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“Urbanisation in Haryana: Trends, Patterns and Regional Disparities”

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ABSTRACT:

Urbanisation in Haryana reflects both the historical legacy of settlement planning since the Harappan period and the dynamic changes of the post-independence era. Initially slow, the pace of urban growth accelerated after the state's formation in 1966, influenced by industrialisation, infrastructural expansion and proximity to the National Capital Region (NCR). State institutions such as HUDA and HSIIDC, along with private developers, contributed to the rise of planned towns, though unplanned colonies also emerged due to political and economic pressures. Census data reveal a marked shift in Haryana's urban hierarchy, particularly in districts like Gurgaon, Faridabad and Panchkula, where urban populations exceed 50 percent. By 2011, Haryana's urban population reached 34.88 percent, above the national average of 31.16 percent, making it one of India's more urbanised states. Yet, regional disparities remain stark: while Gurgaon and Faridabad are among the fastest-growing urban hubs of India, districts like Mewat, Mahendragarh and Fatehabad remain predominantly rural with limited industrial growth. This paper analyses the trends, causes and consequences of Haryana's urbanisation, highlighting spatial imbalances, the role of industrialisation, migration and infrastructural development. It concludes that balanced regional planning and sustainable strategies are essential to bridge the urban-rural divide and manage the challenges of rapid urban growth.

KEYWORDS: Urbanisation, Haryana, Urban Hierarchy, Industrialisation, Migration, NCR, Regional Disparities, Census Trends

INTRODUCTION

The ancient time, India has witnessed a fast rise in the urban development and town planning since the period 'Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro' civilisation. This expansion has been going on since the period 'Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro' civilization. In the instance of the state of Haryana, where there has been ongoing urbanisation and development, this has been seen. This is attributable to both natural growth and the periodic movement of people from rural to urban areas that occurs throughout a variety of different time periods. During the first stage, the urban population in Haryana went through significant temporal and geographical shifts as it moved from one urban hierarchy to another urban hierarchy during the course of the many censuses that were conducted there. In November of 1966, both of these states merged to create Haryana, which was intended to be their single linguistic divide. The process of urbanisation was rather slow in its early stages; nevertheless, it underwent a period of fast expansion in its later stages. This contrasts with the first



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stage, which saw relatively slow development. The quickening pace of industrialisation in Haryana contributed significantly to the acceleration of the urbanisation process. In this context, in the "National Capital Region," the development organisations like the "Haryana Urban Development Authority" and the "Haryana State Industrial & Infrastructural Development Corporation" have played an important role to promote urbanisation in Haryana. This is the case in this context. In addition to these factors, the significant role played by the town and country planning department, as well as the significant role played by corporate urban estate developers like OMAX CITY, DLF, Parsavnath, Taneja Developers, Sun-City, etc. are some of important urban estate developers, significantly contributed to the acceleration of the urbanisation process in Haryana. During the many different census periods, a noticeable transition from one urban hierarchy to another urban hierarchy has been shown to occur on a recurring basis.

The redistribution of the urban hierarchy shows that there has been a major diversity throughout the course of various times since the foundation of Haryana. The redistribution of towns and cities that has taken place in part due to natural expansion and in part due to constant periodic migration from rural regions to urban areas. This process has taken place. The considerable role played by the state, as well as the significant role played by corporate entities involved in the construction of urban estates and infrastructure, considerably contributed to the state's steady urban growth. The fast expansion that has taken place in various regions of Haryana is due, in part, to the fact that several urban development authorities have been engaged in the process of developing towns and cities. On the other hand, there are several private real estate developers throughout Haryana who, in violation of the ordinances imposed by the urban planning department, have established a sizable number of unlawful colonies. These colonies may be found in a variety of locations. It was stated that unlawful colonies had formed in all of the districts and the reason for this is because certain political vested interests encouraged their development. Subsequently, all of these colonies have been regularised. In spite of the fact that some limitations and defects have been found from time to time, as a direct consequence, there has been a shifting of the urban hierarchy, with a total of six urban hierarchies for all of the districts, which are tabulated as follows:

The above-mentioned worked out tabulated census based numbers on changing trend of urban hierarchy indicates a periodic tendency of the changing pattern of appearing of new towns throughout various census periods. These patterns may be seen across the different census periods. The temporal shifts in the categorisation of towns exhibited a diverse tendency in shifting hierarchies throughout the several districts of Haryana. All six kinds of towns and cities reveal a variable changing tendency, which is dependent on the circumstances that are now present in the area and the way that the state's town planning bylaws are put into practice.

According to the results of the census that took place in 2001, the town of Gurgaon maintained its position as a class-I city, although the district of Gurgaon did not have any towns with a class-II



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status. This town's categorization category had a substantial shift as compared to its previous status as a class-III town, as was noticed. At this time, there were four towns that fell under this category. These towns were Sohna, Manesar, Pautodi and Heli Mandi. The other towns were moved to the IVth class town categorization. At this time, there were five towns that fit under this category. These towns are Badshahpur, Bhongal, Farukhnagar, Garhi Harsaru and Nuh. In conclusion, none of the town's properties fell into the fifth or sixth category of this town categorization system. According to the results of the census in 2011, the status of class-I city was maintained by the Gurgaon district. On the other hand, the Gurgaon district did not see the emergence of any class-II status towns. In the case of the class-III category, the categorization of the towns saw a substantial shift. The other towns were moved to the fourth class of towns' classification and there were now just four towns that belonged to this category of town classification. The four towns that did belong to this group were Sohna, Heli Mandi, Manesar and Pataudi. There were four towns total and they were named Badshahpur, Bhondal, Garhi Harsaru and Farukhnagar respectively. In conclusion, neither the fifth nor the sixth category of towns formed throughout the town categorization process.

Growth of the urban population in the years after the country's independence According to the census completed in 2011, there are a total of 28 states in India. One of those states is called Haryana and it is the only one in which the percentage of its population that resides in urban areas (34.88 percent) is slightly higher than the average for the entire country (31.16 percent) (Table 1). At the moment, Haryana is in ninth position among the states that have a percentage of their urban population that is higher than the average for the country. Despite the fact that the pace of urbanisation has been quite sluggish, notably during the pre-Independence era, the percentage of the people living in urban areas has been rapidly expanding, particularly during the time after the country gained its independence. The period from 1951 to 2011 was responsible for the addition of 78.5 lakh people to the state's urban population, accounting for 95.15 percent of the total 82.5 lakh that were added to the state's urban population between 1901 and 2011. Only in the most recent two decades, from 1991 to 2001 and from 2001 to 2011, were an additional 47,7 lakh people added to this total. Even though the urban population expanded by an astounding absolute number of 3.39 lakh people over the decade that ran from 1951 to 1961, the percentage of the population that lived in cities only climbed slightly, moving from 17.07 percent in 1951 to 17.23 percent in 1961. This absolute rise was approximately two and a half times as large as the overall increase in urban population, which was 1.32 lakh people, for the whole duration of the pre-independence era, which lasted for four decades (1901-41). Haryana saw a bustling decade of activity between the years 1961 and 1971. On November 1st, 1966, the state was granted its full statehood status. This resulted in a renewed sense of energy and excitement on the part of the general populace, as well as the bureaucracy and the leadership of the state. They demonstrated their revitalised confidence



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in the progress of the state. The expansion of administrative and developmental operations on a broad scale led to the formation of new urban centres. These new urban centres were characterised by a higher population density. Therefore, the rate of urbanisation in Haryana kept on picking up speed throughout the decade 1961-1971, when the state had a decadal expansion in its urban population of 35.58 percent. The rise in urban population over this decade was virtually the same as the entire urban population in the state in 1921, which was 48 thousand. In absolute numbers, the increase in urban population was 46.5 thousand people. During the years 1971–1981, the rate of urbanisation in the state continued to pick up speed as a consequence of the expansion of administrative and developmental operations on a wide scale, which led to the establishment of new administrative centres. The urban population in the state in 1951 had a total of 9.6 lakhs, meaning that the subsequent rise of 10.5 lakh people throughout this decade was a little bit higher than the entire urban population in the state at that time.

Districts that Have a Larger than Average Proportion of their Residents (Above 50 per cent)

In Haryana, there are a total of 21 districts; however, only three of those districts are characterised by a large concentration of urbanisation. The district of Faridabad has been found to have the greatest percentage of its inhabitants living in urban areas (79.44 per cent). The only city in Haryana with a population of one million or more people is Faridabad, which is also renowned as the industrial heart of the state. Its position in the proximity to the National Capital of New Delhi, the in-migration of people from other areas of the nation and the construction of a significant number of industries are the possible reasons for the greatest degree of urbanisation amongst all of the districts of the state. With a degree of urbanisation that is 68.82 percent, the district of Gurgaon is the second most urbanised district in the state of Haryana. Gurgaon is the city with the most rapid growth in the state. This is due to its close proximity to the National Capital and more specifically to the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi. Additionally, Gurgaon has developed into the leading centre of information technology in the state, which has also contributed to its growth. The percentage of the population living in urban areas in the Gurgaon district rose from 35.58 percent in the year 2001 to 68.82 percent in the year 2011 over the decade that began in 2001 and ended in 2011. In no other district of the state has there been seen such a remarkable rise in the amount of people living in urban areas. The Panchkula district, which is located in the far north of the state, has the third largest urban population (54.87 percent), according to the records. This is because of its proximity to Chandigarh, the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana; over-spilling of urban population from Chandigarh; favourable policies of the state government to develop Panchkula as planned city like Chandigarh; shifting of Govt. offices from Chandigarh to Panchkula by constructing huge buildings in the city; location of very old cantonment at ChandiMandir; and ultimately its development as city of multi-functional character, such as administrative, commercial and residential.



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Districts with a population distribution that is about in the middle (25-50 per cent)

Eleven of Haryana's twenty-one districts have a population that is mostly urban, while the other ten districts have a rural demographic majority. These are the districts of Panipat (45.97 percent of the population), Ambala (44.38 percent), Rohtak (42.02 percent), Yamunanagar (38.94 percent), Hisar (31.73 percent), Sonipat (30.52 percent), Karnal (30.27 percent), Kaithal (30.27 percent), Rewari (25.82 percent) and Jhajjar (25.39 percent), in decreasing order of the proportion of urban population. Four of these 11 districts have a percentage of their population that is urban that is higher than the state average. These districts are Panipat (45.97 percent), Ambala (44.38 percent), Rohtak (42.02 percent) and Yamunanagar (38.94 percent) (34.79 per cent). A moderate but relatively high proportion of the urban population in these districts may be associated with a location along the major transport routes like Grand Truck Road (N.H. 1) and N.H. 10, a high concentration of industries in these districts and the development of cities or urban agglomerations located in these districts as urban centres of multi-functional character, which are the district headquarters. The remaining seven districts are said to have a percentage of their population that is more rural than the norm for the state (34.79 per cent). However, their locations along major transport routes, such as Hisar along National Highway 10; Sonipat, Karnal and Kurukshetra along National Highway 1; Rewari along National Highway 8; and Jhajjar along National Highway 71A; the development of their district headquarters as urban centres of multi-functional character; and the establishment of small and medium scale industries, especially agro-based industries are the factors which favoured a moderate proportion of urban population in these districts.

Districts with a Smaller than Average Proportion of the Total Population (Below 25 per cent)

In the state of Haryana, there are a total of 21 districts; seven of them districts have a small percentage of residents living in metropolitan areas. In western Haryana, these are the cities of Sirsa (24.75 percent), Fatehabad (19.04 percent) and Bhiwani (19.80 percent); in central Haryana, Jind (22.82 percent); and in southern Haryana, Palwal (22.65 percent), Mahendragarh (14.43 percent) and Mewat (11.38 percent). Because of the social conservatism of the Muslim people that predominate the scene in this region, the district of Mewat had the lowest percentage of its inhabitants living in urban areas (11.38 percent), which was recorded. The districts of Mahendragarh (14.43%), Fatehabad (19.04%) and Bhiwani (18.97%) come in second, third and fourth, respectively, after it. These districts are characterised by a highly subsistence nature of agriculture, which absorbs an overwhelming majority of the people as agricultural labour; a low level of industrial development; a low level of diversification of the economy; a less developed transportation and communication network; and their peripheral location with respect to the national and state capitals. Additionally, these districts are located in areas that are geographically distant from both the national and state capitals. As a result, these are the regions that are economically underdeveloped as well as industrially underdeveloped.



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CONCLUSION:

The trajectory of urbanisation in Haryana demonstrates a shift from slow pre-independence growth to rapid post-1966 expansion, driven largely by industrialisation and proximity to Delhi. Gurgaon, Faridabad and Panchkula showcase high levels of urban concentration due to IT hubs, industrial estates and administrative spillovers. Meanwhile, moderately urbanised districts such as Panipat, Ambala, Rohtak and Yamunanagar reflect the influence of transport corridors and agro-based industries. Conversely, districts like Mewat, Mahendragarh and Fatehabad remain underdeveloped, revealing significant regional disparities in urban growth. Urbanisation in Haryana has brought benefits such as improved infrastructure, educational institutions, healthcare and employment opportunities. However, it has also triggered challenges including illegal colonies, environmental pressures, uneven distribution of resources and widening socio-economic inequalities. To ensure inclusive and sustainable urban development, Haryana needs a balanced urban policy focusing on: Strengthening infrastructure in underdeveloped districts, Promoting small and medium-scale industries beyond NCR, Enforcing strict urban planning regulations, Expanding affordable housing and Integrating environmental sustainability in urban growth models. In conclusion, Haryana's urbanisation story is one of contrasts—rapid metropolitan growth alongside lagging rural hinterlands. Addressing these disparities is critical for the state's long-term economic and social stability.

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