

Rural And Urban Regeneration Through Sustainability

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Abstract

“India lives in villages” were the golden words of Mahatma Gandhi. Today India is witnessing a large scale urbanization which is a direct result of migration of people from rural areas to towns and cities. Still almost 68% of Indians live in villages. On the contrary, India’s vision today is highly urban centric. Cities are tipped to be the catalyst of growth in the future. After almost 7 decades of independence, we have created an economy of rich cities and poor villages, surging urban areas and decaying rural areas. Therefore there is a need to visit the existing ground realities & this study looks at various indicators of sustainable progress in India from the rural-urban perspective.

Keywords: Rural-Urban Migration, urbanization, environmental degradation, environmental, social & economic sustainability.

Introduction

Even after 59 years of planned economic development, there exists a wide gap between the level of development of rural and urban areas. Large masses of rural population remain underdeveloped whereas the urban people have easy access to everything. This has resulted in large-scale rural urban migration causing overcrowding in big cities and created several urban problems and growth of slums. The prime factor of rural urban migration is the inadequate employment opportunities in rural sector compelling the rural people to move towards urban areas in search of livelihood. However, there are other factors which also act as the driving force of rural people to urban areas e.g. availability of roads, electricity, education, health and medical facilities etc. Per capita Income in urban location is almost three times that of the rural location. This increasing strain hampers the country’s

urban Infrastructure. This unplanned growth increases the urban pollution, crime and absence of the required infrastructure like access to drinking water, sanitation, roads, footpaths for pedestrians, public spaces, parks and greenery. This makes urban life troublesome.

Rural scenario

Nearly 85 percent of the rural population and 70 percent of total population of our country depends on agriculture and allied activities for their livelihood. Food production rates have increased dramatically since the mid-20th century so the environment in the rural areas is under increased pressure for intensification of food production with the use of conventional agricultural methods with mechanization, artificial fertilizers



and chemical pesticides. However, chemical fertilizers and

pesticides are among the most hazardous pollutants that directly threaten nature and human health due to their toxicity. Agricultural mechanization has increased farm output and reduced the physical labor, but, at the same time it has made farms dangerously dependent on fossil fuels.

Fig. No. 1: Agricultural methods with Mechanization

There are many issues with rural development in India. To name a few:-

- Unemployment, Economic Factors, Lack Of Income Generating Opportunities, Social Factors, Health, Education & Financial Factors, Lack of available infrastructure are some of the major factors for migration in rural India.
- Unhygienic conditions such as less number of toilets, water stagnation, non awareness, Drinking water quality in rural India are the major problems.
- In 21st Century, there is no electricity supply in many villages. Still People trust on primitive methods of cooking, living and farming.
- Illiteracy & untrained, unskilled, inexperienced staff is another major problem in rural areas.
- Due to urbanization there is an increasing shift from agriculture to industrial or service and distributive occupations.

Urban scenario

Almost all the world population is now living in metropolis. The evolution of cities has evolved into an arch-dictatorship: multifunctional sky scrapers structure, where buildings are the new landscape that grows beyond the limits and the city boundaries. The structural urban grid, which once was a part of the city identity, has been lost; the old city icons are now lost in the middle of a dense topography where buildings compete with each other promising new opportunities.

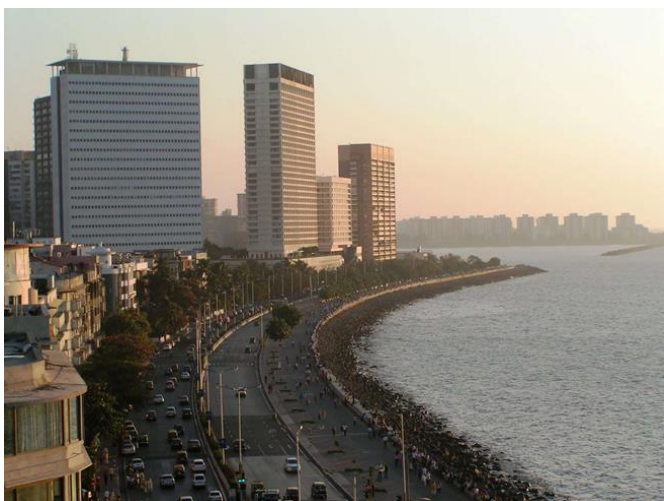


Fig. No. 2: Urban development with skyscrapers

The human kind is transformed into an efficient machine. As the number of towns and cities grow in India, keeping pace with the economic growth and urbanization, it is leading to severe shortfalls in housing, water supply, waste management, sewerage which creates congestion, pollution, environmental degradation, inadequate public transport and lack of good urban governance. Urban infrastructure in India has suffered from inappropriate planning of cities, poor quality of civic services, inadequate maintenance, inefficient operations, under capacity and lack of investments. Poverty and inequality has widened to a great extent in recent years. Poor become poorer and rich become richer.



Fig. No. 3: Inappropriate Civic Services



Fig. No. 4: Slum Development

Sustainable development...

Sustainable development has its roots in concern about the environment, climate change and rising carbon dioxide (CO₂)

emissions, coupled with the combination of poverty in developing nations and unsustainable levels of consumption. Its emphasis is on development that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The aim is to achieve continuous improvement of the quality of life and well-being of the present and the future generations, through the creation of sustainable communities that are able to manage and use resources efficiently, to tap the ecological and social innovation potential of the economy, ensuring prosperity, environmental protection and social cohesion. Key challenges for sustainable development are climate change, clean energy, sustainable transport, sustainable consumption and production, conservation and management of natural resources, public health, social inclusion, demography and migration, poverty. Directives and regulatory measures have been introduced to achieve the aims, such as- those regarding improving air and water quality, energy efficiency, and landfill. Urban-rural linkages play a vital role in local sustainable development, by encouraging the use of a shared approach which can lead to range of benefits.



Fig. No. 5: Key elements of sustainability

Rural regeneration requires a complex approach which must stimulate the rural economy and help protect the environment at the same time. The government, NGOs and other development agencies should develop policies to reduce rural-urban disparities. There is an urgent need for both qualitative and quantitative development in the rural areas. Generation of employment and livelihood opportunities, organic farming, changes in the area of health, education, environment, transport, poverty reduction, removal of regional and social disparities, agricultural and industrial growth are key elements of rural growth. In order to protect the historical and natural heritage, the rural communities should provide assistance in form of expertise and funds. Tourism should develop to experience the rural life .particularly animal farms, wineries, family-run cheese factories, and “pick-your-own” fruits and vegetable farms, to get some peace and enjoy the nature. Increased tourism also provides a major asset for small businesses such as restaurants, family-run bed & breakfasts, horse riding facilities, etc. as well as traditional craftspeople that otherwise often face difficulties selling their products. To

strengthen the rural infrastructure and to tackle with this problem, former President Dr. A.P.J. Kalam has proposed the concept of PURA i.e. providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas in the Vision 2020.

Urban regeneration requires substantial focus to minimize the energy use through efficient system designs, less system losses and harnessing the renewable energy sources, designing climate responsive buildings is of vital importance to minimize damage to the environment. Presently, the cities cover less than 2% of the planet’s surface but consume 78% of the world’s energy. The existing buildings have become resource intensive. Green and intelligent retrofitting will ensure better performance and energy savings. Unplanned urbanization has led to environmental degradation. In Indian context, the Smart Cities initiative is a step towards habitations where the man kind can not only survive but also thrive through improved quality of life and wellbeing.

Conclusion

Urbanization and suburban sprawl, industrialization, intensive agriculture and globalization have dramatically changed the rural areas in both their appearance and character. Adoption of environmentally-friendly agricultural methods and businesses, on the other hand, helps preserve biodiversity and healthy environment which dramatically improves the quality of life of the rural urban communities both directly and indirectly. Unfortunately, there is a tendency to separate ‘rural and urban’ as opposed to each other and one sector snatching away what is due to others. It is the time to recognize these two as complementary to each other and strengthen the rural-urban partnership. Generation of employment and livelihood opportunities, poverty reduction, and removal of regional and social disparities, agricultural and industrial growth and environmental sustainability are key elements of inclusive growth. Information and communication technology should be used to enable solutions over a common platform and help in efficient planning and management of public utilities such as power, water, broadband, internet telephony and transport. Technology can help reduce the disparity between rural and urban India.

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