

# Growing Importance of The Study of Urban Geography

## Abstract

Of the various branches of Geography, Urban Geography is growing more and more popular day-by-day. The reason of the popularity of Urban Geography is the expansion of the urban area and the emergence of the various urban problems resulting in demographic imbalance. Urban geography is the specific branch of Geography that studies the urban geographical aspects. Though it came into existence much later, still its popularity confirms it to be very important branch of Geography.

Urban geography supplies important information about the urban population, urban area, density of population, and urban demographic structure and demographic features. The importance of Urban geography is especially for those who want to understand the atmospheric and environmental conditions in the cities, and to have a serious concern about the trends of the urban population.

The paper serves as a comprehensive study of the growing importance of the Urban Geography to geographers and scholars, as it reflects the major aspects of the urban geographical features.

The findings reveal that the urban environment is in the grip of pollution; urban population which is marked by density is responsible for it; the pollutants present in the air are caused by the urban population and its materialistic modes of living; the study of urban geography is essential to everyone.

**Keywords:** Importance, Urban, Sprawl, Environment, Crisis, Pollutants, Urbanization, Population Explosion, Density, Pollution, Demographic Imbalance, Threat

## Introduction

A specific field of science which studies the lands, features, inhabitants, and phenomena of the Earth and planets is called Geography. Geography is an all-encompassing discipline that seeks an understanding of Earth and its human and natural complexities.

There are two branches of Geography, namely, human geography and physical geography. Human geography studies people and their communities, cultures, economies, and interactions with the environment by studying their relations with and across space and place, while physical geography studies the processes and patterns in the natural environment like the atmosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere, and geosphere. Urban geography deals with the study of urban settlements within the framework of their geographical setting. Warf (2000) identifies six elements that form the base of urban geography. These are –

1. The Built environment
2. Human –environment relationship in an urban context
3. Social geography and social patterns in an urban context
4. City systems and functions: Macro scale
5. City systems and functions: Micro scale
6. Urban planning, policy and design

A region surrounding a city where the inhabitants have nonagricultural jobs, and which is characterized by a density of human structures like houses, commercial buildings, roads, bridges, and railways, is called an urban area.

The census reports of the various decades reveal a remarkable growth of the population in India, and the Indian cities. Between 1947 and the 1981 census is doubled, and by the 2001 census exceeded one billion. The increase between 1991 and 2001 was noted more than 182 million.

The urban environment of India reveals an embarrassing pollution caused by numerous pollutants contributed by the urban population that is

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increasing horribly. The unplanned settlements, waste management, natural disaster preparedness, traffic management, and degradation and pollution of water and land resources and air quality are some of the urban issues that need to be sorted out at the earliest possible in the interest of the people and land.

#### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To study and interpret Geography and its characteristics
2. To make a reflection on the various branches of Geography
3. To discuss the Urban Geography and its features
4. To reveal the importance of Urban Geography in the understanding of the prevailing urban demographic trends
5. To discuss the geographical environment in the urban area
6. To explore the pollutants in the urban environment
7. To reveal the causes of imbalance of population in the urban area
8. To explore the effects of the population imbalance in the urban area
9. To find a way ahead having a balance in urban population
10. To discuss the cause and effect relationship of the issue under consideration

#### **Review of Literature**

Colin Dunn (2010) pays attention to the coverage of prime agricultural areas, loss of wildlife habitat in the urban areas. The author is bold enough to conclude that cities are going to devour agricultural lands and forests all with impunity, driven by a perceived need for more space. The other negative environmental effects include the pollution associated with increased car use, increased runoff due to the quantity of land under pavement, and the loss of habitat and a local decline in biodiversity. The adverse environmental effects also result into a number of social ills that are seen in the form of loss of community spirit and values, higher costs of providing infrastructure, higher taxes, and a number of other concerns at the feet of urban sprawl.

Aneesh Mishra (2012) emphasizes the necessity of Master Plan for the urban development and for the facilitation of the urban population, as it guides, controls and manages urban growth in planned manner. The study finds that Master Plan is very helpful in developing countries like India. Considerable progress of Master plan shows that rather than questioning relevance of master planning approach in Rajasthan, positives steps to strengthen institutions, and greater involvement of public in planning processes is essential for preparation of a good master plan and its implementation on ground level.

Vittorio Gargiulo, Adele Sateriano, Rosanna Di Bartolomei and Luca Salvati (2012) make a focus on the issue of urban sprawl, as a result of which cities are expanding over more and more area, and causing natural disasters, such as earthquakes and floods. The study concludes that more or less, urban sprawl is responsible for natural disasters and for population imbalance.

T. Cheng (2012) lays emphasis on the geographical perspectives that play a vital role in PHC delivery, and for those engaged in informatics and managing population-level care, understanding key geographic information systems methods and terminologies are important as is gaining greater familiarity with institutional aspects of implementation.

Sunil Sankhala & B. K. Singh (2013) finds urban sprawl too threatening as a barrier to the sustainable development in the major cities of Rajasthan. The findings reveal the disfiguring condition and shape of Jaipur city of Rajasthan and reveal that Jaipur has expanded towards south and western directions in uncontrolled manner, engulfing used productive cropped areas. Slums and associated health hazards, Traffic congestion, pollution and health hazards, and reduced social interactions due to low-density suburban development are some of the embarrassing features of Jaipur urban area.

S. N. Mohapatra, Padmini Rani and Monika Sharma (2014) mirror the significance of Remote Sensing and GIS techniques in capturing the geomorphological features of the cities and other geographical areas. The findings reveal that the residual hills, denudational hills and plain areas, natural drainage network are affected due to the urban expansion. Hence, taking into account the microgeomorphological features of the cities, proper measures should be taken for the improvement of future urban scenario.

Seema Rani, Ritu Sharma, Rajeev & Vinay Matri (2015) defines urban sprawl as the spreading out of a city and its suburbs over more and more rural land at the periphery of an urban area. The study generalizes urban sprawl as a global phenomenon mainly driven by population growth and large scale migration. In developing countries like India, urban sprawl is taking its toll on the natural resources at an alarming pace.

Walid Oueslati, Seraphim Alvanides and Guy Garrod (2015) conclude that although the variables generated by the monocentric model explain a large part of the variation of artificial area, their explanatory power for modelling the fragmentation index is relatively low.

Linda McCarthy (Dec 19, 2016) delineates the picture of the population growth in the world, and says that by 2010, the world's urban population approached nearly 3.5 billion, and it is projected to rise to nearly 6.3 billion by 2050. Urban geography can help us understand urbanization trends and their expression in urban spatial structure, have a better appreciation of the economics of what goes on within cities, recognize the interdependencies involved in local, national, and international economic development in an increasingly globalized world, get a framework for conceptualizing.

#### **Hypothesis**

1. Geography education is the demand of all the ages and all the places on the globe
2. All the branches of Geography are significant in themselves

3. Urban Geography helps in developing an understanding of the urban demographic structure
4. The study of urban environment falls in the scope and subject matter of Urban Geography
5. Urban environment is facing much crisis, as there are various pollutants that are disfiguring it
6. There are several factors that are contributing to the pollution of the urban environment
7. The urban environment in India is passing through hard times, and it needs some immediate solution for the balancing of the urban population
8. Urban sprawl forms a major factor of the disfiguration of the urban environment in the cities
9. Population imbalance in Indian cities, particularly in Rajasthan, is because of the process of urbanization that is bringing the rural population of India to the various Indian cities
10. The urban demographic structure is defective these days and can be balanced through Master Plans.
4. In India, the process of urbanization which is forcing the rural people to leave their homes in villages and to settle down in the cities
5. Urban environmental pollution can be reduced in a planned way through Master Plan that can facilitate the life of the urban population
6. Master Plan can bring about the population-balance
7. Slums, crime, transportation problem, accommodation problem, expensive life style and unemployment are some of the urban features that are faced by a common man
8. The root cause of environmental pollution is the geographical imbalance of population, and it destroys the beauty and shape of the urban space
9. Above 300 air quality index (AQI) in all the metropolitan cities indicates that life in cities is too difficult
10. The industrial sector which encompasses a large number of small and large scale industries, is responsible for the AQI status in India
11. NCR is the most affected urban area in terms of environmental pollution, as it has caused there the circumstances of emergency, and it is difficult to survive successfully there
12. Urban sprawl which is an inseparable part of urban structure affects the environmental conditions
13. Urban sprawl is not only a serious factor of environmental crisis, but also the most burning issue of the urban areas in India as a whole
14. Population growth in cities leads to slums and urban sprawl which finally results into natural disasters
15. The major forms of pollution known to the urban areas in India as a whole include the air pollution, water pollution, noise pollution, chemical pollution and cultural pollution
16. Environmental threat in the urban space can be faced successfully only through the planned shaping and reshaping of cities and towns, and through the check on the fast growing population.

**Method**

Theoretical in approach and design, the paper is a comprehensive discussion and study of the need and importance of the study of Urban Geography that can be helpful in understanding the urban demographic features and urban environment that needs to be protected and sustained. For the study, the following steps were acted upon-

1. Brooding over the various relevant topics for the purpose
2. After much consideration, selection of the title 'GROWING IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY OF URBAN GEOGRAPHY'
3. Determination and setting of specific objectives of the study
4. Study of the related literature to grab the spirit of the theme
5. Capturing of the 10 relevant studies that reveal the various aspects of the theme
6. To review the related literature
7. To classify the studies on the basis of the aspects discussed in them
8. To make the analysis of the contents in the selected studies
9. To arrive at certain findings on the basis of the thorough study of the research papers selected for the purpose

**Findings**

1. Urban Geography is a major branch of Geography, and its importance is increasing as the time is advancing
2. The knowledge of Urban Geography is essential to develop an understanding about the urban geographical features
3. The urban environment is changing horribly revealing a drastic pollution caused by several pollutants by the urban population

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