly, Vol XLVII No 30, July 28, 2012, <http://www.epw.in/review-issues/rejuvenating-indias-small-towns.html>)*

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## Endnotes

1 These visits were facilitated by PRIA (Participatory Research in Asia) for a monograph by the author, 'India's Small and Medium Towns: A Story of Lost Opportunities', March 2009. The purpose of the study was to look at implementation of the 74th amendment, whether elected representatives were aware of their rights and duties, whether local community groups were satisfied with their performance, and whether these groups had tried to intervene in the delivery of basic services such as solid waste disposal. This paper goes beyond the largely descriptive documentation of the small towns in the monograph and attempts to suggest an agenda for future research that would contribute towards formulating a policy for small towns

2 Census of India 2011, 'Provisional Population Totals Urban Agglomerations and Cities'

3 K C Sivaramakrishnan, Amitabh Kundu, B N Singh in *Handbook of Urbanisation in India*, Oxford University Press, 2005, page 52

4 In an interview during the visit, the commissioner of Mirzapur, Satyajit Thakur, IAS, said: "Ward members are supposed to formulate projects and submit them. They should generate some income. They do not even use the resources that they have. They are highly politicised and discriminate on that basis. They are not even collecting the taxes that they can. They keep on hoping that the government will help. It is not as if they do not have the money. They cannot even pay their employees." (Mirzapur, February 27, 2009)

5 <http://www.urbanindia.nic.in/theministry/subordinateoff/tcpc/tcpc.htm> (accessed May 2012)

6 <http://www.urbanindia.nic.in/theministry/subordinateoff/tcpc/tcpc.htm> (accessed May 2012)

7 'Industrial Growth in Small and Medium Towns and Their Vertical Integration: The Case of Gobindgarh, Punjab, India' by Amitabh Kundu and Sutinder Bhatia. Management of Social Transformations-MOST. Discussion Paper No 57 [http://www.unesco.org/most/dsp57\\_chap1.htm](http://www.unesco.org/most/dsp57_chap1.htm) (accessed May 2012)

8 'Status of Water Supply and Solid Waste Management in Urban Areas', National Institute of Urban Affairs, June 2005

## Size matters

Size clearly matters in the hierarchy of urban agglomerations. Most programmes including JNNURM are directed at the big cities. Basic civic services including electricity, sanitation and clean drinking water for the poor in small cities and towns are abysmal, and hardly better than rural areas. The widening gap in income levels between rural and urban areas cannot be bridged without developing small cities and towns

*R B BHAGAT*

THE RELATIONSHIP between urbanisation and human wellbeing has been a matter of intense debate, with over-urbanisation evoking a negative response in spite of the fact that it has no empirical basis (Sovani 1964). Since the start of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan, however, urbanisation has been recognised as a positive factor in India's economic development. This is because about 60-65% of GDP accrues from urban areas (Planning Commission 2008). In the Twelfth Five-Year Plan (2012-17), the urban transition is being considered a major challenge requiring massive expansion in urban infrastructure and services (Ahluwalia 2011).

With increasing urbanisation human wellbeing should have been rising, but it is not. Our urban areas are known for poor provision of civic amenities like water and sanitation, and are burdened with air pollution, traffic congestion and electricity failures. Small cities and towns suffer most.

In this respect, former President Abdul Kalam's suggestion of PURA (Providing Urban Amenities to Rural Areas) — focusing policy and programmes on small cities and towns — assumes significance (Kalam 2003).

There are around 8,000 cities and towns in India varying enormously in size and pace of growth. Their growth potential differs according to economic base, employment opportunities and living conditions. The Mumbai Urban Agglomeration comprises 18.4 million people according to the 2011 census whereas the smallest town has a population of less than 5,000. It would be interesting to learn how civic amenities vary in the entire spectrum of urban space and the consequent challenges to urban development. This article questions the extent to which civic amenities differ among the urban poor by urban hierarchy.

There is no doubt that the big cities have benefited more through the agglomeration economy. Most programmes flow to the big cities, while small cities and towns have been relegated to the background. This clearly ignores the fact that better rural and urban linkages can be established only by developing small cities and towns. There has been a serious lack of vision regarding small cities and towns, where the urban poor are severely

deprived of civic amenities. The information presented here pertains to NFHS 3 (National Family Health Survey 3) for the year 2005-06 which assessed a variety of household assets and amenities by size class of cities and towns. In NFHS 3, cities and towns are classified as mega city (more than 5 million), large city (1-5 million), small city (1 lakh to 1 million), large towns (50,000 to 1 lakh) and small towns (less than 50,000).



Rajesh Vora

### Access to civic amenities in small cities and towns

India's 8,000-odd cities and towns have varied economic bases and ability to generate resources from tax and non-tax sources. Big cities have higher employment in the organised sector compared to small urban centres. In many small urban centres, a sizeable proportion of the workforce is also dependent on agriculture (Kundu, Bagchi, Kundu 1999). Thus, size as a measure of urban centre not only reflects population concentration but also its economic strength. The provision of civic services is expected to be directly related to the size of the urban centre. An earlier study showed that civic amenities like access to electricity, drinking water, clean fuel (LPG), and waste water outlets were positively associated with the size class of urban centres. However, this was not true for toilet facilities because of the large presence of slums in big cities (Bhagat 2011). But when we look at more recent data and take only flush toilets, the disadvantage for small towns and cities is distinctly evident. There is substantial variation in toilet facilities, with mega cities showing 96% access to any flush toilet compared to 64% for households with access to flush toilets in small towns. The same is true for LPG (see Table 1).

At the state level, the situation remains unchanged. Small cities and towns in poorer states like Bihar, Orissa, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh show much lower provision of civic services compared to small cities and towns in better-off states like Punjab, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka. Thus, within the same size class, inter-state disparities continue to manifest (Bhagat 2011).

### The poor in small cities and towns

While households in small cities and towns have low access to civic amenities, poor households living in them are much worse off. The NFHS also provided data on civic amenities by wealth index, to measure the economic status of households. The wealth index was constructed using household assets and housing characteristics. (The NFHS 3 wealth index is based on the following 33 assets and housing characteristics: household electrification; type of windows; drinking water source; type of toilet facility; type of flooring; material of exterior walls; type of roofing; cooking fuel; house ownership; number of household members per sleeping room; ownership of a bank or post-office account; and ownership of a mattress, pressure cooker, chair, cot/bed, table, electric fan, radio/transistor, black-and-white television, colour television, sewing machine, mobile telephone, any other telephone, computer, refrigerator, watch or clock, bicycle, motorcycle or scooter, animal-drawn cart, car, water pump, thresher, tractor, etc. [International Institute for Population Sciences and Macro, 2007].) The sample is then divided into five quintiles, that is, five groups with an equal number of households in each group. Access to civic amenities for households in the lowest two quintiles (the bottom 40% of households), who mostly

Table 1: Percentage of households with access to selected civic amenities by size class of urban centres, 2005-06

India	Electricity	Flush toilet	Improved source of drinking water	LPG	Sampled households
Mega city (5 million and more)	99.1	96.2	89.7	75.2	7,672
Large city (1 million to 5 million)	95.9	87.4	97.0	70.4	16,166
Small city (1 lakh to 1 million)	93.6	80.9	95.0	57.9	7,759
Large town (50,000 to 1 lakh)	90.2	79.6	96.3	53.4	4,116
Small town (less than 50,000)	89.2	64.6	92.3	46.2	14,511
<b>All urban areas</b>	<b>93.1</b>	<b>78.7</b>	<b>94.1</b>	<b>58.7</b>	<b>50,224</b>

Source: National Family Health Survey, 2005-2006

Table 2: Access to civic amenities among urban poor (bottom 40% in wealth quintile) by size class of cities and towns, 2005-06

Size class	Electricity	Any toilet facility	Improved source of drinking water	LPG
Mega city (more than 5 million)	75.6	51.8	97.0	1.3
Large city (1-5 million)	49.6	38.1	96.8	2.0
Small city (1 lakh to 1 million)	52.8	24.3	86.3	1.0
Large town (50,000-1 lakh)	43.0	20.9	94.3	0.0
Small town (less than 50,000)	51.8	20.5	89.8	0.6

Source: National Family Health Survey, 2005-06

constitute the urban poor, are presented in Table 2.

One-fifth of the urban poor in small towns have access to toilet facilities whereas this increases to more than half of households in mega cities. The gap in access to electricity among poor households across size class is also huge. About 75% of poor households in mega cities have access to electricity compared to about 50% of households in small towns (see Table 2). These two indicators distinctly show that the poor in small cities and towns are hugely deprived of access to certain civic





amenities that are essential for a good life and survival.

The reason for the extreme deprivation in small cities and towns in general and the urban poor in particular lies in their poor economic base, lack of planning, resources and support from state governments. Many of these small towns are still governed by rural local bodies like panchayats (Bhagat 2005). Thus in actual practice, both administratively and economically they are not treated differently from villages, although demographically small cities and towns are growing as fast as big cities due to their higher natural increase (Bhagat and Mohanty 2009).

The poor in small cities and towns are no different from the rural poor in terms of access to healthcare. Several studies have shown that out-of-pocket expenditure among the poor is huge in India (about 70%), keeping them in a vicious circle of poverty (High-Level Expert Group on Universal Health Coverage 2011). The spatial exclusion of urban poor leading to their concentration in small cities and towns seems to be a logical outcome of the forces of development as well as exclusionary urban policies and programmes that were followed more specifically during the last two decades of neo-liberalism.

### Conclusions and suggestions

The evidence suggests that access to civic amenities varies in accordance with the size categories of cities and towns. Small cities and towns fare the worst in access to civic services like electricity, LPG, flush toilets and improved sources of drinking water. The small cities and towns located in low-income states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh show poorer

access to civic amenities compared to small cities and towns in high-income states like Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. Further, the urban poor living in small cities and towns are hugely deprived of access to civic amenities compared with the urban poor living in big cities. India's urban policies and programmes, which are mostly sponsored by the central government, focus on big cities. The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), a flagship programme of the UPA government, is one such example. India's numerous small cities and towns that are close to rural areas have enormous potential to work as catalysts for rural development. Ironically, urban development in the country is a state subject and state governments have neither the resources nor the vision to develop small cities and towns in synergy with rural areas. On the other hand, centrally sponsored schemes are partly responsible for thwarting the state's agency and perpetuating their dependence on the central government both in terms of vision and resources.

It is time to implement the strategies of PURA to boost rural industrialisation and opportunities for off-farm employment for the large number of rural unemployed youth in order to raise income levels of the rural populace who constitute two-thirds of India's population and contribute a mere one-third to GDP. There is a widening gap in income levels between rural and urban areas that cannot be bridged without developing small cities and towns.

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# Big city, big share

The well-planned development of small cities can help disperse rural migration and prevent overcrowding of the metropolitan centres. JNNURM funds can make much more of a difference in these smaller towns. But the bulk of the allocation under JNNURM goes to the three mega cities of Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata

SAMA KHAN

## Introduction

The Government of India launched the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) in December 2005 for integrated development of urban infrastructure and services. JNNURM was launched with the goal of achieving 'reforms-driven', fast-track and planned development of identified mission cities with the aim of making them self-governing. It was launched as a city-based programme with an estimated investment of Rs 120,536 crore in the Mission period of seven years beginning 2005-06 (1). Under JNNURM, additional central assistance would be provided as a grant to the implementing agencies (2).

## Basic features

JNNURM was launched with four components:

- Urban Infrastructure and Governance (UIG)
- Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns (UIDSSMT)
- Basic Services to Urban Poor (BSUP)
- Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP)

UIG and UIDSSMT are administered by the Ministry of Urban Development, while BSUP and IHSDP are administered by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty-Alleviation.

UIG is a scheme for large cities such as Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Delhi and Ahmedabad, 28 other cities with a population of more than 1 million, 17 state capitals, and 13 cities of religious and tourist importance — a total of 65 cities. It focuses on infrastructure projects relating to water supply and sanitation, sewerage, solid waste management, road network, urban transport and redevelopment of old city areas with a view to upgrading infrastructure therein, shifting industrial and commercial establishments to conforming areas, etc (3).

UIDSSMT is the corresponding scheme applicable to all other cities and towns, according to the 2001 census, except cities/towns covered under UIG.

BSUP focuses on integrated development of slums through projects providing shelter, basic services and other related civic amenities with a view to providing utilities to the urban poor (4). Its objective is, inter alia, provision of security of tenure at affordable prices, improved housing, water supply and sanitation, and ensuring delivery through convergence of other already existing universal services of the government for education, health and social security. The sub-mission covers the same 65 cities as UIG (5).

IHSDP is the corresponding scheme applicable to all cities and towns according to the 2001 census, except cities/towns covered under BSUP.

The funding for all these schemes comes from the Union, state and local governments but their respective shares depend on the size of the city and its location. The details are given in Table 1.

## Performance

It was expected that access to Mission funds would be performance-oriented and competitive in nature. But eventually, the practice of pleasing everyone prevailed as in all government programmes. Additionally, two other criteria were applied for allocating the funds. One was the urban population of the states and its proportion to the urban population in the country. The second was the so-called ceiling for states within which JNNURM assistance had to be accommodated (Sivaramakrishnan 2011). These two postulates resulted in larger states and larger cities getting more of the allocation. As a result, the central share allocation and release is higher for larger states and cities. Table 2 presents allocations for the four schemes and some mega cities.

So, even though the absence of basic services is more prominent in the smaller urban centres than the big cities, under JNNURM the focus on UIDSSMT and IHSDP is limited compared to UIG and BSUP. The bigger cities continue to attract funding from outside as their problems are more visible, while the smaller urban centres are neglected. One of the reasons for this is the low investment in these smaller urban centres and the inability of local bodies to raise independent revenues. Small towns lack financial autonomy



as a result of inadequate transfer of funds from the state or central government and the inability to attract investors (Sharma 2012) (7).

#### Small towns are better performers

If JNNURM had remained performance-oriented, small towns may have got a better deal since they seem to be better at implementing projects. The ratio of central share released to the total central share commitment is one measure of effectiveness, since it measures how quickly the money is being utilised. For UIDSSMT and IHSDP it is 77.3% and 65.1% respectively, whereas for UIG and BSUP it is 58.9% and 53.2% respectively (8). This means that UIDSSMT and IHSDP are performing better than UIG and BSUP as far as accessing JNNURM funds is concerned (Figure 1).

The prominent cities of the large states have also had access to a variety of sources, multilateral, bilateral and private sector, for their needs over the years. Other states like Odisha, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Assam, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh or the northeastern states have not been that fortunate. Though cities in these states such as Patna, Bhubaneswar, Raipur, Guwahati, Shillong, Shimla, Agartala, etc, are not as populous, the need for strengthening their infrastructure and reinforcing and improving their governance is critical. Even under UIG and BSUP, as seen in Table 2, the focus is on the mega cities

compared to the smaller cities. If the focus was instead on the small among the big cities, it may have helped them become self-governing. However, JNNURM is not based on any assessment of whether central assistance would be more effective in some cities than in others.

#### JNNURM: Project or policy response?

JNNURM is both a project response as well as a policy response. However, it has not served to make our larger cities more self-governing. If it is a project response then the big cities will have large projects with higher costs compared to the smaller cities. If, on the other hand, a self-governing system for cities is the goal then the whole course of project sanction, implementation and monitoring will assume a different character and reforms towards governance will have to determine the course of the programme (Sivaramakrishnan 2011).

#### JNNURM for small towns: UIDSSMT and IHSDP

JNNURM also includes small towns under its sub-missions on UIDSSMT and IHSDP that have covered 640 (as of August 2010) and 864 towns (as of September 2011) so far respectively, out of 3,799 statutory towns in India according to the 2001 census (9). Table 3 shows the distribution of JNNURM allocations by size of towns. Census towns, of which

Scheme	Category of cities/Towns/UAs	Centre	State	Local (6)
UIG	Cities/UAs with 4 million-plus population, according to 2001 census	35%	15%	50%
	Cities/UAs with 1 million-plus but less than 4 million population, according to 2001 census	50%	20%	30%
	Cities/Towns/UAs in northeastern states and Jammu and Kashmir	90%	10%	-
	Cities/UAs other than those mentioned above	80%	10%	10%
BSUP	Cities with 4 million-plus population, according to 2001 census	50%	50%	
	Cities with 1 million-plus but less than 4 million population, according to 2001 census	50%	50%	
	Cities/Towns in northeastern states and Jammu and Kashmir	90%	10%	
	Other cities	80%	20%	
UIDSSMT	Cities/Towns	80%	10%	10%
	Cities/Towns in northeastern states and Jammu and Kashmir	90%	10%	-
IHSDP	Cities/Towns	80%	20%	-
	Special category states	90%	10%	-

Source: Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India, Modified Guidelines For Projects of Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission on Urban Infrastructure and Governance (September, 2006) Pg 13; Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty-Alleviation, Government of India, Modified Guidelines for BSUP, February 2009, Pg 10

Note: Under UIG, for setting up desalination plants within 20 km from the sea shore and other urban areas predominantly facing water scarcity due to brackish water and non-availability of surface source, the funding pattern is divided between 80% central share and 10% each for state and ULB

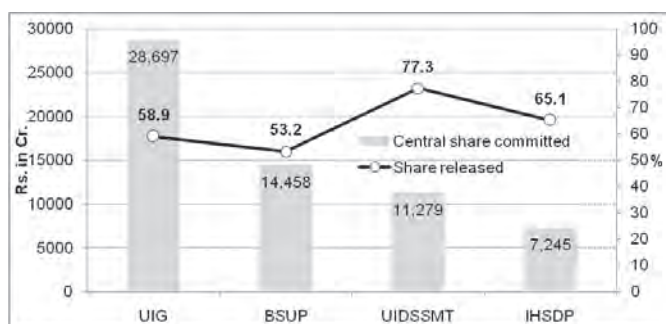
there were 1,362 in 2001, are settlements that are recognised by the census to fulfil all the requirements of being urban but are not recognised as such by the administrative system and are therefore not eligible for JNNURM funding.

As in the case of UIG and BSUP, under IHSDP and UIDSSMT as well, the larger and more prominent Class I cities have received a larger share of allocations. Under UIDSSMT and IHSDP, 46.5% and 37.7% of the total allocations have gone to Class I towns respectively, leaving 53.5% and 62.3% of the total allocations for the remaining Class II to VI towns respectively, but of these, the smaller Class V and VI towns seem to be most neglected with only 2.4% and 4.5% of the total allocations under UIDSSMT and IHSDP. Furthermore, while over 40% of Class I and Class II towns have been

Mega cities	Allocation (Rs crore)	Share
UIG	59,918.3	54.8%
Delhi	7,197.1	6.6%
Mumbai	5,276	4.8%
Kolkata	4,355.2	4.0%
BSUP	26,844.2	24.6%
Mumbai	2,870.0	2.6%
Kolkata	2,675.6	2.4%
Delhi	1,814.5	1.7%
UIDSSMT	12920.5	11.8%
IHSDP	9,637.98	8.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>109,320.98</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: JNNURM database (as on September 2010)

Figure 1: Central share commitment and release under JNNURM



Source: UIG database (as on March 23, 2012), BSUP database (as on January 2, 2012), UIDSSMT (as on March 31, 2012) and IHSDP database (as on January 2, 2012)

covered, a much smaller proportion of Class III, IV, V and VI towns have benefited from these two schemes.

### Conclusion

The 65 cities under UIG and BSUP account for 79% of total allocations, with 42% of the total urban population residing in these cities, whereas only 21% of allocations are attributed to the remaining cities that account for 57% of the total urban population. The allocation for the three mega cities of Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata together is Rs 24,188 crore under UIG and BSUP, which is much more than the total allocation of Rs 22,558 crore under UIDSSMT and IHSDP for all the smaller towns. The focus seems to be on fulfilling the infrastructure requirements of big cities, ignoring hundreds of smaller towns.

Even within the JNNURM schemes for smaller towns, the bigger among them receive most of the funds. Among the smaller (non-Class I towns), a large component, that of census towns, is ignored and cannot access these funds because they remain under rural panchayat administration.

Scheme	Allocation/ Towns	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V	Class VI	Total
UIDSSMT	Allocation	6,011	3,406	2,378	815	226	82	12,918
	Towns	136	157	192	113	30	11	639
IHSDP	Allocation	4,132	2,551	2,735	1,044	388	110	10,961
	Towns	171	197	257	153	60	21	859
Total statutory towns		369	466	1,159	1,115	502	123	3,734
Census towns		10	29	226	448	540	109	1,362

*Source: UIDSSMT database, as on August 31, 2010; IHSDP database, as on September 1, 2011; Census 2001*

*Note: Total statutory towns exclude the 65 cities under UIG and BSUP. Siddharthnagar in Uttar Pradesh could not be located with an approved project cost of Rs 2 crore under UIDSSMT and five towns in Uttar Pradesh — Arthala, Bichhari, Saona, Ghasiganj and Salarganj could not be located under IHSDP*

The population of these census towns has more than doubled from the 2001 to 2011 census and their share in the population of non-Class I towns has grown from 18% in 2001 to 32% in 2011. A large and growing share of the small town population is thus being denied access to the JNNURM programme.

What seems to be forgotten is that urban India also lives in small towns. Investments should be directed to these growing cities for a more balanced urban growth. The number of towns in India has increased from 5,161 in 2001 to 7,935 in 2011 (10). However the growth in the number of towns has not been accompanied by the supply of basic services, as a result of which most small towns appear more rural in character than urban, even as their economy is non-agricultural. Declining governmental investment in infrastructure and basic services in smaller towns over the years and their failure to attract private or institutional investment has increased the disparity within the urban economy (Kundu 2006). Small towns facilitate rural non-farm activities and therefore have a role in urban and rural poverty-reduction (Himanshu *et al* 2011). Well-planned development of small cities can help disperse rural migration and prevent overcrowding of other metropolitan centres (Sahasranaman 2012). JNNURM money can make more of a difference in these smaller towns as compared to big cities. Policymakers need to focus on mitigating the strains of small towns in India and maximising the opportunities offered by these towns, by encouraging investment in industries that generate employment opportunities. This will also provide an opportunity to assess whether in small towns there is greater commitment on the part of elected municipalities and better public participation because of the smaller population size and increased proximity between people and the government.

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## Endnotes

- 1 Government of India, Ministry of Urban Development 'JNNURM Overview' document, pg 3
- 2 Government of India, Ministry of Urban Development 'JNNURM Overview' document, pg 8
- 3 Government of India, Ministry of Urban Development 'JNNURM Overview' document, pg 5
- 4 Government of India, Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty-Alleviation 'Modified Guidelines for Sub-Mission on Basic Services to the Urban Poor', February 2009, pg 3
- 5 Government of India, Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty-Alleviation 'Modified Guidelines for Sub-Mission on Basic Services to the Urban Poor', February 2009, pg 2
- 6 Under UIG, ULB share can include parastatal share/loan from financial institutions. Under BSUP, state/ULB/parastatal share includes beneficiary contribution
- 7 UIG database (as on March 23, 2012), BSUP database (as on January 2, 2012), UIDSSMT (as on August 31, 2010) and IHSDP database (as on January 2, 2012)
- 8 UIDSSMT database (as on August 31, 2010), IHSDP database (as on September 1, 2011)
- 9 Census of India, 2001 and 2011

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# Urban territories, rural governance

West Bengal has the highest number of census towns among all the Indian states but only 127 urban local bodies. The slow process of municipalisation means that most census towns, especially those with fast-growing industry, mining and commercial enterprises, are urban areas governed by gram panchayats. Such urban territories can become unregulated free-for-alls, with low taxes but haphazard development and poor infrastructure and services

GOPA SAMANTA

## Many census towns, few ULBs

The pattern of urbanisation in West Bengal has taken a new turn in the first decade of the 21st century. Indeed, the rate of urbanisation in existing towns as well as growth of new census towns has changed remarkably in the last 10 years. Presently, West Bengal has 780 census towns — the highest among all states in India (second highest is 461 in Kerala, and third highest is 376 in Tamil Nadu, according to the 2011 census) — and 127 statutory towns. The growth rate of census towns is also very high as, of the 780 census towns, 528 have been added only in the last decade. In 2001, the number of census towns was 252, of which only four were recognised as urban local bodies (ULB) in the decade, indicating an extremely slow process of municipalisation (recognising a census town as a statutory town or ULB) in West Bengal. Thus, the slow process of municipalisation and underreporting of actual urban territorial dimensions (discussed later) together contribute to the high level of ‘non-recognised’ urbanisation (urbanisation in areas outside ULBs) in the state. As a consequence, most census towns, especially those experiencing fast economic growth in the form of development activities such as industries, mining and commercial enterprises, represent urban areas with no effective government mechanism.

## Changing patterns of urbanisation

West Bengal is a densely populated state with a population of around 91 million, of which around 29 million live in recognised urban areas; the percentage of official urban population reached 31.89% in 2011. The state also has the highest urban population density of 6,789 persons per sq km. Since Independence, the overall pattern of urbanisation in West Bengal was highly concentrated in and around Kolkata and the Durgapur-Asansol urban-industrial agglomerations of the state. This pattern has started altering with new urban growth coming up in areas away from metropolitan dominance, which can be defined as ‘subaltern urbanisation’ (Denis, Mukhopadhyay and Zerah 2012). The available literature on the broad pattern of urbanisation (Guchhait 2005) and city size distribution (Sarkar 1995, 2012; Mitra 2010, etc) in 20th century West Bengal supports the view of metropolitan and big city dominance. The

Table 1: Urban profile of West Bengal, 1971-2011

Year	Urban population (%)	Growth of urban population (%)	Number of census towns	Number of statutory towns	Urban population in Kolkata Metropolitan Area (KMA) (%)
1971	24.70	28.41	48	83	64.11
1981	26.50	31.73	89	87	63.64
1991	27.48	29.49	148	106	58.92
2001	28.03	20.20	252	123	58.88
2011	31.89	-	780	127	48.44

Source: Samanta, 2012

Kolkata Metropolitan Area (KMA) alone accounted for around 64 to 58% of the state’s urban population in the 20th century (Table 1).

These new trends are not only visible in the case of development of new census towns but also in the district-level spatial pattern of urbanisation. The proportion of the state’s urban population in KMA areas has sharply declined from 58.88% in 2001 to 48.44% in 2011. The growth of small and medium towns became more pronounced and the percentage of urban population in Class I towns decreased from 81.7% in 1991 to 75% in 2001. The maximum growth has taken place in districts outside existing metropolitan areas (1). Out of 780 census towns in West Bengal, only 195 (25%) are located in urban agglomerations of more than 1 lakh and above. Around 75% of new census towns have come up in districts with a dominant agricultural economy, far away from urban-industrial regions. This agro-based urban trend was earlier predicted by Chakraborty and Dasgupta (2011). The new urban growth in the districts may be attributed to agricultural surplus and consequent movement of investment from the farm sector to the commercial-based tertiary sector in the small town category. Some studies (Roy 2012; Banerjee 2012) have proved this connection in their research on the growth of small and medium towns in West Bengal. According to Chaudhuri *et al* (2012), although there was a fall in primary and secondary sector growth in West Bengal in the last decade, its tertiary sector grew at a very fast rate of 9 to 11% which may have

led to this higher level of new urbanisation in the form of small market and service centres and consequent growth of non-recognised urban territories in West Bengal.

### Slow municipalisation and denied urbanisation

Presently, West Bengal has 127 ULBs including six municipal corporations, 118 municipalities and three notified area authorities. In addition, there is one IT township called Nabadiganta Industrial Township located on the periphery of Kolkata metropolis. The criteria for being declared an urban local body (ULB) in states are often more stringent than what is required by the census. According to the West Bengal Municipal Act (Section 3), it is as follows:

- Population size of 30,000. By comparison, the threshold for Andhra Pradesh is 40,000, for Maharashtra 25,000 and for Karnataka 20,000.
- Density of 750 persons per sq km, again considerably more than the census standard.
- Non-agricultural population of 50% or more of the adult population (as compared to the male workforce in the census).

Even if a settlement satisfies these criteria, the declaration is not automatic. The state of West Bengal was famous for its decentralised governance process even before the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment bills were passed in India in 1993 and 1994. A decentralised process is also practised in the formation of ULBs in West Bengal. The demand to transform a settlement from a census town to a statutory urban one has to come from below. The local gram panchayat, in consultation with the local community, requests the local block development office. The block development office then verifies the eligibility criteria. If the concerned settlement satisfies all three threshold criteria, then the block development officer (BDO) forwards the application to the district magistrate (DM) of the respective district. The

district magistrate sends the application to the department of municipal affairs, Government of West Bengal. The minister-in-charge of the municipal affairs department (MAD) discusses the proposal with other cabinet ministers and takes the final decision to make a settlement statutorily urban.

The slow process of municipalisation can in part be explained by this decentralised process. The demand to declare a statutory town should come from the local community, which sometimes is difficult. As soon as the town comes under ULB status, rules and regulations become strict and taxes become higher for the local people, which they might not want. Due to the slow process of municipalisation, the dimension of a 'non-recognised urban territory' (census town) is increasing at a fast rate in West Bengal. Out of 780 census towns, 528 (contributing a 57.9% share of the urban population in CTs) have been reclassified from villages, and these reclassified settlements forming new census towns in 2011 contribute to 66% of the urban growth in West Bengal (Pradhan 2012).

### Invisibility of actual urban dimension

The reported urban population living in both census and statutory towns do not represent the actual urban dimension in West Bengal. The problem lies in population counting in census towns which does not take into account the settlement agglomeration beyond the revenue area of that particular settlement. However, in reality, the actual built-up areas of most census towns have expanded much beyond their physical limit and have taken the shape of settlement agglomerations with an urban character. Field-level observations from selected census towns such as Barjora (Bankura district) and Singur (Hugli district) show that there is a big gap between actual urban expansion (agglomeration) and reported urban expansion (census town) in these places. Singur census town includes the area and population of Singur-I gram panchayat (GP) whereas the actual development of Singur has extended over eight villages beyond the physical limit of the census town



which covers two other gram panchayats. Similarly, the census town of Barjora represents the population of only one revenue village, that is, Barjora, whereas the actual urban spread covers 12 villages located in five gram panchayats of the area surrounding Barjora, giving the entire stretch the shape of a settlement agglomeration. The actual size of urban population living in those settlement agglomerations is much greater than the minimum threshold of 30,000 required to be a statutory urban town in West Bengal. This creates challenges for the rural gram panchayats that are not capable of managing diverse development activities such as mining and industry in these census towns.

### Why urban recognition?

This discussion makes it clear that in West Bengal the recognised urban population living in 127 ULBs and 780 census towns is lower than the actual urban population, and the level of non-recognised urban territories is increasing at a quick pace as a consequence of the slow process of municipalisation as well as invisibility of territorial urban expansion.

Why is recognition as a statutory urban territory, that is, ULB, important for a settlement? Three arguments may be advanced. First, the level of overall development accelerates with increasing urbanisation. The 2011 census data of districts in West Bengal clearly shows that there is a positive relationship between level of urbanisation and people's socio-economic condition, access to water and sanitation, and housing conditions. Second, the urban administrative system is better equipped to provide basic infrastructure and services to settlements. In West Bengal, the new census towns, being peripheral in their location outside existing urban-industrial regions, have poor infrastructure and services as they are governed by gram panchayats that are not capable of providing services at the level of existing ULBs. There are wide gaps in the allotment of government funds to ULBs and GPs. The absence of specific funds for census towns makes the provision of basic services difficult. Constituting a municipality can generate more taxes from town inhabitants which facilitate better provision of infrastructure and services. Third, haphazard growth in built-up areas can be checked with municipal building rules. The rules and regulations for constructing buildings are more stringent in ULBs; GPs do not have fixed rules and regulations. Neither do they have the capacity to plan and govern the emerging economic landscape.

### Conclusion

In the present-day globalising economy, development activities in India such as mining, industry, real estate and construction mostly take place with private capital or under public-private partnerships. These activities usually take place in peripheral locations, either in special economic zones (SEZ) where generous subsidies from the government are enjoyed or in locations beyond the urban limit such as the suburbs of big cities and 'non-recognised' urban territories.

The preference for non-recognised urban territories stems from the lack of control and policing measures under poorly-equipped rural local governments. Because of the absence of regulation, under the existing governance structure non-recognised urban territories are becoming areas of anarchism. Areas experiencing increased industrial activities are often characterised by high levels of pollution and consequent degradation of the local environment. New mining activities in these areas find land acquisition and displacement issues much easier to handle. The absence of a proper governance mechanism is leading to bizarre land transformation in these new urban areas. In the process of keeping their status 'rural', local citizens suffer numerous problems, from pollution and dubious land speculation to utter neglect of basic services provision and infrastructure such as roads, water, sanitation, health and education.

### How long can we deny urbanisation and leave non-recognised urban territories in this state?

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### Endnotes

1 The highest level of increase (above 6%) in urban population has been experienced by districts such as Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Malda, Murshidabad, Nadia, Haora and South 24 Parganas. Most of these districts, except Haora and South 24 Parganas, are located outside the Kolkata Metropolitan Area

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# The making of a mini-city

Market forces, collusion of interest and malpractice are all involved in the growth and ad hoc development of a village into a small industrial town and then into a satellite town of a global city. Nowhere is this more visible than in Dharuhera, 70 km from Delhi

MARIE-HÉLÈNE ZÉRAH

## Between planning and contingency

This paper aims to highlight the range of interrelated transformations that occur with the emergence and production of urban space. Located on the Delhi-Jaipur national highway, 70 km from Delhi, Dharuhera is apparently an example of a village growing into a small industrial town and increasingly integrated as a satellite town of a global city region. Many of the functional and spatial changes of the last decades can be explained by a rational urbanisation process boosted by the process of public policies and economies of agglomeration. But meandering in the streets of Dharuhera and interviewing a large range of actors uncovers a story of unexpected events and local histories that structure the urbanisation process, introducing complexity and contingency in an apparently straightforward story. In this sense, it is emblematic of an urbanisation process betwixt and between planning and contingency.

## The conventional story

Forty years ago, in 1971, 5,266 people lived in the village of Dharuhera. It played a role for the surrounding villages since it had a market and a police station. The first industry was established in 1972 and even though

it closed down after a few years, other companies set up their manufacturing units because they benefited from tax and financial incentives in industrially backward districts, and good quality water was available. In 1978, it was declared an industrial zone and a second phase was added in 1987, when Hero Honda set up its manufacturing unit in the village of Joniawas in 1987 (1). Talking about the arrival of Hero Honda, a politician-cum-entrepreneur of Kapriwas highlighted the spillover effect it created: "Industrialisation created more visionaries, increased competition, entrepreneurship and showed people the benefits of education." (2) Automobile ancillary units of various sizes located their production in the villages around Dharuhera and contributed to the growth of the Delhi auto components industry (Uchikawa 2012). Around 40 registered manufacturing units are located between Dharuhera and Joniawas, Kapiwas and Malpura (Dahiya 2012). Units in other industrial sectors, like United Breweries, have chosen Dharuhera for its connectivity with Delhi and ability to reach urban consumers.

This industrialisation opened new business opportunities, particularly in the transport sector, both for trucks transporting materials and mini-buses or vans for commuting purposes. Truck owners, mostly from Dharuhera

एनसीआर के भविष्य का शहर बनाने की राह पर

## धारुहेड़ा में नए सेक्टर की तैयारी



**अन्य उदाहरण देखें**  
 गुडगाँव। औद्योगिक क्षेत्र के तौर पर उभर चुके गुडगाँव में अब दिल्ली की ओर भी विकास हो रहा है। गुडगाँव के आसपास नए इलाकों की योजनाएं भी चल रही हैं। यहाँ पर प्रमुख कॉन्सल्टिंग फर्मों के लिए नए सेक्टर विकसित करना शुरू हो रहा है। उदाहरण के तौर पर 'डिस्ट्रीक्ट डेवेलपमेंट' की ओर ध्यान देना चाहिए। गुडगाँव के विकास में गुडगाँव के आसपास नए इलाकों की योजनाएं भी चल रही हैं। यहाँ पर प्रमुख कॉन्सल्टिंग फर्मों के लिए नए सेक्टर विकसित करना शुरू हो रहा है। उदाहरण के तौर पर 'डिस्ट्रीक्ट डेवेलपमेंट' की ओर ध्यान देना चाहिए। गुडगाँव के विकास में गुडगाँव के आसपास नए इलाकों की योजनाएं भी चल रही हैं। यहाँ पर प्रमुख कॉन्सल्टिंग फर्मों के लिए नए सेक्टर विकसित करना शुरू हो रहा है। उदाहरण के तौर पर 'डिस्ट्रीक्ट डेवेलपमेंट' की ओर ध्यान देना चाहिए।

**सर्वोच्च डीएमटी प्लॉट**  
 डारुहेड़ा में नए सेक्टर के विकास के लिए सर्वोच्च डीएमटी प्लॉट का उपयोग किया जा रहा है। ये प्लॉट्स 24 मीटर की चौड़ाई के साथ 2.4 हेक्टेयर के क्षेत्र में फैले हुए हैं। ये प्लॉट्स नए सेक्टर के विकास में एक महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाएंगे।

**सिपि रेल ट्रांसपोर्ट सिस्टम भी यहाँ से गुजरेगा**  
 सिपि रेल ट्रांसपोर्ट सिस्टम का निर्माण शुरू हो चुका है। यह सिस्टम डारुहेड़ा और दिल्ली के बीच एक तेज गति से चलने वाला ट्रेन सेवा प्रदान करेगा।



or the surrounding villages, are organised in associations, and numerous trucks ply either on the main roads or transport scrap and small materials from one unit to another (3). Other activities, such as shops, small-scale steel-making units and stone-crushers have also benefited from the industrialisation process.

More recently, since the beginning of the 2000s and mainly in the last seven to eight years, a main driver for growth has been the arrival of the real estate industry, with around 10 large residential townships as well as commercial projects. The proximity to Delhi and to the international airport (40 km away) as well as cheaper land rates compared to Gurgaon, which is only 30 km away but where real estate prices are increasingly unaffordable, have led many in the real estate industry to position Dharuhera as one of the rapidly growing satellite cities of the National Capital Region (4).

In 2007, this rapid growth directed the Haryana state government to notify the Integrated Final Development Plan for Dharuhera in 2021. This plan is in continuity with planning interventions and public policies that influence the transformation of Dharuhera. In this narrative, the story is one of a combination of locational and resource advantages (including cheap cost of land), transport connectivity enhanced by public policies, which created the right conditions for industrial development. Indeed, according to the 2001 and 2021 Regional Plan of the National Capital Region Planning Board, Dharuhera is to be developed as one of the 11 regional centres of the entire region and part of the large industrial zone comprising the Dharuhera-Rewari-Bawal triangle. This type of urban development/industrialisation in the periphery of a large agglomeration, fits well with the agglomeration model of a new economic geography.

#### The other narrative

However, there is another narrative heard often in the streets and homes of Dharuhera. This goes back to the importance of the Rao family (5), the family of Dharuhera whose power was consolidated under British rule since it was given the responsibility of finding military recruits and collecting taxes. They held total dominion over the village since they were the owners of most of the land in Dharuhera, dispensed justice, sorted out interpersonal conflicts, established schools and colleges and undertook social programmes. At the beginning of the 1970s, the then chief minister of Haryana, Bansi Lal, held a rally in Dharuhera, apparently to woo voters from the scheduled castes. One member of the Rao family, said to be in a drunken state, tore down the Congress flag and vandalised the stage claiming that no rally could be held on this land without their authorisation. Consequently, as a local politician-cum-entrepreneur of a surrounding village told us, “one drunkard changed the face of the whole village” (6) since large land acquisition for industrial needs was announced shortly after this incident by the chief

minister who asserted his overriding power.

What, then, was the real trigger for the new functional role of Dharuhera as an industrial hub? Was it a combination of formal planning and economies of agglomeration, or the emotional response of an angry chief minister asserting his authority over a local leader?

#### The production of a fragmented ‘mini-city’

Economic forces and market processes are central to the production of urban space. Landowners sell or develop their land, and in Dharuhera ownership is concentrated in a few families that pursue different strategies of valorisation of the land bank. Traditionally, the Rao family parted with some of its land to people close to them, partly to escape the restrictions of land ceiling, and donated some of it for public amenities.

From the 1970s onwards, Dharuhera has been one of the fastest growing settlements in Haryana, with a decadal growth rate of 44% between 1971 and 1981 and more than a doubling of the population in the 1980s. As migrants started to come into Dharuhera, members of the family and some other small owners developed colonies through sub-division and plotting of land on the Baas road. They sold plots either to newcomers or to farmers from surrounding villages who invested in these plots to later rent or sell to migrants. More recently, as the real estate market became more linked to the Delhi consumer, members of the family who owned land in planned residential sectors formed joint ventures with real estate companies to develop high-end residential complexes (7). In the land bank located in the centre of the old city, they partner with the trading communities to develop shops that cater to the growing needs of the population.

Even though a small set of individuals benefit from land development, their decisions are constrained by regulations. In Haryana, legally (8), once an area is identified as having potential for development, it becomes ‘controlled’ and any change of land use needs to go through a set of authorisations from various levels of the town and country planning department and has to follow the land use defined by the development plan (9). Controlled area was introduced in Dharuhera in 1978, and was later extended to part of Kapriwas in 1980 and in 1991 to Maheshwari, Ghatal and Aakera. Consequently, colonies on the Baas road are officially unauthorised even though services were extended by the panchayat till 2008 and the urban local body has now applied for their regularisation. In the surrounding villages, this also complicated the process of change of land use even though this transformation has been very rapid. In the villages of Kapriwas, Joniawas and Malpura located on the side of the highway where the industries are concentrated, farmers have rapidly shifted from agricultural practices to other activities, either by starting shops, small industries and

warehouses or by entering the transport business. Some sold their land to small industries. In response to the need for migrant workers' accommodation, some landowners chose to build dormitories, with rows of rooms, which are rented for Rs 1,000-1,200 per month and accommodate three to four migrants each. In these three villages, the migrant population doubles the population and this has led to the multiplication of labour contractors. More recently, in villages located on the other side of the highway where townships and apartment buildings are coming up, farmers have been selling land at high prices to developers. This is the case in the villages of Ghari, Ghatal and Maheshwari in particular (10).

The tool of the 'controlled area' is powerful in many ways. First, it acts as a trigger for price escalation since the designation of an area as 'controlled' indicates that the government sees potential for development. The consequent development plan is followed by the 'arrival of the sectors' (11), that is, future planned residential areas to be developed by HUDA (Haryana Urban Development Authority) or by 'colonisers' (private builders) into township or apartment buildings (12). Private builders who did not enter joint ventures followed the more classic method of assembling land by buying it from farmers in surrounding villages.

Second, it creates a maze of complex official procedures and unofficial mechanisms to obtain change of land use. As a young town planner told us, by the stroke of a pen, when designating a piece of land as residential, commercial or for public amenities purposes, s/he can make a millionaire or a pauper of the owner. Influence, collusion of interest and malpractice are all involved in processes by which state intervention shapes the city. Within the town, when colonies come up because of market forces and individual decisions to develop land, they become the 'illegal city'. Even though planners defend their rationale to exclude these areas from development, based on the absence of adequate public amenities in these colonies, their 'illegality' also prevents municipal action from building basic infrastructure, leading to a continued exclusion.

At another level, the planning process is also allegedly shaped by the local power structure, since those with influence can ensure that their land is not going to be acquired for public amenities but rather, be given high potential land use. This ad-hoc nature of state intervention brings us back to the tension between planned and contingent urbanisation. Seen in this way, the local narrative of a tussle between the chief minister and the local *zaildar* is an encapsulation of the ad-hoc, accidental and 'unplanned planned' nature of development.

### Lived spaces and social changes

Is this form of development also reflected in the reality

of spatial practices, experiences of lived spaces and mental representations of the settlement itself? If one attempted to make a simple typology of neighbourhoods in Dharuhera, one can distinguish the following types of localities: (a) the old town that houses the old and decaying *haveli* of the *zaildar* family; (b) their new lavish houses, the market and poorer streets; (c) the residential sectors developed by HUDA; (d) the unauthorised colonies of Baas road; (e) the recent upcoming townships that provide modern housing and amenities; and finally (f) the villages and their new housing structures for migrants. Despite the spatial proximity of these neighbourhoods, do they come together to form the idea of a 'city' with dependent interlinkages? While describing Dharuhera, most interviewees make a clear difference between the 'village' and the 'city'. Many interviewees point to their lack of knowledge of the *haveli*, or to them never venturing into the old town except to use the market facilities at times. In particular, this is the case for the important floating population of professionals who live in Gurgaon or Delhi, work in Dharuhera and commute on a daily basis. For the unskilled labourers of the original village, their daily practices remain mostly circumscribed to the *lal dora* area. For many there is a liminal frontier between the 'village' and the 'city' and only those who straddle both locales use other terms. Among them, the term 'mini city' is the most striking because it points to the search for a term to define the new physical reality of Dharuhera. Residents of the HUDA sector, of Baas road or the surrounding villages, or of the original village, often mention social functions as moments where they move from one area to another in the city. Spatial mobility is then partly embedded in the existing social networks. Indeed, beyond lifestyle changes often put forward to describe small towns, an important question is whether small towns are emerging as sites of social mobility and play a transformative role in social structure or, on the contrary, sites where the resilience of the local elite and its ability to capture local political institutions remain the norm, as argued by De Bercegol (2012) for eastern Uttar Pradesh.

From our exploratory field work and structured interviews with all the elected councillors, one can briefly sketch four types of group trajectories.

First, the landless inhabitants of Dharuhera and surrounding villages, which were traditionally engaged in menial or agricultural labour have not greatly benefited from the urbanisation process. Employment opportunities on farming land have reduced and jobs are not easily found in the industrial area, either because of lack of education or the strong reluctance of industries to employ local labour (13). This population group appears to be both socially and spatially trapped.

Second, at the other end of the spectrum, the traditional landed elite as well as a number of traders have harnessed

the potential of urbanisation. Some of them have moved away from the old city and have relocated to the already developed high-end residential complexes in nearby Bhiwadi. In villages, some landowners commute regularly between their house in the village and another residence in Gurgaon. Among the younger people interviewed, increased access to Delhi, with its metro, expands possibilities for recreation as well as education. They represent 'people who are interstitial because they are in some senses between the rural and urban...' (Young and Jeffrey 2012: 46). The Rao family's ability, and that of a few others, to straddle the local, national and international scale and still 'interact with people without being aliens' (14) makes them close to what Corwin (1977) names 'societal elites'.

Third, among the newcomers to Dharuhera there are different professional and personal trajectories. Skilled workers with secure employment have been able to improve their livelihoods in Dharuhera, often being able to buy a house in the residential sector.

Finally, among the newcomers, one can also note the emergence of a group of entrepreneurial individuals from outside Dharuhera who have seized opportunities to develop activities that will provide them with economic and social mobility. An interesting case is the profession of real estate agents. From a couple of them seven years ago, there are now scores of real estate agencies in Dharuhera and, with the exception of a few agents from Uttar Pradesh, all come from the south of Haryana. They see Dharuhera as a stepping stone to building a professional career and the more enterprising branch out to become part or founders of associations, resident welfare associations among others, to build long-term stable social networks.

## Conclusion

Dharuhera reflects the rapid economic, spatial and social changes that occur when a small settlement grows and urbanises. Even though located in the proximity of Delhi and consequently a top candidate in the economic agglomeration story, the manner in which the city is planned and shaped is clearly embedded in the monopolistic land ownership structure, dominance of some groups and forceful state intervention. Further, this 'mini city' is the site of resilient dominant groups, but it also provides opportunities for a form of urban entrepreneurialism even though the systemic exclusion of those without land and education is a serious drawback. Consequent changes in social structure are additional elements of the 'in-between' nature of these small towns that go beyond urban-rural economic linkages and find expression in its governance structure, which remains an area for future study.

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## Endnotes

- 1 Two years earlier, in 1985, Pusapati Spinning and Weaving Mills Limited was set up in Kapriwas village
- 2 Interview conducted on March 1, 2012
- 3 There are at least two truck associations in Dharuhera, one named the Kapriwas Truck Union that runs 400 trucks of owners located in seven villages. Interviewees mentioned a number of trucks varying from 1,000 to 2,000
- 4 See [http://credaincr.org/news\\_details.php?nid=13124](http://credaincr.org/news_details.php?nid=13124)
- 5 A *zaildar* is a 'leading rural notable, selected and paid a small honorarium by government to represent it and help it in the *zail* (or sub-division of a tehsil)' Brayne, F L. 1929. *The Remaking of Village-India*. Mysore, Oxford University Press. p 262
- 6 Interview conducted on March 1, 2012
- 7 This is the case of at least three ongoing projects in Dharuhera
- 8 According to the Punjab Scheduled Roads and Controlled Areas Restrictions of Unregulated Development Rules, 1965, as amended in September 2012
- 9 This usually follows implementation of the controlled area by a couple of years
- 10 These three villages are located very close to some upcoming townships and, according to interviews, land that was sold for Rs 5-10 lakh per acre five years ago has today reached at least Rs 1 crore
- 11 This term is often used by interviewees to indicate the link made between HUDA's planned residential areas and development of a city
- 12 In the residential sectors developed by HUDA (Sectors 4 and 6), some low-income buildings are provided as well as plots which are mostly inhabited by the large number of skilled labour that has shifted to Dharuhera
- 13 Interviews conducted among a few industry human resource managers confirm that local labour is not preferred because they are less reliable and often absent, they can organise better and gain support from their neighbours and families in case of a dispute
- 14 Interview conducted on January 20, 2012. The family remains anchored in the city where they hold posts in the urban local body and other political positions, but the new generation studies in some of the best Indian boarding schools before going abroad for their graduate studies. They own houses in Haryana, Delhi as well as other places in India and travel internationally on a regular basis

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# Mending what works

Waste can be a tool to break poverty when used imaginatively. In Nainital, Haridwar, Nagpur and several other cities, public-private partnerships in solid waste management have displaced the invisible, informal-sector wastepickers and traders instead of nurturing and upgrading them

BHARATI  
CHATURVEDI

## Things as they stand

Nainital is a romantically named hill town, popular with tourists and a base for many scenic spots in Kumaon, in the Himalayas. Like other places in the region, it is named after a local lake. Till the '90s, Nainital was a prime summer destination. Then, with more spending power, holiday destinations changed. Nainital too urbanised rapidly. Trash became a key concern. Till just recently, a scheme called Mission Butterfly tried to convert Nainital into a zero-waste town. The Mission drew in community involvement, job-creation and more responsible action on the part of waste-generators. Then it was time to upgrade. Nainital decided to improve its solid waste management under the Ministry of Urban Development's Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). Much like other JNNURM-funded infrastructure improvement programmes across the country, Nainital started looking to enter into a public-private partnership (PPP) with private waste management firms.

Amongst the five bidders (1) on October 16, 2012, three had already tarnished their reputations by displacing wastepickers and small waste dealers. SPML had provided similar services in three zones of Delhi. As they began to fulfil their contractual obligations to the city, Chintan found that nearly 50% of Delhi's informal sector waste service-providers in the area (2) quickly became unemployed or underemployed. This kind of PPP model could not exist without displacing wastepickers. In fact, it competed with them for the same plastics, paper and metal — stuff that could be sold in the recycling markets of Delhi. Another bidder, Ramky Enviro Engineers Ltd, followed a similar business model and has only recently tried to work with the informal sector in small areas. The winner in Nainital was A2Z Maintenance and Engineering Service Ltd. But the company was no replacement for Mission Butterfly, which subsequently closed. Like its other two competitors, A2Z's business model competed with the informal sector in previous projects, displacing them from their only source of livelihood.

Haridwar, another city in Uttaranchal Pradesh, offers a similarly telling tale. An additional bidder for a PPP in Haridwar was Hanjer Biotech Pvt Limited. Hanjer is also implementing an integrated waste management project in Nagpur. The Nagpur project is located next to a landfill, where

over 300 women wastepickers worked. None of them were included in the project's planning and implementation. When I visited the plant, several workers were involved in unskilled work — lifting and moving waste (3). "Surely some of the women wastepickers could have been hired for such work?" I asked one of proprietors, a few months later (4), in another meeting. "Firstly, these women, we waited for them. They never came from the front," he replied. "They always came jumping over from the back. This is not correct." In addition, he added, he didn't think this would be women's work.

The problem is Nainital and Haridwar are not unusual. Across India, the informal sector is being displaced by a new regime of solid waste management (SWM), a predatory regime of PPP in which only a predefined 'public' and a predefined, capital-intensive 'private' have a place. All else either don't fit or are easily pushed aside to make way for grander, more modern plans for the city.

For several years, a complex network of wastepickers, itinerant buyers, waste traders and sorters have picked up, segregated and recycled the increasing amounts of paper, plastic, metal and glass that we trash. We owe these often silent and invisible workers in the underbelly of our cities for their persistent labour of efficiently recycling nearly 20% of our rubbish. Not just that, they avert greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by a huge margin. In 2008, Chintan tried to answer the question: How much GHG do informal sector recyclers really save? After a long year of struggling with the question, we got some stunning answers. The data showed that in Delhi alone, the waste recycling system run by the informal sector saved more than 3.6 times the GHG emissions any single formal project that had applied for carbon credits had ever done (5). While the projects received carbon credits, the wastepickers, far greater emission-averters, have never been thanked. They add value to discards, as much as 750% (6) to a unit of plastic. It is not a question of a few thousand waste recyclers; India is estimated to have about 1.5 to 2 million wastepickers alone (7), approximating about 10% (8) of the world's total. In every large city of the developing world, nearly 1% (9) of the population comprises people who earn a living off waste recycling. Instead of receiving our gratitude, these resource recyclers are being displaced by new ideas of what a modern city looks like and appropriate waste management practices within it.

Central to these new ideas of SWM is the fact that the private contractor needs to be assigned property rights to the city's waste. The contractor, in most cases, is a corporate entity that must not just break even, but make profits. To make these, contracts specifically assign the contractor the right to waste. This is similar to fencing public spaces to create private property as happened during the Industrial Revolution in England and happens continually anywhere profits can be made from privatising the commons. Waste, once the property of the municipality, an elected body, is now owned by a corporate body. And informal waste workers, once living off the waste, are transformed from informal to illegal.

### What is happening?

India is witnessing a shift in how waste is managed. Cookie-cutter solutions are being offered in a scenario where waste has become a lucrative industry. The informal sector, even if it is organised, is being seen as unskilled labour rather than entrepreneurs. Three key trends are clear (10).

#### *There has been a shift in perspective*

Many new trends are based on changing ideas of waste management and a lack of clear understanding of how these ideas might apply in the Indian context, or any developing

country for that matter. These are outlined below:

- *Centralisation:* This is considered to be key in solid waste management. Given the large quantities, many municipalities believe that only a large facility, at a centralised level, can handle waste. There is little trust in a decentralised approach despite several well-documented pilot projects that have taken place in Bangalore, Mumbai and Delhi, for instance, in the 1990s and 2000s. Only a few decentralised plans have continued to be robust, and these are ones that have scaled-up.
- *Privatisation at multiple levels of SWM:* Leading from the understanding of centralisation is privatisation, where large companies are entrusted with running several processes related to the collection and processing of solid waste. Hence, starting from the mid-2000s, several cities have outsourced waste management services to private companies. These services include doorstep-collection, transportation to landfills, and processing of waste into energy and other products.
- *Profits from waste-based products:* Several companies see profits in a business model where they own the waste and can either sell it directly to the recycling industry or through processing, such as making compost or briquettes.

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A prerequisite of such a model is that companies should be able to procure contracts that allow them ownership over waste, and thereby illegalise any prior, existing enterprise that might affect their own profit margins. Such contracts often receive government and public support because private waste firms are seen as, and indeed portray themselves as, key players in cleaning up the city.

- *Lack of understanding of the informal recycling sector:* Often policymakers are unable to understand the critical role of various commodity supply chains that the informal sector provides the basis of, or even the quantum of their work. Instead, most see the informal sector as a small number of urban poor making a small contribution, and therefore not germane to SWM planning or any urban planning at all despite global studies that have shown quite the opposite. One reason is because of poor dissemination of information within India, and lack of knowledge networks that policy and decision-makers are part of. An outcome of this is a formal marginalisation of the informal sector.

- *Indifference to reprocessing:* The informal recycling sector in India is, in large part, a trade chain. Wastepickers at the bottom pick up and insert recyclables into this chain. Only materials that can be reprocessed are traded, making the technology and the reprocessors critical. Such reprocessors are rarely included in discussions, far less in plans. Hence, popular understanding on this issue is that paper, plastics, metals — the discards these plants depend on — are as much the problem as wet waste that comprises over 60% of total waste. Consequently, an unequal competition is created between informal waste workers and waste-to-energy and other such technologies. This identifies the wrong problem, and therefore, an inappropriate solution. Moreover, not understanding the needs of the reprocessing sector results in exclusion from city plans, and hence illegalises their important work.

### *Brazen flouting of laws and policies*

Several policies and rules have, in fact, been inclusive of the informal sector. A brief summary is here:

- E-Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2011 allow for the inclusion of informal sector associations that can be authorised for e-waste collection and dismantling.
- Plastic Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2011 in Section 6 (c) states that the municipality is responsible for engaging 'agencies or groups working in waste management including wastepickers'.
- The National Action Plan for Climate Change, 2009, in its part on the Mission on Urban Sustainability, states: 'While the informal sector is the backbone of India's highly successful recycling system, unfortunately a number of municipal regulations impede the operation of the recyclers,

owing to which they remain at a tiny scale without access to finance or improved recycling technologies.'

- The CAG Audit on Municipal Solid Waste in India (December 2008) also recommends (Chapter 3, Section 3.5) that the 'MOEF/states should consider providing legal recognition to ragpickers so that recycling work becomes more organised and also ensure better working conditions for them'.
- The National Environment Policy, 2006, which states: 'Give legal recognition to, and strengthen the informal sector systems of collection and recycling of various materials. In particular enhance their access to institutional finance and relevant technologies.' (Section 5.2.8, point (e), pg 36)
- The Supreme Court accepted recommendations of the report of the committee constituted by the Supreme Court in 1999 ('Solid Waste Management in Class 1 Cities in India'). Sections 3.4.7 and 3.4.8 (pg 34) of this report say that ragpickers must be converted into doorstep waste collectors as a means of upgradation.

Many of these are directly linked with Chintan's advocacy efforts. But rules and policies are only the tip of the iceberg. Implementing them is a much more daunting task, even with institutional oversight.

Take JNNURM, for example. Chintan's 2012 report 'Failing the Grade' (11) evaluated how these rules were implemented, five years after the CAG's performance audit of solid waste management in India was published. Chintan studied Patna, Ahmedabad, Faridabad, Varanasi, Mathura, Allahabad, Hyderabad, Indore, Bangalore, Nagpur, Rajkot, Cochin, Pune and Delhi. We evaluated the proposals the cities had submitted to JNNURM for solid waste, corresponding master plans, and the reality on the ground based on visits, discussions and observations. Our focus was to study these 14 cities under JNNURM to understand how they had included the informal recycling sector, either by not damaging their livelihoods or by formalising or upgrading them by making their work safe, formal and recognised. We assumed that compliance with rules and following the spirit of the policies would be highly encouraged, if not essential, under the government's flagship JNNURM scheme. Unfortunately, Chintan found that none of the 14 cities had fully implemented these rules and policies.

We also observed that several cities, such as Patna and Nagpur, had displaced wastepicker-inclusive systems instead of nurturing and upgrading them. This had been done by privatising aspects of the SWM chain — doorstep-collection and at the landfill — in the two cities respectively. Our report concluded that JNNURM could have fostered inclusion of the informal sector in SWM systems. Instead, it failed this opportunity. Of the eight detailed SWM projects that Chintan could access, only six cities even mentioned

wastepickers in their plans (Ahmedabad, Faridabad, Varanasi, Allahabad, Indore and Cochin). The reality was even worse. In Ahmedabad, wastepickers lost their doorstep-collection contract to a small private company. In Varanasi and Indore, another private company, A2Z, was contracted for SWM, including doorstep-collection. In our prior experience, A2Z has been particularly hostile to any prospects of wastepicker inclusion. In Faridabad, two private contractors were providing solid waste management services. Of these, Ramkey, contracted for door-to-door collection, was working with Safai Sena, an association of wastepickers and other small waste workers, to ensure inclusion. This step was not a result of encouragement from officials at any level but an initiative by the two partners.

But this is only one part of the story, the part where waste is picked up and access denied to workers at the neighbourhood and ward level. In most small and large cities today, landfills or dumps are also work sites for wastepickers and small traders and sorters. Waste-to-energy plants, an internationally favoured SWM solution, cause livelihood loss too. Chintan measured (12) the impact of the waste-to-energy plant in Okhla on worker livelihoods. To do this, the team compared a baseline study undertaken five months before the plant began operations to a study conducted nine months after operations. The results were astounding. First, there was significant depopulation (approximately 40%) among those dependent on landfill wastes. Second, landfill pickers reported the lowest earnings of all the waste workers surveyed in the area and a 24% decrease in incomes during the last eight months. Overall, respondents noted a 5% decrease in the percentage of children attending school between last winter and now. Sixty-seven per cent of these cited not having enough money and having to enlist children as income earners as the primary reasons for their children stopping schooling.

At every point in the waste handling chain — collection, segregation, reprocessing — the informal sector finds its livelihood challenged.

### *A lost opportunity*

The idea of inclusive solid waste management is not a pie in the sky. It has been demonstrated on the ground across India. Good practices include the Bhopal Municipal Corporation's orders for doorstep-collection, Delhi and Pune's doorstep-collection and Bangalore's I-card system. These cities have emerged as the best in terms of implementation, but all with glaring deviations. In Rishikesh, local actors have set up an effective doorstep-collection system that creates livelihoods for the urban poor. In Pune, inclusive doorstep-collection systems for approximately 200,000 households co-exist with mass displacement of wastepickers from a Hanjer-run landfill and loss of a contract due to unfair competition from a private company in Chinchwad (13). In Delhi, the NDMC works with Chintan to include wastepickers in

doorstep-collection and has recognised itinerant buyers, but MCD is an entirely different story.

More recently, several initiatives across India, often in partnership with the German bilateral agency GIZ (14), have leveraged e-waste rules to create livelihoods for waste workers by collecting e-waste. Local waste collectors and itinerant buyers are trained to collect (for free or by purchasing) various kinds of e-waste channelling it into authorised recycling units.

### **What to make of this, then?**

Waste can be a tool to break poverty, if used imaginatively. Informal sector wastepickers, sorters, traders and reprocessors handle nearly 20% of urban waste in a highly efficient manner that is poorly understood and even more poorly acknowledged. Despite several progressive rules and policies, municipalities across cities tend to favour PPPs that dislocate the informal sector, and deprive some citizens of their livelihoods, and all citizens of their right to a greener, cleaner city. On the other hand, there is no dearth of possibilities, many of which currently exist on the ground. The challenge is to see the informal sector waste recyclers with new eyes.

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### **Endnotes**

- 1 <http://htsyndication.com/htsportal/article?arid=%22397650%22&pub=%22Garhwal+Post%22>, October 16, 2012
- 2 'Scavenger Hunt' (November 15, 2007), *The Economist*. Quoting an unpublished survey by Chintan Environmental Research and Action Group. See also Bhargava, Vishal, Chaturvedi, Bharati. 2006. Film: *60 Kilos*. This figure was researched in 2005 in various zones of Delhi, with a focus on the south zone and portrayed in the film
- 3 The author visited the site on various days in Nagpur in March 2011 and 2012, both times as a partnership to investigate and understand the issue, with local NGOs, Centre for Sustainable Development and Church of North India — Social Service Institute
- 4 Discussion with Tyrewalla on September 2011, at the project site of Bhandewadi, Faridabad, Gurgaon
- 5 Cooling Agents. 2009. Chintan Environmental Research and Action Group and the Advocacy Project, Washington DC. [www.chintan-india.org](http://www.chintan-india.org)
- 6 Chaturvedi, Bharati. 1998. *Public Waste, Private Enterprise*. New Delhi. Heinrich Boll Stiftung, Berlin
- 7 Estimates submitted to the Ministry of Labour by AIW (Alliance of Indian Wastepickers), 2012
- 8 Calculated from 'A Scrap of Decency', op-ed by Bharati Chaturvedi. *New York Times*, August 5, 2009
- 9 Carl Bartone. 'The Value in Wastes'. January 1988. *Decade Watch*
- 10 Adapted from 'Failing the Grade: How Cities Across India are Breaking the Rules, Ignoring the Informal Recycling Sector and Unable to Make the Grade'. 2012. Chintan Environmental Research and Action Group
- 11 *Ibid*
- 12 A study was undertaken in October 2012, taking August 2011 data as the baseline to measure the impact. The study is to be released shortly
- 13 Personal communication. Also, *Times of India* (Pune), 'SWaCH Wastepickers Seek Employment with PCMC-appointed waste contractors'. October 5, 2012
- 14 Chintan has been working with GIZ to organise informal workers for services of e-waste collection since 2008 and this comment is based on our working knowledge. Further information has been cross-verified from the website: [http://www.weeerecycle.in/undertaken\\_activities\\_delhi.htm](http://www.weeerecycle.in/undertaken_activities_delhi.htm)



# Messing around with waste

Solid waste management accounts for over 50% of overall municipal budgets and manpower, but municipal authorities collect only 50% of the waste and recycle a negligible 5%. Technology and privatisation are the solutions being proposed everywhere. But public-private partnerships are turning out to be more about using public money for private profit. Is integration of informal sector wastepickers into the management of domestic and commercial municipal waste the solution?

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CHIKARMANE  
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THE PAST DECADE has established that privatisation of urban basic services is not the magic bullet solution that it is made out to be. In a recent article, environmental activist Sunita Narain refers to PPP as 'public money private profit' because little private investment actually comes in, private players are unable to provide good services, and yet profits accrue to them. "The public system takes a further hit and the private system does not benefit. Development does not happen. What happens is loot in the name of growth."

Bangalore, Chennai, Pune, Nagpur, Ropar, Erode, Allahabad, Thiruvananthapuram, Ludhiana, Ranchi, Jaipur, Mumbai and Gurgaon have all been in the news for problems related to solid waste management. This article reflects on some of the issues surrounding the mess that is municipal solid waste management. The authors take reduction, re-use, recovery and recycling of materials as their focal point, unlike conventional municipal solid waste management in India. Municipal governments charged with the responsibility of 'public cleansing' have never acknowledged the existence of the informal waste sector, much less sought complementarity with it. This disconnect exacerbates the complexities that are involved in managing the detritus generated by cities in an era of consumerism, globalisation and privatisation, and corporatisation of waste management. The authors also briefly present the experience of the SWaCH wastepickers cooperative that, till date, is the country's oldest and largest attempt to reconcile formal and informal waste managers through the integration of wastepickers in the management of domestic and commercial municipal waste.

## Municipal solid waste management

An estimated 115,000 MT of solid waste are generated every day in India, increasing every year by 5%. Almost three-fourths of the total waste (83,378 MT) is accounted for by seven mega cities, 38 metro cities, and 388 Class I cities (2005). Conventional modes of municipal solid waste management (MSWM) required waste to be collected, transported and dumped on unsuspecting villages by municipal governments as part of their constitutional obligations. City governments spend between Rs 500 and Rs 1,500 per tonne on solid waste collection, transportation,

treatment and disposal. However, the expenditure is unevenly distributed, with waste collection accounting for about 60-70%, and the rest on transportation, with hardly any expenditure on waste treatment and disposal (DEA, GOI, 2009). MSWM accounts for over 50% of overall municipal budgets and manpower. Yet, municipal authorities are unable to collect more than 50% and to recycle a negligible 5% of the total waste generated in their jurisdictions. The informal sector does most of the recycling, nearly 15% of the total waste generated (NIUA, 2005). Uncollected and non-recyclable waste causes not only visual pollution but also invisible air pollution and groundwater pollution. There is thus a massive 'gap' between the requirement of cities, or demand for waste management, and its supply by ULBs. The past 20 years have seen changes, some driven by law and policy and others by economic factors. Only those considered to be the most significant are referred to here.

## Regulatory changes

The Government of India enacted the Municipal Solid Waste Management and Handling Rules in 2000, in response to directives from the Supreme Court of India that was hearing a public interest litigation on the subject. The rules, among other things, required municipalities to promote source segregation of waste, organise door-to-door collection of waste, divert all recyclables to recycling and organic waste from landfills into processing, leaving only non-recyclables to be landfilled. In 2004, only 38% of urban local bodies had started primary collection, while 9% had some processing facilities (Asnani 2004). Most municipalities in the country still do not comply with these rules, nine years after the deadline prescribed by the court. Some states like Maharashtra have enacted separate legislations such as the Maharashtra Non-Biodegradable Garbage Control Act, 2006.

## Changes in financing

The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) initiated by the Government of India in 2005, with the twin broad objectives of upgrading urban infrastructure and improving basic service-provision in cities with million-plus populations, shaped many of the changes taking place in solid waste management. Under JNNURM,

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costs of urban renewal are to be shared between central, state and local governments. Grants were conditional upon the preparation of *inclusive* city development plans and a set of mandatory and discretionary reforms to be undertaken by local and state governments. Relevant to the subject at hand, levy of user fees for services and full-cost recovery within a period of seven years, enactment of community participation legislation, and earmarking of budgets for provision of basic services to the poor were some of the mandatory reforms. Encouraging private-public partnership was among the optional reforms.

Typically, the expenditure on solid waste management is met from the sanitation tax collected as a component of property tax paid by city residents. A study of six major cities carried out in 2009 revealed that expenditure on solid waste management as a proportion of property tax amounted to a staggering 238% in the case of Bhopal, and between 30-125% in the case of other cities. Their finding — that in the case of SWM, expenditure on operations and maintenance (O&M) is more in comparison with expenditure on capital assets — is consistent with that of the High-Powered Expert Committee Report on Indian Urban Infrastructure and Services that put the total capital expenditure requirement for solid waste management at a staggering Rs 485,820 million and O&M requirement at Rs 27,000 trillion (55,576 times!) (GOI 2011)

Municipalities have been permitted to issue tax-free municipal bonds by GOI. Escalation of taxes for residents is not politically palatable. Taxing of industry or extended producer responsibility (EPR) that produces goods that add to waste on account of packaging and planned obsolescence is not high up on the agenda. That leaves the door wide open for municipalities to exercise their preference for inviting private players through what are referred to as private-public partnerships.

#### *Collective action by city residents*

Many litigations and agitations on the issue of solid waste management centre around landfills. They are led by villagers whose lands and livelihoods have quite literally been buried by indiscriminate garbage dumping and landfilling. No longer willing to stand by mutely, they have organised to resist the takeover of their lands and to corner ill-prepared municipal governments. Bitter struggles and blockades against dumping have been waged most recently by the landfill-affected in Thiruvananthapuram, Hyderabad, Pune, Chennai and Bangalore.

Another kind of landfill-displaced group is that of the wastepickers, who have been dispossessed by the privatisation of landfills that used to enable them to access recyclables.

#### *Technology and the business of waste management*

Technology is often seen as the panacea for all ills and so it is in the case of municipal solid waste, where a surfeit of companies peddle all manner of equipment for transporting, segregating, sorting, shredding and processing solid waste. There is a buzz around waste-to-energy, with expensive incineration-based technologies such as refuse-derived fuel (RDF), gasification and pyrolysis entering the Indian market. Composting and bio-methanation are their less preferred cousins.

Corporate interest in the business of solid waste management became evident during the past few years as privatisation opened up the sector. Large corporate players such as Ramky, Anthony, Hanjer, ITC WOW, and SPML entered the arena along with multinationals like Veolia and Rochem as well as smaller local players. Industry associations like the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) have shown special enthusiasm by organising events around waste management. The World Bank, JICA, ADB, GIZ, CGI and others are heavily invested in the sector.

Industry and the state administration tend to favour techno-managerial solutions that have serious implications for the informal waste sector. Apart from the environmental effects of burning waste, there is serious threat to the recycling value chain. The informal waste sector is ill-equipped to compete with formal enterprises that are managing to privatise the waste commons, in a manner of speaking.

The small contractor-led contracts of the early years of privatisation have given way to large integrated multi-year contracts that incorporate collection, transport and processing and the rights to earn revenue from tipping fees payable by the municipal government, sale of recyclables and processed waste products, as also carbon credits.

#### Contribution of the informal waste sector

The recycling pyramid is constructed on the labour and enterprise of an estimated 1% of the total urban population in developing countries. The number of workers engaged in such activities in India would be in the region of 3.26 million, with the bulk comprising wastepickers and other collectors who occupy lower levels of the pyramid. Even while accounting for regional differences, labour in the waste sector is segmented. Low entry barriers draw large numbers of women, resource-poor scheduled castes, tribes, minorities and new migrants into the sector (Huysman 1998, Chikarmane *et al* 2001). Informal waste work offers an opportunity to climb the economic ladder and create a space in which people do not need to worry about their position in the caste and social hierarchy. Informal waste workers have acquired skills to perform a task few others would care to perform. However, economic imperatives and a growing awareness of the economic potential of the scrap trade are breaking caste barriers as people cutting across

#### Paper (India)

- The import of waste paper has increased from 5.1 million USD in 1980 to 1 billion USD in 2011
- India imports around 4.0 million tonnes of waste paper annually, which is about 57% of its requirements
- Post-consumer paper or waste paper is an important renewable raw material for the paper industry
- 3 million tonnes recovered annually reduces imports
- The recycling process offers an opportunity for the generation of additional income and employment
- 95% of waste paper collection is carried out by the informal sector
- Recycling 1 tonne of waste paper is estimated to result in a saving of 70% of raw material, 60% of coal, 43% of energy and 70% of water, as compared to making virgin paper from wood
- According to some estimates, 1 tonne of recycled paper saves approximately 17 trees, 2.5 barrels of oil, 4,100 kilowatt hours of electricity, four cubic metres of landfill and 31,780 litres of water

(DIPP 2011)



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### Plastic (India)

- Per capita consumption in India: 5.8 kg
- Between 2000-01 and 2009-10, the demand for plastic raw material more than doubled from 3.3 million metric tonnes to 6.8 million metric tonnes
- Plastic processing capacity more than doubled from ~8.2 MMT in 2001-02 to ~19 MMT in 2009-10
- Number of organised recycling units: 3,500
- Number of unorganised recycling units: 4,000
- Major types of plastics recycled: PE, PP, PVC, PET, PS, ABS and PMMA
- Manpower directly involved in plastics recycling: around 600,000
- Manpower indirectly involved in plastics recycling: around 1,000,000
- Quantum of plastics recycled per annum: 3.6 million metric tonnes
- Estimated investment in indigenous plant and machinery for recycling industries (mostly Tier I): about Rs 150.00 crore

(CIPET 2011)

socio-economic profiles try to enter the sector, while those already engaged in it try to defend their preserve against competition (Gill 2009).

#### *Contribution to materials recovery*

Recyclable materials constitute between 17.5% of municipal solid waste and the informal sector retrieves 56% of that (Annepu 2012). Most of the recyclable materials collected and handled by the informal waste sector fall within the broad categories of paper, plastic, metal, glass and rags. For the purposes of this article, the authors look at the consumption and recycling of just two commodities — paper and plastics.

The Indian paper industry uses wood, agricultural residue and waste paper as raw material. In the early-1970s, the share of waste paper used as raw material was only 7%, whereas now it constitutes the major raw material base for the paper industry, with a 47% share in total production (DIPP 2011).

The Working Group Report for the Pulp and Paper Industry XII Five-Year Plan calls for increasing the present indigenous paper recovery rate from 27% to 50% through development of models by the municipality with the involvement of private operators and industry.

Some of the stated aims of the policy resolution for petrochemicals are to increase domestic demand and per capita consumption of plastics and synthetic fibres and to achieve sustainable growth in the petrochemical sector through innovative methods of plastic waste management, recycling and development of bio-photo-degradable polymers and plastics (GOI 2007).

The documents referred to in this section are government publications. They not only acknowledge the presence of the informal sector but indicate the scale of its contribution as well. Yet the discussion paper that has purportedly been prepared by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) favours large businesses that seek to corporatise the sector and supplant the robust enterprise-driven materials collection and trade rather than to strengthen it. What is often overlooked intentionally or otherwise is the fact that the informal sector is already the private sector. So when PPP in India calls for private sector participation it is in fact calling for the participation of organised industry and corporate bodies. The authors by no means suggest that the waste informal sector is disorganised, because there is evidence from studies that establish that it is highly structured and organised and survives without any government support in highly competitive markets (Chikarmane *et al* 2001, Gill 2010). Investment in the informal waste sector is likely to yield benefits in upgrading livelihoods, worker safety and employment-generation, apart from the obvious advantages of building on the foundation of something that already exists.

#### *Contribution to the environment and municipal government*

The informal waste sector manages recyclables which constitute about 15% of the total waste generated, at no cost to the municipal government. In fact, the sector actually subsidises the cost of collection and transportation by recovering and diverting recyclable materials much before the waste journeys to the landfill. Consequently, fuel is saved, as are the environmental costs of mixed waste dumping at landfills and the resultant soil, water and air pollution. The costs of extraction of often non-renewable virgin materials are avoided as well through effective materials recovery and recycling.

#### **Conclusion**

There is a good deal of doublespeak and inherent contradiction in policy and practice and a frightening absence of coherence between policies of different government ministries and departments. While most government policy documents recognise the contribution of the informal waste sector and the need to promote it (see Chikarmane 2012), actual action of governments at all levels works to displace it. A recent study by Chintan

### SWaCH: Candle in the wind?

SWaCH Seva Sahakari Sanstha is an autonomous enterprise of wastepickers that provides front-end waste management solutions to the residents of Pune. It is a pro-poor partnership that is authorised to provide door-to-door waste collection and waste management services by the Pune Municipal Corporation. SWaCH is promoted by Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (KKPKP) which organised over 8,000 wastepickers to work with dignity and created a sustainable decentralised waste management model in the country. The MOU between SWaCH and the PMC extends for a period of five years, from 2008-2013. According to the terms of the MOU, SWaCH members are permitted to recover user fees from service users. PMC provides the infrastructure, including collection equipment. A two-year pilot preceded SWaCH.

The approach at SWaCH is driven by a hierarchical chain of 'recycling points', from door-to-door collection of domestic segregated waste to a chain of scrap shops; also e-waste collection and organic waste processing units that ensure recycling and reprocessing.

<b>Scale</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operational area: Pune city (PMC jurisdiction)</li> <li>Spread: 80 out of 143 kothis</li> <li>Coverage: 340,931 out of 703,486 households (48%)</li> <li>Slum coverage: 28,716 out of 54,584 households in 126 out of 553 slum areas</li> </ul>
<b>Member data</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member workers: 2,055</li> <li>Members regularly paying 5% of earnings: 1,243</li> <li>Daily worker absenteeism: only 3% of total workers (June-July 2012)</li> </ul>
<b>Three main reasons for absence:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Death/accident/illness/maternity leave (self or family) — 26%</li> <li>Out of station — 22%</li> <li>Other family-related reasons — 12%</li> </ul>
<b>Contribution to SWM</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily waste collected: 600 tonnes total</li> <li>Recyclable: 90 tonnes diverted to recycling</li> <li>Non-recyclable: 90 tonnes (includes recyclable materials for which the market is poor)</li> </ul>

(‘Failing the Grade’ 2012) assesses the failings of a number of cities and the doublespeak between policy and action when it comes to integration. The task of integration is left to the goodwill of the private corporate sector. The past decade has established that privatisation of urban basic services is not the magic bullet solution that it is made out to be. In a recent article, environmental activist Sunita Narain refers to PPP as ‘public money private profit’ because little private investment actually comes in, private players are unable to provide good services, and yet profits accrue to them. “The public system takes a further hit and the private system does not benefit. Development does not happen. What happens is loot in the name of growth.” This applies to the solid waste management scenario as much as it does to water, which the article is about. The Government of India as well as state and municipal governments are treading the path of the economically developed world in the matter of managing urban solid waste. Centralised, capital- and technology-driven waste management will spell the death of the informal waste recycling sector. India has a rich history of re-use and recovery which should, in fact, be strengthened by promoting source segregation of waste; registration, integration and

<b>Salient features of the PMC-SWaCH partnership in Pune city</b>
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): Signed in October 2008
Nature of arrangement: Pro-poor partnership
Main tasks: Door-to-door collection of source-segregated domestic waste; maintenance of separate streams
Collection of road sweepings, biomedical waste excluded
Collection of garden waste, construction and demolition waste, e-waste on payment of user fees
Mode of collection: Manual pushcarts (small motorised vehicles introduced for difficult terrain)
Workers involved: Two workers for 200-300 households, offices, shops, other establishments
User fee: From all classes of users
User fee amount: Usually Rs 10 (US\$ 0.20) to Rs 30 (US\$ 0.54) per household per month depending on certain variables; in slums: Rs 15 or US\$ 0.26 per household per month
Collection from slums: To be part-subsidised but this clause is not implemented
Rights over recyclables: Collectors have rights over recyclables and retain income from the sale of scrap
Provision of collection equipment and safety gear: Pune Municipal Corporation
Office, infrastructure and resource-recovery centres: Pune Municipal Corporation
Terms of payment: Operational grant to cover management costs and some operational costs reducing annually
Worker benefits: Medical insurance provided by the PMC
Complaints and customer care helpline: Operated by SWaCH
Performance indicators: Specified in agreement
Validity of MOU: Five years
Monthly per-household cost to municipality: Rs 4.38 (about US\$ 0.08)

upgradation of wastepickers and itinerant waste buyers; reserving space for flea markets, junk markets and scrap materials markets; decentralised composting and bio-methanation and other eco-friendly options.

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