Module Structure

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Description of the Module

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<td>The module discusses how modern cities in the West developed and how the city was understood by early social thinkers. Further, the module discusses how under the rubric of urbanism and urbanisation aspects of growth, structure, settlement pattern, and everyday life in city have been explained. It also looks at key concepts of the Chicago School, a few cultural theorists, Neo-Marxists, and Los Angeles School. Towards the end, the module focuses on dimensions of Indian urbanisation and urbanism.</td>
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I. The City: A common sense idea

The moment we use the word, City, certain places, images and descriptions become apparent. We immediately call places like Mumbai, New Delhi, New York, Shanghai, Los Angeles, London or Paris. We immediately associate these places with some physical features such as closed settlement, skyscrapers, shopping complexes, multiplexes; and, we also say that these cities have some arrangements for drinking water, sanitation, health, recreation and entertainment. We also draw a physical boundary of each city. Therefore, primarily a city is a physical entity. Apart from being a physical entity, a city is also a functional entity where economic, political, and administrative activities are performed. In cities, large volume of trade, commerce and financial services are performed, offices of business groups, government offices and major units of administrative bodies are also located which sustain educational and employment opportunities. Apart from being a physical or a functional entity, a city is also a social entity. The cities are heterogenous places where people from various social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds live in close proximity. We may also say that cities are also “a locus for social reproduction, comprising the myriad interlaced behaviour and activity patterns of its inhabitants and communities, each of which exhibit idiosyncratic preferences and lifestyle characteristics” (Pacione 2002). Innovations in science, technology and communication are experienced first in the cities and then transported to other parts—be it steam engine, or automobile, or Internet or mobile phone.

Every place grows in space, density, facilities and complexity over time. Each of the city we just named has its own history of growth (spatial and demographic) and development. Therefore, in a temporal sense, every city has a history as well. During the last couple of centuries, most of the cities have grown in size and with the arrival of immigrant groups have grown more complex. On several parameters, cities are placed at another pole of continuum in which rural regions (village) are located at another pole. One can access several facilities that may not be accessible in rural areas. In fact, the very idea of city stands in complete opposition to a village. Therefore, we also describe a city that is not rural.
However, one may ask: why are we so fascinated with cities? Why do we attach so much importance to the cities? In fact, the importance of cities are growing everyday. Partly, the importance of city is attached with the modernist dream and human aspiration to control nature, excel in every sphere of life, and a better management of human life. Cities are the crucible of modernists' dreams. Modern cities were the places where modern is imagined, shaped and translated. Often, the growth of modern cities is directly associated with modernisation, growth, development and progress. Nevertheless, cities exhibit different experiences for city dwellers. Some enjoy advancements in city whereas several others simply suffer and struggle to manage hardships. We also describe a city on the basis of a different quality of life. These are a few ways in which we conceive a city. However, a city is much more a complex idea than what we have just discussed.

You may now ask: How do cities grow? How have modern cities came into being? How do economy and technology influence the shape and culture of cities? Does city culture also influence economic and political structures? How do cities deal with the growth of population? Why do people migrate to cities? What is the social position of an individual in a city? What kind and how communities develop in cities? What happens to social and community life when people from different social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds come to inhabit a city? What kinds of attitudes and behaviours do cities nurture among the individuals? How do people look at social relations in cities? In what ways urban life empower or disenfranchise an individual? These are a few questions that the rest of the course/paper, Sociology of Urban Transformation, will be dealing with. This module focuses on two ideas—urbanization and urbanism— that try to encompass a variety of topics.

However, we need to understand terms— city, urban, urbanization and urbanism. As in most cases, social science does not offer uniform, universal and unique definition of these terms. On the basis of different parameters nation-states, administrations, policy makers and planners use these terms differently. Nevertheless, we need to ask: Are there specific cultural patterns, economic, political and administrative structures that make cities unique and different from rural areas? What kinds of settlements are called urban? What are different parameters for considering
any place as urban? (For detailed description for the definition of urban in India, see Module 2.1 titled Defining the Urban in India).

II. Urbanization and Urbanism

Urbanization and urbanism form central trope around which urban social theory tries to discuss growth and development of cities. As Chandavarkar (2009) says, the study of cities have been motivated by two concerns. First, urbanization was taken as an index of economic development and social change, not only for its part in the dissolution of feudalism in the medieval West but also as a measure of modernization in the Third World today. The second concern in urban studies has related broadly to culture. This has been interpreted not simply in terms of the culture of its inhabitants but more generally the urban as a social space is also associated with a state of mind (Chandavarkar 2009: 210-211).

One can understand urbanism as the patterns of behaviour, relationships, modes of thinking that characterizes urban dwellers while urbanization is primarily understood as a process of movement of people from rural areas to urban areas by the virtue of which population as well as spatial boundary of a city grows. Often, this growth occurs due to increased economic activities which triggers migration or pulls people from rural areas to urban areas. Earlier, it was common to consider rural-urban migration an essential cause of urbanization. However, in recent times, urban population growth is also influenced by urban-urban migration. In earlier times, urban growth in Kolkata, Mumbai and Delhi might have occurred due to rural to urban migration of manual labour who moved from villages to cities to work in manufacturing sector. In recent times cities such as Hyderabad and Bangalore (also other cities like Mumbai) are witnessing urban population growth due to movement of people from other cities. This population growth is mainly a result of migration of skilled workers to work in service sector.

Urbanization is also quantified. It is measured around: level of urbanization i.e. ratio of urban to rural population; and, rate of population growth in urban areas. The level of urbanization indicates urban population share with respect to total population of a nation while rate of urbanization indicates annual growth rate of urban population. Taking these two parameters together, one can say that cities have been growing and probably will grow further in the future.
The growth of population in cities give rise to various issues such as shortage of residential spaces, shooting up of residential and office rents, outward and upward growth of city, growth of slums, increased pressure on infrastructure, heavy traffic and road congestions, and many other environmental problems. The population growth also triggers pressure on basic amenities such as water and power supply. In effect, these also affect the quality of life in urban areas. Therefore, urbanization has had important consequences for many aspects of social, political, and economic life (Kleniewski and Thomas 2011).

**Emergence of modern cities in Europe:** Archeologists often claim that city as a space existed ever since human beings stopped sedentary life and began settled life especially with the beginning of horticultural, pastoral and agricultural practices. They consider size and density of population, street layout, existence of some central place. Based on remnants, the cities in places such as Indus Valley, Mesopotamia, and so on are constructed. In this essay, we are not concerned with the existence of cities in the antiquity or the nature of urbanisation and urbanism at archeological sites. We are concerned here with modern cities that formed, grew and expanded in modern times partly due to scientific and technological advancements, industrial revolution, colonisation and imperialism, and modern capitalism. In doing so, we are concerned how these changes structured modern cities and how social thinkers responded and understood modern cities.

Kingsley Davis (1955) aptly points that every human settlement, from the past, cannot be called urban. There is a specific nature of cities that grew with modernity. In modern cities, new methods of commerce and trade developed; new economic structures grew; new work sites started; new jobs and modes of employment created; new population groups arrived; new industries and factories were established; and new social groups developed new cultural patterns and new social structures. “The urban world is a provocative terrain to contemplate central experiences, structures, and problems of the social world, and how they have transformed over the last two hundred years” (Lin and Mele 2013:1). There was something new developing in the modern cities that bothered social thinkers.

The growth of modern cities and thereby urbanization is closely associated with the idea of modernization, industrialization and capitalism which started in Europe from around mid-eighteenth century. However, urban scholars have argued that for urbanization to take place, a
threshold should be achieved in agriculture which leads to surplus production which further assists in the growth of new markets and new economies. With the advancements in science and technology, new machines developed which sufficed growth of industries and thereby industrialization. Industrialization means a shift in production mechanism and techniques away from agriculture to industries where production is done at mass scale. The early industries were labour intensive and required a large number of people. People also saw incentives of working in industries rather than in agricultural field. Therefore, both pull and push factors played crucial role in migration of people to the cities. Once arrived in city, people required places to live which in turn gave rise to demand for housing, sanitation, drinking water and so on. The rate of population growth at that time was very high which the cities could not manage. There was lack of sanitation, crime rates were high, various diseases were prevalent and mortality rate was high. The working and living conditions were poor. In 1801 urban population in Europe was only 17% which rose to 35% in 1851 and again to 54% in 1891 (Davis 1955). This rise in population illustrates the rate of urbanization. However, industrialization alone cannot explain the nature and scale at which urbanization was experienced. A range of other determinants need to be considered, such as capitalist spurt of commerce and underlying profit motives, increase in financial services, cities serving as nodes for intercontinental commerce and so on, also influenced the growth of cities. The urban growth, physical as well as functional, was facilitated by development of public transport systems. Due to the lack of housing facilities around industries and factories, the workers/labours settled down at far away places. In such situation, public transport assisted commutation which lead to the expansion of city boundaries. This brief and cursory description provides a broad sketch of the growth of early modern cities.

Social Scientists believed that the modern cities have assumed a different character due to changes in the modes of production. Based on this criterion, Sjoberg talks about urban topologies in terms of preindustrial cities and industrial cities. For him, preindustrial cities have base in agricultural practices and characterized by low social mobility and less social differentiation whereas industrial cities have diverse economic opportunities and have high degree of social differentiation and specialized division of labour. Similarly, Robert Redfield classifies cities as Orthogenic (a city of moral order and unitary folk culture) and Heterogenetic (a city of technical order that gives priority to economic growth). Hoselitz differentiates cities as Parasite (has a dampening effect on economic growth) and, Generative
(the city acts as a centre of change and stimulates economic growth). The early social thinkers considered social and psychological changes in European society that developed in urban areas due to industrialization and capitalism. Thinkers such as Marx and Engels, Ferdinand Tonnies, Emile Durkheim, George Simmel, Max Weber, W.E.B.DuBois were concerned with modern cities and each of these thinkers tried to explain urban social world, urban personalities and urban social relations. The early thinkers were disturbed by the sordid nature of modern cities, its anomic nature, its alienating atmosphere and a lost ‘ideal’ community that characterized premodern human life.

**Marx and Engels** analyse industrialization and capitalist system and talk about urban labour, working conditions and their relationship with the bourgeoisie (the capitalist class). They believe that preindustrial societies were generic but with the rise of modern city a shift has come from barbarism to civilization with which people gain productive specialization. For them, capitalist system need to be transformed into socialist/communist system to realize the full growth of free and independent human beings. For them, capitalist system, which perpetuates in the city, generates inequality and thus is the reason for alienation and conflict.

**Ferdinand Tonnies**, a German sociologist, was concerned with the shift in social structure of city. For him, rural life was characterized by *gemeinschaft* i.e. community feeling and ties that develop around families, kin groups and neighbourhood and have face-to-face relationship. While *gesellschaft* characterizes city life which is mechanical and leads to disunity, individualism and selfishness. Similarly, **Emile Durkheim**, a French sociologist, looks at social solidarity. For him, *mechanical solidarity* characterizes pre-modern societies which refers to social bonds constructed on likeness and largely depends on commonalities. While modern societies exhibit *organic solidarity* which refers complex division of labour where many different people specialize in many different occupations and develop a social order based on social differences. For Durkheim, city inhabitants have greater freedom but impersonality, anomie and alienation from social world also develops. Among all the early thinkers, **George Simmel**, a German sociologist, understands the ambivalent nature of city. In his essay, *The Metropolis and the Mental Life*, he views city life in terms of social psychology. Simmel argues that nervous stimuli is a unique trait of modern city in which city dwellers are constantly
bombarded with sights, sounds and smells and from which the city dweller has to cope with. He focuses more on urbanism than on urbanization. In cities, the inhabitants learn to discriminate, become rational and calculating and develop a **blasé attitude**. The urban inhabitants are reserve and detached and respond with head rather than heart. But the city environment also provide liberating atmosphere which allows urban dwellers to free themselves from traditional social bonds. German sociologist, **Max Weber**, looks at the city as an ideal type. He argues that a city needs trade and commerce, legal system, political autonomy, self-sufficiency to protect itself and needs social associations where individuals could engage in social relationships. In his book, *The City*, he offers an ecological-demographic model of city and understands the city as an economic system. Weber considered features like closed settlement, large locality, lack of personal relationship and non-agricultural life as distinctive features of city. **W.E.B. DuBois** discusses centrality of race in the analysis of urban social structure. Lewis Mumford in his book, *The City in History*, visualised cities as a social phenomenon. He was not much concerned with city as a physical entity. Rather he discusses the organic relationship between human being and environment. Despite such deep insights, there was no unified trajectory or comprehensive analysis of urban social structure, urban settlement patterns, urbanization and urbanism before the establishment of Human Ecology or the Chicago School.

### III. The Chicago School

The Chicago School refers to a group of sociologists at University of Chicago. The scholars focussed on the city of Chicago and looked at the city as social laboratory where true human nature could be explored. The School offered several concepts to understand city. However, in this module we would discuss a few key ideas that rotate around land use, growth and structuring and urban way of life. Robert Ezra Park, Ernest Burgess, Louis Wirth are a few among many influential Chicago School urbanists who explored different dimensions of the city. With the publication of the book, *The City: Suggestions for Investigation of Human Behaviour in the Urban Environment*, the School announced its arrival (Dear 2005: 54). The city of Chicago which saw an unprecedented growth at that time served as an apt place for the Chicago School to investigate processes of modern urban growth. As prevalent at that time, the School offers a modernist view of city as a unified whole. The School looked at urban processes and conditions through subjective experiences of urbanites. As Micheal Dear (2002) writes that the works of
urbanists of Chicago School “is typically grounded in the individual subjectivities of urbanites, their personal choices ultimately explaining the overall urban condition, including spatial structure, crime, poverty, and racism” (2002:56).

The School propounded several influential ideas that formed foundational concept in understanding the evolution of differentiated urban social areas and urban way of life. Robert E. Park coined the term **Human Ecology** that attempts to apply biological processes/concepts to the social world and maintains that the city and city life are product of competition in the natural environment. The School also focused on the physical form of the city and human’s adjustment to the ecological conditions of urban life. The School was also influenced by Functional Theory and Social Darwinism and looked at city as social organism where different parts/segments are bound together by internal processes. For the Chicago School, the cities are similar to biotic/symbiotic environments in which inhabitants compete for paltry resources.
Among several ideas of the Chicago School, **Concentric Ring Theory**, propounded by Ernest Burgess, remained important for a long time in understanding the pattern the urban growth. The **Concentric Theory** proposes that the city grows outward in continuous residential circles around a Central Business District (CBD). The theory is “based on assumptions that included a uniform land surface, universal access to a single-centered city, free competition for space, and the notion that development would take place outward from a central core, Burgess concluded that the city would tend to form a series of concentric zones (see figure)” (Dear 2002). Burgess argues that CBD forms the core of city. Around CBD, a transitional zone develops offices and dwelling places by converting older houses. Beyond transitional zone, working population zone develops which contains residential units of working men and lower class population. A zone, Middle Class Zone, further develops where middle class have residences which has relatively new dwelling units. At the outer most part, the commuter zone develops which is separate from the continuous built-up area of the city.

In response to Burgess’ model, two more theories of urban morphology were developed by the Chicago School. **Homer Hoyt** in his **Sector Theory** noted the tendency of cities to grow in star-shaped rather than concentric form along highways that radiate from a center with contrasting land uses in the interstices. Hoyt stresses the importance of axial route ways that spreads the outward growth of the built-up area. Concentric Zone as well as Sector Theory are based on the idea that city develops around a Central Business District. However, **Harris and Ullman** argued that there are several subsidiary centres beyond the CBD. They called their theory as **Multiple**
**Nuclei theory** which proposed that “cities have a cellular structure in which land-uses develop around multiple growth-nuclei within the metropolis” (Dear 2002). These theories remained influential in urban social theory for most part of the twentieth century which also influenced planning as well as growth of cities. It should be noted that urbanization concentrates mainly on demographic growth and the Chicago theorists focused on ecological dimensions of cities. “Although both demographic and ecological aspects are important in any urban (or rural) study, in themselves, they do not enable us to understand the social institutions, interactions, activities, values and norms of the urban dwellers” (Rao 1974:4).

Another influential idea that came out of the Chicago School was ‘**Urbanism as a Way of Life**’. Propounded by Louis Wirth, it rests on the idea that cities have a distinctive mode of life. He stressed on the study of social aspects of urbanization. Wirth considers population size, density and heterogeneous social groups as the characteristic features of urban life. As discussed earlier, socio-cultural aspects of city was already been considered by theories but it was with Wirth's article that urbanism as an idea was established in urban studies. Tonnies, Durkheim, Simmel as well as Weber had already described patterns of social relations that develop in cities. “Louis Wirth carried the perspectives of the nineteenth-century European theorists in the American city of the early twentieth century. He drew greater attention than Simmel to the negative consequences of modernity, especially the status of Durkheimian *anomie* and… urban social problems and personality disorders” (Lin and Mele 2013:2). Unlike other theorists of the School, Wirth focused “on the constellation of personalities that collectively amounted to social organization and control” (Dear 2002). Wirth does not only take city as an isolated space but also considers how cities are linked with regional hinterland.

The School came under strong scrutiny towards the 1970s when scholars, often labelled as Neo-Marxists, used the political economy approach to understand social inequalities perpetuated in
the city. Harvey Molotch (1976) using the metaphor of “city as growth machine” explains the gap that exists in the description of city growth. He argues that the dominant ideas propounded by Chicago theorists obscures to consider actual realities of social structure that shapes the city and “decisions affecting land use, the public budget, and urban social life” (Molotch 1976: 326).

Scholars argued that “the capitalist economy structures opportunities that result in differential access by social group and location; and that economic changes influence political and social life. The research agenda that emerged from these studies pinpointed the phenomenon of economic restructuring as the key to understanding other urban issues” (Kleniewski 2005:2).

With the end of Fordism and beginning of flexible production, the labor employed in the erstwhile factories and industries were hard hit. In such situation, the modern character of cities with Central Business District transformed into several centers. Micheal Dear (2002) extends the critique of human ecology with his discussion of the Los Angeles (LA) School of urban studies. He suggests that the modernist hegemony of urban elites has given a way to a polycentric, polyglot and polycultural pastiche of urban development. Dear (2002) suggests that LA has superseded as a paradigm of urban growth in the twenty-first century (Lin and Mele 2013). The shift in production system also affected land use and value of land. The erstwhile factories were converted into gated communities, multiplexes and shopping malls. The right to use city spaces became a contested issue and urban land and city spaces became properties of middle class and the rich sections of society.

IV. Urbanization and Urbanism: Indian Context

Researchers and several agencies such as UNDP have projected that the developing nations will urbanize faster than the developed world in twenty-first century. The year 2007 was announced as a remarkable point in human history when more than 50% of world population lived in urban regions. The Census of India 2011 indicated that more than 30% of Indian population is living in its cities. Compared to Europe and North America, this proportion of urban population is still too low. But it is also related to the process of urban growth and development experienced in different places. Unlike Europe, India has a different experience with modern urbanization process which has a lot of influence due to its colonial history. Nevertheless, one of the
important aspects of Indian urbanization is that it has a continuous history of urbanization starting from Indus Valley to the present day, says Ramachandran (1991: 22). It is an arduous task to trace the entire history of urbanization and urbanism in India in this short introduction. As like our discussion on European urbanization, we will discuss major trends of urbanization in India that began with colonization.

During initial days of British rule, Indian cities did not experience much growth but later on several pre-existing cities were revived and new cities established. There were phases of growth of cities across Indian subcontinent. These ancient cities flourished around some specific functions though they also served other functions. Ramachandran (1991) writes,

Cities grew in number and size during during the Mauryan and post-Maurya periods (from 300 BC to AD 600), both in northern India as well as in the extreme South. Cities declined and were largely neglected during the post-Gupta period. In southern India, on the other hand, urbanization attained a zenith during the period from AD 800 to 1200. Urbanization on a subdued scale flourished in northern India under the influence of Muslims rulers…and attained a second climax during the Mughal period when many of India's cities were established. The British came to India at a time when India was perhaps the most urbanized nation in the world, and the early part of British rule saw a decline in the level of Indian urbanization. During the latter half of British rule, Indian cities regained some of their lost importance; further, the British added several new towns and cities, in addition to generating newer urban forms in the existing cities. The post-Independence period has witnessed urbanization in India on a scale never before achieved (1991: 22-23).

Further, Ramachandran adds, “The story of urbanization in historical times is a story of spatial and temporal discontinuities” (1991:23). He says,
The causative factors behind urbanization varied from time to time, leading to not one but several urbanization processes at different points in time. In the prehistoric period, urbanization was synonymous with the origin and rise of civilization itself, thus manifesting itself essentially as a cultural process. In the historical periods from ancient times to the British period, urbanization was inextricably related to the rise and fall of kingdoms, dynasties and empire, and thus in effect urbanization during this period was essentially a political process. In the recent times, urbanization has been associated with industrialization and economic development. In this sense, urbanization is essentially an economic process. (1991: 23)

The above excerpt indicates broad patterns and trajectories of urbanization in India. Ramachandran's description of cities essentializes different phases of urbanization such as growth of initial cities is associated as cultural process while later phases of urbanizations are associated with political and economic processes. He might be talking about dominant characters of cities at various points of time in history. But it is difficult to dissociate various processes that work together and give shape to cities. In modern times, as Ramachandran says, cities developed around economic processes. However, it needs to be recognized that economic processes feed into and fed by political and cultural processes as well.

Another dominant idea in considering urbanization in India is periodization of urban history: ancient as Hindu, medieval as Islamic and modern as British. There are major issues that need to be considered while tracing urban history, urbanization and urbanism in India. One, the periodization of urban history used in European history is highly problematic in Indian context and "prompts generalizations which may not be justified...also that there is no family resemblance between the colonial towns of North America and those of South Asia" (Gupta 2004:142). Annapurna Shaw(2012), in a different manner, discusses urban history in three phases: precolonial, colonial and postcolonial.

Rao (1974) highlights two important issues regarding studying urban social and cultural life. According to Rao, some scholars believe that majority of Indian population, around 70%, still live in rural areas. Therefore, there is no point in considering urban as a subject for investigation.
In addition, unlike Europe, there is no rupture in urbanization and urbanism in India. Urbanites in India are mostly migrants from rural areas who carry rural and traditional cultural practices to the cities. Pocock [(1960) 1974] argued that village India and urban centers in India are the “elements of the same civilization” (Rao 1974: 2). Nevertheless, urban India forms an important site for various social inquiries. Even though 70% population lives in villages but 30% population that lives in India is not insignificant. In absolute terms, this 30% population forms a substantial proportion of Indian population. Also, even if urban world is not similar to European cities but it is also not similar to Indian villages. On various counts such as family structure, caste values, religious rituals, economic practices, political affiliations display different modalities and these need to be explored. Rao (1974) rightly suggests that it is necessary to ask questions how traditional and modern interact and what are the emergent forms of social relations, behaviours, associations in urban areas.

As discussed earlier, urbanization is considered as an index of development, growth, modernization and social change. Urban was considered to be a new beginning in the civilizational history of human being. It was also thought that urban sites will help: in upward social mobility, in experiencing freedom, and in realizing modern values. In western context, urbanization produced a rupture with traditional system. In Indian context one may argue that there is no complete breakdown from the traditional structures and processes. But is also necessary to emphasize that cities have definitely modified traditions (for a more detailed discussion on such changes see Module 5.2 titled Dynamics of Caste in Urban India). Also, cities were imagined to be the crucibles of self-dependent India where one can overcome limitations exerted by traditional social structures e.g. caste system. Along this line of thinking, urbanization is considered to supplement modernization of India. Here, urban is a considered a nodal point that would influence social, economic and cultural changes in the villages (Chandravarkar 2009).

With the establishment of British rule, cities saw various changes in layout, administration, economic activities and cultural institutions. The colonial rulers introduced “many rule, regulations and practices that aimed to make Indian cities more manageable and legible to the British so that control over them would be easier” (Shaw 2012:12). The British administration
established civil lines and cantonment that marked a distinct area from the old indigenous city (Shaw 2012:13). The architecture of the cities changed, encroachment of land and regularization by paying fine, development of municipal authority, construction of public buildings are a few changes that Indian cities saw during British rule. During British rule several new cities developed e.g. Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai which served economic functions. Also a range of small hill towns (Shimla), industrial and canal towns were established. Introduction of railways and transportation system, establishment of communication channels, establishment of educational institutions and universities marked the growth of different kind of cities in India. The British rule on one hand was modernizing the Indian cities while on the other cities were experienced differently by different sections of Indian society. “This division was directly reflected in their residences—where the rich and poor lived in the city and how they lived” (Shaw 2012:16-17). The same is true even today. Therefore, even if India got Independence from foreign rule, it was unable to create an equitable and just society. This differentiation remains a reality because we still find squatters, pave dwellers and slums in cities.

As Shaw (2012) writes, with independence India saw a different phase when urbanization speeded up for a number of reasons. Refugees from East and West Pakistan, immediately after Independence, required new spaces due to which existing cities in Punjab, Bengal extended. Then towns such as Bhilai, Durgapur, Bokaro, Rourkela grew due to establishment of heavy industries. The modernist dream of Nehru was translated with the creation of city of Chandigarh. In post-liberalization era, the number of metropolitan cities have increased but along with it a lot of dualities have also developed. The horizontal and vertical expansion of cities, rise in number of residential complexes, gated communities, shopping malls, widening of city roads, depletion of basic services in inner city, creation of ring roads, flyovers and so on are a few features of current urban growth. The cities are being privatized in the name of beatification and sanitization. Slums, slum dwellers, poor are systematically ousted. Therefore, the current phase of urban growth offers a dual picture. Nonetheless, urbanization continues to be important. With the growth of neoliberal economic settlements, urbanisation continues to be critically important, it is also important to recognise that in some ways the rural/urban dichotomy is losing its salience. The boundary between rural and urban is increasingly blurred, and many of the traditional distinctions between urban and rural cultures, lifestyles and enterprises are eroding or
reforming (Brenner 2013; Kleniewski 2012; Lin and Mele 2013), more particularly when the importance of nation-state is eroding and cities are becoming important site for market activities and global capitalism.

V. Conclusion: The Urban Turn in India

Of late, scholars have started paying greater attention towards cities which is quite different from the ways in which cities were imagined, explained and discussed in India before liberalisation of economy in the 1990s. The imaginations about city in India were highly influenced by thoughts of Gandhi, Nehru and other nationalist leaders for whom the real India comprises of the villages which itself was influenced by the colonial knowledge about India. For the colonists, India comprised of self-sufficient village republics. Gandhi’s exhalation of gram swaraj is closely associated with colonial constructions of village republic. Gandhi considered cities as places of evil and corruption that takes away simplicity, authenticity and tampers the “inner spirit” of Indian civilisation. Nehru also shared the same vision but considered villages as sites of ignorance and backwardness. After Independence, this vision about Indian nation was also shared by social scientists, planners and administrators who approached cities as the site of several problems such as crime, violence, corruption, housing and so on. Cities, for a large part of post-independence Indian history, was approached and understood from this perspective. Gyan Prakash (2002) argues that the general trend (between 1940s to 1970s) was to treat cities as locations for a range of urban problems. The importance of city rested on the idea that cities are a seat of government, industry and commerce. This kind of imagination and approach obscured considerations about urban social life, urban social structure and urban way of living. Gyan Prakash further argues that such approach created an abstract image of the city which hindered social sciences to look at lived environment.

It is common to observe that most of the cities in India, as elsewhere, are now expanding and making connections with the countryside. There is a greater role of market and global techniques of governance and globalization in cities. The importance of cities are growing. In fact, as many commentators have argued, under globalization and neoliberal economic activities, the importance of nation-state is now being taken up by the cities where most of the market activities
are performed (Please refer to Module 1.2 titled Cities in the World System). In order to bring in more capital, finance and opportunities, the cities have seen a rapid advancement in urbanisation. It is in this overall context that Gyan Prakash places the "urban turn." He asserts that part of the reason for the emergence of the urban from the shadows has to do with globalization. At a time when neo-liberal forms are changing Indian cities fundamentally, it is all the more relevant and urgent to understand the city as society. Further, Gyan Prakash says that the modern city as a particular configuration of social relations and experience; that is, not just a site where politics and society happen, but itself an embodiment of, as well as the condition of possibility for, society. Therefore, it is an urgent requirement to read class, ethnicity, religion, economy, culture, and politics in the very texture of the city — in its built and institutional forms, and in the spaces and rhythms of everyday life (Gyan Prakash 2002).

Bibliography


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