
Unveiling the Exclusion:

*Exploring India's Urbanization Experience and its Effect on
Marginalized Communities*

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Abstract

The rapid urbanization observed in India over the past decade, primarily in its large and medium-sized cities, has brought to the forefront the need to comprehend the dynamics of urban growth and inclusivity. As urban migration intensifies, it becomes crucial to examine the ways in which marginalized communities are often excluded from the benefits of the country's urban expansion. This Article delves into the avenues through which India's marginalized groups face exclusion from the evolving urban landscape.

Keywords: Urbanization, Marginalization, Segregation, Gentrification

Introduction

Historically marginalized communities such as Dalits and Muslims have endured systematic exclusion for generations. The caste-based social hierarchy has subjected Dalits to discrimination, and limited access to quality education, employment opportunities, and adequate housing. Moreover, Muslims have faced marginalization due to factors like economic disparities, religious bias, and inadequate representation in urban planning processes.

Muslims in India are the most Urbanised religious community. 35% of the Muslims live in towns in cities, urban Muslims are also comparatively poorer than rural Muslims. Muslims are also on the margins of the structure of socio-economic and political relevance in India. Incidents of violence post-independence have sustained the Dynamics of segregation. According to the Sachhar Committee report

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fearing security Muslims are increasingly resorting to living in ghettos across the country and it had serious consequences for the community. Ambedkar had asked Dalits to move towards urban India to avoid casteism but post-liberalisation, urbanism has failed to fructify this promise of emancipation For Dalits and Muslims and is to an extent responsible for their marginalization and segregation. In the context of contemporary urbanization, challenges persist for these communities. Land and housing policies often disproportionately affect them, resulting in inadequate living conditions and limited access to essential services. Furthermore, unequal educational opportunities and limited job prospects continue to perpetuate cycles of poverty and exclusion.

Economic Disparity in Urban Centres

The process of urbanization in India has led to both economic growth and increased inequality. Marginalized communities, like Dalits and Muslims, often face unequal access to resources, education, and employment due to rising property values and gentrification. Scholars like Thomas Piketty and David Harvey highlight the impact of these disparities. Piketty emphasizes the importance of equitable wealth distribution, while Harvey critiques how capitalism and urbanization concentrate power and wealth, often excluding vulnerable groups. Addressing these challenges requires inclusive urban planning and policies that ensure equal access to housing, education, and opportunities for all.

Gentrification, Beautification, and the Displacement of Poor

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) contributes to urban development through beautification projects, but these can lead to gentrification and the displacement of poor communities. The Delhi Development Authority (DDA), responsible for urban planning, has faced criticism for projects like the Turkman Gate redevelopment, which resulted in the displacement of long-standing low-income residents. To balance economic growth with community well-being, inclusive urban planning, and affordable housing options are essential to prevent the negative consequences of forced displacement and social exclusion.

Identity-Based Marginalisation in the Global Urban

Identity-based marginalization of Dalits and Muslims in urban India is a complex problem shaped by social, economic, and political factors. Arjun Appadurai's concepts, like "ethnoscapes" and "mediascapes," offer insights into how globalization and urbanization impact identity. In urban areas, discrimination and unequal access to resources affect these groups in areas like housing and education. Appadurai's ideas help us understand the intersection of urbanization and marginalization, emphasizing the need for inclusive development that promotes equality and social cohesion.

Arjun Appadurai's concepts provide insights into how globalization and cultural shifts intersect with these dynamics, influencing perceptions and interactions within

societies. Promoting awareness, education, and inclusive policies is essential to addressing this problem and creating more equitable and harmonious societies.

Changing Occupational Pattern Post Liberalisation

The economic competition and changing occupational patterns among Muslims and Dalits in urban India are significant aspects of social transformation. Over the years, both groups have experienced shifts in their traditional occupations due to urbanization, economic changes, and evolving social dynamics.

Historically, Dalits were relegated to low-status and menial jobs due to the caste system, while Muslims were often engaged in various trades and crafts. However, in urban areas, economic opportunities have expanded, leading to changes in occupational choices for both groups. Urbanization has brought about shifts from agrarian-based work to jobs in manufacturing, services, and the informal sector. Despite these changes, both Muslims and Dalits often continue to face challenges. Discrimination, bias, and lack of access to quality education and resources can hinder their upward mobility. Additionally, traditional norms and societal perceptions might persist, affecting their ability to access certain jobs or roles.

Efforts to address these challenges include providing equal access to education, skill development, and training programs. Creating a supportive environment that ensures fair employment opportunities and reduces bias is crucial. Recognizing and valuing the diverse skills and talents of individuals from these communities can contribute to a more inclusive and economically vibrant urban society.

Migration of Disadvantaged Communities

Communities in India to urban areas is a significant phenomenon that has both positive and negative implications. Many individuals and families from rural or marginalized backgrounds move to cities in search of better economic opportunities, education, and improved living conditions. However, upon arrival in urban areas, these communities often face various challenges. Limited access to affordable housing, quality healthcare, education, and formal employment opportunities can exacerbate their disadvantaged status. Overcrowded and informal settlements lacking basic amenities can lead to health hazards and social disparities.

While urban migration provides an avenue for upward mobility, it's crucial to ensure that the process is accompanied by proper support systems. Comprehensive urban planning should prioritize the inclusion of these communities, considering their unique needs and circumstances. This involves providing affordable housing, access to healthcare and education, and opportunities for skill development and formal employment.

In addressing these challenges, collaboration between government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local communities is essential. Empowering disadvantaged communities through targeted policies and initiatives can contribute

to their integration into urban life, fostering a more equitable and sustainable urban environment.

Conclusion and Way Forward

To address these issues effectively, a theoretical framework should embrace the complexities of the problem. It must encompass aspects such as unequal land distribution, inadequate housing policies, and the interplay between economic development and social integration. Moreover, a gendered perspective could shed light on how exclusion disproportionately impacts women within urban poor communities. In the pursuit of such a framework, interdisciplinary collaboration becomes crucial. Sociologists, urban planners, economists, and policymakers need to pool their expertise to unravel the intricate web of exclusion. Quantitative and qualitative methodologies should be employed to capture the multifaceted nature of the problem and to generate insights that can drive evidence-based policies.

Bridging the research gap on the exclusionary dimensions of urbanization in India is essential. A robust theoretical framework, considering diverse communities and their unique challenges, will enable a more nuanced understanding of the problem. By addressing these complexities, policymakers can formulate interventions that ensure urbanization benefits all strata of society, mitigating the adverse effects faced by the urban poor and fostering inclusive, sustainable development.

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