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**IMPACT OF URBANIZATION ON ENVIRONMENT: A CASE STUDY OF
COOCH BEHAR DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL**

MAFIZUL HAQUE

Research Scholar, Ph.D. in Geography,

CMJ University, Jorabat, Meghalaya, India

ABSTRACT

Although India is one of the less urbanized countries of the world with only 27.78 percent of population living in towns, India is facing a serious crisis of urban growth at present time whereas urbanization has been an instrument of economic, social and political progress, it has led to serious socio-economic problems. Urbanization is a process that leads to the growth of cities due to industrialization and economic development. The population is growing at the rate of about 17 million annually which mean a staggering 45,000birth per day and 31 births per minute. If the current trend continues by the year 2050, India would have 1620 million populations. Due to controlled urbanization in India, environmental degradation has been occurring very rapidly and causing many problems like shortage of houses, water quality, excessive air pollution, noise, dust and heat, problems of disposal of wastes, etc. which causes serious health problems.

The sheer magnitude of the urban population, haphazard and unplanned growth of urban areas, and a desperate lack of infrastructure are the main causes of such a situation. The rapid growth of urban population both natural and through migration, has put heavy pressure on public utilities like housing, sanitation, transport, water, housing, sanitation, transport, water, electricity, health, education, and so on. Poverty, unemployment and under employment among the rural immigrants, beggary, thefts, dacoities, burglaries and other social evils are on rampage. Urban sprawl is rapidly encroaching the precious agricultural land. The population of India had already crossed the 285 million marks by 2001. By 2030, more than 50 percent of India's population is expected to live in poor environment.



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The impact of all this growth on space, environment and quality of life will be, to say the least, tremendous. The provision of infrastructural facilities required to support such large concentration of population is lagging far behind the pace of urbanization. As a consequence, the urban environment, particularly in large cities, is deteriorating very rapidly. Some important environmental problems are discussed below:

Over Exploitation of Natural Resources

Due to high population density and expensive life style, the rate of consumption of natural resources (e.g., water, energy, fossil fuel, forest products etc.) is very high in urban areas. There is also misuse of natural resources whose immediate compensation becomes difficult. Few acute problems of urban areas are scarcity of drinking water especially the ground water, scarcity of forest products, power cut due to excessive use of electricity etc.

Air Pollution

The air of urban areas gets polluted due to a lot of anthropogenic activities, flying of large number of automobiles, industries etc. These activities release pollutants like carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, oxides of nitrogen, oxides of sulphur, hydrocarbons, vapours of organic compounds, particulates, and toxic metals etc. which are capable of including a number of health hazards

Noise Pollution

The noise produced from automobiles, vehicles, social functions, industries etc. cause noise pollution in urban areas which causes psychological and physical ailments.

Unusual Rise in Temperature

The unplanned construction of large buildings in urban areas absorbs solar radiation and, in the afternoon, these emit heat radiations increasing the climatic pressure. As a result, year 2015 was the hottest year from last years. Cities often receive more rain than the surrounding countryside since dust can provoke the condensation of water vapor into rain droplets.