

# **URBAN PROBLEMS**

**E-Content : M.A IV ,2020**

**Paper - EC-1 (Urban Geography)**

By

Dr. Anuradha Sahay

Professor

Department of Geography

Patna University.

>.....

With rapid increasing urbanization crucial urban problems are appearing. India's major cities are facing social issues. These are manifested in the forms of housing problems, lack of drinking water facilities, water disposal, shortage of civic amenities and sanitation. Over population, urbanization and industrialization have contributed to the degradation of urban ecology.

An urban area is defined as one where more than 5000 people depend on non agricultural activities .In rural areas the land is limited and cannot support too many people. People thus move to urban areas in search of jobs, The people move to bigger cities for livelihood issues. Mumbai, Bangalore Delhi, Chennai and Hyderabad are most sort of destinations. Cities are unable to cope with the problems leading to rise in urban problems.

Some of the common problems faced by the cities :

## **(I) Housing**

Housing amenities for people in metropolitan region is a major problem today. With urbanization there is tremendous influx of people from adjoining areas and the problem become acute with industrial growth and the cities face unplanned growth. Slums grow with the growth of cities .They are marked by infirm structure, lack of drinking water, houses are separated by narrow lanes .

Generally the categories of residential areas in the city visible are :

1. Dense and fully developed central zone
2. Moderately dense middle zone
3. Partly built up outer zone
4. Suburban and satellite areas..

The central area of the city are often old and have traditional houses. It is a region of mixed landuse where houses ,shops and business activities are found together.High rise buildings are a common feature and nearly 70% are rented buildings. Residential buildings have sprung up in between middle and outer margins of the city.gradually a slum like condition grows there. Dwellings develop along main roads and they lack proper roads,drainage and and sewage development facilities . The all pervading vicious cycle of housing markets aas the demand and supply is faulty aggravates the housing problems.

## **(ii) Encroachment of surplus land**

As the city grows the agricultural land around the city is usurped for urban development and in its place houses, industrial units ,hotels schools and hospitals and nursing homes have sprung up . Thus fertile lands which which once were a support of millions of people in providing food is lost. As a result of physical, socio-cultural advancement, cities spread and encroach upon rural land.

### **(iii) Increase in land values**

Coupled with the fact that there is shortage of houses for urban dwellers the price of land has increased manifold. Most of the people who are unable to buy costly land end up buying small plots of uneconomic size. The high class people can afford to settle in fringe areas as well in in high rise buildings in the city. The poor class people are left to live in rented houses or in slums. With the rising trend in higher land value the problem of the problem of residential facility has gone out of control as they are exploited by middlemen and builders. People are thus forced to live in unhygienic places as slums.

### **(IV) Transport Problem**

Growth of metropolitan cities in India has not only increased the urban population but to and fro movement of people to the cities have also increased. There is stupendous growth of vehicles on urban roads. With vehicular increase road blockades,traffic jams.congestion

in streets ,noise pollution, energy loss, air pollution, road accidents and mental stress are now a common feature .Apart from increase in the vehicles ,transport demands have increased with increase in income and increase in commercial and industrial activities. The demand has outstripped road capacity. Greater congestion and delays have become widespread in cities and indicates the seriousness of the problem .The number of vehicles have increased from 48857 in the year 2000 to 182445 in 2013 (Govt .of India, Transport sector) Various types of vehicles ply on the roads as two wheelers, Car Jeeps, carts ,good vehicles etc. Absence of fast moving vehicles as metro services, fast trains and fly overs aggravate the problem . With time the no. of vehicles have increased in metro-cities as Bangaluru 5.95, Delhi 8.82 , Chennai 4.40 and in Mumbai 2.50 million in 2013. These four cities constitutes about 12.3% of the total number of vehicles in the country.

#### **(V) Condition of roads**

Cities in India rarely have good roads specially in the central parts of the city. The outer city roads under National Highways Authority are wide with provisions for maintainence. The roads in the internal parts of the city are in deplorable condition . The roads are narrow and winding and do not allow fast movement of traffic. People move to their work place a and return both at peak hours. Congestion on roads are inevitable.. Poorly maintained

roads, heavy traffic, water logging every year damages the road. The trend of trips and frequency are increasing with increase in income levels migration, participation of women and service oriented economy.

Off street parking is another problem faced by urbanites. There is acute shortage of parking spaces both on and off the streets in India .The problem is is acute in smaller cities. There is lackof multi –level parking in most of the cities hence off street parking produces problems in easy flow of traffic .

## **( VI )Shortage of Water**

Cities are growing both in size and population, especially large metropolitan cities have grown by leaps and bound . Cities are now facing acute problem . More than two billion people in cities do not have access to clean water. Both quality and quantity of water is important and it has no substitute. Water is important resource for sustainable urban development. Water is an important resource for sustainable urban development. Water has many uses as household use, Agriculture , industry and leisure . It is estimated that 250 million urban residents of world lack proper sanitation and 170 million have no access to nearby water resources. By 2050 expected increase of global water withdrawals is 55 % when the available water resource is 98 % of seawater. Water stress is increasing in China ,India and sub-Saharan Africa. Inadequate access to safe drinking water, access to sanitation, groundwater

over drafting, overuse and pollution are the main cause of water scarcity.

## **(VI) Electricity Problems**

Energy is a vital component of urban infrastructure. Energy in the form of electricity is of paramount importance in urban area. An integrated approach is to provide uninterrupted supply of energy, promoting energy conservation and minimization of energy cost. Energy is needed for lighting up the houses and offices, working of machines, Mobility construction works, manufacturing and information and communication technology. India's per capita power sector consumption around 940 KWhs is lowest in the world compared to China 4000 KWhs and 15000KWhs in developed countries(Report Energy Sector ). Insufficient power supply causes tremendous hardships in major cities .Increase in demand and poor quality of transformers, old industrial and domestic machines add to the crisis of energy .

## **(VIII) Health Problems**

Health implies a state of physical and mental fitness and a capability of functioning effectively for the good of society .We may also perceive health as a harmonious equilibrium between man and environment . Physical mental stress to which an individual is exposed to, may be detrimental to his well being. The human ecosystem includes in addition to natural environment, all the dimensions of man –made environment

and causes of health hazard. Distribution of disease in an area also deals accessibility to health care and spatial distribution of health care providers. The factors influencing spatial distribution of disease in a city or town may be physical, demographic, social and economic. Health has relation with nutrition, environmental degradation and urbanization. The existing health care facilities is negligible for poor families. Environmental degradation has turned out to be major health hazard of modern civilization because environmental pollution is a major by product of development which adversely affects health of people in urban areas.

### **(IX) Problem of Education**

Education is an important parameter of development of an urban area. Literacy is an important index of socio-economic and economic development which is essential for eradicating poverty, mental isolation and health hazards. It determines the nature of work as well as food habits, efficiency of work particularly its quality, living standard and health care. Traditions, discipline and culture are transmitted through educational institutions. Urban centres provide education through Government as well as private schools and colleges. Poor people send their children to Anganvadi and government school where mid-day meals are provided but the levels of education imparted is poor. Literacy among women are poor. They have no particular knowledge of nutrition, child care and healthy living environment. This applies to men also. Adult education is run by NGO's. Slum dwellers live in unhygienic

surroundings . They are illiterate and ignorant and hence continue to live in the same state for many generations. The urban poor is ignorant of urban laws and bye laws. hence the urban problems continue to prevail .

### **(X) Growth of Urban Economy**

Urban centres are focal points of productive activities and belong to two types of urban activities . – formal and informal . There is a steady flight of rural population from rural areas to urban areas in search of jobs and there is failure of supporting urban formal sector to create job opportunities . This has given rise to informal economy . According to ILO (1971) it can be defined as any economy without official registration .Urban people are engaged in retailing of goods on a smaller scale .Their goods or services change seasonally or periodically, Informal economy functions as economic life of the city . All economic activities are not illegal but they occupy the locational space illegally . These informal activities can be kept under :-

- 1) Micro-enterprise- These include clay pottery making, making toys, confectionary , tailoring, bakery and metal work.
- 2) Street economy- These informal jobs are shoe making ,repairing ,sale of fruits and dry fruits, vegetable selling, tea stalls ,betel shops ,sale of meat ,chicken and eggs. Magazine ,books , icecream , flower vendors and milk sellers .
- 3) Construction work – Day labourers ,brick layers ,electrician carpenter and painter .



4) Floating population or hawkers – In this category are included fruits and vegetable selling, cloth, readymade garments, decorative items , aluminum and steel utensil items items.

The economy is growing and becoming popular but this progressive increase of customers have begun to create traffic congestion and slow movement of vehicles. Fast food stalls, open challohs, solid waste, open defacation by informal workers are giving rise to air, water and land pollution. The urban areas are dotted with slum growth, urban poverty and unemployment are on increase .

## **(XI) Urban Pollution**

Our biosphere and ecosystem have the qualities of self sustainability. Nature maintains a balance in land, water, air And living organisms and any kind of imbalance will create environmental pollution. Due to rapid growth of population and economic development adversely affects the natural resources and environment . Pollution is an unfavourable alteration of our surroundings wholly or largely as a product of man's action . The physical and chemical changes in the environmental qualities being about pollution .

Pollution is a world wide phenomena. India ranks fifth biggest polluters (2010-2011). There are two kinds of polluters :- Bio-degradable and non-biodegradable.

**Non Degradable pollutants** are – Materials, waste glasses, plastics, phenolics, aluminium ,cans, Poisons include mercurial salts, pesticides etc.

**Biodegradable Pollutants** are – Domestic, Sewages ,Cloth , Paper, wood etc.

There are many types of pollution .We can categorise them as :-

- (1) Air pollution
- (2) Water pollution
- (3) Land pollution
- (4) Noise pollution

### **Air Pollution –**

The nature ,dimension and magnitude of air pollution depends on factors as residence ,time of pollutants in the air, sources of pollutants, nature of pollutants. Presence of sulphur di oxide,  $SO^2$ , Nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, carbon- di- oxide , volatile organic compounds. Particulate matter, chlorofluorocarbons, hydrocarbons, fluorides, ammonia, and other toxic materials are polluting the urban environment.

### **Water Pollution –**

Water pollution is yet another pollution affecting the urbanites . Water is consider polluted when chemicals, pathogens or contaminants are detected Availability of clear drinking water is getting rare. Drinking water of the city gets contaminated by sewage, biocides, industrial and medical wastes which enter ground as groundwater, river and water bodies. These contaminated water are a source of many waterborne diseases as dysentery ,cholera ,typhoid , liver problem ,jaundice, hepatitis B and other diseases.

## **Land Pollution –**

Land pollution involves the depositing of solid wastes mostly insanitary landfills which leads to the accumulation of chemicals in the ground. Dumping of wastes, garbage on roads ,along rivers also create a menace for urban dwellers. Foul smell, seepage of wastes that contaminate underground water. Medical wastes also contaminate the subsurface as they are non-biodegradable and hazardous. Plastic wastes also choke the drainage system and causes many diseases.

## **Noise Pollution-**

The urban dwellers are exposed to another problem in the form of noise pollution Different levels of noise affects not only the senses but nerves also. Human or machine created noise noise disrupts activity and balance of life. Traffic is the main source of pollution . Machinery ,motors , generators , loud speakers and compressors used in industrial and market areas create a lot of noise which is detrimental to human comfort .These noise sources are aircraft noise , railroad noise ,construction noise ,industrial noise and indoor noise .

Sound is measured in Leq .RESIDENTIAL AREAS SHOULD HAVE PERMISSIBLE NOISE LEVEL 55 Db (A) Leq, commercial zone 65 dB (A) Leq and industrial zone 75 dB (A). Deafness ,temporary or permanent is one of the most prevalent effects of noise pollution. Other problems hypertension ,sleep disturbances ,annoyance and mental disorders .

## **(X) Social Crime-**

Urban areas are marked by illiteracy and poverty in some sections of the society specially the poor slum dwellers . Slums are areas of delinquency crime and vices While some slums are not habitat of successful criminals ,it may be the habitat of Marginal type or hiding place of fugitives ..The slum areas are areas of social isolation ,loose morals and crime prone areas of urban habitat .

Many schemes of renewal programmes have been brought for benefit of urban dwellers.In 2005,JNNURM or Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission has been introduced to provide

- (i) Basic service for urban poor
- (ii) To provide affordable housing
- (iii) Generation of employment to urban poor
- (iv) Conversion of dry latrines into pour flush latrines
- (v) To improve governance through reforms. Several NGO's are also working for the betterment of urban living ,literacy among poor , female education ,sanitation issues etc .

X.....X