

Urbanisation and Human Welfare in the Era of Globalisation: A Case Study in Burdwan, West Bengal

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Urbanisation is referred to as a process in which an increasing proportion of population lives in cities and the suburbs of the cities. This paper analyses the changes in human welfare associated with urbanisation in the global era as captured by a set of socio-economic indicators. The study is undertaken for nine municipalities of Burdwan district of West Bengal, India, during the two census points (1991 and 2001). Due to limitations in data availability at district level, a composite Modified Human Development Index (MHDI) is constructed. It is found that there are persistent inequities in the human welfare of urbanisation in a global era. There is a decline of traditional urban centres and rise of new centres and there is little correlation between facilities and outcome. However, the results cannot be generalised without covering more districts and time points.

I Introduction

Urbanisation is referred to a process in which an increasing proportion of an entire population lives in cities and the suburbs of the cities (Sivaramakrishnan *et al.* 2005). The 2005 Revision of the United Nation World Urbanisation Prospects Report described the 21st century as witnessing urbanisation as the integral component of economic development. In other words, the rapid advent of urbanisation is inextricably related to changes in economic growth and industrialisation.

According to Census of India, 2001, 27.78 per cent people live in urban area. This has increased from 25.72 per cent in 1991, 23.73 per cent in 1981 and 20.71 per cent in 1971. About a third of the country's population lives in the towns and cities. In absolute terms, it is more than the total population of countries like France, Germany, Brazil and U.S.A. It is even higher than the total population of parts of continents like Eastern Africa, Western Europe, Western

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