



THE RECENT TREND OF URBANIZATION OF SOME DISTRICTS OF SOUTH BENGAL: A GEOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Urbanization and modernization are closely interlinked to each other; hence, they are now at the forefront of social sciences research. The most important aspects of worldwide post-world war demographic incidence are associated with the speedy growth of urban areas in developing nation. However, the pattern of urban growth varies according to the spatio-temporal scale. Therefore, studying the trend and pattern of Urbanization in spatio-temporal variation is essential for any urban development planning. Urban Growth gives rise to various types of economic; industries benefit from the concentration of suppliers and consumers, which allow saving in communication and transport costs and exerts an adverse effect on the environment. In India, the highest urbanized state is Maharashtra, whereas the rate of Urbanization is comparatively less in West Bengal in respect to other Indian states. The variable rate in the urbanization process is found in different parts of the state, too—the study comprises some districts of the southern part of West Bengal. This present paper is a humble attempt to identify the recent trend of Urbanization in the area under investigation.

Keywords: *Urbanization, Decadal urban growth, Urban region, Census Town, Urban density, Urban population*

Introduction

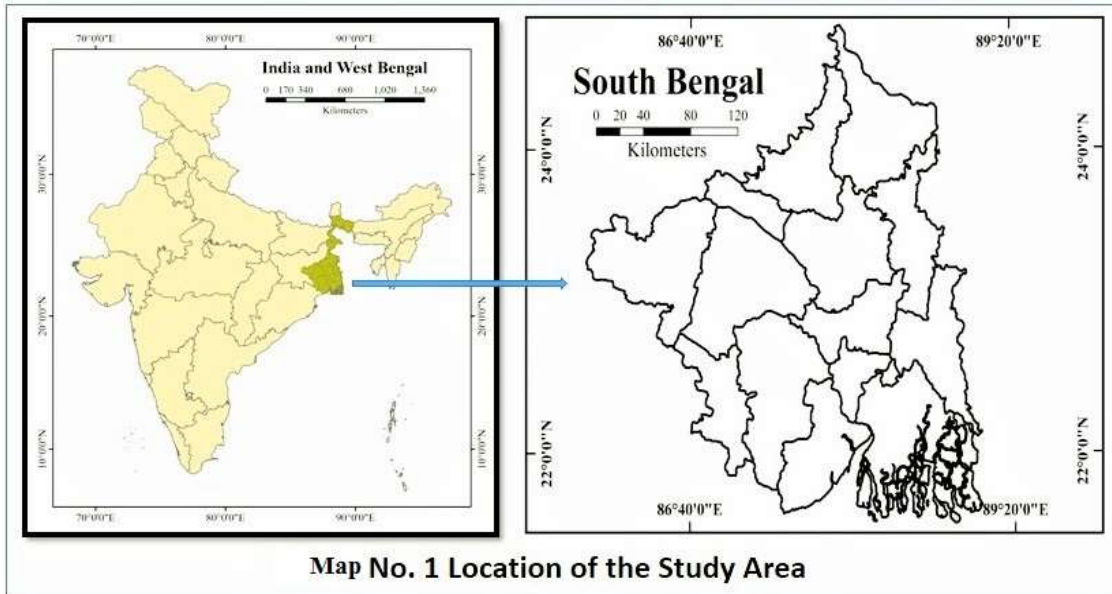
Urbanization is the continual process through which people migrate from rural to urban locations. It is a massive physical and socioeconomic event that is occurring at an unprecedented magnitude and rate throughout the globe (Pickett et al., 1997). It is primarily the process by which towns and cities get developed and grow in importance as more people move to urban centers to live and work. India's adoption of a mixed economy, which led to the emergence of the private sector, accelerated urbanization after the country attained independence.

India is experiencing rapid urbanization. According to the Indian Census 1901, 11.4 percent of the country's population were lived in urban areas. According to the 2001 census, this figure was 28.53 percent; by the 2011 census, it had risen to 31.16 percent. Massive social, economic, and environmental changes brought on by urbanization provide an opportunity for sustainability in the form of improved resource efficiency, more sustainable land use, and the preservation of natural ecosystems' biodiversity. Yet, today, no part of the World is devoid of human footprint. The present study is an endeavor to explain the recent urban growth pattern of some districts of south Bengal.

The Study area

This region's latitudinal and longitudinal extensions are $85^{\circ} 50' E$ to $89^{\circ} 15' E$ and $21^{\circ} 25' N$ to $24^{\circ} N$, respectively. South Bengal has 15 districts and an area of almost 74018 square kilometers. The research area is comprised of twelve districts of West Bengal, India, including Birbhum, Hugli, South Twenty-Four Parganas, Nadia, North Twenty-Four Parganas, Paschim Medinipur, Purba Medinipur, Murshidabad, Puruliya, Haora, Ba

nkura, Bardhaman, and. The physiography of this area can be roughly split into four sections: the coastal plain, the low to medium-high plateau, and the Gangetic delta.



Objectives

The present study has the following purposes -

- To find out the nature of the urbanization scenario in South Bengal
- to make a comparison between the rate of Urbanization among the districts of South Bengal, and
- to identify the causes of the slow growth of Urbanization in the Study Area.

Data and Methodology

The study work is mostly based on the secondary data sources, i.e., data gathered from secondary sources such as the Census Handbook of India, 1961-2011, etc. In addition, data from NRDMS Bankura, Census of India 1961 to 2011, District Statistical Hand Books, Human Development Report of Districts under Study, data from the Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, the District Industrial Centre, and Human Development Report of West Bengal (2004), among others, were collected from the relevant government agencies.

Administrative and thematic maps of various scales were compiled from numerous sources, including the Census of India and the National Atlas and Thematic Mapping Organization, among others. The secondary data are further contrasted and validated through a pilot survey and field observation, which eventually illustrate the job's overall structure.

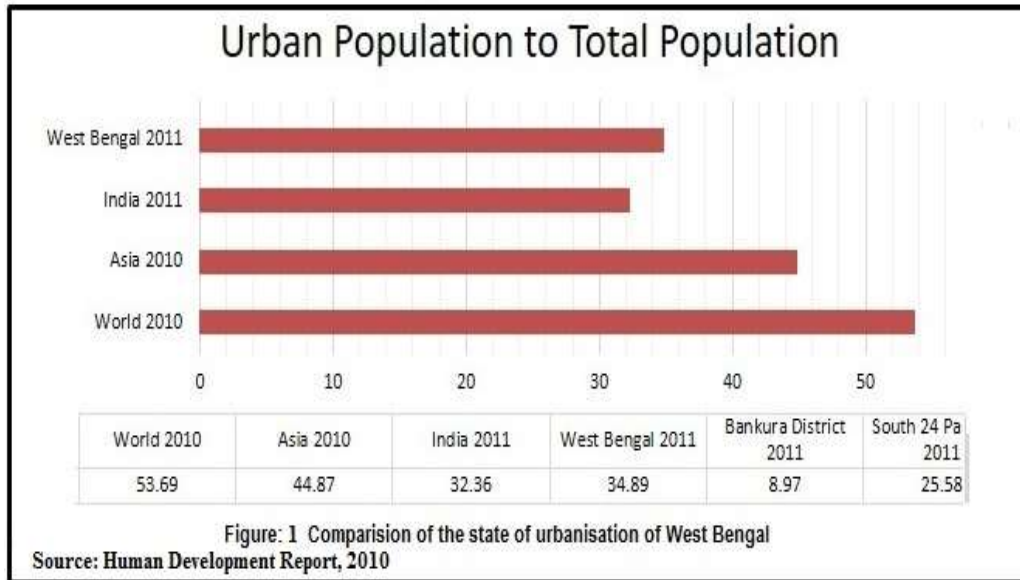
The methodology of the present work includes collecting data, applying specific statistical techniques to determine the intra-district variability of the urban trend in Bankura and South 24 Parganas District, and applying specific cartographic techniques to more clearly depict the results of the investigation. The technique is structured as follows:

- Collection of data from District Statistical Handbooks and Various Census Handbooks to compare the progress of Urbanization in the chosen districts.
- Calculation of $(u/p)100$, $(r/p)100$, and $(u/r)100$ to determine the magnitude of urbanization. In order to compare this district's urbanization rate to that of other districts in West Bengal, the raw data were transformed into a standard score (i.e., Z score).
- Compute "Z-score" to compare the pace of Urbanization in Bankura and South 24 Pargana District to that of the other districts in West Bengal
- Linear transformation of the data to determine the decadal growth rate and various demographic characteristics of the studied towns.

Urbanization is the demand of this century

The urbanization process is influenced not only by the rise in population in urban areas but also by the socioeconomic state of the society and the rate of development of the urban region in question. As a result, the development of Urbanization is inextricably linked to the growth of the manufacturing industry, commerce, and the improvement of transportation and industries. It is determined by the society's physical, socioeconomic, political, demographic, cultural, and technological aspects. Urbanization is a dynamic socioeconomic force that includes an urban component that is greatly influenced by temporal and geographical variation (Paul & Chatterjee, 2012).

Urbanization spread fast throughout the Western World, and since the 1950s, it has also begun to take root in emerging nations. Cities housed 15% of the global population in the twentieth century. According to the United Nations Human Development Report 2010, the year 2007 marked a watershed moment when more than 50% of the global population lived in urban cities for the first time, and by 2050, the whole World's population will be urbanized.



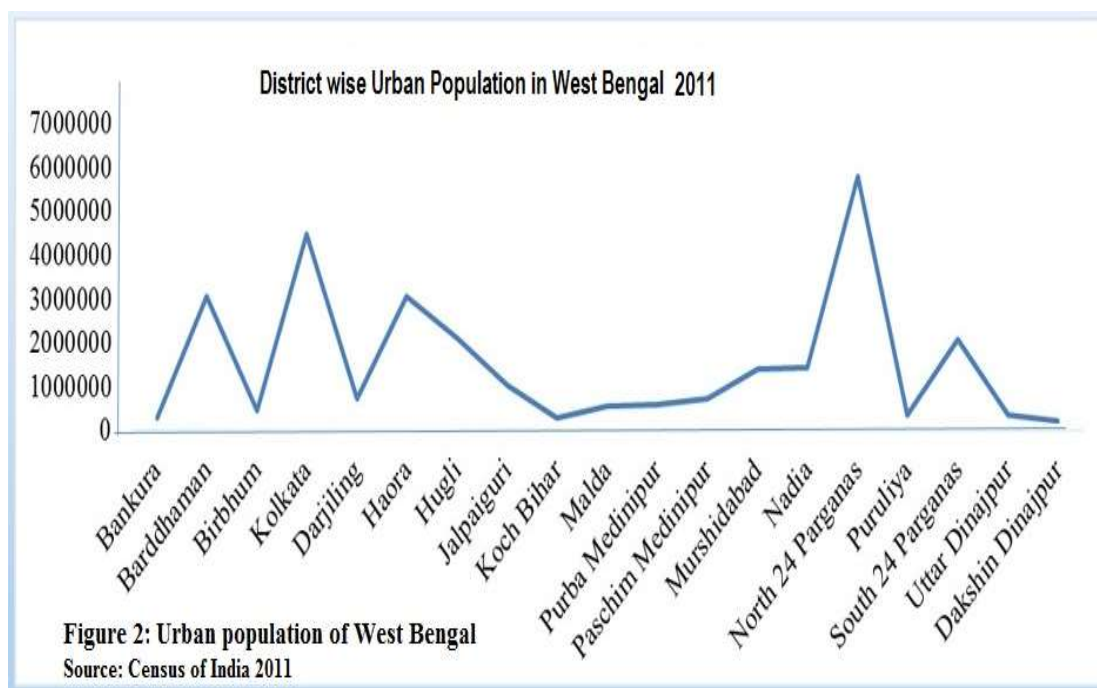
The massive and well-planned towns of the Indus Valley Civilization, such as Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, which thrived around 3000 B.C., are the earliest evidence of Urbanization in India. Pataliputra, Ujjain, Banaras, Vijayanagar, and Mysore all experienced periods of prosperity in the middle ages. Both Muslims and the British had a hand in shaping the development of urban India. In the contemporary era, several cities have emerged based on industry, trade, and natural resources, and Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata are among the most notable of them. This emerging type suggests that Urbanization in India is proceeding rapidly in comparison to its ancient and medieval periods, but at a slower rate than in the West (Figure No.2). The percentage of the Indian population living in urban areas has increased from 11.4% in the 1901 census to 28.53% in the 2001 census and is now at 34% in 2017 according to research by The World Bank (UN DE).

Category	Z Score	Number of Districts	Name of the Districts
Very High	> +0.75	3	North 24 Parganas, Howrah, Kolkata
High	0.75 to 0.25	2	Darjeeling, Hooghly
Medium	0.25 to -0.25	3	Nadia, South 24 Parganas, Paschim Medinipur
Low	-0.25 to -0.75	9	Jalpaiguri, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, Maldah, Murshidabad, Birbhum, Purulia, Purba Medinipur, Burdwan
Very Low	< -0.75	2	Cooch Behar, Bankura

Table No. 1 District wise Level of Urbanization in West Bengal

Source: Computed by the Author

The 2011 census in India revealed that compared to the other states in India, West Bengal has a deficient degree of Urbanization. Its urban population in 2011 was just 31.81%, representing a small rise compared to the figure from the census in 2001, which was 27.9% of the total population in urban areas. Nevertheless, a substantial amount of variety can be discovered between the several districts of West Bengal. The district that encompasses Kolkata, North 24 Parganas, and Howrah has a very higher level of Urbanization. A high degree of Urbanization



can be found in the districts of Darjeeling and Hooghly, while a medium level of Urbanization can be found in the districts like Nadia, South 24 Parganas, and Paschim Medinipur. The other districts, including Uttar and Dakshin Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, Malda, Birbhum, Purba Medinipur, Murshidabad, Purulia, and Burdwan, have a low degree of Urbanization. In particular, the districts of Cooch Behar and Bankura have a deficient level of Urbanization (TableNo.1 and Figure No. 2).

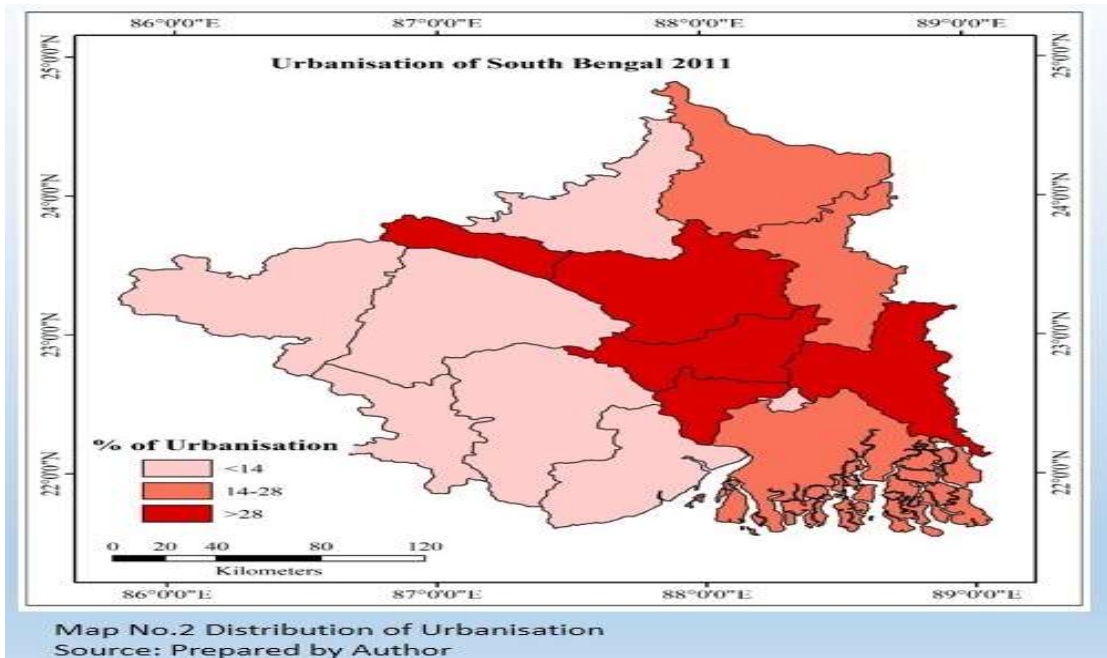
Results and Discussion

In comparison to the total population living in the district as a whole, the North 24 Parganas area had, both in 2001 and 2011, the most significant percentage of people living in urban

areas. On the other hand, the district of Bankura has the lowest reported percentage of its inhabitants living in urban areas. Howrah district has the most significant rate of urban population increase, whereas Paschim Medinipur district has the lowest urban population growth rate.

Name of the District	Percentage of Urban Population to Total Population (in 2001)	Percentage of Urban Population to Total Population (in 2011)	Difference/Growth
Murshidabad	12.49	19.78	7.29
Birbhum	8.57	12.8	4.23
Burdwan	36.94	39.87	2.93
Nadia	21.27	27.81	6.54
North 24 Parganas	54.3	57.03	2.73
South 24 Parganas	15.73	25.61	9.88
Hooghly	33.47	38.62	5.15
Howrah	50.36	63.3	12.94
Bankura	7.37	8.36	0.99
Purulia	10.07	12.75	2.68
Paschim Medinipur	11.9	12.03	0.13
Purba Medinipur	8.29	11.65	3.36

Table No. 2 Decadal Growth of Urban Population of the districts of South Bengal
 Source: Census of India, 2011



The male-to-female literacy rate is another crucial factor that contributes to Urbanization. The urbanization rate is relatively high in the Gangetic plain, even though it is relatively low in the western and southern parts of the state. This is because industrial development and advancements in transport systems have occurred in the Gangetic plain.

Major Findings

The rate and pattern of Urbanization in South Bengal's various districts are not consistent with one another. The percentage of the total population that is urban is relatively high in the district that is located in the Gangetic plain. But on the other hand, the expansion of Urbanization is relatively moderate in the district that is located in the western portion of the country. The

district of Howrah has the most significant urban population, with 63.3% of population living in urban places. In contrast, the district of Bankura has the lowest urban population, with just 8.36% of people living in urban areas, making it the least urbanized district in South Bengal. Since the country's independence, district like Hooghly, Howrah, North and South 24 Pargana, and Burdwan have had higher urbanization rates than Puruliya, Murshidabad, Birbhum, Paschim, and Purba Medinipur. The district of Bankura in South Bengal is the least urbanized of all the districts in the region, and it is classified as belonging to the shallow urbanized zone within the five categories of Urbanization. In contrast, the district of Howrah in West Bengal is classified as belonging to the highly urbanized zone.

Conclusion

The report includes a comparison of the levels of Urbanization in each of the districts in South Bengal. According to the aforesaid findings of the current study, the level and rate of the urbanization process are significantly lower in the districts that are located in the western part of South Bengal since the country's independence when compared to the districts that are located in the southern and southeastern parts of South Bengal. These modest advancements are mostly caused by low industrialization, a lack of infrastructure amenities, a weak transit system, and other factors. Therefore, to eradicate the backwardness of the districts and have a comprehensive future of urban development, the district of South Bengal needs to have balanced Urbanization. It can be accomplished through prudent urban planning and management, boosting the economic base, and receiving special attention from the government.

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