



A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PATTERN AND CAUSES OF REGIONAL VARIATIONS IN URBANIZATION IN INDIA.

Mr. Anirban Hatial

Assistant Professor & HOD, Department of Geography, Manbhum Mahavidyalaya, Manbazar, Purulia, West Bengal.

Abstract

Urbanization is a development process that welcomes a transformation in any region's demographic, economic, socio-cultural, and even occupational changes. Although traditionally it involved a demographic change of population from rural to urban and agrarian to the non-agrarian economy, now it is necessary-modernization. The main objective of this paper is to thoroughly study the trend, pattern, and regional variations in urbanization in India.

India is a glorious big country with variations in terms of religion, language, and ethnicity. So, the study of regional variation of urbanization is not so easy because the urbanization process is not the same as a state to municipality level. Therefore, we confined our study to outline the broad patterns and trends state level and offer the possible reasons for them. According to the 2011 census, about 377105760 persons out of which 195807196 males and 181298564 females lived in 7935 urban centers. The decadal growth rate (2001-2011) is 31.80% and the urban sex ratio is 926 which is till now lesser than the rural sex ratio of 947. For the first time since Independence, the absolute increase in population is more in urban areas than the rural ones. The level of urbanization increased from 27.81% in the 2001 census to 31.16% in 2011. The distinct feature of variation in urbanization in India is its dualism- the Union Territories still have a larger Urban population (varies from 62% to 97 %) than the highly industrialized states like Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Gujarat (Varies from 38% to 45 %). However, in terms of absolute numbers, the seven most developed states, namely Tamilnadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, and West Bengal, account for about half of the country's urban population, while the less developed states, other than Mizoram, have much lower figures.

The major goal of this research is to examine the trend, pattern, and reasons that contribute to India's regional variability in urbanization.

Keywords: Urbanization, Spatial Variation, Regional Growth, and Development.

Introduction

Historically, the process of urbanization intensified in the wake of the Industrial Revolution in the Western world, which led to increased rural to urban migration. In then on-Western world, however, urbanization is more a defining feature of the twentieth century. It is often argued that the process of economic liberalization and associated structural reform would accelerate rural-urban (RU) migration and boost the pace of urbanization. Urbanization is a global phenomenon is of recent vintage. The developed world experienced urbanization much earlier. While in the developing world, urbanization is more a defining feature of the twentieth century. As far as India is concerned, it reflects a gradually increasing trend of urbanization. However, it is important to mention that the level of urbanization in India (31.16 %) is still very low as compared to develop as well as many developing nations. Given this background, the results of the 2011 Population Census regarding the urban sector came as a big surprise. Not on has y the rate of urbanization picked up, it has crossed the rural rate for the first time in the post-independence period. And it has been accompanied by the emergence of more than 2500 new towns in different parts of the country. The level of urbanization is an index of transformation from traditional to



modern society. An increase in urbanization level reduces the dependency on the primary sector and it is considered as a symbol of economic growth and development. Urbanization is an integral part of economic development. The most modern economic activity takes place in cities, and growth in productivity and income is easier in an urban context. Economics growth influences urbanization while urbanization, in turn, affects the rate of economic growth.

The Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India projected the urban population for the year 2011 to 358 million and estimated that urban population growth rates would decline from 2.75% per annum observed during 1991-2001 to 2.23 during 2001-2011 (Registrar General and Census Commissioner 2006). Urban experts also believed that India's urbanization would slow down because of its exclusionary nature and its inability to spur rural-to-urban migration (**Kundu 2007, 2011**). For the last twenty years, the growth in the country has been through the expansion of tertiary activities, especially the service sector. Now, more than 60% of the Gross Domestic Product is generated in the urban centers. The impact of such a change is manifested in the rate of urbanization in the last decade

Rapid urbanization creates tremendous pressure on both urban physical and social infrastructure and its delivery system. There is no universally accepted definition of urban; it differs by country (**United Nations 2009**). Two criteria are used to define India's urban areas. The census authority shall identify the urban areas of the country based on any of the following two criteria:

- a) All settlements in some form of local government are called *statutory towns*.
- b) In addition to this legal town, the Indian Census authority declares certain areas as the town if they simultaneously meet the following three criteria.
 - i. Size criterion: the population of the area has to be at least 5000 inhabitants.
 - ii. Density criterion: the density of the population in the region should be at least 1000 people per square kilometer.
 - iii. Occupational criterion: a minimum of 75 percent of the male laborer's force should be engaged in non-agricultural activities.

The town identified by the second criterion (b) is designated as a census town.

Countries such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan, on the other hand, use only the civic status criterion to designate a settlement urban (**United Nations 2009**). Many new towns are built, and some old towns are classified as rural if they do not meet the criteria. Although there are certain restrictions to the definition, the rural-urban classification applied in India is a dynamic process (**Bhagat 2005**).

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this paper are as follow:

1. To examine the recent trends and patterns of urbanization in India state-wise.
2. To focus on the cause of regional variation in urbanization in India using the census data (1971-2011)

Database and Methodology

The present study is based entirely on secondary sources of data. The main secondary source is the census of India and various other reports and published works. For the study following methodologies have been used. To know the growth rate of the urban population at the state level, the exponential growth rate is calculated with the help of the following formula. The degree or level of urbanization is defined as the relative number of people who live in urban areas. Percent urban,



[(U/P) *100]

Where U= Urban Population, P= Total Population

$$P_t = P_0 e^{rt}$$

Where P_t =Urban Population at time S

P_0 =Urban Population at a time '0',

r =Rate of the Growth and

t = Interval between the base year and terminal year

$$P = P_0 e^{rt}$$

Where P= Final Urban Population, P_0 =Initial Urban Population

R= Rate of the Growth, e=Exponential, t= interval between two years

Analysis

According to the 2011 Census, the urban population grew to 377 million showing a growth rate of 2.76% per annum during 2001-2011. The level of urbanization in the country as a whole increased from 27.7% in 2001 to 31.1% in 2011 – an increase of 3.3 percentage points during 2001-2011 compared to an increase of 2.1 percentage points during 1991-2001. It may be noted that the Indian economy has grown from about 6% per annum during the 1990s to about 8% during the first decade of the 2000s (Ahluwalia 2011). This reflects economic growth bringing about faster urbanization during 2001-2011.

Table 1: Trends of Urbanisation in India (1971-2011)

Census Years	Urban Population (in millions)	Percent of urban population to total population	The annual exponential growth rate of urban population (%)
1961	78.94	17.97	-
1971	109.11	19.91	3.23
1981	159.46	23.34	3.79
1991	217.18	25.72	3.09
2001	286.12	27.86	2.75
2011	377.10	31.16	2.76

Source: Census of India, various years.

Table number 1 shows that India had an urban population of about 79 million in 1961, which constituted about 18% of the total population. The average growth rate of the urban population was 2.32% during 1951-61 which accelerated up to 3.79% during 1971-81. This was the highest urban growth since independence. After 1981, the urban growth rate decelerated to 3.09% during 1981-91 and further declined to 2.75 during 1991-2001. However, the declining growth rate was slightly reversed during 2001-2011.



Table 2: Urban-Rural Population Growth Differentials (1971-2011)

Decade	Rural	Urban	Urban-Rural Growth Differentials (Annual Exponential Growth Rate, in %)
1971-1981	1.76	3.79	2.03
1981-1991	1.80	3.09	1.29
1991-2001	1.69	2.75	1.06
2001-2011	1.15	2.76	1.61

Source: Census of India, various years

Table 2 shows that urban-rural growth differentials increased from about 1% per annum during 1991-2001 to 1.61% per annum during 2001-2011. It is also evident from Table 2 that the rural population growth has declined much faster during 2001-2011 compared to earlier decades. Note that the urban-rural population growth differential is a product of the differentials in the natural increase between rural and urban areas (births-deaths), net rural-urban classification, and net rural-to-urban migration. Thus, it is the urban-rural population growth differential that is critical to the process of urbanization.

Trends of Urbanisation in India

According to the 2011 census, the urban population has grown to 377 million showing a growth rate of 2.76% per annum from 2001 to 2011. The level of urbanization in the country as a whole increased from 27.7% in 2001 to 31.1% in 2011 i.e. an increase of 3.3 percentage points, as compared to an increase of 2.1 percentage points from 1991 to 2001 and 3.3 percentage points increase from 2001 to 2011.

Trends and Patterns of urbanization at the State level

To order to and the dynamics of urban development in a large country like India, it is important to examine the changes in the levels and pace of urbanization across states. At the state level, the pattern of urbanization is full of diversities, but economically advanced states more or less show higher levels of urbanization (Figure:1). All the southern states, including Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and West Bengal, have higher levels of urbanization than that of the national average, but small states like Goa continue to top the list among states (62% urban), followed by Mizoram (51.5%). Among the large states, Tamil Nadu continues to be ahead of the others, with levels of urbanization at 48.4% in 2011. States which lag are Himachal Pradesh with an urban population of 10%, followed by Bihar (11.3%), Assam (14%), and Orissa (16.6%). Other states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand also continue to have lower levels of urbanization than the national average. However, a reversal noticed in the declining trend in urban population growth rate at the national level is a major feature revealed by the 2011 census, there are only 15 states and union territories which show an increased urban population growth rate during 2001-2011 as compared to 1991-2001. Among them, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujarat, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Uttarakhand are the major states. A very high urban population growth has occurred in the states of Kerala and Andhra Pradesh while urban population growth rates have increased to 6.5% per annum in Kerala and 3% per annum in Andhra Pradesh during 2001-11 compared to just about 1% per annum during 1991-2001. In both Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, as well as in West Bengal and Gujarat, a large number of new towns have emerged as a result of rural-to-urban classification in 2011.



Table: 3 Level of Urbanisation across States

States	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	Change from 1971 up to 2011	Annual exponential growth rate 1991-01	Annual exponential growth rate 2001-11
Andhra Pradesh	19.31	23.25	26.84	27.08	33.49	14.18	1.37	1.06
Arunachal Pradesh	3.70	6.32	12.21	20.41	22.67	18.97	7.00	2.33
Assam	8.82	9.88	11.09	12.72	14.08	4.2	3.09	1.58
Bihar	7.97	9.84	10.40	10.47	11.30	1.3	2.57	2.26
Chhattisgarh	10.38	14.69	17.40	20.08	23.24	3.16	3.09	2.06
Delhi	89.70	92.84	89.93	93.01	97.50	7.8	4.14	1.92
Goa	26.44	32.46	41.02	49.77	62.17	35.73	3.32	0.79
Gujarat	28.08	31.08	34.40	37.35	42.58	14.5	2.8	1.77
Haryana	17.66	21.96	24.79	29.00	34.79	6.59	4.11	1.83
Himachal Pradesh	6.99	7.72	8.70	9.79	10.04	3.05	2.81	1.21
Jammu & Kashmir	18.59	21.05	22.76	24.88	27.21	6.16	3.44	2.15
Jharkhand	16.01	20.09	21.25	22.25	24.05	1.8	2.55	2.04
Karnataka	24.31	28.91	30.91	33.98	38.57	14.26	2.53	1.47
Kerala	16.24	18.78	26.44	25.97	47.72	31.48	0.74	0.48
Madhya Pradesh	18.58	22.34	25.27	26.67	27.63	11.34	2.71	1.87
Maharashtra	31.17	35.03	38.73	42.4	45.23	14.06	2.95	1.49
Manipur	13.19	26.44	27.69	23.88	30.21	7.02	1.21	1.72
Meghalaya	14.55	18.03	18.69	19.63	20.08	5.53	3.16	2.49
Mizoram	11.36	25.17	46.2	49.5	51.51	40.15	3.27	2.07
Nagaland	9.95	15.54	17.28	17.74	28.97	19.02	5.27	-0.05



Odisha	8.41	11.82	13.43	14.97	16.68	8.27	2.61	1.32
Punjab	23.73	27.72	29.72	33.95	37.49	13.76	3.19	1.3
Rajasthan	17.63	20.93	22.88	23.38	24.89	8.26	2.71	1.96
Sikkim	9.37	16.23	9.12	11.1	24.97	15.6	4.83	1.17
Tamil Nadu	30.26	32.98	34.2	43.86	48.45	18.19	3.56	1.46
Tripura	10.43	10.98	15.26	17.02	26.18	15.75	2.53	1.39
Uttar Pradesh	14.02	18.01	19.89	20.78	22.28	8.26	2.84	1.85
Uttarakhand	NA	NA	NA	25.59	30.55	4.96	2.84	1.77
West Bengal	24.75	26.49	27.39	28.03	31.89	7.14	1.84	1.31
All India	20.22	23.73	25.72	27.78	31.16	10.94	2.73	1.64

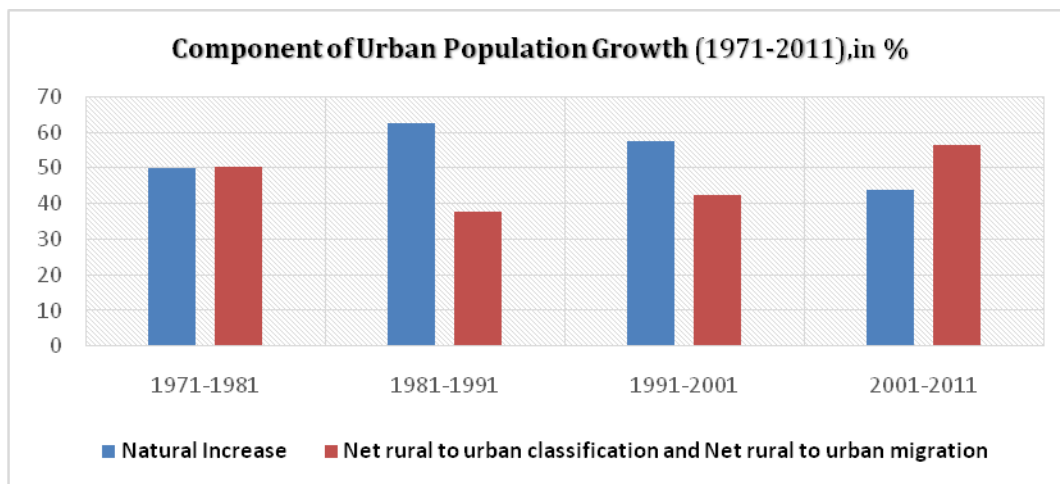
Note: Data is not available for all census years; hence the change is calculated by taking next Census year if previous is not available

Source: Census of India.

Figure 1: Levels of Urbanization, India (2011)

Component of Urban Growth

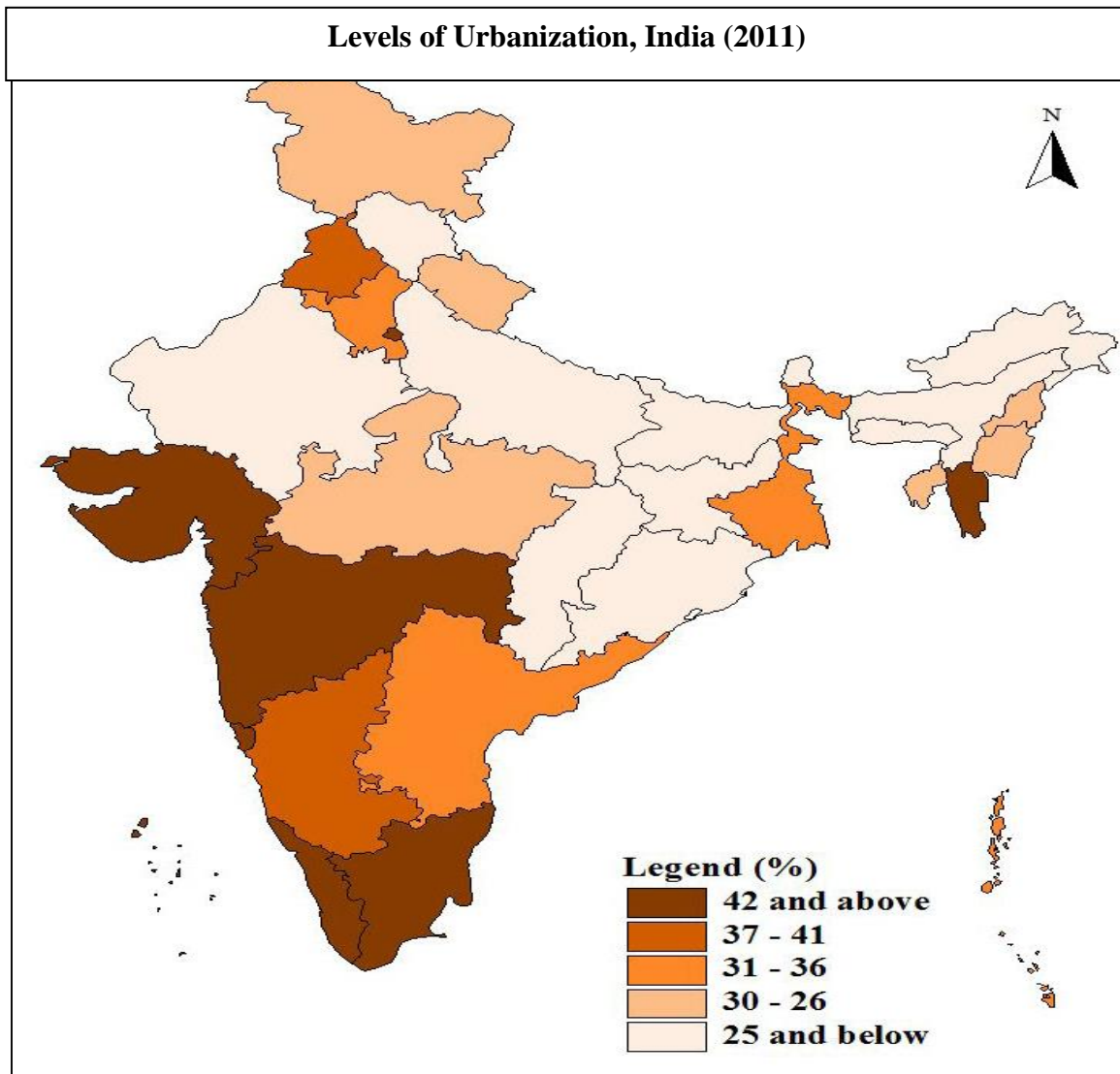
Urban population growth includes natural growth, net rural-urban classification, and rural-to-urban migration. Understanding the dynamics of urban population growth requires an assessment of their relative contributions.



The proportion of net rural-urban classification and rural-to-urban migration has increased from 42% in 1991-2001 to 56% in 2001-2011, as shown in Figure. Because the definition of the urban did not change between the 2001 and 2011 census, this has contributed greatly to rapid urbanization, and many metropolitan cities' growth rates have declined (Kundu 2011).



Natural increases in urban population growth, on the other hand, have decreased a maximum of 62 percent between 1981 and 1991 to 44 percent between 2001 and 2011. However, between 2001 and 2011, the natural increase contributed a large population of about 40 million to metropolitan areas.



At the state level, the pattern of urbanization is very diverse, but economically advanced states more or less show higher levels of urbanization (Figure 1). All the southern states, along with Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and West Bengal, have higher urbanization levels than the national average, but small states like Goa continue to top the list among states (62% urban), followed by Mizoram (51.5%). Among the major states, Tamil Nadu continues to be ahead of the others, with levels of urbanisation at 48.4% in 2011. States which lag are Himachal Pradesh at the bottom with a 10% level of urbanization, followed by Bihar (11.3%), Assam (14%), and Orissa (16.6%). Other states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand also continue to have lower levels of urbanization than the national average. The regional variations in the distribution of urban population are significant. A large proportion is concentrated in the six most developed states, namely Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Punjab, and West Bengal, accounting for about half of the country's



urban population. By the 2001 Census, they report the percentage of the urban population much above the national average of 27.78, whereas the less developed states report significantly low figures. Indeed, the levels of urbanization are high in the states with high per capita income and vice versa (Table 2). The pattern of urban growth across states is significantly different from that of the levels of urbanization. Since independence until 1991, the developed states that have a high percentage of people in urban areas have shown medium or low growth of urban population. High urban growth has however been registered in relatively underdeveloped states, viz. Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa, and Madhya Pradesh, are the states that have low percentages of urban population (Table 2). This implies that the relationship between urban growth and economic development is generally negative. However, some of the developed states like Maharashtra and Haryana are exceptions, as they record urban growth rates higher than the country average.

Table 4: Trends in Urbanization in India 1901-2011

Census Year	Number of UAs/Towns	Urban Population (in millions)	Percent Urban	Decadal Growth Rate	Annual Exponential Growth Rate
1901	1,915	25.85	10.84		
1911	1,864	25.94	10.29	0.36	0.03
1921	2,018	28.07	11.17	8.20	0.79
1931	2,188	33.64	11.99	19.20	1.71
1941	2,392	44.15	13.86	31.97	2.77
1951	3,035	62.44	17.29	41.42	3.47
1961	2,657	78.94	17.97	26.41	2.34
1971	3,081	109.11	19.91	38.23	3.23
1981	3,891	159.46	23.34	46.14	3.79
1991	4,615	217.18	25.72	36.19	3.09
2001	5,161	286.12	27.86	31.74	2.75
2011	7,935	377.10	31.16	31.80	2.76

Source: Census of India

Reason for Regional variation of Urbanisation:

- The proportion of the rural population declined from 72% in 2001 to 69% in 2011, mainly by the reclassification of rural localities in urban units or outgrowth of cities.
- Massive rural to urban migrations, for at least three decades, India is structurally characterized by low residential migrations toward some cities.
- Small towns as an intermediary point in rural to urban residential migration. Some authors, like Kundu, have underlined that small towns could constitute a transitional location where rural migrants experiment with city life.
- Some southern states have a historical advantage and have expanded their industries.

Conclusion

During the 1980s and 1990s, the observed urban population growth rate was against the national level. However, the level of urbanization increased rapidly during 2001-2011. The urban population grew from 286 million in 2001 to 377 million in 2011 – an increase of 91 million, which is larger than the rural population increase of 90.5 million for the first time since independence. This substantial increase



in the urban population is followed by a net rural-urban classification and rural-to-urban migration. A large number of new towns emerged during the last decade, which contributes prominently to urbanization. On the other hand, although the contribution of the natural increase in urban growth has declined in terms of proportions, its share in absolute numbers (about 40 million) continues to be huge due to the large base of the urban population. Its implications can be seen through poor urban infrastructure and civic amenities including reproductive and child health services in urban areas.

The declining trend in the urban population growth rate observed during the 1980s and 1990s was reversed at the national level, and the level of urbanization increased faster during 2001-2011. The urban population grew from 286 million in 2001 to 377 million in 2011 an increment of 91 million, which is larger than the rural population increment of 90.5 million for the first time since independence. A substantial increase in the urban population is due to a net rural-urban classification and rural-to-urban migration. A huge number of new towns emerged during the last decade, contributing significantly to the speeding up of urbanisation. On the other hand, although the contribution of the natural increase in urban growth has declined in terms of proportions, its share in absolute numbers (about 40 million) continues to be huge due to the large base of the urban population. This has implications not only for providing urban infrastructure and civic amenities but also for reproductive and child health services in urban areas. The national trend of declining urban population growth rates in the 1980s and 1990s was reversed, and the level of urbanization increased faster from 2001 to 2011. A net rural-urban classification and rural-to-urban migration have resulted in significant growth in the urban population.

References

1. Bala, Raj. 1986. Trends of Urbanisation in India. Rawat Publications, Jaipur. pp.13-24.
2. Bhagat, R.B. 2011. Emerging Pattern of Urbanisation in India. Economic and Political Weekly, (August) Vol. XLVI No.34 pp.10-12.
3. Bhattacharya, B. 1979. Urban Development in India. Shree Publishing House, New Delhi. pp.279-315.
4. Bhagat, R.B. 2004. Dynamics of Urban Population Growth by Size Class of Towns and Cities in India. *Demography India*, Vol. 33, No.1 pp. 47-60.
5. Census of India: Relevant table from official website www.censusindia.gov.in.
6. Kundu, A. 2006. Trends and Patterns of Urbanization and Their Economic Implications. India Infrastructure Report 2006. Pp.17-41.
7. Bhagat, R B (2005): "Rural-urban Classification and Municipal Governance in India", *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 26(1): 61-74.
8. Mohanty, S. and Bhakat, R.B. (2018) "Trends and Patterns of India's Urbanization: A Demographic Assessment" Paper Presented in the Annual Meeting of Population Association of America, New Orleans, USA.