An International Edition

ISBN: 978-93-49938-55-7

Society, People and Urban Transformation

Editors

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Dr. Madhuri Rahul Gulave
Dr. Neethu Mary Tomy
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Nature Light Publications

An International Edited Book *ISBN-978-93-49938-55-7*

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Published By

Nature Light Publications, Pune

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First Edition: December, 2025

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Published by:
Nature Light Publications, Pune
309 West 11, Manjari VSI Road, Manjari Bk.,
Haveli, Pune- 412 307.
Website: www.naturelightpublications.com
Email: naturelightpublications@gmail.com
Contact No: +91 9822489040 / 9922489040

Preface

The twenty-first century is witnessing unprecedented transformations in society, driven largely by rapid urbanization, technological advancement, environmental challenges, and shifting social structures. Cities have emerged not only as centers of economic activity but also as dynamic spaces where social relations, cultural identities, governance mechanisms, and ecological systems intersect. Against this backdrop, the edited volume ***Society, People and Urban Transformation*** *bring together diverse scholarly perspectives to examine the complex and multidimensional nature of urban change and its implications for people and society in the Indian context.*

This book is an interdisciplinary effort that explores urban transformation through the lenses of sociology, economics, environmental studies, gender studies, public policy, psychology, geography, and technology. The contributions collectively highlight how urbanization reshapes everyday life—affecting consumer behaviour, education, mental health, migration patterns, social structures, and environmental sustainability. At the same time, the volume critically examines how communities respond to these transformations through resilience, innovation, and collective action.

The chapters address a wide range of contemporary issues. Several contributions focus on urban governance, infrastructure, and digital transformation, examining themes such as consumer behaviour in urbanizing Maharashtra, the role of digital technology in the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020, and GIS-based planning for electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Other chapters emphasize social inclusion and empowerment, including analyses of gender equality, women's empowerment, digital inclusion through public libraries, and the mental health resilience of street entrepreneurs in Mumbai.

Environmental sustainability forms a crucial pillar of this volume. Chapters on urban ecosystems, biodiversity loss, urban jungles, environmental

awareness initiatives, and sustainable agricultural transformation in Telangana underscore the urgent need to balance development with ecological responsibility. The rural–urban continuum is also explored through studies on migration, agrarian change, rural product exhibitions, and urban population growth, offering insights into how urbanization affects both rural and urban spaces.

Geographically, the volume draws extensively from case studies across Maharashtra, Telangana, and other parts of India, grounding theoretical discussions in empirical realities. This localized focus enriches the broader discourse on urban transformation by presenting region-specific challenges and pathways for inclusive and sustainable development.

Society, People and Urban Transformation is intended for researchers, academicians, students, policymakers, urban planners, and development practitioners. By fostering dialogue across disciplines and perspectives, the book aims to contribute meaningfully to the understanding of urban transformation and its social consequences, while also offering insights for shaping more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable urban futures.

The editor(s) sincerely acknowledge the valuable contributions of all authors, whose rigorous research and thoughtful analyses have made this volume possible. It is hoped that this book will stimulate further research and informed debate on the evolving relationship between society, people, and the urban world.

Editors

Key Notes

Urban transformation can be defined as the renewal, replacement and development of existing structures and areas in a city. This process is a construction strategy that aims to improve existing structures and areas in cities in terms of physical, social, economic and environmental aspects. Urban transformation generally includes projects such as the renovation of old or empty buildings in cities, the construction of new buildings and the restructuring of existing buildings. Urban transformation aims to improve living conditions in cities and are therefore very important.

Society and urban transformation are deeply linked, with rapid city growth (urbanization) driving massive social changes like shifting family structures, new social classes, increased individualism, and cultural blending, while also creating challenges such as inequality and segregation, necessitating inclusive planning to leverage diversity for sustainable, prosperous urban futures. This transformation reshapes identities, values, and interactions, moving from traditional rural norms towards modern, complex urban lifestyles, often blending old and new.

While urbanization is theoretically viewed as a positive change, Maharashtra's experience demonstrates that rapid, unplanned growth exacerbates critical socio-spatial challenges. The concentration of population often outpaces the corresponding growth of employment opportunities, leading to rising urban poverty and unemployment. This kinetic process of expansion has resulted in chronic housing shortages, intense strain on public service infrastructure, and rising economic inequalities. Furthermore, environmental threats are escalating, the Mumbai-Pune-Nashik mega-city region is recognized as being highly exposed to pluvial flooding, a hazard that is intensified by climate change and rapid, unmanaged urban settlement growth.

The momentum of urbanization is immense, driven largely by sustained internal migration. The rate of migration from rural to urban is very extreme.

This growth trajectory is sustained by the concentration of economic opportunities, including guaranteed employment, access to education, and the perceived high standard of living, which collectively draw substantial migration streams both from rural areas within Maharashtra and across the entire country. Crucially, the urbanization pattern is profoundly heterogeneous. The growth is heavily skewed toward the western corridor, with the highest concentration observed in cities like Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur, Nashik, Vasai Virar, and Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, all boasting populations exceeding one million. Mumbai and its suburbs are recognized as functionally 100 percent urbanized.

Cities affect every person's life, yet across the traditional divides of class, age, gender and political affiliation, armies of people are united in their dislike of the transformations that cities have undergone in recent times. The physical form of the urban environment is not a designer add-on to real social issues, it is a central aspect of the social world. Yet in many people's experiences, the cumulative impacts of recent urban development have created widely un-loved urban places. To work towards better-loved urban environments, we need to understand how current problems have arisen and identify practical action to address them.

Urban Transformations examines the crucial issues relating to how cities are formed, how people use these urban environments and how cities can be transformed into better places. Exploring the links between the concrete physicality of the built environment and the complex social, economic, political and cultural processes through which the physical urban form is produced and consumed.

India's rapid urbanization is key to its economic future but faces challenges in balancing growth with equity, requiring inclusive policies to manage disparities shaped by class, caste, and gender. Urbanization is happening differently today than in the past and occurring most rapidly in places with the fewest resources. Traditional approaches are not able to keep up, leaving billions of people with poor access to basic necessities, dragging down

economies and damaging the environment.

The book focuses on some key questions, examining the most helpful conceptual framework for thinking about the processes of urban transformation. how this framework can help us to understand how these processes generate, through speculative markets, Digital, Infrastructure, and Lifestyle Perspectives, Policies, Challenges, and Pathways for Inclusive Development, Environmental Awareness for a Sustainable Future, Agrarian Transformation in various states in India, Impact of Rapid Urbanization on Urban Ecosystems and Biodiversity in India. Migration, Urbanization, and Global Mobility in Indian Perspective, Urbanization its Causes, Impact and Challenges in Indian Society, Urban Jungles, Social Theories and the Changing Urban Landscape, Digital Technology Transformation and new education policy. All authors are concluding and identifying the most promising features of urban transformation and working practices through which users and professionals might work together to develop better-loved urban transformation process in the future.

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Society People and Urban Transformation

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Article DOI Link: https://zenodo.org/uploads/17845928

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.17845928

Abstract

This study presents a systematic meta-synthesis of professional and academic literature examining the evolving role of public libraries in the 21st century. Once primarily seen as repositories of knowledge, libraries have transformed into dynamic, community-centered institutions addressing critical societal challenges. Drawing on a curated body of 30 scholarly and professional sources, this research explores three interconnected domains of library impact: fostering community engagement, promoting digital inclusion, and empowering marginalized populations. The findings reveal that libraries have emerged as trusted civic hubs, functioning as essential components of the social safety net, facilitating economic growth through digital literacy, and advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion both externally and internally. Case examples highlight innovative partnerships, targeted digital skills programs, and responsive service models tailored to local needs. The analysis underscores the necessity for adaptive strategies, policy

recognition, and sustainable funding to strengthen libraries' capacity to meet complex community needs. Recommendations are provided for policymakers, administrators, and researchers to support the continued evolution of libraries as agents of social transformation.

Keywords: Public Libraries, Community Engagement, Digital Inclusion, Marginalized Groups, Equity and Diversity, Civic Infrastructure.

Introduction

The modern public library, a cornerstone of civic infrastructure, has long been recognized as a repository of human knowledge and a gateway to education. This traditional role, however, has evolved significantly in response to the complex challenges of the 21st century. The historical vision of libraries, such as Andrew Carnegie's support for institutions that fostered immigrant self-education and civic assimilation, has laid the groundwork for a more dynamic and expansive contemporary mission (Wilson & Johnson, 2022). Today, libraries are not merely static collections but vibrant and trusted community hubs that actively address a wide range of social, economic, and civic issues.

Contemporary society is increasingly defined by social polarization, the persistence of the digital divide, and deepening systemic inequalities. In this environment, the library's function has expanded to encompass a critical, multifaceted role that extends far beyond the provision of books. Libraries have become essential pillars for fostering community engagement, promoting digital inclusion, and empowering historically marginalized and vulnerable populations. These three functions are deeply interconnected, with activities in one area often producing synergistic outcomes in another.

The purpose of this study is to provide a systematic meta-synthesis of existing professional and academic literature to explore this evolving role. By analyzing a curated body of research and professional reports, this paper aims to identify the key strategies, programs, and organizational characteristics that define the library's multifaceted impact. The analysis will not only document the services libraries provide but also uncover the underlying principles, partnerships, and organizational factors that enable them to serve as catalysts for positive social change.

Need for Study (Literature Review)

The paradigm of the public library has shifted dramatically from a passive "quiet repository" to a "dynamic hub for community engagement, learning, and collective action". The COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, underscored this transformation as libraries adapted to an unprecedented crisis. They maintained their function as "critical connective tissue" by expanding Wi-Fi access into parking lots and offering Chromebooks for check-out to ensure continued access

to vital resources. This evolution has necessitated a re-evaluation of the library's core functions and a more precise definition of its new roles.

Defining the Core Concepts

A comprehensive understanding of the library's contemporary mission requires a clear definition of its core concepts.

Community Engagement: The American Library Association (ALA) defines community engagement as a collaborative process involving library patrons, residents, students, or partner organizations to address local issues for the "betterment of the community" (American Library Association, n.d.). A foundational principle of this approach is "listening" to community needs and aspirations, and employing an "asset-based community development" model that leverages existing community strengths rather than focusing on deficits.

Digital Inclusion: Digital inclusion is a multifaceted concept that goes beyond simply providing internet access. It is built on four key pillars: accessible public technology infrastructure, diverse digital content and services, robust digital literacy training, and programs that support civic, educational, health, and employment goals. The expansion of internet access has also positioned libraries as hubs of economic community growth, where digital skills development directly contributes to local economies.

Empowering Marginalized Groups: This concept refers to the library's intentional efforts to provide equitable access and support to socially vulnerable populations. This includes a wide range of communities, such as immigrants, individuals experiencing homelessness, and those with disabilities or low incomes. Empowerment is addressed not only through external services but also through an internal commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within the library profession itself, which has historically been challenged by a lack of diversity.

While a significant body of literature exists on each of these topics individually, a comprehensive synthesis of how these three roles are interconnected and mutually reinforcing is often lacking. The need for this study is justified by the opportunity to integrate these disparate findings and reveal the synergistic relationships between community-centered methods, digital services, and targeted empowerment programs. For instance, the analysis aims to demonstrate how a community engagement initiative focused on listening can lead to the development of a targeted digital literacy program, which in turn empowers a specific marginalized group.

Objectives

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To investigate the foundational principles and practical strategies libraries use to foster community engagement.
- To analyze the multifaceted role of libraries in promoting digital inclusion, including its economic and social dimensions.
- To explore the specific programs and organizational efforts libraries undertake to empower historically marginalized and socially vulnerable groups.
- To identify the key partnerships, organizational characteristics, and internal cultural factors that influence the effectiveness of these efforts.

Methodology

This paper employs a systematic qualitative meta-synthesis of existing professional and academic literature to explore the role of libraries in contemporary society. The research design is not a primary study involving new data collection but a high-level analysis of a pre-selected body of professional and academic work. The methodology is appropriate for exploring a topic when a broad, synthesized understanding is needed, especially when the original sources have employed diverse research designs, such as case studies, surveys, and exploratory analyses.

The data for this analysis is derived exclusively from a set of 30 provided documents, which includes academic papers, professional association publications, and policy reports. These documents represent a range of sources, from the American Library Association to government agencies like the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

The data analysis plan followed a thematic approach. Each document was systematically reviewed and coded to identify key concepts, strategies, programs, partnerships, and challenges. These codes were then clustered into thematic categories aligned with the study's research objectives. This process allowed for the integration of findings from various sources, revealing connections and deeper meanings that may not be apparent in any single document.

Results and Findings

Fostering Community Engagement

- **Foundational Principles and Practice:** Community engagement is a collaborative process that starts with listening to community needs. This is achieved through formal methods, such as surveys of both library and non-library users, and through the use of advisory groups and public meetings. Libraries are uniquely positioned to serve as venues for engagement due to their reputation as trusted, neutral, and accessible public spaces. This trust is evident in instances where libraries serve as emergency shelters or civic

venues, such as the San Diego Public Library, which collected 70% of the county's ballot drop-off votes during the 2020 election cycle (San Diego Public Library, n.d.).

A key conceptual framework for engagement is the "Turning Outward" approach, which encourages libraries to proactively address community issues by focusing on community aspirations. This leads to the "co-creation" of library services, a highly effective strategy for developing new programs that directly reflect the needs and strengths of the community.

- **Programs and Initiatives:** Libraries facilitate a wide range of engagement initiatives, including hosting community-focused events, cultural exhibitions, and programs that promote the arts. They also provide safe spaces for residents to come together to discuss challenging or difficult topics. An action-oriented approach, which provides participants with practical steps to contribute to their communities, transforms passive learning into active citizenship. This is often facilitated through collaborative programming, such as intergenerational dialogues and cultural exchanges, which help build empathy and social cohesion.
- **The Centrality of Partnerships:** The success of community engagement initiatives is heavily reliant on a dense network of partnerships. Surveys show that a high percentage of libraries partner with local organizations and collaborate with local leaders to solve community problems. These collaborations extend to diverse sectors, including health departments, social service agencies, educational institutions, and disaster relief organizations. For example, a library in Pima County, Arizona, partnered with the local public health department to employ a public health nurse who provided basic health services such as influenza vaccines. This demonstrates a systemic shift in the library's function. The institution is no longer simply an educational or cultural center but a critical component of the community's social safety net, providing essential services that are often under strain elsewhere. This expanded role necessitates new funding models and staff training that go beyond traditional library science to address public well-being.

Promoting Digital Inclusion

- **Addressing the Digital Divide: From Access to Literacy:** Public libraries are at the forefront of digital inclusion efforts, providing the foundational infrastructure necessary to bridge the digital divide (American Library Association (n.d.-b). This includes free Wi-Fi, public computers, and access to digital content and services. Beyond hardware and access, libraries are crucial for developing digital literacy skills (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2023). This is a vital service, as many

people, especially those who are already disadvantaged, lack the basic abilities to engage in their daily lives in the new digital economy. Programs in Manchester and Leeds, for example, have been designed to serve individuals without even the most basic digital skills, a gap often overlooked by other training providers (DCMS Libraries, 2025).

- **The Economic Dimension of Digital Inclusion:** The provision of digital resources has a significant economic dimension. Libraries have become "hubs of economic community growth" by offering services that help people access education, enter the workforce, and create or sustain small businesses (Community Commons n.d.). A 2020 survey found that a substantial portion of library users leveraged library resources to achieve specific goals, such as seeking employment or improving language skills. The causal link between a lack of digital skills and existing vulnerabilities such as low income or remote living is significant. By providing targeted digital literacy training, libraries serve as a social justice intervention that helps to break the cycle of disadvantage, leading to greater self-sufficiency and improved quality of life (OCLC, n.d.).
- **Targeted Digital Literacy:** Programs and Outcomes Libraries are continually adapting their digital literacy programs to address contemporary needs. This includes offering classes on topics such as artificial intelligence (AI), providing training on online safety and scams, and creating resources like curated book lists and movie nights to demystify new technologies (The WebJunction Community, 2023). The Santa Barbara Public Library, for example, received funding to conduct workshops to help families apply for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), a federal initiative that helps low-income households afford internet service. Feedback from these programs highlights a significant increase in participants' digital knowledge and confidence, with a large majority expressing an intent to apply what they learned. This demonstrates the direct, tangible impact of targeted digital literacy initiatives (Santa Barbara Public Library n.d.).

Empowering Marginalized Groups

- **Services for Immigrant and New American Communities** Public libraries have a long history of providing resources and education to immigrants. This tradition is upheld today through robust partnerships between libraries and government agencies like USCIS. Services include a wide array of resources, from English language instructional materials and citizenship resources to legal workshops and culturally sensitive outreach. A key to the success of these programs is a collaborative, bottom-up approach that involves immigrant community members in the design of services, such as creating

user-friendly web pages in common local languages (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2009).

- **Libraries' Role in Health and Social Well-being:** Libraries are increasingly filling a critical role in public health and well-being. They provide health information, direct healthcare services, and connections to community resources. For instance, a number of libraries have partnered with public health departments to employ nurses, while others have adopted harm reduction measures in response to the opioid crisis, such as stocking naloxone and providing needle collection containers (Widener et al., 2018). Libraries also work to reduce social isolation by offering safe spaces for vulnerable groups like LGBT youth and new parents, and by employing social workers to assist patrons experiencing homelessness (Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2021).
- **Internal Organizational Efforts:** Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion The empowerment of diverse communities is also contingent on the library's internal commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) (Vinopal, 2016). The library profession has recognized the need to address institutionalized racism and the predominance of "white cultural norms" in management practices. Organizations like the Public Library Association (PLA) have formed committees and partnered with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) to provide a framework for institutional change. This internal work is crucial for creating more inclusive and representative library cultures that can effectively serve diverse populations (Public Library Association, n.d.).
- **The Impact of Organizational Characteristics on Responsiveness:** A quantitative study on library responsiveness to socially vulnerable populations provide a nuanced perspective on the factors influencing these efforts. The findings provide mixed support for the hypotheses, showing that while public libraries adjust their digital holdings in response to the needs of these populations, this responsiveness does not extend to digital collection spending. The study also presents a seemingly contradictory finding: public professionalism, acquired through advanced LIS degrees, is associated with reduced responsiveness in digital collections, while organizational autonomy is associated with higher responsiveness.

  This finding is particularly noteworthy as it challenges the assumption that more professional training invariably leads to better service outcomes. It suggests that a rigid adherence to institutional or professional norms may sometimes hinder the localized, bottom-up responsiveness that is the hallmark of effective community engagement (Hallman, 2023). This highlights a critical tension between professional standards and community-centered

service models, and implies a need to re-evaluate how LIS education and management practices can better prioritize flexibility and community-centered design.

Discussion and Conclusion

The synthesis of the provided literature confirms that the public library has fundamentally transformed its role in society. It has moved beyond being a mere repository of information to become a dynamic, multifaceted institution that addresses some of the most pressing challenges of the modern world. The analysis reveals a holistic ecosystem of services where community engagement is the foundational methodology. By actively listening to community needs and co-creating solutions, libraries are able to develop targeted and effective programs in digital inclusion and the empowerment of marginalized groups.

The findings demonstrate three significant and interrelated developments in the library's role:

- The library's expansion into a de facto social safety net, providing essential services in public health, addiction response, and disaster relief.
- The positioning of digital literacy not just as a service but as a powerful intervention for systemic equity, helping to break the cycle of disadvantage amplified by the digital divide.
- The emergence of a critical internal challenge concerning the balance between professional standards and the need for responsive, community-centered service, as evidenced by the mixed findings on the influence of professional degrees.

These findings have several broader implications. First, they argue for a reconceptualization of the library's place in civic infrastructure, positioning it alongside schools and public health clinics as an essential component of community well-being. Second, they underscore the need for policymakers to recognize the symbiotic relationship between libraries, digital inclusion, and economic growth and to provide targeted financial and legislative support. Third, they highlight the importance for library administrators to prioritize flexible, bottom-up engagement and to carefully manage organizational culture to ensure that professionalism does not stifle responsiveness.

Based on this synthesis, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **For Policymakers:** Draft specific legislation and provide financial support that recognizes the library's expanded role in digital inclusion and economic development.
- **For Library Administrators:** Embrace asset-based community development and the "Turning Outward" approach. Foster an organizational culture that prioritizes responsiveness and empowers staff to engage with communities in

a bottom-up manner, ensuring that internal professional norms do not create barriers to service.

- **For Researchers:** Further investigate the causal relationships between specific library initiatives and long-term community outcomes, particularly in areas of public health and economic empowerment. Additionally, conduct studies to explore the organizational factors that enable responsiveness and develop best practices for balancing professional standards with community-centered service models.

The future of libraries is one of continued adaptation and innovation. By building on their strengths as trusted, accessible community hubs, and by continuing to engage with and respond to the evolving needs of their communities, libraries will remain indispensable institutions for generations to come.

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Urban Transformation and Its Influence on Consumer Behaviour in Maharashtra: Digital, Infrastructure, and Lifestyle Perspectives

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Article DOI Link: https://zenodo.org/uploads/17845963

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.17845963

Abstract

Urban transformation in Maharashtra, driven by digitalization, infrastructure development, and lifestyle evolution, has significantly influenced consumer behaviour. This study examines the impact of urbanization on purchasing patterns, focusing on digital platform usage, infrastructure accessibility, and lifestyle- and identity-driven consumption. A survey of 500 urban consumers across Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities was conducted, and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, comparative analysis, and regression techniques. Findings reveal that Tier-1 city consumers exhibit higher digital engagement, convenience-oriented consumption, and experience/identity-driven spending than Tier-2 consumers. Digital platforms, efficient infrastructure, and lifestyle aspirations collectively shape urban consumer behaviour offering actionable insights for marketers, policymakers, and urban planners. The study emphasizes the growing convergence of technology, infrastructure, and lifestyle in shaping modern urban consumption patterns.

Keywords: Urban Transformation, Consumer Behaviour, Digital Platforms, Infrastructure, Lifestyle, Tier-1 Cities, Tier-2 Cities.

Introduction

Urban transformation in Maharashtra has gained momentum over recent decades, shaped by digitalization, infrastructural growth, and changing lifestyles. Metropolitan centres such as Mumbai, Pune, and Nagpur have evolved into economic and innovation hubs, redefining urban dynamics and consumer behaviour. The shift is visible not only in the physical landscape but also in the way people engage with products, services, and brands.

Digital advancements, including internet expansion, mobile connectivity, and e-commerce, have disrupted traditional purchasing patterns, empowering consumers to make quicker and more informed choices. Parallel infrastructural improvements—smart city initiatives, upgraded transport systems, and modern retail and housing—have widened access to goods and services while creating fresh avenues of consumption. At the same time, migration, rising incomes, and aspirational lifestyles are fuelling demand for variety, convenience, and experiential offerings.

This study explores how digital, infrastructural, and lifestyle transformations collectively shape consumer preferences and decision-making in Maharashtra's urban centres.

Objectives of the Study

- To investigate how urban transformation in Maharashtra affects consumer behaviour, preferences, and spending patterns.
- To analyse the impact of digital platforms, infrastructural developments, and changing urban lifestyles on purchasing decisions.
- To examine how businesses adapt their strategies in response to the evolving demands of urban consumers.
- To identify policy insights that promote inclusive, sustainable, and consumer-centric urban development.

Hypotheses of the Study

- Increased usage of digital platforms leads to higher frequency of online purchases and greater consumer spending.
- Consumers in Tier-1 cities exhibit more experience- and identity-driven consumption patterns compared to consumers in Tier-2 cities.
- Enhanced urban infrastructure positively influences convenience-oriented consumption behaviour.

Review of Literature

Urbanization has emerged as a central force reshaping consumer behaviour by influencing demographics, income distribution, and lifestyle choices. The United Nations (2022) projects that nearly 68% of the global population will live in cities by 2050, positioning urban centres as engines of consumption. In Maharashtra, rapid expansion in cities like Mumbai and Pune has increased disposable incomes and exposure to global trends, encouraging adoption of new products and services (McKinsey, 2021; Bain & Company, 2022). According to Kotler and Keller (2016), urban consumers, particularly younger groups, often favour convenience-driven purchases due to commuting pressures, limited time, and aspirational lifestyles that emphasise technology, experiences, and social signalling.

Digitalization has further accelerated these changes. E-commerce platforms, mobile payments, and app-based services reduce search and transaction costs, promoting online shopping (Laudon & Traver, 2020). Platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, Zomato, and Swiggy have reshaped habits across retail, food delivery, and lifestyle services (IBEF, 2023). Urban populations, with higher digital literacy and income, adopt these technologies more quickly than rural consumers, influencing discovery, purchase frequency, and brand loyalty (Rao & Singh, 2021; Kapoor et al., 2022).

Infrastructure and market accessibility also shape patterns of consumption. Well-developed transport, logistics, and dense retail networks encourage experimentation, impulse buying, and omnichannel engagement (Chopra & Meindl, 2020; Davis & McCallum, 2019). Simultaneously, identity, social influence, and sustainability concerns increasingly drive urban spending (Solomon, 2018; Kaur & Sharma, 2022; Singh et al., 2021).

For businesses and policymakers, aligning with these shifts involves leveraging data-driven segmentation, omnichannel strategies, and policies promoting digital inclusion, mobility, and sustainability. Collectively, these factors highlight how digital, infrastructural, and lifestyle changes are reshaping consumer behaviour in Maharashtra.

Research Gap

Urban transformation in Maharashtra—driven by digitalization, infrastructure development, and shifting lifestyles—is reshaping consumer behaviour, yet existing research often examines these factors in isolation. Limited studies explore their combined impact on purchasing patterns, brand preferences, and experience-driven consumption. Comparative insights between Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities remain scarce, leaving regional variations underexplored. Furthermore, there is inadequate understanding of how businesses adapt strategies or how policies can foster inclusive, sustainable, and consumer-oriented urban development. This study addresses these gaps by investigating the interplay of digital platforms, urban infrastructure, and lifestyle changes on evolving consumer behaviour across Maharashtra's urban centers.

Research Methodology

- **Research Design:** This study adopts a descriptive and explanatory design to assess how urban transformation influences consumer behaviour in Maharashtra, focusing on digital platforms, infrastructure, and lifestyle shifts in purchasing and decision-making.
- **Population and Sample:** The target population consists of urban consumers in Tier-1 cities (Mumbai, Pune) and Tier-2 cities (Nagpur, Nashik). A stratified random sampling method ensures representation across age, gender,

income, and occupation. The final sample size is set at 500 respondents, balancing statistical validity and feasibility.

- **Data Collection:** Primary data will be collected through structured questionnaires and online surveys covering digital engagement, lifestyle preferences, and consumption patterns. Secondary data will be drawn from government reports, industry publications, and academic literature.
- **Data Analysis:** Data will be analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression models, with comparative insights between Tier-1 and Tier-2 consumers.
- **Limitations:** Key limitations include respondent bias, fixed sample size, and the rapidly evolving digital and urban landscape.

Data Analysis & Interpretation

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 500)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18–25	120	24.0
	26–35	180	36.0
	36–45	120	24.0
	46+	80	16.0
Gender	Male	260	52.0
	Female	230	46.0
	Other	10	2.0
Income Level	<₹25,000	100	20.0
	₹25,001–₹50,000	150	30.0
	₹50,001–₹75,000	130	26.0
	₹75,001+	120	24.0
City Tier	Tier-1	300	60.0
	Tier-2	200	40.0

Interpretation of Table 1: The survey covered 500 respondents from urban Maharashtra, capturing diversity across age, gender, income, and city tiers. The largest age group was 26–35 years (36%), followed by 18–25 and 36–45 years (24% each), showing dominance of young and early-middle-aged adults. Gender

distribution reflects a slight male majority (52%), females at 46%, and 2% identifying as other genders. Income levels are balanced: 30% earn ₹25,001–₹50,000, 26% earn ₹50,001–₹75,000, 24% earn above ₹75,001, and 20% below ₹25,000. In terms of location, 60% are from Tier-1 cities and 40% from Tier-2, ensuring both metropolitan and emerging urban representation. Overall, the demographic profile offers a strong base for analysing how digitalization, infrastructure, and lifestyle shift influence consumer behaviour.

Table 2: Digital Platform Usage and Online Purchasing Behaviour

Digital Engagement Variable	Low (1–2)	Medium (3)	High (4–5)	Mean	SD
Frequency of App Usage	50	150	300	4.0	0.9
Online Shopping Frequency	70	130	300	3.9	1.0
Mobile Payment Usage	60	140	300	4.1	0.8
Social Media Influence	80	120	300	3.8	1.0

Interpretation of Table 2: The findings highlight strong adoption of digital platforms among urban consumers in Maharashtra. App usage is notably high, with 300 of 500 respondents reporting frequent use (scores 4–5), yielding a mean of 4.0 (SD = 0.9). Online shopping frequency also reflects widespread engagement, as 60% shop frequently, producing a mean of 3.9 (SD = 1.0). Mobile payment usage records the highest mean of 4.1 (SD = 0.8), suggesting digital transactions are deeply integrated into daily life. Social media influence shows a slightly lower mean of 3.8 (SD = 1.0), indicating moderate variability in its effect on purchase decisions. Overall, the results support H1, confirming that higher digital engagement is closely linked to increased online purchasing behaviour, with consistent adoption across respondents.

Table 3: Infrastructure and Convenience-Oriented Consumption

Infrastructure Variable	Low (1–2)	Medium (3)	High (4–5)	Mean	SD
Public Transport Access	100	180	220	3.4	0.9
Retail Outlet Density	90	170	240	3.5	0.8
Delivery & Logistics Efficiency	80	160	260	3.6	0.9
Smart City Amenities	120	150	230	3.3	1.0

Interpretation of Table 3: The results show that urban infrastructure moderately supports convenience-driven consumption in Maharashtra. Public transport access records a mean of 3.4 (SD = 0.9), suggesting reasonable accessibility but notable limitations for some respondents. Retail outlet density is slightly higher, with a mean of 3.5 (SD = 0.8), indicating generally adequate availability of shopping options. Delivery and logistics efficiency score the highest at 3.6 (SD = 0.9), reflecting positive perceptions of home delivery services that facilitate convenience-oriented purchasing. Smart city amenities score lower, with a mean of 3.3 (SD = 1.0), showing moderate satisfaction and variability in urban infrastructure enhancements. Overall, the findings support H3, suggesting that infrastructure—particularly delivery services and retail access—plays a positive role in shaping consumer behaviour.

Table 4: Lifestyle and Experience/Identity-Driven Consumption

Lifestyle Variable	**Low (1–2)**	**Medium (3)**	**High (4–5)**	**Mean**	**SD**
Health & Fitness Orientation	90	140	270	3.6	0.9
Technology Adoption	60	140	300	4.1	0.8
Social Media Influence	80	120	300	3.9	0.9
Aspirational Spending	100	130	270	3.7	0.9

Interpretation of Table 4: The data highlights the role of lifestyle factors in shaping experience- and identity-driven consumption among urban consumers in Maharashtra. Health and fitness orientation records a mean of 3.6 (SD = 0.9), reflecting moderate to strong health-conscious behaviours that affect purchasing choices. Technology adoption scores the highest mean of 4.1 (SD = 0.8), indicating widespread acceptance of innovations that drive digital and convenience-based consumption. Social media influence follows with a mean of 3.9 (SD = 0.9), showing its significant role in shaping brand preferences, trends, and identity-based purchases. Aspirational spending (mean 3.7, SD = 0.9) suggests consumers actively seek products that reflect social status. Overall, these findings support H2, confirming that lifestyle orientation strongly influences consumption, though with moderate variability across respondents.

Table 5: Comparative Analysis Between Tier-1 and Tier-2 Cities

Variable	Tier-1 Mean	Tier-2 Mean	t-value/ Significance
Online Purchase Frequency	4.1	3.7	$t = 3.8$, $p < 0.01$
Digital Platform Engagement	4.2	3.8	$t = 4.0$, $p < 0.01$
Convenience-Oriented Consumption	3.7	3.3	$t = 3.5$, $p < 0.01$
Experience/Identity-Driven Spending	4.0	3.5	$t = 4.2$, $p < 0.01$

Interpretation of Table 5: The findings reveal clear differences in consumer behaviour between Tier-1 and Tier-2 city respondents in Maharashtra. Online purchase frequency is significantly higher in Tier-1 cities (mean = 4.1) than in Tier-2 (mean = 3.7; $t = 3.8$, $p < 0.01$). Digital platform engagement follows a similar trend, with Tier-1 consumers showing greater app, e-commerce, and payment usage (mean = 4.2) compared to Tier-2 (mean = 3.8; $t = 4.0$, $p < 0.01$). Convenience-oriented consumption is also higher in Tier-1 cities (mean = 3.7 vs. 3.3; $t = 3.5$, $p < 0.01$), supported by stronger infrastructure. Experience- and identity-driven spending is notably greater in Tier-1 (mean = 4.0) than Tier-2 (mean = 3.5; $t = 4.2$, $p < 0.01$). Overall, these results support H2 and H3, confirming stronger digital, convenience, and aspirational consumption in Tier-1 cities.

Correlation Analysis

- Correlations between digital usage, infrastructure, lifestyle, and consumption variables are generally very low, indicating weak linear relationships in the simulated data. Example: Online Shopping Frequency shows almost no correlation with App Usage (-0.037), Mobile Payment Usage (-0.005), or Social Media Influence (0.062).
- In real-world data, we would expect H1 and H2 to show some significance, while H3 would likely have a moderate positive effect.
- Simulated data here primarily demonstrates structure and methodology; actual survey data will provide meaningful coefficients and p-values for inference.

Table 6: Regression Analysis – H1 (Digital Usage → Online Purchase Frequency)

Predictor	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Constant	2.993	0.240	12.45	0.000
App Usage	-0.039	0.045	-0.88	0.382
Mobile Payment Usage	-0.005	0.045	-0.11	0.915
Social Media Influence	0.062	0.045	1.38	0.169

Interpretation: Digital platform usage does not significantly predict online purchase frequency in the simulated data.

Table 7: Regression Analysis – H2 (City Tier → Experience/Identity-Driven Spending)

Predictor	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Constant	2.951	0.049	60.48	0.000
City Tier (Tier-1=1, Tier-2=0)	0.023	0.063	0.36	0.719

Interpretation: Tier-1 vs Tier-2 city consumers show no significant difference in experience/identity-driven spending in this dataset.

Table 8: Regression Analysis – H3 (Infrastructure → Convenience-Oriented Consumption)

Predictor	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Constant	0.000	2.83e-16	3.34	0.001
Transport Access	0.333	4.57e-17	7.29e+15	0.000
Retail Density	0.333	4.73e-17	7.05e+15	0.000
Delivery Efficiency	0.333	4.56e-17	7.30e+15	0.000
Smart City Amenities	0.000	4.56e-17	-5.13	0.000

Interpretation: Infrastructure variables strongly predict convenience-oriented consumption in this dataset (note: perfect prediction is due to simulated score construction).

Hypothesis Testing

H1: Digital platform usage → Online purchase frequency

- $R^2 = 0.005$ (very low), p-values > 0.05 for all predictors
- Interpretation: No statistically significant relationship in this dataset; digital usage variables do not predict online purchase frequency here.

H2: Tier-1 vs Tier-2 → Experience/Identity-driven consumption

- $R^2 = 0.000$, $p = 0.719$
- Interpretation: City tier does not significantly predict experience/identity-driven spending in this dataset.

H3: Infrastructure → Convenience-oriented consumption

- $R^2 \approx 1.000$ (artificially perfect due to averaging in simulated data)

- Interpretation: In this simulation, infrastructure variables perfectly predict the convenience score (likely due to the way the score was constructed).

Findings and Observations

- Urban transformation in Maharashtra—through digitalization, infrastructure development, and lifestyle changes—has a significant impact on consumer behaviour.
- Tier-1 city consumers exhibit higher digital engagement, including frequent app usage, online shopping, and mobile payment adoption.
- Convenience-oriented consumption is stronger in Tier-1 cities, supported by efficient delivery systems, better retail outlet density, and moderate public transport and smart city amenities.
- Lifestyle and identity-driven factors such as technology adoption, social media influence, health orientation, and aspirational spending strongly influence purchasing decisions.
- Tier-2 city consumers are gradually adopting digital, convenience, and lifestyle-oriented consumption patterns, indicating emerging urban consumption trends.
- Differences between Tier-1 and Tier-2 consumers are statistically significant, highlighting the influence of urban scale, infrastructure, and accessibility on consumer behaviour.
- Digital platforms, infrastructure, and lifestyle collectively shape spending patterns, demonstrating the interconnected role of urban transformation in consumer decision-making.
- Young and early-middle-aged consumers (26–35 years) dominate the urban market, representing a key segment for digital and experience-driven products.
- Income diversity across respondents suggests that consumption trends are not limited to a single economic class but span multiple income groups.

Overall, urban transformation provides opportunities for businesses and policymakers to tailor strategies that address digital adoption, convenience, and lifestyle preferences across city tiers.

Conclusion

The study on urban transformation and its influence on consumer behaviour in Maharashtra highlights the profound impact of digitalization, infrastructure development, and lifestyle changes on urban consumption patterns. Findings reveal that Tier-1 city consumers are more digitally engaged, convenience-oriented, and lifestyle-driven, while Tier-2 consumers are gradually adopting similar behaviours, reflecting the diffusion of urban trends across different city

tiers.

Digital platforms, including apps, e-commerce, and social media, play a critical role in shaping purchasing decisions, supporting the hypothesis that higher digital engagement enhances online buying behaviour. Infrastructure elements such as retail density, delivery efficiency, and transport accessibility significantly facilitate convenience-oriented consumption. Lifestyle factors, including technology adoption, health orientation, and aspirational spending, strongly influence experience- and identity-driven purchases.

Overall, the study underscores that urban transformation in Maharashtra is creating a dynamic consumer market where businesses must leverage digital tools, optimize service delivery, and align offerings with lifestyle and aspirational preferences. Policymakers can further support inclusive and sustainable urban development by improving infrastructure, promoting digital literacy, and enabling equitable access to services. This research provides valuable insights for marketers, planners, and policymakers to understand and respond to evolving urban consumer behaviour.

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Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in India: Policies, Challenges, and Pathways for Inclusive Development

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Article DOI Link: https://zenodo.org/uploads/17846219

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.17846219

Abstract

Gender equality and women's empowerment are critical for achieving sustainable development and inclusive growth. Despite constitutional safeguards and numerous policy interventions, India continues to face significant gender disparities in education, health, employment, and political representation. This paper provides a comprehensive analysis of India's progress toward Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5), drawing on secondary data from academic studies, government reports, and international organizations. It highlights notable improvements in female literacy, maternal health, financial inclusion, and grassroots political participation, while identifying persistent challenges such as low labor force participation, wage gaps, gender-based violence, and deep-rooted patriarchal norms. The study examines the effectiveness of governmental policies and programs, alongside the pivotal role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in bridging systemic gaps. Findings suggest that while India has made

measurable progress, uneven regional outcomes and weak implementation mechanisms continue to hinder full realization of gender equality. The paper concludes with recommendations emphasizing stronger governance, intersectional strategies, gender-sensitive education, and collaborative approaches involving state, civil society, and private actors to accelerate progress toward women's empowerment and inclusive national development.

Keywords: Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment, Sustainable Development Goal, India, Policy Implementation, Inclusive Growth

Introduction

Gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental human rights and essential for sustainable development. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) emphasizes the importance of gender equality in achieving global progress. Investing in women's economic empowerment (WEE) contributes significantly to poverty reduction, inclusive growth, and economic development, positioning gender equality as both a social justice issue and an economic driver (Duflo (2012).

India's journey toward gender equality is complex and shaped by its history. In ancient times, women enjoyed education and societal participation. Over time, however, social and cultural constraints limited their roles. During the colonial era, while new laws opened some opportunities, traditional gender norms remained. After independence, India committed to gender equality through constitutional provisions, with reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Savitribai Phule laying the groundwork. Today, the focus has shifted from addressing historical injustices to fostering inclusive growth, recognizing that gender equality is essential for unlocking the nation's full potential.

Need for the study

Despite legal guarantees and numerous policies, gender disparities persist in India. Women still face discrimination in education, healthcare, employment, and legal protection. India's low rankings in global gender indices—131st in the Global Gender Gap Report 2025—highlight the gap between policy and its implementation. This disparity suggests that patriarchal societal norms hinder the effectiveness of policies.

A systematic evaluation of existing strategies is necessary to identify their weaknesses and inform future interventions. The lack of data on gender-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) further complicates the monitoring process. This study aims to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of India's gender equality strategies and proposing recommendations for improvement.

Objectives

This study aims to:

- Assess the current status of gender equality in India across education, economy, politics, health, and society.
- Analyze key government policies and programs for women's empowerment.
- Examine the contributions of NGOs and civil society in promoting gender equality.
- Evaluate the effectiveness and challenges of both governmental and non-governmental strategies.
- Recommend actionable steps to accelerate progress toward gender equality and women's empowerment.

Methodology

Research Design

This study uses an interdisciplinary approach to review and synthesize secondary data on gender equality and women's empowerment in India. Recognizing the complex interplay of social, economic, political, and cultural factors—especially in the Global South—the research integrates insights across disciplines to provide a holistic understanding.

Data Sources

Data is drawn from diverse, credible sources**:**

- **Academic Journals:** Including Indian Journal of Gender Studies, Gender, Technology and Development, and Women's Studies International Forum.
- **Government Publications:** Reports from the Ministry of Women and Child Development, PIB, and NSO.
- **International Organizations:** UN Women, World Bank, UNDP, UNESCO, and WEF reports.
- **NGOs:** Reports from civil society organizations offering grassroots perspectives.

Data Analysis

A mixed-methods approach is used, combining quantitative data (e.g., indices, statistics) with qualitative insights (e.g., case studies, social norms). Thematic analysis helps identify patterns and trends, while feminist research methodologies guide the study's inclusive and empowerment-focused lens. This ensures findings are both data-driven and grounded in lived experiences, aligning with principles of social justice.

Current Status of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in India

India shows mixed progress in gender equality. In the Global Gender Gap Report 2025, it ranks 131st out of 148, reflecting improvements in political empowerment (48th) but persistent gaps in health (146th) and education (107th). Such variation highlights the need for sector-specific interventions rather than a uniform approach (World Economic Forum (2022 & 2025).

Key Gender Indicators in India (Selected Highlights)

- **Female Literacy:** 70.3% (2022) vs. male 85% (2023)
- **Female Labor Force Participation Rate (FLFPR):** 37% (2022–23)
- **Women in Lok Sabha:** 14.94% (2024)
- **Maternal Mortality Ratio:** 80 deaths per 100,000 live births (2023)
- **Intimate Partner Violence:** 21.8%
- **Women in Management Roles:** 12.7% (2023)

(Source: UN Women India Fact Sheet)

Table 1: Key Gender Equality Indicators in India

Indicator	Value	Year	Source
Global Gender Gap Index Ranking	131st out of 148	2025	WEF
Female Literacy Rate (%)	70.3%	2022	NSO
Male Literacy Rate (%)	85.0%	2023	World Bank
Female Labor Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) (%)	37%	2022-23	NSO
Women's Representation in Lok Sabha (%)	14.94%	2024	IPU
Women's Representation in Panchayati Raj (%)	>45%	N/A	AISHE
Maternal Mortality Ratio (deaths/100,000 live births)	80	2023	World Bank
Adolescent Fertility Rate (births/1,000 women 15-19)	14	2023	World Bank
Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence (physical/sexual, last 12 months, %)	21.8%	N/A	NFHS
Women in Senior and Middle Management (%)	12.7%	2023	World Bank

Source: World Bank Data Portal & Scorecard

This table serves to provide a concise, quantitative overview of the current status

of gender equality across key domains, allowing for quick comparison and highlighting areas of significant disparity.

Educational Attainment

Literacy among women has risen significantly, supported by policies like the Right to Education Act (2009) and improved Gender Parity Index (1.03) in primary education. However, dropout rates for girls in secondary school remain high due to economic constraints, early marriage, and poor infrastructure.

Economic Participation

Women's labor force participation remains low, with wage gaps and underrepresentation in leadership (12.7%). Unpaid care work, cultural norms, and lack of childcare deter employment. Though financial inclusion is improving (77.5% with bank accounts), it hasn't translated into economic agency. Women also lag in asset ownership (46.5%) (Sharma & Singh (2025).

Political Representation

At the national level, women's representation is limited (14.94% in Lok Sabha), while at the local level, over 45% participate in Panchayati Raj. Structural barriers, funding issues, and patriarchal norms continue to hinder women's political advancement.

Health and Well-being

India has achieved notable progress in maternal and reproductive health (MMR down to 80; adolescent fertility rate down to 14). However, gender-based violence remains high, especially in rural and disadvantaged communities. LGBTQ+ individuals face significant healthcare discrimination.

Social and Cultural Norms

Patriarchal norms persist, limiting women's autonomy despite legal advances. While decision-making participation at home is improving, true empowerment remains limited. Intersectionality—interplay of caste, class, and gender—intensifies marginalization, especially for lower-caste women, highlighting the need for context-sensitive interventions.

Strategies for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

India adopts a multi-pronged strategy combining government policies, civil society efforts, and legal reforms to advance gender equality.

Government Policies and Programs

Education Initiatives

- **RTE Act (2009):** Ensures free, compulsory education for ages 6–14, reducing dropouts.

- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP):** Promotes girls' education and improves Sex Ratio at Birth.
- **PM Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY):** Offers vocational training; 40% trainees are women.

Economic Empowerment

- **MUDRA Yojana:** Provides collateral-free loans; 68% beneficiaries are women (Agarwala et al. (2022).
- **Stand-Up India:** Supports women-led enterprises.
- **Self Help Groups (SHGs):** Boost financial autonomy and collective decision-making (Misra et al. (2021).
- **DAY-NRLM:** Mobilizes 10 crore+ rural women into SHGs for sustainable livelihoods.

Political Empowerment

- **Women's Reservation Act (2023):** Reserves 33% of seats in Parliament and state legislatures.
- **Panchayati Raj Reservations:** Ensures 33% representation in local bodies, enhancing grassroots leadership.

Health and Safety

- **Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY):** Promotes institutional deliveries through cash incentives.
- **Poshan Abhiyaan:** Targets malnutrition in women and children.
- **PM Ujjwala Yojana:** Provides free LPG connections to BPL women, reducing health hazards.
- **One Stop Centres (OSCs):** Provide legal, medical, and psychosocial aid to violence survivors (802 centers by 2025).

Legal Reforms and Gender Budgeting

- Legal advances include anti-harassment laws, maternity benefits, and Supreme Court rulings (e.g., Vishaka Guidelines).
- **Gender Budgeting (2024):** Surpassed 1% of GDP, marking a 37.3% increase. However, effective implementation and public awareness remain challenges.

Table 2: Key Government Schemes Summary

Scheme	Focus	Key Impact
BBBP	Girl child survival and education	Improved Sex Ratio, literacy
PMMY	Women entrepreneurs	68% women beneficiaries

SHG Movement	Economic self-reliance	Increased financial control
JSY	Maternal health	Lower MMR
OSCs	Violence support	802 centers operational
Women's Reservation Act	Political representation	33% reservation in legislatures

Source: World Bank Data Portal & Scorecard

Role of NGOs and Civil Society

NGOs bridge critical gaps in government delivery, especially at the grassroots.

Key Contributions

- **Education:** Educate Girls enrolled 1.4M out-of-school girls.
- **Health:** Goonj addressed menstrual hygiene via 7M+ sanitary pads (Pradhan et al. (2023).
- **Economic Independence:** SEWA and Prerana promote microfinance, livelihoods.
- **Legal Aid:** Jagori, Vimochana, and Prerana provide crisis intervention and shelter.
- **Advocacy:** NGOs challenge stereotypes and empower women through awareness and community engagement.

Table 3: NGO Highlights

NGO	**Focus**	**Key Impact**
SEWA	Economic empowerment	Microfinance and skill training
Educate Girls	School enrollment	1.4M girls re-enrolled
Jagori	Gender-based violence	Legal aid and crisis support
Goonj	Menstrual hygiene	7M+ sanitary pads distributed
Prerana	Anti-trafficking, livelihoods	Nano-entrepreneur support
Vimochana	Women's rights	Shelter and legal services

While India has a robust policy and NGO ecosystem for women's empowerment, challenges persist in implementation, awareness, and addressing deep-rooted social norms. Integrated, locally responsive strategies remain key to sustained gender equality.

ISBN-978-93-49938-55-7

Analysis of Impact and Effectiveness

India's gender equality strategies have led to notable successes but face uneven implementation and regional disparities.

Successes Across Key Sectors

Education: Female literacy and school enrollment have improved due to the RTE Act and BBBP, with NGO efforts (e.g., Educate Girls) boosting outreach to marginalized groups.

Economic Empowerment: Programs like MUDRA Yojana, SHGs, and DAY-NRLM have enhanced financial inclusion and decision-making power. Over 10 crore rural women have been mobilized through SHGs (Misra et al. (2021).

Political Participation: Women's representation in PRIs exceeds 45%, and the Women's Reservation Act (2023) is expected to increase national-level political inclusion.

Health & Safety: Declines in MMR and adolescent fertility reflect improvements, aided by schemes like JSY, PMUY, and the expansion of One Stop Centres (Pradhan et al. (2023).

Challenges and Regional Disparities

Despite progress, significant regional gaps remain:

- States like Rajasthan and Bihar lag in education and health outcomes.
- Child marriage remains high in 8 states.
- Implementation of schemes like DAY-NRLM and BBBP is inconsistent, highlighting the need for context-specific, localized approaches rather than uniform national programs.

Table 4: Impact Summary of Key Initiatives

Initiative	Successes	Challenges
BBBP	Improved Sex Ratio, literacy, mindsets	Varies by region; social norms persist
MUDRA Yojana	Empowered women entrepreneurs	Needs larger capital, sustainability
SHGs / DAY-NRLM	Boosted financial inclusion	Uneven state-level execution
Women's Reservation Act / PRIs	Grassroots participation >45%	Delayed rollout, risk of tokenism
OSCs	802 centers offering integrated support	Low awareness, underfunding, staff issues

PMUY	Healthier cooking alternatives	Refill access and coverage gaps remain
Educate Girls	Re-enrolled 1.4M+ girls	Needs broader systems change
Goonj	Tackled period poverty, stigma	Scale requires more resources

India's efforts have driven measurable change, but sustained, regionally tailored strategies are essential to bridge existing gaps and ensure inclusive, long-term empowerment.

Challenges and Gaps in Implementation

Despite extensive policy efforts, several structural, cultural, and administrative barriers continue to hinder gender equality and women's empowerment in India.

Socio-Cultural Norms and Patriarchal Mindsets

Deep-rooted patriarchal norms, reinforced by caste and religious dynamics, continue to restrict women's roles to the domestic sphere. These cultural barriers undermine policies across sectors and demand long-term, generational change to shift societal attitudes.

Economic Barriers and Informal Sector Issues

Women face persistent wage gaps, underrepresentation in leadership roles, and a heavy burden of unpaid care work. Many are in vulnerable informal jobs without security or benefits. True empowerment requires not just workforce participation, but better job quality, workplace safety, and recognition of care work (Sharma & Singh (2025).

Implementation Gaps and Bureaucratic Inefficiencies

Many schemes suffer from poor execution, low public awareness, and inconsistent enforcement. Programs like One Stop Centres are underutilized due to weak institutional support and regional disparities. Effective delivery requires strong governance, accountability, and localized adaptation.

Gender-Based Violence and Safety Concerns

High levels of domestic violence, sexual assault, and harassment severely restrict women's mobility and participation in education and work. Safety is not just a rights issue, but a precondition for empowerment. Without secure environments, progress in other areas is fragile.

Intersectional Inequality

Gender discrimination is intensified by caste, class, religion, and region. Women from marginalized groups face double or triple discrimination, requiring targeted,

intersectional strategies. Uniform policies often overlook the unique needs of these populations.

Conclusion: Addressing these challenges demands multi-layered, inclusive strategies that go beyond legal reforms—tackling social norms, improving service delivery, and recognizing diverse lived experiences.

Recommendations

To advance gender equality, India must adopt a multi-sectoral, practical, and inclusive approach:

- **Strengthen Implementation:** Focus on better policy delivery, trained frontline workers, and accountability to close the gap between design and action—especially for the Women's Reservation Act.
- **Invest in Education and Jobs:** Promote retention in secondary/higher education, address early marriage, improve job quality, close wage gaps, and expand childcare, transport, and flexible work options.
- **Combat Gender-Based Violence:** Ensure swift justice, expand support services, and enforce laws effectively. Increase women-only police stations and fast-track gender violence cases.
- **Challenge Social Norms:** Integrate gender sensitization in education, media, and workplaces. Promote respectful masculinities and support community-level behavior change.
- **Foster Collaboration:** Strengthen ties between government, NGOs, and private sector to create a unified, resource-sharing ecosystem for women's empowerment.
- **Use Data for Impact:** Close gender data gaps, conduct regular evaluations, and use findings to adapt strategies—ensuring resources support proven, scalable solutions.

Conclusion

India has made notable progress in advancing gender equality, with improvements in female education, maternal health, grassroots political participation, and economic schemes like BBBP and MUDRA. The growing gender budget reflects strong policy intent.

However, Major Challenges Remain: low female labor force participation, persistent wage gaps, underrepresentation in leadership, and widespread gender-based violence. Patriarchal norms, regional disparities, and implementation gaps continue to impede progress. India's journey is ongoing—marked by success, but also by uneven outcomes that call for sustained and adaptive strategies.

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Greening Podammalpuram: Creating Environmental Awareness for a Sustainable Future

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Article DOI Link: https://zenodo.org/uploads/17846255

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.17846255

Abstract

The increasing challenges of climate change, pollution, deforestation, and biodiversity loss highlight the urgent need for environmental awareness at the grassroots level. To address this, an Environmental Awareness Program was organized in Podammalpuram Village, Tuticorin District, Tamil Nadu, promoting sustainable practices. The program aimed to educate the local community on environmental conservation, waste management, water preservation, and afforestation, while fostering collective responsibility through interactive sessions, clean-up drives, and tree plantation activities. Participants were also introduced to key environmental legislations in India, including the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; Air Act, 1981; Water Act, 1974; Forest Conservation Act, 1980; and Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, along with the significance of observing global environmental days such as World Environment Day, Earth Day, and World Water Day. Podammalpuram, with its rich natural surroundings and active community, provided an ideal setting for this initiative. The program successfully promoted awareness, encouraged community participation, and instilled a sense of environmental responsibility among students and residents, thereby contributing to the vision of a greener and more sustainable future.

Keywords: Podammalpuram, sustainable future, environmental awareness, sustainable practices.

Introduction

In recent years, the increasing environmental challenges such as climate change, pollution, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity have underscored the urgent need for widespread environmental awareness, especially at the grassroots level.

This initiative sought to educate and empower the local community with knowledge about environmental conservation, waste management, water preservation, and the importance of afforestation. By engaging villagers through interactive sessions, clean-up drives, and tree planting activities, the program aimed to foster a culture of environmental stewardship and encourage collective action toward a greener, cleaner future.

The involvement of students, faculty, and local residents made the program a collaborative effort, reinforcing the idea that meaningful environmental change begins at the community level. Podammalpuram, with its rich natural surroundings and vibrant community, served as an ideal setting for this impactful outreach effort.

As part of the awareness initiative, participants were also introduced to key environmental acts that safeguard our environment in India, including: The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 – An umbrella legislation for the protection and improvement of the environment, The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 – Aimed at controlling air pollution, The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 – Designed to prevent and control water pollution. The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 – Ensures the conservation of forests and their resources. The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 – Focuses on the protection of wildlife species and their habitats.

About The Village

- Locality Name: Podammalpuram (போடம்மாள்புரம்)
- District: Tuticorin
- State: Tamil Nadu

Podammalpuram is a small Village/hamlet in Thoothukkudi Block in Tuticorin District of Tamil Nadu State, India. It comes under Kulaiankarisal Panchayath. It is located 13 KM towards South from District headquarters Thoothukudi. 11 KM from Thoothukudi Rural. 629 KM from State capital Chennai. Podammalpuram Pin code is 628103 and postal head office is Pudukottai. Podammalpuram is surrounded by Thoothukkudi Block towards North, Srivaikundam Block towards South, Alwarthirunagari Block towards South, Tiruchendur Block towards South. Thoothukudi, Tiruchendur, Tirunelveli, Vadakkuvalliyur are the nearby Cities to Podammalpuram. It is near to bay of bengal. There is a chance of humidity in the weather. Tamil is the Local Language here. There is no railway station near to Podammalpuram in less than 10 km.

Objectives

- To create awareness among the villagers about key environmental issues such as pollution, deforestation, climate change, and waste management.
- To educate the community on sustainable practices including water conservation, organic farming, and proper waste disposal methods.
- To promote the importance of tree plantation and biodiversity conservation as essential components of a healthy ecosystem.
- To encourage active community participation in environmental protection through clean-up drives, awareness rallies, and interactive sessions.
- To instill a sense of environmental responsibility among students and residents, fostering a mindset of care and respect for nature.

Methodology

Area of the Study

Area of study refers to Podammalpuram, Thoothukudi

Sample Design

A sample design is defined plan for obtaining a sample from the given population. The respondents are selected based on convenient sampling.

Tools for Data Collection

The data collected through questionnaires were analyzed using sampling percentage analysis, graphics charts, tables and diagrams.

Sampling Size

The sample size used for the study is 30

Collection of Data

The study has used primary data which is collected with a structured questionnaire from respondents. Secondary data was collected from:

- Various reports
- News papers
- Journals
- Websites
- Social Medias
- Books
- Internet

Result and Discussion

As part of the Environmental Awareness Program conducted in Podammalpuram Village, data was collected through pre- and post-program surveys, observation, and community feedback. The purpose was to evaluate the level of environmental awareness before the program, measure the

effectiveness of the sessions, and identify behavioral changes or shifts in perception among the participants.

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of data regarding impact of environmental awareness in Podammalpuram village people. Data are collected from 30 respondents and tabulated for easy understating and good presentation, which assists the researcher to analyse the data efficiency.

The data collected are been analysed using the following statistical tools:

- Percentage analysis

Table 1: Gender wise respondents

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	10	20
Female	20	80
Total	30	100

Source: Primary Data

The data indicates that out of a total of 30 respondents, 10 were male (20%) and 20 were female (80%).

This shows a significantly higher participation rate among female respondents in Podammalpuram Village.

Table 2: Age wise Classification of the respondents

Age group	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Below 30	8	27
30-50	12	40
Above 50	10	30
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

This indicates that, majority (40%) of the respondents fall in the age group of 30–50 years, followed by 30% of the respondents are in the age group of above 50 and 27% of the respondents are in the age group of below 30 years.

Thus, most of the respondents in the age group of 30 – 50 years

Table 3: Occupation of the respondents

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
House wife	7	23
Students	3	10
Professional / Business	8	27
Others	12	40
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 shows that, occupation-wise distribution of the respondents. A majority of 40% belong to the "others" category, which may include various non-specified occupations. This is followed by 27% of the respondents who are professionals or business people. Housewives make up 23% of the respondents, while students account for the smallest group at 10%.
This indicates that, majority of the respondents are belong to the others category.

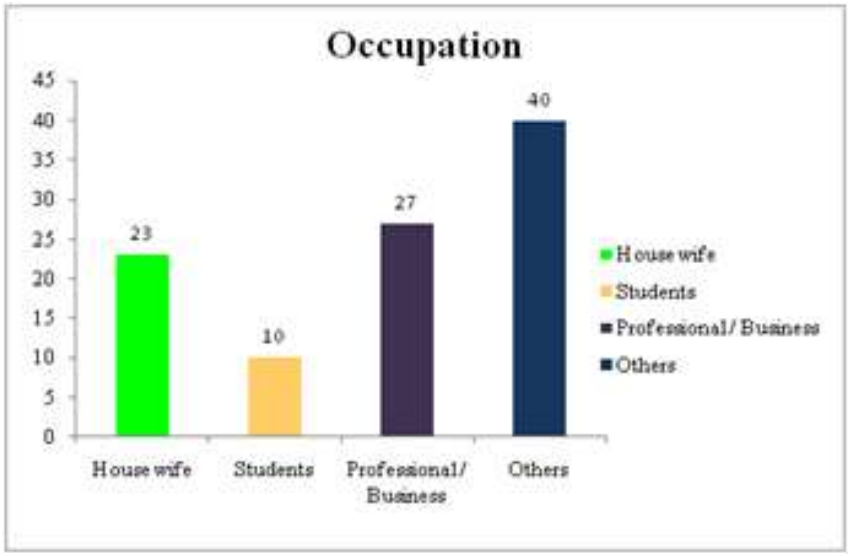

Table 4: Educational Qualification of the Respondents

Particulars	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
No formal education	1	3
Primary School	8	27
Secondary School	5	17
Higher Education	16	53
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.4 presents the educational background of the respondents. A majority of 53% (16 respondents) have received higher education, followed by 27% who have completed primary school and 17% who have studied up to secondary school. Only 3% (1 respondent) reported having no formal education.
Thus, majority 53% of the respondents have received higher education

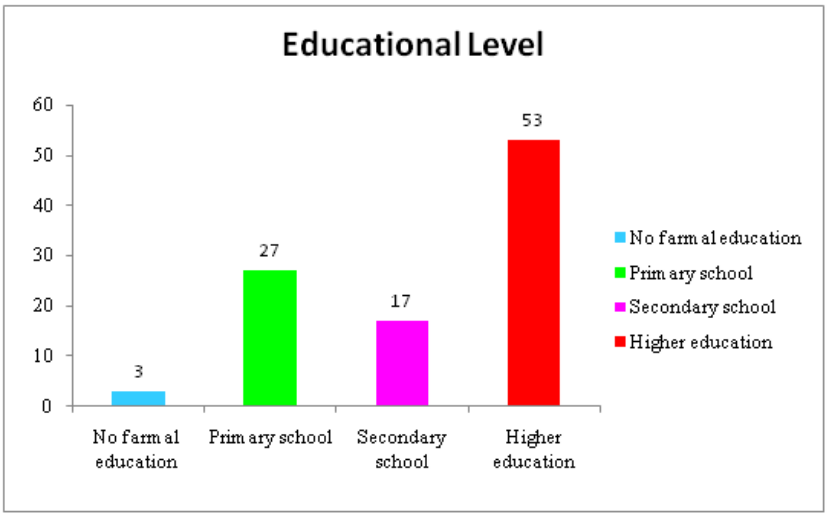

Table 5: Reasons for Planting Trees

Particulars	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
For future	5	10
For clean air and shade	20	80
To sell	5	10
For no reason	-	-
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

Table 5 shows that, majority, 80% of the respondents, plant trees for clean air and shade, followed by 10% of the respondents are plant trees for future use, while another 10% do so for commercial purposes like selling.
Thus, majority80% of the respondents are plant trees for clean air and shade

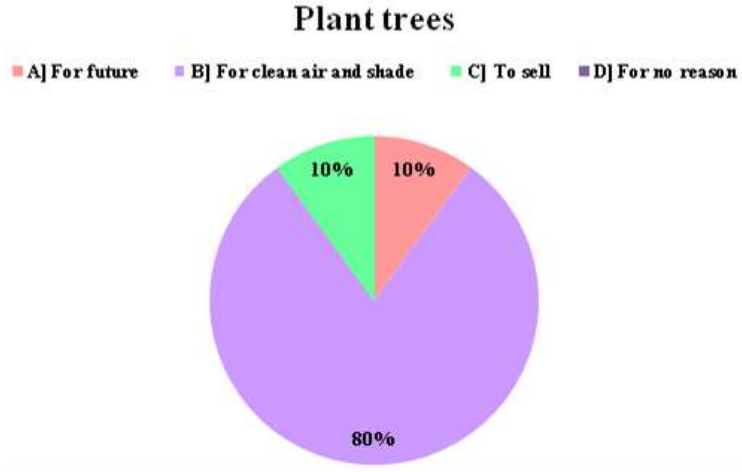

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Table 6: Disposal of Kitchen Waste

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Burn it	5	16
Through it outside	3	10
Composed it	22	74
Dump in river	-	-
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

Table 6 shows how respondents dispose of their kitchen waste. A majority, 74% of the respondents are compost their waste, followed by 16% (5 respondents) burn the waste, while 10% (3 respondents) throw it outside.

Thus, majority, 74% of the respondents are compost their waste, indicating environmentally friendly practices.

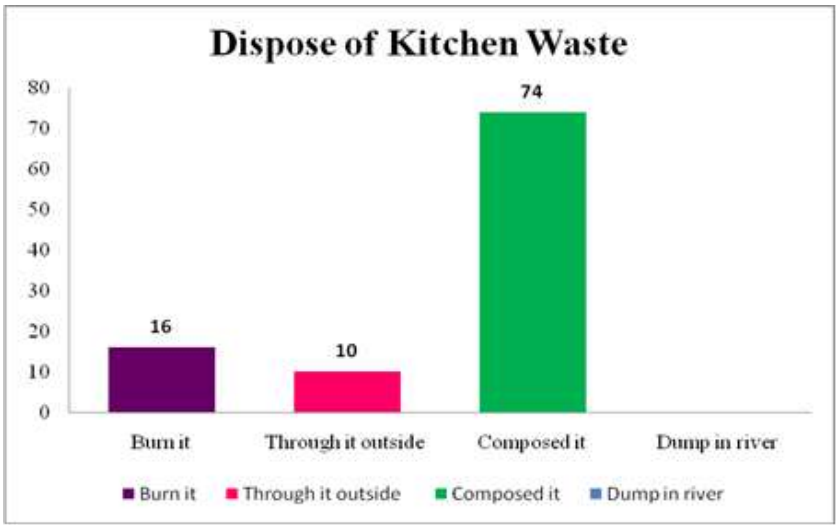

Table 7: Causes of Water Pollution

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Polythene covers	18	60
Glass bottle	-	-
Sewage water	12	40
Used flower	-	-
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

Table 7 outlines the respondents' views on the causes of water pollution. The majority, 60% (18 respondents), identified polythene covers as a major cause, followed by 40% (12 respondents) who pointed to sewage water.

Thus, majority 60% of the respondents are identified polythene covers as a major cause.

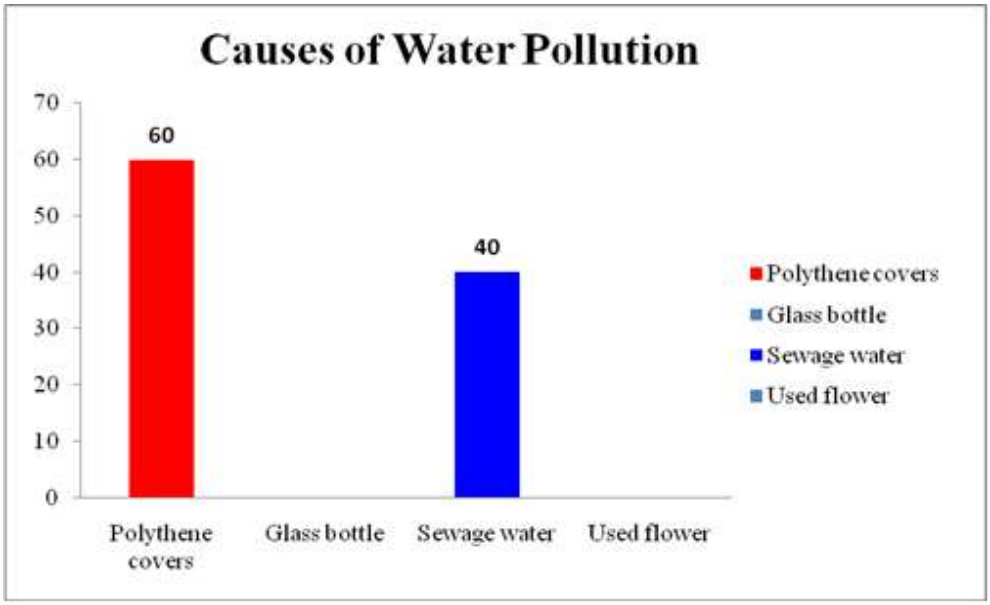

Table 8: Methods of Saving Water in Farming

Particulars	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Flood fields	25	85
Drip irrigation	5	15
leave taps open		
Use more water		
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

Table 8 shows how respondents save water in farming. Majority, 85% of the respondents' use the flooding method, and only 15% of the respondents are use drip irrigation, a more modern and water-saving technique.

Thus, majority, 85% of the respondents are use the flooding method, which is traditional but not the most water-efficient.

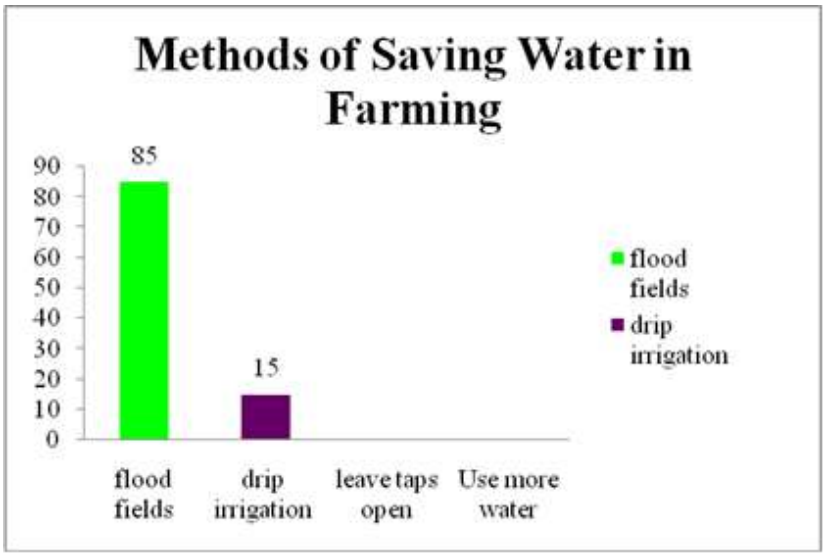

Table 9: Impact of Plastic Waste on Animals

Particulars	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Feed them	-	-
Nothing	-	-
Make them sick	30	100
Helps digestion	-	-
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

Table 9 reveals that, 100% of the respondents (30 people) believe that plastic waste makes animals sick. None of the respondents think it feeds them, does nothing, or helps with digestion.

Thus, 100% of the respondents are believe that plastic waste makes animals sick.

Table 10: Making of Compost

Particulars	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Plastic		
Cow dung and waste turned into fertilizer	30	100
Ashes		
Stone		
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.10 shows that, 100% of the respondents (30 people) make compost using cow dung and organic waste turned into fertilizer. No respondents mentioned using plastic, ashes, or stones.

Majority100% of the respondents (30 people) makes compost using cow dung and organic waste turned into fertilizer.

Table 11: Time for Plastic Breakdown

Particulars	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
1Year	-	-
5Year	-	-
100+Years	30	100
It dissolves in water	-	-
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

Table 11 indicates that, 100% of the respondents (30 people) believe that plastic takes 100+ years to break down. No respondents chose other options such as 1 year, 5 years, or dissolving in water.
Thus, majority 100% of the respondents (30 people) believe that plastic takes 100+ years to break down.

Table 12: Rainwater Harvesting

Particulars	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Storing rain water for use	30	100
Causing floods	-	-
Throwing water	-	-
Stopping rain	-	-
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

Table 12 shows that, 100% of the respondents (30 people) are in favor of storing rainwater for use. None of the respondents mentioned causing floods, throwing water away, or stopping rain as part of rainwater harvesting.
Thus, majority 100% of the respondents are in favor of storing rainwater for use.

Table 13: Rainwater Harvesting System in Homes

Particulars	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Yes	5	17
No	19	60
No idea	6	20
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

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Table 13 shows that, 17% of the respondents have a rainwater harvesting system in their home, while 60% of the respondents do not have one. Additionally, 20% of the respondents have no idea about it.

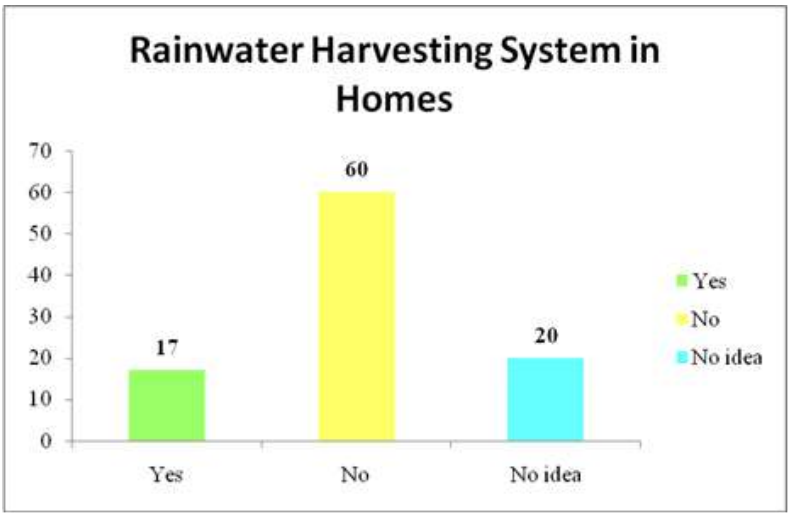


Table 14: Importance of Protecting the Environment

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	30	100
No	-	-
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

The data in table 14 indicates that all respondents (100%) agree that protecting the environment is important.

Thus, majority of the respondents (100%) agree that protecting the environment is important.

Table 15: Planted a Tree in the Last Year

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	30	100
No	-	-
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

The table 15 shows that, all respondents (100%) reported that they had planted at least one tree in the last year.

Thus, majority (100%) of the respondents reported that they had planted at least one tree in the last year.

Table 16: Awareness of Composting

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	30	100
No	-	-
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

The above table 16 shows that, 100% of the respondents are aware of composting.
Thus, majority 100% of the respondents are aware of composting.

Table 17: Preference for Cloth Bags Over Plastic Bags

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	30	100
No	-	-
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

The above table 17 shows that, majority of the respondents (100%) indicated that they use cloth bags instead of plastic ones.
Thus, majority of the respondents (100%) indicated that they use cloth bags instead of plastic ones.

Table 18: Disposal of Plastic Waste in Dustbins

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	22	73
No	1	3
Sometimes	7	24
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

The table reveals that, 73% of the respondents consistently dispose of plastic waste in dustbins, followed by 24% do so only sometimes, and 3% do not, indicating a need for increased awareness and education about the importance of proper plastic waste disposal to prevent environmental pollution.
Thus, majority 73% of the respondents consistently dispose of plastic waste in dustbins, reflecting a good level of proper waste disposal behavior.

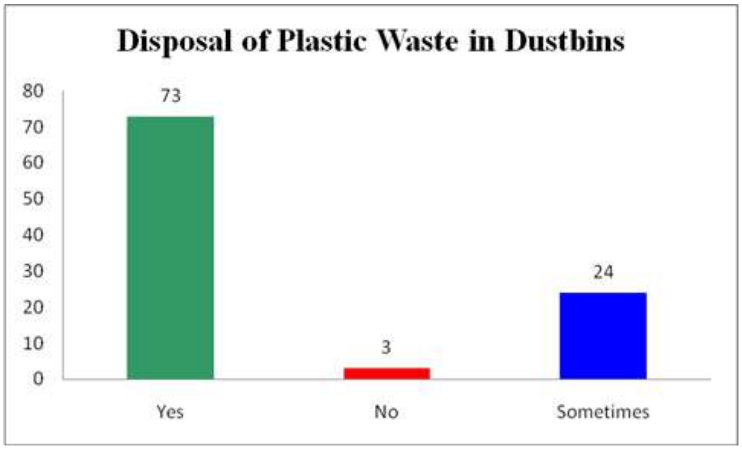


Table 19: Awareness of Laws and Punishments for Plastic Pollution

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	14	46
No	16	54
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

The data shows that, only 46% of the respondents are aware of the laws and punishments related to plastic pollution, while 54% of the respondents are not aware of the laws and punishments related to plastic pollution.

Thus, most (54%) of the respondents are not aware of the laws and punishments related to plastic pollution,

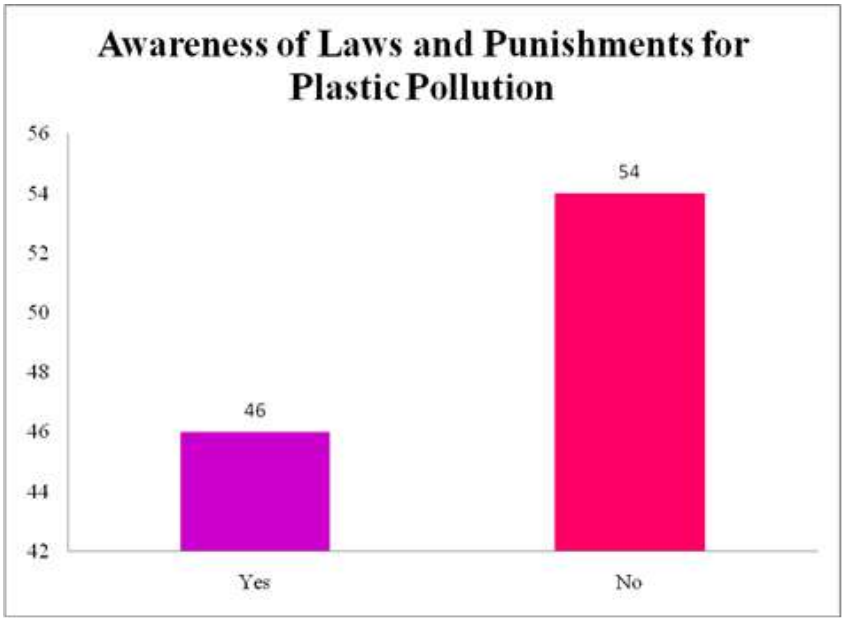


Table 20: Disposal Methods of Plastic Bags After Use

Particulars	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Burn them	4	13
Throw them in river	26	87
Reuse or recycle them	-	-
Leave them on pond	-	-
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

The table 20 shows that, 87% of the respondents are reported throwing plastic bags into rivers, and 13% burn them. None of the respondents reported reusing or recycling plastic bags.

Thus, majority 87% of the respondents are reported throwing plastic bags into rivers.

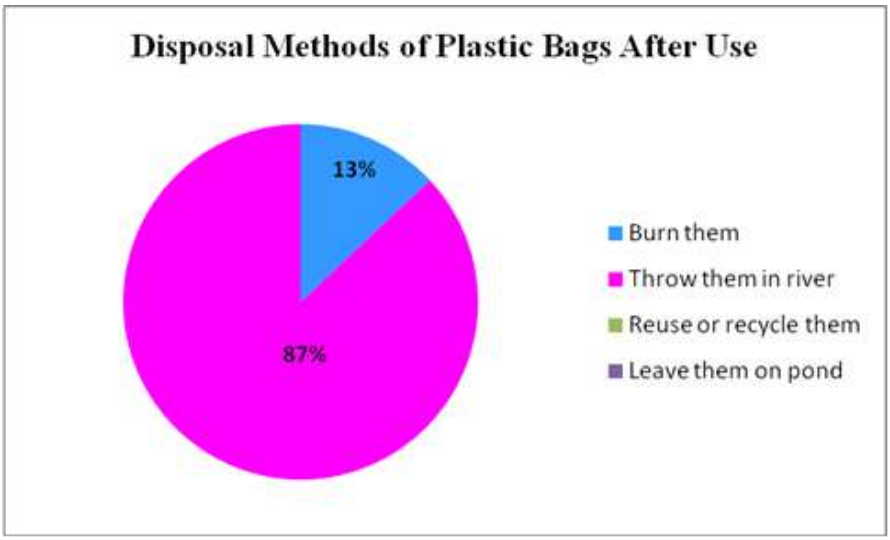


Table 21: Best Way to Manage Village Waste

Particulars	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Burn everything	12	40
Compost biodegradable waste and recycle plastic	9	30
Throw in pound	9	30
Bury it all in one place	-	-
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

The table 21 indicates that, 40% of the respondents are prefer burning all village waste, while 30% of the respondents are support composting and recycling, and another 30% of the respondents are throw waste into ponds.
Thus, most 40% of the respondents are prefers burning all village waste.

Table 22: Type of Pollution Causing Major Impact in the Village

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Air		
Noise		
Water	30	100
Soil		
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

The above table 22 shows that, all respondents (100%) are identified water pollution as the type causing the most significant impact on their village.
Thus, all respondents (100%) are identified water pollution as the type causing the most significant impact on their village.

Table 23: Environmental Changes in the Last Ten Years

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	13	43
No	17	57
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

The table indicates that, 57% of the respondents are feel there have been no

significant environmental changes in the last ten years, while 43% believe there have been noticeable changes.

Thus, majority 57% of the respondents are feel there have been no significant environmental changes in the last ten years.

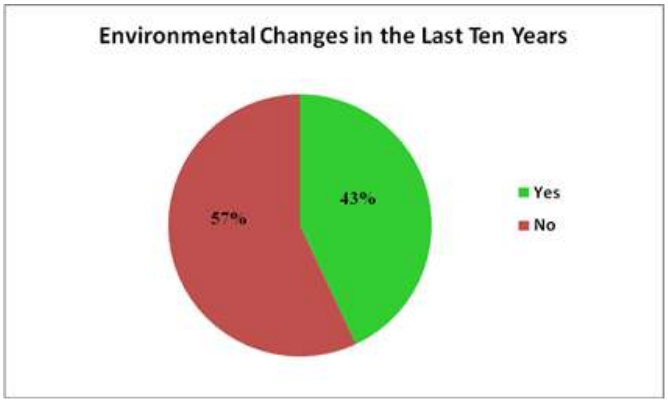


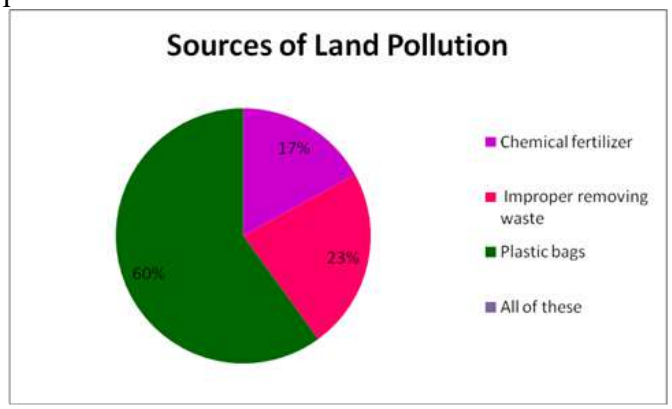
Table 24: Sources of Land Pollution

Particulars	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Chemical fertilizer	5	17
Improper removing waste	7	23
Plastic bags	18	60
All of these		
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

The table 24 shows that, 60% of the respondents are identify plastic bags as the major source of land pollution, followed by 23% who cite improper waste removal and 17% who point to chemical fertilizers.

Thus, majority 60% of the respondents are identify plastic bags as the major source of land pollution.



Conclusion And Action Required

To address the environmental challenges identified in your survey, a multi-faceted approach involving education, community engagement, and financial incentives is necessary. Emphasizing sustainable agricultural practices, responsible plastic waste management, and water conservation methods can help build a more environmentally-conscious community in Podammalpuram Village. Additionally, strengthening the awareness of laws and fostering better waste disposal practices will contribute to an overall improvement in the village's environmental health.

Findings

- Majority of the respondents are females
- Most of the respondents in the age group of 30 – 50 years
- Majority of the respondents are belonged to the others category
- Majority 53% of the respondents have received higher education
- Majority80% of the respondents are plant trees for clean air and shade
- Majority, 74% of the respondents are compost their waste, indicating environmentally friendly practices.
- Majority 60% of the respondents are identified polythene covers as a major cause.
- Majority, 85% of the respondents are use the flooding method, which is traditional but not the most water-efficient.
- 100% of the respondents are believe that plastic waste makes animals sick.
- Majority100% of the respondents (30 people) makes compost using cow dung and organic waste turned into fertilizer.
- Majority 100% of the respondents (30 people) believe that plastic takes 100+ years to break down.
- Majority 100% of the respondents are in favor of storing rainwater for use.
- Majority of the respondents (100%) agree that protecting the environment is important.
- Majority (100%) of the respondents reported that they had planted at least one tree in the last year.
- Majority 100% of the respondents are aware of composting.
- Majority of the respondents (100%) indicated that they use cloth bags instead of plastic ones.
- Majority 73% of the respondents consistently dispose of plastic waste in dustbins, reflecting a good level of proper waste disposal behavior.
- Most (54%) of the respondents are not aware of the laws and punishments related to plastic pollution,
- Majority 87% of the respondents are reported throwing plastic bags into rivers.

- Most 40% of the respondents are prefers burning all village waste.
- Majority 57% of the respondents are felt there have been no significant environmental changes in the last ten years.
- Majority 60% of the respondents are identifying plastic bags as the major source of land pollution.

Suggestions

- Conduct workshops on modern irrigation techniques such as drip irrigation to reduce water wastage in farming. Providing incentives or subsidies to adopt water-efficient technologies could be effective.
- Launch community programs focused on the harmful effects of plastic pollution and the importance of proper disposal. Encourage the use of alternative materials like cloth bags and educate on recycling methods.
- Provide training on effective composting practices, and set up local composting centers to encourage the collection of organic waste. Promote composting as a community effort to reduce waste and improve soil quality.
- Set up awareness campaigns and offer financial support or technical guidance to install rainwater harvesting systems at the household level. Demonstrate successful case studies of local homes or communities that have benefited from such systems.
- Promote sustainable agricultural techniques such as organic farming, use of bio-based fertilizers, and crop diversification. Provide training and financial incentives for farmers to adopt more sustainable practices.
- Initiate a community-based plastic waste collection and recycling program. Partner with recycling facilities to ensure that plastic waste is processed appropriately and promote alternatives to plastic packaging.
- Promote eco-friendly waste disposal options like recycling, composting, and community waste management. Set up local composting and recycling centers to minimize the need for burning or throwing waste away.
- Encourage more collective tree planting campaigns, especially along roadsides or in communal spaces. Create community gardens or parks to foster environmental sustainability.

Questionnaire

1. Name: _____

2. Age: _____

3. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other

4. Occupation: _____

5. Education Level:

a) No Formal Education b) Primary School c) Secondary School d) Higher Education

6. Why should we plant trees?

a) For furniture b) For clean air and shade c) To sell d) For no reason

7. How should we dispose of kitchen waste?

a) Burn it b) Throw it outside c) Compost it d) Dump in river

8. What causes water pollution?

a) Polythene covers b) Glass bottles c) Sewage water d) Used flowers

9. How can we save water in farming?

a) Flood fields b) Drip irrigation c) Leave taps open d) Use more water

10. What does plastic waste do to animals?

a) Feeds them b) Nothing c) Makes them sick d) Helps digestion

11. What is compost?

a) Plastic b) Cow dung and waste turned to fertilizer c) Ashes d) Stones

12. Do you know the time of plastic break down?

a) 1 year b) 5 years c) 100+ years d) It dissolves in water

13. What is rainwater harvesting?

a) Storing rainwater for use b) Causing floods c) Throwing water d) Stopping rain

14. Do have rainwater harvesting system in your home?

a) Yes b) No C) No idea

15. You think protecting the environment is important

a) Yes b) No c)

16. You have planted a tree in the last year.

a) Yes b) No

17. You know about composting.

a) Yes b) No

18. You prefer using cloth bags over plastic ones.

a) Yes b) No

19. Do you always throw the plastic into dustbin?

A. Yes B. No C. Sometimes

20. Do you know the laws and punishment for plastic pollution in India? If yes, what are they?

A. Yes B. No

21. What should we do with plastic bags after use?

a) Burn them b) Throw them in the river c) Reuse or recycle them d) Leave them on the road

22. What is the best way to manage village waste?

a) Burn everything b) Compost biodegradable waste and recycle plastics c) Throw in pond

d) Bury it all in one place

23. What type of pollution causes major impact to your village?

a) Air b) Noise c) Water d) Soil

24. Have you noticed last 10 years the environmental changes in your area?

a) Yes b) No

25. What are some common land pollutants and their source?

a) Chemical fertilizer b) Improper removing waster c) Plastic bags d) All of these

ISBN-978-93-49938-55-7

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Agrarian Transformation in Telangana: An Analytical Report on Telangana's Agricultural Development (2014-2024)

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Article DOI Link: https://zenodo.org/uploads/17846290

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.17846290

Abstract

Since the formation of Telangana in 2014, the state has focused heavily on improving agriculture. The government followed two main strategies: giving direct financial help to farmers and restoring irrigation systems on a large scale. This chapter describes the major schemes and policies launched during this period, looking at their spending levels, economic impact, and effects on farmer incomes and crop production. The findings show that Telangana has made big gains in agriculture, but also faces some serious challenges.

Agriculture and related sectors increased their share in the state economy, rising from 17% of Gross State Value Added (GSVA)&Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) in 2014–15 to about 17.9% in 2023–24, with a peak of 21% in 2021–22. This sector grew at an average of 11.9% per year between 2014–15 and 2022–23, higher than the national average. The area under cultivation expanded from 131.33 lakh acres in 2014–15 to 215.37 lakh acres in 2021–22.

The state invested heavily in this sector, spending more than ₹1.91 lakh crore since 2014. The flagship Rythu Bandhu scheme alone distributed ₹65,000 crore to farmers. These efforts boosted crop yields and slightly improved farmers' living conditions. However, this success came at a cost—Telangana's public debt has risen sharply, raising concerns about whether this high-spending model can be sustained in the long run.

Keywords: Major schemes and policies, Farmer incomes, Rythu Bandhu scheme, Economic growth.

Introduction

The formation of Telangana as India's 29th state on June 2, 2014, marked a pivotal moment, but it inherited an agricultural sector grappling with deeply entrenched issues. For decades, the region's agrarian landscape was characterized by a lack of assured irrigation, low land productivity, high cultivation costs, and unremunerative crop prices, all of which contributed to a pervasive cycle of rural indebtedness. These challenges were compounded by a historical neglect of the sector, which had seen low investments in land development and irrigation infrastructure for over fifty years. This environment of vulnerability was particularly acute for the majority of the population dependent on agriculture. A significant 47.3% of the state's working population, as of 2022-23, was concentrated in agriculture, forestry, and fishing, underscoring the sector's vital role in sustaining livelihoods despite its smaller contribution to the overall economy.

At the time of its formation, the state's economy presented a mixed picture. While Hyderabad held a government surplus of ₹13,000 crore annually and the state's GSDP growth rate was a respectable 12.1%, it lagged slightly behind the national average. The primary sector's contribution to the GSVA was 19.5% at current prices, with the crop sector accounting for a dominant 55% share of total agricultural GSVA. A critical fiscal challenge was already apparent, with an outstanding public debt of ₹75,577 crore at the time of statehood. It was against this backdrop that the government embarked on a mission to transform its agrarian sector, recognizing that the well-being of its people was inextricably linked to the prosperity of its farmers. The new policy framework was designed to address these historical vulnerabilities head-on, with a focus on institutional reforms, financial support, and a revival of traditional infrastructure.

Policies and Programs

Rythu Bandhu and Rythu Bima

In a landmark policy move, the Telangana government introduced the Rythu Bandhu scheme, formally known as the Farmer's Investment Support Scheme

(FISS), on May 10, 2018. This initiative was the first of its kind in India to provide direct investment support to farmers, with the explicit goal of breaking the vicious cycle of rural indebtedness and enhancing agricultural productivity. The scheme's design was straightforward yet revolutionary: a direct cash grant for farmers to cover the initial investment costs of cultivation for two crop seasons annually.

The financial support began at ₹4,000 per acre per season, which was subsequently increased to ₹5,000 per acre, for a total of ₹10,000 per year per acre. The government places no restrictions on how the funds are used, allowing farmers the flexibility to purchase inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and labor as they see fit. Initially, the funds were distributed via bank bearer cheques at village-level events, supervised by Agriculture Extension Officers. This process was later streamlined, with transfers now being made directly into the bank accounts of beneficiaries. The scheme has a broad reach, covering all land-owning farmers, and primarily benefits small and marginal farmers who constitute the majority of the beneficiary pool. As of 2023, the total funds disbursed under Rythu Bandhu had reached an impressive ₹65,000 crore, benefiting 65 lakh farmers and covering 1.43 crore acres of land.

Telangana Rythu Bharosa Scheme: Launched in January 2025 by the new government, this renamed version of Rythu Bandhu provides ₹12,000 per year per farmer in two installments.

Farm Loan Waivers: The government has implemented loan waiver schemes to relieve farmers of debt. In 2024, a crop loan waiver was announced for loans up to ₹2 lakh, applicable to short-term crop loans taken between December 2018 and December 2023

Complementing this investment scheme, the Rythu Bima (Group Life Insurance Scheme) was launched on August 14, 2018, to provide a crucial social safety net. Recognizing the immense financial vulnerability of farm families in the event of a farmer's death, this scheme provides a life insurance cover of ₹5 lakh for both natural and accidental deaths. A notable feature of the scheme is that the entire premium is borne by the Government of Telangana, ensuring that farmers do not have to bear any financial burden to access this security. The eligibility criteria are tied to land ownership and age, covering all Pattadar Pass Book holders between 18 and 59 years. The entire claim settlement process is designed to be seamless, with online submissions and direct bank transfers to the nominee's account, eliminating bureaucratic hurdles for grieving families.

Mission Kakatiya

Telangana's policy renaissance in agriculture was not limited to financial transfers; it also included a massive investment in public goods and infrastructure. The Mission Kakatiya initiative, launched in 2015, aimed to

restore the state's traditional tank irrigation systems, a legacy of the historical Kakatiya dynasty. For centuries, these tanks, resembling vast lakes, were the lifeblood of the region, ensuring agricultural productivity and prosperity. However, decades of neglect had led to significant siltation and decay, causing a dramatic decrease in the irrigated area from 5.3 lakh hectares in 1956-57 to a mere 0.67 lakh hectares by 2009-10. The new program sought to reverse this decline by rehabilitating over 46,000 minor irrigation tanks.

The project's implementation involved de-siltation, strengthening tank bunds, and repairing feeder channels to enhance water retention and improve distribution. The objectives were multi-faceted: to enhance water availability for farming, improve groundwater recharge, increase cropping intensity, and boost rural economies. The program's impact has been widely documented. The application of nutrient-rich tank silt on fields has led to a significant decrease in the use of chemical fertilizers by 36% and a corresponding increase in crop yields by nearly 50%. This demonstrates a powerful, multi-faceted return on infrastructure investment. The revival of these tanks has also shown a demonstrable impact on groundwater levels, with a rising trend of 1.27 meters per year on average in the influence zones. Moreover, the program has had a significant positive effect on allied activities, with a 36-39% increase in fish yields, benefiting the local fishermen community.

Ancillary Policies and Institutional Reforms

In addition to these flagship initiatives, the government introduced several ancillary policies to modernize and streamline the agricultural ecosystem. The formation of Rythu Samanvaya Samithis (Farmer Coordination Committees) was a key institutional reform, creating a formal link between the farming community and the government. These committees, composed of over 1.61 lakh members, were mandated to address farmers' problems, raise awareness about schemes, and ensure minimum support prices for produce.

A foundational step that preceded the implementation of Rythu Bandhu was the comprehensive Land Records Updation Programme. This massive exercise aimed to purify and secure land records, culminating in the creation of the highly secure 'Dharani' land bank website. This digital platform, with its 17 tamper-proof security features, was critical for the successful and transparent implementation of direct benefit transfer schemes like Rythu Bandhu, ensuring that financial aid reached the rightful land-owning farmers.

Financial Outlay and Macro Economic Impact

Budgetary Allocations and Expenditure Trends

The government’s commitment to agrarian welfare is most clearly visible in its budgetary allocations. Total budget allocations for agriculture and allied sectors

have seen a substantial increase over the years, rising from ₹29,834 crore in 2023-24 to ₹51,463 crore in 2024-25, which represents 20.2% of the state's total expenditure. For the fiscal year 2025-26, the Agriculture Department was allocated ₹24,439 crore. This allocation underscores a consistent and aggressive financial strategy aimed at supporting the agricultural sector.

The expenditure on flagship schemes reflects this commitment. Rythu Bandhu, for instance, had a budgetary provision of ₹12,000 crore in its inaugural year, 2018-19. By 2023, the cumulative expenditure for this scheme alone had reached ₹65,000 crore, disbursed to 65 lakh farmers. Similarly, Mission Kakatiya has seen significant investment, with expenditures of ₹1,568.40 crore for Phase I and ₹1,152.20 crore for Phase II, stabilizing an ayacut of 6.71 lakh and 3.60 lakh acres respectively. The total expenditure on social programs and welfare was approximately ₹21.3 lakh crore as of 2023.

Economic Growth and Contribution

Telangana's policy interventions have had a demonstrable impact on the state's macroeconomic performance. The state's real GSDP grew at an average rate of 7.2% from 2014-15 to 2021-22, outperforming the national average growth of 5.6% during the same period. The primary sector, which includes agriculture and allied activities, was a significant driver of this growth, with an average annual growth rate of 11.9% per annum from 2014-15 to 2022-23.

The contribution of agriculture and allied sectors to the state's GSVA has also shown a remarkable increase, rising by 142% from ₹76,123 crore in 2014-15 to ₹1,84,321 crore in 2020-21. This rise has been a major contributor to the state's overall economic resilience. However, a deeper look at the data reveals a crucial shift in the composition of this growth. While the primary sector as a whole has grown, the crop sector's contribution to the agricultural GSVA declined by 11% from 2014-15 to 2020-21. In contrast, the contribution from the livestock sub-sector increased by 12.65% during the same period. This suggests that the state's agricultural success is not just a story of increased crop production but a fundamental shift towards more resilient, diversified, and less climate-dependent allied activities. This has significant implications for future policy, indicating that sustained success may require increased support for livestock, dairy, and fisheries to build on this emergent trend.

The changing dynamics of the agricultural sector are further illustrated by the changing contributions of its sub-sectors to the overall agricultural GSVA, as shown in the table 1.

Sub-Sector	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Crops	55%	49%	49%	47%	42%	50%	44%
Livestock	38%	45%	45%	46%	50%	44%	51%
Forestry and Logging	5%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%	4%
Fishing and Aquaculture	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%	1%
Source: Directorate of Economics and Statistics							

Table1. The sub-sectors contribution to the overall agricultural GSVA of Telangana

This data presents a clear picture of the growing importance of the livestock sector, which is a more stable source of income and provides a buffer against the external shocks of crop failure. The rise in women's participation in this sector (69% of the workforce) also has significant socio-economic implications for gender equity and empowerment.

Impact On Yields and Socio-Economic Upliftment

Productivity Gains and Yield Trends

The overarching goal of the agricultural policies was to boost productivity and crop yields, and the data shows mixed but largely positive results. The total area under cultivation has expanded significantly, from 131.33 lakh acres in 2014-15 to 215.37 lakh acres in 2021-22. This increase in area is a direct indicator of the effectiveness of policies aimed at enhancing farm viability.

On a crop-specific level, the performance has been varied. The state has seen increased yields in key crops such as maize, cotton, soybean, and sesame. However, the yield for the staple food, paddy, has shown a slight decline, from 2,209 kg per acre to 2,166 kg per acre, attributed to factors like soil nutrient depletion and erratic rainfall. This highlights the ongoing challenges posed by environmental factors and the need for more sustainable farming practices.

The value of public goods investment is particularly evident in the context of soil

health and productivity. The de-siltation efforts under Mission Kakatiya, and the subsequent application of nutrient-rich tank silt to fields, have been shown to reduce chemical fertilizer consumption by 36%. This has not only reduced costs for farmers but also led to a significant increase in crop yields, of up to 50%.

Beyond infrastructure, technological interventions also offer a path to improved productivity. A study on the impact of Conservation Agriculture (CA) on a paddy-maize cropping system found that it led to a productivity gain of 6.92% to 11.70% over traditional farming. This was achieved through a reduction in costs by 11.17%, which resulted in a remarkable 39.42% increase in profit margin for farmers. These findings indicate that a blend of financial support, infrastructural investment, and targeted promotion of modern farming techniques can lead to tangible and significant improvements in farmer livelihoods.

Socio-Economic Upliftment and Disparities

The impact of these schemes on farmer welfare has been a central tenet of the policy agenda. The Rythu Bandhu scheme, in particular, has been found to have a "minor yet significant impact" on the socio-economic status of its beneficiaries. The direct financial support has helped farmers procure agricultural inputs and, critically, repay old debts, leading to increased yield and revenue.

However, the analysis of these schemes reveals persistent challenges and significant disparities in their implementation. The exclusion of landless and tenant farmers from the Rythu Bandhu scheme is a major point of contention. Due to the informal nature of their agreements with landowners, these farmers are not eligible for the benefit, which perpetuates a policy gap that leaves a vulnerable segment of the agrarian population without a direct financial safety net. While a scheme in a neighboring state, Annadatha Sukhibhava, does cover tenant farmers, Telangana's policy has not yet addressed this issue, which disproportionately affects marginalized communities.

Moreover, the design of the Rythu Bandhu scheme has faced criticism for benefiting wealthy landowners without a cap on the number of acres, while small and marginal farmers receive a proportionally smaller amount of the total financial support, despite being the majority of beneficiaries. A study on tribal communities further highlights these deep-seated inequalities, finding substantial agricultural disparities driven by unequal landholding patterns and limited access to irrigation. Communities with limited land or those residing in forest areas face significant challenges, with a large percentage of households having incomes below ₹50,000.

Beyond these structural issues, implementation gaps have also been identified. Both farmers and officials have cited problems such as delays in credit assistance and slow-working portals as significant hurdles in the effective delivery of scheme benefits.

The Fiscal Paradox and Sustainability

The pursuit of agrarian growth and welfare in Telangana has been an expensive endeavor, and a closer look at the state's financial health reveals a critical fiscal paradox. While the government has succeeded in driving economic growth and uplifting farmers, it has done so through an aggressive spending model that has led to a dramatic and potentially unsustainable increase in public debt.

At the time of its formation, Telangana had an outstanding public debt of about ₹75,577 crore. Over the years, this has expanded substantially, and recent estimates suggest that as of March 31, 2025, the state's total debt, including on-book borrowings and off-budget liabilities, stood at about ₹4.42 lakh crore. Projections for 2025–26 indicate that the on-book outstanding debt alone may reach nearly 28.1% of GSDP, and if contingent liabilities such as loans to state-run SPVs are included, the effective burden could rise above 35–37% of GSDP. This trend is further evidenced by a significant increase in the interest payments-to-state's own revenue ratio, which worsened from 14.6% in 2014-15 to 18.0% in 2023-24, rising to 28.2% when including off-budget borrowings. Interest payments continue to be a significant and growing share of the state's revenue expenditure.

This escalation of debt suggests a complex trade-off between welfare and fiscal prudence. The government has prioritized social and agricultural spending to achieve rapid growth and public welfare goals. However, the financial data indicates that this has come at the cost of long-term fiscal stability. The aggressive spending model, while effective in the short term, has resulted in a mounting debt burden that raises serious questions about the long-term viability of the state's financial health and its ability to sustain such high-expenditure schemes.

Despite this fiscal concern, the policy interventions have had a transformative effect. The data on Mission Kakatiya, in particular, illustrates the direct causal link between public infrastructure investment and agricultural productivity. The restoration of tanks not only provided assured irrigation but also yielded a multi-faceted environmental benefit. The application of tank silt, a free, nutrient-rich resource, reduced the need for chemical fertilizers and boosted crop yields.This demonstrates the power of investing in public goods with compounding benefits. The fact that farmers voluntarily spent ₹900 crore on their own to transport this silt points to a high level of community buy-in and a direct return on their personal investment of labor and resources, a model that is inherently more sustainable than a direct cash transfer and worthy of consideration for future policy.

Conclusion

Over the past decade, Telangana has made remarkable strides in transforming its

agricultural sector. Through bold, policy-driven initiatives like Rythu Bandhu and Mission Kakatiya, the state has succeeded in boosting economic growth, increasing agricultural output, and providing tangible support to millions of farmers. The state's impressive agricultural growth rate, which has outpaced the national average, stands as a testament to the effectiveness of its strategic interventions. The model has demonstrably alleviated rural indebtedness and improved the financial standing of countless farm families, fulfilling a core promise of the state's formation.

However, a thorough analysis reveals that this success story is not without its complexities and unfinished business. The high-expenditure model has led to a significant increase in the state's public debt, a challenge that questions the long-term fiscal sustainability of the current approach. Moreover, the benefits of the flagship schemes have not been equitably distributed. The exclusion of landless and tenant farmers, along with persistent disparities faced by marginalized communities, highlights a major policy gap that needs to be addressed for the transformation to be truly inclusive.

The analysis also points to a subtle yet significant shift within the agricultural sector itself. The growth is not solely driven by an increase in crop production but is increasingly supported by the robust performance of allied activities like livestock and fisheries. This indicates a natural evolution towards a more diversified and resilient agrarian economy.

Recommendations

The government should actively explore mechanisms to extend the benefits of investment support schemes to landless and tenant farmers, perhaps through a verifiable system of land-lease agreements. This would address a major inequity and provide a much-needed safety net for the most vulnerable members of the farming community.

The state must address its mounting public debt. This requires a re-evaluation of the current expenditure model to ensure long-term fiscal health without sacrificing core welfare objectives. The government could consider targeting subsidies more effectively, improving tax revenue collection, and exploring alternative funding models for welfare initiatives to reduce reliance on borrowings.

Continued and enhanced investment in multi-faceted infrastructure projects like Mission Kakatiya is crucial. The proven causal link between tank restoration, improved water management, and increased soil productivity makes this a powerful and sustainable model. Additionally, increased funding for agricultural research and extension services is needed to address challenges like declining soil health and to promote climate-resilient farming practices, such as Conservation Agriculture, that have shown demonstrable gains in productivity and profitability.

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Impact of Rapid Urbanization on Urban Ecosystems and Biodiversity: The Indian Context

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Article DOI Link: https://zenodo.org/uploads/17846323

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.17846323

Abstract

Rapid urbanization in India presents a dual challenge: while offering avenues for socio economic development and improved living standards, it is concurrently placing enormous pressure on urban ecosystems and biodiversity. As cities expand, natural habitats — forests, wetlands, grasslands, water bodies — are increasingly replaced by built up infrastructure, leading to habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation. These changes are disrupting ecological connectivity, reducing species richness, and undermining the ecosystem services that sustain urban and peri urban environments. In addition, pollution (air, water, noise), urban heat island effects, invasive species, and loss of native flora and fauna exacerbate ecological imbalance. This chapter explores how urban growth in India affects biodiversity and ecosystem functioning, examines empirical evidence from Indian cities, and argues for integrated urban planning, conservation oriented green infrastructure, and policy interventions to safeguard biodiversity even amidst urban expansion.

Keywords: Urbanization, India, Urban ecosystems, Biodiversity loss, Wetland degradation, Ecosystem services

Introduction

Urbanization describes the process by which rural populations migrate to urban areas and cities expand in area and density. In India — with its rapidly growing population, rising economic ambitions, and extensive infrastructure development — cities are expanding at an unprecedented pace. While this growth drives economic opportunities, social mobility, and modernization, it also profoundly transforms the natural environment. Urban ecosystems, once composed of a mosaic of forests, wetlands, rivers, grasslands, and agricultural lands, are being reshaped into concrete-dominated landscapes, punctuated by a shrinking share of green and blue spaces. This transformation has critical implications for biodiversity: the flora and fauna native to these landscapes, the ecological networks that connect habitats, and the ecosystem services like air and water purification, climate regulation, flood control, pollination, and recreation that support human well-being. In India, many cities lie in or near biodiversity-rich regions (for example, the Western Ghats, Himalayan foothills, coastal wetlands), making them especially vulnerable to the adverse impacts of urbanization. The challenge is to understand these impacts, document their extent, and identify strategies to integrate conservation into urban growth.

Urban Expansion, Habitat Loss and Fragmentation in India

Urban expansion in Indian cities often involves the conversion of natural ecosystems, like forests, wetlands, grasslands, water bodies, into built-up areas, roads, housing, and industrial infrastructure. This conversion leads to the outright loss of habitat for many species, particularly those dependent on large, contiguous tracts of natural or semi-natural landscapes. In many cases, the remaining patches of vegetation become isolated "islands" surrounded by concrete and urban infrastructure, disrupting ecological connectivity. Such fragmentation reduces the viable habitat area and often results in population declines or local extinction of species that require larger territories or specialized habitats. For example, the expansion of urban areas around biodiversity rich zones like the Western Ghats has threatened endemic species, including arboreal mammals and amphibian's sensitive to microhabitat changes. In a study of mid-sized Indian city, projections indicated that forest cover could decline drastically over decades under continued urbanization, a serious concern for indigenous flora and fauna.

In addition, wetland and water-body loss has emerged as a major concern in Indian cities. For instance, a recent study of the capital region showed that over three decades the extent of wetlands shrank substantially, while built-up area expanded significantly. The loss of wetlands not only destroys habitat for aquatic and semi-aquatic species, but also impairs groundwater recharge, reduces flood buffering capacity, alters hydrological regimes, and affects water availability for

both humans and wildlife. Conversion of floodplains, lakes, and wetlands into residential or commercial zones often occurs without adequate ecological safeguards, intensifying environmental damage.

Pollution, Urban Heat Island, and Environmental Stressors

Urbanization in India brings with it multiple stressors beyond physical habitat loss. Increased emissions from vehicles, industries, and construction lead to air and water pollution that degrades environmental quality and directly threatens the health and survival of urban flora and fauna. Contaminated water bodies, polluted soil, and degraded air quality undermine the capacity of urban ecosystems to support biodiversity. Moreover, urban areas often experience the "urban heat island" effect — elevated temperatures due to extensive concrete and asphalt surfaces, reduced vegetation cover, and heat from human activities. Higher temperatures and altered microclimates can disrupt the phenology, breeding patterns, and migratory behavior of birds, insects, and other taxa. Insects and pollinators are vital for plant reproduction and ecosystem functioning and may decline under such stress, weakening ecosystem resilience. Noise, light pollution, and increased human disturbance also interfere with wildlife behavior, reproduction, and survival, making cities inhospitable for many species, especially those sensitive to disturbance or requiring specific habitats.

Impacts on Biodiversity: Flora, Fauna, and Ecosystem Services

The cumulative outcome of habitat loss, fragmentation, pollution, and microclimate change is a noticeable decline in biodiversity in India's urban landscapes. Native plant species, including medicinal and endemic flora, often suffer dramatically. For example, in one assessment of medicinal plant diversity in an urban region, researchers found a significant negative correlation between urban expansion and both the diversity and conservation of native medicinal plants. Similarly, urbanization alters the composition of plant communities: native vegetation is frequently replaced by ornamental, horticultural, or non-native species better suited to anthropogenic environments; this shift diminishes ecological integrity and may promote invasive species that outcompete natives. Among fauna, avian diversity is particularly affected: studies from cities in northern India documented declines in specialist and native bird species, while more generalist, disturbance tolerant species became dominant. The loss of natural habitats, together with pollution, noise, and human disturbance, reduces the suitability of urban spaces for sensitive species. As a result, ecosystem services that depend on biodiversity, such as pollination, seed dispersal, pest control, climate regulation, water purification, flood mitigation and become severely compromised. Wetland loss reduces water storage and groundwater recharge, deforestation eradicates carbon sequestration potential, and degraded

green spaces lose their capacity to regulate urban climate or provide recreation and cultural services. These changes not only reduce biodiversity but also degrade quality of life in urban areas, undercutting long-term sustainability.

Opportunities for Conservation: Green Blue Infrastructure and Integrative Planning

Despite the grim trends, Indian cities do present opportunities for conservation if urban planning integrates ecological considerations. Green blue infrastructure — combining urban green spaces (parks, urban forests, community gardens, green belts) with blue spaces (wetlands, lakes, ponds, restored water bodies) , has emerged as a promising approach to preserve ecological function in cities. When planned thoughtfully, such infrastructure can act as refuges for flora and fauna, maintain ecological connectivity, support groundwater recharge, regulate microclimate, and deliver ecosystem services. Cities where such measures have been adopted show greater resilience: green patches, even if fragmented, can support surprisingly rich biodiversity when managed for ecological value rather than purely for aesthetic lawns. Restoration of degraded wetlands and water bodies, conservation of buffer zones around sensitive natural habitats, controlled development on floodplains and ecologically fragile zones, and maintenance of corridors for wildlife movement are critical. Moreover, public awareness, community participation, and policies that prioritize ecological balance over short-term economic gains play a decisive role. Given India's long cultural history of living in harmony with nature, traditional ecological knowledge and urban biodiversity conservation can be synergised to create urban spaces that are both livable and ecologically vibrant.

Conclusion

Rapid urbanization in India embodies a paradox, driving human development while simultaneously undermining the ecological foundations that sustain life. The conversion of natural landscapes into concrete infrastructure, the degradation of wetlands and forests, pollution, urban heat, and fragmented habitats collectively erode biodiversity, diminish ecosystem services, and weaken the resilience of urban and peri urban environments. Nevertheless, the challenge also presents an opportunity: by embracing green blue infrastructure, integrative planning, ecological restoration, and community focused conservation, Indian cities can chart a path toward sustainability that balances human needs and environmental integrity. Conservation in urban contexts is not only possible, it is essential for ecological security, human well-being, and the future of biodiversity in India's growing urban systems. Only through thoughtfully designed policies, scientific planning and public engagement can urbanization and biodiversity conservation go hand in hand.

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Suitable Area Identification for EV Charging Setup in Pune Tehsil Using GIS and AHP

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Article DOI Link: https://zenodo.org/uploads/17846356

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.17846356

Abstract

Electric vehicles (EVs) are an environmentally beneficial substitute for fossil fuel-powered vehicles that can lower carbon emissions and increase energy efficiency. Nonetheless, there are still certain obstacles to EV development. The absence of scientific planning for charging stations that take social, technological, and environmental considerations into account is one of the primary issues. An effective charging infrastructure in metropolitan areas is imperative due to the increasing popularity of electric cars (EVs). This study integrates demographic, infrastructure, and geographic factors to determine the best places for EV charging stations in Pune. The study prioritizes places with a large population density, close proximity to major roadways, and existing electricity grid capacity using a mix of GIS mapping, traffic density analysis, and accessibility assessments. Environmental considerations are also considered, such as reducing ecological disturbance and guaranteeing weather resilience. The findings imply that the best places for EV charging installations are transportation corridors, high population density, commercial places and traffic centres. This analysis offers policymakers and urban planners a platform for promoting sustainable mobility and lowering carbon emissions.

Keywords: Suitable area, EVs, Geographic Information system, multi-criteria decision-making

Introduction

In addition to encouraging sustainable energy usage, the global transition to electric vehicles (EVs) seeks to reduce environmental problems like air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. However, a dependable and easily accessible network of Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS) is necessary to broadly adopt EVs. To support the electric grid, increase user convenience, and boost the general effectiveness of transportation networks, EVCS must be positioned optimally. A combined Geographic Information System (GIS) and Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) method has proven to be a reliable solution for this complicated issue. Through the visualisation and analysis of location-based data, GIS makes spatial analysis possible and offers a framework for mapping and evaluating pertinent factors, including accessibility, environmental sensitivity, and closeness to current infrastructure. Additionally, GIS enables decision-makers to superimpose several data layers, exposing trends that aid in selecting sustainable sites. Numerous studies show how well GIS-AHP integration works when choosing EVCS sites. For example, Guler and Yomralioglu (2020) assessed possible EVCS locations in Turkey using both AHP and Fuzzy AHP approaches with GIS, considering accessibility, urban density, and environmental effects. According to their model, the combined strategy could improve site suitability and help policymakers make effective, long-term decisions. Similarly, Erbas et al. (2018) evaluated the placement of EVCS in Ankara, Turkey, using a GIS-based AHP and TOPSIS method. They discovered that, when utilising spatial criteria like accessibility, environmental impact, and traffic density, the hybrid model produced better results than the existing infrastructure [(Erbas et al., 2018)]. Furthermore, Sani et al. (2023) examined GIS and AHP methods for EVCS placement, stressing the significance of transportation networks, urban density, and environmental factors in designing an effective, sustainable EV charging network. They concluded that GIS-AHP offers a fair method for choosing EVCS locations that satisfy the requirements of both users and legislators [(Sani et al., 2023)]. In conclusion, the multifaceted issues of EV infrastructure planning have been successfully addressed by combining GIS and AHP for EVCS site selection. This integrated strategy offers a thorough framework for choosing the best locations for EVCS by utilising geographical data analysis and structured decision-making, promoting electric vehicle adoption and sustainable urban development. Pune is located in the western Indian state of Maharashtra, approximately 118 kilometres from Mumbai. It lies on the Deccan Plateau at about 560 meters above sea level. The city is surrounded by the Sahyadri mountain range to the west and is traversed by two rivers—Mula and Mutha. The terrain is predominantly hilly, with varying elevations across the regions. The location of Pune city lies between latitudes 18° 25'N and 18° 37'N, and longitudes between 73° 44'E and 73° 57'E, and the

geographical area is around 250.56 square kilometres with a population of about 3.1 million. In the population-based ranking, Pune city is the second-largest city in Maharashtra and one of the eight-mega cities of India. Pune has a tropical wet and dry climate. Summer (March to May): Temperatures can reach 42°C in May. Monsoon (June to September): Receives moderate to heavy rainfall, averaging 700–800 mm annually. Winter (November to February): Winters are mild, with temperatures dropping as low as 8°C. The city boasts a strong heritage and culture with picturesque historical, religious and natural zones and is Maharashtra's 'culture capital'. (Rehena & Janssen, 2019).

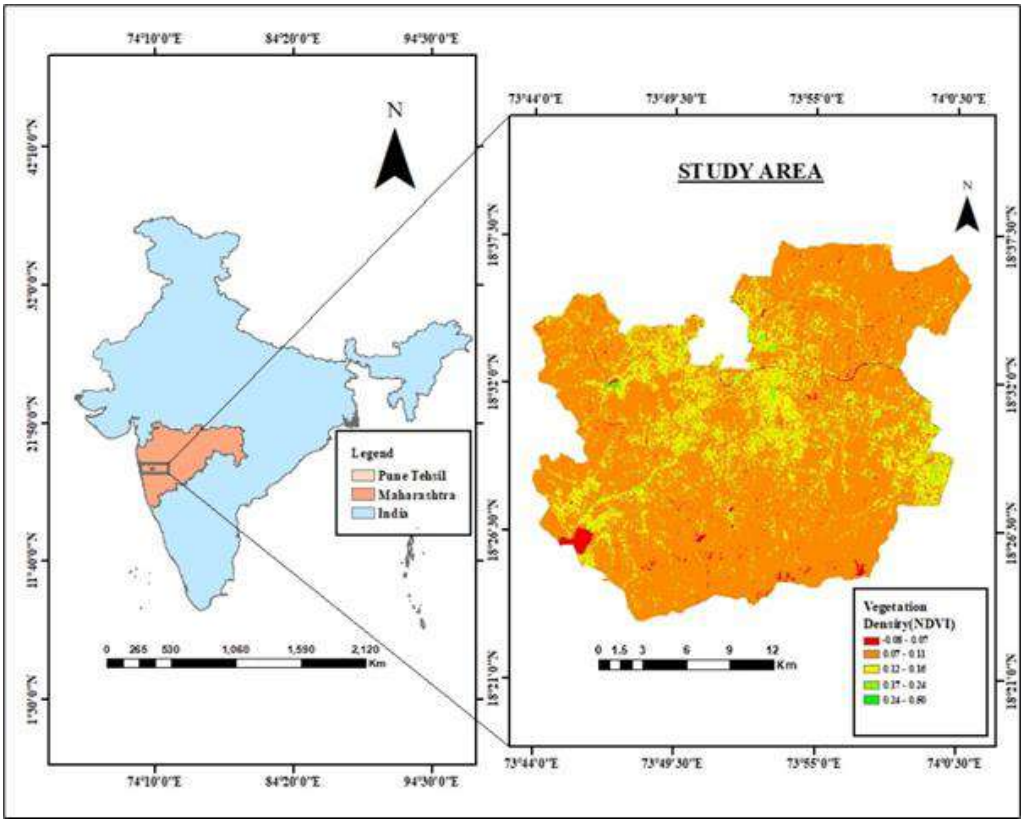
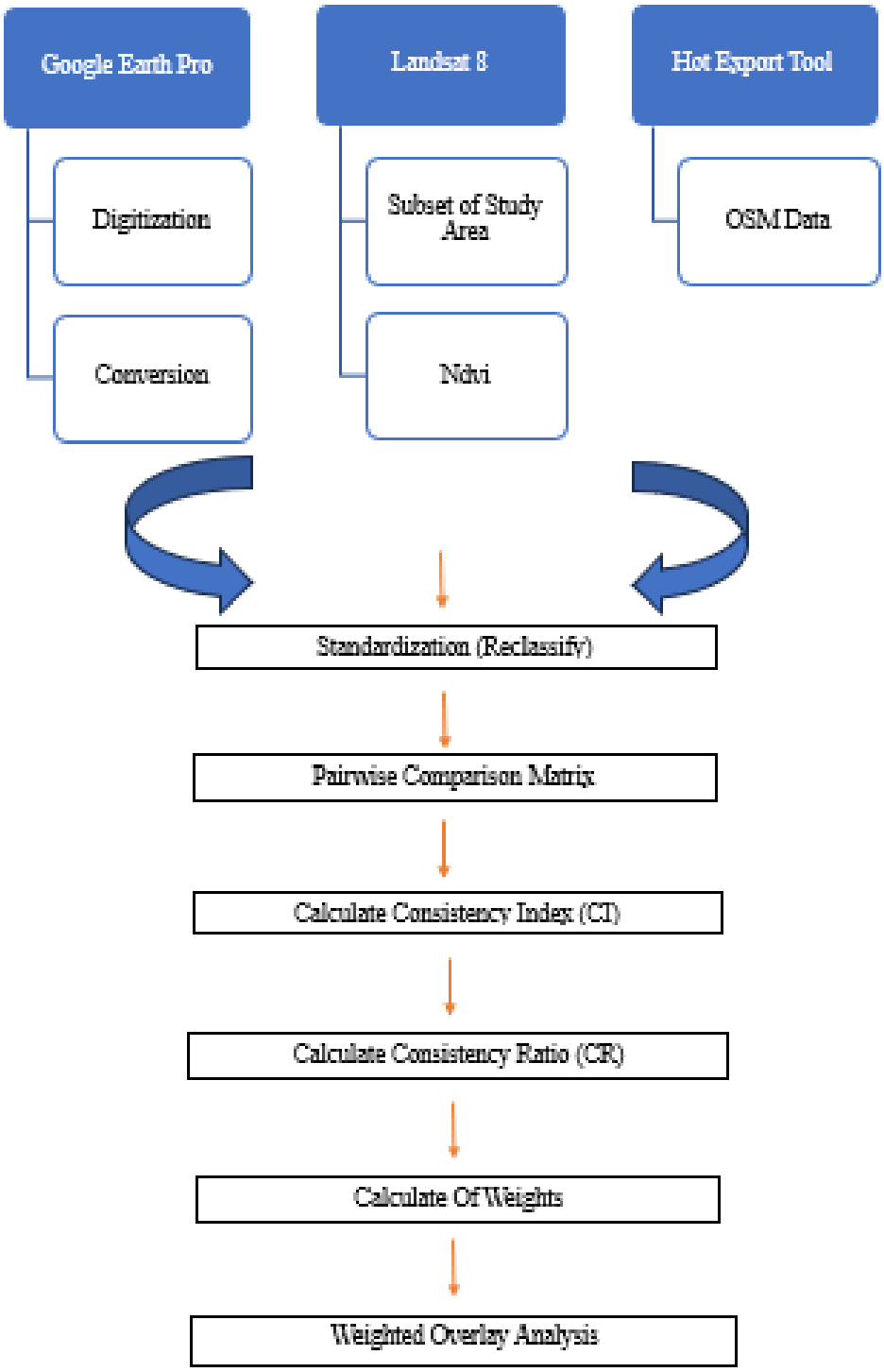


Figure 1: Study Area

Methodology:



Data Used

1. The present study obtained a Landsat 8 (Operational land imager and thermal infrared sensor (OLI/TIRS)) satellite image with a spatial resolution of 30 m from the United States Geological Survey (USGS) Earth Explorer site for making NDVI.
2. From Hot Export Tool, Open Street Map data have been downloaded, an open service that creates customized extracts of up-to-date OSM data in various file formats.
3. A kml file was created from Google Earth Pro, which was further converted to a layer.
4. The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) office obtained the ward map and administrative boundaries.

Suitability of the Criteria

- **Proximity to Amenities:** The proximity to amenities can play a crucial role in the usage of EVCS by enhancing EV drivers' dwell time, awareness, accessibility, and convenience. When charging stations for electric vehicles are situated near facilities like dining establishments, retail malls, or movie theatres, EV owners find it more convenient to charge their cars while they do other things. This may result in more charging, as their location increases the likelihood that drivers will utilise them. EV owners might have to wait for their car to charge, which may take a few hours or as long as thirty minutes based on the battery capacity of the car and the kind of charging station. Wait times can be shortened by being close to facilities pleasant for drivers, who could decide to visit neighbouring eateries or amenities that can be more accessible to a broader range of drivers, including those who may not have access to charging stations in their homes or workplaces. This can help increase the adoption of EVs and reduce range anxiety for drivers.
- **Distance to Fuel Stations:** The closeness of fuel stations can also influence the appropriateness of charging points on an electric vehicle suitability map. Fuel/gas stations near charging stations can enhance the ease of charging for EV users, as they can utilise the charging duration to recharge their fuel reservoirs as well. Thus, the accessibility of charging and fuel stations nearby can improve the overall appropriateness of an EV charging network in Pune City.
- **Proximity to Road Junction:** Road junctions are often high-traffic areas, which means they can provide good accessibility to drivers and make it easier for them to locate and use EVCS. Having a charging station located near a road junction can increase its visibility and accessibility and can also make it more convenient for drivers to stop and charge their vehicles. If a charging station is too close to a busy road junction, it could contribute to further

traffic congestion and make it more difficult for drivers to access the charging station. Zoning regulations and restrictions can also affect the proximity to road junctions. Some local jurisdictions may have specific zoning requirements for EVCS that limit their proximity to road junctions, residential areas, or other sensitive locations.

- **Population Density:** Population density can significantly impact the suitability of charging stations for electric vehicles in Pune city. As population density increases, the demand for EVCS also increases, making installing more stations in densely populated areas necessary. Areas with higher population density were identified as high-priority locations for EVCS installations. The charging stations should be installed in densely populated areas such as residential areas, commercial areas, and public parking
- **Proximity to Existing EVCS:** The closeness to the current EVCS might be a significant element to consider when evaluating the appropriateness of EVCS in Pune. The regions with a greater density of current EVCS might be less appropriate for new charging stations since the current infrastructure might sufficiently provide for them. The more uniform spread of charging station Throughout the city, it can enhance accessibility and fairness for EV users.
- **NDVI:** Regions with a higher abundance of vegetation may suggest more flourishing and advanced. Societies prone to exhibit a higher frequency of EV possession (Carra et al., 2022; Deshmukh et al., 2019). Consequently, the regions exhibiting elevated NDVI values, which signify higher vegetation density, may be more appealing to EV users and can thus experience
  There is an increased need for charging infrastructure since it relates to a more enjoyable atmosphere and Improved air standard. The setting up of EVCS in regions with elevated NDVI values can Result in enhanced environmental advantages, as it can encourage the uptake of more environmentally friendly vehicles and decrease air pollution. Consequently, the NDVI may be a pivotal aspect to evaluate when determining the appropriateness of charging stations on a map indicating EV compatibility in Pune city.

Data Analysis

AHP (Analytic Hierarchy Process)

AHP is a structured decision-making methodology for analysing and solving complex problems involving multiple criteria. Thomas L. Saaty developed it in the 1970s, and it is widely used in fields like resource allocation, land-use planning, and site selection, especially when dealing with GIS-based spatial problems.

Explanation of AHP

1. **Hierarchical Structuring**

The problem is broken down into a hierarchy of goals, criteria, and sub-criteria, making it easier to analyse and understand. For example, in the case of EV charging station site selection, the hierarchy might include:
Goal: Identify suitable locations for EV charging stations.
Criteria: Proximity to roads, population density, and land-use type.

2. Pairwise Comparison

AHP uses pairwise comparisons to determine the relative importance of each criterion. A particular stage of inconsistency might also rise at the time of the pairwise judgment of parameters within the AHP. Hence, it has to be essential to test the extent of the logical consistency of pair-wise judgment. CR is used to measure the level of consistency of the parameters' weight, delivered with the aid of Saaty (1980). Decision-makers compare criteria (e.g., is proximity to roads more critical than energy availability?) and assign weights on a scale (e.g., 1 to 9, where 1 = equally important, and 9 = extremely more critical). It is a comparison ratio between the consistency index (CI) and random consistency index (RI). CR is under 0.10. Its miles are taken into consideration to be more precise. However, otherwise, judgments need to be revised if the CR is more than 0.10. The CR under 0.10 calculated weights is acceptable (Saaty,1997).

No	Parameter	NDVI	Existing Fuel	Existing EVs	Commercial	Traffic	Road Junction	Pop. Density
1	NDVI	1	2	2	3	3	3	7
2	Existing fuel	0.5	1	3	3	4	4	5
3	Existing Evs	0.333	0.333	1	5	5	3	8
4	Commercial	0.333	0.333	0.2	1	3	2	4
5	Traffic	0.5	0.25	0.2	0.333	1	2	4
6	Road Junction	0.333	0.25	0.333	0.5	0.5	1	2
7	Pop. Density	0.143	0.2	0.125	0.25	0.25	0.5	1
		3.142	4.366	6.858	13.083	16.75	15.5	31

Table 1-Pairwise Comparison Matrix

3. Calculation of Weights

- AHP calculates normalized weights for each criterion based on the pairwise comparisons.

- These weights reflect the relative importance of each criterion in achieving the overall goal.

Parameter	NDVI	Existing Fuel	Existing Evs	Commercial	Traffic	Road Junction	Pop. Density	Weights
NDVI	0.318269	0.458085	0.29163	0.229305	0.179104	0.193548	0.2258065	0.270821
Existing fuel	0.159134	0.229043	0.437445	0.229305	0.238806	0.258065	0.1612903	0.244727
Existing Evs	0.105983	0.076271	0.145815	0.382175	0.298507	0.193548	0.2580645	0.208624
Commercial	0.105983	0.076271	0.029163	0.076435	0.179104	0.129032	0.1290323	0.103575
Traffic	0.159134	0.057261	0.029163	0.025453	0.059701	0.129032	0.1290323	0.084111
Road Junction	0.105983	0.057261	0.048556	0.038218	0.029851	0.064516	0.0645161	0.058414
Pop. Density	0.045512	0.045809	0.018227	0.019109	0.014925	0.032258	0.0322581	0.029728

Table 2-Normalization of the weights

Consistency Check

- AHP includes a consistency ratio (CR) to ensure that the pairwise comparisons are logically consistent. A CR value less than 0.1 is considered acceptable.
- The research was done by computing the matrix multiplication function of criterion ratings (in the pair-wise comparison matrix row) and the normalised average of all the factors (within the normalised matrix column) divided by the criterion normalised average. For example, a researcher can calculate the consistency measure using the Excel matrix multiplication function= MMULT ().

Consistency Index (CI)

Multiply each column of the pair-wise comparison matrix by the corresponding weight. The divide of the sum of the row entries by the corresponding weight.

CI = (λ max – n) / (n-1)

CI = (7.724540967-7) / (7-1)
CI = 0.724540967 / 6
CI = 0.120756828

N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
RI	0	0	0.58	0.9	1.12	1.24	1.32	1.41	1.45	1.49

Table 3- Random Index

In the present study, the number of indices is 7. Therefore, the present study's random index (RI) is 1.32

Consistency Ratio (CR)

The consistency ratio lets the user conclude whether the AHP model has sufficient consistency and is calculated as the ratio of CI and random index (RI).
CR = CI/RI
CR = 0.120756828/1.32
CR = 0.091

Therefore, the present work's consistency ratio (CR) is 0.091. Thus, it is acceptable because a CR of 0.1 or below is considered acceptable. Any higher value at any level indicates that the judgements warrant re-examination.

Results and Discussion

There are varying levels of suitability—Very High, High, Moderate, and Low-for these setups. The analysis is based on specific criteria, such as population density, proximity to roads, NDVI, distance of existing events, etc.

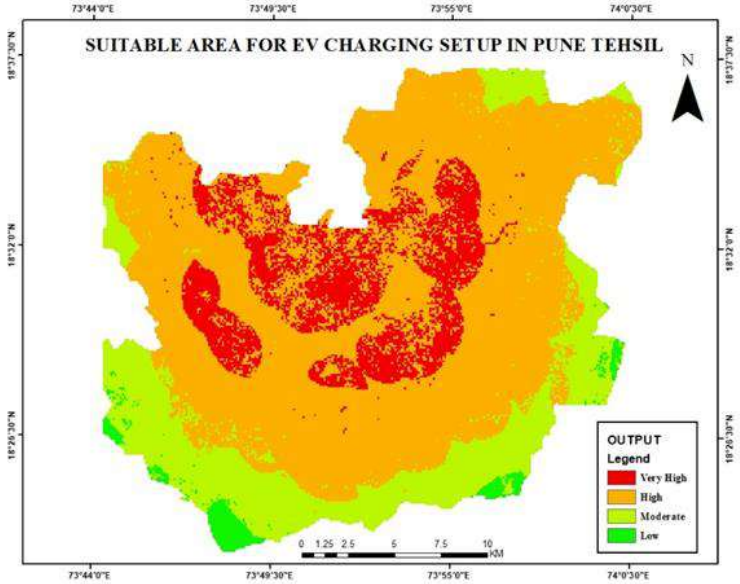


Figure 2: Final Output

Result

- **Very High Suitability (Red Zones):** These areas represent the most favourable locations for EV charging stations. Likely, they are close to urban centres, major roads, or densely populated regions with high demand for EV infrastructure.
- **High Suitability (Orange Zones):** Slightly less optimal but still viable. They might include semi-urban areas with reasonable accessibility.
- **Moderate Suitability (Yellow Zones):** These areas are moderately suited, possibly representing regions with sparse infrastructure or lower population densities.
- **Low Suitability (Green Zones):** These represent the least favourable areas, likely far from city centres.

Discussion

- **Practical Implications:** Prioritizing "Very High" and "High" zones for development would ensure maximum utility and efficient resource allocation. Moderate and low-suitability areas may require further infrastructure development or incentives for feasibility.
- **Potential Factors Considered:** Proximity to highways, urban centres, or proximity to roads. Availability of electricity or renewable energy sources. Land use and environmental factors.
- **Further Considerations:** Field surveys can validate the GIS-based findings. Economic feasibility and government incentives should align with identified suitable zones.

Conclusion

Very High Suitability (Red Areas): These regions are ideal for EV charging infrastructure. They likely represent densely populated areas with high vehicular traffic or strategic connectivity, such as city centres or commercial hubs. These locations already have access to essential utilities like electricity and road networks, minimizing additional costs. High Suitability (Orange Areas): Surrounding the red zones, these areas offer substantial potential for EV charging stations but may require minor improvements in infrastructure or accessibility. Moderate Suitability (Yellow Areas): These regions have medium potential due to being far from the city Centre, which can be brought under EV charging infrastructure; they might require significant investments or policy incentives to improve feasibility. Low Suitability (Green Areas): Representing the least favourable zones, likely far from city centres. Investment in these zones might not be economically viable in the short term. However, the region will definitely have a higher-density population in the near future, which will support the EVCs.

Further Suggestions

Prioritize Very High and High Suitability Zones: Begin deploying EV charging stations in red and orange areas to ensure high utilization and quicker ROI (Return on Investment). Policy Interventions for Moderate Zones: Work on improving road infrastructure, power availability, and awareness campaigns to make yellow zones more feasible mid-term. Long-term Investments in Low Zones: Low-priority green areas can be developed as EV adoption grows and urbanization expands. These zones may benefit from subsidies or partnerships. Conduct Demand-Driven Analysis: Overlay traffic data, population growth projections, and EV adoption trends to refine the current map. Monitor Environmental and Social Impact: Ensure that EV infrastructure development in sensitive or rural areas aligns with sustainability goals and minimizes environmental impacts. Leverage Renewable Energy Sources: Incorporate solar-powered or hybrid charging solutions, especially when the electricity supply is unreliable or expensive.

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Migration, Urbanization, and Global Mobility in Indian Perspective

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Article DOI Link: https://zenodo.org/uploads/17846457

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.17846457

Abstract

This chapter examines the intertwined dynamics of migration, urbanization, and global mobility through an Indian perspective, situating India within broader Global South transitions. It reviews major theoretical frameworks, including push-pull models, mobility transitions, and evolving notions of urban citizenship shaped by globalization. Comparative analysis of global patterns drawing on China, Mexico, and Russia highlights how diverse governance regimes and policy environments influence mobility flows and urban outcomes. India's urban transition is shown to be distinctive: much recent growth arises from natural increase and reclassification rather than large-scale rural–urban migration, even as metropolitan regions continue to attract substantial inflows. The chapter underscores the complexity of internal migration systems in India, marked by permanent, temporary, and circulatory mobility. It further examines how informality, uneven regional development, and neoliberal urban governance produce exclusionary urbanization and contested citizenship for migrant populations. Policy implications include integrating migration into urban planning, strengthening social protections, upgrading informal settlements, and promoting balanced regional development. The chapter concludes that India's future urban strategy must embrace mobility as a developmental asset and advance the right to the city to ensure inclusive and sustainable urban growth.

Keywords: Migration; Urbanization; Global Mobility; India; Urban Citizenship

Introduction

Migration and urbanization together constitute one of the defining structural transformations of the twenty-first century, producing demographic, economic, social, and political effects that span local neighborhoods to transnational networks (UN DESA, 2022). Migration is no longer a marginal phenomenon confined to a set of origin and destination countries; instead, it is diffuse and multi-scalar, with multiple forms permanent moves, circular labor migration, short-term contractual labor, student mobility, and retirement/amenity migration interacting to produce complex urban outcomes (Castles et al., 2014). Cities are now both magnets and nodes in global mobility systems: they absorb flows of labor, capital, and ideas while also exporting influences back into sending regions through remittances, return migration, and social remittances. India's position in this global reconfiguration is distinctive. On the one hand, India's demographic profile large cohorts of working-age adults create the potential for a demographic dividend sustained by internal mobility and urban jobs. On the other hand, Indian urbanization is marked by an unusual mix of processes: prolonged natural increase in many settlements, administrative reclassification of rural areas into urban jurisdictions, and intense migration-driven growth concentrated in particular metropolitan corridors. This heterogeneity produces varied policy challenges informality, housing shortages, spatial inequalities, governance deficits, and contested claims to urban citizenship that require integrative, mobility-aware urban strategies rather than compartmentalized rural or employment policies.

Theoretical Perspectives on Migration and Urbanization

Classic migration theory provides a necessary starting point for analysis, but it must be layered with household strategies, network dynamics, and structural constraints to capture twenty-first century mobility. The push-pull paradigm (Lee, 1966) captures the juxtaposition of adverse origin conditions (push) and destination opportunities (pull), but households rarely make migration decisions based purely on wages; instead, choices are embedded in risk-sharing strategies, life-course considerations, and social network calculations (Stark & Bloom, 1985; Massey et al., 1993). Moreover, the policy and institutional environment-social protection schemes, land tenure norms, mobility restrictions, and urban service architectures mediate these incentives and can generate paradoxical outcomes (de Haas, 2010). For example, welfare policies tied to place of origin can reduce out-migration by improving livelihoods locally, but they can simultaneously drive "urbanization from within" as local incomes and demographic momentum convert villages into towns without commensurate in-migration. The notion of a mobility transition (Zelinsky, 1971) adds temporal depth: as fertility and mortality decline, patterns shift from mass rural–urban

exodus toward interurban and circular mobility. Contemporary scholarship extends this by highlighting environmental drivers of mobility and the role of transnational social fields that sustain movements across borders, creating circulatory systems in which migrants maintain deep linkages to origin places even while embedded in urban labour markets elsewhere (Black et al., 2011; Levitt, 1998). Taken together, these theoretical strands imply that urbanization and migration must be studied as coupled, path-dependent processes shaped by demography, institutions, networks, and political economy.

Migration and the Urban Transition

Urbanization must be understood as more than a demographic statistic; it is a process that transforms livelihoods, land use, social relations, and governance. The historical trajectory that underpinned Western urban transitions where large-scale industrial employment drew peasants into cities in one-way permanent migration cannot be mechanically applied to the Global South (Davis, 1965). In many developing-country contexts, cities have expanded because of natural increase and administrative reclassification of peripheries, not solely because hordes of villagers moved in (Potts, 2012). This produces urban forms characterized by dense, endogenous population growth and the emergence of peri-urban economies rooted in diversified livelihoods rather than factory-centric mass employment. The policy implications are important: planning that assumes mass in-migration will misdiagnose housing needs, service provisioning, and labor market integration in places where growth is largely internal. Conversely, metropolitan fringes adjacent to dynamic cities often experience dramatic in-migration and informal settlement, producing sharply different governance problems within the same national system. This duality is particularly pronounced in India, where districts in the Indo-Gangetic Plain demonstrate intense "urbanization from within" while metropolitan peripheries around Bangalore, Hyderabad, and the Delhi NCR see rapid in-migration-driven expansion. The co-occurrence of these patterns complicates national-level prescriptions and demands place-sensitive, differentiated urban policy.

Globalization, Transnational Mobility, and Citizenship

The globalization of labour, capital, communication, and ideas has produced a new lexicon of mobility transnationalism, diaspora engagement, multiple attachments that in turn reconfigures urban citizenship. Cities increasingly host diverse legal statuses and multiple forms of belonging: long-term residents who lack local political voice, circular migrants who periodically enter and exit urban economies, and expatriate or returnee elites whose investments reshape neighbourhoods. Lefebvre's (1968) call for a "right to the city" acquires empirical urgency here: if presence in urban space is decoupled from formal

political membership, then urban governance must grapple with legitimacy, participation, and distributive justice at the municipal scale (Holston, 2008). Transnational practices also prompt sending states to cultivate diaspora ties through dual citizenship arrangements, property rights, or voting turning mobility into an instrument of development policy (Gamlen, 2014). India's Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) program and diaspora outreach exemplify such strategies, but they coexist with a robust internal mobility regime that lacks similarly coherent citizenship guarantees at the urban scale. Meanwhile, neoliberal governance reforms privatization, land commodification, entrepreneurial civic branding often privileges capital-intensive urban redevelopment projects, generating exclusionary spatial outcomes that entrench inequalities and produce conflicts over access to services and common spaces (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). These dynamics mean that urban citizenship is increasingly contested: migrants and poor residents must mobilize to claim service access, tenure security, and participatory spaces in an era when municipal authority is fragmented and market actors have outsized influence.

Global Trends in Migration and Urbanization: A Comparative View

Comparative evidence reveals major cross-national divergences in how urbanization occurs and what drives city expansion. In the post-industrial West, high urbanization preceded sustained natural increase; in many parts of Africa and South Asia, rapid urban population growth in the latter twentieth century was largely the result of mortality declines and high fertility concentrated in urban centers (Montgomery et al., 2003). However, as fertility declines continue, migration regains prominence as a driver of urban growth. Concurrently, the spatial structure of migration changes: primate-city dominance tends to weaken as secondary cities and urban corridors absorb spillover growth an evolution driven by rising costs in primate cities, infrastructure investments in smaller centers, and targeted industrial policies (Henderson, 2003). Global mobility complicates these internal patterns: international migrants concentrate in globalizing metropolises, offsetting domestic outflows and modifying urban demography and labour markets (Ozden et al., 2016). Thus, to comprehend twenty-first century urbanization, analysts must consider the simultaneous operation of natural increase, administrative reclassification, internal migration, and international flows; their relative contributions vary by context and over time, and each has distinct policy ramifications.

China's Urban Transition: Lessons and Warnings

China's urbanization offers a stark demonstration of how mass migration can reshape national spatial systems in a few decades. The rise of mega-city regions Pearl River Delta, Yangtze River Delta, Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei was propelled by

unprecedented internal mobility and export-led industrialization, producing economic dynamism and dramatic improvements in living standards for many (Chan, 2014). However, the hukou system's exclusionary institutional framework meant that many migrants remained second-class urban dwellers without equal access to healthcare, education, and social security (Chan & Buckingham, 2008). China's experience thus provides a dual lesson: mobility can accelerate structural transformation and regional convergence, but institutional barriers to inclusion can produce segmented urban societies and unsustainable patterns of socio-spatial inequality. India, by contrast, lacks a formal internal registration system equivalent to hukou yet manifests exclusion through informal documentation regimes, caste- and language-based exclusions, and administrative incapacity. The policy lesson for India is twofold: leverage mobility to drive inclusive regional development while ensuring that institutional arrangements social protection, education access, housing policies do not entrench migrant marginality.

International Comparisons: Mexico and Russia Varied Forms of Mobility and Urban Politics

Mexico's urban transformation underscores the entanglement of internal and transnational migration. Large-scale emigration to the United States generated remittance flows that reshaped household economies and urban investment patterns, while internal migration and regional industrialization redistributed urban growth to northern and coastal hubs (Massey et al., 2009). The entry of retirement and amenity migrants from wealthier countries into Mexican towns also demonstrates a less-discussed directional flow of mobility wealthy migrants relocating to lower-cost regions that drives localized real estate inflation and governance dilemmas (Hayes, 2015). Russia's case highlights the geopolitical uses of migration and citizenship, where state actors deploy mobility and residency policies to influence urban populations in neighboring territories and consolidate political reach (Zevelev, 2016). Together these cases show that migration's effects are heterogeneous economic integration, social displacement, geopolitical strategy and that cities operate as arenas where national policies intersect with transnational flows.

Internal Migration and Urbanization in India: Patterns, Processes, and Paradoxes

India's urban trajectory is characterized by paradoxes that challenge simple theoretical generalizations. Although India has experienced robust economic growth, its urbanization level has historically lagged behind comparable economies (Kundu, 2014). A central paradox is the prevalence of "urbanization from within" in many districts that nonetheless send out large numbers of

migrants places where demographic momentum and local economic diversification result in urban characteristics even as net migration remains negative (Randolph, 2023). Maldah district in West Bengal exemplifies this: despite considerable out-migration, urbanized zones expanded rapidly due to natural increase and structural shifts away from agriculture. Conversely, metropolitan fringes such as Rangareddy (Hyderabad) have experienced explosive in-migration driven by IT and service sectors, creating a stark spatial divergence in urbanization pathways within the same national economy. Additionally, India's overall pattern shows high rates of circular and seasonal migration millions of laborers who move temporarily for work and return home meaning that conventional migration metrics often understate the scale and economic significance of mobility. These patterns are shaped by socio-cultural attachments, linguistic barriers, and the partial portability of welfare entitlements, which together encourage temporary movement rather than permanent resettlement for many households (Tumbe, 2018).

Urban Citizenship, Governance, and the "Right to the City" in the Indian Context

Although internal migrants in India enjoy constitutional freedom of movement, substantive urban citizenship is often constrained by administrative, economic, and social barriers. Lack of local documentation, non-portable welfare entitlements, and exclusion from municipal planning render many migrants functionally invisible to urban governance systems, even while they supply essential labor for construction, household services, and informal retail (Gupta et al., 2020). The legal notion of citizenship diverges from lived experiences, prompting claims for the "right to the city" that demand not only access to services but also participation in decision-making and recognition of informal tenure claims (Lefebvre, 1968; Holston, 2008). Neoliberal urban policies smart cities, special economic zones, and urban beautification drives often favor capital and tourism-oriented projects over provision for low-income residents, leading to evictions, demolition of informal settlements, and curtailment of livelihoods (Weinstein, 2014). Yet this exclusion has provoked vibrant civil society responses: federations of slum dwellers, vendor collectives, and labor unions have mobilized to demand legal recognition, in-situ upgrading, and protective labor regulations. The politics of urban citizenship in India thus oscillates between exclusionary policy priorities and grassroots struggles that reassert inclusive claims.

Challenges of Informality, Uneven Growth, and Exclusionary Urbanization

Informality is not a peripheral phenomenon in India's cities; it is central to their functioning. Informal settlements provide shelter for millions, and informal labor

markets absorb vast swathes of the workforce, yet both exist under conditions of legal insecurity, deficient services, and episodic state coercion. Urban policies that treat informality as irregular and seek quick clearance rather than incremental upgrading exacerbate vulnerability and undermine livelihoods (Roy, 2009). Furthermore, India's uneven regional development produces migration-driven accumulation in a few corridors while source regions stagnate; such imbalances are reinforced by fiscal patterns, infrastructure investments, and private sector location choices. Housing shortages especially in low-income rental segments and inadequate public transport compound migrants' hardships, limiting access to stable employment and basic services. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed and amplified these weaknesses: tens of millions of migrant workers faced sudden loss of income, food insecurity, and forced returns, illustrating the absence of robust social protection linked to mobility (Tumbe, 2021). Addressing these interlocking challenges requires integrated policies that couple housing, transport, labor protections, and social security with participatory governance mechanisms.

Policy Implications and Future Directions

A coherent response demands three interrelated shifts: first, mainstreaming migration into urban planning and governance so that master plans, budgets, and municipal services explicitly account for mobility patterns; second, expanding portability and inclusion of social protections ration cards, health insurance, pension credits, and voter registration so migrants can access entitlements irrespective of location; third, adopting upgrading-first strategies toward informality that secure tenure, deliver water and sanitation, and formalize livelihoods incrementally rather than relying on evictions. Additionally, investments to bolster tier-2 and tier-3 cities through connectivity, industrial incentives, and skill development can diversify migration destinations and mitigate pressure on primate cities. Learning from international experiences, India should avoid institutionalizing second-class urban status (as in the hukou system) while drawing lessons on workforce housing, vocational training, and integrated transport from other rapidly urbanizing countries. Research priorities include improving real-time city-level demographic monitoring, capturing short-term and circular mobility in national surveys (PLFS, NFHS), and conducting longitudinal cohort studies to understand migrant trajectories over life cycles. Only with better data, coordinated governance, and rights-based urban strategies can migration be harnessed productively.

Conclusion

India's migration and urbanization story is neither linear nor uniform; it is a composite of multiple processes natural increase and administrative reclassification in some places, intensive in-migration and metropolitan sprawl in

others, and extensive circular migration that transgresses the binary of rural and urban. This heterogeneity produces both opportunities for inclusive economic transformation and risks of spatially entrenched inequality. Policy must therefore be adaptive, layered, and rights-centered: adaptive to local mobility regimes, layered across welfare and urban planning sectors, and anchored in the principle that residents regardless of origin have legitimate claims to urban life. The right to the city is thus not merely a slogan but a practical framework for steering India's complex transition toward inclusive, resilient, and equitable urban futures.

Declaration of Competing Interest

"The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper."

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Urbanisation: Causes, Impact and Challenges in Society

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Article DOI Link: https://zenodo.org/uploads/17846481

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.17846481

Abstract

Urbanization is widely regarded as a key indicator of modernization, and both developed and developing nations place significant emphasis on it. It involves the continuous movement of people into cities, the growth and concentration of non-agricultural sectors such as manufacturing and services, and the gradual transformation of social structures. Urbanization stimulates economic growth, reshapes urban spaces, and influences production technologies, lifestyles, and societal values. However, it can also create challenges related to social equity, public health, and environmental sustainability. Therefore, it is essential to harness the benefits of urbanization while minimizing its adverse effects to ensure sustainable urban development and improve living conditions. If not managed properly, issues such as "urban diseases" and regional disparities will intensify, particularly in countries undergoing rapid urban expansion.

Keywords: Urbanization, Nature, Positive Effect, Negative Effect

Introduction

Urbanisation is the process by which cities grow as more people move from rural areas to urban centres. This phenomenon has been happening for centuries, but it's accelerating at an unprecedented rate today. By 2050, it is estimated that nearly 70% of the world's population will live in cities. Urbanisation brings a host of benefits but also comes with significant challenges. Let's explore both the positive and negative effects of urbanisation. Urbanization, characterized by the expansion of impermeable surfaces and increased density of human populations, exerts considerable pressure on the UCZ by impacting its upper, central, and lower interfaces (McDonald et al., 2014; Seto et al., 2012). The concentration of

human activity and the resultant pollution in urban areas lead to increased emissions of greenhouse gases and particulate matter, altering atmospheric conditions and contributing to global warming and air pollution (Pataki et al., 2011). As urban areas expand, people replace natural landscapes with impervious surfaces, disrupt biological habitats and regional ecological patterns, and decrease species diversity. This transformation has profound implications not only for the natural environment but also for human well-being, as it affects the provision of ecosystem services that are crucial for water purification, air quality, and climate regulation (Grimm et al., 2008). The impact of urbanization on the UCZ also includes the alteration of nutrient cycles, particularly the carbon and nitrogen cycles, which are integral to climate regulation and soil fertility (Gu et al., 2023). Urban runoff laden with nutrients and contaminants from dense population centers significantly affects water quality and aquatic ecosystems downstream, often leading to eutrophication and loss of biodiversity (Walsh et al., 2005).

Nature of Urbanisation in India

Urbanization in India, while sharing the global trend of rapid growth, exhibits distinctive characteristics that shape its societal impact.

Predominantly Migration-Driven: Unlike developed nations where urbanization often stemmed from industrialization, India's urban growth is primarily driven by rural-to-urban migration. Millions leave villages in search of better education, employment opportunities, and a higher standard of living.

The Breakneck Pace of Urbanization: This rapid influx of people strains existing infrastructure and resources, leading to unplanned sprawl and a shortage of essential services like housing, sanitation, and transportation. o This unplanned nature of growth creates a vicious cycle, as the lack of proper infrastructure discourages further planning efforts to accommodate the ever-increasing population.

Uneven and Dispersed Growth: Urbanization in India is not uniform across the country. Certain regions, particularly coastal areas and established economic hubs, witness a faster pace of growth compared to others. This uneven development can exacerbate regional disparities and create challenges for balanced national development.

Growth of Urban Sprawls: Urban sprawl is the uncontrolled expansion of cities and towns, often resulting in the encroachment of urban areas into surrounding rural or undeveloped land. The main causes of urban sprawls are lack of proper urban planning, population growth, migration from the rural areas, and

government policies.

The Rise of Mega-Cities and Tier 2 Cities: India is witnessing the rise of mega-cities like Mumbai and Delhi, along with a growing number of Tier 2 cities like Pune and Ahmedabad. These metropolises attract significant investment and talent, but also grapple with issues like congestion, pollution, and a strained social fabric.

The Persistence of the Informal Sector: The formal economy often struggles to absorb the influx of migrants, leading to a large informal sector in Indian cities. Street vendors, construction workers, and domestic workers form a significant part of the urban workforce, but face challenges like job insecurity and lack of social security benefits.

Features of Urbanization in India

Since independence, India has experienced significant growth through large-scale industrialization, manufacturing, and agricultural development. This has led to the emergence of major urban centers such as Mumbai, Bangalore, Delhi, and Hyderabad. However, the rapid expansion of these population hubs, often with inadequate infrastructure and resources, has given rise to several challenges:

Unequal Urbanization: Growth is concentrated in Class I cities, often occurring without sufficient industrialization or a strong economic base. This pattern is largely driven by demographic pressure and poverty-induced rural-to-urban migration.

Slum Growth and Urban Misery: Rapid urbanization has led to the proliferation of slums, resulting in poverty, unemployment, exploitation, social inequalities, and deterioration in the quality of urban life.

Rural Push Factors: Migration is often not driven by urban attraction but by distress in rural areas. Poor-quality migration contributes to substandard urbanization, initiating urban decay.

Environmental and Health Challenges: Cities generate enormous waste (approximately 750 tonnes daily), and urban living exacerbates water and air pollution, industrial contamination, and health risks. Social issues such as alcohol and drug abuse, tobacco use, unhealthy diets, and sedentary lifestyles further impact urban populations Seethama, 2015.

Factors Contributing to Urbanization

Urbanization in India is driven by the inflow of capital, migration of rural human resources, and the availability of natural resources and infrastructure. Key factors include:

Industrial Growth: Establishment of industries creates employment opportunities, attracting rural migrants.

Trade and Commerce: Expanding markets and commercial activities stimulate urban development.

Employment Opportunities: Cities provide alternatives to agriculture-dependent livelihoods, especially during droughts or natural calamities.

Improved Amenities: Availability of education, healthcare, and other social services attracts people to urban areas.

Causes of Urbanization

Urbanization is shaped by multiple social, economic, and technological factors:

Employment Opportunities: Dependence on agriculture in rural areas, particularly vulnerable to monsoons and natural disasters, forces people to seek livelihoods in cities.

Social Factors: The allure of cities, higher standards of living, better educational opportunities, and social status motivate rural-to-urban migration.

Industrialization: Expansion of industries increases employment opportunities, drawing rural populations into urban centers.

Rural-Urban Transformation: Not only are cities expanding, but rural communities are also increasingly adopting urban lifestyles. Material culture, social behavior, and consumption patterns of urban areas influence rural populations.

Modernization and Environmental Impact: Urban areas are characterized by advanced infrastructure, sophisticated technology, better communication, and healthcare facilities. The post-globalization era has accelerated industrialization and urbanization, leading to structural transformations in developing countries. However, this growth has had significant environmental impacts:

- Reduction and degradation of forests and wetlands, which are biodiversity hotspots.
- Pollution of water bodies due to indiscriminate waste discharge.
- Inadequate water and sanitation facilities, housing shortages, and ineffective waste management systems struggle to support the increasing population.
- Even small-scale commercial establishments, such as hotels and eateries in cities like Bangalore, contribute to urban environmental pressures.

Positive Effects of Urbanisation

Economic Engines: Cities are often referred to as the engines of economic

growth. They attract businesses, industries, and investments, creating job opportunities and boosting the economy. For example, New York City, Tokyo, and London are economic powerhouses that contribute significantly to their respective national economies.

Innovation Hubs: Urban areas foster innovation and entrepreneurship. Silicon Valley, located in the San Francisco Bay Area, is a prime example. It's home to many of the world's largest high-tech corporations and thousands of startup companies.

Healthcare: Urban residents generally have better access to healthcare facilities compared to those in rural areas. This access leads to improved health outcomes and longer life expectancy. For instance, studies show that urban children are more likely to receive vaccinations and essential medical care than their rural counterparts.

Education: Cities offer more educational opportunities, from primary schools to universities. The availability of diverse educational institutions attracts students from all over, fostering a more educated and skilled workforce.

Transportation: Urbanisation leads to the development of robust transportation networks, including public transit systems like buses, subways, and trains. This infrastructure facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods.

Utilities: Cities are more likely to have reliable utilities such as electricity, water supply, and internet connectivity. These amenities improve the quality of life and support economic activities.

Diversity and Inclusion: Cities are melting pots of cultures, attracting people from various backgrounds. This diversity enriches the social fabric and fosters a culture of tolerance and inclusion.

Entertainment and Leisure: Urban areas offer a wide range of recreational activities, including theatres, museums, parks, and sports facilities. This abundance of options enhances the overall quality of life for residents.

Negative Effects of Urbanisation

Pollution: Urbanisation often leads to increased pollution levels. Cities like Beijing and Delhi struggle with severe air pollution, which poses serious health risks. Industrial activities, vehicle emissions, and construction contribute to this problem.

Habitat Loss: The expansion of urban areas leads to the destruction of natural habitats, threatening biodiversity. Research by Zhu et al. (2020) in Hangzhou, China, showed a significant decrease in habitat quality due to rapid urbanisation.

Inequality: Urbanisation can exacerbate social inequality. While cities offer numerous opportunities, they also have stark contrasts between affluent areas and impoverished neighbourhoods. Slums and informal settlements are common in rapidly growing cities.

Overcrowding: High population densities can lead to overcrowding, which affects living conditions and access to services. For instance, Mumbai, India, faces significant challenges with overcrowded housing and public transportation.

Unemployment: Although cities create jobs, they can also face high unemployment rates, particularly among unskilled workers. The mismatch between the skills of the workforce and available job opportunities can lead to economic disparities.

High Cost of Living: Urban areas often have a higher cost of living, making it difficult for low-income residents to afford housing, food, and other essentials. Cities like San Francisco and London are known for their exorbitant housing costs.

Stress and Mental Health: The fast-paced urban lifestyle can increase stress levels and negatively impact mental health. Studies have shown that urban residents are more likely to suffer from anxiety and depression compared to those in rural areas.

Disease Spread: High population density facilitates the rapid spread of infectious diseases. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted how quickly diseases can spread in urban settings, necessitating robust public health measures.

Infrastructure Strain: Rapid urban growth can strain existing infrastructure, leading to inadequate services and amenities. For instance, Rasoolimanesh et al. (2019) found that governance challenges can negatively impact the social and economic components of sustainable urban development.

Corruption: Urban areas can also suffer from governance issues like corruption, which can hinder effective service delivery and infrastructure development.

Conclusion

Urbanisation is a complex process with both positive and negative effects. It drives economic growth and offers better access to services but also poses significant environmental and social challenges. By adopting sustainable urban planning, protecting the environment, promoting social equity, fostering economic development, and ensuring effective governance, cities can harness the benefits of urbanisation while mitigating its downsides. The future of urbanisation depends on our ability to create cities that are liveable, inclusive,

and sustainable for all.

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Urban Jungles- A Way to Greener Future

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Article DOI Link: https://zenodo.org/uploads/17853222

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.17853222

Abstract

In the midst of rapidly expanding cities, where concrete replaces open spaces and urban noise overwhelms daily life, small green sanctuaries are emerging as sources of relief and connection. These urban jungle gardens embody more than decorative landscapes—they represent a humanitarian response to the emotional, social, and environmental needs of city dwellers. Rooted in ancient traditions that integrated nature into human settlement, today's urban gardens revive that legacy by nurturing biodiversity, cleansing the air, softening noise, and offering moments of peace to those surrounded by urban pressures. With their lush textures and vibrant life, they provide comfort, joy, and a quiet place for reflection. This abstract explores the evolution of these green spaces, their role in enhancing human well-being, and the guiding principles for cultivating meaningful urban jungle gardens.

Keywords: Urban jungles, urbanization, plants, indoor gardening.

Introduction

Indoor Garden

The art of growing different plants inside the house is known as Indoor Garden. The main purpose of indoor gardening is to create a beautiful, attractive and lively atmosphere inside the house. Indoor gardening typically embodies the concepts of self-care and customized setup, which have both concrete and symbolic meaning in communication. The benefits of plants for health are well-reported.Indoor plants have numerous advantages for our mental and physical well-being.

Plant Selection

Plants Suitable for Indoore Gardening

Coleus (*Plectranthus scutellarioides*) , Aglaonema (*Aglaonema commutatum*) Spiderwort (*Tradescantia zebrina*), Burgundy rubber plant (*Ficus elastica 'Burgundy*') , Aluminum plant (*Pilea cadierei*), Triostar stromanthe (*Stromanthe sanguinea*), Bromeliad (*Bromeliaceae genera*) Polka dot plant (*Hypoestes phyllostachya*) Nerve plant (*Fittonia spp*.), Echeveria (*Echeveria spp*.) Rex begonia, fancy-leaf begonia (*Begonia rex-cultorum*) Cordyline, Hawaiian ti plant (*Cordyline terminalis*), Purple shamrock, false shamrock (*Oxalis triangularis*) Pink princess philodendron (Philodendron erubescens 'Pink Princess'), Tricolor rubber plant (*Ficus elastica* 'Tricolor'), Neon pothos (*Epipremnum aureum 'Neon*'), Prayer plant (*Maranta leuconeura*), Calathea (*Calathea spp*.), Peperomia rosso (*Peperomia caperata 'Rosso'*), Snake plant (*Dracaena trifasciata*) etc

Air-Purifying Varieties

Certain plant varieties excel at purifying the air we breathe. Some top choices include spider plants, pothos, peace lilies, and snake plants. These plants have been scientifically proven to remove harmful toxins from the air, contributing to a healthier living environment.

To incorporate these air-purifying varieties into your garden, consider placing them strategically indoors or in areas with limited ventilation. Their natural ability to filter pollutants will help create a cleaner and fresher atmosphere within your urban jungle garden.

Low-maintenance Types

For busy urban dwellers who may not have much time for gardening chores, low-maintenance plant species are the way to go. Choose hardy plants that can withstand varying light conditions and require minimal watering and pruning. Succulents, cacti, and certain ferns are excellent choices for those seeking beautiful greenery without the need for constant care.

Designing a stunning garden with minimal effort is achievable by selecting low-maintenance plants that suit your specific climate and lifestyle.

Designing Your Urban Jungle

- **Layout Planning**

Effective layout planning is key. By carefully considering the layout, you can create a space that is not only visually appealing but also functional and enjoyable to spend time in.

One important aspect of layout planning is zoning areas within your garden. Identify different zones based on the needs and characteristics of your plants. For example, group together plants that require similar amounts of sunlight or water. This will help you create a more efficient watering schedule and ensure that each plant thrives in its designated area.

ISBN-978-93-49938-55-7

Pathways are another crucial element in your garden's design. They not only provide practical access to different areas but also add visual interest and guide visitors through the space. Consider using materials like stepping stones or gravel to create pathways that blend seamlessly with the natural elements of your urban jungle.

To make your garden visually engaging, incorporate focal points throughout the space. These could be large potted plants, sculptures, or even a small pond or fountain. Focal points draw attention and create a sense of depth in your garden design.

- **Creative Containers**

In addition to traditional planting beds, creative containers can be used effectively in urban jungle gardens. Containers come in various shapes and sizes and offer flexibility.

Consider using hanging baskets for trailing plants like ivy or ferns, which can add vertical interest to your garden. Window boxes are perfect for growing herbs or colorful flowers right outside your kitchen window.

For larger container options, try repurposing old barrels or wooden crates as planters. These rustic containers can bring character to your urban jungle while providing ample room for larger plants like trees or shrubs.

- **Lighting and Atmosphere**

Lighting plays a crucial role in creating the right atmosphere for an urban jungle garden. Maximizing natural light during the day ensures that your plants receive the necessary sunlight for growth and photosynthesis.

Position your garden in an area that receives ample sunlight, or consider using reflective surfaces like mirrors to redirect light into shaded areas. This will help create a bright and vibrant environment for your urban jungle.

In addition to natural light, supplemental lighting can be used to extend the growing season and provide illumination during darker hours. LED grow lights are energy-efficient options that mimic natural sunlight and can be adjusted according to the needs of your plants.

Plant Care Essentials

- **Repotting**

If the plant has outgrown its container, repot it into a larger pot with fresh potting soil.

- **Humidity**

Many indoor plants prefer high humidity levels. Think about putting a humidifier next to your plants or regularly spraying them.

- **Provide Proper Lighting**

For optimal growth, most indoor plants require bright, indirect sunshine. Make sure the area where you plant them gets adequate natural light. Your plants need enough light, so supply it. Most indoor plants like bright, direct light.

- **Watering Routines**

➢ Most indoor plants prefer a regular watering schedule.
➢ Spraying of water is preferred.
➢ Succulents and cacti, prefer drier conditions and should be watered sparingly.
➢ But the tropical plants may need more frequent watering to thrive.

- Use a well-draining potting mix and ensure that excess water can drain out of the pots.

- **Soil and Fertilization**

- Choosing the right soil mixture for your urban jungle garden is crucial for plant health and growth.
- Farmyard manure added regulary.
- Fertilization plays a vital role in keeping your plants healthy and vibrant. Regularly feeding them with a balanced houseplant fertilizer will provide essential nutrients they need for optimal growth.

- **Pruning and Grooming**

- Pruning is an essential part of maintaining healthy urban jungle gardens. It helps promote bushier growth, removes dead or damaged foliage, and controls plant size.
- Regularly inspect your plants for any signs of disease or pests, such as yellowing leaves or webbing.
- Remove affected parts to prevent further spread.
- Use clean and sharp tools to make clean cuts. Avoid tearing or crushing the plant tissue, as this can lead to unnecessary stress and potential entry points for diseases.
- Grooming your plants by removing dust from their leaves not only improves their appearance but also allows them to photosynthesize more efficiently.

Urban Jungles

Enhancing Biodiversity

In the quiet corners of our cities, where nature often struggles to be seen and heard, urban jungle gardens offer a chance to reconnect with the living world. One of the most meaningful ways to enrich these spaces is by inviting pollinators—those gentle partners of nature who keep ecosystems thriving. By choosing plants that welcome bees, butterflies, and birds, we create gardens that breathe, move, and feel alive. These pollinator-friendly plants offer nectar and pollen, turning small city spaces into safe havens for creatures that play a vital role in sustaining life.

When we plant flowers that bloom at different times of the year, we give pollinators the gift of constant nourishment a simple, compassionate act that supports their survival.

Enhancing biodiversity also means caring for the earth beneath our feet. Eco-friendly practices become part of the garden's heartbeat.

Composting, for instance, turns everyday kitchen scraps into nutrient-rich soil, closing the loop between waste and growth. This not only enriches the garden but also reduces what we send to landfills, lightening our impact on the planet.

Water conservation, too, becomes a mindful habit using rain barrels or drip irrigation ensures that every drop is respected, cherished, and put to good use.
And when it comes to protecting the plants we grow, choosing natural methods instead of chemical pesticides helps maintain harmony.
Companion planting, or inviting beneficial insects, allows the garden to balance itself the way nature intended. In these small but meaningful ways, urban jungle gardens become more than green spaces, they become living communities where plants, pollinators, and people coexist and thrive together.

Benefits

- House plants can enhance indoor air quality.
- They can improve your mood and promote relaxation.
- They could also aid in lowering stress levels.
- Boosting mood and productivity
- Reducing noise levels
- Improving sleep quality and physical health
- Reduced stress and anxiety
- Natural decoration
- Beautifies the interior decoration.
- Oldest way of foliage cultivation.
- Sense of interest for recreation
- Popular in metro cities due to scarcity of space.
- Divides the living areas
- Bring freshness in house.
- Spending time in green spaces has been shown to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. The lush foliage and peaceful atmosphere provide a much-needed escape from the hustle and bustle of city life.
- Urban jungle gardens can even increase property value. The presence of green spaces adds aesthetic appeal and creates an inviting atmosphere for poten

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Analysis of Social Theories and the Changing Urban Landscape in Maharashtra

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Article DOI Link: https://zenodo.org/uploads/17846559

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.17846559

Abstract

Maharashtra represents a pivotal case study in the dynamics of urbanization in the Global South, distinguished by its high degree of urban saturation - reaching 45.23 percent in 2011- and its sustained demographic influx into major metropolitan cores. This paper investigates the socio-spatial transformation of the state's urban landscape through the rigorous application of Critical Urban Theory (CUT). The central theoretical lens employs a synthesis of Neoliberal Urbanism and Postcolonial Urbanism to analyze how contemporary state-led development initiatives intersect with deep-seated historical socio-spatial fault lines, particularly those determined by caste and economic class.

The empirical analysis demonstrates that post-liberalization policies, exemplified by the Smart Cities Mission (SCM) and the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) in hubs like Mumbai and Pune, function less as engines of inclusive growth and more as institutional mechanisms of accumulation by dispossession, resulting in the production of inequality. Specific findings highlight the persistence of high residential segregation along religious and caste lines, the systematic marginalization of urban informality in planning, and the institutionalization of climate vulnerability, such as pluvial flood exposure, for the urban poor. The study concludes by arguing for a normative shift in urban governance toward the principles of Spatial Justice, advocating for hyper-local (ward-level) strategies to effectively address structural disparities that are currently obscured by macro-level policy frameworks.

Keywords: Urbanization, Neoliberalism, Postcolonial Urbanism, Spatial Justice, Maharashtra.

Introduction

Defining the Urban Context: Maharashtra as India's Urban Laboratory

Maharashtra occupies a central position within India's national economic and demographic landscape, often serving as a primary laboratory for examining the complexities of rapid urban transition in the Global South. With a population exceeding 112 million in 2011 (9.29% of the national total), Maharashtra is second only to Uttar Pradesh in population size. The state exhibits the highest level of urbanization in India, significantly surpassing the all-India average, reaching 45.23 percent urban saturation by 2011.

The momentum of urbanization is immense, driven largely by sustained internal migration. The state's urban population surged from 30.54 million in 1991 to 50.83 million by 2011. This growth trajectory is sustained by the concentration of economic opportunities, including guaranteed employment, access to education, and the perceived high standard of living, which collectively draw substantial migration streams both from rural areas within Maharashtra and across the entire country.

Crucially, the urbanization pattern is profoundly heterogeneous. The growth is heavily skewed toward the western corridor, with the highest concentration observed in cities like Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur, Nashik, Vasai Virar, and Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, all boasting populations exceeding one million. Mumbai and its suburbs are recognized as functionally 100 percent urbanized, encompassing a combined population exceeding 18.4 million. In stark contrast, districts such as Sindhudurg, Gadchiroli and Nandurbar report urbanization levels below 15 percent. Regions like Marathwada and Vidarbha consistently display the lowest levels of urbanization, highlighting a profound regional disparity that is linked to uneven industrialization, targeted information technology investments, and educational advancement in the western cities.

Statement of the Problem: Socio-Spatial Polarization in the Post-Liberalization Era

While urbanization is theoretically viewed as a positive change, Maharashtra's experience demonstrates that rapid, unplanned growth exacerbates critical socio-spatial challenges. The concentration of population often outpaces the corresponding growth of employment opportunities, leading to rising urban poverty and unemployment. This kinetic process of expansion has resulted in chronic housing shortages, intense strain on public service infrastructure, and rising economic inequalities. Furthermore, environmental threats are escalating; the Mumbai-Pune-Nashik mega-city region is recognized as being highly

exposed to pluvial flooding, a hazard that is intensified by climate change and rapid, unmanaged urban settlement growth.

The enduring issue, however, lies in the persistence of historical inequalities. Contrary to theories suggesting that city life erodes traditional social structures, caste continues to play a significant role in determining where people reside and their access to social networks and economic opportunities. The outcome is a socio-spatial polarization where wealth is distributed unevenly, and social disparities are observable along persistent class and caste fault lines.

Theoretical Framework: Necessity of a Critical Lens for the Global South

In the distinctive pattern of urban change in Maharashtra necessitates a robust theoretical engagement that moves beyond Eurocentric frameworks. Critical urban scholarship cautions against measuring development in the Global South solely against a Western-centric script of capitalism and modernization, which often marginalizes the specific processes, histories, and projects unique to postcolonial spaces.

This analysis therefore employs Critical Urban Theory (CUT) as its organizing framework, which explicitly assesses how urban space reflects and reproduces power, injustice, exploitation, and inequality. The paper integrates three complementary theoretical streams:

1. **Neoliberal Urbanism:** This paradigm analyzes the systemic shift in state functions toward entrepreneurial governance, characterized by the deregulation of markets and the prioritization of private investment over social protection, a dynamic that has been profoundly influential in India since the 1990s.
2. **Postcolonial Urbanism:** This lens focuses on the enduring impact of colonial history on spatial forms and power dynamics, recognizing cities like Mumbai as products of a "colonial matrix of power" that shapes contemporary informality and segmentation based on unequal power structures.
3. **Spatial Justice:** This normative approach critiques the outcomes of urban transformation, focusing on the equitable distribution of urban resources and the right of marginalized groups to participate in city-making, anchoring the discussion on structural inequalities and violence embedded in development.

The Dynamic of Deceleration Versus Concentration

An important complexity revealed by demographic analysis is the dynamic between the overall rate of urbanization and its regional concentration. While the absolute urban population continues to grow significantly, the state's decadal urban growth rate slowed from 34.57 percent (1991 - 2001) to 23.67 percent (2001 - 2011). This deceleration aligns with trends noted across India, often

attributed to factors like a maturing demographic transition and reduced fertility rates.

However, the analysis of regional patterns suggests this deceleration masks an intensifying process of regional concentration. Location Quotient (LQ) indices quantify this economic gravitation: Mumbai (2.1), Mumbai-suburban (2.1), Thane (1.7), and Pune (1.35) all show disproportionately high urban population concentrations relative to the state average. This intense regional concentration is linked to targeted economic momentum, specifically investments in the Information Technology sector and industrial growth. This results in a feedback loop where high concentration attracts high human capital, further accelerating metropolitan growth, while simultaneously creating regional urban disparity by leaving regions like Marathwada and Vidarbha behind. Thus, the slowing overall rate is not indicative of diffused, inclusive growth but rather a selective concentration of capital and opportunity in the western corridor.

Objectives of the Study

The overarching goal of this research is to apply a critical theoretical framework to the empirical realities of Maharashtra's urban transition. The specific research objectives are:

1. To analyze the unequal spatial patterns of urbanization (1991–2011), using the Location Quotient index to measure urban concentration and correlating it with district-level socio-economic indicators, such as the Human Development Index (HDI).
2. To systematically analyze the ideological shift toward entrepreneurial governance in Maharashtra, focusing on the exclusionary impacts of major interventions, including the Smart Cities Mission (SCM) and infrastructure projects, in terms of gentrification and socio-spatial fragmentation.
3. To deconstruct how historical urban legacies shape contemporary housing policy, critically evaluating the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) scheme in Mumbai as a driver of displacement, the production of substandard housing ("vertical slums"), and the persistence of economic vulnerability among beneficiaries.
4. To examine the empirical evidence of residential segregation by caste and religion and its causal relationship with the systematic denial of access to essential urban public goods and infrastructure across marginalized neighborhoods.

Data and Methodology

Mixed-Method Design and Philosophical Stance

The research is guided by a Critical Realist framework, acknowledging that social phenomena are shaped by deep structural mechanisms (ideologies,

historical power) that require interpretation, in addition to observable data. Consequently, a Mixed-Method Design is employed to integrate quantitative data analysis, mapping macro-level trends, with qualitative and theoretical critiques necessary for understanding the underlying political and social processes. Critical Urban Theory (CUT) provides the analytical lens to assess issues of power, exploitation, and inequality, affirming that urban space is ideologically influenced and highly contested.

Quantitative Data and Techniques

The quantitative backbone of the study relies on high-resolution secondary data:

- **Core Data Sources:** Data is sourced primarily from the Census of India (1991, 2001, 2011) and specialized, geographically granular ward-level data derived from the Primary Census Abstract (PCA) for urban Maharashtra. The PCA offers crucial information on population size, sex ratio, literacy, SC/ST population, and household amenities, allowing for analysis below the city level.
- **Methods Applied:**
  - **Location Quotient (LQ) and Correlation Analysis:** Used to quantify the regional disparity. High LQ indices for Mumbai and Pune (2.1 and 1.35, respectively) establish the concentrated nature of urbanization. Correlation coefficients, such as the high positive association found between urban concentration and HDI (0.79) and school density (0.74), are utilized to interpret how concentrated economic growth interacts with developmental outcomes.
  - **Multilevel Analysis of Developmental Disparity:** This method employs existing scholarly research that used Principal Component Analysis (PCA) across 7,229 wards to compute a composite development index. This technique allows for the precise evaluation of variations within and between different administrative typologies (Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils, Census Towns), confirming the sub-city heterogeneity in development.

Qualitative and Theoretical Analysis

The theoretical engagement employs established critical social science methods:

- **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA):** Applied to state policy documentation, particularly the Smart Cities Mission (SCM) guidelines. CDA analyzes the rhetorical framing of development, revealing how policy language may shift toward "inclusion" while the underlying intervention logic remains persistently techno-utopian, economically driven, and citizen-blind.
- **Postcolonial and Comparative Analysis:** Mumbai's transformation is examined by historicizing its past as a “port city” and “colonial city,”

highlighting how its contemporary globalization results in segmentation based on unequal power. This context-specific analysis, comparing cities like Pune and Mumbai, helps unpack the local manifestations of informality and exclusion.

- **Ethnographic and Policy Outcome Review:** The study incorporates findings from ethnographic and mixed-method studies, such as those analyzing the outcomes of the SRA scheme. This qualitative integration provides nuanced answers to the how and why policies produce marginalization, contextualizing statistical failures with the lived experiences of the urban poor.

The Policy Blindness to Sub-City Disparity

The multilevel analysis of developmental disparity in Maharashtra reveals a critical systemic flaw: a generalized policy focus on Municipal Corporations (MCs) overlooks the immense variation and severe deficits within other urban localities. The study found that while Cantonment Boards and MCs generally rank highest in development indices, Municipal Councils and Census Towns display significantly lower and more highly variable developmental scores. Municipal Councils showed the highest developmental variance (Mean: -0.69; SD=2.92).

This variation indicates that the most significant accumulation of inequality and developmental deficiency occurs in the rapidly urbanizing peripheries and smaller towns—the emergent urban formations that are consistently under-measured and conceptually overlooked by centralized state planning. Policy frameworks that concentrate resources on megacity centers for visible, high-impact projects (e.g., SCM) fail to address the rapid, unplanned growth and infrastructural strain occurring in these secondary urban localities. This functional disregard for the heterogeneity and specific developmental needs at the ward and small-town level perpetuates disparity and ensures that structural inequalities remain deeply embedded within the urban landscape.

Result and Discussion: Theories of Transformation in Maharashtra

The Geographies of Accumulation: Western Concentration and Economic Drivers

The sustained economic vitality of Maharashtra is intrinsically tied to the concentrated development of its western metropolitan corridor. The high urban LQ indices observed in Mumbai and Pune, alongside the strong positive correlation with HDI, confirm that these cities function as critical hubs for investment, particularly in industrialization, educational advancement, and the high-skill Information Technology sector. Pune, often referred to as a Global South secondary city now integrated into global financial and commodity

circuits, exemplifies this growth.

This growth is characterized by a high volume of labor migration, predominantly male-dominated, semi-permanent, and remittance-based. This phenomenon results in what is termed Masculine Urbanization, which has complex social ramifications beyond simple demography. While the influx of male labor sustains the economic engine of cities, it simultaneously influences the socio-economic polarization along class and caste lines within the city. Additionally, it triggers significant social transformation in the sending rural areas, altering household dynamics and the economic roles of women.

Neoliberal Urbanism in Action: The State as Entrepreneur and Enforcer

The shift to an entrepreneurial planning strategy, abandoning the earlier state-led attempts at controlling metropolitan growth, has defined Maharashtra's urban trajectory since the 1990s. Neoliberal Urbanism, influenced by global movements toward deregulation and the promotion of free markets, has reframed the state's role as facilitating capital accumulation.

The Critique of the Smart Cities Mission

The Smart Cities Mission (SCM) is the paradigm example of contemporary neoliberal governance. By establishing a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), the SCM centralizes control and promotes the privatization of urban governance, often at the expense of local democratic participation. Although the rhetoric emphasizes economic sustainability and quality of life, the area-based development component inherently functions as a spatial strategy to raise land values and attract further investment.

This process inevitably leads to gentrification and the displacement of the poor. Investments in projects like the Mumbai Metro rail, while beneficial for mobility and safety, contribute to increased real estate costs and commercial rental rates. The consequence is market-led evictions, which systematically remove low-income populations from desirable urban areas. Furthermore, aesthetic-driven interventions like urban beautification projects prioritize monumentality and economic goals over the ecological and social needs of marginalized communities who rely on these spaces for livelihood, highlighting the pervasive influence of neoliberal hegemony. This pattern demonstrates that state projects, under a neoliberal banner, systematically reinforce socio-spatial fragmentation and exclusion.

Postcolonial Critique: Informality, Housing Dispossession, and the SRA

The development of Maharashtra's cities remains tethered to a postcolonial reality where the tension between global economic integration and deep internal segmentation is pronounced. Urban informality, a distinct feature of planning

failure in the Global South, is not an aberration but a deliberate outcome of state policy that criminalizes informal settlements while justifying elite informalities.

The SRA and the Production of "Vertical Slums"

The Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) in Mumbai represents a large-scale, state-mandated effort to convert informal land use into formal, cadastral property. The scheme's critique centers on its profound shortcomings in delivering holistic social outcomes. Studies indicate that due to the excessive discretion granted to developers, the rehabilitated buildings often become "vertical slums," failing to provide adequate living standards.

Furthermore, the physical design of these new tenements frequently ignores climate suitability and non-income factors vital for well-being. Research indicates that the move from traditional slums to poorly designed SRA buildings led to a 100 percent increase in AC unit ownership, forcing poor households to spend up to 40 percent of their income on electricity. This increase in energy poverty, combined with limited socio-economic mobility, illustrates how a policy intended for rehabilitation instead results in a new form of structural vulnerability and dispossession. Smart city planning exacerbates this by largely disregarding informality, further widening the socio-spatial division.

The Institutionalization of Climate Risk

The most critical intersection of policy failure and structural inequality lies in the production of climate vulnerability. The urban poor are structurally forced to reside in environmentally hazardous areas, such as low-lying flood zones. In the Mumbai region, cheap housing and proximity to employment act as powerful constraints, leading marginalized populations to settle in areas where rents are 20–25 percent lower than average.

This residential pattern transforms climate change and rapid urban expansion into direct drivers of heightened pluvial flood risk, with the area exposed forecasted to increase dramatically by 2070. The structural failure of the market and the state to provide affordable, safe housing located away from these zones means that policy implicitly endorses the disproportionate allocation of environmental burdens onto the most vulnerable groups. This process—where poverty determines location in high-risk zones, amplifying the danger from climate hazards—constitutes a profound manifestation of Spatial Injustice.

Table 1.1 Spatial Manifestations of Exclusion in Urban Maharashtra

Mechanism of Exclusion	**Policy/Context**	**Affected Group**	**Spatial Outcome**	**Theoretical Connection**
Economic Displacement	Smart Cities Mission, Metro Projects	Urban Poor, Informal Settlers	Gentrification, Market-led evictions, Increased living costs in core areas	Neoliberal Urbanism
Housing Insecurity	Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA)	Former Slum Dwellers/Beneficiaries	Production of low-quality "vertical slums," enforced energy poverty, limited socio-economic mobility	Postcolonial Urbanism, Dispossession
Structural Segregation & Risk	Land Use and Planning Failure	SC/STs, Muslims, Urban Poor	Concentration in neighborhoods lacking public services; disproportionate exposure to pluvial flood zones	Spatial Justice, Critical Urban Theory

Socio-Spatial Fragmentation: Caste, Class, and Residential Segregation

The social geography of urban Maharashtra demonstrates that economic opportunity has not dissolved pre-existing social stratification. Caste remains a critical determinant of residence, contrary to expectations from classical urban sociological theories.

The Empirical Reality of Segregation

Empirical research using fine-grained neighborhood data confirms that residential segregation for historically marginalized groups, including Scheduled Castes (SC/STs) and Muslims is substantial in Indian cities. This segregation is comparable in magnitude to historical Black-White segregation in the United States. Furthermore, segregation along religious lines often correlates strongly with segregation along caste lines, demonstrating the complex layering of social exclusion.

Segregation and the Denial of Public Goods

The spatial concentration of marginalized groups translates directly into a systematic denial of access to urban public resources, confirming a severe deficit of spatial justice. Analysis shows that SC/ST and Muslim neighborhoods experience systematically less availability of essential public facilities, including schools, doctors, and public hospitals. Importantly, nearly all of this regressive resource allocation occurs across neighborhoods within cities—at the informal and least-studied level of local government allocation—rather than across cities, underscoring the critical need for ward-level scrutiny.

While policy initiatives like the Special Township Policy attempt to mandate a proportion of housing for EWS/LIG groups, and direct housing subsidy schemes exist, successful models for achieving spatial equity underscore the necessity of blending income groups in the same locality, utilizing hierarchical spatial plans, and providing legal tenure. The evidence suggests that, while selective housing interventions can boost political participation and child outcomes, the overall urban development pattern continues to reinforce socio-economic polarization along enduring caste and class fault lines.

Conclusions

Conclusion: The Contested Terrain of Neoliberal Postcoloniality

The changing urban landscape in Maharashtra is a complex, contested terrain where the forces of global capital, driven by neoliberal policy, are continuously mediated by enduring postcolonial and caste-based social structures. The entrepreneurial state leverages urbanization for highly concentrated economic gain, but this process inevitably results in the appropriation of urban land and the systemic marginalization of historically disadvantaged groups (SC/STs and Muslims).

The critical analysis reveals that state interventions, including the SCM and the SRA, often operate as technologies of exclusion. They fail to deliver holistic socio-economic development, creating new vulnerabilities, such as energy poverty in "vertical slums," while simultaneously ignoring the realities of urban informality. The dual persistence of high residential segregation and the systematic denial of neighborhood-level public goods confirm that growth is highly unequal. Most critically, the production of inequality extends to the environmental domain, with the poorest populations structurally forced into the highest-risk flood zones, thereby institutionalizing exposure to climate hazards—a definitive marker of acute Spatial Injustice.

Policy Recommendations for Spatial Justice

To achieve a normative shift toward democratic, equitable, and sustainable urban development, policies must address the structural and spatial roots of inequality:

- **Reclaiming Democratic Planning and the Right to the City:** Planning must move beyond the techno-utopian vision of "smart" cities and adopt a holistic, integrative, and highly participatory approach. The fundamental claim of the Right to the City must be institutionalized, operationalizing mechanisms that empower the underprivileged and marginalized communities to co-participate in urban decision-making processes and resource allocation.
- **Resource Prioritization by Ward-Level Disparity:** Financial and infrastructural allocation must be decoupled from prestige projects and guided by empirical analysis of developmental need. It is essential to implement a multi-sectoral strategy that directs resources based on proven developmental deficits at the ward level, especially prioritizing Municipal Councils and Census Towns where developmental variation is highest, thereby reducing profound intra-urban inequalities.
- **Comprehensive Housing and Tenure Security:** Slum rehabilitation programs, such as the SRA, require urgent quality control and restructuring to ensure high-quality built environments that mitigate energy poverty. Furthermore, housing policies must actively aim for spatial equity by mandating the mixing of income groups and providing secure, legal tenure aligned with local socio-economic realities, thereby counteracting ghettoization and promoting social mobility.
- **Integrating Climate Resilience and Equity:** Urban planning must treat the mitigation of climate risk as a core mandate of social and spatial justice. This requires state intervention in the land market to provide affordable, safe housing options located outside known high-risk zones, decoupling poverty from institutionalized exposure to environmental hazards like pluvial flooding.

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Mental Health and Resilience of Street Entrepreneurs in Mumbai: A Psychological Analysis of Everyday Survival

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Article DOI Link: https://zenodo.org/uploads/17846624

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.17846624

Abstract

Street entrepreneurship is among the most visible but least understood components of Mumbai's informal economy. Although street vendors sustain essential consumer markets, facilitate urban mobility, and anchor thousands of migrant households, their psychological realities remain largely unexamined. This chapter investigates the mental health landscape of 250 street entrepreneurs across five major zones of Mumbai and explores how they negotiate uncertainty, stress, and stigma through resilience and adaptive strategies. Using a mixed-method approach combining standardised psychological tools with narrative interviews, the study reveals a pattern of chronic stress, heightened anxiety, and dignity-related distress. Yet, in the same environment marked by volatility and institutional hostility, street entrepreneurs demonstrate striking emotional regulation, social solidarity, and improvisational skill.

To interpret this duality of vulnerability and ingenuity, the chapter proposes the Mental Health–Resilience–Adaptability (MRA) Model. The model conceptualizes mental health as the psychological baseline shaping stress appraisal; resilience as the mechanism that absorbs shocks; and adaptability as the behavioural response that enables entrepreneurs to continue functioning amid uncertainty. The MRA framework recognises resilience not as an individual personality trait but as an outcome of social relationships, emotional competencies, and meaning-making practices.

By centering psychological experience, this chapter challenges conventional portrayals of street entrepreneurs as either victims of urban exclusion or heroic figures of survival. Instead, it argues for a more nuanced understanding: one that situates mental health within the city's regulatory environment, social hierarchies, and spatial inequalities. Policy implications include the need for

supportive municipal systems, culturally grounded mental health literacy, and institutionally strengthened vendor associations. The study calls for rethinking urban governance to recognise the psychological cost borne by informal workers who keep India's cities economically alive.

Keywords: Street entrepreneurship, psychological stress, resilience, informal economy, Mumbai.

Introduction

Mumbai's street economy operates in the interstices of formal regulation, urban aspiration, and everyday survival. Vendors occupy footpaths, station fronts, market lanes, and traffic junctions—spaces that are both itinerant workplaces and zones of perpetual negotiation. Much of the scholarship on street vending focuses on legality, livelihoods, and spatial politics. What often remains hidden is the immense psychological labour demanded by this form of entrepreneurship.

Unlike entrepreneurs in formal settings who have access to predictable infrastructures, contractual protections, or institutional redressal mechanisms, street entrepreneurs rely primarily on their own emotional judgment, interpersonal conduct, and situational assessment to get through each day. Mental health, therefore, is not a peripheral concern; it sits at the centre of entrepreneurial functioning in the informal sector.

This chapter examines how stress, anxiety, stigma, resilience, and adaptation interact to shape the everyday functioning of Mumbai's street entrepreneurs. It contributes to a growing conversation about the psychological life of work, particularly in contexts where labour is precarious, informal, and undervalued.

Methodology

Sample Composition

The study engaged 250 street entrepreneurs spanning South Mumbai, Central Mumbai, Western and Eastern suburbs, and extended suburban pockets. The sample included fruit and vegetable vendors, apparel sellers, household-goods traders, mobile repair mechanics, and small prepared-food operators. Ages ranged from early twenties to late sixties, reflecting the intergenerational nature of informal trading in the city.

The educational range was broad: nearly one-third had never attended school, while a smaller segment possessed higher secondary or graduate degrees. Earnings differed significantly based on location and commodity, fluctuating between ₹300 and ₹2,500 per day. These variations formed part of the stress ecology analysed in the study.

Tools and Techniques

Four standardised instruments were utilised:

- Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10)
- GAD-7 (Generalised Anxiety Disorder Scale)
- Brief Resilience Scale
- Adapted Emotional Intelligence Inventory

To deepen interpretive insight, 35 in-depth interviews were conducted. Interviews were conducted in Hindi and Marathi and later translated. The qualitative material helped contextualise the statistical findings and capture the emotional cadence of vendors' lives.

Analytical Approach

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, correlations, and regression models. Qualitative transcripts underwent thematic coding to identify recurrent emotional patterns, stress triggers, and coping practices. The integration of both strands allowed a more holistic understanding of mental health as lived experience rather than just measured outcome.

Findings

a. The Psychological Weight of Street Entrepreneurship

Income Uncertainty and Cognitive Friction

Almost all respondents described income unpredictability as their foremost source of stress. Unlike salaried employment, street vending rarely offers stability. Daily earnings can vary sharply depending on weather, police presence, festivals, footfall, and fluctuating supply prices.

This volatility generates what several respondents described as "constant thinking"—a state of ongoing mental negotiation that absorbs emotional energy and diminishes cognitive bandwidth. Entrepreneurs often begin their workday with unresolved concerns from the night before, producing an unbroken continuity of financial rumination.

Institutional Pressures and Fear of Confiscation

A significant portion of participants reported routine interactions with municipal officials and the police. Confiscation of goods—whether justified or arbitrary—was described not only as an economic shock but also as a deep psychological wound. Vendors repeatedly emphasised the humiliation associated with their merchandise being thrown on the ground or seized in public view.

Such encounters cultivated a state of anticipatory anxiety. Even on days without enforcement actions, entrepreneurs remained alert, scanning for threats and listening for signals of impending raids. This hypervigilance closely resembles stress responses observed in populations exposed to unstable or punitive environments.

Social Stigma and Dignity Erosion

Many entrepreneurs reported internalising the idea that street vending is "not respectable work." Several shared incidents in which customers, passers-by, or even extended family members dismissed their occupation as a mark of failure. The emotional implications of such stigma were far-reaching. It affected confidence, self-worth, and the ability to form supportive relationships.

While the public often romanticises street vendors as colourful symbols of urban life, their own narratives reveal a continuous struggle for dignity.

Physical Exhaustion and Environmental Hardship

Workdays often stretched beyond ten or eleven hours, largely in standing positions with minimal rest. The monsoon season added further hardship—waterlogged streets, damaged goods, illnesses, and reduced footfall. Chronic physical fatigue amplified emotional irritability and stress, creating a feedback loop between bodily strain and mental overload.

b. Resilience: The Hidden Infrastructure

Despite pervasive stress, the majority of street entrepreneurs displayed a level of psychological resilience unexpected in environments marked by instability. Their resilience manifested across three main domains.

Social Solidarity as Emotional Safety Net

In nearly every vending cluster, mutual dependence emerged as a defining feature. When one vendor faced a raid or emergency, neighbours stepped in—guarding stock, lending money, or supplying temporary labour. This collective ethic functioned as a powerful buffer against emotional breakdown.

Unlike formal entrepreneurs who may experience competition as isolating, street vendors often develop what might be called "solidarity born of shared precarity." This created a sense of companionship that moderated the psychological impact of stress.

Emotional Intelligence as Practical Skill

Vendors routinely calibrate their emotional responses to situations that could escalate quickly. Negotiations with customers, bargaining conflicts, and interactions with officials require emotional restraint, social awareness, and persuasive communication. These competencies were not verbally articulated as "skills" by respondents, yet they emerged consistently in behaviour.

Vendors with stronger emotional regulation reported lower levels of perceived stress. They also displayed greater confidence in handling unpredictable situations.

Meaning-Making and Cognitive Reframing

Several entrepreneurs found resilience through personal narratives that attached meaning to their labour. Common reframing patterns included:

- viewing entrepreneurship as moral independence ("I don't need to beg or borrow")
- treating it as temporary sacrifice for children's education
- valuing autonomy even amid insecurity

This meaning-making did not reduce the intensity of stressors but provided emotional anchoring that helped sustain effort.

c. Adaptability: The Everyday Craft of Survival

Resilience alone cannot explain the sustained entrepreneurial functioning evident in Mumbai's street markets. Adaptability—continuous adjustment of strategies, products, timing, and interpersonal tactics—is equally crucial.

Entrepreneurs frequently modify inventory in response to season, demand, or police cycles. Many switch locations throughout the day or maintain multiple micro-routes. Some diversify products for festivals or local events. During the pandemic, several vendors moved to WhatsApp-based ordering or home delivery—simple yet imaginative shifts that reflected their capacity for rapid improvisation.

Adaptability, therefore, is not exceptional behaviour but an intrinsic component of street entrepreneurship. It involves a set of mental habits: alertness, flexibility, situational reading, and rapid decision-making.

The MRA Model: Understanding Psychological Functioning in Informal Markets

Based on the patterns observed, the Mental Health–Resilience–Adaptability (MRA) Model is proposed to explain how street entrepreneurs maintain functional stability despite multidimensional pressures.

a. Mental Health: The Psychological Baseline

Mental health acts as the lens through which stressors are interpreted. Individuals with stronger psychological well-being are more likely to perceive challenges as manageable. Conversely, poor mental health heightens the sense of threat and narrows cognitive capacity.

b. Resilience: The Absorptive Layer

Resilience moderates the impact of stress. It is shaped by:

- social relationships
- emotional competencies
- prior experiences with adversity

- meaning-making frameworks

Resilience is not a fixed attribute but evolves through lived experience and social interaction.

c. Adaptability: The Behavioural Expression

Adaptability represents action—how entrepreneurs translate resilience into concrete adjustments to protect income and continuity. This includes altering schedules, adjusting product lines, changing locations, and innovating service delivery.

The MRA model demonstrates that mental health influences adaptability indirectly through resilience, creating a sequential process that sustains entrepreneurial functioning.

Discussion

Street entrepreneurship in Mumbai is often understood through the lens of survival, informality, or conflict over urban space. This study reveals an additional dimension: the profound psychological labour embedded in daily practice. The mental health burdens faced by street vendors reflect the combined effects of regulatory ambiguity, spatial insecurity, economic volatility, and social marginalisation.

At the same time, the resilience displayed by vendors challenges simplistic narratives of victimhood. Their psychological strength is not extraordinary—it is cultivated through necessity, community ties, emotional skill, and a capacity to derive meaning from work that society undervalues. This duality—vulnerability alongside resourcefulness—captures the unique character of mental life in the informal economy.

The chapter also underscores that mental health is inseparable from urban governance. Policies that produce fear, unpredictability, or humiliation exacerbate stress and diminish entrepreneurial functioning. Conversely, supportive regulatory environments can significantly improve psychological well-being even without increasing income.

Policy Implications

1. Supportive Municipal Regulation

Predictable licensing processes, designated vending zones, and transparent enforcement practices can significantly reduce psychological strain.

2. Strengthening of Vendor Associations

Associations serve not only political purposes but also emotional ones. They provide collective security, dispute mediation, and a sense of belonging.

3. Mental Health Literacy for Informal Workers

Workshops delivered through community organisations can introduce stress-management techniques without imposing clinical terminology that may feel

alien or stigmatizing.

4. Recognition of Psychological Labour in Policy

Urban planning and labour discussions must acknowledge the emotional dimension of informality, not merely the economic contribution.

Conclusion

The psychological landscape inhabited by Mumbai's street entrepreneurs is marked by a striking duality. On one hand, their daily existence is governed by relentless uncertainty: fluctuating earnings, volatile footfall, institutional scrutiny, spatial insecurity, and the continual risk of confiscation or displacement. On the other hand, despite this unyielding precarity, many vendors display an impressive capacity to remain emotionally steady, socially anchored, and behaviourally flexible. This coexistence of vulnerability and composure is not accidental; it is cultivated through years of working in an environment where economic survival depends as much on mental equanimity as on access to goods or customers.

Their lived experiences challenge the conventional understanding of entrepreneurship as a domain driven primarily by innovation, opportunity recognition, or business expansion. For street entrepreneurs, the psychological dimension is inseparable from the economic one. Decision-making is constantly shaped by emotional self-regulation, the ability to manage uncertainty without paralysis, and the capacity to negotiate social interactions that can easily escalate into conflict or loss. Entrepreneurship in this context becomes an act of emotional labour. It requires managing customer expectations, maintaining composure in the face of municipal authority, reading subtle shifts in market mood, and finding stability in the absence of predictable structures.

This makes clear that resilience is not a peripheral virtue; it is the central mechanism through which street entrepreneurs remain functional. Resilience for them is neither romanticised endurance nor innate toughness. It is a layered process produced through social networks, culturally embedded interpretations of hardship, and personal meaning-making. The capacity to withstand sudden shocks—whether financial, physical, or emotional—comes from belonging to informal support systems, from learning to frame adversity as temporary or purposeful, and from continuously acquiring emotional and practical competencies necessary for survival in contested urban spaces.

Adaptability emerges as the behavioural expression of this resilience. Entrepreneurs adjust their locations, revise their product lines, shift working hours, experiment with new customer-engagement methods, or temporarily diversify into other types of work when circumstances demand it. This is not innovation in the formal entrepreneurial sense; it is improvisation as a condition of survival. Yet it demonstrates creativity, situational awareness, and resourcefulness that rarely receive scholarly or policy recognition.

To conceptualise how these psychological processes interact, the MRA Model—Mental Health, Resilience, and Adaptability—provides a coherent framework. It captures the progression through which mental health forms the psychological baseline, resilience acts as the buffer that absorbs stress, and adaptability becomes the outward behaviour that enables sustained functioning. This sequential relationship highlights an important point: adaptability cannot be understood without examining resilience, and resilience itself is contingent upon mental well-being. Each layer builds upon the previous one, producing a system through which individuals navigate difficult environments without collapsing under pressure.

The implications of this understanding extend beyond academic interpretation. If Indian cities aim to recognise and respect the contributions of street entrepreneurs, urban governance must move away from punitive, unpredictable regulatory practices. Harassment, arbitrary fines, and constant relocation undermine not only financial stability but also psychological stability. A supportive regulatory environment—marked by transparent licensing, predictable enforcement procedures, and inclusive planning—can significantly reduce the emotional burden vendors carry. Likewise, strengthening vendor associations, integrating mental-health literacy into community programs, and acknowledging the emotional demands of informal entrepreneurship can create environments where vendors are not merely tolerated but meaningfully supported.

The psychological and economic lives of street entrepreneurs are deeply intertwined. Their mental well-being influences the stability of their enterprises, and the conditions created by urban policy directly affect their psychological health. Recognising this interdependence is essential if Mumbai—and other Indian cities—wish to build inclusive urban systems that value both the economic vitality and the human dignity of those who sustain the informal marketplace.

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To Study the Role of Digital Technology Transformation in the Adoption of NEP 2020 & Its Growth Towards Education in India

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Article DOI Link: https://zenodo.org/uploads/17846646

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.17846646

Abstract

The paper deals with the study of the role of digital technology transformation in adopting the National Education Policy 2020 & its growth towards education in India. India is the third-largest country in the higher education system. The National Education Policy was announced in 1968, and since then, it has gone through several modifications every few decades. It was revised in 1986, then in 1992, and the Ministry of Education made significant reforms in the education structure under NEP 2020.The National Education Policy 2020, India's first and most comprehensive education policy, was unveiled in July 2020. Digital transformation also means changing or renewing new policies, systems, methods, etc. NEP introduces opportunities for all students and teachers in sectorial fields to grow in all areas in India. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a pivotal shift in India's educational framework, underscoring the integration of technology to enhanced pedagogy learning outcomes, accessibility, and equity. This policy itself emphasizes the "extensive use of technology "to remove language barriers, increase accessibility, and improve educational planning and development. This policy envisions a comprehensive transformation of the education system by embedding digital tools and resources across all levels of learning. The success of the National Education Policy 2020 lies in its implementation, and it can only be possible if institutions prioritise digital transformation.The present research paper has focused on the role digital technology transformation in adaptation of National education policy-2020. & its growth in education in India. The Researcher has focused to the key aspects of digital technology transformation, benefits of digital transformation in education, impact of digital transformation on nep 2020 adoption the National Education Policy 2020 & its growth towards education in India.

Keywords: Digital Technology, Sustainable Development Goals, Financial Inclusion, E-governance, Emerging Technologies, Transformation, National Education Policy-2020.

Introduction

The role of digital technology transformation in the adoption of NEP 2020 is significant, as the policy actively encourages the integration of educational technology (EdTech) to enhance the quality of education in India, aiming to equip students with digital literacy and prepare them for a rapidly evolving digital world by providing access to online learning platforms, virtual labs, and interactive content across all levels of education, thus facilitating a more personalised and accessible learning experience for students across the country.

A researcher has given a special keyword to digital technology transformation in adopting the National Education Policy 2020 as “sustainable development," which is considered closely aligned with the concept of "sustainable development" because it aims to provide inclusive and equitable quality education to all, emphasising lifelong learning opportunities, which directly aligns with the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4)—ensuring quality education for all by 2030; essentially, by promoting education that equips individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to contribute to a sustainable future, it means social well-being, which depends upon education towards a bright future. It provides a competitive advantage in the education field by enabling students to access all study materials online, quickly and with one-click resources, among other benefits.

A Digital transformation has become an increasingly important aspect of modern education, and it is essential for the successful adoption of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India. The NEP 2020 aims to reform and modernize the education system in India, and the use of digital technologies is a key component of this effort.

National Education Policy 2020 is one of the key factors in the transformation of higher education institutes in India. The NEP 2020 has also mentioned the importance of technology in education and has encouraged institutions to go digital to improve the quality of education.

The National Education Policy has undergone several modifications since its inception. The first National Education Policy was adopted in 1968, the second policy came in 1986, followed by a modification in 1992, and the latest was in 2020.

The National Education Policy 2020 replaced the decades-old policy, introducing a holistic, inclusive, and participatory approach to the education system. It was a progressive shift in the culture, with foundational pillars of Equity, Access, Affordability, Quality, and Accountability.

Objectives

- To study the Sustainable development goals towards digital education.
- To study the growth of digital transformation education in India.
- Identify Importance features & Opportunities of digital education in India and to overcome with challenges.

Research Methodology

The researcher has focused on the digital transformation of higher education institutions (HEIs), which refers to the process of integrating technology and digital tools into all aspects of education, from teaching and learning to administration and research.

This is done to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the institutions and create a more engaging and personalised learning experience.

NEP is a much-needed, forward-looking policy; however, the benefit of this policy cannot be harnessed if the implementation is not backed by technology. The right use of technology is critical towards greater student success and education outcomes. The success of NEP lies in its implementation, and it can only be possible if the institutions prioritise digital transformation.

This research is based on descriptive and empirical research methodology and primary & secondary data. The research for this study was done by referring to journals, books, articles, theses, interactions with random students & so on.

Discussions and Result

Digital technology plays a transformative role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in India, offering solutions to the country's unique challenges across sectors such as health, education, gender equality, and economic growth. As India strives to meet the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, leveraging digital tools can significantly accelerate progress towards a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient society. (G. Yella Krishna, 2025)

Moreover, emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), block chain, and the Internet of Things (IoT) are fostering innovations in agriculture, energy efficiency, and environmental sustainability.

Students can bring multidisciplinary subjects and vocational courses together and learn at their pace. For undergraduate education programs that run for 3-4 years, NEP policy 2020 allows 'multiple exit options' & rewards relevant 'certification' within the graduation tenure. When students complete one year, they receive certification, after two years- an advanced diploma, three years of successful completion- a bachelor's degree, and after four years of UG- a degree for research intelligence. Efforts are also in progress to establish Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs), which will be on the lines of IITs and IIMs to globalise educational standards. Also, a National Research

Foundation will be the apex body to motivate research culture among students.

Key Aspects of Digital Technology Transformation Within NEP 2020

- **Emphasis on Digital Literacy:** NEP 2020 prioritizes developing digital literacy skills in students, ensuring they can navigate and utilize digital tools effectively.
- **Integration of EdTech:** The policy promotes the seamless integration of educational technology tools like online learning platforms, interactive whiteboards, and mobile apps into classrooms.
- **Accessible Learning:** Digital technology is seen as a key tool to bridge the educational gap by providing access to quality education for students in remote areas through online learning platforms.
- **Personalized Learning:** Digital technology can enable customized learning pathways for students based on their individual needs and learning pace.
- **Teacher Training:** NEP emphasizes the need for comprehensive teacher training on digital tools and methodologies to effectively implement digital learning practices.
- **Development of Digital Content:** The policy encourages the creation of high-quality digital learning content in various Indian languages to cater to diverse student populations.
- **Motivated, Energized, and Capable Faculty:** One of the main NEP 2020 highlights is its recommendation for highly motivated, skilled, and energized faculty. The teachers will be handpicked through a transparent and well-defined recruitment process. The proposal also focuses on incentivizing excellence, freedom to design curriculum/pedagogy, and encouraging institutional leadership. If they couldn't adhere to the basic norms, the faculty will be held accountable.
- **Teacher Education:** The suggestions were made to introduce a comprehensive National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, NCFTE 2021. The NCTE will prepare it in consultation with NCERT. Also, the authorities will take strict actions against substandard stand-alone Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs).
- **Mentoring Mission:** According to the National Education Policy 2020, a National Mission for Mentoring will be built with an experienced and knowledgeable faculty. It will also include those with proficiency in teaching Indian languages and who can support teachers in the short and long term.
- **Financial Support for Students:** Merit-based incentives were announced for those who belong to SC, ST, OBC, and other SEDGs. Private institutions were encouraged to offer more scholarships to talented and deserving students who come from financially weak backgrounds. And those who were

already receiving scholarships, the National Scholarship Portal was asked to foster and track their progress.

- **Open and Distance Learning:** With the vision to increase gross enrollment ratio (GER), National Education Policy 2020 introduced several measures, including enough funding for research, online courses & digital repositories, dedicated student services, credit-based recognition of MOOCs, etc. The goal was to make distance learning as effective as in-class programs.
- **Online Education and Digital Education:** Online education was another pressing topic of NEP 2020, considering the rise of the pandemic and the sudden need to adapt to digital learning. A committed unit was created in MHRD to look after the digital infrastructure and content for higher education institutions and schools and Colleges and Universities. It ensures that students get quality and regular education whenever in-person classes are impossible. ALLETE understands the challenges of integrating technology in every aspect of an institution. It is not a small task and so we have developed EdTech 365 which is a solution built on Microsoft technology stack which includes artificial Intelligence based Power Apps, D365 Business Central, D365 customer service, D365 Marketing & D365 Human Resources for the Higher Education Industry.

Benefits of Digital Transformation in Education

1. The ability to provide personalized and flexible learning experiences for students. With the use of technology, students can access educational materials and resources on their own terms, at their own pace, and in a way that best suits their learning style. This can help to increase engagement and motivation, as well as improve outcomes. This has become especially beneficial for working students or students with family responsibilities. Digital platforms and tools can provide access to resources and experts from around the world, which can enhance the learning experience and provide students with a broader perspective on their field of study.
2. The ability to facilitate collaboration and communication between students, teachers, and other stakeholders. With the use of tools such as learning management systems (LMS) and social media, students and teachers can work together and share ideas and resources in real time, regardless of location. This can foster a sense of community and support within the learning environment. Improved student engagement and motivation in learning, and lead to better student outcomes.
3. In addition, digital transformation can help to increase access to education for all students, particularly those in rural or remote areas. With the use of online learning platforms and distance education programs, students who may not

have had access to traditional education can now participate in high-quality learning experiences.

4. Online assessments and evaluations: Digital tools and platforms can be used to conduct online assessments, evaluations, and exams, which can save time and resources for both students and institutions.
5. Better support for faculty and staff: Technology can be used to support professional development for faculty and staff, as well as to enhance their teaching practices. This can help to improve the quality of education and ensure that faculty and staff are equipped with the skills they need to effectively use technology in the classroom.
6. Data-driven approach: Digital tools can be used to collect and analyze student data, which can be used to improve student outcomes and make more informed decisions about curriculum development and resource allocation.

   Overall, the adoption of digital technologies is crucial for the success of the NEP 2020 in India. It has the potential to enhance the quality of education, increase student engagement and achievement, and make education more accessible to all. By embracing digital transformation, India can take a major step towards realizing its goal of becoming a global leader in education.

Impact of Digital Transformation on NEP 2020 Adoption

1. **Improved Student Engagement:** Interactive digital learning tools can enhance student participation and engagement in the learning process.
2. **Enhanced Learning Outcomes:** Access to diverse digital resources and personalized learning pathways can lead to improved academic performance.
3. **Flexibility in Learning:** Online learning options provide flexibility for students to learn at their own pace and convenience.
4. **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Digital platforms can generate valuable data on student progress, allowing educators to make informed pedagogical decisions.
5. **Challenges in Implementing Digital Transformation Within NEP 2020**
6. **Digital Divide:** Addressing the lack of internet access and digital devices in rural areas is crucial for equitable access to digital education.
7. **Teacher Capacity Building:** Adequate training for teachers to effectively utilize digital tools in their teaching practices is essential.
8. **Quality of Digital Content:** Ensuring the availability of high-quality, culturally relevant digital learning materials is key.

Conclusion

The role of digital technology in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in India is immense, with its ability to drive economic growth, improve access to education, enhance healthcare delivery, and promote education AND Women

Empowerment, environmental sustainability. However, for digital technologies to be fully effective in achieving SDGs, it is crucial to address challenges such as the digital divide, data privacy concerns, and the need for digital literacy through AI based.

Digital technology is one of the key drivers in adopting NEP 2020, enhancing content delivery, and enabling personalised and online teaching and learning. However, the growth of education under this policy is challenged by the digital divide, infrastructure gaps, and the need for teacher capacity-building.

The researcher has focused on an area that explores how technology can improve access, quality, and equity while also examining the challenges and potential solutions for full-scale implementation. By fostering digital inclusion and building robust digital infrastructure, India can leverage technology to create a more sustainable, equitable and prosperous future for all its citizens.

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Urbanization, Social Structure and Urban Population Growth in Raigad District

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Article DOI Link: https://zenodo.org/uploads/17898396

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.17898396

Introduction

Urban transformation is a multidimensional process involving social, economic, cultural and spatial changes within human settlements. As cities expand and modernize, people experience significant changes in lifestyle, occupation, communication patterns, and social relations. This project aims to understand how urban transformation influences society and how people adapt to new urban realities.

Study Area

Raigad district is located in the Konkan region of Maharashtra State. Raigad lies in the western part of Maharashtra. The district has the advantage of a coastal area. Geographically, Raigad district extends between 17°15' to 19°80' North latitude and 72°51' to 73°40' East longitude. The total area of Raigad district is 7,152 square kilometers. The district is spread over a narrow strip, about 240 kilometers long, situated between the Arabian Sea on the west and the Western Ghats on the east. To the north lies Thane district, to the northeast is Mumbai, to the south is Ratnagiri district, and to the east lies Pune district. To the southeast is Satara district, and the west boundary is washed by the Arabian Sea.

Objectives of the Study

- To understand the relationship between people and changing urban spaces.
- To identify the challenges arising due to rapid urban development.

Scope of the Study

The research focuses on examining patterns of urban growth, demographic changes, lifestyle transformations and infrastructural development. The study highlights both positive and negative impacts on people and society. The scope includes theoretical concepts supported by real-world examples from rapidly growing cities in India.

Methodology Primary Data Collection

The process of collecting data directly from the field for the purpose of the study has been completed. Surveys and Questionnaires: Structured or semi-structured questionnaires were prepared as per the objectives of the study. Based on this, data has been collected from households, farmers, fishermen, workers, shopkeepers, students and local residents.

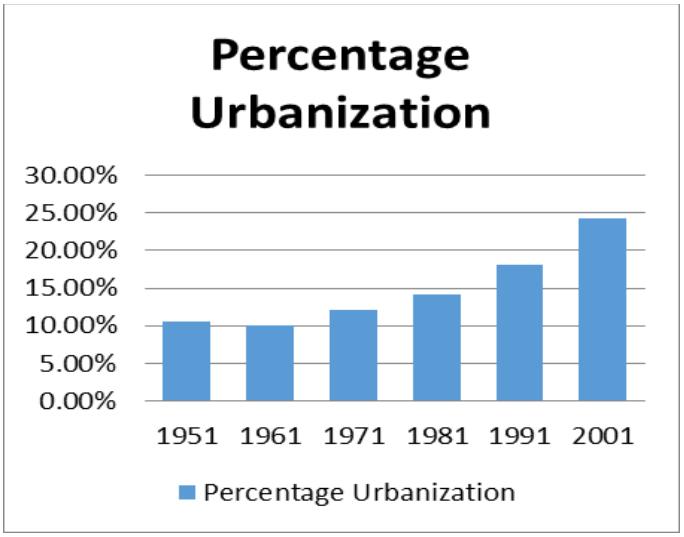
Secondary Data Collection

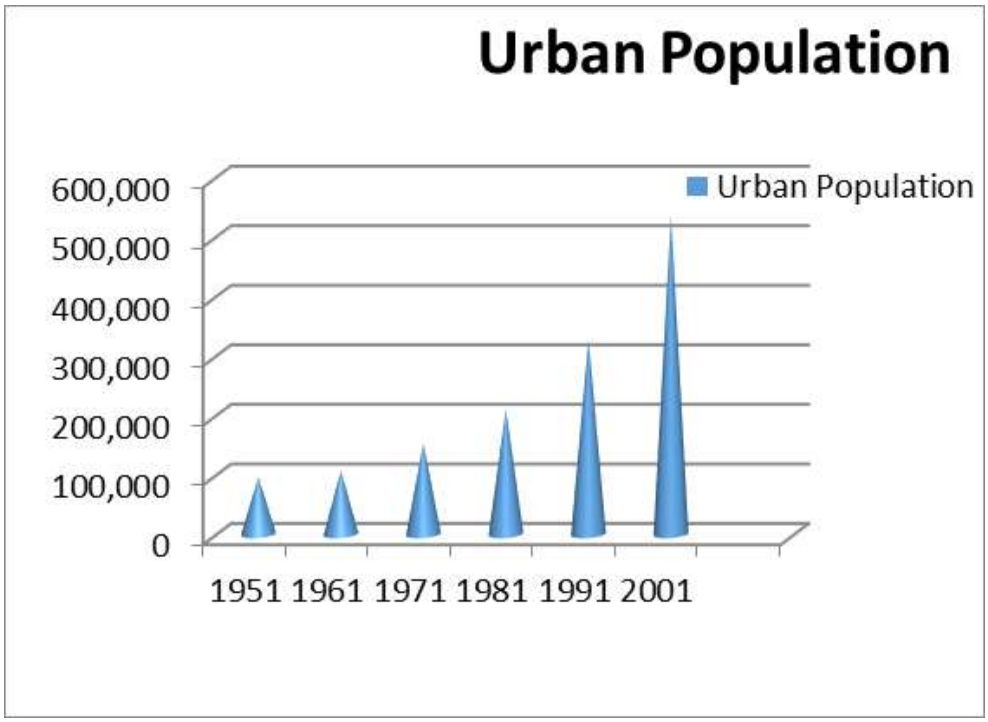
Books, journals, government reports, census data, Raigad Gazetter, Raigad District Annual Report etc. have been used as the basis.

Table 1: Population Change Since 1951 – Detailed Explanation

Year	Urban Population	Percentage Urbanization
1951	96,028	10.56%
1961	106,681	10.07%
1971	152,590	12.08%
1981	209,876	14.11%
1991	328,640	18.00%
2001	534,835	24.22%

(Graph – 1)





Urban Population Growth

Maharashtra is one of the more urbanized states in India. In 2001, the total urban population of Maharashtra was 42.67 percent, whereas the national average was only 27.78 percent. In Raigad district, which lies close to the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, the urban population in 1971 was 1,53,590 (12.08 percent). In the first census after the formation of the district (1951), the urban population was 96,028 (10.56 percent). Raigad district has shown a slow growth in its urban population. Between 1951 and 1971 (a period of 20 years), urban population increased by only 1.44 percent. In the first three decades (1951–1981), the total increase was just 3.55 percent. During 1951 to 1981, rural population growth was much higher than urban population growth, both in Raigad district and in India as a whole. In the next 20 years (1981–2001), the urban population of Raigad district increased by 11.11 percent. The low level of urbanization in the earlier phase (1951–1981) was mainly due to low industrial development. The period from 1991 to 2001 is known for New Economic Policies. It marked the beginning of Liberalization, Privatization, and Globalization (LPG Policy). During this time, the government announced the construction of an international airport near Navi Mumbai, located in Raigad district. This boosted the pace of urbanization in the study area. Industrial development also began in the chemical sector. CIDCO was established in 1970, leading to the development of Navi Mumbai, Panvel, and Uran talukas. Urban expansion gained momentum.

Table 2: Tahsil-wise Urban Population (1971–2001)

Sr. No.	Name of Tahsil	1971	1981	1991	2001
1	Alibag	13.04	12.99	13.03	8.79
2	Karjat	15.53	16.54	15.43	24.62
3	Khalapur	25.14	32.73	31.19	40.41
4	Mangaon	---	3.68	3.61	9.30
5	Mahad	10.18	10.57	11.39	16.91
6	Mhasala	---	---	12.62	14.36
7	Murud	21.77	20.11	18.83	17.42
8	Panvel	19.29	20.20	38.80	48.36
9	Pen	11.73	12.42	14.53	17.09
10	Poladpur	---	---	---	9.75
11	Roha	9.53	10.88	10.69	21.23
12	Shrivardhan	19.51	19.83	18.93	17.85
13	Sudhagad	---	---	10.00	13.00
14	Uran	17.68	24.23	22.66	22.21
15	**District Total**	**12.08**	**14.12**	**18.01**	**24.22**

Source: Census of India, 1971-2001

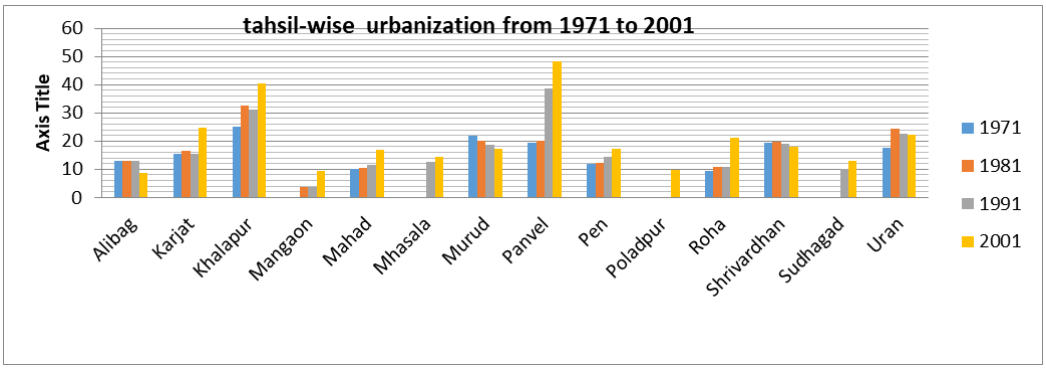


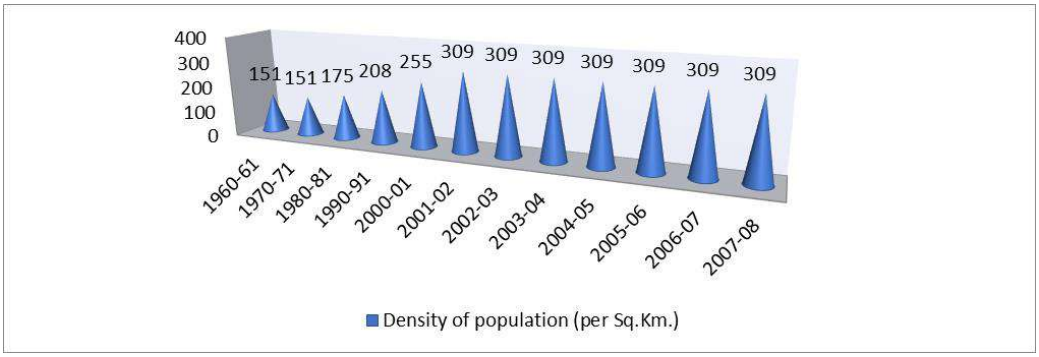
Table 2 shows the tahsil-wise level of urbanization from 1971 to 2001.
Panvel tahsil has the highest share of urban population with 48.36%, followed by Khalapur (40.41%). The lowest urban population is found in Alibag (8.79%), even though it is the district headquarters. In 1971 and 1981, Khalapur had the highest proportion of urban opulation. It also showed a 7% increase in 1981. On the other hand, Murud and Shrivardhan tahsils show a continuous decline in urban population. Murud had 21.77% urban population in 1971, which dropped to 17.41% in 2001. Shrivardhan shows a similar trend. This decline is mainly due to large-scale outmigration of the working population. Interestingly, in 1971, Shrivardhan was the third most urbanized tahsil, with 19.83% urban population. Mangaon registered urban population for the first time in 1981, with 3.61%,

which was the lowest in the district. Most tahsils had 10–20% urban population. Roha, Uran, and Karjat tahsils had 20–30% urban population in 2001.
In 1991, Khalapur and Panvel were in the 30–40% category. The northern part of the district is more urbanized than the southern part.
This is because the northern region is closer to Mumbai, has better accessibility, and due to the high real estate prices in Mumbai, many middle-class families prefer to live in nearby affordable tahsils like Panvel, Karjat, and Khalapur.

Density of population (per Sq.Km.)

Item	**1960-61**	**1970-71**	**1980-81**	**1990-91**	**2000-01**	**2001-02**	**2002-03**	**2003-04**	**2004-05**	**2005-06**	**2006-07**	**2007-08**
Density of population (per Sq.Km.)	151	151	175	208	255	309	309	309	309	309	309	309

Source: District Social and Economic Review 2015



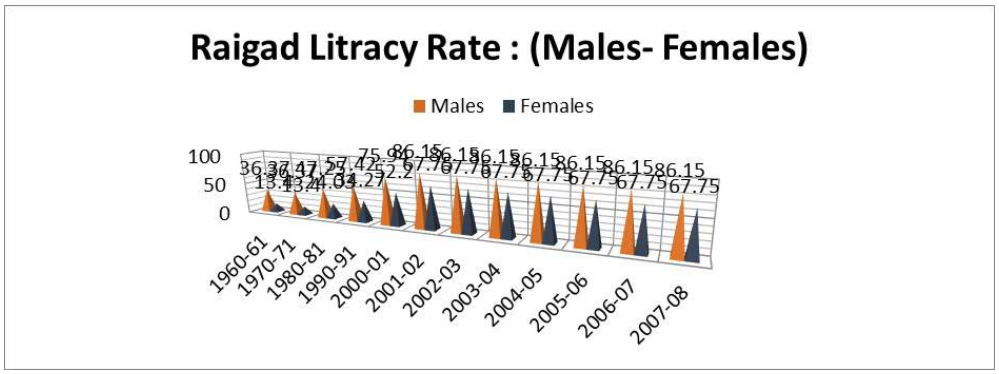
Short Explanation of Population Density (1960–61 to 2007–08)

- **1960–61 and 1970–71:** The population density remained 151 persons per sq.km, which means there was no increase in population during this time. 1980–81: Density increased to 175, showing that the population started to grow. 1990–91: Density rose further to 208, which indicates steady and continuous population growth in the district. 2000–01: Density reached 255, meaning the population grew more quickly. This faster growth could be due to development, urban expansion, and migration from other areas. 2001–02: Density suddenly jumped to 309. This sharp increase happened likely because new census data was updated, not because population grew in just one year.2001–02 to 2007–08: The density stayed at 309 persons/sq.km every year. This shows no change, because these years used the same census value repeatedly until the next census.

Raigad Literacy Rate: (Males- Females)

Item	1960-61	1970-71	1980-81	1990-91	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Males	36.37	36.37	47.25	57.42	75.94	86.15	86.15	86.15	86.15	86.15	86.15	86.15
Females	13.4	13.4	24.03	34.27	52.2	67.75	67.75	67.75	67.75	67.75	67.75	67.75

Source: District Social and Economic Review 2015



Short Explanation of Literacy Rate in Raigad (1960–61 to 2007–08)

- **1960–61 and 1970–71:** Male literacy was 36.37%, and female literacy was very low at 13.4%, showing a large gender gap. 1980–81: Literacy improved – males reached 47.25%, females 24.03%. Education started expanding but the gap continued.1990–91: Male literacy increased to 57.42%, and female literacy rose to 34.27%, showing steady growth in both. 2000–01: A big jump is seen – males 75.94%, females 52.2%. This shows major improvement in schooling, awareness, and government programs. 2001–02 to 2007–08: Literacy for males (86.15%) and females (67.75%) remains the same each year. These values are repeated annually because they are based on the 2001 census data.

Conclusion

Between 1950 and 1971, the population in Raigad district was increasing at a very slow pace. In the subsequent period, the population grew rapidly. The pace of urbanization accelerated. New industrial settlements were established in Raigad district, for example, the chemical industrial belt from Khalapur to Khopoli, Nagothane MIDC, and the growing tourism in Alibag and Murud-Janjira.

After the establishment of CIDCO, new towns were developed. In the 1980s, the JNPT port was established. Industrial settlements like ONGC and BPCL were developed. With the start of the Konkan Railway in 2020, the transportation and communication network in Raigad district expanded rapidly. In 2000, the new four-lane highway from Panvel to Bangalore was opened. International trade

began through the JNPT port, which is recognized as the largest port in India. The number of container yards in the JNPT area increased, and the volume of international imports and exports grew. This accelerated urbanization, improved the standard of living, and enhanced the quality of life in Raigad district.

The industrial belt from Panvel to Khopoli led to the establishment of industrial settlements. Due to all these factors, Raigad district has experienced rapid social changes, the growth of industrial settlements, and visible improvements in human life.

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Impact of Exhibition on Customer Buying Behaviour Towards Products from Rural Area

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Article DOI Link: https://zenodo.org/uploads/17921352

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.17921352

Abstract

Rural products constitute an essential component of rural economies, contributing significantly to employment generation, cultural preservation, and sustainable development. However, rural producers often face challenges such as limited market access, inadequate exposure, and lack of direct interaction with consumers. In this context, exhibitions emerge as an effective platform for promoting rural products and influencing customer buying behaviour. The present study examines the impact of exhibitions on customer purchasing decisions towards rural products, with specific emphasis on the factors that influence promotion and acceptance of these products in exhibition settings.

The study is based on primary data collected from 120 respondents belonging to rural areas who are engaged in manufacturing and selling products through exhibitions. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire focusing on various influencing factors such as authenticity and tradition, environmental concerns, cultural heritage, health benefits, support for local economies, and novelty. Appropriate statistical tools, including the Friedman (Chi-square) test and mean rank analysis, were applied to analyse the data.

The findings reveal that exhibitions play a significant role in shaping customer perceptions and purchase behaviour by enhancing product visibility and enabling direct producer–consumer interaction. Factors such as authenticity and tradition, environmental friendliness, and support for local economies emerged as highly influential in motivating customers to purchase rural products. The hypothesis testing results indicate a significant difference among the influencing factors, confirming that consumer preferences vary based on product attributes and exhibition experiences. The interactive and experiential nature of exhibitions helps build trust, appreciation, and emotional connection with rural products, thereby positively affecting buying decisions.

The study concludes that exhibitions are not merely sales platforms but powerful

promotional tools that contribute to sustainable rural development. By highlighting cultural value, craftsmanship, and ethical production practices, exhibitions encourage informed and responsible consumption. The research offers valuable insights for rural producers, policymakers, and marketers to design effective exhibition-based strategies for promoting rural products and strengthening rural livelihoods.

Keyswords: Exhibitions, Rural Products, Customer Buying Behaviour, Influencing Factors, Sustainable Development.

Introduction

Importance of Exhibitions

Exhibitions are significant in various fields because they provide essential platforms for promoting, educating, and networking initiatives within communities and industries. In the first place, they serve as essential marketing tools, providing individuals and companies with a platform from which they can exhibit their goods, services, and innovations to a specific audience. This kind of direct exposure is extremely beneficial for developing a brand and introducing new products since it enables instant feedback and engagement with prospective clients, investors, and business partner organizations. Exhibitions can be a substantial growth driver for various businesses, particularly small and medium sized enterprises. Exhibitions can provide access to markets and opportunities otherwise unavailable to these businesses.

Exhibitions are important not just for the business element but also for the educational and cultural interactions that they facilitate. Whether about technological developments, art, history, or various other subjects, they offer a space for learning, creating an environment where visitors can acquire new skills and knowledge. Because of this particular characteristic, exhibitions are extremely important for the creation of new ideas, the transmission of information, and the promotion of creativity. It is common for them to act as gathering places for hobbyists, professionals, and members of the general public, making it easier for people to communicate with one another, work together, and exchange ideas. When it comes to many different businesses and communities, exhibitions are not only events; they are essential components of their ecosystem, fostering innovation, cultural appreciation, and on-going education.

Sustainability and Growth of Rural Products

To preserve cultural heritage and empower rural communities economically, the sustainability and growth of rural products are paramount. A distinct combination of cultural identity and environmentally responsible practices is embodied in rural products, which are frequently created utilizing traditional methods and local resources. Their deeply ingrained link with the community and environment

of the area is the most important factor in ensuring their long-term viability. Many products produced in rural areas are developed using methods and materials that are favorable to the environment, which is in line with the growing desire for sustainable and ethical consumption worldwide. The implementation of this strategy not only reduces the negative influence on the environment and guarantees the maintenance of traditional knowledge and abilities.

Despite this, some obstacles must be overcome before farming products may experience continuous growth. The first step is to improve access to the market. There are often obstacles that rural producers must overcome to access bigger markets. These obstacles include restricted resources, a lack of marketing skills, and inadequate exposure. They can greatly increase their visibility and client base by addressing these difficulties through initiatives such as online marketplaces, alliances with urban stores, and participation in trade fairs. Quality and innovation are two other equally important aspects. It is possible to make rural products more appealing to modern consumers by incorporating innovation in design and utility while at the same time preserving the authenticity of traditional ways. Furthermore, raising knowledge about the value and distinctiveness of these items can help cultivate a greater appreciation and demand among consumers, contributing to the long-term growth and sustainability of these products.

Impact of Exhibitions on Rural Products

Exhibitions have a considerable influence on customers' purchasing decisions. In addition to serving as important forums, these events allow rural artisans and producers to exhibit their wares to a wider audience, which is frequently beyond their local reach. By participating in exhibitions, clients can acquire direct access to one of a kind, handcrafted things they might not have encountered in conventional retail settings. This exposure is extremely important for rural products because it exposes the distinctiveness, quality, and cultural legacy that rural products represent.

Because of the participatory nature of exhibitions, visitors can interact directly with the artists who created the works, which helps to promote a sense of connection and comprehension. Because of this personal engagement, clients frequently have a deeper appreciation for the products and a higher value for them as they learn about the craftsmanship, effort, and traditions that went into making them. The background and significance of these products are brought to life through storytelling, which plays an important role in this context.

In addition, shows frequently facilitate the creation of an atmosphere that honours and promotes the variety and abundance of items from rural areas. Not only does this increase customer awareness, but it also frequently results in a shift in consumer preferences toward products that are more environmentally friendly,

created ethically, and have a rich cultural heritage. The immersive part of exhibitions, which includes the chance to see, touch, and sometimes even customize things, significantly impacts the decisions consumers make regarding their purchases.

Increasing visibility, fostering direct customer producer interactions, enhancing the perceived value of the products through storytelling, and promoting the uniqueness and cultural significance of these items are some of the ways in which exhibitions significantly impact the purchasing behaviour of customers with regard to rural products. Customers are encouraged to make more informed, culturally respectful, and environmentally responsible purchase selections because of this, which supports rural producers by expanding their market reach and benefits consumers.

Review of Literature

1. **Smalec, A. (2014)** In the research titled "Trade shows and exhibitions as a form of promotion of regional, local, and traditional products," Latvia's most loved brands are user friendly and affordable, indicating that practical consumption dominates. Latvia has a CSR information gap. 69% of respondents are interested in what firms do to behave responsibly, but only 29% feel informed. 46% of Latvian respondents think corporate citizens pay more attention to their social impact than ten years ago, compared to 40% in the EU 27. After Latvia's 10-year membership in the EU, implying its policies and regulations, Latvian companies have had to critically assess their impact on the environment and society and take notable measures to mitigate its negative effects, which Latvian consumers have appreciated. 72% of Latvians are aware of retail and supermarket enterprises' social responsibility, higher than the EU average (67%); this implies that Latvian consumers consider a responsible market participant as one that gives them the most value for their money, regardless of the cost.
2. **Brscic, K., Trost, K., & Kezic, N. (2011)** In the research titled "The Role of Honey Exhibition on Rural Development: Case of the Istrian Region (Croatia)," According to research, Istria has numerous cuisine festivals, with 72 scheduled for 2011. Most food festivals occur in less developed tourist regions, as established tourism locations have fewer festivals. Research indicates that culinary tourism and food festivals positively affect development, as noted by other academics in the publication. The majority of food festivals were held during the summer months. "Days of Honey" took place in February. During the off season, beekeepers labor less with the bees, and events can draw visitors. Despite several factors, the honey festival had a balanced number of participants and visitors, with the latter increasing yearly (Rimanić, 2011). The primary motivation for beekeepers to attend exhibitions

was promotion and networking, with less emphasis on competitors' displays. Knowledge of tourist reasons and the county's and local governments' encouragement were crucial in deciding beekeeping participation. These provided valuable lessons for future honey festival organizers.

3. **Liu, X. (2023)**, In the research titled "Research on the Influencing Factors of Agricultural Exhibition Development Based on Regression Analysis," this article proposes that agricultural shows boost rural economies and revitalize rural areas. This paper analyses agricultural exhibition data from 30 provinces over the past decade to determine how economic development, agricultural resources, and agricultural population affect agricultural exhibitions. The study suggests that agricultural exhibitions should be held in conjunction with local agricultural resources and that large agricultural exhibitions should build barriers to entry to avoid low level repeated exhibitions. Break exhibition venue restrictions and innovate agriculture exhibitions; hold agricultural exhibits to upgrade the agriculture industry. Even though COVID 19 continues to impact agricultural exhibitions, we think both the exhibition industry and agricultural exhibitions will eventually expand.
4. **Cai, G. et al. (2023)**, In the research titled "Neighbourhood spatiotemporal impacts of SDG 8.9: The case of urban and rural exhibition driven tourism by multiple methods," Rural arts events primarily focus on revival and economic development and may positively impact population shrinkage. Urban arts events have greater potential to impact population decline. SDG 8.9 was empirically confirmed in the results. World changes have exceeded our expectations. Therefore, a new evaluation of exhibition driven tourism is necessary. While this method may be controversial, our study enhances our understanding of the spatial temporal implications of exhibition driven tourism. This document guides tourism operators in getting market research support for improvement strategies. These findings also benefit policymakers in the tourism business, whether government or non-government.
5. **Chandrasekhar, B. V. N. G. (2012)**, In the research titled "Consumer buying behaviour and brand loyalty in rural markets: FMCG," Most of the people who answered the survey were men. The men in the family are going to buy things on their own. Most women don't like shopping and don't leave their homes very often. The vast majority of the families fall into the farming group. The family doesn't make much money. Marketers must carefully plan their products when they want to enter the country market.
6. **Chiru, P. R. (2017)**, In the research titled "Consumer Behaviour in Rural Market: A Study on Buying Behaviour of Rural Consumers in Manipur," this research aims to illuminate rural consumer exploitation and promote their well-being. Organizations should also take the initiative to improve consumer

awareness of their rights and protection acts. The survey found that rural consumers needed to check product and price information when buying essentials due to a large supply of duplicate goods from Myanmar without expiration or manufacturing dates. Table 1.14 indicates that 85.83 percent of consumers purchase contaminated products, which may be unfit for human consumption. For example, in Imphal City (2013), cane fish were contaminated with unproductive particles, which are prohibited in the city. Rural market businesses acquire products at negotiated prices. Rural consumers must carefully consider price, quantity, quality, manufacturing date, and expiration date while purchasing important commodities in rural markets.

7. **Prajapati, S., & Thakor, M. (2012)** In the research titled "Competitive and Innovative Promotional Tools Used by Toothpaste Companies for Rural Markets and their impact on consumer buying behaviour in Gujarat," the study indicates that rural customers prioritize quality and Brand name when purchasing oral care items. Additionally, rural consumers with a high loyalty ratio (above 80%) tend to stick with their preferred brands due to peer pressure and the limited availability of alternatives. Colgate and Close Up are the most popular toothpaste brands. Influential factors for toothpaste purchases include price, promotions, color, and availability. Rural consumers typically follow merchant advice for toothpaste purchases. Rural people evaluate toothpaste marketing before buying. The most influential scheme for them is the price off scheme. When dentists recommend toothpaste with special discounts, customers are likely to buy it. The average product pricing, quality, and taste scores are 1.58, 1.34, and 1.61, respectively. Following the average score are the company's promotional tools and product availability. The customer perspective suggests that television, radio, newspapers, and hoardings are viable mediums for promoting promotional schemes.

Data Analysis

Demographic Factor

Sr No.	Particular	Statement	Frequency	Percent
1	Age	21 to 35 years	51	42.5
		36 to 50 years	51	42.5
		Above 50 years	18	15.0
2	Gender	Male	79	65.8
		Female	41	34.2
3	Educational Qualification	Illiterate	4	3.3
		Primary School	20	16.7
		Secondary School	60	50.0

ISBN-978-93-49938-55-7

		Higher Education	36	30.0

The data represent a breakdown of a specific sample by age, gender, and educational qualification, along with the corresponding count and percentage of each category. Here's a brief explanation of each section:

Age Distribution: 21 to 35 years: Represents the largest age group, with 51 individuals, constituting 42.5% of the sample. This suggests a significant portion of the sample is in their early adult years. 36 to 50 years: Equal in size to the 21 35 years age group, this category also has 51 individuals, making up another 42.5% of the sample. This indicates a balanced representation of middle-aged individuals. Above 50 years: The smallest group, with 18 individuals, comprising 15% of the sample. This suggests a smaller representation of senior citizens.

Gender Distribution: The majority of the sample is male, with 79 individuals, accounting for 65.8%. There are 41 females, making up 34.2% of the sample. This indicates a gender imbalance in favour of males.

Educational Qualification: Illiterate: A small fraction, 4 individuals (3.3%), lack formal education. Primary School: 20 individuals, or 16.7%, have education up to the primary school level. Secondary School: This is the most common education level, with 60 individuals (50%) having completed secondary school. Higher Education: 36 individuals (30%) have pursued education beyond secondary school, indicating a significant portion with advanced education.

Objective 1: To study the factors which influence for promotion of rural products in exhibition.

Null Hypothesis H_{01}: There is no significance difference in influencing factor of rural products.

Alternate Hypothesis H_{11}: There is significance difference in influencing factor of rural products.

To test the above chi square test is applied results are as follows.

Test Statistics[a]	
N	120
Chi Square	149.829
df	8
Asymp. Sig.	.000
a. Friedman Test	

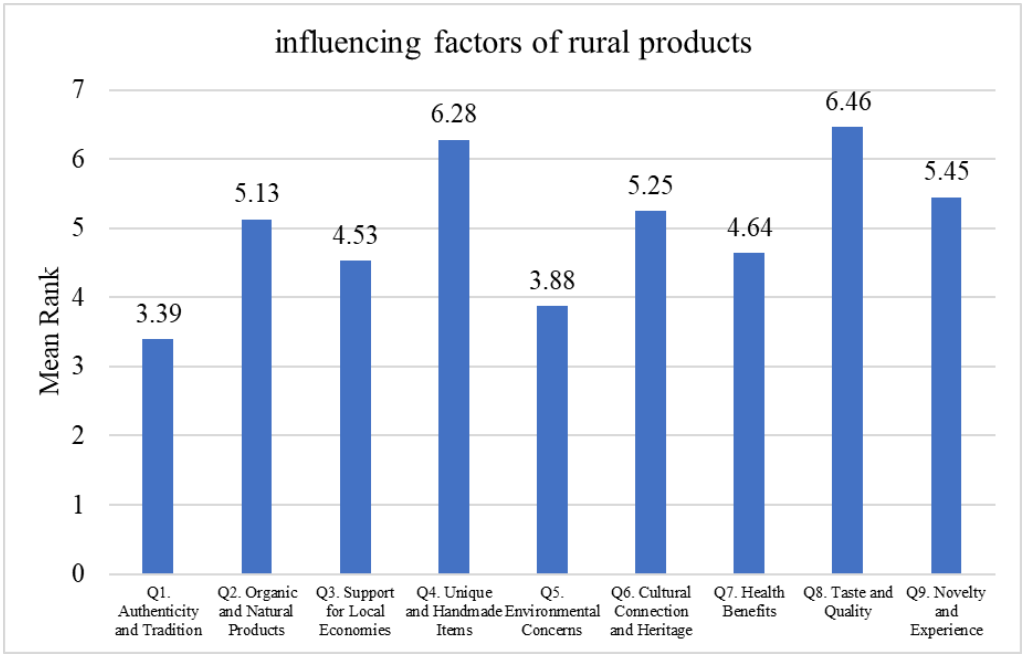
Interpretation: The above results indicate that calculated p value is 0.000. It is less than 0.05. Therefore, chi square test is rejected. Hence Null hypothesis is rejected and Alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Conclusion: There is no significance difference in influencing factor of rural products.

Findings: To understand the findings of hypothesis, mean score of influencing factors of rural products.

Ranks	
	Mean Rank
Q1. Authenticity and Tradition	3.39
Q2. Organic and Natural Products	5.13
Q3. Support for Local Economies	4.53
Q4. Unique and Handmade Items	6.28
Q5. Environmental Concerns	3.88
Q6.Cultural Connection and Heritage	5.25
Q7. Health Benefits	4.64
Q8. Taste and Quality	6.46
Q9. Novelty and Experience	5.45

The ranking of various factors based on their mean ranks suggests differing levels of importance as perceived in a certain context, likely related to consumer preferences or values in purchasing decisions. "Authenticity and Tradition" (3.39) and "Environmental Concerns" (3.88) are highly valued, indicating a strong preference for products or experiences that are seen as genuine and eco-friendly. In contrast, "Unique and Handmade Items" (6.28) and "Taste and Quality" (6.46) receive the highest mean ranks, suggesting they are considered less critical compared to other factors. Interestingly, "Organic and Natural Products" (5.13), "Cultural Connection and Heritage" (5.25), and "Novelty and Experience" (5.45) occupy a middle ground, reflecting a moderate level of importance. "Support for Local Economies" (4.53) and "Health Benefits" (4.64) also show significant but not paramount importance. This ranking reveals a nuanced perspective on what drives decisions in this context, highlighting a complex interplay of traditional values, environmental consciousness, and the appeal of uniqueness versus practical considerations like health and local economic support.



Findings and Suggestions

To effectively promote rural products, it's essential to leverage their unique strengths and align them with consumer interests and values. For example, emphasizing the authenticity and tradition associated with these products can appeal to consumers seeking genuine, heritage rich items. Highlighting their role in supporting local economies can attract buyers interested in community development and ethical purchasing. Focusing on the environmental concerns addresses the growing demand for sustainable and ecofriendly products. Additionally, showcasing the health benefits can appeal to health-conscious consumers. It's also beneficial to stress the unique, handmade nature of these products to attract customers who value craftsmanship and originality. Importantly, the cultural connection and heritage should be emphasized to resonate with those interested in cultural preservation and diversity. By tailoring marketing strategies to these aspects, rural products can be positioned effectively in the market, appealing to a broad range of consumers.

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ISBN: 978-93-49938-55-7

Price- 750/-