

The process of urbanization in pakistan



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Urbanization is a worldwide phenomenon with different countries experiencing various rates and patterns of rural urban migration. The entire world is changing into an urbanized centre with most of the people moving to large cities during the past few decades. Every nation, every city, every individual is somehow involved in this process. Before mid-century, urban development was mostly restricted to developed countries but has spread to developing countries since. Now almost all the developing countries in the world are experiencing accelerated process of urbanization.

Pakistan has a moderate level of urbanization within the Asia-Pacific region based on both, the level of urbanization and urban growth. However among the South Asian countries, Pakistan has the highest share of people living in urban area. In figure 1, we can see the levels of urbanization that are based on population censuses. Year 2005 shows an estimated value of 35 percent of urbanization. Urban population increased from 17.4 percent to 32.5 percent during 1951 to 1998. According to UN, half of the population will be living in urban centers by 2030.

Large scale urbanization is breaking down the old structure leading to a fundamental revolution in our society. The growth of urbanization in Pakistan reflects the aspirations and hopes of billions of new urbanites. It is a cyclical process a country experiences as it evolves from an agrarian to an industrial society. They migrate from economically depressed areas to a place where better opportunities are offered. Urbanization is spread between the four provinces. The most urbanized province is Sindh (Karachi and Hyderabad) followed by Punjab (Lahore, Faisalabad and Pindi) whereas NWFP is the least urbanized one. Natural increase (population growth) and rural urban

migration significantly contribute to urban growth. Although urbanization is the best test of industrialization, in case of Pakistan urbanization has gone out of step from economic development. Over urbanization reflects that there is more 'push' of people from rural to urban than 'pull' from urban to rural. It is equally important for the 'liveability ranking' to rise together with growing urbanization. However the current scenario indicates that the 'liveability ranking' will decrease tremendously if nothing is done to improve the environment. Knowing the gravity of the problem, its concern is increasing amongst social scientist and the government of Pakistan to take corrective measures for sustainable development of these cities because of the increased burden on limited resources of urban areas.

Significance of rural urban migration in economy

Human beings are like other organisms who have been polluting their environment with the by-products of their actions. As long as population was low, the environment was able to manage these alterations. However in case of Pakistan, environmental degradation is sounding alarms.

Over the last 60 years, the process of economic development has brought about a number of changes and the most critical element of the process is rural to urban migration. It is changing the faces of large cities and villages. It is expected to shoot up further although many cities have already reached the saturation point where further population can endanger the delivery of basic services to all. The intensity of impact is critical in larger cities such as Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad and Rawalpindi where the civic bodies are badly failing to manage these problems.

One of the major urban nightmares is solid waste management. Due to lack of professionalism and proper wastage disposal, 40% of the waste is not picked up and keeps on rotting in streets. As a result, more and more people become vulnerable to air and water born diseases. Moreover, eating up of green and open space, important for ecological balance, also leads to deteriorating environment. Air governs the quality of environment. The air in Pakistan is so polluted that it can clearly be seen with naked eye.

Historical building can no longer be seen and even protected monuments are getting vandalized. The trees are being cut without a second thought. No one coordinates the work of development agencies with reference to rural urban migration.

Urban decay in Pakistan cannot be overlooked at any cost. There is no proper sewage system, traffic on roads has lead to serious accidents, the crime in urban centres is increasing day by day and litter can be seen at every possible place. The government is no longer able to provide security, good quality of primary/secondary education and healthcare at affordable prices due to limited resources. Because of this reason, private sector has come forward to play such roles but at the cost of social justices, as the services offered are very expensive and only a small percentage is able to afford it.

The ideal situation would be an equitable distribution of people between rural and urban areas. However, migrants are attracted to urban life with better economic and educational opportunities and better quality of life. It is high time that policy makers of Pakistan should think hard to check the

current demographic trend. Urbanization is screaming out loud, pleading for intervention.

Historic evolution of rural urban migration

The city planning in Indus valley (Moen-jo-Daro and Harappa) together with the status of development in Lahore during the Mughal rule is a witness to the fact that rural life flourished along with the urban culture. After independence, urbanization gained speed and Population Census of Pakistan stated that one out to four individuals could be considered as urban (Population Census of Pakistan, 1972; 1981). In 1947, only 15% of the population lived in urban areas whereas now more than 40% of Pakistan's population lives in urban centres. It has been predicted that, by 2030, about half of Pakistan's population will be settled in cities. " The rural growth rate fluctuated substantially between 1951 and 1998; it first increased from 1.8% for the 1951-61 period to 3.4% for the next intercensal period, 1961-72. Since then it has continuously declined reaching 2.2% for the 1981-98 period. The average annual growth rate of urban population declined continuously from 4.9% for the intercensal period of 1951-61 to 3.5% for the period of 1981-98" (Arif & Hamid, 2009). However, the urban growth rate has remained higher than rural growth rate because of rural urban migration. Urban growth started to decline later because of deteriorating law and order situation, lack of job opportunities in manufacturing sector etc.

Massive urban population explosion was experienced due to the immigrants first from India, due to the partition, and then from Afghanistan, due to war on terror. Most of them settled in Lahore (heart of Pakistan) and Karachi (financial sector of Pakistan), shooting up the urban population in a few

years. With concentration of economic activities in Karachi, a need for a new capital was felt where government agencies can be concentrated. Thus the capital was transferred to Islamabad in 1960.

Migration and transformation of rural economy is highly related. “ The agriculture sector contributed more than half of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1949-50, but it declined to 22 percent of GDP in 2005-06. Over the same period, manufacturing share in GDP increased from 8 to 26 percent, and shares of services and trade sectors also increased from 25 to 51 percent. The share of agriculture labour force has declined, from 65 percent in 1951 to 48 percent in 2003” (Arif & Hamid, 2009). Due to this decrease in dependence on agricultural sector, the rural-urban migration is taking place leading to urbanization.

Figure 2 shows that urban growth consists of natural increase and internal migration. It can be seen that urban areas grew primarily because of natural increase. However, contribution of internal migration was comparatively higher in Sindh and Balochistan.

Measures and policies undertaken by the government

High level of urbanization is creating lots of urban issues affecting the socio-economical, cultural and political conditions of the economy. According to United Nation, the urban population is said to double (from 3.4 billion to 6.3 billion) by 2050. Thus it's important for us to tackle this problem of massive urbanization or otherwise economic and environmental crisis can occur in near future. The unplanned and unmanaged expansion of cities without any master plan for coping with the problems of proper disposal of the solid

waste, traffic management, availability of clean drinking water and other significant areas of urban planning will lead to chaos in big urban cities. The government needs to learn from experiences of others and develop cities on modern lines. Urbanization is good as long as it is followed by economic growth and thus it is important to manage the accelerating growth.

Inadequate housing, indoor air pollution, no land at affordable prices, over crowding of people in one house are typical challenges faced by urban centres. Urban development authorities have sanctioned public land to land development schemes by military, allocating the public land to few privileged ones. Thus land is the primary source of wealth creation in Pakistan, creating severe inequalities in urban areas. The goal of the policy should be to tackle systematic bias towards poor who have been suffering by urban development schemes and should provide home for all the migrants.

Pakistan has been facing two different educational standard systems. The privileged children attend expensive schools offering better education compared state operated educational centres. The government has been opening schools in different areas in order to make the youth literate enough to be able to earn a living in future. However the educational standards are way below with non professional teachers and irrelevant syllabus. Urban education policy is needed to tackle the high urban population growth. An urban education policy is needed that should provide high quality education with sufficient resources to ensure services are provided at affordable prices.

Like education, even health system has separate standards in rural and urban areas. The rural centres have no other option but to avail the public

health care system. In urban Pakistan, the hospitals are crumbling due to inadequate staff and funding. Private health centres only entertain the needs of the rich population who can afford the price. The quality of rural health centres is way below the quality of private hospitals. They lack the resources to basic health facilities. This inequality needs to be looked upon and the government should ensure that comparable services are offered to low income group.

For the management of urban centres, the government of Pakistan is planning to organize “ Pakistan Urban Forum” in March 2011. The theme is “ Managed Urbanization: The Road to National Development” and their basic goal is to discuss the challenges of urbanization and suggest policies towards better decision making for an improved urban future.

Concentration of urban population was first time realized in the fourth year plan (1970-75). The growth of cities was termed as ‘ uncontrolled’ and ‘ unbalanced’. The next plan’s (1978-83) strategy was to develop small and medium-sized towns by improving their urban infrastructure. The strategy was followed by subsequent three plans, sixth, seventh and eighth with the addition of rural development.

Future outlook of urbanization

Our social structure has been changing at a rapid rate due to factors such as inflation, industrialization, urbanization and huge number of refugees. The old unique traditions are breaking apart. Sociologically our culture is undergoing effects of modern age. New and advanced values have taken over. Today it’s the world of social changes and industrialization, where

industrialization is highly correlated with urbanization. It is expected for Pakistan to be urbanized as well as industrialized with the creation of factories. Rapidly growing cities with commercial expansion contributes to the high levels of urbanization.

Figure 3 show that, according to United Nations, the urban population is expected to double in the next 40 years or so. By 2050, around 6.3 million people will be living in cities-more than 68% of the population. For Asia, it shows an increasing trend throughout.

As family size increases along with rural urban migration, slums are growing and unlawful resident settlements are emerging at a rapid rate, on slopes of hills, along river beds, in parks and playgrounds, even in diminishing reserved areas for forest. All this would lead to serious management problems, worsening the economic conditions. Due to large number of emigrants schools, colleges, hospitals and every single place is over crowded leading to environmental and ecological degradation through air, water, noise, and soil pollution along with putting pressure on existing resources. Inadequate housing, traffic on roads, poor public services threaten quality of human life and lead to social pathologies such as crimes. Migrants are vulnerable to lack of food, water and other basic necessities of life and might be a threat to political stability. Thus the government needs to think of a best possible solution either to control urbanization or take measures to accelerate industrialization and economic growth so that urbanization benefits the economy in a positive way. Otherwise it might lead to uncontrollable social, political and economic disaster for Pakistan if low income group lives without enjoying the basic needs of life.

2. 1 Socio economic attributes of rural areas in developing countries

Childbearing decisions are an economic calculus and in rural areas, the return to childbearing is higher than the cost. Zambia evidence suggests that generally after the age of 12, children change from consumers to producers. However in Pakistan, females become net contributors to household activities at the age of 11-16. Thus even if children are resource gatherers, net benefits are not experienced till the child reach age 11. In cases where females marry early, the period of net contribution is very less. However fertility decisions are predominantly dependent on cultural, religious and emotional factors. Another policy that needs attention is women's status in participating in activities to improve the management of natural resources. This way economic calculus can be shifted as the opportunity cost of having children will be the loss of income generation. Thus people will enjoy a better environment with higher standards of living. (Sherbinin, Rural Household Micro-Demographics, Livelihoods , 2006)

The impact of farmer adjustments to limited resources and technological development is not fully apparent. It has been seen that former canal colonies have experienced changes on access to land, employment opportunities, working conditions and occupational patterns. With changing economic activities, the protective and productive functions of rural children have begun to alter. The emergent agri-cultural sector consists of households who operate medium and large size holdings. They have gained advantage in terms of information gathering, internal generation of capital, use of machinery, purchase of inputs but still the focus remains on future

productivity. Workforce on large farms is employed on short term basis whereas the family members engage in supervisory activities. Generally the females are kept away from the labour force and only the man is educated for managing the resources. However in small farms, females are given chance to work as labourers because of the financial constraints to hire labour from outside. In other cases, families lack the claims on agricultural land and depend on either wage employment or livestock rising. Their welfare primary depends on competitive market forces. It can be seen from the employment levels of Faisalabad that changes in cropping pattern and agricultural techniques able even the small farmers to employ labour on wages (Lieberman, 1982).

The balance of power in decisions making is important between both genders for a healthy society to exist (Taj, A. Majid¹, Mirza, & Abbas, 2004). The position of a woman in any society is based on her ability to take decisions in different spheres of life, degree of control, choices of freedom, what rights and duties they enjoy. Initially women were only given their primary roles those of daughters, wives and mothers whereas their spouse used to make all the decisions about their lives. Majority of them grow up in sheltered environment possessing only primary education, getting married at early stages and expected to bear about five children. Even to this date, birth of a daughter is regarded as an addition of burden since she is looked as a transient member of the family. Although these situations do exist in rural areas, women participation in urban areas is increasing massively where women have employed themselves in multi nationals, earning high salaries and enjoying the independence form men.

2. 2 Rural urban differentials in developing countries

2. 2. 1 Infrastructure and provision of social service

At present, the rural infrastructure is facing crisis. Rural sector even lack the basic organizational and physical structures in transportation, energy, water management, communication and solid waste management. Thus there is a dire need to upgrade the rural infrastructure as rural areas are the agricultural sector that is the backbone of many developing countries.

Theory (Gunatilaka, April 1999) shows rural economic infrastructure should be there to meet the target population and to make the life of poor more bearable. However if the policy maker expect to generate profit out of such projects, they would be disappointed. This is because the rural project are designed keeping the village level in mind. However there is no doubt that well established local markets provide opportunities to increase production capacity or to make good quality goods earning a high price. In order to earn more, the producer needs to upgrade the production techniques so that he is able to access the urban market for trading purposes. Thus the infrastructural policies should integrate the markets between rural and urban sector, so that business opportunities can be availed by everyone.

2. 2. 2 Socio cultural disparities and poverty comparisons

The authors (Macours & Swinner, 2008) discuss the rural urban poverty differentials in transition countries of Eastern Europe. It explains different patterns of rural urban poverty by comparing analysis of different countries. The poverty trends suggest that recently poverty reduction looks similar in rural and urban areas. However, all poverty indicators show that the poverty in rural areas is way more than urban areas in transition countries and this

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will continue in future. Thus, reduction in rural poverty plays a very important role in overall poverty reduction. Rural poverty cannot be reduced unless rural asset accumulation is facilitated, returns to the assets are increased, or sufficient transfers are provided. Rural urban areas of Eastern European EU accession countries have the highest differences between poverty. Differences are even high for Russia and Kazakhstan. In these countries rural urban poverty ratio is higher than 1.5; rural centers are 50% more at poverty risk as compared to urban centers. On the other hand, in Belarus, Armenia and Azerbaijan the rural poverty is consistently lower than urban poverty whereas rural urban poverty is almost the same in Bosnia, Herzegovina, Hungary, Estonia, Macedonia and Tajikistan.

Similar trends were followed by rural urban poverty changes in 1998 to 2002. The rural urban poverty gap was around 5% points and it has remained stable as rural and urban poverty declined at almost the same rate. However rural poverty reduction was stronger in Moldova and Azerbaijan. As seen in the article, rural urban poverty differentials remained almost the same for low income countries. However it has increased in middle income countries.

The impacts of rural urban migration on psychological and physical health should be considered by comparing the health of migrants with those who remain in rural areas (Lu, 2009). Theory explores socioeconomic and behavioural pathways mediating the migration effect. The health facilities in urban areas are much more advanced than in rural areas. However rural urban migration has amplified the threat of psychological disorder as

measured by depressive symptoms. This was mainly because of reduced social support as a result of family disruption: migrants who moved alone.

2. 2. 3 Education services and rural urban gap

Birth order inversely effects the schooling decisions but it is more in rural areas where the families are large and thus not able to afford the education. The younger ones have a lesser probability to attend school mainly because of resource constraint. The school enrollment age is more delayed in case of rural areas as compared to urban areas. Thus, as age increases, the probability of attending school increases at a decreasing rate. (Khan & Tasnim Khan, 2010)

Unfortunately the boys are more preferred to send to schools than girls, in both rural and urban centers. However gender disparity is higher for rural areas because they have specific characteristics and a certain socio economic structure due to which the decision of his/her schooling is highly related to the gender. As a result, the female literacy rate is much lower in case of rural areas. Opening of primary schools might reduce the gender gap but the religious and social values would still prefer to keep the girls at home because of seclusion ethic. However even in case of boys, the standard of rural versus urban schools is beyond comparison. The rural areas mostly have government school that lacks the necessary resources whereas the private involvement in urban centers has raised the standard of education to quite an extend. Moreover there is school dropout disparity as well. Rural students are more likely to be dropped out of schools as compared to urban students. In short, rural literacy is low due to intra household's

discrimination, higher poverty levels, low rewards to education, low opportunities, and strict socio cultural customs.

Generally it's seen that the head of the household should play a positive role in educating the family members. Together with this, parental preference for education and their assistance in home work is very important. In urban areas, the women are educated and highly paid. Thus they contribute more to income that results into higher probability of child schooling. However in rural centers, the employed females are underpaid as they are involved in informal employment. Thus contributing less to income and their participation in decisions making is close to zero. They engage in unskilled labor, decreasing their perception about education for children. However in case of rural areas, the head is usually not that well educated as have low education returns compared to the financial cost. At the end, they have to look after their farms and earn a living out of it. So employment status is also an important factor in determining if education can be afforded. In rural areas, people are employed in agricultural sectors so they have more advantages to make their children involve in work. However in urban centers, people are mainly employed in industrial sectors and can afford schooling of their children. Thus, the literacy levels are higher for urban areas.

2. 2. 4 Health profile in rural and urban areas

In the last two decades, major cities of developing world are experiencing urban population exposure resulting in economic slowdown and increase in levels of urban poverty (Fotso, 2006). Rural urban differentials are discussed

in the paper by comparing the socio economic status (SES) of different countries. As seen in the paper, controlling of SES dramatically drops the rural urban gaps; about 80% in Uganda, Togo and Cameroon. The study uses a sample of 15 countries in sub-Saharan Africa; 7 of Western and Central regions and 8 of Eastern and Southern parts. The results show that differentials in child malnutrition have lowered in six countries primarily due to a rise in urban malnutrition and have widened in 3 countries due to decline in urban malnutrition. However the malnutrition in urban areas is much lower than rural areas as rural areas lack the health services offered in urban centers. Although urban areas have a better health system, the growing urbanization has put pressure on the existing recourses due to which urban malnutrition is increasing. Programs and policies of MDGs on child's health should focus on urban poor. The existing data collection should be redesigned by taking slums areas into consideration because usually they are ignored and are taken as illegal settlements.

Generally females are a higher proportion of underweight and stunted children and these girls are to become the undernourished mothers. This negatively affects the pregnancy and results in low birth weight of the new born. Thus a cycle of stunted adolescent and undernourished girls is repeated over time. Nowadays the urban children spend more time at indoor activities such as playing video games and computers or watching television. However, rural children are more into physical activities with less food intake and so tend to be underweight. Although rural areas are agricultural sector and should have more pure food for consumption, but the lack of finances force them to sell their food production for money. Thus

nutritional status for urban children is more than rural children (Anwar & Awan, 2003).

2. 2. 5 Communication, transportation and mobility

(Qureshi & Huapu, 2007)The paper talks about Karachi urban development along with the environmental and infrastructural conditions, focusing mainly on the transport development projects. The present transport system is experiencing crisis as the urban design and policies doesn't provide holistic approach to urban transportation. The rail based mass transportation projects and bus development will improve the urban transportation in years to come but for now, the system is environmentally, economically and socially unsustainable.

Rapid urbanization and economic growth has put massive pressure on travel demands. It has been seen in the paper that, in 2002, the registered vehicles were growing at a rate twice to population growth. Vehicle fleet is predominated by motorcycles and car which constitute 92% of vehicles. The congestion on roads has increased because of lack of economic instruments and an increase in personal vehicle ownership. The main urban transportation system is road based along with Karachi Circular Railway providing a non significant share. The limited road space is poorly maintained with delayed repair work.

On the other hand, no interest is shown to improve the rural transportation system due to which the rural communities are kept away from becoming more developed. The authority concentrates on building new road but fail to look after the maintenance of existing roads. The heavy trucks used by the

farmers will eventually destroy the roadways, leading to unpaved roadways. There are hardly any buses available for transportation. The people own bicycles, motor cycles and a few own tractors and trucks. Thus, although the urban transportation is facing problems, the transportation system of urban is no comparison to rural.

2.3 Rural urban income gaps and the migration process

Rural urban migration has transformed the urban employment and income structure in such a way that it no longer offer better quality of life to the migrants (Mujahid). The hypothesis is based on the data from household income expenditure survey 1966/667. It shows that although earnings are 55% higher in urban than rural centres, the differentials get less impressive in lower deciles. For the two lowest deciles, the urban earnings are only 16% higher. However it doesn't take into account the real earnings as it ignores the cost of living differential that is approximately around 20-25%. Thus in real terms, the rural urban earning differentials are more or less the same.

However People tend to ignore the real earnings and concentrate more on nominal earnings. The agricultural labour expects to get jobs in factories and earn industrial wage. However it is difficult to obtain actual data on agricultural earnings due to very little information available. According to the survey of rural labour in Punjab (1971), the income of temporary and permanent labourers is Rupees 4110 and Rupees 470 respectively. Data on industrial wages are available from Ministry of Labour and the Census of Manufacturing Industries. Studies show that the industrial wages have increased over time, resulting in widening the gap of rural urban income differentials. In early 1950's, the average agricultural wage was three and a

half times higher and in 1960's it was four times higher than industrial wage. The industrial wages further increased due to West Pakistan Minimum Wages for Unskilled Workers Ordinance in 1969. The minimum annual wage of Rupees 1380 for unskilled worker was itself three and a half times higher as compared to the wage of landless agricultural labour that is estimated to be Rupees 410. However despite the increasing rural urban income differentials, rural urban migration decreased in 1960's as compared to 1950's. This maybe explained by military activity, political turmoil and industrial mismanagement. The lack of job vacancies under such conditions offsets the incentives for rural urban migration resulting from rural urban income differentials. Thus it's not only the income differentials but also the probability of earning a higher income that explains rural urban migration.

2. 4 Urbanization and sustainability of urban development in developing countries

One of the most important social transformations has been urbanization. Urbanization process can be seen everywhere in the world, with different speed and timing. Due to urbanization, 44 million people are added to population of cities each year. It has brought massive socio economics changes and plays a pivotal role in economic development. It has been associated with the vacancies for job employments for millions of people, reducing absolute poverty levels. It has transformed the cultures, lifestyles, welfare, institutions, organizations and even governments. However, in Asia, urbanization is coming at a price. Due to poor quality forms or urban development, more than 12 km² of productive agricultural land is lost. Traffic congestion and air pollution is increasing day by day, degrading the

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urban environment and reducing the quality of living. Due to overcrowding, lack of employment opportunities, urban poverty, and lack of services is a common social problem. Urban governance (institutions for financing urban services) has been swamped by the magnitude and speed of urbanization. In not so serious cases, such problems degrade the living standards and conditions. However in serious cases, they might be a threat to socio economic and environmental stability. By executing the urbanization process more efficiently, the rewards of urbanization can be enjoyed by improving standards of living and decreasing constraints on economic activity. As a result, economic and environmental cost will be reduced.

Improvement of urban sustainability requires public and private sector investments. Along with this, the government and management need to implement infrastructural provisions and services through public private partnerships. Along with this, leadership and commitment to the plan is very important. However present policies