



URBANISATION IN THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH 24 PARGANAS, WEST BENGAL: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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I INTRODUCTION

Urbanization is a distinct way of life which emerges in cities due to their large, dense and heterogeneous population. It has influence on society, environment and fringe areas. It takes place due to natural growth, migration and reclassification. Urbanization leads to encroachment of towns into arable and wet land (West Bengal Development Report-2010). Usually in cities, people have more freedom to choose better basic needs as well as health, education, employment, recreation, cultural activities and sports & games. As a result social structure and institutions become more dynamic and ultimately it stretches its hands towards urban periphery (Dr. S.A.A. Jafri and B.K. Bajpai-2012). The city life clearly influences its residents in terms of social, economic and human development. Ultimately the evils takes place in towns and cities and reason behind it, is unhealthy living condition of very large- size population. In view of that, National Commission of India on Urbanization has recommended developing intermediate and small towns.

In the context of Urbanization, a study has been made on South 24 Parganas District of West Bengal. South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal has Latitudinal extension between 21°26'0"N and 22°33'45"N and longitudinal extension between 88°3'45"E and 89°4'50"E. Area of the district is 9,960 Sq. Km. It has seven municipalities and 29 Community Development Blocks. Bangladesh is located in the east of the district, Purba Medinipur and Haora district of West Bengal is in the west, Kolkata and North 24 Parganas district lie in the north and Bay of Bengal is in the south of the study area.

The major objectives of this study are: 1. To analyze the trend of urbanization in terms of (a) Level of urbanization, (b) Rate of urbanization and (c) Urban growth rate 2) the number and aerial expansion of urban units, 3) Causes behind urban expansion, 4) to find out the changing pattern of population due to urbanization, 5) To evaluate its socio-economic impact on the society.

Key words: *urbanization, urban growth rate, level of urbanization, census town, impact of Urbanization*

II STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem is mainly related to trend and impact of urbanization. The District is adjacent to the megacity of Kolkata but surprisingly it is lagging far behind in terms of urban growth rate and level of urbanization. Slow rate of urbanization has an influence on the quality of life of the people, mainly on literacy rate, occupational structure and work participation rate.

III RESEARCH FINDINGS

Urbanization started in the colonial period as industrial area in Budge Budge and as a port in Diamond Harbour in the neighborhood of Calcutta. Local business centers were developed in the interior of the district. Gradually these business areas become urban areas (Joynagar, Baruipur, Sonarpur). Megacity Kolkata act as a business and economic hub that attracts people to settle down in the area of Sonarpur, Baruipur, Budge-Budge, Maheshtala, Pujali located under the jurisdiction of Kolkata Metropolitan Area.

3.1 Nature of Urban Areas:

Urban areas in this block are of two types. Municipalities are statutory towns and Census towns are just fulfilled the criteria of urban areas i.e. population density 400/sq.km, total population-5,000 and 75 per cent of the work force engaged in non agricultural activities and these census towns located in the C.D. Blocks administered by local block office.

3.2 Trends of Urbanization:

Trend of urbanization is measured in different way in C.D. Blocks and Municipalities. In case of C.D. Blocks numbers of urban population to total population, that is level of urbanization is considered and in Municipalities' rate of urbanization and decadal growth rate have been considered.

3.3 Distribution of total, urban and rural population: From 1951 onwards this district experiencing a low level of urbanization. Urban population was only 4.6 per cent in 1951 and now it is 25.58 per cent. From 2001 to 2011 period the total population increased from 1,086,220 to 2,087,773. The rate of growth on that period was 9.35 per cent. This is due to natural increase, rural to urban migration and appearance of new census towns. Fig-1 shows that there is a large increase in total population and both rural and urban population, but the rate of increase of urban population is more than rural population

YEAR-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RURAL AND URBAN POPULATION

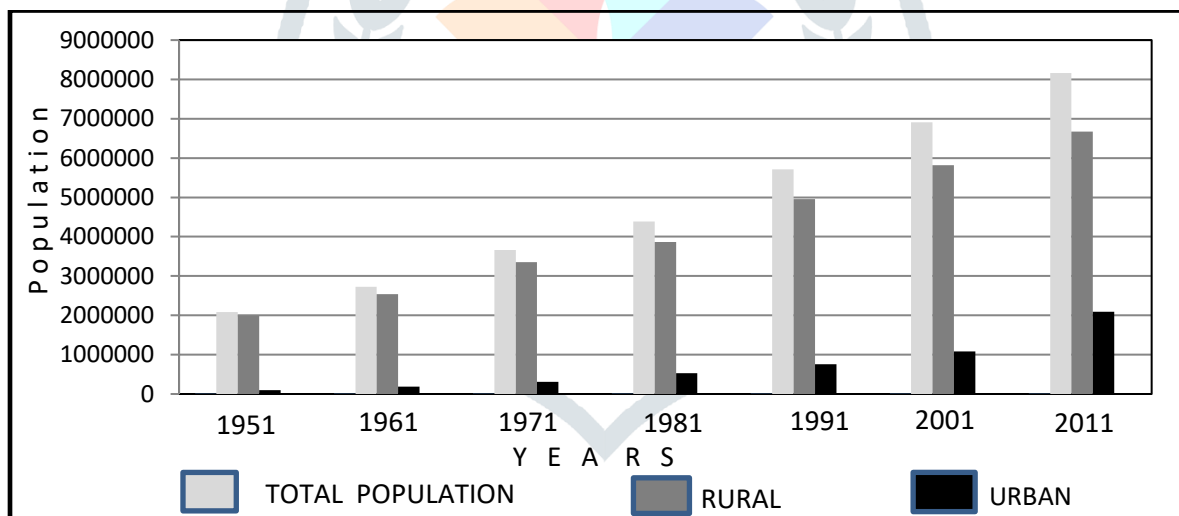


Fig-1

Data source: Census of India, 2011

Table-1: Decadal Growth Rate of Rural, Urban, Total Population and Level of Urbanization

Census Year	Decadal Growth Rate (Urban)%	Decadal Growth Rate (Rural)%	Decadal Growth Rate (Total)%	Level of Urbanization%
1951				4.58
1961	98.0	27.5	30.7	6.93
1971	63.6	32.1	34.2	8.45
1981	69.9	15.1	19.8	11.99
1991	44.5	28.3	30.2	13.30
2001	42.9	17.5	20.9	15.72
2011	9.35	4.35	18.17	25.57

Computed by the author

3.4 Decadal Growth Rate:

The district have overall decreasing trend. Only in 1981 the urban growth rate was increasing from 63.6 to 69.9 per cent. In the period of 2001 to 2011 it was lower than total population growth rate, but higher than rural growth rate (Fig-2).

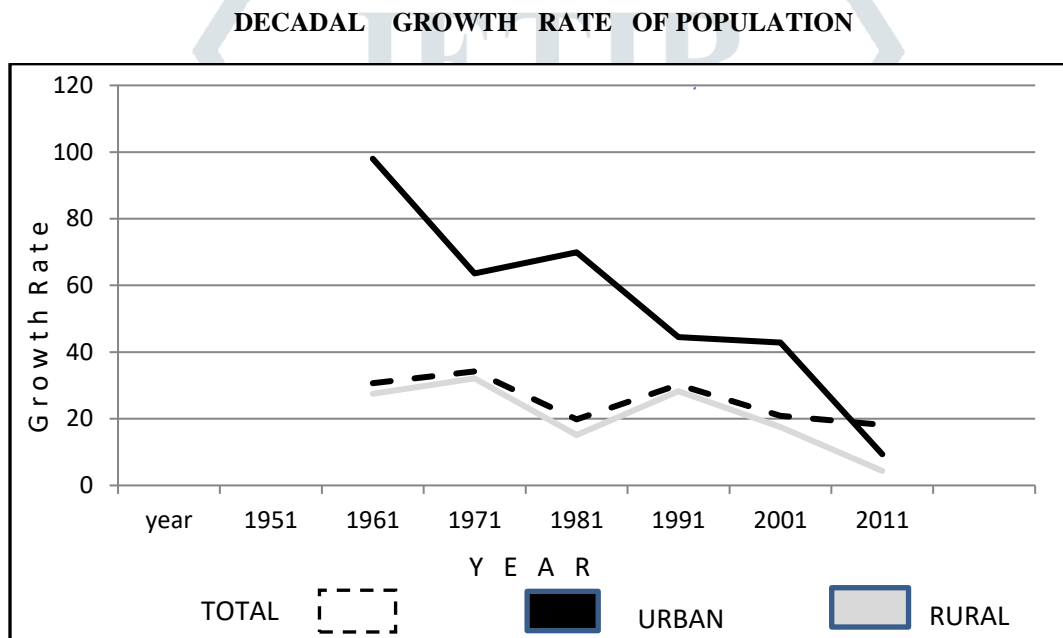


Fig-2

Data source: Census of India, 2011

3.5 Level of Urbanization:

Level of urbanization is the percentage of urban population to total population. The increase in this field in a slower rate in 1951 it was only 4.58 per cent. From 1971 to 1981 it was 11.99 per cent and 1991 to 2001 it was 15.72 per cent and in 2011 it was 25.57 per cent.

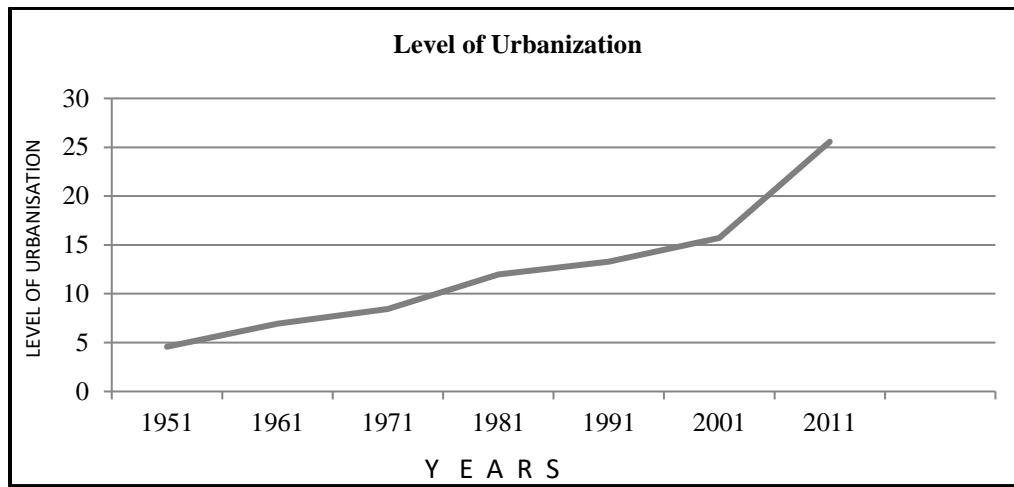


Fig-3

Data source: Census of India, 2011

Table-2: Level of Urbanization in the C.D. Blocks

Name of the Block	Level of Urbanization (2011)	No. of Census Town (2011)
Thakurpukur-Maheshtala	48.82	9
Budge-Budge-I	73.80	7
Budge-Budge-Ii	29.60	5
Bishnupur-I	12.04	4
Bishnupur-Ii	35.21	11
Sonarpur	20.08	7
Bhangar-I	8.28	3
Canning-I	40.43	8
Canning-II	4.43	1
Baruipur	27.08	12
Magrahat-I	24.36	8
Magrahat-II	28.29	8
Falta	9.37	4
Diamond-Harbour-I	13.45	4
Diamond-Harbour-II	1.76	1
Kulpi	5.84	2
Mandirbazar	11.70	3
Mathurapur-I	13.24	4
Jaynagar-I	17.60	6
Jaynagar-Ii	4.90	2
Basanti	1.97	1

Computed by the author

From the table-2 it may be observed that Level of Urbanization (LOU) is high on the vicinity of Kolkata. With the increasing distance LOU is decreasing. Budge-Budge 1 have very high level of urbanization that is 73.80 per cent, Thakurpukur- Maheshtala, Canning have moderate value of 48.82 and 40.43 per cent. Other blocks have lower than 40 per cent urban population.

3.6 Size classification of town:

By analyzing the size classification of town it may be said that, only two Municipalities (Rajpur-Sonarpur and Maheshtala) have population more than 1 lakh. Other municipalities are class II or class III towns. All the census towns are class IV class V or class VI type.

Table-4: Changes in Urban Units

Year	Municipalities	Census Towns	Out Growth
2001	7	14	2
2011	7	111	0

Source: Census of India

As the region is a backward one the number of urban unit is very few. In 2001 there were 23 urban units (Municipality-7, Census town-14, out growth-2). In 2011 there are 7 municipalities, 106 census towns. In 2011 all the census towns are not equally distributed in the C.D. Blocks. Baruipur have 12, BishnupurII have 11 and Thakurpukur-Maheshtala have 9 census town (Fig-6). Other Blocks have lower number of census towns. Some Blocks nearer to Sundarban have no census town.

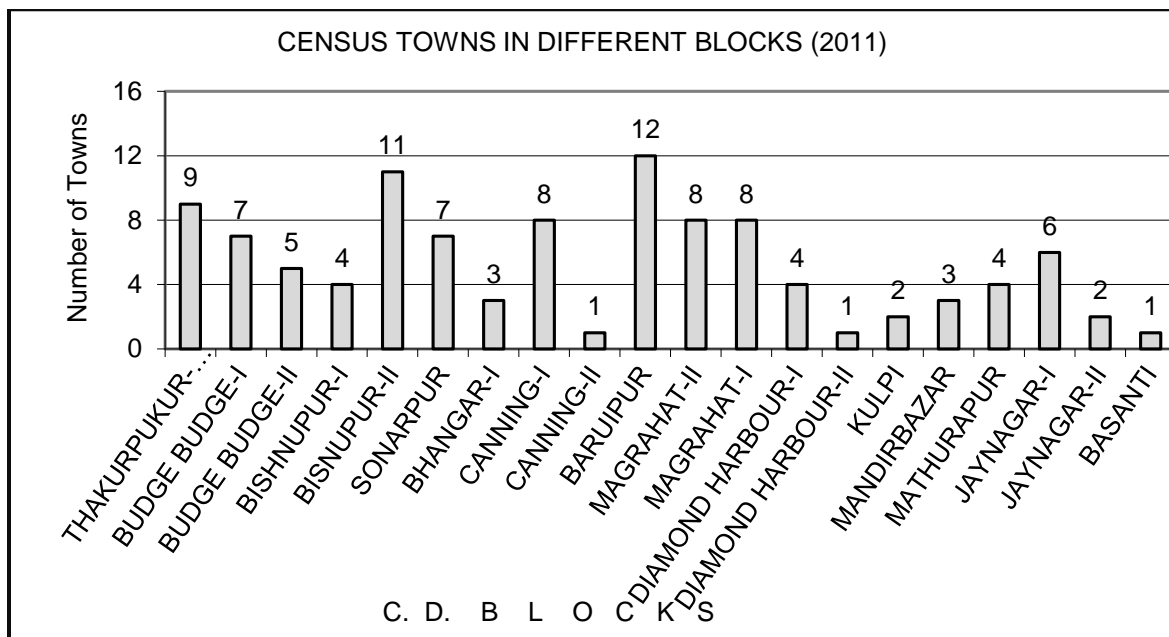


Fig-4

Data source: Census of India, 2011

3.7 Causes of Urban Growth: Presently this District has seven municipalities and 106 census towns. Out of this municipalities, five (Budge-Budge, Maheshtala, Pujali, Baruipur and Sonarpur) are located in the outer periphery of Kolkata Metropolitan Area and experiencing the urban sprawl. The reasons behind this sprawling are: a) Improved communication system with city core. b) High speed intra-city transit route c) Lower land value than the city core d) Flexible rules and regulations for land conversion. e) Lack of job opportunities in the hazard prone remote rural areas. f) Attraction of civic amenities.

The other two municipalities- Diamond Harbour and Joynagar-Majilpur have remote location. Diamond Harbour is a port and Joynagar-majilpur is a very old municipality and local business centre. The rate of growth of these municipalities is very slow because of lack of attractive job opportunities to the poor rural artisans. The other type of urban area, which are census towns are local markets and business area where people settled down for business purpose and better civic amenities than the villages.

3.8 Impact of Urbanization:

The impact of urbanization may be divided into two: 1) Impact on rural areas 2) impact on urban areas.

Impact on rural areas: a) Urbanization attracts the rural people to urban areas and rural-urban migration takes place. It is seen that in Baruipur and Sonarpur, majority of the people comes from interior of the district. Rural to urban migration also seen in Budge-Budge, Maheshtala and Pujali Municipality b) Crops, vegetables and fish transfer to urban areas comes from interior of the village and it is a occupation of the large number of rural people. c) For the supply of raw materials to industry in urban areas many small scale household industry have developed by Self Help Group in rural areas. A large part of marginal worker are engaged in Jari works, Shola works Muri making to fulfill urban need.

Impact on urban areas: Urbanization accelerates the economic growth through providing job to the skilled and unskilled labor force. b) Urban areas have high literacy rate, gender ratio and work participation rate than the rural areas. It is seen that municipal towns have

high literacy rate, work participation rate than the adjoining C.D. Blocks. Occupational structure is also different in municipal towns. (Fig-5 and 6) c) Recently Housing Industry is flourished in the District due to lack of space in Megacity Kolkata. Sonarpur and Maheshtala are more attractive in this respect.

Table-5: Literacy Rate and Work Participation Rate of Different Blocks and Municipalities

Name of the Block	Literacy Rate % (2011)	Work Participation Rate % (2011)	Name of the Municipalities	Literacy Rate % (2011)	Work Participation Rate % (2011)
Thakurpukur-Maheshtala	75.26	38.56	Maheshtala	76.90	36.36
Budge-Budge	71.77	36.63	Budge-Budge	76.80	33.92
Sonarpur	70.94	37.56	Sonarpur	85.40	39.19
Baruipur	66.42	35.63	Baruipur	89.40	36.28
Diamond-Harbour	64.84	33.56	Diamond Harbour	80.00	35.42
Joynagar-II	59.20		Joynagar	84.10	

Computed by the author

The negative effect of urbanization (Dasgupta, 1981) may be observed in the area under study. These are: a) Shortage of houses b) Inadequacies of civic amenities viz, power, potable water, health facilities, sanitation etc. c) Deterioration of urban environment due to traffic congestion d) Incidence of acute poverty in the slums and other squatter settlements.

IV OBSERVATIONS

It is important to note that the portion of workers engaged in manufacturing, service and non-farm sector has registered an upward trend and it has weakened the rural urban migration and it is one of the causes of slow pace of urbanization.

Changes in literacy rate, comparatively better infrastructure, and low vulnerability to natural hazards attract people (Giri, 1998) to migrate in urban area but because of lack of skill and specialized education they cannot settle in urban areas permanently. Often they enhance the size of labour force in unorganized sector (Dutta, 2009)

V CONCLUSION

Urbanization should be positive force of economic and social development in the District like South 24 Parganas. Establishment of large scale industries, extension of vocational education, occupational shift from primary to secondary and tertiary sectors, peoples' changing perception regarding civic amenities can make a pace in urbanization (Carter, 2010) otherwise number of census towns will grow more in the interior of the district.

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