

## Chapter – III

### THEORIZING THE CONCEPT OF URBANIZATION

The progress and development of urban life in the concerned places (Jalpaiguri District) is based on the constant upward change of economy in this geographical space. According to historical aspects two separate preconditions are necessary: i) the generation of surplus product which helps people in non-agricultural activities and ii) the achievement of a level of social viability and stability<sup>1</sup>. In the opinion of the urban historians that such type of development were seen in the Neolithic period. It also states that the volume of surplus product imposed a ceiling upon urban development in the pre-industrial society and the process of industrial capitalism initiated the pattern of urban growth and urbanization. Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy and North America were such process which led to the emergence of urban societies<sup>2</sup>.

*Structuralist Interpreters* – such as Wallerstein, Gold frank, Chase Dunn, Dikens, Taylor etc.<sup>3</sup> says, that recent changes in the rules and organization of the economy of developing countries to the growth and extension of capitalism which tends to concentrate production and consumption in location also was responsible for urbanization. However, structuralists' development tells us the most influencing factor for the development of global urbanization.

Another theory *Interdependency* – explores the link between development in core regions and underdevelopment in the periphery<sup>4</sup>. Dependency theory states that underdevelopment is on account of plunder and exploitation of peripheral economics by economic and political groups in core areas. This theory also echoes the structuralized approach towards urbanization which put much emphasis on the process of capitalist development as the single most factors for urbanization.

So, we can see that such approach traces all types of urbanization stems directly from capitalism. But it is not true that all types of urbanization have arisen in an identical way and is therefore the same is all countries. According to Royal

Geographical Society, “Capitalism had adopted different forms at different times and it is regulated in different ways, so producing spatially differentiated patterns of urban development at the global scale”<sup>5</sup>.

But the Interdependency theory has been accepted in modern times. Now, the fact is that capitalism changed at a time of massive urbanization does not necessarily suggest a functional connection. Apart from these in this theory the urbanization in the developed world and the developing world has little similarity.

In modern times urbanization has been utilized to denote the number (level) of population in an urban area. According to Hope Tisdale, the process of concentration of population in a particular area a sign of urban growth identified in the process: 1) The multiplication of points of concentration and 2) The increase in the size of individual concentration. Three important concepts are mainly applied while talking about urbanization. These are –

a) A demographic phenomenon by which the absolute growth of towns within as specified area is being shown based on census information has been become the process of urbanization.

b) The development of the industrial capitalism and the structural change in society is being with this demographic process. Cities are being seen here centers’ of production functions. The search for increased productivity led to the development of urban factories to gain from the process of concentration and centralization.

c) The last concept of urbanization treats the topic in the backdrop of sociological theory. Here the process of urbanization is being seen as a behavioural process; urban centers are being treated as centers of social change, attitudes and values and subsequently behaviour patterns are modified in the particular context of the urban centre<sup>6</sup>.

The above discussed factors are mostly responsible for growing of mufassal towns in Jalpaiguri district. The addition to those economic transformations is one of the most important factors. Easier way of earning

livelihood always attracts people from one zone to another. It attracts immigrants and infiltrators. It ultimately increases the population of small town or Mufassal towns where earning livelihood is the key factor of increasing population.

But the theory of demographic urbanization has been criticized on the ground that the late capitalism does not demand the continued concentration of population. The census hand book has defined an urban area on the basis of the following features:

- 1) The number of population should exceed 5000.
- 2) Population density exceeding 400 per sq.km.
- 3) More than 75% of the total working class population should be engaged in non agricultural works.

But Prof. Biblab Das Gupta denied this paradigm of urbanization on the basis of demographic ground<sup>7</sup>. According to him - “there is nothing sacrosanct about the figure 5000. There are many countries which adopt a much lower population size as the cut-off point for determining an urban area.” Johnstin, Gregory and Smith opined –“Demographic urbanization comes about for a variety of reasons as part of structuring of space within a social reformation; there is no reason to suppose that what is typical of others”<sup>8</sup>.

Incidentally the demographic scenario of Jalpaiguri district as well as West Bengal is changing rapidly. The density of population of decades earlier invariably differs from today. It is increasing at an alarming rate. The so called above mentioned criteria of Mufassal town should be changed in perspective of the density of population per sq. km today. It has gone up beyond imagination. The present demography says it increased from 5,000 to 20,000 in Mufassal town areas.

However, from the above discussion it is clear to us that no demographic specification could be attached in respect of branding any centre as urban.

In rural belts a common trend is found that commoners rush to the town of cities to earn their livelihood in an easier way. To achieve this goal communication and marketing of agricultural products gradually developed. In

course of time the density of population in urban sectors goes up why in rural belts it goes down. Consequently the urban people determine the demand and price of agricultural products.

The famous social historian Louis Wirth put much emphasis in his papers titled —“Urbanization as a Way of Life”(1938) on the relation between the size of the total population and the social relations. The greater number of population is the greater chances of differentiation, which in the last stage leads to segregating among social groups. The traditional sense of kinship, bonding and sentimental attachments are likely to be weakened. In this atmosphere competition is more likeable rather than collaboration. The urban contrasts of rich and poor, a sense of facility also dominates the urban life. But it has positive side also. The sense of fillings of castism is being undermined in urban localities giving the highest priority to job and increasing proficiencies in respective fields of work and trade. It is the prime point of consideration not the caste or parental identity.

But this view also criticized by Sjoberg, a reputed scholar of modern urban studies. His argument that the ideas of social change although has a relevance but should not be cited as the role cause for rural–urban break.

In view of the theory of *Marxian Pro–letarianisation* the researcher thinks industrialization with the help of developing technological devices attracts more and more rural people towards towns and cities as their reminds the easier way of having livelihood and modern amenities. In such growing new born towns the people feel much secure regarding earning which is the basic need of survival<sup>9</sup>. This is also one of the most significant reasons of growing Mufassal towns or small towns through gradual industrialization from small scale to large scale.

## **Urbanization in India**

As compared to many other developing countries urbanization in India relatively slow over the past fifty to sixty years. The rate of population growth according to the Census of 1991 is at per the rate of China, the largest country in perspective of population in the world<sup>10</sup>. According to many historians, China has

the largest urban systems in the world. In India the growth rate is very fast and it requires immediate attention to slow it down. For population management generation of employment and urbanization are both indispensable. Same is applicable to the region of the Jalpaiguri district.

The table–2.1 below presents the urbanization experience of India since 1901 while the total urban population increased nearly sixfold in between 1952 to 2011 and the urban settlement only three times<sup>11</sup>. Thus the manifold growth of population has made the urge of creating more and more small towns i.e. Mufassal towns in different parts of North Bengal. The old towns having sufficient population have become larger while the smaller or new towns started growing very fast because of availing modern amenities like medical service, communication and education and many other useful services. Thus, the growth of population has made the local economy more stable and healthy. Gradually the smaller towns of the recent past have become richer and more useful from the view points of trade and commerce, industrialization, culture and education.

The mathematical presentation over 60 years is partially insufficient for the pattern of urban growth during the decades. Here observing the annual rate of urban population growth (table–3.1, Colum–5), there had been a steady acceleration of growth in the year 1951, but a slow down during 1951 to 1961, acceleration again from 1971, and again deceleration to 1991. From 1991 to 2001 annual growth rate of urban population is still in 3.15% per year. But finally in 2011 it was raised to 3.18% per year<sup>12</sup>.

The table–2.1 illuminates the rate of rural population growth in India. It is expected that as the share of agriculture in the economy falls, the rate of rural population growth would progressively slow down. From 1971 to 1981 it was observed, but the rate of growth increased again in 1981 to 1991<sup>13</sup>. It may be expected that the rate of rural population growth had increased significantly during the 60's of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which had contracted the economy growth of this localities following poor production in agriculture and other segments of economic growth and stability. As a result after almost two decades there were increase in agro–products and population also. This growth has led the people towards

urbanization from rural–living style. Finally, from 2001 the rate of rural population growth would decrease or went down.

Table – 3.1  
Growth of Urban Population in India 1951 – 2011

Census	No of towns <sup>b</sup>	Total urban population (million)	Level of urbanization <sup>c</sup> (%)	Annual growth-rate of urban population (% per year)	Annual growth-rate of Rural population (% per year)	URGD <sup>d</sup> (col.6-col.7)
1951	2795	61.6	17.6	3.52	0.82	2.70
1961	2270	77.6	18.3	2.24	1.88	0.46
1971	2476	107.0	20.2	3.26	1.97	1.29
1981	3245	156.2	23.7	3.86	1.75	2.11
1991	3609	212.9	26.1	3.15	1.80	1.35
2001	5161	286.12	27.82	3.15	1.21	1.2
2011	7935	377.11	31.80	3.18	1.22	1.81

<sup>a.</sup> Excluding Assam, and Jammu and Kashmir.

<sup>b.</sup> Constituent towns of urban agglomerations are not counted as separate units.

<sup>c.</sup> Proportion of urban to total population.

<sup>d.</sup> Urban–Rural Growth Differential.

*Source* : Several Census Report of India, from 1951 – 2011.

Urban growth of India is best analysed on the basis of the table–3.2(a) and 3.2(b) has shown here under. The growth rate of different places across the country is not uniform. Still the trend towards urbanization is constant and noteworthy. It is only due to the modernization of taste and culture of the mixed population. With the inception of modernized life style of the people in the

localities under the reviews of the research person was stepped forward for urban amenities. It is an unchecked tendency inherent in every one's mind. This tendency has made the local people to follow the better and higher strata of the urban life. They have been auto-motivated to earn more for better amenities of life. This very urge has taught them to grow more crops in their agro-field in most cases it has been found that the advanced farmers grow three harvests annually where they used to make two.

A developing country with agricultural base gains high population density. It engages most of the population in agro-base earning sources. But it is continuing for a certain period of time. Thereafter with the fast progress of science and technology people incline towards non-agricultural activities from agriculture. They think non-agricultural activities provide wider scope of earning than agricultural. As a result the mission of earning deviates from the so called conventional sources i.e. agriculture the village or rural belts incline towards the nearest urban or semi-urban life style. It motivates them to be engaged in multi-ferious activities like small scale industry based on agriculture, trade and commerce and techno-based activities. These types of activities give wider scope of earning within a shorter period than agro-based activities. The area Jalpaiguri is measuring the study falls under such economy. As a result a slow but steady tendency of common people is observed to adopt the urbanized life style in the rural belts where probability become brighter in the last five or six decades<sup>14</sup>.

In the post independence period the growth and development of rural belts were slow because of the dependence of economy on agriculture specially in North Bengal. Other than agriculture there were the plantation of tea and timber and cultivation of tobacco. These could not promote the economy of this region satisfactorily. Towards the last two decades of the last century the economic growth and development were some what faster and more stable. This economic growth much encouraged the upper section of the society to develop their own educational and cultural sphere keeping similarity with the nearest big towns and cities. As a result with the development of economy the cultural development

flourished at and around the towns in the district of Jalpaiguri and grew bigger very rapidly.

The following table show the classification of towns based on population through the table-3.2 and Size-distribution of urban population in West Bengal and India through the table-3.3. The table-3.4 and-3.5 describes the growth of urban and rural population in India State wise<sup>15</sup>.

**Table – 3.2**  
Correspondence between Censuses of India Size Classification  
of Urban Centres and Size Classification Used in the Paper

<b>Census of India, Town Class</b>	<b>Classification of Population Size</b>	<b>Classification used in the Paper</b>
1. Class – 1	1,00,000 and above	1. City
2. Class – 2	50,000 – 99,999	2. Medium Town
3. Class – 3	20,000 – 49,999	
4. Class – 4	10,000 – 19,999	3. Small Town
5. Class – 5	5,000 – 9,999	
6. Class – 6	Below 5,000	

Source: Census of India, 1971, Series I (India) Part – 2 A (i) General Population  
Tables.

Table – 3.3

## Size – Distribution of Urban Population in West Bengal and India

A. Urban Agglomeration Classified According to Total Population					
<b>West Bengal</b>					
years	City	Medium Town	Small Town	All Urban	Urban Population (10 <sup>x5</sup> )
1951 <sup>2</sup>	75.1	14.7	10.2	100	62.8
1962 <sup>2</sup>	72.1	19.0	8.8	100	85.4
1971 <sup>2</sup>	71.0 <sup>2</sup>	21.5	7.5	100	109.7
1981 <sup>4</sup>	76.8	18.5	4.7	100	144.3
<b>India</b>					
1951 <sup>2</sup>	43.4	26.3	30.3	100	624.0
1962 <sup>2</sup>	50.2	28.6	21.2	100	789.0
1971 <sup>2</sup>	55.8	27.0	16.5	100	1,090.0
1981 <sup>4,5</sup>	60.4	26.0	13.6	100	1,561.9

B. Constituent Towns of Urban Agglomeration Considered as Separate Units					
<b>West Bengal</b>					
	City	Medium Town	Small Town	All Urban	Urban Population (10 <sup>x5</sup> )
1951	58.9	29.2	11.9	100	62.8
1962	55.5	32.4	12.1	100	85.4
1971	55.6	33.1	11.3	100	109.7
1981	56.1	31.0	13.0	100	144.3
<b>India</b>					
1951 <sup>3</sup>	38.0	30.0	32.0	100	624.0
1962 <sup>3</sup>	44.5	32.0	23.5	100	789.0
1971 <sup>3</sup>	48.9	31.8	19.3	100	1,090.0

Sources and Notes: (1) Size distribution of 1981 cannot be compared with those of the earlier years because the demarcation of urban agglomerations has changed.

(2) Percentage figures collected from *Census of India* 1971, Series 1 (India) Part – 2A (i) General Population Tables, Statement 16, pp. 205 – 207.

(3) Percentage figures collected from *Census of India* 1971, Series 1 (India) Part – 2A i) General Population Tables, Statement 3, p. 183.

(4) *Census of India* 1981, Series 1 (India) Part – 2 of 1981 Provisional Population Tables, Rural–Urban Distribution, Statement 8, pp. 30–31.

(5) Excludes Assam and Jammu–Kashmir.

Table – 3.4

## Growth of Urban Population in India by State, 1951 – 1991

(Percent per Year) <sup>A</sup>

State	Urban Population			
	1951-61	1961-71	1971-81	1981-91
Andhra Pradesh	1.5	2.9	4.0	3.6
Bihar	4.1	3.7	4.4	2.7
Gujarat	1.8	3.5	3.5	2.9
Haryana	3.1	3.1	4.8	3.6
Karnataka	1.7	3.1	4.2	2.6
Madhya Pradesh	4.0	3.9	4.6	3.7
Maharashtra	2.0	3.5	3.4	3.3
Orissa	6.5	5.2	5.3	3.1
Punjab	2.6	2.3	3.7	2.6
Rajasthan	1.1	3.3	4.6	3.3
Tamil Nadu	2.1	3.3	2.5	1.8
Uttar Pradesh	0.9	2.7	4.9	3.3
West Bengal	3.1	2.5	2.8	2.5
INDIA <sup>B</sup>	2.3	3.3	3.9	3.2

<sup>A</sup>. Table includes all states with a total population greater than 10 million in 1971 except Assam and Kerala.

<sup>B</sup>. Including all states except Assam and Jammu and Kashmir.

Sources: Mohan, 1985 and Census of India, 1991.

Table – 3.5

GROWTH OF RURAL POPULATION IN INDIA BY STATE,  
1951 – 2011 (PERCENT PER YEAR) <sup>A</sup>

State	Rural population			
	1951-61	1961-71	1971-81	1981-91
Andhra Pradesh	1.5	1.7	1.6	1.7
Bihar	1.6	1.8	1.9	2.0
Gujarat	2.6	2.3	2.0	1.4
Haryana	2.9	2.8	2.0	1.9
Karnataka	2.1	1.9	1.7	1.6
Madhya Pradesh	1.9	2.3	1.8	2.0
Maharashtra	2.2	2.0	1.6	1.7
Orissa	1.6	2.0	1.4	1.6
Punjab	1.8	1.9	1.6	1.6
Rajasthan	2.6	2.3	2.4	2.2
Tamil Nadu	0.8	1.5	1.2	1.2
Uttar Pradesh	1.7	1.7	1.8	2.0
West Bengal	2.8	2.4	1.9	2.1
INDIA <sup>B</sup>	1.9	2.0	1.8	1.8

<sup>A</sup>. Table includes all states with a total population greater than 10 million in 1971 except Assam and Kerala.

<sup>B</sup>. Including all states except Assam and Jammu and Kashmir.

*Sources:* Mohan, 1985 and Census of India, 1991.

However, the process of urbanization involves an increase in population and economic activities in the urban areas which leads to further development of town and agglomerates to contain this rising population. It is cause and effect of heightened economic progress in a region. Though migration is the key factor, other aspects such as the demand of economic employment, better educational opportunities, and health facilities and higher standard of living act as major propellants contributing to the upward trend in urbanization. To conclude the point it may be stated that the cosmopolitan trend of life style has allured the commoners in rural areas to adopt the same slowly slowly. And that's why the trend has become the center of innovation and experiment.

## *Notes & References*

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11. *Ibid*, p – 61.
12. *Ibid*, p – 61.
13. *Ibid*, p – 62.
14. *Ibid*, p – 62.
15. *Ibid*, p – 63.