

Quadrant II – Transcript and Related Materials

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Notes:

Urbanization: causes and Impacts

Introduction

Urbanization is the movement of people from rural to urban areas, and the result is the growth of cities. It is also a process by which rural areas are transformed into urban areas. Urbanization is a process that has occurred, or is occurring, in nearly every part of the world that humans have inhabited. People move into cities to seek economic opportunities. Urbanization is measured by the percentage of people, who are urban in a society, a region or the world. Urbanization, therefore, summarizes the relationship between the total population and its urban component. That is, it is mostly used as a demographic indicator or in the demographic sense, whereby, there is an increase in the urban population to the total population over a period of time.

The concept of urbanization has a dual meaning -demographically and sociologically. The demographic meaning refers to the increasing proportion of population in a country or a region that resides in cities. Sociologically, it refers to the behaviour, institutions and materialistic things that are identified as urban in origin and use. In other words, it is a social process which is the cause and consequence of a change in the man's way of life in the urban milieu.

In the urban areas, one can find a range of features like the loss of primary relationship and increasing secondary group relationship, voluntary associations, plurality of norms and values, weaker social control, increasing secularization and segmentary roles-a greater division of labour, greater importance of the mass media and the tendency for the urbanites to treat each other instrumentally. Sociologists believe that all these are caused due to large number of population, which is heterogeneous, having come from various backgrounds. Thus, the denser, larger and heterogeneous the community the more accentuated are the characteristics associated with the urban way of life. Another aspect is that in the social world, institutions and practices may be accepted and continued for reasons other than those that originally brought them into existence and that accordingly the urban mode of life may be perpetuated under conditions quite foreign to those necessary for its origin.

MEANING AND DEFINITION OF URBANIZATION:

John Palen in demographic terms defines Urbanization as 'an increase in population concentration; organizationally it is an alteration in structure and functions'.

Eldridge substantiates this view. According to him, urbanization involves two elements such as the multiplication of points of concentration and the increase in the size of individual concentration.

Thompson Warren in Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences states Urbanization is the movement of people from communities concerned chiefly or solely with agriculture to other communities, generally large whose activities are primarily concerned with the government, trade, manufacture or allied interests.

According to Anderson, 'Urbanization is not a one-way process, but it is a two way process. It involves not only movement from villages to cities and change from Agricultural occupation to business, trade, service and profession, but it involves change in the migrants' attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviour pattern. Thus, according to him, urbanization involves the following:

- Concentration of people at population densities higher than those associated with agricultural populations with only very rare exceptions on either side.
- Population shift (migration) from rural to urban areas.
- Occupational shift from agricultural to non-agricultural.
- Land-use shift from agricultural to non-agricultural.

From the above definitions, one can conclude that sociologists meant urbanization as a process of diffusion of certain modernizing traits or characteristics in a population. It is often considered to be a causal factor of modernization. Thus, urbanization can be summarized as a process which reveals itself through temporal, spatial and sectoral changes in demographic, social, economic, technological and environmental aspects of life in a given society.

CONSEQUENCES OF URBANIZATION

Any consideration of the impact of urbanism must take into account many variables. The behaviour and values of persons who may be affected by urban influence the geographical location of the persons, whether residing in cities or the hinterlands: the effects on the political, economic and occupational organization of

the cities or the hinterlands, the health, education and general welfare of individuals involved. It must also be kept in mind that the social and cultural systems of societies differ and that these differences invariably have a bearing on the interaction between a city and its hinterland. The impact of urbanization can be seen as societies become increasingly urbanized, social emphasis is placed on achievement rather than on ascription. Urbanization has brought about many changes in various spheres of urban life, namely physical, social, psychological and cultural aspects.

- The various aspects of urbanization include:
- Physical aspects
- Social aspects
- Economical aspects
- Cultural aspects