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## Trends of Urbanization in India: Issues and Challenges

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### Abstract:

The Globalization has great impact on the country like India, which increases the economic growth of the country. And because of this, we are seeing a growing urbanized India. Historically, India's population has been predominately rural, but since the year 1991 the urban population was increasing, and today it stands about more than 30% of the total population of the country. Although, urbanization in India has been underpinned by the rapid growth in the economy especially from the last decade of the 20th Century, and there is transformation from rural economy based on agriculture and its allied activities to the modern economy related to industrial activities. However, as India's urbanization is increasing we are seeing its negative impacts on the urban areas by way of lack of basic facilities like infrastructure, drinking water, housing, transport etc. Thus, this article tries to present the urbanization taking place in India, and also gives particular attention to the emerging issues and challenges associated with the urbanization in India and some suggestions to overcome it.

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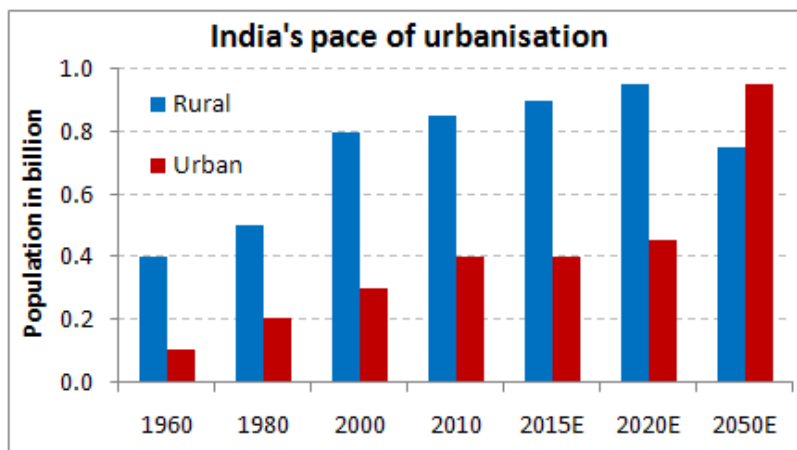
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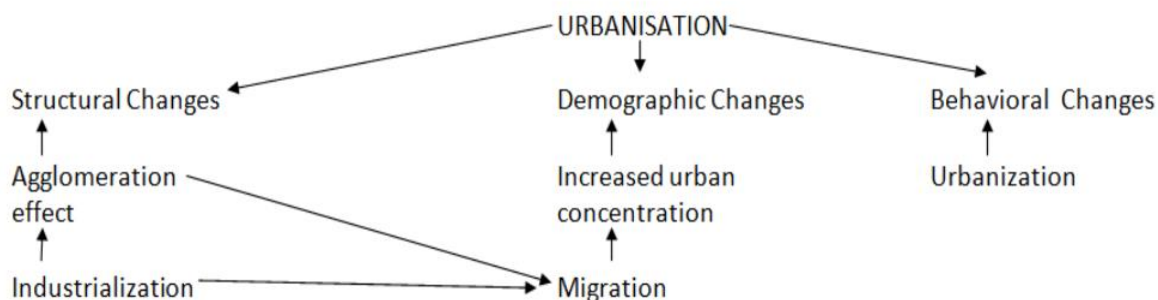
### Introduction

The growth of urbanization in India is basically through two ways, one is through increase in the urban population, which will be natural and the second one is through migration, which is result of people migrating from rural to urban areas and also from small towns/cities to big metros. However, the 1990s, i.e when the Indian government opened up their economy there seen a rise in rapid economic growth of the country.[1,2] But this economic growth was more of urban growth, which led to rapid migration of rural population to urban areas. In the year 1951, only 5 cities are having population of more than 1 million, which increase to 53 cities in 2011 and it was estimated that by 2031 it will be 70 cities in the country with million populations. Similarly, 3 cities are having more than 10 million populations in the year 2011; and it was estimated that 6 cities will be having 10 million populations

by 2031. Thus, it was estimated that the total urban population by the year 2030 will be 610 million, which will account for the 40% of the total population of the country (Mohan, 2012).

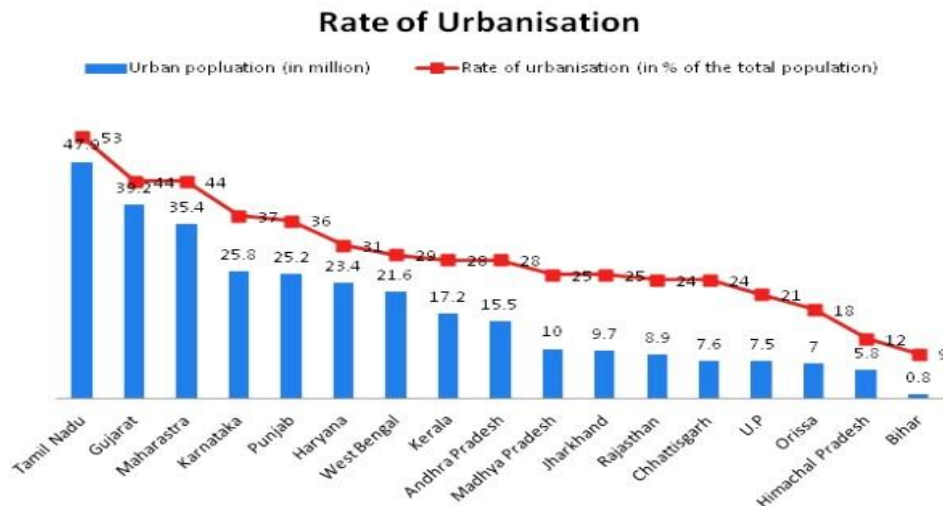


The many cities in our country are becoming extremely crowded and if we see the 20 most densely populated cities in the world, out of which 5 will be from India including [Kolkata and Mumbai] (A Report on Intelligent Urbanization, 2010). In India, especially after 1990s there emerge some metropolitan cities with specialize urban economy. The reason for studying this map is because employment is the main cause for migration and both skilled and unskilled people migrate from one place to another. The three distinct metropolitan cities region emerging are: first is Delhi and NCR [National Capital Region] in northern part of India, as fast growing export manufacturing industries with 4.5%, whereas ICT [Information and Communication Technology] services and high technology manufacturing industries accounts for 2.6 % and 2.6% respectively.[3,4] The second is Mumbai and Ahmedabad in western part of India emerged as high technology manufacturing industries with 9.6%; while for ICT services it was 5.2%; and for fast growing export manufacturing industries 5.1% respectively. The third is Bangalore-Hyderabad-Chennai triangle in southern part of India emerged as ICT services hub with 25.9% quite largest in number compare with other two [fast growing export manufacturing industries and high technology manufacturing industries] which is understandable as India is the major player in the world IT sector market. [5,6] The high technology manufacturing industries accounts for 3.2%, whereas for fast growing export manufacturing industries it was 5.8%; which is slightly higher in number compare with other two metropolitan cities region.[7,8]

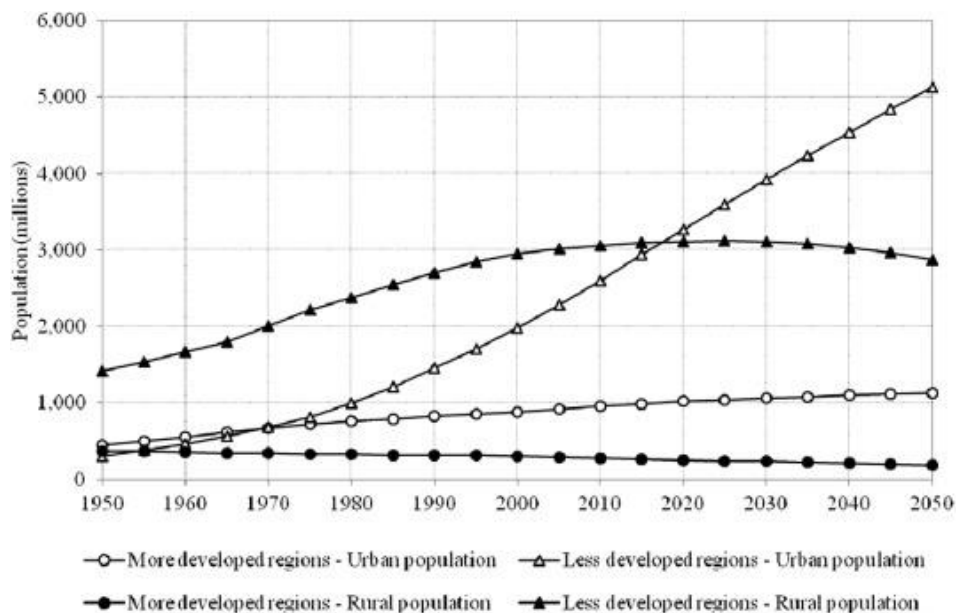


The cities mentioned in above pre distinct metropolitan cities region are also most populated in the country, especially the cities which are having more than 5 million population are: [Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Delhi] and every day number of people is migrating

towards these cities for jobs; and ultimately urbanization is increasing in these cities. Interestingly in year 2011, out of the seven States which accounts for 62% of India's urban population, the five cities mentioned above [Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Chennai] comes in 5 States: they are Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat. [9,10] However, there are also other cities in India which also contribute towards the GDP of the country. And already 43% of the country's wealth is generated by top 100 cities (Staff Reporter-The Times of India, 2012).



Thus, cities are the real growth engines and generators of national wealth; not only in India but also across the globe, which was rightly proved by Jane Jacobs in her book „Cities and the Wealth of Nations“ in 1984. [11,12] Further, her analysis suggests that the wealth of nations is actually the wealth of its cities, and the roots of the ailments that plague nations can be traced to the State of their cities (Report on Indian Urban Infrastructure and Services, 2011).

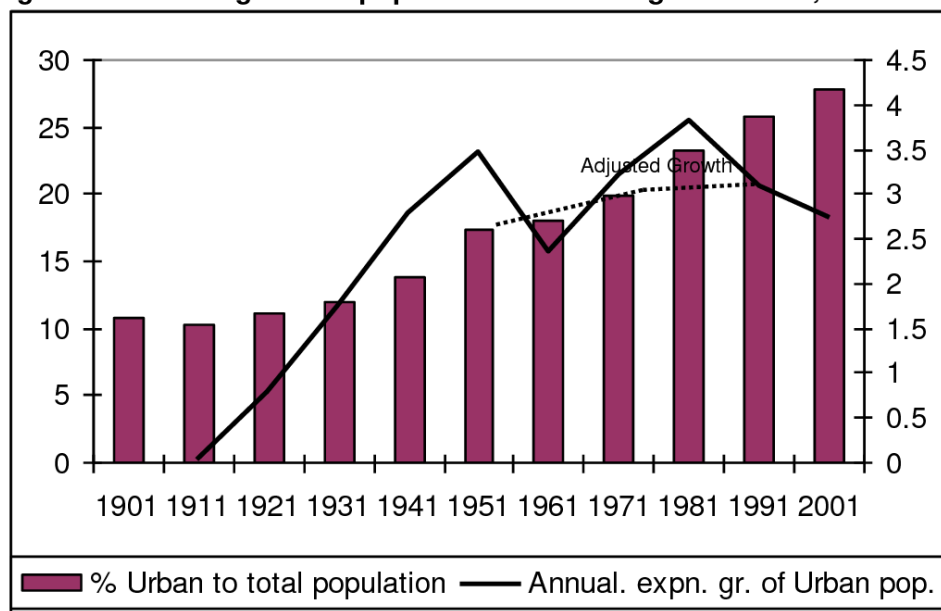


Rural areas need to be made developed so that people don't think about migrating in such huge number. Here, the role of State government becomes more important, along with the Panchayati Raj Institutions, the latter needs to be given more powers and functions. The 73rd constitutional amendment act related to rural local self government needs to be re-look and frame according to the real needs of the rural people, especially because of climate change, the people who depends upon agriculture directly or indirectly are mostly going to be affected.[13,14] Furthermore, initiating number of programmes for the welfare of the people living in rural areas, especially related to providing employment by the government; like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, which guarantees 100 days of work for one unemployed person in a family in a year. Because, unemployment is the main reason for migration of the people, especially to urban areas. Also, the private players need to be encouraged to set up business in rural areas; by giving them concession of various kinds. Even if people want to migrate for better opportunity and life in that situation, instead of putting pressure on big cities; it is preferable to identify and develop the small towns and cities which can absorb the rural migrant located near to their place.[15,16]

## Discussion

The basic infrastructure of urban areas need to be developed. For which over the next decade, the investment of rupees in excess of US Dollar 1 trillion of public investment is needed, according to an estimate of CII [Confederation of Indian Industry] (A Report on Intelligent urbanization- Roadmap for India, 2010). Similarly, other organizations and committees have also estimated, like the Mckinsey which estimates the urban infrastructure expenditure for next 20 years will be total of \$1.20 trillion; out of which the two most important sectors is water infrastructure which needed \$200 billion and second one urban transport which needed \$590 billion. [17,18]

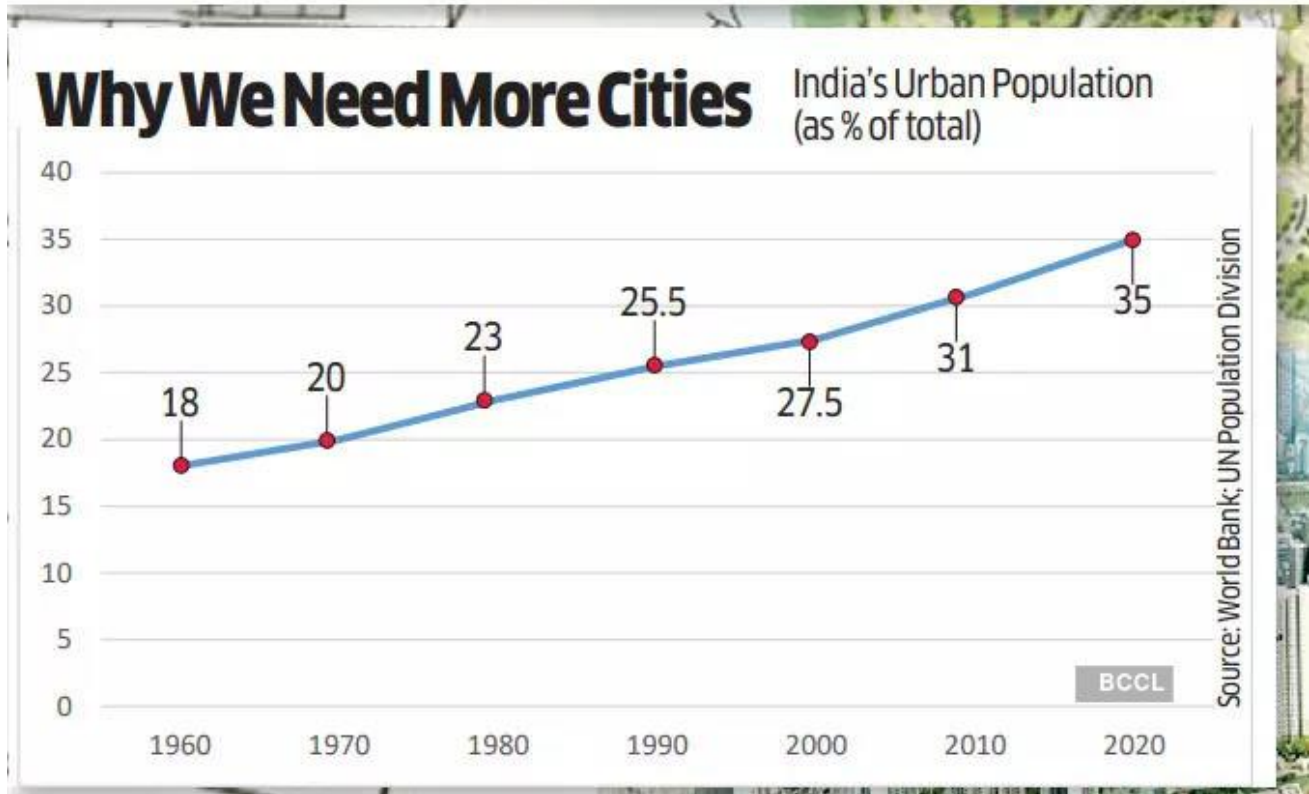
**Figure 1: Percentage urban population and urban growth rates, 1901–2001**



Source: Table 4; Adjusted growth rates are author's interpolation.

The Ahluwalia Committee of the Government of India estimates urban infrastructure expenditure will be total of \$785 billion, out of which water infrastructure needed \$150 billion and urban transport \$460 billion (Mohan, 2012). The governments don't have such sufficient resources in their hands, thus both

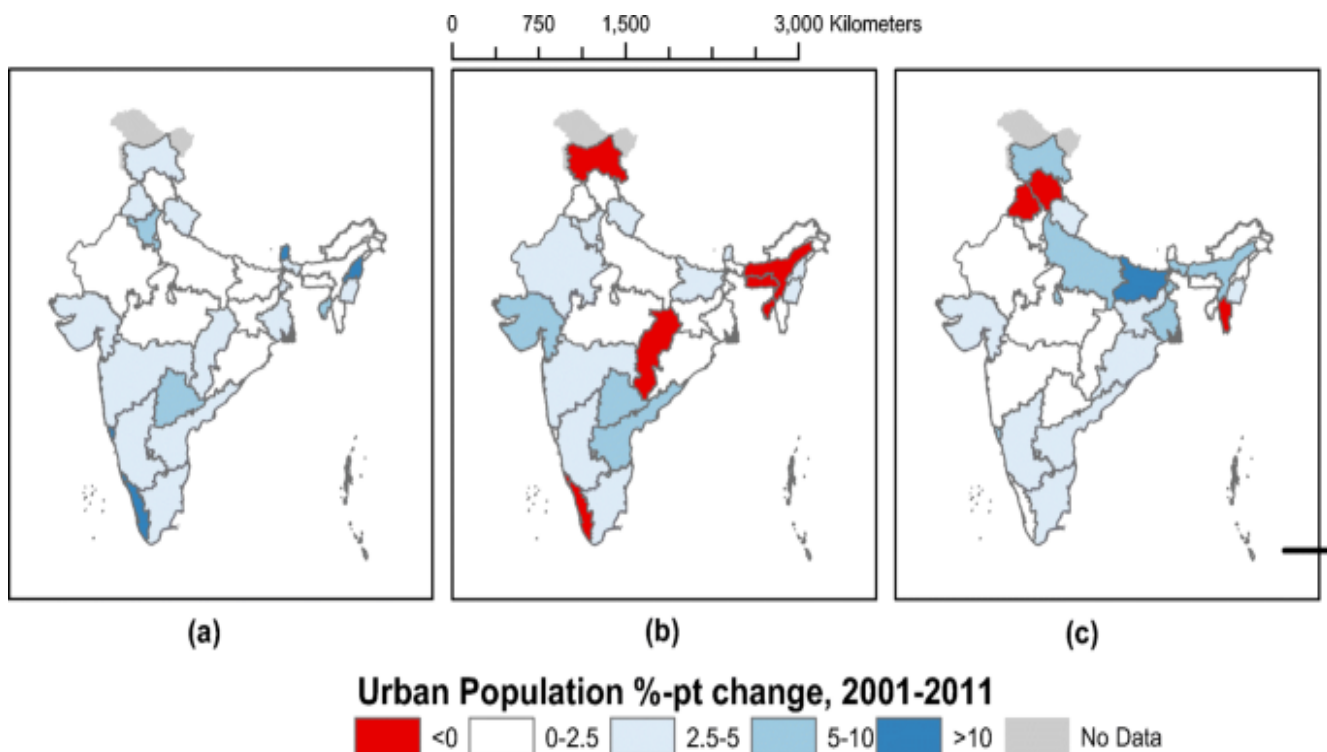
Central and State governments need to encourage private participation investment in the infrastructure creation and development. [19,20]



The Scheme of PPP [Public Private Partnership] should be explored and encouraged in the field of financing various public goods and services in urban areas. For example, recently in August 2012 the Delhi government has identified three areas in Delhi [Vasant Vihar, Mehrauli and Malviya Nagar] under pilot study through PPP for providing water services to the people residing in the above mentioned places. [21,22] One thing has to be done for making PPP successful, is that all the projects under PPP should be brought under RTI [Right to Information] Act, so that any information [except vital information related to the safety and security of the country] related to the project can be accessed by the people at any time, as it was done in South Africa under RTI act. Also, people have to be involved in the policy making, implementation and management of any PPP project by the government. The reason for being involvement of people is to make them felt that the goods and services generated from the project is for their own benefit and they also equally responsible for its management. [23,24]

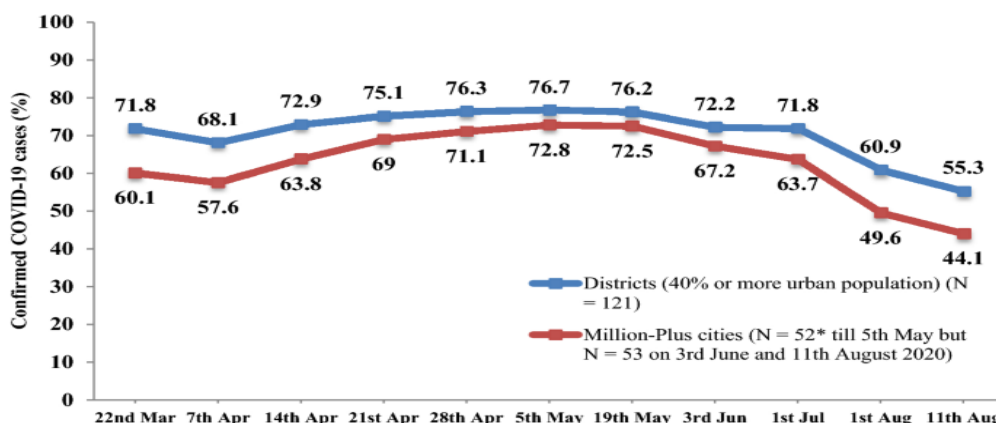
India is not only a developing economy, but also a liberal democracy too, where there are competing demands for public investment (Menon and Mitra, 2009).





There required a lot of money for infrastructure build up and governments don't have such huge amount; and also the big foreign and domestic companies are not interested to invest in India, because they cite the problem of high costs [interrupted] power, bad infrastructure and high transactions costs in general (Ibid).[25,26] Here, the SEZ [Special Economic Zone] can be promoted and utilize as a tool to attract and locate investments not only in big metros and cities, but also more importantly in those areas where investments for infrastructure were lacking especially in small towns and cities and also create employment opportunities. Although, already number of SEZs were established and functioning in the country, which came through the Special Economic Zones Act, 2005; and passed by the Parliament in May 2005, but it came into effect on 10th February 2006. So far 585 SEZs are approved, out of which 381 have been notified and among them 143 SEZs are already functioning and exporting in excess of Rupees 3,00,000 crore which accounts for over 28% of the country's total exports. It also provides direct employment to 7,00,000 persons (Special Economic Zones in India, Government of India). But, the issue of land acquisition, [27,28] especially related to agricultural land for a project is a big controversy, which needs to be taken into account in a proper manner. Otherwise we have to face the problem like Nandigram SEZ controversy which took place in the year 2006.

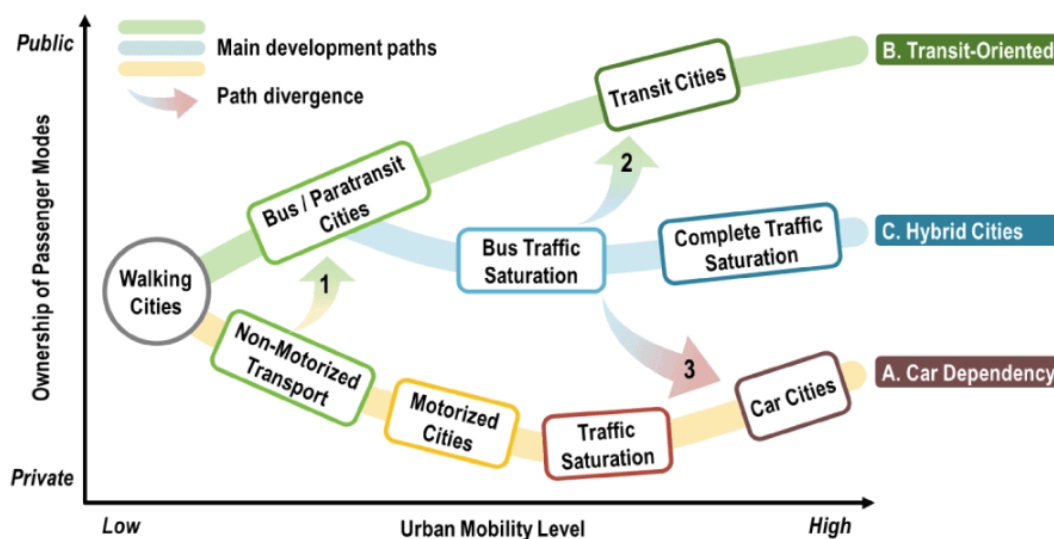
Climate change policies should be made central to India's long term urbanization policies.



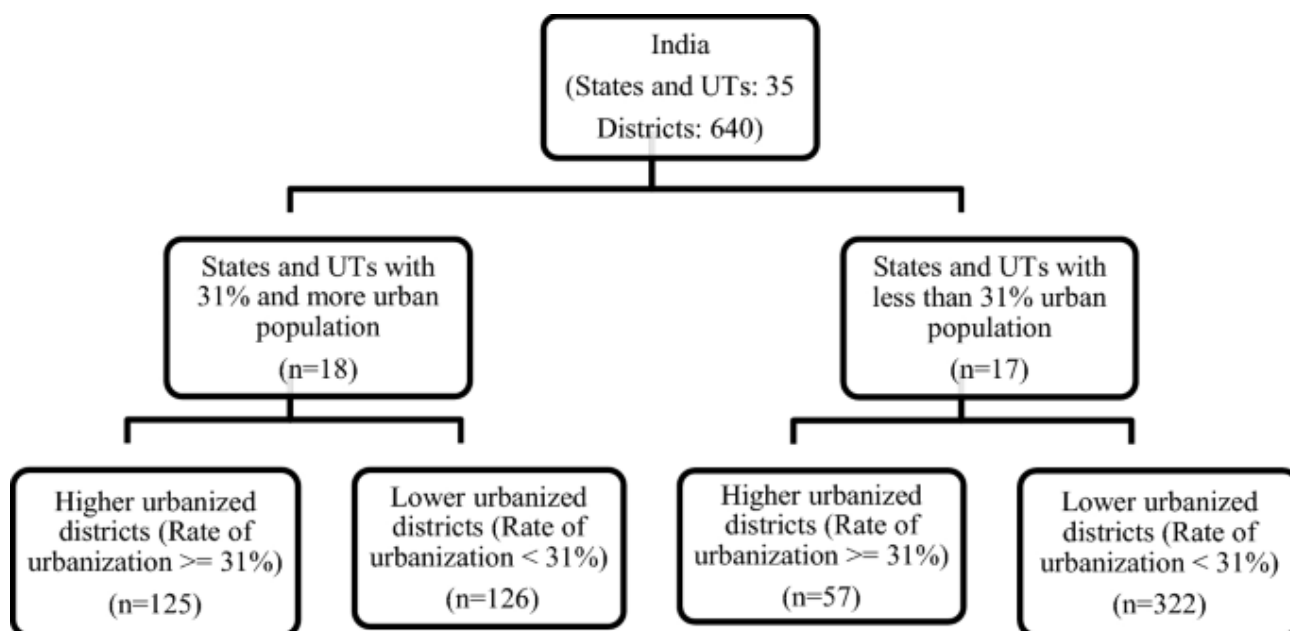
Especially, if we see there exist a major problem of water and power in big cities and towns, this can be partially solved by making every citizen accountable for climate change, initially starting with the upper middle class, who are staying in posh colonies or areas making it mandatory for them for having rain water harvesting and installing solar plant in their roof top. The reason for being start with the rich people because, they have the money and space for doing it. Gradually, the government should implement it for the middle and below middle class, although it will be not easy to do it for the latter two category, because of financial and space limitation. But more than space, it was the financial constraint which is a big hindrance. Here, both Central and State governments need to take initiative for providing freely to rain water harvesting and installing solar plant in roof top of the below poverty line people and subsidizing it for the middle class.[29]

## Results

The above initiatives of the government should be started as a pilot project. If the results are good, then it needs to be expanded and if not satisfactory, then it needs to be re-modified by rectifying the present problems.



But, one thing has to be remember that the policy for rain water harvesting and solar plant installation can't be put in a backburner or discarded from now onwards, rather it has to be implemented in more effective manner. Along with this, the policy of water and power conservation should be taken into seriously, as both go hand in hand. Although, Government of India on 30th June 2008 released its NAPCC [National Action Plan on Climate Change] in which 8 national missions are given and out of which one related to National Water Mission; and second on National Solar Mission (Sadashivam, 2010a). However, according to one recent study by two authors Sujatha Byravan and Sudhir Chella Rajan; who have evaluated India's NAPCC, and some of which are published in one of the reputed English national newspaper in India called „The Hindu“. According to two of them, if sustainable development is indeed a central guiding principle in India's climate policy, it has not been prioritized in the approaches and outcomes of individual missions. [30,31] These missions were placed in 8 separate bins has led to viewing the problems and solutions with sector-specific lenses. And according to both authors, India needed an approach that is inter-disciplinary in its character, breaks traditional ministerial boundaries, and learns rapidly from the effects of warming that are ongoing and our successes and failures in dealing with them (Byravan and Sudhir, 2012).



This is rightly said that this century is urban century, where more people are living in urban areas. The urbanization concept provides both the challenges and opportunities for every country, although it may not be uniform in every country. In India also, the urban population is increasing in good number; but there exist a problem of infrastructure deficit, which was a big hurdle in the way of providing basic services to the people and also more importantly the economic growth of the country. Thus, it is the right time for our country to take seriously negative implications of the urbanization concept, and make it useful for the development of the country. But, urbanization needs to be sustainable in two counts i.e. First, it is need to equally benefit all the people in the society i.e. socially inclusive and secondly environmentally sustainable. [28,29]

## Conclusions

At present India is witnessing a sharp rise in urbanization. At the same time, India is among the countries of low level of urbanization even less than the average world urbanization. More over India



Ranks second in the world next to China. But about the proportion of urban population with respect to world urban population, both India and China accounts for 30 percent of urban population. According to the 2011 Census, the absolute increase in the urban population of India was higher than that in rural population. ` This is rightly said, that this century is urban century, where more people are living in urban areas. The urbanization concept provides both the challenges and opportunities for every country, although it may not be uniform in every country. In India also, the urban population is increasing in good number, but there exist a problem of infrastructure. But, urbanization needs to be sustainable in two counts i.e. First, it is need to equally benefit all the people in the society i.e. socially inclusive and secondly, environmentally sustainable.[30,31]

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