

Unit 14

Urban Sociology in India

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Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- describe some of the urban sociological studies done in India;
- discuss the historical comparative studies in urban area;
- explain the ecological urban studies;
- discuss some of the studies on urbanisation and urban growth;
- describe the studies done on urban poverty, housing and slums in India, and
- discuss the caste, class and ethnic formations that are found in urban societies.

14.1 Introduction

Urbanization in India is not a modern phenomenon. A very rich traditional process of urbanisation, which dates back to the Indus Valley Civilisation (2500 B.C.), existed in India. The urbanisation process diffused to other parts of the country notwithstanding some temporal and spatial discontinuity in urban growth. The spread of urbanisation in India happened under the impact of varied factors operating during early, medieval and modern periods. Although India thus had a long history of urbanisation and urban spread, any systematic study on the Indian urban phenomena began only in early 20th century at a time when urban sociology was getting recognition as a distinct branch of Sociology in the U.S.A. and other western countries.

The birth and growth of urban sociology in India was rather slow. The reasons for this can be attributed to many factors. If we look at the geographical differentiation of Indian land into rural and urban areas, we can see that the vast majority of the Indian population lives in the so-called rural areas. Populations in those areas, which are demarcated as urban, are only less than 30% (2001 census). This was one of the major factors which held against the requirement for a scientific discipline to study urban phenomena in India. But the majority criterion, however,

cannot annihilate the significant variations in the institutional and organisational behaviour of the people in the urban context (Rao 1991). Rao argues that the study of urban social structure and organisation is relevant in the context of wider theoretical problems of Indian society.

As you know, at present, the urban field is subjected to multidisciplinary research involving disciplines such as economics, geography, history, political science, and demography besides sociology. According to Rao a more direct source for a sociological study of urbanism and urbanisation come from the studies of sociologically relevant aspects of urban social life and of segments of urban population, relating to issues such as immigration, caste system, occupational segmentation, family organisation, politics and religion etc. The birth and growth, and the state of urban sociology in India as a distinct branch of sociology discipline can be examined by taking stock of the studies on urban social settings in India that contributed to the development of the discipline. Since it is beyond the scope of this unit to include all the sociologically relevant urban studies, we will limit our discussions to some selected areas that fall under urban sociology.

14.2 Urban Sociological Studies in India

The studies of towns and cities in India on aspects of urban social life are not too many. In India urban sociology developed as a branch of sociology, which itself is a comparatively young social science discipline. Professor Patrick Geddes, a notable town planner and sociologist, established the first department of sociology in the University of Bombay in 1920, around the time when studies about cities and city life were getting much attention due to the initiatives of the Chicago School. According to Patrick Geddes, cities are a concrete image of civilization. He initiated a few urban studies in India. Geddes wanted to revive indigenous customs and use them for modern town planning in India. He believed that social processes and spatial form are related and therefore by changing the spatial form it is possible to change social structure as well. Geddes wrote around forty town-planning reports in India between 1914 and 1924 at the behest of various institutions and government agencies, which were included in the work *Town Planning Towards City Development*. These not only put forward novel ideas about preserving and reviving Indian urban centres but were also an important archive about the status of Indian cities in the early decades of the twentieth century (Meller, Helen 1990).

Although Patrick Geddes initiated urban studies in India it took a few more decades for the subject to take off as an area of study. According to M.S.A. Rao the reasons for the neglect may be due to the predominant view among the sociologists that the distinction between rural and urban sociology is not meaningful due to its lower level of urbanisation and also due to the perception that there was no distinction between the traditional city and the village as both were elements of the same civilisation.

The three Trend Reports (D'Souza 1974, 1985; Kosambi 1994) commissioned by Indian Council of Social Sciences Research (ICSSR) have reviewed the literature of urban studies in India since the 1950s. This gives a fair idea of the amount of work that had been done on urban social settings in India. In these reports in order to make the survey of urban sociological studies in India, the field of urban sociology has been divided into a number of subject areas to learn how far studies in each area have been made. These are urbanisation, city and region, urban functions, urban internal structure, emerging urban systems, urban social organisation, urban community development, urban social problems and urban planning.

The process of urbanisation and urbanism in India attracted the attention of scholars on and off since the 1950s. D'Souza (1974) observes that social scientists began to show real interest in urban studies after the 1951 census report, which revealed high growth of urban population in India. Max Weber, Arnold Toynbee, Milton Singer, Robert Redfield, G.S. Ghurye, Radhakamal Mukherjee, D.N. Majumdar and Gideon Sjoberg are a few scholars to name who showed interest in urban phenomena in India. Prof. G.S. Ghurye, successor of Patrick Geddes at University of Bombay, showed keen interest in studying the urban situation in India. He worked on the comparative and historical aspects of urbanisation and also studied rural-urban relations. He concentrated on the ecological, political and cultural aspects of ancient and medieval cities in the context of civilisation. This is reflected in his article *Cities of India* published in 1953. Max Weber (1962) has offered a comparative historical account of cities, with special attention to the institution of caste in the context of Indian cities. He argued that while the caste system accounted for the continuity of the main characteristics in traditional Indian cities, it obstructed the emergence of citizenry, social and legal equality, fraternisation and autonomy of modern Indian cities.

Sjoberg (1964) categorises Indian cities into pre-industrial and industrial considering industrialisation as the key variable. But Rao (1974) is of the opinion that the process of urbanization in India is complex and that categorisation of Indian cities on the basis of one factor will be too simplistic, although he agrees that British colonialism is a cut off point in the history of Indian urbanisation. Toynbee studies the location and shifting of capital cities. Redfield and Singer engaged in studying the organisation of great tradition in Indian cities, as well as the sacred geography and functions of Indian cities in terms of their cultural role.

Prof. Radhakamal Mukherjee initiated social ecological studies of Indian cities at Lucknow University. Besides sociologists, geographers have also contributed to the social ecological studies of towns and cities. Ecological studies may not be of much value to the sociologists, but they are a valuable source material to follow up both the social processes and implications of ecological phenomena (Rao 1991).

The 1971 census recorded a high rate of growth of urban population, which again attracted the interest of many more scholars into the study of cities and associated issues, which resulted in gaining fast development of urban sociology in India (D'Souza 1974). The problems of rural-urban migration, urban development, and other related areas such as demography, neighborhoods, slums, stratification, education, ethnic conflict and movements, kinship, religion, politics, economy, social problems, and impact of urbanization on rural areas attracted the attention of many sociologists and social anthropologists (Rao 1982). Thus, in 1970s there were some good studies on Indian urbanism (Ghosh (1973), Dimock and Inden (1970), Hambly (1968), King (1978), Saberwal (1978). There were a number of important studies on urbanisation related social problems in towns and cities. Sociologically relevant studies on problems like prostitution, beggary, juvenile delinquency and slums in the urban context have been carried out both by social workers and urban sociologists. Many well-known slum studies were conducted (Desai and Pillai 1970, 1972, Wiebe 1975, D'Souza 1978, 1979) during this period. Several edited volumes of papers on urban themes were published as proceedings of a conference of special number of journals devoted to urban issues (Sandhu 2003). Demographic studies of towns and cities have been made based on the Census Reports and National Sample Surveys. Kingsley Davis, Ashish Bose,

Sovani and others have made significant contributions to urban demographic analysis. These studies enable us to know more about the magnitude and scale of urbanisation in our country. D'Souza observed that most of the studies conducted during the periods of 1950s, 60s and 70s are largely empirical generalisations about the urban phenomenon most of which lacked the rigour of scientific method (D'Souza 1985).

In the 1980s and afterwards there was a remarkable growth in urban studies, although certain areas received more attention (such as urbanization patterns and trends, migration studies, social problems in urban areas) in research, while other areas (metropolitisation, regional planning, spatial structure of cities) were not explored much. A number of studies have been conducted on urban problems of slums and squatter settlements in the 1980s (Misra and Gupta 1981, Rao and Rao 1984, Jha 1986, Kaldate 1989, Sandhu 1989) and in the 1990s (Rao, R.N. 1990, Das 1993, Desai 1995, De Wit 1996, Purewal 2000, Lobo and Das 2001).

Box 14.1 : Some Basic Questions in the Study of Urbanism and Urbanisation

"A Study of urban social structure and organisation, apart from contributing to a fuller understanding of Indian social institutions, has relevance in the context of wider theoretical problems. Urbanisation is a world-wide process and it has been considered not only as an index of economic development but also as an important factor of social change. It has been argued, on the basis of Western experience, that urbanisation means a breakdown of traditional social institutions and values. In the Indian context this means, among other things, that the caste system will change into the class system, nuclear families will emerge from joint families and religion will become highly secularized. These hypotheses assume that urbanisation in India is the same as Westernisation, and ignore the existence of traditional urbanization on which modern urbanization had its first impact. The "breakdown" hypotheses, therefore, mislead one into asking the wrong questions, while it would be more realistic to formulate the questions as follows : What changes have come about as a result of interaction between traditional and modern urbanisation? Which aspects of caste, kinship and religion have changed in the new urban context? What are the new forms of associations, relationships and interactions, that have emerged in the cities, and in what respects have the traditional ones got intermeshed with new forms of behaviour? What is the impact of such changes in the urban situation on rural life? These questions rightly focus on the changes in the traditional urban situation instead of taking the rural context as representing the traditional social institutions of India." (Rao, M.S.A, Bhat C. & KadeKar, L.N. (ed.) 1991:2).

There were some more government initiatives in the 1980s and 1990s in conducting urban studies. The National Commission on Urbanisation published its five-volume report. It highlighted the problems of urbanisation at the grassroots, sub-state and state level. The government of India encouraged the city studies for the preparation of a national report on the state of Indian cities as an after effect of the 1996 Istanbul conference on Habitat by UN's Center for Human Settlement (UNCHS). Moreover the National Urban Observatory established by the government of India is

planning to promote urban databases at the city level as a part of the local urban observatories in accordance with UNCHS guidelines and suggestions. Sandhu (2002) observes that all these efforts will provide a more congenial environment for urban studies in India.

In the preceding section we had seen the development of Urban Sociology in India by having an overview of the urban studies conducted since the 1920s. We have seen urban studies in India were concentrated on different aspects of evolution of the city and city life. Based on these different perspectives let us make a broad categorisation of urban studies and have a look at some of the studies in each of them.

Reflection and Action 14.1

If you are a city/town dweller then you choose a village near it and if you are a villager choose the nearest city/town near it. Observe the nature of family, kinship and marriage system practiced in your region and compare it with that of the other region. Write an essay of about three pages on the "Comparison of Rural and Urban Social Organisation" based on your observation.

Compare your essay with those of other learners at the Study Center.

14.3 Historical Comparative Studies

Urban studies have evoked much interest in historical and comparative perspectives on the origin and growth of cities or urban centers. Many scholars perceive cities in the wider context of the history of civilisation. Some even believe that history of civilisation should be written in terms of the history of cities and that the city is the symbol of civilisation. The history of India's urbanization is centuries old. Scholars have attempted to classify Indian pre-modern and modern cities based on different criteria such as function of the cities, size and population of the cities etc. According to Rao India's urbanism has essentially been shaped by three civilisations. The Hindu, during the early period; the Muslim, during the medieval period; and the Christian, during the modern period. The rulers representing these civilisations tried to impose elements of their culture on the urban life of India. Moreover, the urban settlement patterns in India often show juxtaposition of old and new. Thus historical perspective adds an important dimension to our understanding of the urban situation in India.

There are a handful of studies on urbanism in historical India. Authors such as A. Ghosh (*The City in Early Historical India* 1973) and M.S.A. Rao (*Traditional Urbanism and Urbanisation* 1974) have dealt with urbanism and cities in early historical India. In his essay Rao analyses the urban styles of lives and processes in pre-colonial India in the framework of civilization. He points out that there is not one Hindu civilisation or great tradition but a multiplicity of civilisations which accounted for varied urban institutions, styles and images in a situation of interaction. He describes varied patterns of urbanism and urbanisation in terms of ecological features, social organisation of religions, artistic, scientific, technological, economic and political activities and rural urban networks. In the context of urbanism and urbanisation in traditional India, he argues that the towns and villages formed a part of the civilisational process, with structural continuities and organisational differences.

There are other studies, which discuss various aspects of urbanism during the later periods of history. Edward C. Dimock and Robert B. Inden (*The City in Pre-British Bengal* 1970) described the cities in pre-British Bengal as gathered from the Mangala Kavya Literature. Gavin Hambly (*Cities of Mughal India* 1968) and Hameeda Khatoon Naqvi (*Urbanisation and Urban Centres Under the Mughals* 1971) dealt with cities and urbanization during the Mughal period. The influence of British colonial period on urban development in India also was an interesting theme for scholars of urban sociology. In his study Antony D. King (*Colonial Urban Development: Culture, Social Power and Environment* 1976) examines the evolution of Delhi under British rule when it became the dual city. He looks out for the symbolic meanings and hidden values implicit in British approaches to urban design and planning. Satish Saberwal (*Indian Urbanism: A Socio-historical Perspective* 1978) has given some glimpses into Indian urbanism during the historical period. Meera Kosambi (*Three Colonial Port Cities in India* 1988) studies the urban morphology of the three colonial port cities of Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta, which according to her, share a distinctive pattern that is part of their colonial past. Basic features are a nucleus with a European-style fort and open esplanade, segregated, residential areas for Europeans and Indians, a central business district, and peripheral military and manufacture zones; the features that other cities lack.

The colonial city has always posed a problem in its conceptualisation because of different forms of colonial expansion and domination. Fox (*Tezibazaar: Colonial Town in Prismatic Society* 1977) argues that the colonial cities form a part of a type of state society called prismatic society. According to Fred Riggs (1964), such state societies are prismatic in that they combine pre-industrial and industrial institutions and refract them into new social forms. That means such urban centers are subjected to the impact of industrialisation under Western political and economic influence without getting industrialised themselves. Fox illustrates this in his case study of a small administrative town of Tezibazaar under the colonial era, particularly in the context of transition of its governance from the traditional elite, through British bureaucrats and their overlords, to the new elites elected through modern electoral machinery. He argues that the colonial rule fossilised the economic productivity and how the colonial industrial states economically exploited and politically subdued their colonial dependencies. Fox notes that prismatic society was earlier considered transitional between traditional and modern. But such societies have assumed a stability of permanency of their own.

A different approach to study colonial city is to study them in the Marxian framework of imperialism and exploitation and dependency theory. Moonis Raza and Atiya Habib in their study of *Characteristics of Colonial Urbanisation - A Case study of the Satellitic Primacy of Calcutta* examine the growth of Calcutta into satellitic primate of the metropolitan economy under the colonial situation. The authors emphasise the need to analyse the colonial urbanisation in the framework of the development of underdevelopment under imperialist exploitation since the processes of urbanisation are closely interrelated to those of economic development. According to them Calcutta, a satellitic primate, was neither able to sustain itself as a metropolis nor induce the development of its hinterland. Calcutta grew but did not develop during the colonial era and its growth was a reflection not of the healthy process of urbanisation but rather of the diseased process of urban assertion.

Yet coming back to the urban studies in historical perspective, there are some studies that deal with particular towns and cities in their historical

perspectives. B.C. Dutta (1970) and Devendra Handa (1970) provide brief historical descriptions of two of the ancient cities of Punjab, Sunet and Rupar respectively. Some of the major urban centers such as Ahemadabad (Gillian 1968), Varanasi (A.N. Singh 1969) and Calcutta (Sinha 1968) have also been viewed historically. The historical approach has also been adopted in studying certain aspects of the social organization of urban communities such as caste system in Madras during the period of British Merchant Government (Roche 1975), and the leadership in Bombay during the period 1840-1885 (Dobbin 1972). The relationship between the urban and rural areas has also been studied historically in a work dealing with Saurashtra (Spodek 1976 cf D'Souza 1985).

14.4 Ecological studies

The historical events and the culture of the people in India played a pivotal role in shaping the existing ecological structures of Indian cities. Weinstein (1986) points out some prominent subjective elements that influence ecological structures in Indian cities. These are local cultural views, ethnic and caste loyalties, traditional segregation principles, particularistic canons of neighborhood desirability, and norms of intensive land use. If we look into the evolution of morphology of Indian cities, we can see that even the cities of the Indus Valley Civilisation were planned having formal layout in a regular grid. But the later cities, which grew around the temples or royal palaces within the fortress, were irregular and amorphous.

Reflection and Action 14.2

Take a map of an Indian city like Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai etc. Find out the different functions of different areas in the map eg. residential colonies, institutional areas, corporate offices, etc. Choose the different residential areas in the map and find out about the socio-economic and occupational background of the people who stay in these colonies.

Write a report on the "Social Stratification and Structure of the City" in about three to five pages based on your map reading of the city chosen by you.

Discuss your report with those of other students at your Study Center.

The ancient texts and the archeological findings of ancient cities shed light to the ecological structure of Indian cities of ancient days. Political treatises like the *Arthashastra* and the works on architecture and design such as *Agnipurana*, the *Manasara*, and the *Sukranitisara* which date back to 500 B.C. to A.D. 300 have described in detail the norms pertaining to the spatial structure of different types of cities. The salient features of ancient cities were a fortress, religious institutions and the socio-economic separation of people into distinct neighborhoods or natural areas (Ghurye 1961 cf. Rao 1991). Though all the scriptures seem to provide a general pattern for the construction of cities there are certain slight variations. While *Arthashastra* prescribes the positioning of royal and administrative or the temple at the centre of the city *Agnipurana* specifies the temples at the corners of the city wall and the shops are to be at the centre of the city. As per *Sukranitisara*, an architectural treatise, the royal palace, court council buildings, museum and the residences of the officials shall be at the centre of the city (Berry and Spodek 1971). The residential pattern of different caste groups were also prescribed in these scriptures. The four varnas of Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Shudra are to be grouped

respectively to the north, east, south and west of the royal palace and the outcastes outside the city walls.

Even during the pre-British period the urban centers in India showed power polarisation – with socially, financially and politically influential people at the center and less influential mass at the periphery – as depicted in Sjoberg's (1955) model. With the advent of British colonialism and the sequential appearance of functionally distinct elements of military garrison, civil administration and railway colony in the Indian cities, marked changes in the settlement order of the native cities came (Smailes 1969). Even before independence itself the cleavages between different functional settlement units began to be blurred giving way to the social gradation of native society (Rao 1991).

The planned development of the post-independence period has brought about significant changes in the internal structure of the Indian cities (Rao 1991: 87). The government created a separate town-planning department to prepare the development plans of urban areas. The government also introduced western models of town planning to give a facelift to the Indian cities. The most noteworthy feature of urban planning of the post independence period was that there had been a clear cut separation of various land uses such as industrial, commercial, educational, institutional, administrative, residential etc. There was also an unprecedented growth in higher educational institutions, universities, and research institutions spreading over hundreds of acres in large cities (*Ibid*). Thus, there was a gradual change in the residential pattern of Indian cities during the post independence period.

Urban ecology and morphology of Indian cities became the subject matter of study for a good number of sociologists and geographers. The studies done on the residential pattern of Indian cities (Berry and Rees (1969), Singh (1975), Brush (1975, 1977) shows the changing urban way of life in the Indian cities, as well as the new segmentation pattern of the urban residential spaces on the basis of class and status. Prof. G.S. Ghurye and his students such as Bopegamage (1957), Venkatarayappa (1957), Rajagopalan (1962), Mohsin (1963) showed keen interest in studying the morphology and ecological structure of Indian cities. Since 1969 there had been a handful of studies on the ecological structure of various Indian cities based on the factorial ecological approach. Berry and Rees (1969), Weinstein (1974, 1986), Brush (1977, 1986) are a few to name.

Brian Berry and Philip Rees (1969) on the basis of a factor analysis and six other major cities in India observed that communal or religious and caste status is being transformed into class status, and this in turn has led to the dominant spatial pattern of high status neighbourhoods in central areas and low status on the periphery. Other studies also prove this inference. Other scholars such as N.K. Bose (1965) who studied Calcutta and Mehta (1968) who studied Poona city also agree with the findings of Berry and Rees on the residential segregation of distinct socio-economic groups. Brush (1975) from an analysis of the socio-economic structure of Bombay and Delhi perceives apart from the city center the residential colonies of elites (new elites specifically) are coming up in a sectoral fashion in the outer zones of the city.

Some of the studies dealing with the internal structure of cities delineate and describe different aspects of urban communities while certain others show how the structure has evolved. Some seek to explain the underlying factors in the changing structure such as land use pattern, land values, residential patterns etc. (D'Souza 1974). Gist (1957) studies the morphology

of Bangalore city using 1941 and 1951 census data. He found that caste, education and occupational characteristics are co-related and he believed that the impact of industrial technology, large-scale economic organization, modern transportation and western status values will bring about changes in the ecological structure of Bangalore. John E. Brush in his study *Morphology of Indian Cities* (1962) examines the relationships of the physical structure of Indian cities with the social aspects, in the light of the historical circumstances influencing their origins and evolution.

Arthur E. Smailes argues the historical development of two distinct part of the city – the indigenous city and the British annexes—resulted in dualism in the morphology of Indian cities. In many Indian cities the major morphological periods identified are pre-railway (pre-1853), railway-British (1853-1947) and the post independence. He also outlined the major morphological elements of India, cities as : a) old walled city, b) modern extramural extension, c) cantonment, d) civil lines, e) railway colony, f) post 1947 estates and residential colonies.

Many scholars adopted factorial ecology approach to analyse the ecological structure of various India cities. Factorial ecology approach is an improvement over social area analysis. In this method factor analytic techniques are used to identify the underlying structural dimensions from a set of socio-economic characteristics selected for variation in the structure. Berry and Spodek (1971) make an in-depth study of traditional styles of Indian culture as they affect residence patterns through a factor analysis of five Indian cities. They show that in cities under study the basis for residential segregation is transformed from caste to class status and in the course of this process, residual caste status and class status reinforce each other so that the dominant spatial pattern remains that of high status neighbourhoods in the central area and the low-status neighbourhoods in the periphery. They also noticed that the increasingly diverse bases of social and economic power that the modern India is generating transforming the urban structure.

Weinstein in his study *Subjective Components of Urban Ecological Structure: A Theoretical Statement and an Application to two Indian Cities* (1986) shows that the emerging ecological structure of Indian cities is not entirely based on objective components of city life. He argues that rather than the traditional objective features of urban ecological structure, like, physical distance, location of transport routes etc., the subjective elements of local cultural views, ethnic and caste loyalties, traditional segregation principles, particularistic canons of neighbourhood desirability etc. are more prominent in influencing urban ecological structure. Pragati Gihar (2003) analyses various elements of the spatial and social structures found in varying nature in different parts of the city. The work contributes to the theoretical understanding of the spatio-social structures prevalent in urban areas which may further point out the uneven degree of urbanization and its implications on the social and cultural life of the people living in different localities in the city

14.5 Studies on Urbanisation and Urban Growth

According to the 2001 Census, India is home to more than one-sixth of the world's population and 28% of its people live in urban areas. There are 35 urban agglomerations each with a population of more than one million, and about 37 per cent of the total urban population lives in these million-plus cities. The two largest – Mumbai (Bombay) and Delhi (including the capital, New Delhi) – had population of more than 9 million each. In the last 60 years the percentage of urban population to the total population

(urbanisation) doubled from 13.86 (1941) to 27.78% (2001). The absolute number of urban population (urban growth) increased even more.

Urbanisation in India is proceeding at a modest pace. According to the 2001 census, there has been an increase of 2.1 per cent in the proportion of urban population over the 1991 census. Urbanisation and urban growth are two different concepts. Urbanisation refers to the percentage of the total population, which is concentrated in urban settlements as well as to a rise in the percentage. Urban growth refers to the percentage increase in the absolute size of the urban population. The pattern of urbanisation and urban growth in India shows a relatively low rate of urbanisation and high rate of urban growth (Bose 1973).

As we said earlier urbanisation in India is not a new phenomenon. However, proper documentation of urban growth and related aspects began to be recorded along with the census survey only. The population growth in the cities as well as growth of market towns occurred during the colonial period due to increase in commerce and commercialisation of agriculture. The growth in small-scale industries resulted in the development of large towns. Cotton textiles and other industries caused the concentration on population location-based and in the development of urban centers. Thus there was a gradual growth of urban areas in India. The development of trade, commerce, industry, transport, communication and construction etc. all led to a faster rise in the percentage of urban population. There had been some good studies – Kingsley Davis (1951), Turner (1962), Huser (1957), Sovani (1966), Ashish Bose (1970, 1973, 1975, 1992, 1993, 1998, 2001), Fisher (1972), Singh (1973), Premi, M.K. (1985, 1994, 1996), Ramachandra, R. (1989), Rao (1986), Mishra, R.P. and Kamalesh Mishra (1998), Sandhu, R.K. (2003), Kundu A. (1994, 2000) Sivaramakrishnan et al (2005) – on the morphology of urbanisation in India concentrating of issues such as increased urban growth in larger cities, inter and intra city urban variations, migration patterns, urban governance etc. Most of the studies on urbanisation are based on census data.

The processes of urbanisation and urban growth have been studied by social scientists from various dimensions. The demographic studies concentrate on the rate of urban growth and related aspects. Studies on migration consider migration as significant factor in urbanisation. Urbanisation has far reaching effects on larger societal processes and social institutions such as family and kinship. Certain urban studies focused on this aspect also. Now let us see what are the issues covered in the urban studies of each of these areas.

Box 14.2 Urban Studies with Policy Implications

Policy oriented urban research has gained momentum in India during the post-independence period. Urban researchers turned their attention to this area due to the deterioration of civic amenities in the urban centers which resulted from the increased concentration of urban population, industrial and tertiary activities in a few large cities. The thrust of these studies was to give direction to the future urban growth in the country. A provision for making a Master Plan for metropolitan cities was included in the Third Five Year Plan. Several government-sponsored studies were conducted based on the analysis of land use and socio-economic structure to prepare development plans.

Most of these studies adopted a holistic approach towards the study of cities studying various aspects at the same time. The Master Plans developed based on these studies were not so successful. Moreover the growing complexity of city economy and that of managing the infrastructure and public utilities revealed the inadequacies of the holistic approaches and prompted the scholars to focus on particular segments of the economy on specific problems. A good number of studies had been undertaken in the 1970s and 1980s (Agarwal 1976, Srivastava 1976, Papola 1981, Subramaniam 1982) that restrict their scope to one or a few sectors of micro economy.

Source: (Kundu, A. 1992)

Urban Demographic Studies: Kingsley Davis (1951) is one of the foremost to study the urbanisation pattern in India using census data. Although his predictions did not prove to be correct, he made an attempt to predict the future course of urbanisation and urban growth with the turn of the century in India. N.V. Sovani (1966) in his study *Urbanisation and Urban India* argued that while Indian urbanisation had many resemblances in form to that of the West, it differed from the latter in content. For him the process of urbanisation plays a socially dynamic role and it will continue to do so. In *Urbanisation in India* (1970) Ashish Bose analysed the pattern of urbanisation, its structural characteristics and some related problems. The focus of examination for K.C. Zacharia was the role played by internal migration in the process of urbanisation. For this purpose he analysed the census data since 1901. Ashok Mitra (1967) in his paper *A Functional Classification of Towns in India* attempts to make a composite classification of towns using a triangular coordinate technique on the basis of industrial classification of workers in the 1961 census. P.B. Desai (1969) studies the changes in the size and sex composition of India's population over a period of sixty years using census data. The work examines the relationship of sex composition with other demographic variables like age structure, migration, working force and the geographical distribution of urban population.

Ashish Bose did a good number of urbanisation studies from the demographic perspective. *Urbanisation In India* (Prakasha Rao 1983) deals with the process of urbanisation in India. Giriraj Gupta analyses the major components of urban social organisation such as structure, growth, culture migration, slums and various forms of mobility and interaction. Lakshmi Narayan (1986) examines the historical and demographic dimensions of the growth of metropolitan cities in India. Weinstein, J. (1992 *Urban growth in India: Demographic and Socio-cultural prospects*) studies the numerical and qualitative aspects of the growth of the Indian urban population with the benefit of data from the last 4 censuses of 1951–1981. Roy, B.K. (1993 *Urban Growth in India: Its contemporary Relevance*) examines the urban growth in India in general with relevance to urban agglomerations of major significance on the basis of the Census of 1991. Debnath Mookherjee and Hoerauf (2004 *Cities in Transition: Monitoring Growth Trends in Delhi Agglomeration 1991-2001*) studies the differential growth pattern of peripheral urban centers of Delhi urban agglomeration in terms of size and location relative to the core units utilising the census data for the period of 1991-2001. He examines the number and growth of census towns and urban core and indicates a change in the urban structure of Delhi urban agglomeration.

Urbanisation and Migration: Migrants constitutes a sizable section of urban India. Rural to urban migration is a principal source of urbanisation. There had been studies on the streams and patterns of migration in India by urban sociologists. Ashish Bose (1973) presented some data for different migration streams for 1961 and 1971 utilising the respective census data. Ashok Mitra (1968) and Narain, V. (1976) studied the 1961 census to bring out some special features of rural to urban migration and their implications for rural-urban relations. Chatterjee, A. (1974) makes a comparative study of migration streams in 1961 and 1971. Premi (1980) too makes a comparative study but has concentrated on female migrants.

Chatterjee, M. (1971) has shown that the stability of migration is a function of distance from the native place as well as of occupational status. The longer the distance from the native place, the greater the percentage of migrants who regard their stay in the city as temporary, and relatively more migrants from the lower prestige occupations than those from the higher occupations regard their stay in the city as temporary. It is also argued that the volume of migration tends to decrease with the increase in distance and that at shorter distances females are more migratory than males, but at longer distances males are more migratory than females. Singh, J.P. (1984) examines and proves these theoretical arguments with regard to rural to urban migration, based on census data, in the states of Kerala and West Bengal in a comparative manner. Premi and Tom (1985) examined the phenomenon of migration to Indian cities using 1971 census data. They focused on the city characteristics of size, growth rate, functional specialisation etc. In another study M.K., Premi (1986) in *Migration to Cities in India* analyses the phenomenon of migration in the growth of class 1 cities.

Migration does not take place at random, but it follows certain patterns. S.N. Singh and K.N.S. Yadava (1974) studied the rural migrants to urban areas and pointed out that the number of migrants to a place at a given point of time is related to the number of migrants at an earlier point of time. K.N.S. Yadava (1987, 1988) further studied the volume, pattern, detriments and consequences of rural urban migration in India. Selvaraj and Rao (1993) studied consequences of rural urban migration.

Impact of Urbanisation on Social Institutions: The family structure and the intra and inter family relations are affected by the process of urbanisation. The cross cultural influence in the urban areas and its diverse nature in terms of ethnic, religious, linguistic, etc., backgrounds leads to the breaking of the old community bonds and formation of new relationships. There had been studies conducted on urban families by scholars. Studies by I.P. Desai (1964), Kapadia, K.M. (1969), A.D. Ross have pointed out that urban joint family is gradually replaced by nuclear family with the shrinking of family size and confining the kinship relation to two or three generation only. It has been shown that though the structure of urban family is changing, the spirit of individualism is not growing in the families (I.P. Desai 1964). Desai in his study observed that though most of the families are residentially nuclear, functionally and in terms of property they are joint. Apart from these, Ross found through her study (1961) that in urban settings the typical form of family unit is small joint family. Moreover the relations with one's distant kin is weakening or breaking. And the households seem to be more of an egalitarian kind rather than concentrating around the head of the family as seen in the traditional patriarchal family. Even in the midst of such changes the family ethos remain more or less the same.

Sylvia Vatuk who has done research on the India family and kinship system in urban settings maintains that the ideal of family jointness is upheld in urban settings although living may be separate. The extended family acts as a ceremonial unit and close ties with the agnatic extended family are maintained. She also finds that there is an increasing tendency towards individualising marital bond and decline of practices such as levirate widow inheritance, widow remarriage, marriage by exchange, polygyny etc. Thus, features such as diminishing family size, reductions in functions of family, emphasis on conjugal relationship etc. are pointed out as the major changes of urban family structure.

But there are views which go in opposition to this argument. Conklin (1976) in his study *The Household in Urban India* makes a factor analysis of household composition using census data in Karnataka state and reveals that urbanisation is not associated with a decline in complex households. The census data show urban household size increasing as fast in India as rural household size and the urbanite and the villager are equally in favor of the joint household in practice and in theory. It is concluded that the relationship between urbanisation and household composition in India is neither simple nor is the process unidirectional.

14.6 Urban Poverty, Housing and Slums

Poverty in India is a widespread phenomenon seen both in rural and urban areas. The poor in cities suffer from various deprivations such as lack of access to employment; adequate housing and infrastructure; and social protection and lack of access to health, education and personal security etc. Slums or hutment dwellings have become an inevitable part of the urban landscape and living place for the urban poor in India. Non-availability of accommodation near the workplace, high cost of land, and inability to pay rent have forced several millions of urban residents to take shelter in slums. Many of these slums are awful, devoid of basic amenities like water supply, electricity, sewerage, bathroom, toilet, etc., (Rao 1991). Urban poverty, housing and slums have attracted the attention of social scientists of all streams.

Studies focusing on the problem of urban slums began in the late 1950s. In the late fifties and early sixties the Planning Commission studied the problems of slums and housing. But these primarily were statistical analyses of housing, emphasizing the gravity of the problem. Bharat Sevak Samaj's study on the slums of old Delhi (1958) was the first major work on an Indian slum. A lot more studies followed by different authors studying the problem of urban poverty and housing in different urban centers situated in various States in India. Dandekar and Rath in their study *Poverty in India* (1970) point out that in the urban context, poverty and slums intersect with each other. Most people who are poor live in slums and most of the slum dwellers are poor. According to them urban poverty is an extension of rural poverty and the proportion of urban poor is far more than the corresponding proportion of rural poor. And their argument was that solving the problem of rural poverty could solve the problem of urban poverty as well.

There had been other studies which examined the problem of urban poverty from the standpoint of the urban poor and slum dwellers. Andrea Manefee Singh and Alfred De Souza (1980) compile several papers systematically on slum and pavement dwellers in some of the metropolitan cities and other urban centres. Victor D'Souza (1978) formulates a new theory of urban slums and poverty in India. He attributes the genesis and the persistence

of the problem of urban poverty to the fact that the poor and slum dwellers are, by and large, socio-culturally marginal to the dominant sections of the community in which they live. This approach shifts the responsibility for the solution of the problem from the victims to the society.

There had been studies analysing different dimensions of urban poverty such as avenue of employment available to the urban poor (Van Den Bobaert (1978), Sethuraman, S.V. (1978)), nutritional levels of urban poor (Judith Katona (1978)). There had also been a number of descriptive studies on slum life, some of which aimed at testing the prevailing notions about the urban poor and others yielding some important and interesting generalizations. Paul Wiebe (1975 and 1978) in his study on Madras slums concludes that some of the negative assumptions about the urban poor that they suffer from the culture of poverty, that slum life is socially disorganized, that there is a duality between slum and non-slum people and so on, do not hold good in the case of this population. M.K.A. Siddiqui (1969) and Owen M. Lynch (1974) also confirm this argument. Scholars such as Tapan Mazumdar (1978), Khatu (1977), Ratna Naidu (1978) Venkatarayappa (1976) studied the situations of urban poor in various cities.

There were a number of studies on the situation of poverty and slum and housing of Mumbai city. Vandana Desai's research (1995) tries to discover the intricacy of the social fabric and political dynamics of Mumbai slums. Studies by Jha S.S. (1986 *Structure of Urban Poverty: The Case of Bombay Slums*), Jeremy Seabrook (*Life and Labour in a Bombay Slum* 1987) are also some significant ones in this regard. Kalapana Sharma (2000) describes and views from a different angle the life in Dharavi, Asia's largest slum intuited in Mumbai, the city where half the population lives in slums. In situated discussing Dharavi Sharma narrates the way the city developed through migrations and settlements, displacements and resettlements, its shape, both geographical and metaphorical, driven by an elite who carved out for themselves the core, hugged all the urban services to themselves and relegated the underclass to the periphery, displacing them through demolitions, as they once again reclaimed the periphery and poverty to make it their core. The author looks at Dharavi as representing Mumbai's real cosmopolitanism, a place where people from different regions of India have forged new identities and lives through sheer grit and determination (Hindu 2000).

14.7 Caste, Class and Ethnic Formations

People who migrate into urban centers belong to different caste, class, language and regional backgrounds. In a country like India where tradition and culture provide primordial identities, immigrants tend to maintain their ethnic identities in the urban settings too. So also social organisations such as caste, class, region, language etc. plays a significant role in Indian urban social formation making ethnicity an inevitable part of the Indian urban environment. The ethnic groups maintain their distinct identity in the midst of the social and cultural heterogeneity of the city life. Sociologists had been attracted to study the nature and dynamics of ethnic formations in Indian cities.

M.S. Gore (1970) examines the degree of adjustment and integration of south Indian migrants in the city of Bombay. Vijaya Puneekar (1969) analysed inter group interaction and boundary maintenance among the various ethnic groups formed on the basis of linguistic and regional identities in Bangalore. She found manifest neighbourhoods only among one's own

linguistic or regional group. The issue of integration of south Indian migrants were studied by Andrea Menefee Singh (1979) in Delhi and Nair, K.S. (1978) in Poona. In both the studies it has been found that the majority of the migrants belong to the high caste Brahmins and they have white collar jobs. In both the places the migrants have not imbibed the mode of life of the local members, instead they recreated in the host communities the conditions of their home communities. Susan Lewandowski (1983) studied on the ethnic formations of Kerala migrants in the city of Madras. The studies of later period (Syed Ali 2003) show that more than caste or class, regional and linguistic affinity forms the basis of ethnic formations in urban areas. Gopa Sabharwal (2006) in her study *Ethnicity and Class: Social Divisions in an Indian City*, attempts to define the concept ethnicity in the urban context.

14.8 Conclusion

In this unit we have seen the origin and development of Urban Sociology through the studies done by sociologists on urban social realities in India. For this purpose we carried out briefly a review of research done on urban settings. Although some scientific studies began in the 1920s, major contributions in this field commenced around the 1950s. Social scientists started showing keen interest in the urban phenomena and various related social issues after the publication of the 1950 census report, which showed an enormous urban growth. There had been studies on various dimensions of urban phenomena. From the quantum of work done in the area it can be said that urban sociology has been established as a distinct branch of Sociology now.

14.9 Further Reading

Rao, M.S.A. (ed.) 1991. *A Reader in Urban Sociology* Orient Longman: New Delhi.