Annals of Human and Social Sciences
www.ahss.org.pk

RESEARCH PAPER

Urbanization: A Comprehensive Analysis of Causes, Impacts, and Policy Implications

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses the causes, impacts, and policy implications of urbanization, focusing on its socio-economic and environmental consequences. Urbanization, characterized by migration from rural to urban areas, has significantly shaped modern societies, particularly post-Industrial Revolution, transforming economies and lifestyles while introducing socio-economic and environmental challenges. Utilizing an exploratory research approach and secondary data analysis, the study investigates urbanization's characteristics and implications through liberal, socialist, capitalist, and environmental perspectives. Key drivers, such as industrialization and economic opportunities, are identified, alongside impacts on urban infrastructure, population dynamics, and socio-economic disparities. The study recommends proactive policies to address grassroots migration and unemployment, enhance access to education and healthcare, and promote sustainable urban development. These measures aim to balance regional growth and mitigate the adverse effects of urbanization, contributing to informed policymaking and fostering sustainable urban environments.

| Keywords: | Employment, Features, Geometric Growth, Migration, Sustainable Development, Urban Bias Theory |

Introduction

Urbanization is described as the movement of individuals from rural areas to urban centers, characterized by a continuous increase in the urban population and the societal shift from rural to urban lifestyles (NLM, 2014). The Economist (2012) projects that by 2050, 86% of the developed world and approximately 64% of Africa and Asia will be urbanized. Furthermore, the United Nations forecast that almost all population growth from 2017 to 2030 will occur in urban areas, with an expected addition of 1.1 billion people (Barney. 2015).

Many thousand years ago, hunter-gatherers consolidated into villages, causing a significant shift in settlement patterns. Common blood identity, personal relations, and social conduct distinguish village life from urban life, which is defined by distant blood identity, unfamiliar relation, and competitive attitude. Over the next few decades, it is anticipated that this massive population influx will continue and accelerate, growing cities to levels that were unimaginable just a century ago. As a result, the trend of global urban population growth followed a quadratic hyperbolic pattern until recent times. (Korotayev. 2006).

From Mesopotamia's and Egypt's early cities to the eighteenth century, there was a balance between the great majority of the population resides in rural areas, and small towns, where the main sources of income were market trade and small-scale manufacturing

(Taylor. 2012). The rural-urban population ratio did not change throughout this period due to the outdated and generally constant state of agriculture. Furthermore, Mughal India is responsible for a notable rise, since throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, 15% of the population lived in cities, which was higher than any other European nation at the time. (Ray. 2016).

Urbanization rapidly expanded across Europe and, starting in the 1950s, began to significantly influence Africa and Asia as well. At the dawn of the 20th century, only about 15% of the world's population lived in urban areas (Satterthwaite. 2005). Data on urbanization from 3700 BC to 2000 AD was released by Yale University in June 2016, and it was utilized to produce a movie that showed how cities changed globally throughout that period (Reba. Reitsma & Seto. 2016).

Literature Review

The literature on urbanization explores various dimensions, including its historical evolution, socio-economic impacts, and environmental implications. Early urbanization patterns are discussed by Korotayev (2006), who provides a quantitative analysis of global urbanization dynamics from ancient times to the modern era, highlighting how cities have historically evolved as centers of trade, administration, and culture. Taylor (2012) emphasizes the transformative role of cities from Mesopotamian and Egyptian early settlements to the structured urban centers of the Industrial Revolution. The socio-economic drivers of urbanization, such as industrialization and employment opportunities, are examined by Todaro (1969), who models Labor migration and urban unemployment in less developed countries, showcasing the pull factors that attract rural populations to urban centers. Similarly, Gugler (1997) and Girardot (1996) discuss rural-urban migration, emphasizing the push factors like land degradation and poverty that compel rural inhabitants to seek better living conditions in cities.

Environmental concerns related to urbanization are addressed by Glaeser (1998), who discusses the urban heat island effect and its implications for urban climates. Jiang et al. (2008) caution about the environmental and social pressures arising from rapid urban population growth, particularly in regions already facing food insecurity. These findings are supported by Park (1987), who explores the variations in urban heat intensity and their geographical determinants.

Health and social impacts are explored by Allender et al. (2008), who quantify the relationship between urbanization and chronic diseases in developing countries, noting higher disease prevalence in urban slums. Eckert and Kohler (2014) extend this analysis by systematically reviewing the health outcomes of urbanization in developing regions, highlighting the disparities in health services between urban and rural populations.

Lastly, the concept of urban sprawl and its socio-economic implications are discussed by Fishman (1987) and Smith (1996). Fishman outlines the rise of suburban areas and their environmental costs, while Smith critiques gentrification processes, noting how they transform urban neighbourhoods and often displace long-term, lower-income residents.

Together, these studies provide a comprehensive understanding of urbanization, offering insights into its historical roots, driving factors, and multifaceted impacts on society and the environment.

Material and Methods

This study adopts an exploratory research approach to investigate the multifaceted nature of urbanization, utilizing secondary data analysis as the primary method. The

research draws upon a comprehensive review of existing literature, historical records, and statistical data to understand the causes, impacts, and policy implications of urbanization.

The study employs a theoretical framework incorporating perspectives from European liberal, socialist, capitalist, and environmental viewpoints to analyze the diverse factors influencing urbanization. This multi-disciplinary approach enables a holistic examination of urbanization's socio-economic, environmental, and cultural dimensions.

Data sources include historical accounts of urban development, socio-economic reports, and environmental studies. These sources are critically analyzed to identify patterns, trends, and key drivers of urban growth. The study also examines case studies from different regions to illustrate the varied impacts of urbanization and to highlight effective policy responses. By synthesizing these diverse sources, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of urbanization and offers recommendations for sustainable urban development.

Characteristics of Urbanization

- Structured Facilities The following uses are the primary purposes of urban structures that are proportionately appropriate. Roads 18.0%, Administration 4.0%, Recreation 10.0%, Residential 60.0%, Industrial 4.0%, Commercial 2.0%, and Miscellaneous 2.0%, Total 100.0%, (Shinn Jr, C. C. (1979). The following uses are the primary purposes of urban structures that are proportionately appropriate.
- The residential sector The residential sector accounts for most of the land use in metropolitan areas. Residential areas are highly populated, leading to significant movement of people and traffic during weekdays.
- Employee Center for Industries The manufacturing, economic, and administrative sectors provide energy for any town. These have become successful employment hubs.
- A network of communication An interconnected web of communication links binds urban areas structurally linked.
- Roadways The free flow and effectiveness of human and vehicle movements are improved by an effective network of roadways and transportation systems. An uneven or narrow street layout causes turmoil and traffic. There is room for enough lanes and infrastructure installation with a wide road reservation and sufficient setbacks.
- Infrastructure facilities Urban areas typically have access to infrastructure such as telephone, power, solid waste disposal, and water supply.
- Size Urban areas typically have higher population densities than rural areas in the same region and timeframe. Consequently, there is a positive relationship between urbanization and population size.
- Population density Urban locations have higher population density than rural villages. Urbanization and population density are closely linked.
- Family The urban community prioritizes individuals over families. Nuclear families are typically more prevalent in urban environments.
- Marriages Urban communities tend to have more love weddings and Marriages between different caste groups. There is also a higher rate of divorce.
- Occupation Major vocations in urban regions include industrial, administrative, and professional. Labor divisions and occupational specialization are highly widespread in cities and metropolitan areas.
- Class Extreme Urban areas can have both wealthy and impoverished populations. In a metropolis, squalid slums coexist with opulent bungalows for the wealthy, as well as middle-class apartments.

- Social heterogeneity While metropolitan regions are heterogeneous, villages are homogeneous. Different racial and cultural groups, as well as inhabitants, set the city apart. There are big differences in the eating, clothing, housing, religion, customs, and traditions of urbanites.
- Social distancing Diversity and anonymity produce social distance. In a town or city, most social contacts are fragmented and impersonal.
- Interaction system Interest groups serve as the focal point of the interaction system in urban areas. Compared to rural areas, cities have broader social networks. City living is incredibly varied and challenging. due to the greater systemic region of interaction for each person and aggregate.
- Mobility Social mobility is facilitated by urbanization. In large cities, a person's social standing is primarily based on his or her merit, wit, and tenacity. Thus, there is a favorable correlation between urbanization and migration (Abasilim, 2018).

Causes of Urbanization and Rural-Urban Migration

Urbanization is the process where individuals move from rural areas to cities, leading to the growth and development of urban centers. Urbanization is fuelled by several important reasons, including

Industrialization

Work opportunities As a result of the increased demand for Labor in factories and other industries, Individuals from rural regions are attracted to metropolitan areas in pursuit of employment.

Economic growth Industries frequently concentrate in metropolitan areas, which encourages urban development and draws in capital, services, and infrastructure.

The modernization theory suggests that employment opportunities in the industrial sector attract individuals from rural areas to urban centers. Economic growth, a shift towards non-agricultural jobs, growing welfare inequalities, and substantial rural-to-urban migration led to the emergence of social classes. Consequently, many countries in Asia and Africa faced considerable economic challenges and inefficient growth (Gingler, 1997).

Job

Jobs not related to agriculture Cities provide a wider range of employment options in industries like manufacturing, services, and technology, which are less common in rural areas.

Greater wages People go to cities in search of higher incomes since urban employment often pays more than farming jobs in rural areas.

European liberals claim that the employment opportunities in metropolitan areas draw people from rural areas. Theoretical support for it comes from both the urban pull and rural push factors.

Poverty

Scarcity of land Over-reliance on agriculture and fragmentation of land can cause poverty in rural areas in many places, particularly in developing nations. **Natural disasters** When farming becomes unsustainable due to environmental conditions like droughts, floods, and soil degradation, people may migrate to cities in search of stability and employment.

Policies for urban development

Government rewards by implementing policies that support urban infrastructure and industry, many governments encourage urbanization and draw people from rural areas to metropolitan.

Special economic zones (SEZs) Because industrial parks and SEZs provide tax breaks and employment possibilities, the establishment of these areas within metropolitan areas frequently spurs rapid urbanization.

According to the above factor, Urbanization is a result of capitalist development. The capitalists made choices that mostly benefited themselves to maximize their wealth. They control the economy and push people to move to cities to provide resources for their multinational companies that support local, national, and regional markets. A major issue is that these capitalist groups are focusing their efforts on countries in Asia and Africa.

Quality

Healthcare and education People move to cities in search of higher quality of life because they frequently have access to better schools, colleges, healthcare facilities, and other necessary services.

Infrastructure Urban regions typically have better access to modern homes, roads, electricity, and water supplies.

Social and cultural factors

Social services and entertainment are readily available Cities provide a plethora of social and cultural activities, as well as amenities such as dining establishments, sports arenas, and theatres.

Education and personal development Higher education, professional development, and job promotion are frequently more readily available in cities.

In the 1920s, Robert Park and Ernest Burgess introduced the concept of urban ecology. They argued that the urban environment is a complex response to various external pressures and conflicting influences. Urban ecology's first premise is that the city is separated into various sectors, each of which is focused on a particular activity, like heavy manufacturing or luxurious housing. Second, a portion would eventually belong to the sector with the highest economic value as urban space became scarce and competitive intensified, even though the long-standing sector would be determined by the concentric zone that successively grew outward from a central business district.

Pre-Industrial Revolution Urbanization

Numerous reasons contributed to urbanization prior to the Industrial Revolution, but it happened more slowly and on a smaller scale than it did after industrialization. The following were the main forces behind urbanization at this time.

Agricultural Surplus

The number of persons employed in agriculture decreased because of advances in farming techniques that produced agricultural surpluses. Towns and cities grew because of the Labor being freed up for various uses in metropolitan regions.

Trade and Commerce

Cities on rivers, coasts, or important trade routes developed into important trading hubs. These urban centers saw the settlement of merchants and artists, who promoted urbanization and economic expansion.

Political and Administrative Centres

Cities frequently sprang up around the administrative and political centres of authority. People were drawn to these centres because of the government, protection, and job possibilities they offered.

War and Conquest

Many of the people who were uprooted by war and invasion sought safety in walled cities. Some towns were once military outposts that, because of their strategic importance, grew into larger communities over time.

Geographical Advantages

Cities often grew in areas with natural advantages like rivers or fertile land. Coastal cities benefited from maritime trade, while inland cities thrived on access to transport and resources.

Social and Legal Systems

Compared to rural areas, cities offered greater autonomy and legal freedoms. Many cities operated under charters that provided citizens with legal rights, which attracted many people to live in cities.

Transportation Networks

Trade was facilitated by improved transportation, such as Roman roads and maritime developments, which connected cities. Cities were able to expand and prosper through trade thanks to this improved connectedness.

Post-Industrial Revolution Urbanization

- As the number of factories increased during the Industrial Revolution, people from rural regions migrated to urban areas in search of employment in manufacturing and various other industries.
- The development of industries and the construction of railroads and mechanized production lines increased industry productivity and fuelled urban growth.
- The availability of a wider range of jobs in the manufacturing, services, and commerce sectors in cities attracted people from rural areas who were looking for improved living standards and greater incomes.
- Developments in public transport, roads, and utilities like electricity and sanitation made cities more liable and facilitated urban expansion.
- Mechanization in agriculture reduced rural jobs, pushing people to migrate to cities in search of work and improved economic prospects.
- Urbanization led to new social structures, including the rise of the middle class and labor movements, which influenced political and social reform.
- Rapid urban growth led to overcrowded conditions, with inadequate housing and infrastructure, giving rise to slums and public health challenges.

Results and Discussion

Rural-Urban Migration and Urbanization Patterns, Factors, and Impacts

Migration is the term used to describe the movement of people across borders or within geographical units. It is classified into different categories, Migration can occur in various forms, including rural-to-rural, rural-to-urban, urban-to-urban, and urban-to-rural, and can be seasonal, long-term, or periodic (Bilsborrow, R. E. (Ed.). (1998)). Urbanization is mainly fueled by rural-to-urban migration, where people move from rural regions to cities in pursuit of better economic opportunities. In the past, this kind of migration has significantly increased urbanization and changed metropolitan environments. Significant changes in population distribution and urban development have been brought about by rural-urban migration in numerous nations, including Pakistan. This movement has been propelled by structural developments including the acceptance of capitalism ideals and the growth of the merchant class (Sajor, E. E. (2003)). New institutions are created as metropolitan areas grow, and those that already exist change to accommodate the expanding populace. Given their complexity and the economic, social, and environmental ramifications of rural-urban migration and the ensuing urbanization, these phenomena demand more research and legislative action (Sajor, E. E. (2003)).

Patterns of Rural-Urban Migration

Rural to Urban The most common form of migration, especially in developing countries, where individuals leave rural areas for employment, education, and improved living conditions in cities.

Urban to Rural Though less common, some migrate from cities to rural areas for lifestyle changes or due to overcrowding and high living costs in urban centers.

Urban-Urban and Rural-Rural These movements occur within the same type of area, often driven by job opportunities or family reasons. In urban-urban migration, individuals may move from one city to another for better employment prospects.

Factors

Individuals may be attracted to cities by their appeal or pushed there by the poverty that forces them to leave rural areas. Migration can result from a mix of both pull and push factors. For many farmers, migration becomes their only choice due to these conditions. Environmental degradation further worsens the situation (Gugler 1997, Girardet 1996).

Push Factors

Common factors that make it challenging for rural residents to sustain their livelihoods include land degradation, insufficient land, unequal land distribution, droughts, storms, floods, and a lack of access to clean water. The main source of income for those living in rural areas is farming, which is made challenging and sometimes impossible by these significant disadvantages. Religious conflicts, a lack of modern resources, a lack of firewood, and local economic downturns are all major factors in the Migration of individuals to urban areas.

Pull factors

The high industrial wage is one of the things that draws rural inhabitants to the city. As long as people think that urban incomes will surpass their existing rural earnings, they will keep moving to cities. For rural residents, the "bright lights" are better job opportunities, higher incomes, the chance to reunite with other rural migrants, escape

restrictive lifestyles, and gain access to improved health and education services (Gugler 1997, Girardet 1996, Sajor 2001).

Impacts of Urbanization

Urbanization has significant impacts on both individuals and society. These impacts can be classified into economic, environmental, health, and social effects.

Economic Impacts

Costs can rise and fall dramatically as cities expand, driving out members of the local working class, including municipal employees. For instance, "During our time [1789-1848], urban growth was a significant process of class division that pushed the newly employed working class into vast abysses of suffering outside of the bourgeoisie's newly specialized residential districts and the centers of business and government" (Todaro, 1969) was written in Eric Hobsbawm's book The Age of Revolution 1789-1848 (published in 1962 and 2005).

Think tanks like the Overseas Development Institute have proposed labor-intensive growth strategies to accommodate the influx of unskilled and low-skilled workers (Grant, 2008). Low-skilled or unskilled migratory labourers from rural to urban areas are sometimes compelled to live in slums because they are unable to obtain employment or afford housing in cities (Benedictus, 2017). Even though the centres of these developing nations' cities are getting more and more crowded, suburbanization trends are being driven by infrastructure advancements and urban challenges. Families can benefit from the advantages of diversity and proximity when they live in cities (Brand, 2009).

Environmental Impacts

In recent times, the presence of cities heat islands has emerged as a significant issue. Significantly more heat is released by factories, cars, and residential and commercial heating and cooling systems (Glaeser, 1998). consequently, cities typically experience temperatures that are 1 to 3 °C (1.8 to 5.4 °F) warmer than these outsides (Park, 1987). A study by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (Jiang et al., 2008) cautioned that by 2050, there will be an additional 2.4 billion people on the planet, especially in countries where food insecurity is already a problem due to changing environmental conditions. UN experts predict that a humanitarian and environmental crisis could result from the growing population of metropolitan regions and shifting weather patterns straining basic health care and sanitation facilities (WESS).

Health and Social Effects

In an unequal society, this disparity is reflected in the areas where people reside. which suggests that society may be less developed and have less empathy. — Jack Emegan, UN-Habitat Urban Program Specialist (Auber, 2013). Life expectancy does not significantly increase because of urbanization in nations in Africa and Asia. Depending on the illness and location, different infectious diseases have different death rates (Eckert and Kohler, 2014).

In general, health outcomes tend to be better in urban areas compared to rural ones. Slums and informal settlement dwellers have disproportionate rates of illness, injury, and early death; furthermore, the co-occurrence of poverty and poor health eventually solidifies disadvantage (Allender et al., 2008). Farmers have examined how globalization and urbanization affect health. Fast food is often chosen over other foods, which deteriorates health. Easier access to unconventional foods may result in lower nutritional value eating practices (Sridhar, 2007). According to Bora (2012), The rate of diabetes in urban areas of

India seems to be more than double that of rural areas. Key risk factors for chronic diseases are typically more prevalent in urban environments (Davis et al., 1954).

Forms f Urbanization

Urbanization occurs in various forms, depending on socio-economic, demographic, and spatial factors. Below are five key forms of urbanization along with references.

Suburbanization

Suburbanization involves the expansion of cities into nearby rural or semi-rural areas, forming suburbs. This process is largely driven by improved transportation systems, allowing people to live further from their workplaces while still commuting. Suburbanization offers residents larger homes and lower living costs but can lead to urban sprawl, environmental degradation, and reliance on cars for transportation (Fishman, 1987).

Counter-Urbanization

Counter-urbanization is a reverse trend where people move from urban areas to rural regions, seeking a quieter, less congested lifestyle. This movement often happens in developed nations as people opt for more affordable housing and better quality of life in rural areas. It contrasts with traditional urbanization patterns and sometimes results from overcrowded, expensive city life.

Re-Urbanization

Re-urbanization refers to the movement of people returning to urban centres after a period of urban decline or suburbanization. This trend is often associated with urban renewal projects, gentrification, or the development of economic opportunities in the inner city. Many post-industrial cities have seen a resurgence in population due to this process (Butler, 1997).

Uncontrolled Urbanization

Low-density expansion of urban areas into the surrounding countryside. It is often characterized by widespread suburban development and increased dependency on cars. Sprawl can lead to the loss of agricultural land, environmental degradation, and inefficient use of infrastructure and resources.

Gentrification

Gentrification is a process where deteriorated urban neighbourhoods are redeveloped, attracting more affluent residents and businesses. While it often revitalizes neglected areas, gentrification can displace long-term, lower-income residents and alter the social dynamics of communities. The process is controversial due to its social implications and impact on housing affordability.

The Urban Bias Theory

The Urban Bias Theory suggests that the conflict between urban and rural populations is widespread globally. The rural sector is marked by poverty and limited opportunities for growth, whereas the urban sector holds most of the resources, organization, and power. Consequently, the urban sector holds a dominant position in the struggle with rural areas (Lovelace, 1965).

Conclusion

This study methodically investigated the complex processes of urbanization, offering light on its historical roots, contemporary expressions, and far-reaching ramifications for communities around the world. The study's exploratory research methodology and rigorous analysis of secondary data revealed the various elements of urbanization, including its organized facilities, population dynamics, and socioeconomic difficulties. From ancient Mesopotamian villages to enormous megacities of the modern period, urbanization has been driven by a variety of factors, including agricultural surplus, technical improvements, and economic prosperity. However, in addition to its revolutionary potential, urbanization has created substantial obstacles, such as environmental deterioration and socioeconomic inequity.

Moving forward, aggressive policy interventions are required to mitigate the negative effects of urbanization and promote sustainable urban growth. Governments can harness the transformative potential of urbanization by promoting inclusive growth, improving access to basic services, and empowering marginalized people to create dynamic, resilient, and equitable cities. Furthermore, strengthening collaboration among stakeholders, such as governments, civil society, and the corporate sector, is critical for navigating the complexity of urbanization and steering toward a future in which cities serve as engines of wealth, innovation, and social advancement. Finally, by adopting a comprehensive strategy to urban development based on principles of equality, sustainability, and social justice, countries can realize the full potential of urbanization as a force for positive change in the twenty-first century and beyond.

Recommendations

To mitigate the negative impacts of urbanization and promote sustainable urban growth, the study suggests several proactive policy initiatives

- Policies should focus on improving rural living conditions to reduce the push factors driving migration to urban areas. This includes investing in rural infrastructure, healthcare, and education, as well as promoting local economic development.
- Urban planning should incorporate strategies to create job opportunities that cater to both skilled and unskilled Labor. This can be achieved through the development of industrial zones, support for small and medium enterprises, and vocational training programs.
- Governments should implement urban planning frameworks that prioritize sustainability. This includes developing green spaces, enhancing public transportation, and promoting energy-efficient building practices to reduce environmental degradation.
- Investment in urban infrastructure such as housing, sanitation, and transportation is crucial to accommodate growing urban populations. Policies should focus on inclusive urban development that ensures access to essential services for all residents.
- Urban policies should aim to reduce socio-economic disparities by promoting affordable housing, equitable access to services, and inclusive urban governance. This can help prevent the marginalization of lower-income residents and support social cohesion.
- To balance urban and rural development, regional policies should encourage investment in secondary cities and towns, thus distributing population growth and economic activities more evenly across regions.
- By implementing these recommendations, policymakers can better manage the challenges of urbanization and foster sustainable, inclusive, and resilient urban environments.

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