INDIA’S URBAN DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION

The 2011 Census Results (Provisional)

JNNURM Directorate, Ministry of Urban Development
and
National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA)
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Urbanization ....a process characterized by more and more people living in the urban areas....is one of the most important transformations the world has witnessed in recent decades. India is an integral part of the process. In 2010, India accounted for 11 percent of the world's urban population; the United Nations projects it to be 15 percent by 2030.
### India's cities today in 2011...

- **377 million** people live in urban areas
- The top ten cities have a population of **93 million**
- The number of metropolitan cities is **53**
- **160 million** people live in metropolitan areas
- **52%** is the urban share of GDP in 2004-05
- The level of urbanization is **31%**

### ... and tomorrow and in 2031

- **600 million** people will live in urban areas
- The top ten cities will have a population of **140 million**
- The number of metropolitan cities would leap to **87**
- **255 million** people will live in metropolitan areas
- By 2031, urban share of GDP will be **75%**
- By 2039, the level of urbanization will reach **50%**
India's demographic transition

Population growth during 2001-2011 was evenly divided between rural and urban settlements, with a marginal edge for urban settlements.

From now on, population growth is expected to be largely an urban phenomenon.
The scale of urban change

India is making a slow but steady shift from 'rural' to 'urban'.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of urbanization (per cent)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
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<tr>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
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The number of towns has jumped from 5,161 to 7,935 between 2001 & 2011 - a net addition of 2,774 towns. The bulk of the increase is due to the addition of 2,532 census towns, which are 'urban' by definition, but 'rural' in governance.
The pace of urban change

The annual exponential growth rate of 2.76 per cent registered during 2001-2011 has reversed the declining trend observed during 1981-91 and 1991-2001.

Composition of urban change

Natural growth had been the principal force driving urbanization in India.

But during 2001-2011, the push to urban population has come in from rural to urban conversion and rural-urban migration. The contribution of these two has shown a sharp spike while natural increase has declined to 44 per cent.
Urbanization levels in India vary greatly across states.

Inter-state variations in the levels of urbanization are large but have not risen over time.

Eight states are still below the 1981 level of urbanization attained by India.

The eight north-eastern states have very low levels of urbanization (lower than India's average), except the state of Mizoram, which has urbanization level above 50 per cent.
Class I (100,000+) cities now account for 70.2 per cent of the total urban population; it was 68.6 per cent in 2001. While the percentage of population in 5 million plus and 1-5 million city size classes have been growing steadily over time, those in size classes of 100,000 -1 million and in less than 100,000 have steadily declined; thus indicating an increasing concentration of the emerging urban form.

Several states exhibit a high degree of urban primacy, with a large percentage of the state’s urban population in a single city.

**Five major states with highest urban primacy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Urbanization level (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>48.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>37.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>36.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>36.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>27.33</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The number of metropolitan (million-plus) cities has risen sharply, from 35 to 53 during 2001-2011; out of which eight are 5-million plus. They now account for 42.6 per cent of the total urban population, up from 37.8 per cent in 2001. Out of the 18 new metros, 6 are in Kerala.

Average size of towns (and cities) in India has grown from 33,624 in 1961 to about 61,159 in 2011.

The growth in big metros has become stagnant, while the newer (and smaller) ones are growing faster.

Out of the ten fastest growing metropolitan cities, 6 are in Kerala. Also, out of these ten, eight are new metros.

Kolkata and Mumbai feature prominently in the list of the ten slowest growing metros.
Evidence points to the spread of urbanization from the core city to the periphery throughout the country. Eleven metropolitan cities (out of the total 53) have within their municipal limits less than 50 per cent of the total city population.

Of the five slowest growing municipal corporations, four are new metros from Kerala, with extremely high peripheral growth.
The interlinkage effects between per capita income and urbanization levels across Indian states have become increasingly stronger over the decades. But the interlinkages are still quite low by international standards.

The impact of economic growth on cities in India is thus not yet strong enough; and the impact of agglomeration economies on urbanization is far from being saturated.
The actual urban population registered in 2011 has left all projections way behind.

By 2039, 50 per cent of India’s population would begin to live in urban areas (projections based on UN World Urbanization Prospects). The challenge over the next 30 years is to take advantage of the potential benefits of urbanization and agglomeration in an inclusive way.