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# Problems, Reasons And Results Of Urbanization In India And The UK

## Introduction

The topic I have chosen for my Individual Report is Changing communities, where I focus on my main research question "How far has urbanization changed our lives". I will be highlighting the positives and negatives of urbanization and analyzing its causes and what effects it has on some major countries. I will also be stating some major issues and their sources of information to support my arguments. Finally, I will include my own reflection and a personal perspective of this topic followed by a bibliography.

## What is Urbanization?

Urbanization is the movement of people from rural areas to an urban, modern one for many reasons such as better employment opportunities, better education, modern lifestyle, health and medical facilities, commercialization, social status and so on. This concept of transforming societies, taking on a modern approach to real life situations and issues has become widely popular over the last few decades and is continuing to evolve each and every day.

## Why this topic?

According to the United Nations, right now 55% of the world's population live in urban and developed areas, this population is expected to increase to 68% by 2050. This has caused me to think that most of the issues caused today are due to the effects of overpopulation and must be addressed. If you ask me, urbanization is not our main enemy but our own attitude towards it is and if tackled properly surely we can do something to minimize its negative effects. Below are some of the issues that urbanization has created.

## Issues, Causes and Consequences

### Urbanization in India

Urbanization took place in India after the 19th century after India gained its independence from the foreigners. Ever since then, this country has been rapidly developing each and every day. People from the rural and poor areas are migrating to metropolitan cities like Delhi and Mumbai in search of jobs and opportunities to have another chance at improving their lifestyle. The urban population of India had already reached the 285 million mark by 2001 and by 2030, more than 50 per cent of India's population is expected to live in urban areas, this is quite shocking as this country is facing a serious crisis of urban growth today, the following issues are taking place in some of the most popular destinations in India.

### Overpopulation

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With over hundreds of people migrating everyday to cities there has been a massive increase in population. This one problem leads to several like congestion, traffic, pollution, housing, facilities etc. Too many people are living in too little space and it has become impossible to accommodate so many people. It leads to tremendous pressure on families and government to manage housing, electricity, water, job opportunities and transport. The efforts taken by Delhi government to develop ring towns have not met with any success yet.

## **Housing**

The UN estimates that 44% of urban households (as compared to 34 per cent of rural families) occupied one room or less according to Indian survey in 1959. In larger cities the proportion of families occupying one room or less was as high as 67%. Moreover, the rate of construction in India is very slow and time consuming which makes the problem even more complicated. Taking India as whole, there are about 179 million residential houses, i.e., about six people to each house. Thirty-nine per cent of all married couples in India (about 86 million) do not have an independent room to themselves. As many as 35 per cent (18.9 million) urban families live in one-room houses. This indeed is a very serious issue.

## **Slums and Squatter settlements**

With an increase in population and an issue with housing, a natural development of unchecked, unplanned and haphazard growth of urban areas is the growth and spread of slums and squatter settlements which present a striking feature in the ecological structure of Indian cities. This growth of slums is due to so many factors such as high costs of living in apartments or buying a house which is beyond the reach of the poor, and a high rate of unemployment due to overpopulation. If not slums then where do these poor people reside? Such an environment where people live in houses made of cheap materials and poor quality is so unhygienic and causes numerous health problems such as diseases. They also have lack of basic necessities like access to water and electricity merely due to the fact that they cannot afford it.

These are some of the main issues faced by the population of India, other issues include trash disposal, sewerage problems, urban crime and overcrowding of public and private transport methods. This quality of urban life is declining and widely backfiring metropolitan cities.

## **Urbanization in UK**

Urbanization took place in UK after the 1800s. The rapid urbanization began at England's industrial capitalism (Clark, 1998) at the end of 18th century and it spread rapidly after the use of coal for the industry primary raw material and a better transportation system. A lot of effort had been put into the development and infrastructure of the country. In 2015, the population of the UK rose to over 65 million people. Let's take a look at the issues in Birmingham, the second largest city in UK:

### **Urban decline**

In 1911, the main jobs of people in Birmingham were in the manufacturing industry. Over the recent years this business has declined due to several factors such as competition from abroad and ever changing trends in today's lifestyle. Manufacturing is traditionally an important export

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sector. Relative wage costs and productivity are very important for determining demand and competitiveness. UK has struggled to remain competitive with lower wage cost economies, like China. The low skills of the labour force has already negatively impacted Birmingham's manufacturing, and got intensified by the replacement of Birmingham's numerous small manufacturers by large firms.

## **Unemployment**

In spite of rapid urbanization and economic and social changes in UK, many people are still in search of jobs and are finding various sources of making an income. Many families have gone bankrupt due to recession. Overpopulation has left very little job opportunities in the market. This is one of the reasons for urban crime as well. The closure of factories and manufacturing business has left UK with a high rate of unemployment in Birmingham and various major cities.

## **Pollution**

With rise in population, people are always out and about and mostly use either their own private methods of transportation such as driving their car to work or using a bike or public methods of transportation such as riding the bus or subway. These automobiles release harmful gases into the atmosphere causing air pollution. Air pollution reached a crisis in the 19th century with the spread of the Industrial Revolution and the rapid growth of the metropolis. The increase of domestic fires and factory furnaces meant that polluted emissions surged considerably.

Aside from threats to countries, Urbanization also affects wildlife and our ecosystem. Poor air and water quality, insufficient water availability, waste-disposal problems, and high energy consumption largely affect almost everything around us. Animal populations are a victim of the pollution caused by us and often have to sacrifice their habitats due to lack of space left for humans to settle in.

The urban crime rate has majorly increased all around the world too. Issues of lack of resources, overcrowding, unemployment, poverty, and lack of social services and education has lead to so many social problems including violence, drug abuse, and crime. Most of the crimes such as murder, rape, kidnapping, riots, assault, theft, robbery, and hijacking are reported to be more prominent in the urban settlements. Besides, poverty related crimes are the highest in fast-growing urban regions. These acts of urban crime really upset the peace and law of cities/towns.

## **Solutions**

So how do we battle these challenges? What can we do to protect our environment and at the same time manage our households and gain an adequate amount of income each month? I say it starts with us. Until and unless we don't start changing our own lifestyle we cannot force other people to. Governments should become stricter and pass laws that plan and provide cities with smart growth techniques, considering that people should not reside in unsafe and polluted areas. Our objective should focus on taking a sustainable approach to these problems. To lessen the negative effects of rapid urbanization while at the same time conserving natural ecosystems, private investments should be encouraged so as to utilize natural resources and create more job opportunities. One way to control population would be by spreading awareness

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and educating people about family planning and creating awareness among the rural communities. Another way to battle pollution would be by using renewable energy sources like solar energy, wind energy, hydropower and encouraging governments and industries to make use of them. Investments in energy efficient industries and technologies will lead to clean economy. Reforestation instead of deforestation should be promoted. In India specialists have stated that the government must focus on two critical factors which is solid waste management and waste water treatment. I personally think the government should take an initiative to open universities or create a subject teaching the younger generation on urban planning, urban infrastructure, urban development to learn how to meet the demands of urbanization. To lessen urban crime, police staff in urban areas should undergo a specific training to maintain demands of the law and order situation. Government must make polices to construct low cost multi-storeyed flats in order to accommodate the people living in slums and squatter settlements. There should also be an initiative taken to provide funds to encourage entrepreneurship. Funds and charity should also be donated to the poor populations and proper sanitation and hygiene must be developed in these rural areas.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, urbanization is important in today's world, we all require a better standard of living but not at the expense of ruining our surroundings. I think in order to live in an urbanized city we must abide by the laws and regulations and create a sustainable environment for all to live in. With ever growing advancements in technology I am sure we can find some way or the other to transform our problems into solutions. Today smart cities are being created, and I really like how they aim to improve the quality of urban services or reduce its costs. It stands out for its specificities: smart management, lifestyle, mobility, housing, as well as a smart economy. Our main goal should be to reconcile technological innovation with the economic, social and ecological challenges of the city of tomorrow.