MODERNISATION AND URBANISATION CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT: Urbanisation refers to the shift of population from rural to urban areas. There are numerous social benefits attributed to life in cities. In cities and towns, there are more job opportunities. creation of employment opportunities, technological and infrastructural advancements, improved transportation and communication, quality educational and improved medical facilities, and improved standards of living. Solutions to Urbanization, Building Sustainable and Environment-friendly Cities

KEY WORDS: Urbanisation, . Commercialization, Overcrowding, advancement, social benefits, employment opportunities, medical facilities, Sustainable, Environment-friendly

Urbanisation refers to the shift of population from rural to urban areas, the decrease in the proportion of people living in rural areas, and the ways in which society adapt to the change. It is predominantly the process by which towns and cities are formed and become larger as more people start to live and work in central areas.

In developing countries, urbanisation usually occurs when people move from villages to settle in cities in hope of gaining a better standard of living. The movement of people from one place to another is called migration.

The population move from rural to urban areas, enabling cities and towns to grow. It can also be termed as a progressive increase in the number of people living in towns and cities. It is highly influenced by the notion that cities and towns have achieved better economic, political, and social mileages compared to rural areas.

Accordingly, urbanization is very common in developing countries as more and more people have the tendency of moving closer to towns and cities to acquire privileged social and economic services as well as benefits. These include social and economic advantages such as better education, health care, sanitation, housing, business opportunities, and transportation.

The majority of people move to cities and towns because they view rural areas as places with hardship and backward with primitive lifestyles. Therefore, as the population move to more developed areas (towns and cities) the immediate outcome is urbanization.

This contributes to the development of land for use in commercial properties, social and economic support institutions, transportation, and residential buildings. Eventually, these activities raise several urbanization issues.

Various Causes of Urbanization

1. Industrialization

Industrialization is a trend representing a shift from the old agricultural economics to a novel non-agricultural economy, which creates a modernized society. Through the industrial revolution, more people have been attracted to move from rural to urban areas on account of improved employment opportunities. Industrialization has increased employment opportunities by giving people the chance to work in modern sectors in job categories that helps to increase the economic developments.

2. Commercialization

Commerce and trade play a major role in urbanization. The distribution of goods and services and commercial transactions in the modern era has developed modern marketing institutions and exchange methods that have tremendously given rise to the growth of towns and cities. Commercialization and trade come with the general perception that the towns and cities offer better commercial opportunities and returns compared to the rural areas.

3. Social Benefits and Services

There are numerous social benefits attributed to life in cities and towns which include better educational facilities, better living standards, better sanitation and housing, better health care,

better recreation facilities, and better social life in general and more people are prompted to migrate into cities and towns to obtain a wide variety of social benefits and services which are unavailable in rural areas.

4. Employment Opportunities

In cities and towns, there are more job opportunities that draw people from rural areas to seek a better livelihood. Therefore, a majority of people frequently migrate into urban areas to access well-paying jobs as urban areas have better employment opportunities in all developmental sectors such as public health, education, transport, sports and recreation, industries, and business enterprises. Services and industries generate and increase higher value-added jobs, and this leads to more employment opportunities.

5. Modernisation and Changes in the Mode of Living

Modernsation plays a very important role in the process of urbanization. As urban areas become more tech savvy together with highly sophisticated communication, infrastructure, medical facilities, dressing code, enlightenment, liberalization, and other social amenities availability, people believe they can lead a happy life in cities. In urban areas, people also embrace changes in the modes of living namely residential habits, attitudes, dressing, food, and beliefs.

6. Rural-urban Transformation

As localities become more fruitful and prosperous due to the discovery of minerals, resource exploitation, or agricultural activities, cities start emerging as the rural areas transform into urban areas. The increase in productivity leads to economic growth and higher value-added employment opportunities. This brings about the need to develop better infrastructure, better education institutions, better health facilities, better transportation networks, the establishment of banking institutions, better governance, and better housing facilities.

As this transformation takes place, rural communities start to adopt the urban culture and ultimately become urban centres that continue to grow as more people move to such locations in search of a better life.

Effects of Urbanization on Our Cities

1. Positive Effects of Urbanization

Urbanization yields several positive effects if it happens within the appropriate limits. Some of the positive implications of urbanization, therefore, include

a. creation of employment opportunities,

b. technological and infrastructural advancements,

c. improved transportation and communication,

d. quality educational and

e. improved medical facilities, and

f. improved standards of living.

However, extensive urbanization mostly results in adverse effects. Few of them are:

1. Housing Problems

Urbanization attracts people to cities and towns which leads to a high population increase. With the increase in the number of people living in urban centers, there is a continued scarcity of houses. This is due to insufficient expansion space for housing and public utilities, poverty, unemployment, and costly building materials which can only be afforded by a few individuals.

2. Overcrowding

Overcrowding is a situation whereby a huge number of people live in a small space. This form of congestion in urban areas is consistent because of overpopulation and it is an aspect that increases day by day as more people and immigrants move into cities and towns in search of a better life. Most people from rural or undeveloped areas always have the urge of migrating into the city that normally leads to congestion of people within a small area.

3. Unemployment

The problem of joblessness is highest in urban areas and it is even higher among educated people. It is estimated that more than half of unemployed youths around the globe live in metropolitan cities.

And, as much as income in urban areas is high, the costs of living make the incomes seem horribly low. The increasing relocation of people from rural or developing areas to urban areas is the leading cause of urban unemployment.

4. Development of Slums

The growth of slums and squatters in urban areas is more rapid due to increased cost of living in urban areas. Fast-paced industrialization, lack of developed land for housing, a large influx of rural immigrants to the cities in search of a better life, and the elevated prices of land is beyond the reach of the urban poor.

5. Water and Sanitation Problems

Because of rapid population increase in most urban centres, it is common to find there are inadequate sewage facilities. Municipalities and local governments are facing serious resource crisis in the management of sewage facilities. As a result, sanitation becomes poor and sewages flow chaotically, and they are drained into streams, rivers, lakes, or seas..

6. Poor Health and Spread of Diseases

The social, economic and living conditions in congested urban areas affects access and utilization of public health care services. Slum areas in particular experience poor sanitation and insufficient water supply which generally make slum populations susceptible to communicable diseases. Consequently people suffer from water-borne diseases like blood dysentery, diarrhoea, malaria, typhoid, jaundice, etc. Environmental problems such as urban pollution also cause many health problems namely allergies, asthma, infertility, food poisoning, cancer and even premature deaths.

7. Traffic Congestion

When more people move to towns and cities, one of the major challenges posed is in the transport system. More people means an increased number of vehicles which leads to traffic congestion and vehicular pollution. Many people in urban areas drive to work and this creates a severe traffic problem, especially during rush hours

8. Urban Crime

Issues of lack of resources, overcrowding, unemployment, poverty, and lack of social services and education habitually lead to many social problems including violence, drug abuse, and crime. Most of the crimes such as murder, rape, kidnapping, riots, assault, theft, robbery, and hijacking are reported to be more prominent in the urban vicinities. Besides, poverty-related crimes are the highest in fast-growing urban regions. These acts of urban crime normally upset the peace of cities/towns.

Solutions to Urbanization

1. Building Sustainable and Environment-friendly cities

Governments should pass laws that plan and provide environmentally sound cities and smart growth techniques, considering that people should not reside in unsafe and polluted areas.

The objective here is to build sustainable cities that adapt to the improved environmental conditions and safe habitats for all urban populations.

Governments should also encourage sustainable use of urban resources and support an economy based on the sustainable environments such as investment in green infrastructure, sustainable industries, recycling and environmental campaigns, pollution management, renewable energy, green public transportation, and water recycling and reclamation.

2. Provision of Essential Services

Urban stakeholders must ensure all populations within the urban areas have access to adequate essential social services namely education, health, sanitation and clean water, technology, electricity, and food.

The objective here is to provide and implement employment opportunities and wealth creation activities so that people can earn a living to pay for the maintenance of the services.

Subsidies can also be availed by the government to lower the costs of basic healthcare, basic education, energy, education, public transportation, communication systems and technology.

3. Creation of More Jobs

Through start-ups try to lessen the negative effects of rapid urbanization while at the same time conserving natural ecosystems, private investments should be encouraged so as to utilize natural resources and create more job opportunities.

Tourism promotion and the sustainable exploitation of natural resources can create more jobs for urban population. Subsidies and grants may as well be provided to foreign and private investment in environmentally friendly development projects that encourage job creation.

4. Population Control

Key stakeholders in urban areas must provide campaigns and counselling for effective medical health clinics and family planning to help reduce the high rates of population growth.

Medical health clinics oriented towards family planning options must be made accessible across the entire urban area with the objective of controlling diseases and population growth.

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