

Unit 15

Level, Trends and Patterns

Contents

- 15.1 Introduction
- 15.2 Urbanization and Levels of Urbanization: Concepts
- 15.3 Urban Growth in India: Trends
- 15.4 Classification of towns by size and differential trends of Urbanization
- 15.5 Inter-state Variation in Urbanization
- 15.6 West Bengal Model
- 15.7 Changing Urban Employment Market and its Impact on Urbanization
- 15.8 Conclusion
- 15.9 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the concept of urbanization and levels of urbanization
- describe the urban growth and its trends in India
- Classify towns by size and differential trends of urbanization
- discuss the inter-state variation in urbanization
- describe a model of West Bengal in this context and, finally
- discuss the changing urban employment market and its impact on urbanization

15.1 Introduction

Urbanization is commonly understood as a process by which an area and its population assume “urban” character or features. The Population Census in India accords “urban” status to a settlement when at least 70 per cent of its male workers are engaged in the non-agricultural sector and when it satisfies some other standards regarding size and density of population. When an area grows in size, density, and heterogeneity and assumes urban social, cultural, economic, ecological, physical and political features and declared as “urban” by the State administration it is called urban. Some ideal-type features, which are generally taken as urban include non-agricultural occupations, a big size population in a given area, high density of population, social and cultural

heterogeneity of population, large-scale division of labour, an economy based primarily on industry, commerce, tourism, concentration of facilities like modern communication and transportation, banking, education, health, sports, courts, administration, concentration of urban civic amenities like power and water supply, sanitation, garbage clearance, parking, market complexes, parks, play grounds, community halls, theatre halls and similar other facilities for public use, urban association based on contractual relations rather than kinship or primordial relations, erosion or breakdown of traditional values and norms and rise of new set of values, morality and norms (which are rationalistic in nature), and a municipal or corporation administration, with provisions of democratic decentralism and urban citizenship. Such general features of the “urban” are called ideal typical because there is no fixity or concreteness of the levels to these features to be called urban and even in the absence of some of these features a particular area could be accorded urban status. Urbanization is actually a process where a non-urban area becomes urban and a less urban area becomes more urban by assuming more and more of these features. In the process of urbanization the urban people or the urbanites, and the new entrants to the urban center get attuned to urbanism, or the urban way of life.

It is however debatable if there is only one particular way to urban life. The non-European sociologists and anthropologists have argued that the characterization of urban, as has been done above, is primarily Western and suffers from Western ethnocentrism. Empirical studies of the African and Asian urban situations have confirmed that there could be non-Western modes and levels of urbanization as well, where each country would have their historical and contextual specificities, and some degree of continuation of their cultural, social and political traditions, and the level of economic and technological developments could also be different. The traditional social and cultural forms are expected to continue in the urban areas. The level of civic amenities, the physical looks of the cities, the structural arrangements, the level of consumerism would also be different from those in the Western cities, although the influence of Western modernity or post modernity in the cities of the less developed countries could also be felt.

15.2 Urbanization and Levels of Urbanization: Concepts

The level of urbanization is often defined in terms of proportion of urban population to total population. This measure of urbanization attaches great value to the human and social dimensions of urbanization as well. There are, however, two more important measures of urbanization. The first one is that the towns serve the rural people in terms of socio-economic change and the larger the rural people served by each town, on an average, the lower the level of urbanization. Alternatively, when no rural people are left to be served by town urbanization is taken to have reached its zenith. The second measure of urbanization concerns the distance that the rural people have to cover to reach the nearest urban center. The greater the distance, lower the level of urbanization. Because such a situation would mean urban centers are fewer in number and the distance between the urban centers is quite high. In a state with well-developed urban network people cover smaller distances to reach the urban centers (Ramachandran, 1989: 121-122).

15.3 Urban Growth in India: Trends

Put against the level of urbanization in the world India's urbanization level is still low, although urbanization has gained some speed in the post-independence period. From the 1990 data we can see that 42.7 per cent of world population was living in urban areas. There was wide gap in the level of urbanization between the more developed regions, which had 72.7 per cent of the population as urban population, and the less developed regions, with only 33.9 per cent of urban population. Among the continents Europe, Oceania and Latin America had a very high level of urbanization with 73.1, 70.9 and 72.3 per cent of their population as urban population respectively. In contrast, Africa with 34.5 per cent of its population as urban population and Asia with only 29.9 per cent of its population as urban population were the least urbanized among the continents. Again, among the Asian regions Western Asia is more urbanized (with 58.2 per cent of its population living in urban areas) than Eastern Asia (29.4 per cent), Southeastern Asia (29 per cent) and South Asia (27.8 per cent) (for details see Mitra, 1994: 48). Thus South Asia, of which India is a part, is one of the least urbanized regions of the world. According to 1991 census only 25.72 per cent of India's population was living in urban areas, which again is less than the South Asian standard.

The annual growth rate of urban population in India has declined from 3.1 per cent during 1981-91 to 2.7 per cent during 1991-2001. The decade 1971-81 had recorded the highest annual growth rate of 3.8 per cent but the last two decades have recorded decelerating growth rates in India. The percentage of urban population has gone up from 23.73 in 1981 to 25.72 in 1991 and finally to 27.78 in 2001. The slow growth of urban population in India goes against popular notions of “urban explosion” and against the most expert predictions. The Planning Commission (1983), the Expert Committee for Population Projections for the Eighth Plan, and the UN Study of World Urbanization Prospects (1995, 2001) had predicted 3 – 4.4 per cent annual growth of urban population in the 1980s and 1990s. The UN projection of 3.2 per cent growth during 2000-10 and 2.8 per cent during 2020-25 also seem to be unrealistic. Keeping in view that the growth rate of total population is expected to be less than 1 per cent according to UN projection it would require a very high rate of rural-urban migration to meet the projected level of urbanization.

By way of explanation to the sluggish growth of urban population the scholars argue that not only the natural growth rate of urban population has declined but also the city bound migration of both male and female population has decelerated over the years. A study in 1983 suggests that contribution of rural-urban migration to urbanization declined over the decades and stood at 22.6 percent in the 1980s. During 1971-81 the percentage of intercensal migrants in urban areas declined from 18.5 to 16.9 and that of lifetime migrants (male) from 33.6 to 32.4. The share of lifetime interstate migrants came down from 11.2 per cent to 10.0 per cent. The 1991 Census also recorded further decline in urban-bound migration rate. In the 1981-91 decade the decadal, lifetime and interstate migration rates were 11.7, 26.0 and 8.0 respectively. The female migration to the urban areas, which takes place primarily due to social and cultural factors, also slowed down during the decade.

Table 1: Number of towns and growth of urban population over census years

Census year	Number of towns	% of urban to total population	Annual growth
1901	1827	10.84	-
1911	1915	10.29	0.03
1921	1949	11.18	0.79
1931	2072	11.99	1.75
1941	2250	13.86	2.77
1951	2843	17.29	3.47
1961	2365	17.97	2.34
1971	2590	19.91	3.21
1981	3378	23.34	3.83
1991	3768	25.72	3.09
2001	4368	27.78	2.73

Source: Census of respective years

Amitabh Kundu has identified four major reasons for the growth of urban population in India: (a) natural increase, (b) growth of new towns outside agglomerations, (c) merging of towns and jurisdictional changes in agglomerations, and (d) rural-urban migration. Available data suggest that natural increase accounted for 61.3 per cent and 59.4 per cent of the total increase in urban population in 1971-81 and 1981-91 decades respectively. The 1991-2001 decade too experienced a decline in natural growth rate of urban population. The share of component (b) in the total addition to urban population has declined from 9.4 per cent in the 1980s to 6.2 percent in the 1990s. This indicates that the rate of urban growth outside the existing agglomerations and urbanized regions has slowed down over the decades. The third component, i.e., extension of municipal boundaries, merging of old towns or inclusion of new towns in the existing urban agglomerations, was considered a minor contributor to the growth of urban population in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. The number of towns merged with existing neighbouring towns was only 221 in 2001 and in 1991 the number was half of this. However, the share of this factor to the growth of urban population went up from 7.6 per cent in 1991 to 13.0 percent in 2001. The contribution of the fourth factor has been estimated to be 21 per cent in 1990s, which was marginally less than the figure for the previous decade. (Kundu, 2005: 105).

Classification of towns by size and differential trends of urbanization

On the basis of population size the Census of India has placed towns into six categories:

Class I town – 1,00,000 or more

Class II towns – From 50,000 to 99,999

Class III towns – From 20,000 to 49,999

Class IV towns – From 10,000 to 19,999

Class V – From 5,000 to 9,999

Class VI – Below 5,000

Table 2: Distribution of towns by category and census year

t ux.kuk	Ji.kh I	Ji.kh II	Ji.kh III	Ji.kh IV	Ji.kh V	Ji.kh VI
1901	24	43	130	391	744	479
1911	23	40	135	364	707	485
1921	29	45	145	370	734	571
1931	35	56	183	434	800	509
1941	49	74	242	498	920	407
1951	76	91	327	608	1124	569
1961	102	129	437	719	711	172
1971	148	173	558	827	623	147
1981	218	270	743	1059	758	253
1991	300	345	947	1167	740	197
2001	393	401	1151	1344	888	191

Source: Census of India for respective years

Table 2 suggests that the number of large cities and medium towns (Class I to Class IV) has grown significantly over the decades while the number of smaller towns in Class V and Class VI has remained either stagnant or declined. The other trend is that growth in number of cities before independence was rather slow and the number started increasing at a faster rate in the post-independence period; the increase is particularly remarkable from 1951 census. Intensification of developmental activities in and around the large towns, investment in industrial production, increase of commerce, the increase in agricultural productivity and evolution of smaller towns into bigger ones explain the relatively faster urbanization in the post-independence period. This also explains the reason behind the faster growth of larger cities and towns. Apart from rural-urban migration from smaller towns to bigger ones has contributed to the faster growth of larger towns. Migration of people from East and West Pakistan and from other neighbouring countries has also contributed to the faster urban growth in the post-independence period.

India being relatively advanced economy it has drawn migrants from poverty infested Bangladesh and Nepal. The explosive demographic pressure in Bangladesh is continually ejecting a significant part of its labour force to India even in recent years.

Table 3: Urban population in towns of different categories

t ux.kuk	Jl.kh I	Jl.kh II	Jl.kh III	Jl.kh IV	Jl.kh V	Jl.kh VI
1901	26.00	11.29	15.64	20.83	20.14	6.10
1911	27.48	10.51	16.4	19.73	19.31	6.57
1921	29.70	10.39	15.92	18.29	18.67	7.03
1931	31.20	11.65	16.8	18.00	17.14	5.21
1941	38.23	11.42	16.35	15.78	15.08	3.14
1951	44.63	9.96	15.72	13.63	12.97	3.09
1961	51.42	11.23	16.94	12.77	6.87	0.77
1971	57.24	10.92	16.01	10.94	4.45	0.44
1981	60.37	11.63	14.33	9.54	3.58	0.50
1991	65.20	10.95	13.19	7.77	2.60	0.29
2001	68.67	9.67	12.23	6.84	2.36	0.23

Source: Census of India for respective years

Data presented in Table 3 further substantiate the top-heavy trend of urbanization. While the percentage share of total urban population Class I cities has grown substantially from 26 in 1901 to 68.67 in 2001 the population share of towns of all other categories has declined. The worst sufferers in the process are Class IV, V, and VI towns.

The higher growth rate of Class I cities is due to expansion of area and immigration. The emergence of large satellite towns in close proximity and their subsequent integration into the city agglomeration has helped faster growth of Class I cities. Most importantly, the concentration of production and commercial activities, and development of infrastructure-base have attracted migrants of different economic classes from the far-flung places (Kundu, 2005: 107).

During 1981-1991, the metropolitan cities (cities with more than one million population) grew by 3.25 per cent per annum against 2.83 per cent growth rate of other towns. During 1991-2001, however, the growth rate of the metropolitan towns has slowed down to 2.88 and for the common towns the rate has been 2.6 per cent. The share of population of the million plus cities was 26.4 per cent in 1981, which has gone up to 32.5 per cent in 1991

and to 37.8 per cent in 2001. The metropolitan cities have grown at a faster rate than class I cities as well as towns of other categories.

The growth rate of capital cities (state as well as national) is also high. During 1981-91 the growth rate of capital cities was at par with that of the million plus cities, the growth being 33.6 per cent in the decade. However, the percentage share of population of the capital cities to total urban population increased marginally from 25.7 in 1991 to 25.9 in 2001.

Thus despite the higher growth rate of the class I cities, metropolitan cities and capital cities it is not difficult to notice the slight decline in the growth rate of these cities in the last decade in particular. Fall in the government investment in the urban infrastructure, decline in the public sector, fall in the natural growth of population and dwindling migration could be some of the reasons that can explain the relative slump in the growth in the bigger cities in recent years.

15.5 Inter-State Variation in Urbanization

Since the forces of urbanization are unequally distributed the level and pattern of urbanization in the States and Union Territories of Indian federation vary widely. Following the 2001 Census it is observed that the States that are economically developed experience higher rate of urbanization and account for a larger share of urban population. Thus six relatively developed states, namely, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, and West Bengal together account for more than half the total urban population of the country. The percentage share of urban population of all these states is higher than the national average of 27.78, according to 2001 census. The share of urban population of less developed States with less per capita income is much less than the national average.

Following the findings of 2001 Census we can classify the Indian States and Union Territories into three groups depending upon the levels of urbanization: Group A consisting of States and UTs with higher level of urbanization (with an urban population higher than the national average of 27.72 per cent), Group B consisting of States and UTs with moderate level of urbanization (more than 20 per cent but less than the national

average), and Group C consisting of States and UTs with low level urbanization (with less than 20 per cent urban population to total population of the State or UT).

Group A

Delhi (93.01), Goa (49.77), Gujarat (37.35), Haryana (29.00), Karnataka (33.98), Maharashtra (42.4), Mizoram (49.5), Punjab (33.95), Tamil Nadu (43.86), West Bengal (28.03), Andaman and Nicobare Islands (32.67), Chandigarh (89.78) Daman & Diu (36.26) Lakshadweep (44.47) and Pondicherry (66.57). The figures within the parenthesis indicate percentage share as urban population in the respective State or UT.

Group B

Arunachal Pradesh (20.41), Chattisgarh (20.08), Jammu & Kashmir (24.88), Jharkhand (22.25), Kerala (25.97), Madhya Pradesh (26.67), Manipur (23.88), Rajasthan (23.38), Uttar Pradesh (20.78), Uttaranchal (25.59), and Dadra & Nagar Haveli (22.89).

Group C

Assam (12.72), Bihar (10.47), Himachal Pradesh (9.97), Meghalaya (19.63), Nagaland (17.74), Orissa (14.97), Sikkim (11.1) and Tripura (17.02).

With four of the seven North-East Indian States figuring in Group C, it may be said that this part of India is least urbanized. Two of the relatively economically backward East zone States namely Bihar and Orissa too are among the States with low level of urbanization. Earlier, following the trend up to 1981, Ramachandran had observed that urbanization is at a lower level in states of North-East and in the Ganga plains of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and in Orissa. In general terms, he observed, ‘western and southern India are relatively highly urbanized while eastern and northern India are least urbanized’ (Ramachandran, 1989: 123). In recent years while some of the earlier trends continue it is not difficult to see that the north Indian states and even some of North-East states are experiencing urbanization at a faster rate.

Reflection and Action 15.1

If you live in a city or town, find out which category A, B or C it belongs to in terms of the level of urbanization it has. If you live in a village, find out whether it is developing the features of urban area or not in terms of its social, economic, occupational structure.

Write a note on “The Level of Urbanization in My town/City/Village” based on your finding in about two pages. Share your note with other students at your study centre.

During the 1991-2001 decade the urban population in India has grown by 2.27 per cent annually. Among the states which have recorded a high growth rate (i.e, more than 3 per cent annually) in the last decade are Arunachal Pradesh (7.00 per cent), Assam (3.09 per cent), Chattisgarh (3.09), Delhi (4.14), Goa (3.32), Haryana (4.11), Jammu & Kashmir (3.44), Meghalaya (3.16), Mizoram (3.27), Nagaland (5.27), Punjab (3.19), Sikkim (4.83), Tamil Nadu (3.56), Andaman & Nicobar Islands (4.40), Chandigarh (3.40), and Dadra & Nagar Haveli (14.59). There is none among the States that has recorded a negative growth. Among the UTs, however, Lakshadweep has recorded a negative growth of -0.77 per cent. It is noteworthy that some of the States with low level of urbanization figure among the States which have been experiencing higher rate of urbanization in recent years, while many of the States with higher level of urbanization (i.e, many of the Group A States) are experiencing urban deceleration. Among the major States that have experienced very low rate of annual growth in the last decade are Andhra Pradesh (1.37), Kerala (0.74), Manipur (1.21) and West Bengal (1.84).

The trend however was different until 1991 of the post-independence period. The states like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Punjab already had high concentration of urban centers and urban population but the rate of urban growth was either medium or low. On the other hand, the relatively backward States like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa registered higher growth rate despite the fact that these States had lower share of urban population. As an exception to this trend, economically advanced states like Haryana and Maharashtra had both higher rate of growth and higher share of urban population. Overall, the trend until 1991 negates the positive correlation between economic development and urban growth. We have to look for other factors to explain this puzzle. Possibly, higher incidence of rural poverty, regular occurrence of natural disasters like drought and flood can also cause higher incidence of rural-urban migration and hence higher rate of urban growth. The post-independence dualism in the urbanization pattern, according to Kundu (2005: 108), be partially be attributed to ‘ ...

government investment in the district and *taluka* headquarters, programmes of urban industrial dispersal, and transfer of funds from the states to local bodies through a need based or what is popularly known as “a gap filling” approach’. The “lack of diversification in agrarian economy” in these backward States also, as Kundu suggests, has contributed to higher urban growth.

In the 1990s, with the economic liberalization gaining momentum, there has been significant investment of foreign and corporate capital and expansion of commercial activities in the economically advanced States. This precisely explains why the rate of urbanization is high in Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra and Gujarat. In Karnataka and West Bengal the rate of urbanization is relatively low among these highly urban states because these states, and particularly West Bengal, has been following a policy of urban dispersal. The introduction of land reforms, infrastructure development of small and medium sized towns, dispersal of production activities, introduction of panchayats have probably put a check on the rate of urbanization and city-bound movement of population. We have therefore considered the West Bengal case separately in the following section.

15.6 West Bengal Model

India is a vast country and its economic and social development is marked by huge regional disparities. The concentration of resources (both natural and human), the historicity of the region, the geographical location of the state and proximity to international borders, cross-border migration, the level of agricultural and industrial development, the initiatives of the state government are some of the major factors that influence the level of urbanization of that region. The end result is that there are different patterns and levels of urbanization in different parts of the country.

West Bengal is one of the States, which has higher urban growth. In the last decade the growth rate for India was 25.71 per cent, but for West Bengal it was 27.40 per cent. In contrast to the rest of the country, where urban growth is large city-centric in West

Bengal the trend of migration to metropolis has been arrested. In 1970s 70 per cent of State's urban population lived in Calcutta but in 1991 the share of metropolitan population has declined to 59 per cent; the cities and towns other than Calcutta together have a share of 41 per cent of the urban population in the State. Between 1971 and 1991 the number of class –I cities (with more than one lakh population) has doubled from 148 to 296 but in West Bengal the number of class-1 cities has grown five times and large cities can now be seen in the distant districts from Calcutta. During the same period the number of municipalities has grown by 43 per cent. As an impact of the spread of urbanization all over the State there has been a significant achievement in terms of control of natural growth rate of urban population. According to 1991 figures, West Bengal had a decadal natural growth of 8.2 per cent against the national rate of 14.4 per cent. Between 1981 and 1991 the natural growth rate in Maharashtra was 14.7 per cent and in Tamil Nadu it was 11.2 per cent.

The balanced urban growth and urban spread have been possible primarily of two factors: first, land reforms, rural development through *panchayats* and the resultant rise in agricultural production, and (2) decentralized urbanization through the development of small and medium-sized towns. Between 1980-81 and 1990-91 food-crop production in West Bengal grew by 5.9 per cent against the national average of 2.8 per cent. Agricultural growth has helped expansion of rural markets and increase of earning opportunities. The calorie intake of average villager in West Bengal was less than the national average in 1972-73 but in 1993-93 the average calorie intake of rural people in West Bengal has exceeded the national average by 209 kilo calorie. As a result of a distinct rise in the quality of life in rural areas the rate of rural-urban movement has been largely controlled over the years.

With a view to achieve balanced urbanization the Government of West Bengal is now focusing on (a) decentralized urban growth, (b) participation of people, especially the people of economically backward classes and women in urban planning and in execution of development programmes, (c) democratic decentralization, and transparent and responsible urban administration, (d) development of small and medium towns and rural

development, (e) reduction of the gap between Kolkata (Calcutta) and other towns in terms of per capita allocation of development fund, and (f) slum development and development of quality of life of the urban poor, reduction of infant mortality and population growth rate (For details see Bhattacharya, 2005: 82).

15.7 Changing Urban Employment Market and its Impact on Urbanization

The concentration of industrial, commercial and development activities in the urban areas create employment and earning opportunities which in turn not only sustain the urban work force but also draws additional workforce from outside the urban areas, specially from the poverty infested rural areas and economically stagnant small towns. After economic liberalization the general economic trend is that while the corporate sector of industry is growing the public sector and small-scale industries are either facing stagnation or gradual decline. The fast growing high-tech corporate sector is capital intensive and therefore the employment generation capacity of this sector is limited. The public sector units have registered a negative growth of workforce in the 1990s and thereafter. The National Sample Survey (NSSO 2001) has reported a steady decline in the share of regular and salaried workers during this period. Since the large industries are now resorting to subcontracting there has been a steady growth of casual and self-employed workers and feminization of workforce. The large masses of urban workforce in these casual and contractual jobs in the tertiary sector are highly exploited and lack security of job and income. The Fourth Economic Census and Various Enterprise Surveys by NSS (see Kundu 2001) have reported the waning capacity of the urban informal sector, which was earlier termed as the “survival sector for the urban poor”, to absorb the new entrants to the urban job market. The recent changes in the urban job market have been reflected in the decline in the urban growth, particularly the falling rate of growth of large cities.

Reflection and Action 15.2

Identify a business district or area in your neighbourhood. Select an industry or business organization which employed more than 100 people. Find out which background these

employees are coming from; what is their level of education and skill and what are their promotion chances.

Write a report on “Profile of Urban Workers” based on your findings. Share it with your Academic Counsellor and peers at your study centre

Another recent trend is that the large-scale industries in the private sector (national as well as multinational) are coming up mostly outside the geographical limits of the large cities because it is very difficult to find the required land within the cities. The supporters of green movement are also contributing to this process. The investors do not mind this because they get cheap land in the bargain. Thus new settlements develop around these industries without immediately adding to total urban population.

Yet another factor that has contributed to the deceleration of urban growth in the recent decades is the application of land ceiling, and control on location of industrial and commercial units, rigid land use regime imposed through Master Plans. Such restrictions have restricted the absorptive capacity of the cities.

In the post-independence India rural poverty has been more intense and widespread than the urban poverty. With the growth of population the pressure of man on land has also increased over the years. Although the ratio of non-agricultural occupation has increased the non-agricultural sector in rural economy has failed to arrest the city-bound migration of rural poor. In the recent years, however, the intensity of rural poverty is falling and the gap between urban and rural poverty is also narrowing down. Also, when the unemployment in urban areas is on the rise the rate of rural-urban migration is declining.

15.8 Conclusion

Urbanization does not mean the growth of urban population and concentration of production and commercial activities alone; it would also mean a balanced development of infrastructure, civic amenities and opportunities for all sections of the urbanites. It would mean access to healthy environment, egalitarian development, democratic empowerment, and decentralization of power and cultural uplift of the people. What

would ultimately matter is the quality of life that the urban centers ensure to their citizens.

Judging the current trend it is projected that by 2015 around 40 per cent of India's population would be living in urban areas and a large majority of this population would inhabit the large cities. At present nearly 38 per cent of total urban population is considered poor and about 35 per cent live in slums. About 44 per cent of urban families manage with one room, between 70 and 80 lakh urban population are homeless; 52 per cent of urban population do not have access to healthy sanitation; only about 24 per cent own sanitary latrines; a large section of urban population does not have access to safe drinking water; every year environmental pollution hands over untimely death to about 40,000 urbanites. When there is an estimated need of twenty thousand crore rupees to provide the minimum urban amenities to its people the Indian Government is down sizing the budgetary allocation for urban development. In 1951 the budgetary allocation for urban development was 8 per cent but in 2005 it has been reduced to 2.6 per cent (Bhattacharya, 2005: 56-83)

Asish Bose has observed that the post-independence urban legislations, particularly the Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act of 1976, have the negative impact in the urban land and housing market because these have affected the urban poor and have not helped promote equity in the urban sector (Bose, 1995: 37). The National Commission on Urbanization submitted its report in 1988 and in the report there suggested scrapping of Urban Land Ceiling Act. The report was prepared as groundwork for the impending economic liberalization. There was a general consensus, in line with World Bank policies, that nothing should be subsidized and people must be made to pay for urban services and public utilities.

With globalization process gaining speed in India one could see its impact on the future trend of urbanization in India. The Indian cities would see a significant improvement in the infrastructure as the cities would be showcased to attract FDI, the looks of the cities would change fast and more speed would be injected in city life. The metropolitan administration and the state governments are already moving in this direction. Since the

corporate capital will not be available for development of infrastructure the State governments shall have to borrow money from the international monetary agencies for the purpose. As a part of structural adjustment the government would always want to cut expenditure on the welfare sector and public services. We have already seen how the health, transport, education, power, housing, telecommunication, television and entertainment sectors are thrown open to the private capital. The urban land would be sold to the corporate houses and as a result the urban poor and middle classes would lose their control over precious urban land. We would see demolition of slums and squatter settlements, extinction of water bodies and fallow land in and around the cities. The job market that would be created in the corporate sector would be meant for the skilled workers alone and this would not attract the rural unskilled labour force. With more and more government services going private the urban poor would find it difficult to maintain the minimum quality of life. In the era of globalization many of the public sector production units are finding it difficult to compete with the corporate capital and as a result many units are being closed down and thousands of industrial workers are being rendered jobless. The impact of these changes has already been felt in terms of slowing down of rural-urban migration and the rate of overall urban growth in the country. The falling rate of natural growth of urban population would also have its bearing on the urban growth rate in the years to come. With the urban areas already reaching the saturation point in terms of accommodation of more people, and little land being available for investment, there is a clear possibility that the cities would grow horizontally and more and more new and planned townships would come up with support of the private capital.

15.9 Further Reading

Kundu, Amitabh, 2005. 'Urbanization and Urban Governance: Search for a Perspective beyond Neo-Liberalism', in *Pachimbange Nagar Unnyoner Abhigyata*, Proceedings of the Seminar held at NBU on 5-6 February 2005: 101-124.

Ramachandran, R., 1989. *Urbanization and Urban System in India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

References

- Bhattacharya, Asok, 2005. 'Khamatar Bikendrikaran O Pachimbanger Paurasabha: Ekobinsha Satabdite Unnyonsil Dese Nagarayaner Bikalpa Dristibhangi' in *Pachimbange Nagar Unnyoner Abhigyata*, Proceedings of the Seminar held at NBU on 5-6 February 2005: 56-83.
- Bose, Ashish, 1995. 'Urbanization and Slums' in Prodipto Roy and S Das Gupta (eds.) *Urbanization and Slums*, New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications: 19-43.
- Kundu, Amitabh, 2005. 'Urbanization and Urban Governance: Search for a Perspective beyond Neo-Liberalism', in *Pachimbange Nagar Unnyoner Abhigyata*, Proceedings of the Seminar held at NBU on 5-6 February 2005: 101-124.
- Mitra, Arup, 1994. *Urbanisation, Slums, Informal Sector Employment and Poverty: An Exploratory Study*, Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation.
- Planning Commission, 1983. *Task Forces on Housing and Urban Development, Vol. I*, Government of India, New Delhi.
- Ramachandran, R., 1989. *Urbanization and Urban System in India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- United Nations, 1995. *World Urbanization Prospects*, New York: Population Division.
- United Nations, 2001. *World Urbanization Prospects (The 1999 revision)*, New York: Population Division.

Unit 16

Marriage, Family and Kinship

Contents

- 16.1 Introduction
- 16.2 Impact of urbanization and social Change in India
- 16.3 Continuity and Change: The Institution of Marriage
- 16.4 Continuity and Change: The Institution of family
- 16.5 Continuity and Change: The Institution of Kinship
- 16.6 Conclusion
- 16.7 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to

- Discuss the impact of urbanization and social change in India
- Describe the kinds of changes that have occurred in the institution of marriage.
- Explain the changes that have occurred in the institution of family in India and finally
- Outline the changes that have occurred in the institution of kinship in India

16.1 Introduction

In this unit, as in the previous one, we are going to study the impact of the process of urbanization on social institutions like marriage family and kinship in India. The Book 1 of this course, MSOE-004: Urban Sociology has already familiarized you with the concept of urban and the process of urbanization. You learnt about the origin and development of urban sociology in the west as well as in India. It was explained to you very clearly that in India urban structures have evolved since the very ancient times from Indus valley civilization to contemporary period in India.

The forces of social change that have taken place in India, such as, the colonial impact, introduction of modern education, better means of transport and communication and so on, have had its impact on the different institutions in society. Their impact has been felt throughout India but more so on the population living in the cities than the villages. In this unit you will learn about the impact of urbanization on the social institutions of marriage, family and kinship in urban India.

16.2 Impact of urbanization and social change in India

You must have studied the unit on urbanization (unit 25, MSO- 004 Sociology in India) which is part of the M.A. (sociology) core course to refresh your memory, let me explain some aspects of the process of urbanization.

Urbanization is a structural process of change which is associated with the movement or migration of people from rural to urban areas. It is generally related to industrialization but it is not always the result of industrialization. It results due to the concentration of large-scale and small-scale industrial and commercial, financial and administrative set up in the cities, technological development in transport and communication, cultural and recreational activities.

Since, the process of urbanization is in excess of the process of industrialization in India, what we often find is over urbanization. Here, a peculiar phenomenon can be observed in urban areas. There is industrial growth without a significant shift of population from agriculture to industry and of growth of urban population without a significant rise in the ratio of the urban to the total population while in terms of ratio, there may not be a great shift from rural to urban activity. But there is still a large migration of population from rural areas to urban areas. As a result we find that urban areas, towns and cities are choked and there is lack of adequate infrastructure and amenities to cope up with this large influx of population in most cities in India.

As mentioned in unit 25 Urbanization, urbanization implies a cultural and social psychological process whereby people acquire material and non-material culture, including behavioral patterns, forms of organization, and ideas that originated in, or are distinctive of the city. Although the flow of cultural influences is in both directions, i.e. from rural to urban and urban to rural, but there is no doubt that the cultural influences created by the city on non urban people are probably more pervasive than the influences exerted by the rural. The India of urbanization may be better understood when interpreted as aspects of diffusion and acculturation. Urbanization may be manifest either as intra- society or inter-society diffusion, i.e. urban culture may spread to various parts of same society or it may have cross-cultural or national boundaries and spread to other societies. It involves both borrowing and lending. On the other side of the diffusion coin is acculturation, the process where by individuals acquire the material possessions, behavioral patterns, social organizations bodies of knowledge, and

meanings of groups where culture differs in certain respects from their own. Urbanization as seen in this light is a complex process (Gist and Favia: 1933).

It is, thus clear that urbanization process is an important force of social change. In India this process besides reflecting economic growth, political change, change in values and attitudes, has also revealed elements of continuity between rural and urban social structures. Pocock (1960) categorically maintains that villages and cities in India are part of the same civilization and as such cannot be separately understood. Therefore any discussion of urban social structure in India is in terms of its basic social institutions, such as the family, marriage, kinship and caste. All these four aspects are closely related with each other in both rural, as well as, urban social structure.

It is often assumed by sociologists studying the urban society in India that the process of urbanization leads to the break down of the joint family, increase of nuclear family, slackens the caste and kinship ties and role of religion. These assumptions have been critiqued by several sociologists who tried to understand the urban social structure in India.

Gandhi, Raj (1983: 5) believes that ‘any discussion on problems of change in connection with urban sociology in India, ought not to make one feel that the sociologist of urban India should necessarily be the sociologist of social change. It merely reminds us of two facts:

1. Urbanism is often thought of as a force of social change, particularly when we are dealing with the developing society such as India, hence acquaintance with the problems of social change could be rewarding.
2. Often comparisons and contrasts are drawn between several aspects of rural and urban structure of India. The latter is, at times, interpreted as different from the former without any commentary on the problems of change. In this sense also, theoretical understanding of the problems of change could be fruitful.

Thus it is important that any discussion on the social institutions of marriage, family and kinship in urban India is understood within the theoretical framework of wider social change both from within, as well, as without, taking place in society in India.

16.3 Continuity and Change: The Institution of Marriage

Social institutions have been defined as the network of social relationships in society which are relatively permanent, Weber (cf. Martindale, 1962: 55- 8) has defined social institution as the social relations in a whole network of social actions. The institutions exists only so far as people act in certain ways. It is manifest only as a pattern of behavior. Thus social institutions in the Indian cities as marriage, kinship, family, caste and religion could be conceptualized as the occurrences of complex sets of social interactions. Gandhi (1983: 20) believes that in the traditional city of India ,the institutional complex of the marriage, kinship, family, caste is most strategic for analysis and understanding of the socio cultural life of the city. He says that due to the relative preoccupation of Indian sociologists with the study of India's villages marriage within urban context has received scant attention. Marriage as an institution has traditionally been embedded and linked with the institution of caste in India in both rural and urban areas. Marriages have been contracted keeping the caste or jati endogamy in mind Rules of marriage in each caste community in different religions of India follow different rules and regulations. Giri Raj Gupta (1974) examines a number of social dimensions of marriage, such as marriage rituals in the context of intra- family roles and norms implications of caste per for marriage and the family, social exchange among the castes, the 'nata' alliance (remarriage) etc. He examines them in a Rajasthan village.

In the urban cities, the phenomenon of inter caste marriages, inter-communal, inter regional, and inter- religious marriages even though infrequent, must be studied in details with the help of such methods as extensive depth interviews, caste histories and the social geographies of individuals involved. (Gandhi R. 1983: 21) "just twenty five years ago the instances of inter-caste marriage were very few, and those individuals who dared to marry out side the caste had to undergo truly great hardships. Today the situation is altogether different not only has the privileges of inter-caste marriage become considerable, but even the difficulties the inter-caste marriage couple have to face, have become comparatively quite mild " (Kannan, C.T : 1974)

C. T. Kannan's study of inter-caste and intercommunity marriages in Bombay is based on two hundred inter-caste marriages and fifty inter-community marriages in Bombay during 1958-59. The analysis of the couples by the year in which they got married shows a steady increase in the incidence, a majority of 64% being married after 1950. Kannan says that the spread of higher education both among the males and females is one of the reasons for the increase in

the incidence of inter-caste and inter-religious marriages amongst the younger generations in the cities. Indeed, one could safely assert that the graph of inter-caste marriages is steadily rising, never becoming a plateau, much less declining. Even in the newspaper columns, the pros and cons of inter-caste marriage are found freely debated particularly by ladies, a subject which was formerly almost a taboo. (Kannan, C. T. 1974).

Due to modern education full of western thoughts and ideas, emancipation of women and the association of young men and women with various political and social organizations, new ideas which are incompatible with the traditional norms and values are nurtured amongst the youth in cities. As a result their attitudes towards traditional norms changes and new values develop which affects marriage, kinship and family.

Kannan in his study mentioned earlier found that besides schools and colleges, social organizations such as Jati Seva Dal, Lok Sena, Swastik League, Kshariakya Parisad, etc., have played a great role in influencing the younger generations in selection of their partners. Political organizations have also been responsible in providing suitable claim for some males and females to come together and develop intimacies.

Most significant aspect of change that the noticed was that the young generation becomes individualistic by such influences and they take their own decision even in the matter of marriage. They become less caste-conscious than their elders and, therefore, in their inter group relations they ignore caste and creed differences. In many cases the objections to such inter-caste marriage by the parents was there but not always due to caste considerations. It is observed that far more important considerations existed behind parental opposition than caste of their child's bride/ groom. These were mainly the lack of wealth and status in the partner. Where these factors were favourable, the parents had given their consent and cooperation to marriage, ignoring caste differences. Thus, education and socio economic background matters more in cities than caste (Kannan, C. T 1974: 341).

In a study by B. V. Shah (1964: 84-86) of male students of Baroda University, it was found that a higher proportion of unbetrothed students from urban background (cities, 63 per cent; towns 14 per cent) than from rural background (18 per cent) existed. In case of selection of bride too a higher proportion from the urban background (cities 61 per cent; towns; 47 per cent) favoured at least a matriculate (i.e. high school graduate) than from the rural background

(only 13 per cent). Thus, the non-traditionality as regards bride selection is found largely in urban areas, whereas traditionality is found proportionately greater in rural areas than in urban areas.

It is also found that a 'new concept of wifehood' (i.e. emphasis on conjugal relationship) has emerged which is associated with urban living in the contemporary society in India. (Gandhi, Raj 1983: 21) M. S. Gore (1968: 196) in a study of a community near Delhi found that the urban educated respondents who had changed their occupation felt 'closer to their wife' than their mother. Thus, it is found that in urban society the joint family living in India which traditionally deemphasizes the direct conjugal relationship between man and his wife seems to have changed as nearly three-quarters of the highly urbanized male respondents tend to favour closeness to wife.'

Gandhi, R. says that these developments as discovered by Gore and others conform to William J. Goode (1963) who hypothesized that there is a logical fit between the urban-industrial society and the 'conjugal family' which is supposed to be the characteristic of the west. Conkhin's study (1973) of the emerging conjugal role patterns in the city of Dharwar in South India notes that urbanization and education does result in a significant increase in conjugal role patterns, even within a joint household.

However, while some sociologists may jump to the conclusion that urbanization and education will lead to 'conjugal family patterns' in India even before industrialization; it is a matter of doubt whether the 'conjugal family pattern' and joint family pattern did not co-exist in urban India since early times (c.f. A M Shah, 1974). The distinction between the two is a false dichotomy of western sociology unnecessarily imposed upon the understanding of Indian urban society.

Another change observed by sociologists of urban areas is that age at marriage has increased. But the question of self choice or 'arranged marriage' still remains a debatable point. Cormack's claim (1961: 101) that the Indian youth are increasingly allowed the 'right' of decision for their marriage without the 'means' to make it. Therefore, it is quite clear from the available evidence that situation in urban India is not automatically conducive to increase in the freedom of choice for one's marriage since marriage is still closely tied to family (and hence to parental authority and kin-constraint) and caste (Gandhi, R. 1983).

Aileen Ross (1961: 253) in her study of the Hindu families in the city of Bangalore found that young people tend to select their spouse themselves and then take the approval from their parents. But Vatuk (1972:73-111) is opposed to this view. She studied two middle class neighborhoods in the North Indian city of Meerut. She found only four cases of so-called “love marriages” (i.e. marriages of personal choice) during her field-work among the mohalla residents. These occurred within the circle of relatives and friends, involving either fellow students in a co-educational college, fellow workers in an office, affinal kins or residents of the same dwelling. During her study she did not find even a single case of arranged inter-caste marriage.

Men in these middle class mohallas accepted their inability to arrange inter-caste marriages for their children, however, egalitarian they may be. Karve (1965) like Srinivas (1969) and Khare (1970) observed that the role of dowry in marriage arrangements was of significance. She found a tendency to give larger amounts of cash rather than goods amongst the wealthy Banias. Gandhi (1983) believes that what urbanism does is to increase the ‘price’ of the college educated urban youth of India in the matrimonial market.

The significance of caste endogamy too remains largely unchanged as ‘arranged marriages’ are contracted traditionally within one’s own caste. Kapadia’s study (1968; 119) of family in urban India found that 51 per cent out of 513 university graduates interviewed expressed their willingness to give their children in marriage outside their own caste but only one their were against the departure from tradition. This change of attitude is reflected in opinion rather than actual practice. Caste considerations are still playing a major role in marriage in reality.

In a study conducted by Raj Gandhi (1976) of the Bania Sub-caste in the city of Jamnagar found that 67.5 per cent of the kin of the respondents were found to be married into their own Dasa Bania sub-caste. Of the remaining 32.5 per cent, 13.3 per cent had married into a higher Visa sub-caste; the practice of hypergamy, which does not necessarily reflect the breach of caste endogamy. He found only 14 cases (11.6 per cent) of real inter-caste marriages going beyond the sub-caste and caste boundaries. Mandelbaum (1970: 653) gives a general statement which according to Gandhi sums up the developments that have occurred and the continuities that exist in the arena of marriage as a social institution. He says that ‘although endogamy remains a major consideration in arranging a marriage, the boundaries of the endogamous group... are typically being enlarged, and marriage patterns may now come from

formerly separate jatis (sub-castes) of the same jati cluster... but such unions are still very exceptional even among the urban educated people.’

Since, the studies on marriage in urban areas are few and far between, it is difficult to generalise. But what stands out clearly is the continuing link it has with caste. There has been increase in factors like, age at marriage, wider circle of spouse selection within the caste, level of education of bride and so on. Let us now understand the social institution of family in the urban context.

16.4 Continuity and Change: The Institution of Family

Family in India has been generally of two kinds, joint or extended family comprising more than two generations of members such as a married couple, their children, married or unmarried and one or both parents. The other type of family is the nuclear family consisting of husband, wife and unmarried children.

It was initially assumed that the process of urbanization leads to a decline in family size, weakening of family ties and break up of joint family system into nuclear families. This assumption was a result of application of Western notions of evolution. F. Tonnies, E. Durkheim, Louis Wirth etc., advanced theories which explained these developments in society as it moved from simple to complex. Industrialization and urbanization brought about these types of social changes in society and nuclear families came to be associated with the modern industrial urban societies. In India, too, this assumption presupposes that joint family is an institution of the rural social structure and as society gets urbanized the joint families, associated with rural agrarian economy will give way to nuclear family with the increase of non-agrarian occupations.

But as evidence gathered by sociologists studying family in urban India reveals, this hypothesis does not hold much credence since as a matter of fact joint families are found in urban areas as well. The correlation of “joint” family with rural areas and “nuclear family with urban is not tenable. In fact, sociologists like A.M, Shah (1970) Kapadia (1956) Gore (1968) and others observe a cyclical change from nuclear to joint to nuclear family within a period of time. This is the household dimension of family in India which indicates that there is no correlation between urbanization and ‘separate’ nuclear households.

A. M. Shah (1970: 100-101) dispels the myth of the breakdown of the joint family in urban India. He studied the social history of Gujarat and on the basis of his findings, he claims that in the past the sanskritized castes (i.e. those castes which have adopted the values, customs and behaviour of the upper castes) formed a much higher proportion of the population in towns (or cities) than in villages. This implies that the principle of the residential unity of patrikin and their wives was practiced to a much greater extent in towns than in villages. This shows that towns included a considerable number of households composed of two or more married brothers living together after their parent's death. It may also have included a few large households where married cousins lived together in the same household even after the death of their father and grandfather; the households composed of parents and two or more married sons formed a greater proportion of household in the town.

Shah believes that these findings are very important because they debunk the two notions that are widely prevalent amongst urban sociologists in India. These notions are: (1) that the people who migrate from villages are governed by strong emphasis on the principle of the residential unity of patrikins and their wives; and (2) that the urban area into which they come to live is necessarily an area having a weak emphasis on the principle of the residential unity of patrikin and their wives.'

I. P. Desia (1964: 117-8) in his study of Mahuva considers 'jointness' of Indian family when seen in the light of the actions of members guided by the traditional norms, and then examines the effects of urbanization on 'jointness'. He operationalizes urbanization in terms of the 'duration of stay in Mahuva'. During his study he found that the older families tend to be more joint than the younger ones and where the nuclear families preponderate over the older families, nuclearity may also preponderate over the joint families. He found that the families under investigation were more joint than nuclear in terms of ownership of property and mutual obligations. In case of residentiality too, he found enough evidence that nuclear families continue to grow joint and joint becomes nuclear.

In this sense, his findings conform with A. M. Shah's suggestion that one of the most fruitful approaches in this case would be to examine the developmental process of (family) households, both progressive and regressive which is assumed to be operative in the villages, towns, and we believe, the cities of India (Gandhi; R 1983:33).

Ram Krishna Mukherjee (1964:87) studied the rural-urban differences in the familial organization of West Bengal society. He too, while examining the co-resident and commensal relationships amongst kin groups as the locally functioning family units found the presence of extended or non-nuclear family types amongst the cities, towns and villages equally. But as he mentions, paradoxically, the nuclear type of family is found most frequently in villages, then in the towns, and the least frequently in cities.

In a different study, Mukherjee (1965) reports that unlike the common assumption, his data does not support the belief that joint family organization is not linked with the urban way of life. His study indicates clearly that joint family organization increases progressively as one shifts from villages to small towns to large cities or from non-industrial through partly industrial to highly industrial towns. He discovered that the upper castes, who also generally belong to the upper economic classes gave more importance to the joint family organization than the lower castes and lower economic classes. Mukherjee's findings support Shah's (1974: 246) correlation between household, caste and rural-urban community.

Similarly, M. S. Gore (1968) came to a similar conclusion while testing a similar kind of hypothesis in three communities which is supposed to be represented by three stages of urbanization, viz. the city of Delhi, villages on the fringe of Delhi, and the villages away from Delhi. In spite of the fact that he confined his empirical study (using questionnaire interview method) to only the merchant caste of Aggarwals, he took almost equal number of families from rural and urban communities, almost equally divided between 'nuclear' and 'joint' families in each type of community. According to Gore, there is a distinction between the processes of industrialization and urbanization. He uses the latter i.e. urbanization to refer to the increasing ratio of urban dwelling to the non-urban dwelling persons in a county. He further states that the family change may be induced by such factors as higher education, modern professions and bureaucratic populations (considering that these are the attributes of urban life). However, he found that neither of these factors, not even industrial occupations were found to have any significant change in the joint family.

Kapadia (1956) in his analysis of the National Register data on households in the towns of Navasari and the fifteen villages around Navasari in South Gujarat similarly found that the assumption that people in cities and towns live in nuclear families while joint families are stronger in the villages is incorrect contrary to this opinion, he found during his studies (1954

& 1955) of 531 high school teachers (279 Gujarati, 187 Maharashtrian and 47 Kannadiga in Bombay city, that so far as the residential family is concerned, 219 (42 per cent) out of 513 teachers lived in elementary families i.e. nuclear families, while 67 per cent (294 teachers) lived in joint families. Not only a high degree of jointness was found in the residential group, but outside the residential group (Gandhi, R 1983).

Conklin (1976) too during his study of the household composition of Karnataka State based on the Government survey result found that urbanization was not associated with a decline of complex households (joint households) nor was there any relationship between the two. Saroj Kapoor's (1965) study of family and kinship among the Khatri, a wealthy caste of businessmen in Delhi also found that at least 42.9 per cent of complex households existed in a neighbourhood in the metropolitan city of Delhi.

We find in the analysis of several studies of family and household in the urban context that not only kinship is found to be an important principle of social organization in cities but also that there is a structural congruity between the joint family on the one hand and the requirements of industrial and urban life on the other. Milton Singer's (1968) study of 19 families of outstanding business leaders in Chennai city discovered that these leaders could effectively 'compartmentalize' traditional values and life style in the area of home and modern professional outlook for the business or company at their offices. There need not be any conflict between the two. He argued that a modified version of traditional joint family is consistent with the urban industrial setting.

Sudha Kaldate ({1962}2003) however, holds a different opinion. She says that all these studies which assert that 'although structurally the traditional (joint) family appears to be breaking down, functionally it is not so. These try to maintain that the joint family is not disintegrating in order to function as independent units (nuclear) but adapting to new patterns which have the same degrees of jointness. The strong protagonists of the views are Kapadia (1954) and Desai (1956), these are not looking at the varying outside factors.'

She says that 'any social institution which is exposed to a number of varying outside factors should result in change. Urbanization, in addition to reflecting technological change, creates a new form of economic organization and gives rise to a new way of life, Cultural uniformity

and traditional patterns of belief and behaviour tend to change under the impact of the above changes and social change gets accelerated.’

Kaldate (2003:173) believes that these types of changes in social institutions do not affect the areas where a large proportion of the indigenous population is resident in a village within the urban framework. To the extent that these populations remain outside from urban contacts they tend to retain their ‘folk society’ characteristics (Hauser 1957). This fact is very important since it is this reason that the extent of change in the institution of family is found to exist more in the areas within the orbit of the city and less in the interior communities. We may give the example of the pockets of rural areas within and on the fringes of metropolitan city of Delhi.

Kaldate supports her hypothesis with empirical data available. Her basic thesis is that “ in the process of social disorganization, the changes in family organization tend to take the form of changes from the large or joint family system to the small family system. Larger proportions of joint as well as quasi-joint families are found in the more traditional communities (existing outside the urban framework); and smaller proportions of such types of families are found in such communities as have been more exposed to outside influence.’

So far we learnt about the impact of urbanization of the social institution of family. Let us now explain briefly the institution of kinship in India.

16.5 Continuity and Change: The Institution of Kinship

As you already know the social institution of marriage, family, kinship and caste are closely interrelated in Indian society.

The kinship pattern in Indian society is generally viewed in the context of Hindu joint family and therefore has not received much attention. However, like the studies of family in the urban context, this area of kinship again suffers from the same dichotomous assertions of opposition between the rural and the urban. But ever since the ‘break up’ theories of joint family in urban communities has been proved incorrect a few interesting studies on urban kinship in India have reported elaborate network of kinship in Indian cities. Gandhi, R. (1983 : 25) in his study of family, kin group and sub-caste as the realms of primary interactions of the Indian urbanite found that as many as 36.7 percent of the women of the Das Bania sub-caste had their

parental or natal kin (parents, brothers, their wives, sisters, their husbands) living in the same city, similarly, the largest proportion, about 55 percent of the respondents were found to interact most frequently with their natal kin, these findings have further implications, according to Gandhi, when we compare them with Vatuk's study of the north Indian city of Meerut.

Vatuk (1972: 140-41) believed that because of the patrilineal emphasis in the north Indian kinship system, a wife is expected to interact most frequently and intensively with her affines, agnates of her husband and their wives. However, in Meerut, she found that the significant number of married women who live near their natal kin (i.e. their own parents) interact more frequently with them than with the affinal kin. It is true that under such circumstances, the bonds between the women and her natal kin could be stronger as such interactions are face to face, primary and reciprocal and they tend to maintain the continuity and solidarity with her natal kin unit.

However, Vatuk assumes that there was a strong patrilineal emphasis in Meerut prior to urbanization. Gandhi believes that traditionally the cities of India have always manifested strong ties with both the natal and the affinal kin of women as it has been possible for them to marry within the city where their parents (i.e. natal unit) lived unlike the situation in the north Indian villages where village exogamy separated the woman from her natal village after marriage.

Vatuk, however, arrives at the conclusion that so far as changes in the kinship system are concerned there is an increasing tendency toward neolocal residence in the city. However the weakness of this interpretation is that she presumes that the neolocal residence for a married couple in an Indian city is a new phenomenon. This belief coupled with the belief that earlier most residences in Meerut city were patrilocal have no supportive evidence

Unlike Vatuk, I.P Desai's study of Mahuva town effectively proves that the cyclical pattern of patrilocal–neolocal– patrilocal residence i.e. joint residence to nuclear and back again to joint residence may continue to exist in any city, village or town and there is no conclusive evidence to prove change in any one direction. This conclusion is again supported by Gandhi's study of the city in Jamnagar in western India, (Gandhi R., 1983: 27)

It is the evolutionary bias in sociology in general and urban sociology in particular that can be observed in the finding or research in kinship patterns. Chekki (1974: 156) studied two caste clusters, Brahmin(Gokul) and Lingayat (Kalyan) from the suburbs of Dharwar city, Karnataka. He discovered that in order to meet the demands of complex modern urban life a modified extended family is emerging and it consist of a series of nuclear families joined together on an equalitarian basis for mutual aid and functioning to felicitate the mobility strivings of its component member families and individuals.

Mary Chatterjee (1947: 337-49) in her study of kinship in sweeper(low caste) locality in Banaras city found that the kinship terms were also used not only for persons in the mohalla, whether or not related, but also for most of the persons encountered outside the locality. She found that kinship was the basic principle in structuring of that urban locality, both as a means of conceptualization of relations and as a principle of recruitment to residence. The consanguineal (i.e. blood relatives) and affinals (relatives by marriage) were linked in terms of their relation to the acquisition of cleaning jobs in the municipality.

Gandhi (1983) observes that largely the kinship studies in urban areas go to prove the contention of Pocock (1960) who believed that the presumed dichotomy between 'rural' and 'urban' does not obtain in the Indian situation, at least when we examine such social institutions as family and kinship in urban India.

He says that when we think in terms of change in the patterns of kinship in urban India' we observe a strange anomaly between continuity and change. However, increase in neolocal residences, change in the outward forms or observable patterns of kinship, may be change in degree and not in kind. Although urban-rural differences were not found to be statistically significant, the study (Conklin's and other) maintains that urbanization levels and employment of wife of the household outside are major factors in the relative freedom of women.

16.6 Conclusion

when we study the impact of urbanization on the social institutions of marriage, family and kinship, we find that the evolutionary approach of western scholars, from Durkheim, F. Tonnies (1940) Louis Wirth (1938) have markedly influenced the studies of urban sociologists. Such theoretical assumptions led to the biased approach of dichotomizing the

rural and urban as two different types of societies. Initially several sociologists jumped to the conclusion that the joint family is associated with the rural agrarian economy, as found in the west and the nuclear family belonged to the urban industrialized non-agrarian economies.

However, several studies on family, marriage, kinship and caste in urban India, e.g. I.P. Desai's (1964), K.M. Kapadia (1956), Ramkrishana Mukherjee and so on found contrary to this view there was no such link between the types of society and jointness or nuclearity of the family and the household. In fact A.M. Shah's study gives a turning point to these studies by pointing out that there is a cyclical change of joint to nuclear to joint in urban areas as well. However, it is quite clear from the analysis of all these studies that slight modifications in terms of personal and private lives and professional competitive life in the cities and towns; as pointed out by Milton Singer (1968) does exist.

Another important fact is that ample confusion in terms of defining and understanding of what constitutes "joint" and "nuclear" exists. This area of study therefore needs greater attention since as mentioned in the sections of the unit, all the social institutions marriage, family and kinship are constantly adjusting and accommodating to new needs and requirements and therefore subtle changes keep taking place without affecting the larger form.

16.7 Further Reading

Gandhi, Raj 1983 in Main Currents in Indian Sociology, ed. By Giri Raj Gupta, vol. VI Urban India, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd: New Delhi.

Sandhu, R.S (ed.) 2003, Urbanization in India Sociological Contributions, Sage Publications: New Delhi.

Unit 17

Traditional Neighbourhoods and Modern Cities

Contents

- 17.1 Introduction
- 17.2 Concept of Neighbourhood
- 17.3 Neighbourhood Studies
- 17.4 Neighbourhoods: traditional and modern
- 17.5 Neighbourhoods in modern cities: Suburbs, Ethnoburbs
- 17.6 Criticism
- 17.7 Conclusion
- 17.8 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- explain the concept of neighbourhood
- assess the importance of neighbourhoods in modern cities
- explain more recent concepts like ethnoburb

17.1 Introduction

From its inception Sociology gave importance to the analysis of social relationships. With this tie between individual and family and between various families got prominence in Sociological literature. Scholars focusing on importance of groups in an individual's life also recognized the importance of neighbours. Neighbourhood is a community of families living in close proximity over a period of time and therefore influencing each other's life. In villages and small towns neighbourhoods provided a canvass of social

networks defining society at large. In large industrial cities neighbourhoods were seen as the microcosm of the larger world.

Today the social life of the 21st century is highly diversified. Do the metropolitan cities, global cities and world cities have any space for community ties and neighbourhoods? If yes, what kind of neighbourhoods would there be?

The title of this unit is 'traditional neighbourhoods, modern cities'. From modernist viewpoint, it was thought that with modernization, traditional neighbourhoods would be an anomaly. This unit tries to address some of the above mentioned issues in short. In a world defined by capital flows, information flows and cultural flows, how do individuals sustain socially? What are the defining principles of their community life? The time-space compression and immense mobility characterizes today's world cities and global cities. Then what is the nature of social networks?

17.2 Concept of Neighbourhood

The Advanced Learner's Oxford Dictionary (1974, 1982) defines neighbourhood as 'people living in a district; area near the place'. According to Compact Oxford Dictionary and thesaurus, 'neighbourhood is a district within a town or city.' In Sociological literature, neighbourhood is 'a term used to describe localities in urban areas which are characterized by a common sense of identity and usually a common life style. (Lawson and Garrod: 2003, 178)

One of the very influential and popular schools of thought in urban sociology was the Ecological or Chicago school in the first half of the 20th century. Scholars like Park and Burgess, with the ecological orientation differentiated between localities within a city. Different kinds of land use, and the varied urban populations that occupied the city were

classified into separate areas. These “neighborhoods “ (Park 1915,580) or “natural areas” (Park [1929] 1952,196) had particular affinities or aversions to one another, resulting overall in an urban ecology- a spatial division of the city, that corresponds to the functional division of labor occurring within it. The examples of these areas were the central business district, exclusive residential areas, areas of heavy or light industry, slums, ghettos, immigrant communities, bohemians and “hobohemias” (Flanagan, 1999: 54).

Community studies, a sub-discipline of Sociology covered for a long time, empirical study of territorially defined communities like villages and urban neighbourhoods. According to Tuan Yi-Fu (1974), “‘Neighborhood’ and ‘Community’ denote concepts popular with planners and social workers. They provide a framework for organizing the complex human ecology of a city into manageable sub-areas; they are also social ideals feeding on the belief that the health of society depends on the frequency of neighbourly acts and the sense of communal membership.”

Charles Cooley, in his writings on ‘Primary group’ and ‘Secondary group’ where he discusses the development of the ‘Looking- glass self’ highlights the significance of the role played by neighbours in shaping the personality of individuals. Parents, neighbours and schoolmates are the three examples of primary groups that he offers. These according to him cast lasting influence on an individual due to their long term, close, direct, involuntary relationships characteristic of these groups.

The term ‘traditional neighbourhood’ denotes localities with ethnic enclaves or settlements of families with identical values, ideals and lifestyles. These are the places where relationships between neighbours are close, direct and intimate as opposed to the

idea of cosmopolitan heterogeneous urban settlements. The spatial features of these localities are imprinted with traditional architectural forms and practices.

In the first half of the 20th Century, the term neighbourhood suggested settlements of either the working classes or the bourgeoisie with similar occupational, economic and cultural background in major Western industrial towns.

Reflection and Action 17.1

Observe the neighbourhood within which you are living. Do you think your neighbourhood is traditional or modern? Write down why it is traditional or modern keeping in mind the above description in about two pages.

Discuss your essay with other students at your study centre.

17.3 Neighbourhood Studies

As Wellman and Leighton (1979:363) have pertinently argued, 'Urban Sociology has tended to be neighbourhood sociology.' What they meant by this was the collapse of urban sociology into study of small networks, direct social interaction and small scale studies of how sense of community evolves.

In social geography 'neighbourhood studies' signified an important branch, wherein study of specific localities with shared architectural forms and shared socio-economic and cultural features was undertaken. It was observed by these studies that certain neighbourhoods showed certain housing patterns and certain lifestyles. These studies were significant in the context of two factors: in the emerging Western industrial metropolitan cities, social commentators and Sociologists with functionalist orientation had predicted a loss of shared values. Secondly, neighbourhood studies falsified the

assumption that in modern cities ethnicity would lose its importance, as most of the neighbourhoods were based on race and ethnicity.

In the field of Urban Sociology, scholars belonging to the Chicago School took up neighbourhood studies. Looking at processes of adaptation and competition, they focused on creation of separate neighbourhoods on class lines. Some focused on ethnic ghettos and enclaves. These places were preferred destination of first generation immigrants. Ethnic links made occupational and social adjustments easier. For this purpose they undertook detailed observations for months together to create classic neighbourhood profiles. Participant observation, life history and survey were the preferred techniques. (Spates and Macionis, 1982:46,47)

Park, Burgess, and their followers contributed to the theoretical and methodological aspects of the new field called urban sociology. America witnessed emergence and expansion of many large cities in the beginning of the 20th century, and therefore, manifold study of the urban subject matter was a need of the hour. Also, it was believed that the American way of life was based on industrialization; human spirit of achievement and this modern urban world was expected to create new identity of 'modern human being'. In reality, however, ethnic enclaves emerged in all big cities of the world and social networks played a very important role alongside wealth and power. Burgess, in the analysis of his famous 'concentric zone theory', pointed this out. (Burgess, 1967: 50) The famous diagram illustrating the land use and distribution of population in Chicago city argued that manufacturing activities determined the nature of city life in America in the early 20th century. As the city grows it gets divided into sub-communities, which are spatially segregated into zones or sectors.

Wellman and Leighton (1979:363-90) discuss the reasons why neighbourhood studies substituted community studies. First, the neighbourhood provided itself as an easily accessible research site to urbanists. Secondly, neighbourhood was the building block of the city, which was the aggregate of many such neighbourhoods as per the ecological school. Third, administrative officials imposed their own definitions of neighbourhood boundaries while attempting to create bureaucratic units. Fourth, urban sociology's particular concern with spatial distributions had tended to be translated into local area concern. Fifth, many analysts have been concerned with the conditions under which solidary sentiments can be maintained. These scholars acknowledge the fact the genre of 'neighbourhood studies has produced hundreds of finely wrought depictions of urban life and they have given us powerful ideas about how small scale social systems operate in a variety of social contexts'.

Rex and Moore as Saunders (1981) observes it, took works of the ecological schools as the starting point of their theory. They argued that in the initial settlement of the city, three different groups, differentially placed with regard to the possession of property, become segregated from one another and work out their own community style of life' (1967, p.8). The upper middle class owning relatively large houses are located near the business and cultural centers, but away from the industries. The working class rents small terraced cottages are bonded by economic adversity with others in the same situation experience a strong sense of collective identity and mutual support. The lower middle class rent their houses but aspires the bourgeois way of life. These three groups signify not only three kinds of neighbourhoods, but also three different lifestyles and value

structures. Their occupational positions, access to property ownership and resultant consumption and cultural preferences are significantly different.

Rex and Moore, while forwarding their theory of space, focus on conflicts over housing. They point out that the direction of migration is from inner city area to outer limits of the city. Basing their analysis on the study of Sparkbrook in Birmingham they illustrate that working class neighbourhoods decline into 'twilight areas' with a concentration of the immigrant population. This happens alongside a parallel development: increasing desirability of suburban middle class housing for the lower middle class. As a result of this suburban spacious housing becomes a scarce commodity.

Community Studies is an academic area, which has concentrated on study of neighbourhoods. In most of the Western metropolitan cities neighbourhoods are organized around ethnicity. Hence community studies are conducted in neighbourhoods. Another sub-discipline, which focuses on neighbourhoods and their particularities, is Ethnic and minority studies.

Distinctive neighborhoods have well-defined boundaries that in a way isolate them from rest of the city. Especially suburbs with peculiar characteristics like luxurious housing and deteriorating slums; settlements of immigrants and ethnic ghettos get distinguished from other localities for a variety of economic and cultural reasons.

However, many scholars have questioned whether neighbourhood refers to a mental perception or a planning category? Suzanne Keller has shown that the concept of neighborhood is not at all simple. The administrator or planner may define it in terms of physical characteristics. But the resident's perception of the locality might be completely different.

As Tuan Yi-Fu (1974), puts it, the words “neighborhood” and “district” tend to evoke in the outsider’s mind images of simple geometrical shape, when in fact the channels of neighborly acts that define neighbourhood may be extremely intricate and vary from small group to small group living in close proximity. Moreover, the perceived extent of neighbourhood does not necessarily correspond with the web of intense neighbourly contacts.

The degree to which acknowledgement and assessment of a neighbourhood’s specificities depends on class of residents according to Tuan. It is observed that the extremely rich are more conscious of the boundaries of their physical territory as well as their cultural world. They devise ways to keep others away from their realm. Tuan states that ‘Middle class suburbanites can be even more sensitive of their territorial integrity, for their world, in comparison with that of the established rich, is more vulnerable to the invasion by “uppity” outsiders’ (Tuan: 1974, 75). He also observes that white immigrants from ethnic specific residential quarters are not as conscious of their territoriality and cultural identity as their coloured counterparts from slums for coloured population. This may be due to the fact the coloured population face hostility everywhere except in their locality.

Following the illustrious contributions of the theorists of Chicago schools with their detailed accounts of occupational and residential differentiation, neighbourhoods in Chicago were studied repeatedly by various scholars. Gerald Suttles (1968) in his study of a poor neighbourhood in Chicago, with various ethnic communities showed that there was a well-worked out social order based upon strong territorial identification. In a locality that Suttles called the “Addams Area,” growing numbers of blacks, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans slowly replaced Italians. Although each community had its

independent existence and ties, all ethnic groups shared territorial identification. In spite of tensions between ethnic communities, conflict and confrontation was avoided. Sometimes tensions between adolescents led to confrontations between Italians within and outside the neighbourhood. At such moments going beyond ethnic divisions, the entire neighbourhood got united against outsiders. Suttles (1972, 21-35) termed this as “defended neighborhood”.

Both Tuan (1974) and refer to Beacon Hill, Boston as a neighbourhood of those with exclusive access to peculiar kinds of residence, lifestyle and therefore a territorial boundary. While commenting on symbolism, imagery and perception of American cities, Tuan observes that Beacon Hill, Boston marked itself off from others by tradition, culture, social standing and economic power. He argues that though Beacon Hill matches ethnic quarters of some kinds, it is different in so far as it maintains its isolation through its presumed sense of superiority. Ethnic quarters, on the other hand take isolation to be the best means to cope up with threat. Beacon Hill began after the revolution as upper class suburbia. It was planned as a fashionable quarter for those with position and means. He compares Beacon hill with West End- another working class locality which sprang near Beacon Hill. The residents of the later neighbourhood were not aware of the territorial identity as those in Beacon Hill were. (Tuan:76)

17.4 Neighbourhoods: Traditional and Modern

Traditional neighbourhoods denote old parts of the city. In many American studies, these parts are referred to as ‘inner city areas.’ Immigrant population with low quality of amenities and dilapidated or deteriorating housing conditions, no governmental

investment, marks these localities. As the city grows the lower middle classes move out of the inner city areas and the new immigrants move in these dwellings with low rent. Architecturally, inner city areas show traditional styles and forms of using space. They facilitate older styles of interactions and social networks.

Middle classes and the rich population on the other hand inhabit outer city areas. These localities have more amenities, large plots of land, more services and are scarcely populated. These are more modern neighbourhoods with up-market styles and forms of spatial use. In some cities the traditional neighbourhoods have been preserved as architectural heritage sites. (In Sydney, for example, the old quarters have been turned into a tourist spectacle.)

As Sharon Zukin and others have pointed out cities in the post-modern era symbolize cultural spectacles. Discussing the case of Disneyland, she points out that parts of cities are now created, maintained and marketed as items of consumption. Cities showcase dazzling, grand architectural and material worlds, where viewers can interpret and reinterpret spatial reality in multiple ways. Cultural homogenization results from the standardizing impact of globalization imposing universal food, beverage and clothing styles.

In the global South, it is difficult to differentiate between traditional and modern neighbourhoods in the same way as in the U.S. of the first half of the 21st century. In Mumbai, for example, the older neighbourhoods with textile mills and lower class residences are recently converted into up-market malls and shopping areas. Here, the old defunct mill chimney exists along with plush multi-storied multiplex or mall. In many

south Asian cities, the inequalities between access to resources and livelihoods result in the simultaneous existence of polar worlds.

Reflection and Action 17.2

On a weekend or holiday, take a trip to the surrounding colonies in your city town. (If you stay in a village then you may choose the nearby town). Find out the socio-economic status, occupation of the residents and infrastructural facilities available in at least three neighbourhoods. Are there people of different ethnic backgrounds living in the same colony, are rich luxury houses and small middle class residences found in same colony, etc.

Write a two page note on “My city /Town” based on the above findings. Share your report with other students at your Study Centre.

17.5 Neighbourhoods in Recent Times: Suburbs, Ethnoburbs, and so on

In recent years works dealing with space, economy and culture have pointed out how ‘place internalised the market’ (Zukin: 1993) On the other hand, scholars like Sassen (2001) have theorized the ways in which the global economy is now controlled from a few cities, wherein financial services and speculative decisions are made. Though manufacturing is decentred through various continents, certain cities have emerged as ‘global cities’- global nodes of economic and technological flows. These writings have shown that local neighbourhoods are today influenced by transnational capital, technological and cultural flows (Zukin: 1993, Sassen: 1991, 2001). This means that study of urban phenomenon in terms of local community structures, territorially defined value systems would be irrelevant in the context of outsourcing and offshore production.

Anthony King (2005) has reiterated this in his recent book. He reminds us that suburbs meant an outgrowth of the city. “Today, however, in many cities round the world, there are not just sub-urbs but also supraurbs (suprurbs) or, alternatively, globurbs. By this we mean forms and settlements on the outskirts of the city, the origins of which – economic, social, cultural, architectural – are generated less by developments inside the city, or even inside the country, and more by external forces beyond its boundaries. The influences as well as the capital come from afar, either electronically, or physically, and not least through printed media.” (2005,97) he argues that today’s new kinds of suburbs sustain from outside state boundaries. Not just global forces generate these suburbs. Extending the concept of postcolonial globalization used by Hopkins (2002), he states, they are generated ‘more particularly, by those of imperialism, colonialism, nationalism, as well as the diasporic migratory cultures and capital flows of global capitalism- these are the postcolonial globurbs.’ (King: 2005, 97-103)

King sites the concept of ‘ethnoburb’ coined by geographer Wei Li. It means ‘suburban ethnic clusters of residential areas and business districts in large American metropolitan areas. They are multi-ethnic communities in which one ethnic minority group has a significant concentration but does not necessarily comprise a majority (Li Wei 1998: 479). This term was referred to describe San Gabriel Valley, in the eastern suburban area of Los Angeles County with more than 158,000 ethnic Chinese (from mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and elsewhere), in 1990. This was the largest suburban Chinese concentration in the US. The ethnoburb, is ‘a new outpost in the global economy’, which emerges as an outcome of the ‘influence of international geopolitical and global

economic restructuring’. Changing national immigration and trade policies, local demographics, economic and political contexts also result in the making of an ethnoburb. He also discusses another category called Technoburbs (King: 2005, 106). Reflecting on the role of technologies in creating and maintaining suburbs, King refers to Silverstone and Robert Fishman (1987). Fishman comments on the ‘new high technological post-suburbs growing along the edge of the old’ and underscores “the home-centered nature of both physical and symbolic environments, as ‘technoburb’ and television promote their mutual interests, in their dependence on, and encouragement of decentralization (Silverstone 1997: 9)”. It is through television that the ethnoburb is instantaneously linked with the ‘countries of home’, “the ‘imagined communities’ of ethnic recognition round the world”(King, 2005, 107). It acts as engines of suburban hybridization, reproducing in the process the ‘ambiguities of modernity’ (Silverstone 1997).

Box 17.1 The Non Resident Indians

It is observed that Indians in USA or UK tend to have close interaction with other Indians and Asians living there. They tend to celebrate their festivals; life cycle rituals, etc., within this close community. Most parents with grown up children prefer to arrange marriages of their children within their caste/ region and there fore often come to India for this purpose.

King’s discussion of these contemporary processes shaping hybridities, bring to the fore transnational migrations, diasporic communities and decentralised production coupled with distantiated subjectivities.

17.6 Criticisms

As the discussion in the previous section illustrates, the phrase based on binary opposites of ‘traditional neighbourhoods in modern cities’ is not exactly relevant to describe or analyze contemporary urban phenomenon.

Earlier on in late 1970s itself, the tendency to associate urban neighbourhoods with communities was criticized. Wellman and Leighton (1979) have commented on the problems created by the entangling of study of community ties with neighbourhood in the following way:

1. The identification of a neighbourhood as a container of community ties assumes the a priori organizing power of space. This is spatial determinism.
2. The presence of many local relationships does not necessarily create discrete neighbourhoods.
3. The identification of neighbourhood studies with community studies may omit major spheres of interaction.
4. The focus on neighbourhoods may give undue importance to spatial characteristics as casual variables.
5. Many analyses have been over occupied with the condition under which solidary sentiments can be maintained. When not found in the neighbourhood, community is assumed not to exist.

These criticisms also hold true for the most part for the tendency to view traditional neighbourhoods in modern cities as repositories of ‘close, direct relations, the souls of the soul less cities’. Today residents of a neighbourhood might not attach territorial markers of identity as closely as they would attach other kinds of markers, for example, certain

kinds of music, participation in particular kinds of activities, etc. Moreover, there would be simultaneous emergence of multiple identities or switching from one marker to another. The geographical unit of space is not the solitary determinant of identity, lifestyle and ties.

17.7 Conclusions

As mentioned above, today it is hard to find ‘traditional’ neighbourhoods in terms of architectural form and style except a few heritage sites or preserved neighbourhoods. The crucial question that students of urban sociology need to ask is whether a dichotomous pairing of ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ can prove to be a viable analytical tool in the first place. Tradition is always a relative category – in terms of time and space. Modernity is also relative to time and space and is defined dynamically. The title ‘traditional neighbourhoods in modern cities’ poses a number of epistemological and methodological questions.

Without going into the details of the discussion of these aspects, we can certainly conclude that in contemporary metropolitan and non-metropolitan cities throughout the world intimate ties between neighbours are observed. But this does not mean that all neighbours share direct, intimate relations; neither does this suggest that intimate relationships can be sustained by territorial boundaries alone.

At the same time, there is enough evidence to suggest that neighbourhoods are not only geographical or administrative units imposed on maps; but many of them represent certain value structures, class-specific lifestyles and consumption preferences. In the developing world, these peculiarities are even more complicated by internal hierarchies of class, caste, race and gender.

In the first half of this century ecological school theorists believed in homogeneous structuring of neighbourhoods. Today, it will be adventurous to state so.

17.8 Further Reading

Flanagan W G., Urban Sociology *Images and Structure*, 1999, 1995, 1990, Allan and Bacon, Boston

Sassen S., 2001, Global cities,

Wellman B. and Leighton B., Networks, Neighborhoods, and Communities: Approaches to the Study of the Community Question, in Urban Affairs Quarterly, Vol. 14, No. 3, March 1979, pp. 363-90.

Reference

Balshaw M. and Kennedy L., 2000, Urban Space and Representation, Pluto Press, London.

Bilton T., (et al), 1987, Introductory Sociology, Macmillan.

Bourne, L., (ed), 1982, Internal structure of the city, readings on urban form, growth and policy, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Castells, M., 1983, The City and the Grassroots, University of California Press, Berkeley.

Flanagan W G., Urban Sociology *Images and Structure*, 1999, 1995, 1990, Allan and Bacon, Boston

Hamnett C., (ed.) 1996, Social Geography A Reader, Arnold, London, New York, Sydney, Auckland.

King A., 2005, Spaces of Global Cultures, Architecture Urbanism Identity, Routledge, London.

- Kosambi M., 1994, Urbanization and Urban Development in India, ICSSR, New Delhi.
- Savage M, and Warde A., 1993, Urban Sociology, Capitalism and Modernity, Macmillan Press Ltd, London.
- Robson B. 1973, Urban Growth: An Approach, Methuen & Co. Ltd, London.
- Sassen S., 2001, Global cities,
- Saunders, P., 1981, Social Theory and the Urban Question, Hutchinson, London.
- Tewari V., Weinstein J., Rao VLS Prakasa, (ed.) 1986, Indian Cities- Ecological Perspectives, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi.

- Tuan Yi-Fi, 1982, *American Cities: Symbolism, Imagery, and Perception*, in Bourne Larry S., 1982, *Internal Structure of the City Readings on Urban Form, Growth, and Policy*, OUP, New York Oxford.
- Wellman B. and Leighton B., *Networks, Neighborhoods, and Communities: Approaches to the Study of the Community Question*, in *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 3, March 1979, pp. 363-90.
- Zukin S., 1993, *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles.
- Zukin S., 2005, 'Whose Culture? Whose City?' In Lin J., Mele C., (ed.), 2005, *The Urban Sociology Reader*, Routledge, New York.

Unit 18

Urban Influences on Rural Areas

Contents

- 18.1 Introduction
- 18.2 Some Major Studies
- 18.3 Urban Impact through Migration
- 18.4 Influences of Urban Areas
- 18.5 Occupational Changes Particularly in Periods of Globalisation
- 18.6 Political Influences
- 18.7 Social Influences
- 18.8 Cultural Influences
- 18.9 Conclusion
- 18.10 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

After studying this unit you will be able to:

- briefly describe some major studies on the urban influences on rural areas;
- the three situations of urban impact;
- discuss some of the influences of urban areas;
- explain the economic influences of urban areas on rural areas;
- describe the occupational changes that take place in rural areas; and
- outline the political, social and cultural influences of the urban areas on rural areas.

18.1 Introduction

In the common parlance, any big city or town or for that matter any metropolis is believed to be a melting pot, where people from several cultures come and converge to become one urban mass with distinct culture. If we analyse this within the framework of science and particularly physics, we might describe it as a centripetal force of urbanization. On the other hand, there is centrifugal forces of urbanization also, which influences rural areas. Often such forces become factors of social, cultural and economic change in the rural society. In urban sociology, the process of such changes has emerged as important with number of studies being focused on social and cultural changes in rural areas.

18.2 Some Major Studies

For past many decades, several authors, both from India and the West, have contributed to this branch of knowledge. A prominent scholar among them is M.N. Srinivas, who has analysed the impact of both industrialization and urbanization on rural system in great depth. He has highlighted how different areas of rural social life are being affected by urban centres. Mark Holmstrom has analysed the political network of leaders in the rural pocket within the Bangalore Corporation in the context of election. The influence of urban market on village economy has been the focus of study of D.N. Mazumdar. He has carried out this study in a village called 'Mohana' near Lucknow.

It is not necessary that the villages which are in the vicinity of the city are influenced. Often, villages which are far off from cities but has a significant proportion of its population as emigrant, exhibit high urban influences. This has been highlighted in the study of a village in U.P. by E. Eames. He notes

that since many emigrants in this village live in different cities and towns, they regularly send money back as remittances. The reason for this is that most have left their families back home. Such 'money-order' based economy has a spin-off effect in the sense that their dependents have cleared their debt and some are sending their children to schools. This implies that though this village is not in the vicinity of a city but is under the impact of urbanization. R.D. Lambart's study, too, highlights the fact of varying degree of influence of urban centres on the rural life and culture. Social changes are maximal in the area where displacement is sudden and maximum.

The most important contribution in this field has been made by M.S.A. Rao. He has argued that many villages all over India are becoming increasingly subject to the impact of urban influences. But the nature of urban impact varies according to the type of relation a village has with an urban area. This urban area could be a city or a town.

18.3 Urban Impact through Migration

It has been postulated that rural urban inequality in terms of economic and social wellbeing would accelerate rural urban migration. The pull factors operating through the highly productive sectors in urban centres would attract labour force from rural areas. Many among rural poor would move to urban areas in any case as a part of their survival strategy and supplement their family income in their villages. Rural economy often *plays an important role in ensuring balance between demand and supply of labour through circulation of population in different seasons of the year.*

Broadly, three different kinds of rural urban migration could be identified.

- i) First, there are villages in which a significant proportion of populations have sought employment in far off urban areas. In this situation they leave their families in villages of their birth. This situation is prevalent not only within the country but also in overseas cities. In either of the situation, such emigrants visit their village either during festivals or on family occasions. Most significantly majority of them send money regularly. In villages, because of constant flow of money to such families, the economic status is raised. In some cases, even the urban employment itself becomes the symbol of higher social status. In tangible terms, families of such emigrants have been found to build fashionable houses in their villages. They have also invested money on land and industry. Then it can be safely be inferred that whether the emigrants reside in Indian or overseas cities, the feedback effect of urbanization remains significant for such villages. In this situation, the urban impact is felt by villages despite the fact that physically they are neither situated within the cities nor are near them.
- ii) Second kind of impact is felt by villages which are situated near an industrial town. These villages are exposed to several kinds of influences. The reasons for this could be a) with the coming up of an industrial town some villages might be totally up-rooted, b) lands are partially acquired, c) influx of immigrant workers, d) demand of all kinds of amenities for new residents and e) finally ordering of relationship between immigrants and native residents.

In real terms this could mean that because industrial township is coming up, so there would be employment opportunities for villagers at their door step. In other words, this means that there would be a shift in the occupational structure among the villagers. Hence villagers instead of depending only upon agriculture, would send their adult members of the family to work in the factories as well. A considerable number of workers would commute from the city to the factories and eventually may shift their residence. However, it is important to remember that urbanization due to industrialization has general as well as specific influences on the

villages. The specific influence has more to do with the nature of industry. Hence, agro based industries will encourage farmers of surrounding villages to devote more agricultural lands for that particular crop. The best example in this case could be that of sugar mills. It has been observed that farmers in villages around sugar mills tend to cultivate sugarcane on larger portion of their land.

- iii) Finally, the third type of urban impact is felt by phenomenon of ever increasing size of metropolitan cities which many times convert into megalopolis. In the above situations, normally either village is sucked in to the city as it expands or land excluding the inhabited area is used for urban development. Such situations give rise to 'rural pockets' in the city area. In such villages the landless peasants get cash compensation, which they either invest in far-off places or in commerce or squander money. The villagers in general seek urban employment. In villages where land is partially acquired, there cultivation is still possible, but then farmers take up the emerging demand in consideration while deciding for the type of crop which they cultivate. Another effect of a metropolitan city on the surrounding villages is the outflow of urban residents who wish to move out of the congested areas in the city into the open countryside.

Rural areas in the immediate periphery of large cities often act as dormitories for poor migrants who commute on daily basis, as they are unable to find a foothold in the cities. The rural periphery, which absorbs these migrants has to deal with various socio economic problems, due to deficiency of basic amenities and social fragmentation. These often lead to outbreak of epidemics, social tensions as also group conflicts, as the local residents struggle and fight with the migrant groups to access or share the limited employment opportunities and basic amenities. Furthermore, the environmental lobby gaining strength in these cities often launches measures to push out the pollutant and obnoxious industries to these areas, thereby creating a process of degenerated Peripheralisation. Understandably, this process helps the cities in reducing their infrastructural costs and pass on the responsibility and costs of social transition to peripheral villages.

Beside economic impact such villages also change in terms of political features. One of the unique features is that the villagers participate directly in the city's or corporation's politics. The slum dwellers in the periphery often constitute the vote bank for political parties. They are, thus, affected by the political process at the city, state and the national levels. This is very unlike traditional villages where political landscape is governed by intermediary structure of 'Taluk' and district. These villages have direct administrative links with cities. It should, however, be noted that not all the villages may be said to have been exposed in the same way to urban influences, for the nature of the relations of the village with the cities, and the response of the village to this situation vary from village to village.

18.4 Influences of Urban Areas

Rural economy in general and agriculture in particular are noted to exhibit tremendous resilience and a high capacity of internal adjustment in response to challenges posed by the process of urban development, particularly in the era of globalisation. Rural areas shoulders the major responsibility of releasing material resources, necessary for meeting the capital and current expenditures of the modern sectors that generally provide the lead in the growth process. It is also supposed to sustain the process of urban industrial development by meeting the costs of shifting of workers (along with their family members) from rural to urban areas, finding a shelter and sustenance at least during the period of transition. Further, able-bodied male labour required in the upcoming activities in towns and cities are also made available through release of workforce from within the agrarian system. More

importantly, workforce displaced in industrial sector when it comes under slump due to fluctuations in global market, technological shifts or other socio-political disturbances, often seek absorption within agriculture in the short run.

Rural areas have also been a major provider of surpluses and investible funds. During the colonial regime, the rulers often succeed in operationalising a “suction mechanism” for expropriating resources from the colonies. The process often continued even after end of the colonial rule in many less developed countries. This has led to a high disparity between agriculture and non-agricultural sectors and between rural and urban areas in terms of per capita earnings as also in other dimensions of economic and social well-being.

In this context it is important, for the purpose of generalization, to classify the influences of urban centres on villages under some broad categories, such as economic, social, cultural and political. However it must be kept in mind that all these headings encompass several sub-categories. For example under category ‘economic’ sub-categories such as occupational roles, employment pattern and shift in profession is subsumed.

Reflection and Action 18.1

In your city/town/village find out at least five people who have recently (i.e. within the last one year) have come to stay. Ask them about the reasons of their arrival in this city/town/village. Why have they chosen to move to this place? How this movement has affected their life?

Write report on “Nature of Migration in My City/Town/Village” in about two pages. Share your report with other students at your study centre.

i) Economic influence

The urban areas are synonymous with market economy. If this seems harsh, then it can be said that economy of urban areas are very different than rural areas, though to a large extent it is based on supplies from rural areas. In the order of influence it can be inferred that in return rural areas gradually gets into market economy. Bohannon and Dalton while discussing the markets in African society characterized entry into the market economy by three criteria: a) marketing of produce with direct repercussion on production, b) selling labour and, c) buying for resale as contrasted to marketing one’s own product.

ii) Commercialization of agriculture

Marketing of agricultural produce has significant social implications. This is in the sense of several roles which a villager takes up. In villages which are yet relatively untouched by the urban influences, though in today’s scenario this is very unlikely, a villager as an economic being is mostly a cultivator. However, when s/he comes under the urban influence, they are likely to take up the role of farmer as well as that of a businessman. This means s/he not only has to grow those crops which has relatively higher and faster cash returns but also market them. Marketing entails arranging for quick transportation so that right price is procured. Further, there is a change in the cropping pattern i.e., a shift from growing food crop to growing vegetable, fruits, horticulture, poultry and dairy farming. In other words, market economy of urban places offers large scope of choice in terms of farming. The best example of this is when one is traveling from village to any urban area. It is apparent that as one nears any town there is more of vegetables, fruits, flowers grown than any staple food items like rice, wheat or pulses. This is not only the case for those villages which are in the vicinity of a metropolis or a city, but also with those villages which are away from urban areas but has relatively good transport and communication linkages.

Most of the time this offers good economic returns to villagers but sometime this also results in huge economic loss for a farmer in far off villages. The best example of this was apparent a few years back when there was glut of

potato in the market. Many of the farmers were neither able to sell their produce to any market nor were able to keep the produce in any storage facility. The reason for this is that a farmer makes choice of crop in a field on the basis of last year's market price. However, they do not take into consideration the fact that others are also farming the same crop and hence there is crash of market prices. In this regard it is important that farmers are provided with information on cropping pattern and adequate storage facility.

Sociologically, this shift in roles and also in cropping pattern has a significant bearing on the rural society. That is, going by certain theoretical premise, traditionally in caste system, specific castes have been associated with certain occupations with minor deviations. So an 'Ahir' was associated with dairy farming and a 'Malli' was associated with 'horticulture' though at a very nascent level. The flip side of this association of occupation with caste was that other castes considered taking up any other occupation, with which they have not been associated, less prestigious. This role of caste was in addition to its role as identity marker. Now when villagers take part in the market economy of urban areas, they after some resistance tend to cross those caste boundaries and accept new occupations. Hence the traditional cultivators i.e. growers of main food crop take growing of vegetables, fruits, flowers and tend to go into poultry and dairy farming. In this context it is important to remember that it's not that those farmers were not at all growing vegetables, fruits and flowers. They have been doing so but only for own consumption and not as a main farming or for purpose of selling. Analytically this meant that occupational stratification on the basis of caste got gradually blurred. This in other words meant that the so-called lower castes who were also positioned lower in traditional economy, came to be at par with other castes. Hence they, as equals in new economy, had more bargaining powers which in a way was due to the new set of constraints.

The shift in occupational roles also meant that farmers have to learn new tasks, skills and purpose oriented activities such as raising vegetables, transporting and selling them. Further they were brought into relationships with the brokers at the auction market (subzimandi), and carters and the contract-gardeners in the village. At this juncture it is also important to remember that pursuit of new role was not in contradistinction but in conjunction with activities as cultivators. However, this certainly meant reorganization of resources both material and human, involving choices. Therefore, the large and medium-size farmers, who do not have adequate labour resources within household tend to go for partial mechanization of agricultural operation, hire labour and sell their crop before harvesting. Those farmers who have adequate supply of household labour but little land try to go for lease in land, concentrate on raising more short-term vegetables and cultivate their land intensively.

18.5 Occupational changes Particularly in Periods of Globalisation

In the context of economic influence, one must recognise that urban areas not only provide opportunity to villagers to sell their agricultural produce, but also supply labour, as noted above. The supply or availability of labour for farm activities is often affected by the employment opportunities offered by urban areas. If possession of land and adequate resources determines the entry of a villager into urban market place, education and contacts with people in influential positions in cities and towns helps them in getting the quality jobs. This however does not mean that when a villager gets a job in the urban areas, s/he gives up agricultural activities. Migrants to urban centres often get their land cultivated either by their kinsman or by employing farm laborers. But more commonly, while one member of the family takes charge of cultivation, others are encouraged taking up jobs in cities and towns.

Other than urban employment, growth of trade and commerce between cities and rural areas are also of great significance in changing the occupational structure. This category includes contract-farmers, brokers and shopkeepers. The development of such commercial activity in a rural area means entering in market economy of cities and towns through the third category mentioned by Bohannon and Dalton, i.e. buying for resale.

Urban influences also result in a household in village adopting different combinations of occupations and occupational mobility. Under the impact of modernization and globalization, many of the villagers tend to combine both traditional and modern occupations. In a household a husband may be working in urban area as clerk, peon or as call centre worker on casual or regular basis while his wife may be working as farm labour. The other trend has been that many a times a villager begins with traditional occupation and midway changes to modern occupation but is forced back to traditional occupation due to uncertain global or national market. One of the reasons offered by scholars are that traditional occupations becomes a life support system in case of job loss in urban areas. Final type of urban influence on occupational structure can be seen is situations in which traditional occupations are pursued with low earnings in modern settings of an urban area. Caste based occupations such as barber, sweepers and others, are often pursued even in towns and cities. But the only difference is that it is not governed by traditional social and economic constraints.

One important consequence of the exposure of rural economy to regional and national market through the neighbouring urban centres and resultant changes in occupational structure is sharpening of agrarian inequalities. Launching of the programmes of globalisation and structural reform in a country often leads to rapid growth of a few large cities and their peripheries. Entrepreneurs from the national and global market invest in industries, most of these coming up in and around large cities. Globalisation, unfortunately, brings little relief to agrarian economy, as the latter has no capacity to provide incentive to attract the global players. Instead, the import of agriculture and related products from international market impacts negatively the rural economy by lowering down the prices of the products. Sluggish growth in production, near stagnation in productivity often results in rise in rural unemployment. Thus, the negative impact of liberalisation becomes much more significant and visible in the rural than in urban economy.

The growing disparity between rural and urban areas during the period of globalization is expected to accelerate mobility of labour. Scholars and policy makers have often envisaged major shifts of workforce from agriculture to non-agricultural activities and from rural to urban areas. It is argued that the process would result in substantial decline in agricultural employment and corresponding increase in the high profit industrial and tertiary activities. Unfortunately, structural constraints and imperfections of labour market have inhibited or slowed down the process of this shift. Often, collapse of certain industries/activities due to slump in global market has pushed the migrants back to their rural occupations. Low productive farm and non-farm activities in rural areas have thus come under serious stress as these have become a sink for the surplus labour, sharing the limited income among larger number of households members. *These households have, thus, been forced to bear the cost of unstable growth process in globalising world of today.* A part of the surplus labour have, however, sought absorption in informal manufacturing and tertiary activities that have emerged in cities and towns as the "residual sector", at a low productivity level.

18.6 Political Influences

Political changes in the villages have close relationship with the processes of change taking place due to economic activities under urban influences.

However, these changes are also affected by wider social and political forces, administrative changes and democratic political institutions impinged upon the traditional political organization. If we analyse historically, during Mughal and British rules, the traditional authority relation i.e., leading men from dominant caste as custodians, were given due recognition. This was done keeping in mind maintaining of law and order. Till the decades of thirties this system prevailed, where dominant caste exercised political control over other castes which many times was also based upon the jajmani or patron and client relationship.

During the National freedom movements and during the post-independence period (1947 onwards) a lot of changes took place in the political structure of the villages. Part of this was due to awareness generated among various caste groups. Due to social movements such as 'Arya Samaj' and 'Brahmo Samaj' and partly because of administrative and political changes introduced after independence. The major changes came in the relationship between dominant and subordinate caste when latter had opportunity to become politically independent. As has been described above, this opportunity came with their participation not in traditional economy but outside of it. Further, this led them to become partners in the new economy instead of remaining economically subservient to the dominant castes. The change in economic status gave them more bargaining power, this includes political domain as well. The change was further influenced by privileges and benefits given to the so-called backward castes as entitlements. Also this led to the emergence of a rural middle class who had more bargaining power politically.

Similarly, the introduction of Panchayati Raj and associated regulations gave villagers belonging to lower caste and class a voice along with voting rights. This also provided opportunity to these castes to compete for positions of power in the village set up. This was also because control of panchayat meant access to the most important local resources such as land and other economic benefits that flow from development and welfare schemes; the ruling caste tries to derive the maximum benefits for its members.

In the new political era, especially after the sixties, the new developments at village political level was that new political organization parties were formed on the basis of alliances between groups or to be more precise on 'interest' groups. This was a new development when one compares this with pre-independence era, where it was based upon patron-client relationship between castes. Formation of interest groups across various caste groups meant that factionalisation of caste took place. At least in case of dominant caste this implied that chances of settlement of disputes within traditional panchayat system becomes minimal i.e. urban courts are approached for dispute settlement. This in the long run affects the so-called 'moral order' of traditional social structure.

18.7 Social Influences

In any society, whether be it rural or urban, various aspects are interlinked with each other. Hence, changes in one aspect has its repercussions on the others as well. Similarly, even in case of rural areas, as has been described above, economic area is the first one where change is noticed, but has its repercussions on traditional social structure as well. Moreover, a change in one area of economic organization tends to affect another economic activity. For example, an analysis of 'Jajmani system' of urban influenced village reveals that certain service relations are no longer bound by traditional constraints. In this regard it is important to note that service relationships in rural areas could be classified in three broad categories: (a) regular service relations arising out of occupational roles, (b) independent occupational roles and (c) the customary occupational roles. Same individual might be performing these roles but the set of rules governing each of the above

categories is different. Thus a barber might have ceased to shave his 'Jajmans' when village got integrated with urban economy and he became a daily commuter, but he still might be rendering customary service of messenger on ceremonial occasions.

The much fabled 'joint family system' of rural areas, is argued to have gone through tremendous changes under urban influences. It has been a general belief that with the changes in cropping pattern and occupational diversification there will be a breakup of joint family system into nuclear ones. However, evidence suggests contrary, as you learnt in unit 16: Marriage, Family and Kinship. The economic compulsion has rather forced people to continue with the joint family system, albeit a reorganization of wider kinship obligations. Sometimes it is in the economic interest of the villagers to continue living in joint family. This is also because of complementary economic interests of common landholding and job in urban market. As Aird has concluded in his study of two Muslim villages on the outskirts of Dacca, 'family structure has shown considerable resistance to the forces of social change brought about by urban contact. Only those facets which are closely tied to the economic aspects of urbanization seem to have undergone any change, and even this is slight'.

The urban influence on rural areas has also been a factor in bringing about changes in traditional status based differentiation. In rural areas, traditionally status has been based on ownership of land, however under new set this has lost much of its edge. Now status markers are income, occupation and education. Modern occupation based in urban areas brings with it prestige and even there some are more prestigious than others. That is, white collar workers are on higher pedestal than blue collar workers. Hence the caste identity which earlier defined the level of interaction between villagers seems to have realigned itself. Rather now the new status markers are bringing out new rules of interaction. In a sense this has created a sort of egalitarian grounds for the people to interact, but at the same time created new types of social differentiation.

In this context, it must also be noted that though there has been changes in the occupation, association and at broader level changes in the life style of people but certain basic principles of caste differentiation still remains intact. Those premises are endogamy, rules of inter-dining i.e. commensality and ritual hierarchy at local level. The recent developments in rural-urban relationships however has highlighted the fact that same villagers who have settled in urban areas are not very sensitive to rules of inter-dining and ritual hierarchy. Moreover, the endogamy is still very much prevalent and in some communities where it was relaxed slightly earlier are trying to reinforce with higher zeal. All these changes in some institutions and continuing with traditional values in other institutions bring out the point that people in rural areas differentiate among several spheres of social system. That is, in some respects they accept changes easily whereas in some others there is quite a big resistance. But the fact of the matter is that as soon as changes are accepted in one domain it has its rippling effect in other domains as well, only the pace varies.

18.8 Cultural Influences

The urban common man's understanding of rural people and their lives is often an imagined one rather than based on the reality. They believe that in rural areas people are rooted in soil, not very rational, are superstitious and always live in joint family system. Moreover, it is believed that most of the things are 'clean' and are nearer to 'nature' as compared to the life in the cities or urban areas. In other words, rural areas are always portrayed as opposed to cities or towns. In the same vein, urban areas are viewed as den of corruption, where people lead immoral, artificial and amorphous life. If we closely analyse, such portrayals, it tells us a lot about perceived cultural differences

between an urban and a rural area. Further, this also hints towards almost complete isolation of rural from urban areas and vice-e-versa. In the above section we have discussed economic influence of urban areas and also social influences. This in our understanding is a tangible influence upon rural areas. In this section, we will discuss cultural influences which are to some extent tangible but mostly intangible.

In the category of tangible cultural influences comes that aspect of social life which is visible to the world outside. This category obviously is based on apparent cultural symbols, which people use to distinguish themselves from others. This includes linguistic usage, dress, eating habits, forms of salutation and others. Similarly, within the category of intangible cultural forms are those which can be felt and described but not seen. Both forms of cultural expressions are not mutually exclusive. Rather many a times each becomes the means of expressing the other.

One of the things quite visible in villages are that when migrant workers come to their native place, they still continue to use the linguistic terms of places where they work. For example, in villages of eastern UP, from where people mostly migrate to Mumbai, they continue using terms and proverbs used in that region. Many a times it is picked by other villagers as well. Similarly, people in villages of Bihar, continue using Punjabi mixed Hindi, they pick it while working in Delhi and neighboring region, where they mostly migrate. Sometimes, these terms gets accepted in the dialect of the workers native place.

All the regions of India and specifically rural areas have specific ways of dressing and salutation. However, with migrant workers criss-crossing the length and breath of country, there seems to have emerged a uniformity of dressing pattern. Even if we don't take into account the influence of western dresses among women, 'Salwar suit' has become a pan Indian dress. Similarly, different symbols are used to connote the marital status of a woman, but 'Mangal sutras' are again assuming the pan-Indian nature, which previously was confined to a few regions of south India. On a similar note, shirts and trousers are becoming a common dress for adolescents and adult men. What is being argued here is that at some level urban influences are having a homogenizing effect on villages. The result of this is that nuances of diverse cultures of villages are getting lost. To some extent this is due to the mass media, such as, television which portrays an array of images and life style which influence both urban, as well as, rural life.

Here arises a question, under urban influences, are villagers turning to consumerism? In other words, are they are they becoming consumers? Here we must distinguish between consumer of information and consumer of FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) and other consumables. As we all are aware, post 1990's there has been kind of media deluge in all the forms-print, IT developments and mass media. The reach and penetration of these media are increasing every day leaps and bounds. It is also a fact that content of most of these media forms are determined by people living in urban areas. This has a spatial constraint as well in the sense that most of the media houses are based in urban areas. In such a scenario, the messages sent across have larger urban context. For example, if we just take note of soap operas, except for 'Neem Ka Paed' and some others almost all of them are situated in urban context. Same is true for advertisements. Similarly, in the context of movies also, except handful movies such as 'Do Bigha Zameen', 'Mirch Masala', 'Nishant' or 'Upkar', most of the movies are urban based. The urban content of all these media forms informs people living in the villages about the life style and facilities available in the cities. These informations villagers consume and aspire to achieve. In this context, village study of Dipankar Gupta, becomes very important. Though in different context, he interestingly informs that one of the villages he was able to locate 'beauty parlor' run by

so-called lower caste people. In the same context it must be noted that in today's village that some form of consumerism is also taking place, which is indicated by proliferation of 'fake' branded articles which ranges from items like toothpaste to cosmetics. One of the important reasons for proliferation is that people are not able to afford 'original' items, but this does indicate towards the fact that people in rural areas do consume. Similar is the case with FMCG goods. Sensing these only FMCG giants like Hindustan Lever Limited (HLL) and Procter and Gamble (P&G) are drawing fresh marketing strategy to sell more goods. A bright example of this is villages of Punjab and Gujarat, where villagers almost possess all gadgets which any urban household has.

Reflection and Action 18.2

Watch a film or read a novel regarding the problem of rural migrants in urban cities; such as, Mumbai, Calcutta, Chennai etc.

Write an analytical report of one page on the plight of rural migrants in cities based on this film or book. Share your report with other students and your Academic Counsellors at your study centre.

Within intangible cultural influences of urban areas upon rural populace also comes in the domain of education. The apparent sign of this is the proliferation or mushrooming of 'English medium schools' in the villages. Some people believe that this is exploitation of the aspirations of poor villagers. In this context, it should be recognized that villagers, in course of their contact with urban areas as emigrant workers, or for business or as resident of fringe villages, have witnessed the role of English education in getting jobs. Hence they aspire to send their children to English medium schools. However, given the availability of resources in villages both in terms of infrastructure and human resources, only some of the elite of the villages are able to send their children to schools. In this regard important thing to remember is that there seems to be developing a synergy of needs of urban areas and aspirations of the villagers.

18.9 Conclusion

In this unit you learnt about the influence of the urban cities on rural life and vice versa. As is clear, it is the urban which has far greater impact on the rural than the rural on the urban. However, some of the major studies described in this unit; such as, of Srinivas, Mark Holmstrom, D. N. Majumdar and others clearly point out that the exchange of ideas, values, style of life between the urban and rural is a continuous process where some changes are apparent and can be viewed while many others are subtle and cannot be observed. Here we have explained to you that how migration of people from villages to cities and contact of people from the cities with the villages leads to a series of changes in the economy, occupational structure; polity; society and culture of the rural areas under the impact of urbanization.

18.10 Further Reading

Majumdar, D.N., Caste and Communication in an Indian Village, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1958.

Eames, E. 'Some Aspects of Urban Migration from a Village in North Central India', Eastern Anthropologist, Sep-Nov: 1954

Lambart, R.D., 'The Impact of Urban Society Upon Village Life', in R. Turner (ed.), India's Urban Future, University of California press, Berkeley, 1962

Srinivas, M.N., 'Caste in Modern India and Other Essays' Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1962.