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# Urbanization and the Growth Trajectory of Urban Centers in India

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**Abstract**

Urbanization is a complex process and a significant phenomenon that contributes to the development of countries worldwide. This study endeavors to examine the growth trajectory of urban centers across subdivisions of India and to explore the regional variations in urban and city growth using the information provided by the Census of India. The annual exponential growth method has been employed to examine the growth dynamics of urban centers. In the last few decades, India has experienced steady urban growth from 216 million in 1991 to 377 million in 2011, with a slowing growth rate. Urban centers show distinctive characteristics, with an increasing share of stabilizing towns, decreasing growing towns, and the emergence of declining towns. The growth trajectory seemingly shifting backwards indicates the slow growth of urban centers, especially among small and medium-sized towns. Significant inequality has been found in terms of the concentration of urban centers across the regions. While urban growth and the level of urbanization significantly control the growth and distribution of urban centers in India. Cities are considered engines of growth as they significantly contribute to the economy. However, some of these engines are struggling for their survival as population growth slows down or declines. The study highlights the importance of understanding changing growth characteristics and linkages between urbanization, urban growth, and population growth in towns and cities. It calls for a focus on empowering smaller urban units with adequate infrastructure and economic opportunities to achieve balanced growth across various regions and reduce development inequalities. A holistic and decentralized urban planning approach is suggested to accommodate the needs of urban inhabitants and foster sustainable urban development.

***Keywords***

Growth trajectory, regional variation, urbanization, urban transition, urban policy

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**Introduction**

Urbanization refers to the process by which people move from rural areas to urban areas, resulting in the growth of urban population in relation to rural population. It also refers to the transformation of a settlement from traditional rural to modern industrial economies and from small to largely populated complex settlements (Davis, 1965). This transformation process has been occurring for centuries, but in recent decades, it has accelerated due to globalization, industrialization, and population growth. However, urbanization and urban growth pattern varies in developed and developing countries. In developing countries, the level of urbanization is low and growing rapidly, but infrastructure improvements are lagging behind. In contrast, developed countries that have already reached a saturation level of urbanization are experiencing a slow pace of urbanization (UNDESA, 2019). According to Davis (1965) process of urbanization has three stages. The first stage involves a traditional rural society that relies mainly on agriculture and has dispersed settlements. The second stage is characterized by a shift in the economy and investments in transportation and communication infrastructure, resulting in a gradual increase in the proportion of the urban population. The third and final stage is reached when the urban population exceeds three-fourths of the total population, and the rate of urban population growth and total population growth become equal. At this point, the level of urbanization becomes almost constant. However, the time period for follow-up of these stages varies across countries and states.

Globally urbanization has been considered a key indicator of development, as it is strongly linked with economic growth, per capita income, and quality of life (Henderson, 2010; UN- Habitat, 2016). Thus, achieving high economic growth is possible through rapid growth in subnational urbanization levels as urbanization and growth go parallel together (Chen et al., 2014). It is evident that nearly all middle-income countries have more than half of their population concentrated in urban areas, while all high-income countries have three-fourths of their population in urban settlements (Spence et al., 2009). India is one among the largest urban systems in the world, with 377 million (31.12%) people residing in urban areas in 2011. In absolute numbers, the urban population in India is more than the total population of highly urbanized countries across the globe (NITI Aayog, 2021). Urban growth is primarily driven by three key indicators: urban-rural differences in natural increase, rural-to-urban migration, and reclassification of rural areas into urban units or changes in definition (Bhagat & Mohanti, 2009). However, variation in urban population distribution and growth creates sub-national inequality in several socio-economic indicators. As highly urbanized areas experience rapid population growth with many growing urban centers as well as economic growth, the low-urbanized areas experience minimum growth with few urban centers (Balasubramanian et al., 2021).

In India, the urban population distribution at the state level is very diverse. Here economically advanced states have a higher level of urbanization with many large cities. However, economically disadvantaged states struggle with low levels of urbanization and minimal growth (Bhagat, 2018). The emergence and growth of cities across various states in India have been affected by the existing disparity in urban population distribution. In the past century, India has undergone a rapid urban transition, resulting in changes in the characteristics of towns and cities. Demographic changes, such as low fertility rates, internal migration and an aging population, have also influenced this urban transition. Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend the changing growth characteristics of towns and cities and understand the urban transition process in a better way. The primary objective of this study is to examine the growth trajectory of urban centers and the regional variations in urban and city growth across different states. Additionally, this study examines the linkages between urbanization, urban growth, and population growth in urban centers. The findings of this study will be highly beneficial for mitigating urban growth inequality and

promoting sustainable urban planning.

**Materials and methods**

This study is primarily based on official census statistics collected from the website of the Census of India. The latest dataset of 2011 has been used. The population census provides data on different subunits such as state, district, town, city, and village. This study has used state-level and city/town- level data available in various census tables. First, the primary census abstract has been used to understand the population size distribution and composition. Secondly, the A4 data table has been used, which provides the decadal variation in population size, change in civic status and administrative area for all towns and cities in India.

Based on the census data, this study has examined the growth trajectories of towns and cities. For this, the annual exponential growth method has been employed to understand the growth of urban centers and examine the urban growth trajectory in India from 1901 to 2011. Following the annual exponential growth rate (AEGR), the towns and cities has been classified into three categories: growing, stabilizing, and declining. All urban centers (towns/cities) that have experienced negative population growth during 2001-11 were considered declining towns. Towns that have experienced a growth rate of 0-2% per annum were considered stabilizing towns, while towns exhibiting a growth rate of more than 2% per annum have been considered growing towns (Wiechmann & Wolff, 2013). Based on these categories, urban growth trajectories were plotted in graphs. The historical urban growth transition was presented for the last century. Further, the growth trajectory for all towns and cities was analyzed since 1961 as since 1961 a standard urban definition was adopted and followed the same with minor changes in 1981 and 2011. Growth trajectory has also been presented to understand the regional variation in the growth of towns and cities. Further, this study has used a geospatial approach to understand the relationship between urban growth and city growth. An overlay analysis was performed to examine the urban growth inequality and its impact on the growth of urban centers across the states in India.

**Definition of Urban, 2011**

The Census of India provides a two-fold classification of the urban as per recent census reports, and these are statutory towns and census towns. All places with a municipality, corporation, cantonment board, notified town area committee, etc., are the statutory town. While census towns are the places that follow the three flowing criteria – i) A minimum population of 5000, ii) At least 75% of the male main working population engaged in non-agricultural pursuits; and iii) A density of population of at least 400 persons per square kilometer. Further, the Census of India also provides a six-fold classification of urban centers as per the size of the population in that urban center. These classifications are Class I (>1, 00,000), Class II (50,000 to 99,999 population), Class III (20,000 to 49,999), Class IV (10,000 to 19,999), Class V (5000 to 9,999) and Class VI (less than 5,000) town.

**Urbanization and urban growth in India**

India is the most populous country, with a population of 1.4 billion in 2023, and it is the second-largest urban system in the world (United Nations, 2022). In 1901, India had a population of only 26 million living in urban areas. Urbanization in India has progressed slowly due to a slow process of reclassification of rural areas as urban in comparison to other countries at similar levels of urbanization (UNDESA, 2019). The urban population in India increased to 377 million in 2011, comprising 31% of the total population, up from only 11% in 1901. According to the Census of India, the highest urban population growth was recorded from 1971 to 1981, with a growth rate of 45%. During 2001-2011, the urban population grew to 377 million, with a growth rate of 2.8% per annum, and the level of urbanization in the country increased from 28% in 2001 to 31% in 2011. The first urban growth peak occurred in 1951, owing primarily to the country's split and an influx of refugees seeking refuge in metropolitan areas. The second high, reached in 1981, was due to the Nehruvian growth model, which established many industrial and mining towns. Since 1981, the

decadal growth rate of the urban population has been steadily declining (Table 1). Urban growth seemed to slow down even with the faster economic growth during the 2000s (Bhagat, 2018).

It is evident that the emergence and growth of towns and cities drive urbanization in India. Thus, sustaining the growth of urban centers is very important for maintaining the tempo of urbanization. Evidence shows that the number of towns and cities in India has rapidly grown from 1827 in 1901 to 7935 in 2011, with the highest addition of towns occurring in the last decade from 2001 to 2011. Almost three thousand new towns were added during this period (Kumar, 2015; Roy et al., 2023).

**Population growth in towns and cities in India**

India's urbanization is characterized by a top-heavy distribution of population, with a concentration of 70% residing in class I cities. In 2011, the total urban population was 377 million, of which 264 million was living in class I cities, and the remaining 113 million resided in the other five size-class categories. Notably, there was a significant increase in population size in the class I category over time. In 1961, the population of class I cities was 41 million, which rose to 264 million by 2011. While class II and class III cities also witnessed an increase in population over time, the population of class V and class VI cities remained minimal, with occasional fluctuations (Roy et al., 2023).

As mentioned earlier, towns and cities are broadly classified into two categories: census towns and statutory towns. One is based on the administration unit and the other is based on socio-demographic characteristics. Statutory towns are major urban units where an urban local body provides all urban facilities and services. On the other hand, census towns are classified as urban areas based on certain criteria, such as population size, occupational structure, and population density given by the Census of India. However, census towns do not have a local self-government structure or administrative powers. In India, the majority of towns were statutory towns in the past, with only a few census towns. However, there has been a rapid increase in the number of census towns in the last two censuses conducted in 2001 and 2011 (Figure 1). The total number of census towns has increased from 346 in 1991 to 3890 in 2011, with the majority of towns being smaller, and newly classified as urban (Figure 1). However, a steady increase in statutory towns has been observed, rising from 2145 to 4045 from 1961-2011. The increase in the number of towns in categories like Class I, Class II, and Class III has been noticeable, whereas the increase in smaller size classes was not as apparent.

The first four class categories (cities and medium-sized towns) have demonstrated consistent population growth, albeit with a declining growth rate trend. Specifically, in 1961, the population growth rate in class I cities was 5.8% (Figure 2), which decreased to 1.1% in 2011. In contrast, the population growth rate in class V and class VI categories is not consistent and exhibits significant fluctuations. However, in the last census, class V and class VI towns recorded the highest growth rates of 7.2% and 9.3%, respectively, in 2011 (Figure 2). The increase in growth rate is probably due to the addition of new census towns in 2011.

**Urban growth trajectory in India**

Over the past few decades, India has achieved steady urban growth in the last century; however, it has experienced a falling growth rate since 1981 (Table 1). The urban growth rate fell from 3.7% in 1981 to 2.8% in 2011. The share of growing towns followed a similar trend with the urban growth rate, dropping from 75% to 26% during 1981-2011. Furthermore, the share of stabilizing towns has increased rapidly since 1981. However, a noticeable change occurred with an increase in the share of declining towns in the recent decade. In 2011 more than 11% of towns (634 urban centers) experienced negative population growth.

Overall, the growth of towns and cities has slowed down, as can be observed in Figure 3, where the growth distribution of towns has shrunk or compressed to low growth rate over the years. In earlier decades (1961-81), the city

growth distribution curve was wide and peaked at higher growth rates.

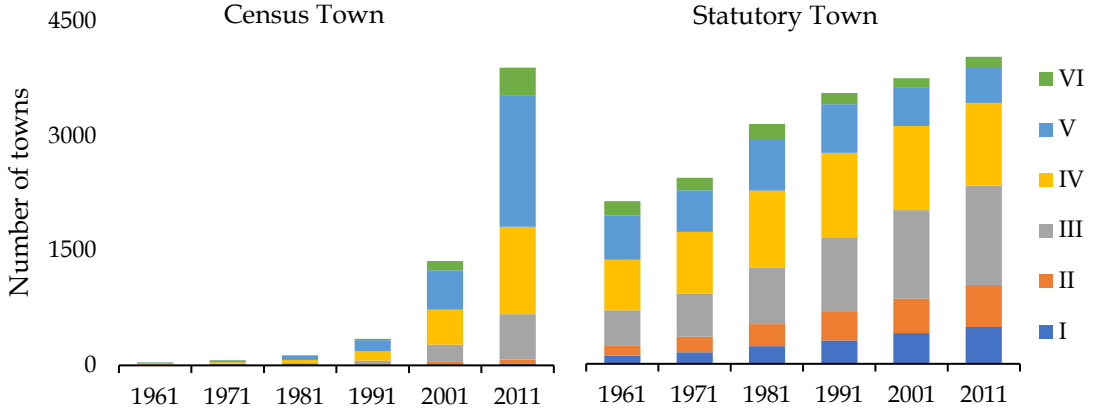


**Figure 1** Number of Census Town and Statutory Town in India by size class, 1961-2011

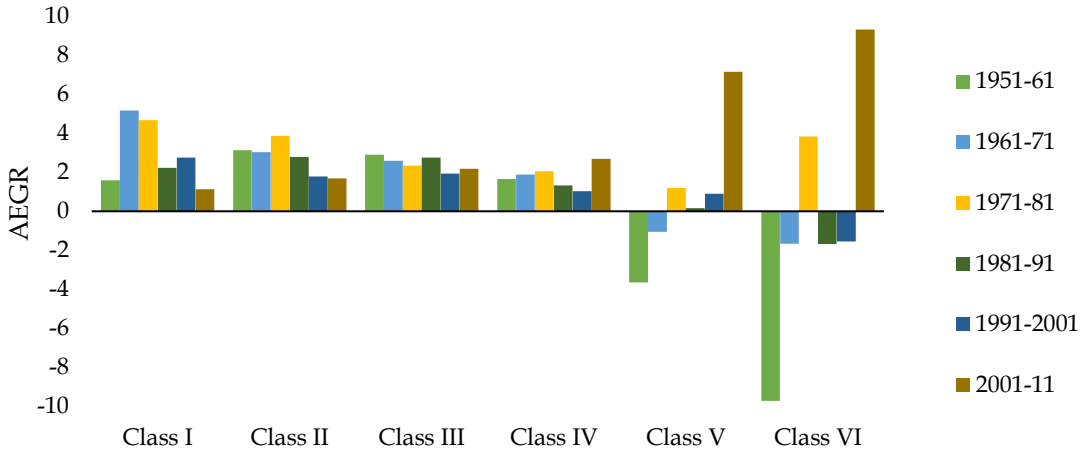


**Figure 2** Population growth (annual exponential) in different sizes of towns during 1951- 2011

**Table 1** Urbanization, urban growth and share of growing, stabilizing and declining towns in India, 1911-2011

| Year | Urbanization Level | AEGR Urban Pop. (% p.a) | Growing towns (> 2.0% p.a) | Stabilizing towns (0- 2.0% p.a) | Declining towns (<0.0%p. a) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1901 | 10.8 | - | - | - | - |
| 1911 | 10.3 | 0.0 | 9.1 | 36.2 | 54.7 |
| 1921 | 11.2 | 0.8 | 16.3 | 36.0 | 47.8 |
| 1931 | 12.0 | 1.8 | 27.2 | 58.3 | 14.5 |
| 1941 | 13.9 | 2.8 | 37.1 | 53.1 | 9.9 |
| 1951 | 17.3 | 3.5 | 43.6 | 42.5 | 13.9 |
| 1961 | 18.0 | 2.3 | 50.2 | 43.3 | 6.6 |
| 1971 | 19.9 | 3.2 | 66.2 | 29.6 | 4.2 |
| 1981 | 23.1 | 3.7 | 75.7 | 22.5 | 1.8 |
| 1991 | 25.5 | 3.1 | 62.5 | 33.3 | 4.1 |
| 2001 | 27.8 | 2.8 | 50.4 | 43.3 | 6.3 |
| 2011 | 31.1 | 2.8 | 27.7 | 60.8 | 11.5 |

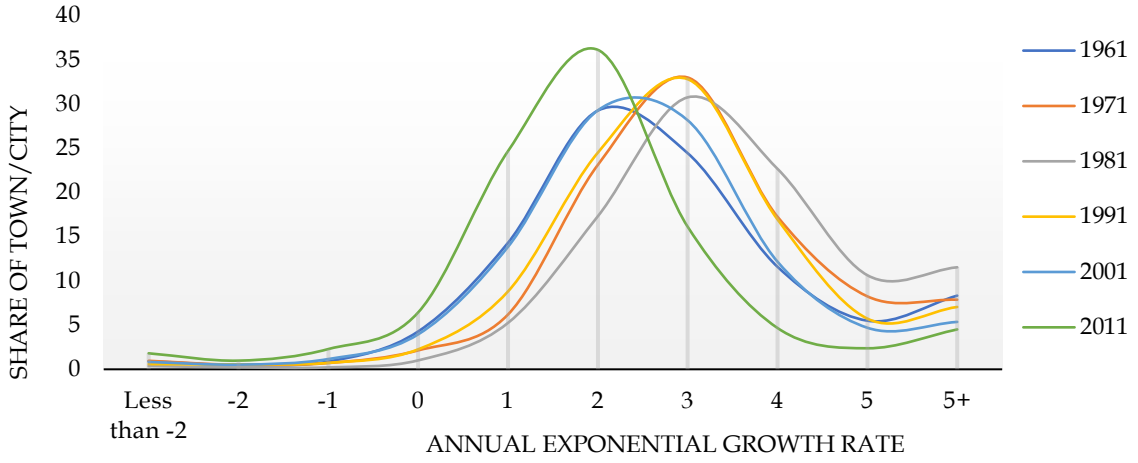


**Figure 3** Growth trajectories of urban centers in India from 1961 to 2011

Hence, there has been a shift in the urban growth process from 1961 to 1981, with cities exhibiting higher growth rates increasing, while towns and cities with negative growth rates decreasing. After 1981, a reverse shift began to occur, and by 2011, a rapid shift was evident. Specifically, the majority of towns and cities were growing at a growth rate of 0 to 2% (annual exponential) in 2011. Thus, towns and cities are mostly stabilizing, while there is a notable increase in the percentage of declining towns and cities compared to 1981 (Figure 3).

However, the growth transition is not similar for all categories of towns and cities. Results highlight that there is wide variation in growth patterns across various size classes of urban centers (Figure 4). Larger towns, such as those in Class I and Class II categories, have almost a similar pace of growth, with peaks at 2% (AEGR), indicating a majority with a high growth rate. However, the smaller towns in Class V and Class VI categories paint a different picture. Their growth rate is much lower than any other class, with a large proportion of towns exhibiting negative growth rates. Although urban centers are declining in all classes, a greater share of Class V and Class VI towns are declining with a higher negative growth rate.

**Regional variations in urban growth**

This study reveals that, much like the level of urbanization, the growth patterns of towns and cities in India vary significantly across different regions.

The northern region exhibits the highest share of growing towns, at 38%, followed by the western region at 29%, and the north-eastern region at 29%. On the other hand, the central (67%), southern (65%), and eastern (61%) regions shows a higher share of stabilizing towns or towns that grew at a rate of 0-2% annually. In other regions, over half of the towns are in a stabilizing state. However, the share of declining town is higher in the western and north- eastern regions, at over 14%, followed by the southern region at 13% and the eastern region at 12%. Conversely, in the central and northern regions, the share of declining towns is low, at 8.1% and 10%, respectively (Figure 5).

A similar result can be depicted in the growth trajectory of towns and cities across different regions in India, as depicted in Figure 6. The central region demonstrates a majority of towns in the growing and stabilizing phase. The northern region displays a sharp peak in growth rate between 1-2%, indicating that a majority of the towns are stabilizing. In contrast, the southern, eastern, and western regions exhibit an inflated distribution towards negative growth rates, with many towns and cities in these regions experiencing a high negative growth rate.

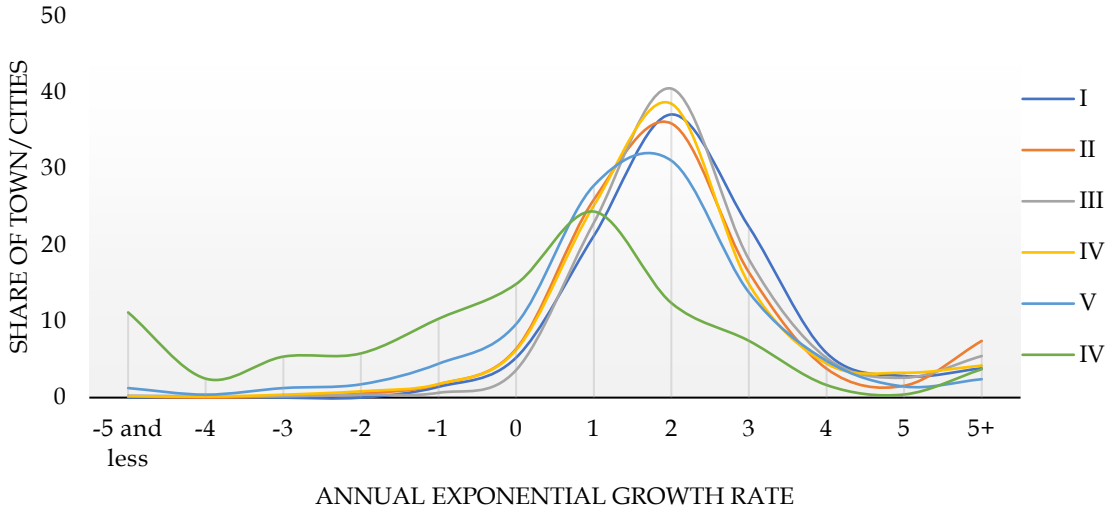


**Figure 4** The growth trajectory of urban centers by size class category of town/city in India, 2011

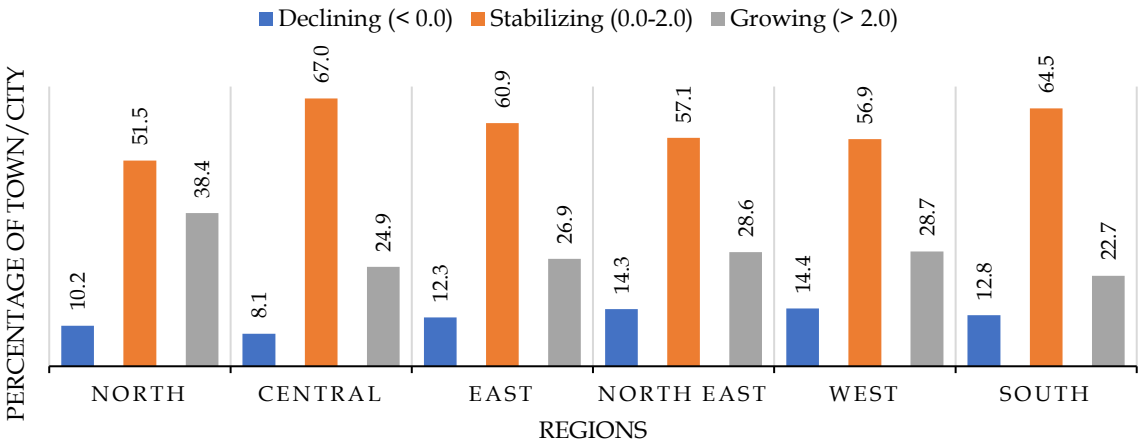


**Figure 5** Regional variation in the share of declining, stabilizing and growing towns in India, 2011

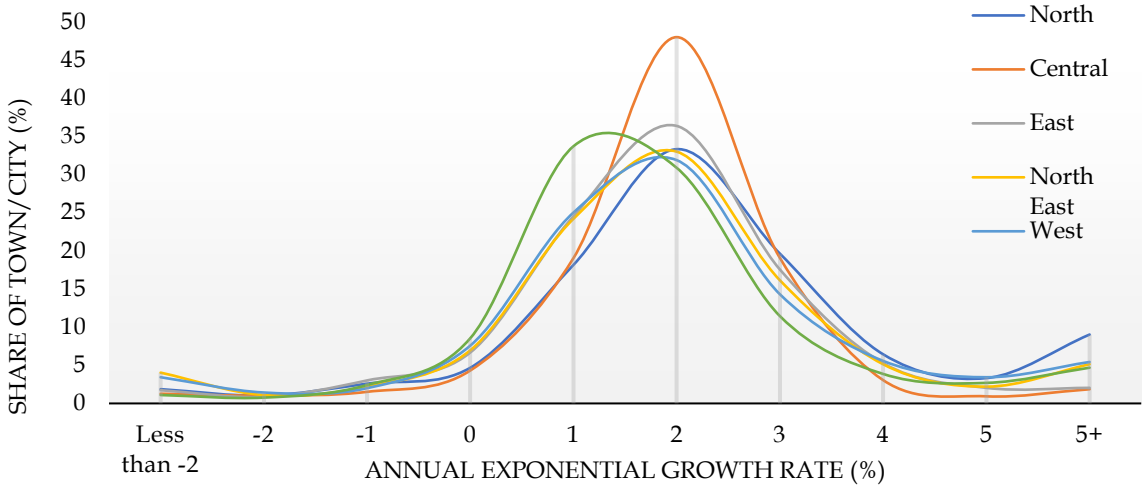


**Figure 6** Regional variations in the growth trajectories of towns and cities in India, 2011

Further analysis indicates that there is a wide variation in the level of urbanization, urban growth rate, and concentration of towns and cities across different regions of India. These three components are strongly related to each other. Figure 7 illustrates the level of urbanization in 2001 and 2011, the annual exponential growth rate of urban population, and the number of towns and cities located in each state in 2011. The map reveals that urbanization is higher in larger states like Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Kerala, and Gujarat and a few smaller states like Delhi, Chandigarh, Goa, and Mizoram. In contrast, it is lower in states like Bihar, Odisha, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh. Furthermore, the map shows that urban growth is comparatively higher in highly urbanized states, except for Tripura, Nagaland, and Sikkim.

The level of urbanization and urban growth is also reflected in the distribution of towns and cities across the states. States like Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Kerala, West Bengal, and Gujarat have the majority of the towns in India. On the other hand, states like Bihar, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, and the North Eastern States have a minimal number of towns, as they have low urban growth and low levels of urbanization (Figure 7).

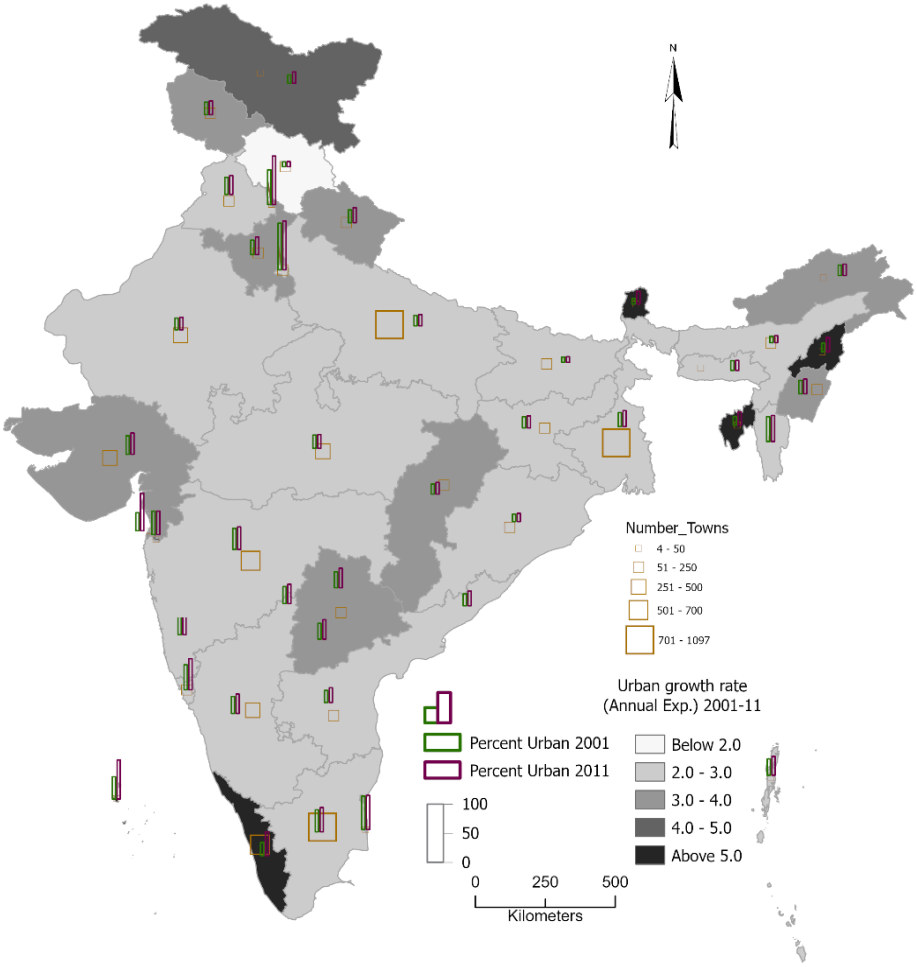


**Figure 7** State-wise distribution of towns and cities, level of urbanization and urban growth during 2001-11

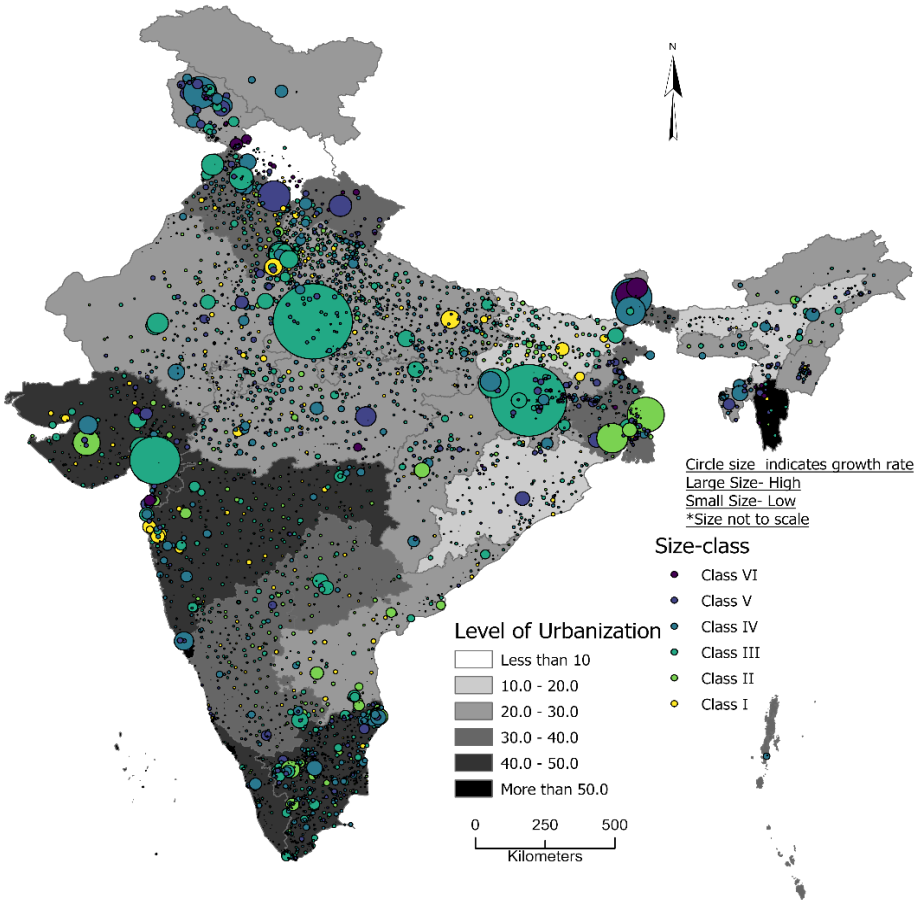


**Figure 8** The relationship between urbanization level and growth rate of different size-class towns in India, 2011

Additionally, the results highlight the interlinkage between the level of urbanization and city growth. It is evident that higher urbanization is strongly associated with a greater concentration of large urban centers and rapid population growth (Figure 8). The figure also indicates that highly urbanized states like Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab, Delhi, and West Bengal exhibit many rapidly growing town clusters. Moreover, these states have a substantial number of larger towns (Class I and Class II). In contrast, lowly urbanized states display a concentration of smaller towns, albeit with a limited number, and the growth rate of towns and cities is also very low in these regions. For example, the north-eastern states have a much lower density of urban centers, with hardly any Class I cities found in any of these states. Furthermore, the map clearly shows that urban centers in India are concentrated in agglomeration-oriented patterns surrounding larger cities, exhibiting higher growth rates.

**Discussion**

India has a very complex urban system. In the past few decades, the level of urbanization has increased steadily. After independence, a rapid rural-urban transformation took place, and urban centers were growing fast (Bhagat & Mohanti, 2009). However, in the post-liberalization period, several major changes took place in the Indian urban system. Urban growth in India followed a declining trend due to the structural transformation in the country (Kundu, 2003; Bhagat & Mohanti, 2009). The structural changes led to the concentration of the economy in selected major cities like Bengaluru, Delhi, Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, and Pune, leading to slow urban growth across many parts of the country (NITI Aayog, 2022). Additionally, following the steady urbanization process, many new towns have emerged across the states in India. This study has found that statutory towns have followed a steady increase

in number. However, the number of census towns has increased drastically in the last two censuses, and it accounts for nearly half of all urban centers in India. The sudden increase in the number of census towns was due to a change in the urban definition adopted by the 2011 census (Tiwana & Sahib, 2020).

However, India's urbanization is characterized as top-heavy urbanization. The lion's share of the urban population is concentrated in large cities, and there is a dominance of million-plus cities over India's urbanization (Bhagat, 2004). Therefore, consistent growth can be observed in large cities, and it was accelerated mainly due to extensive resource mobilization and investment. Thus, it has led to the metropolitanization of the Indian economy in the last few decades (Shaban et al., 2020). However, small and medium towns' growth fluctuated over time in India. The same was argued by Chouraqui (2021) while studying medium-size towns in France that population decline is common among weakened medium-sized cities. Overall, the majority of urban centers are stabilizing in terms of population growth, while some are declining and shrinking. As a result of the fertility decline and population stabilization in the country, these towns and cities are stabilizing or declining (Pandey, 2020). On the contrary urban to urban out-migration plays a crucial role in the redistribution of population among the urban centers.

Additionally, there has been a significant shift in the growth trajectory of towns and cities in India. In the last decade, the growth rate of most towns and cities has decreased to below 2% per annum, indicating their stabilization. However, the growth and decline scenarios differ for different classes of towns and cities. The growth patterns of towns and cities also vary across regions. In less developed regions, the share of growing towns is lower, while stabilizing and declining towns are more prevalent. Moreover, states with higher levels of urbanization, encompassing larger geographic areas, host a greater number of towns and cities, and their urban growth rates are also higher. A strong relationship can be observed between the level of urbanization and the growth rate of towns of different sizes across different states in India.

Hence this study has explored that following the same trend, many towns and cities will be shrinking in future decades, while many registered shrinkages at the current time as well (Ganapati, 2014). The same trend may follow in many developing countries across the globe. Demographic changes in terms of low fertility, aging, and internal migration plays a vital role in the shrinking process (Zhai et al., 2022). Indeed, it is paradoxical for developing countries as in the period of rapid urban growth, and many urban centers are shrinking (UN- Habitat, 2008). It indicates that the urban transition in many developing countries has taken a different shape in the form of urban shrinkage and urban decline, ghost cities etc., and it may have a greater consequence on economic growth, development disparity and quality of life (Hartt et al., 2021; Martinez-Fernandez et al., 2012).

**Urban Policy in India**

Urban policy in India has undergone significant changes since the country's independence in 1947 (Bhagat, 2014). India was primarily an agrarian economy earlier; however, over the years, rapid urbanization has taken place, and now, more than one-third of the population lives in urban units. In the early period, the government focused on strengthening the industrial base in the country and promoting higher economic growth. However, it has helped in the emergence of large agglomerations and cities. Though not much emphasis was placed on social and environmental development in urban areas.

After the 1960s the Government of India took the initiative towards urban planning and development and recognized the importance of cities. Therefore, the government introduced several policies to address the challenges of urbanization. The focus shifted from industrial growth to creating livable cities with better social and environmental conditions. The government introduced policies to improve housing conditions, provide basic services such as water supply and sanitation, and create better transportation infrastructure. The growth of new major cities like Chandigarh, Gandhinagar, and

Bhubaneswar was part of the programme.

During the sixth five-year plan, a major policy on urban development launched as Integrated Development of Small and Medium Towns (IDSMT) was launched by the central government in 1979 to regenerate smaller urban centers. Later in the 1980s, urban policy shifted to the decentralization of urban governance and more power was given to the urban local bodies, and citizens were involved in the decision-making process (Shaw, 1996).

After the 2000s, the government introduced several policies to address the challenges of rapid urbanization, given the growing importance of the urban sector. The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) was launched in 2005 to provide financial and technical assistance to cities for infrastructure development. The National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy was introduced in 2007 to improve housing conditions in urban areas. The Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) was launched in 2015 to provide basic services such as water supply, sanitation, and transportation to small and medium-sized cities, also a GIS bases master plan was introduced under AMRUT mission (NITI Aayog, 2021).

In recent years, the focus of urban policy has shifted to creating smart and sustainable cities. The Smart Cities Mission, launched in 2015, aims to promote sustainable urban development by using technology and innovation. The policy emphasizes the creation of livable and sustainable cities with better quality of life for citizens. Along with that, other policies like Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) and Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY – NULM) were launched (Bhagat, 2014; MoUHA, 2020).

Thus, urban policy in India has evolved significantly since independence, with a shift from a focus on economic growth to creating livable and sustainable cities. However, there are still significant challenges that need to be addressed, including the provision of basic services and infrastructure, informal settlements, and inadequate resources for urban local bodies (Aijaz, 2007). However, the urban policy in India was never implemented with a holistic approach targeting balanced urban development. Most of the urban policies taken by the government addressed the issue in larger urban units, especially in major cities, while smaller towns were growing on their own. These policies function at many levels to resolve the issue, but many problems like congestion, cleanliness, housing, and drainage must be addressed (Batra, 2009). Moreover, inadequacy in management, especially in smaller cities, restricts local governments from optimally benefiting from reform initiatives (Nandi & Gamkhar, 2013). Schemes like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Mukhya Mantri Awas Yojana (MMAY), Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA), and Rurban Mission (RM) were implemented to improve the quality of life in villages and other smaller towns. However, the implementation of these policies was not efficient due to the lack of experts working on the rural sector to develop them at par with urban sector (Kulkarni et al., 2017). Therefore, issues faced by the inhabitants in small and medium-sized towns and villages have not been addressed and neglected so far (Datta, 2006). If these policies were implemented holistically, ensuring the basic amenities, education and health facility, road infrastructure, and livelihood generation activities, it might have transformed the rural economy, and uncontrolled migration of the people from villages may automatically stop (Kulkarni et al., 2017). Even though few attempts were made but it failed to achieve its objectives. Later these policies were dropped one after another.

**Conclusion**

In this era of globalization and modernization, people are seeking better facilities, lifestyles, and opportunities to achieve a healthy and better quality of life. Consequently, it is the government's responsibility to provide urban facilities equally to attain sustainable development. The states with low levels of urbanization require attention from the government to expedite the urbanization process

so that towns and cities can sustain and grow in these regions. Therefore, an economic push is necessary to improve facilities and enrich urban amenities in less developed areas. Additionally, the government may also benefit from increasing employment opportunities, accelerating economic growth, and utilizing potential markets.

Furthermore, the issue of unplanned growth and expansion, the growth of informal settlements, and the lack of infrastructure in larger cities have been extensively discussed in recent literature and continue to be so. However, this paper aims to shed light on the other side of the story, that is, potential solutions to unplanned, overcrowded, and uncontrolled growth, especially in major cities. By promoting urban growth in smaller urban units and empowering them with adequate infrastructure, increasing economic opportunities can not only reduce development inequalities but also help develop rural areas. (Shaban et al., 2020).

Urban Planning in India should focus on accommodating the needs and concerns of urban inhabitants. A holistic, decentralized, and more participatory approach is necessary. Further, the small and medium towns, which are emerging growth centers, should be posterized in terms of providing finance, infrastructure, and amenities for future growth. It will contribute greatly to the national economy, help integrate, and serve rural areas. Similar plans, like a Master Plan for large cities and a regional planning strategy for small and medium towns, can be introduced. Furthermore, fund allocation for the smaller urban units should be increased to push them to move forward (Bhagat, 2014).

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