Urban Action School 2023

Unpacking the Urban-Rural Continuum Towards Sustainable Futures for All

KILA

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Foreword

Amid India's rapid urbanisation, a notable transformation is unfolding – the emergence of intermediate settlements where the boundaries between rural and urban blur, giving rise to a 'continuum'. While this urban-rural continuum offers certain advantages, it simultaneously presents challenges that defy conventional notions of the urban-rural divide. The traditional mechanisms designed to address distinct urban and rural needs are insufficient in grappling with the multifaceted issues arising in this evolving landscape, spanning poverty, education, health, environment, and overall development.

Further, despite the blurred boundaries, geographical disparities persist between urban and rural landscapes. The process of urbanisation has failed to diffuse the fruits of economic growth. There are considerable differences in the availability of physical and social infrastructure, contributing to gaps in education attainment, livelihood opportunities and public services across rural and urban India. Moreover, traditionally seen as symbols of progress, cities have inadvertently become hubs of exploitation, inequality, and exclusion. The surge in urbanisation has heightened population density, resulting in challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, environmental degradation, lack of affordable housing and socio-economic disparities. Urban sprawl further exacerbates problems by encroaching on agricultural land and natural habitats.

In the face of global disruptions stemming from technological advancements, the rise of the informal economy, and the ongoing climate crisis, understanding the spatial realities becomes crucial for inclusive and resilient regional planning linking urban centres to rural hinterlands. The nuanced understanding of the urban-rural continuum and the persisting divide is critical for moving toward a future where sustainable development touches every aspect of the urban-rural continuum, ensuring prosperity for all.

The Urban Action School 2023 (UAS'23), on the theme "Unpacking the Urban-Rural Continuum: Towards Sustainable Futures for All", aimed at deepening the understanding of the urban-rural continuum's social, economic, cultural, political, and ecological dimensions. The course explored

fair, creative, and multidisciplinary approaches to unpacking this continuum and embedding equity in collective practices and actions. Discussions delved into the structures, spatiality, mobility, and identities shaping rural-urban dynamics, considering theoretical frameworks and critical concepts such as agrarian distress, migration, food security, public services, climate change and various regional growth models. Jointly organised by the Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA), Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS) South Asia, and ActionAid Association (AAA), the sessions took place from November 20th to 26th, 2023, at the Thrissur campus of KILA, with a field trip to local municipalities and a textile cluster.

This publication serves as an effort to document the cross-learning from the diverse pool of participants and course facilitators of UAS'23. We intend this document to serve as a guiding framework for stakeholder actions, fostering new collaborations and strategies for more effective interventions. We welcome your comments and suggestions to extend and enrich this ongoing conversation.

Sandeep Chachra
Executive Director
ActionAid Association

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Urban Action School (UAS) is a learning and reflection space for addressing the policy environment and furthering the debate nationally around issues relating to poverty, exclusion, livelihood, and justice from a wide range of disciplines. The success of UAS lies with the cross-pollination of ideas brought forward by the active participation of activists, practitioners, and scholars from all across the country. Our sincerest gratitude to all the participants of Urban Action School 2023 (UAS'23). We are also extremely thankful to all the course facilitators who engaged with the participants, shared their inputs and enriched the learning environment of UAS'23.

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Introduction

Traditionally perceived as a hallmark of civilisation and progress, we have long viewed urbanisation through the lens of European experiences, particularly the post-World War II resurgence. Since most perceived the process of urbanisation as a positive phenomenon, based on experiences in the Global North, this process in countries of the Global South was consciously driven by policies explicitly designed to mimic the forms of cities and urban systems in the Global North, attempting to invoke or accelerate modernisation through spatial planning and investment approaches. However, prevailing urban-rural and development theories derived from Global North examples don't fit the Global South, particularly in countries like India. Global South populations, considering their mostly common history of colonialism, large populations, and underdeveloped infrastructure, have different histories and patterns of behaviour than those typically seen in the Global North. There is a need to re-evaluate the urban-rural divide.

With the world's second-largest urban system, India is at a critical juncture in its economic transformation, with urban populations projected to comprise half of the country in the coming decades. Unlike Western experiences, the growth of Indian urban centres and urban populations has not been accompanied by a complete decline of the rural. Instead, cyclical migration in the country fuels urban growth, contributing to the blurring of the rural-urban boundary. Traditionally, urban development was oriented towards large cities. However, the growth rates in these cities have declined since the end of the last century, and faster growth is now observed in the peripheral areas. There is a significant growth in the expanse of urban agglomerations across India, with substantial increases seen in census towns - areas having urban features, but lacking any institutional setup such as a municipal body or other urban local body for governance. Much of this growth has occurred sprawl-like with low density and large spatial footprints.

The overall urbanisation process has undoubtedly generated positive externalities for India's development with increased access to physical, economic and social infrastructure. However, the pattern of urban growth has also produced adverse outcomes. Indiscriminate land use conversion has encroached upon open spaces and farmlands, jeopardizing local food supplies

and displacing agrarian communities. The transition from farm to non-farm employment, a marker of industrial growth, has largely resulted in precarious jobs lacking formal contracts and social security.

The rural-to-urban migration in India increasingly flows to city peripheries, reflecting a broader pattern of urban sprawl. Migrant workers, unable to afford housing in urban cores, settle in unrecognized residential areas on the city's outskirts, often without proper civic amenities. This uncontrolled growth at the city fringes exacerbates urban poverty, mirroring rural impoverishment within city systems. The COVID-19 pandemic-induced reverse migration highlighted the fluid rural-urban dynamic, as many urban workers returned to their rural homes, underscoring the blurring of the rural-urban divide.

Charting a Sustainable Path Forward

These ground realities challenge the traditional idea of a strict rural-urban divide and while we can debate the merits and drawbacks of the emerging continuum, it is paramount to recognize the Urban-Rural Continuum as an undeniable reality, inextricably linking urban and rural futures. Historical trajectories of urbanisation, particularly in the Global North, witnessed a demographic shift from rural to urban areas. This demographic shift observed in the Global North was first accompanied by the expansion of European colonial settlements across the Americas, Australia and South Africa. Population outflows at that scale are no longer possible in our world today. The second phase of the demographic shift occurred at the outset of the long boom, starting from the 1950s till the oil shock. In the face of the current jobless and "job-loss" development models, we do not see cities absorbing surplus populations from rural areas. In the current historical moment, for countries in the Global South to attempt at replicating urbanisation models as seen in the Global North is not only undesirable, it is impossible and also an ecological dead-end.

In India seasonal or circular migration remains a major shaper of urban realities, and in one sense marking the greatest of the urban and rural continuums. Millions of people, "pushed or starved out of agriculture", gravitate towards urban hubs in pursuit of improved livelihoods. These marginalised communities, the majorities of whom are Dalits and tribals, remained trapped in perpetual movement from cities to rural areas. Children and women disproportionately bear the brunt of these challenges. When work

becomes scarce, they move back to their rural homes. This pattern of migration reflects the struggle for sustainable livelihoods, with neither rural nor urban environments providing lasting solutions. The “long walk home” witnessed when lockdown was imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, represents a major castigation of our cities by informal workers, who preferred the severe challenges of finding their way back to their villages then stay back in the city.

Ensuring sustainable livelihoods for all requires holistic approaches that integrate conjoint development of urban and rural areas, promote sustainable livelihoods, and foster community resilience through inclusive and participatory processes. Planning systems must prioritise understanding the lived experiences of individuals, with a clear focus on enhancing overall quality of life.

Grounded efforts should be made to establish a universal labour guarantee, ensuring the fundamental right to work and an adequate living wage for both urban and rural populations. In the face of current pathways of economic development not demonstrating any major potential at labour absorption, we need to government support to promote feminist solidarity economies to promote collective social enterprise such that informal labour may build economies of scale, efficiency of operations and go up the value chain in terms of products and services being offered. Skill building and training courses need to accompany efforts in collaboration with civil society organisations to set up suitable forms of collective enterprise including cooperatives, producer companies and other innovative forms of collective social enterprise.

Informal workers, who constitute more than 90% of the working population live in informal settlements with insecure land tenure, inadequate infrastructure, lack of essential civic services, resulting in overcrowding, poor sanitation, and environmental degradation. Cities need to create a housing continuum which includes shelters, workers’ hostels, rental accommodation and housing with secure tenure and titles.

Access to essential services such as healthcare, education, clean water, sanitation, and reliable electricity is a significant issue for deprived urban communities. Informal workers lack social protection mechanisms, leaving them vulnerable to income fluctuations, job insecurity, and economic shocks. Health and well-being are significant concerns, as poor living conditions, limited access to healthcare, and environmental hazards contribute to health

disparities, infectious diseases, malnutrition, and mental health issues among deprived urban communities.

The focus should be on making inclusive cities, built on the 'Right to City' paradigm. Cities must embrace the "makers of cities" and their most vulnerable peoples – the destitute, the homeless and those discriminated against and exploited such as the migrants, refugees, Dalits, indigenous, minorities. It is imperative that cities provide opportunities that were previously denied to them due to their gender or social status.

Keeping in mind the shared futures, and that a complete demographic transition into urban areas is not on the cards, efforts must be made to revitalise the rural economies by ensuring sustainable livelihoods for farmers and agricultural workers through investment in rural infrastructure and agriculture, promoting sustainable farming. Equitable distribution of agricultural land should be the first step to empower rural households. Harnessing innovations in agriculture, infrastructure, and communication can bridge the divide between urban and rural areas, fostering economic growth and enhancing quality of life for all.

Embracing the urban-rural continuum facilitates the development of more inclusive and comprehensive policies that address the diverse needs of communities along the continuum through a unified view that harmonises policy frameworks, ensures community empowerment, and harnesses technological advancements. Efforts should be aimed at evolving integrated solutions that promote sustainable development, enhance access to services and opportunities for the marginalised communities and foster resilience in both urban and rural areas, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and sustainable future.

Overview of the Publication

The Urban Action School 2023 (UAS'23) aimed to further the social, economic, cultural, political and ecological understanding of the urban-rural continuum. With the broad theme of "Unpacking the Urban-Rural Continuum: Towards Sustainable Futures for All", the course welcomed participants from diverse fields across India, including academicians, practitioners, researchers, and policymakers—with their backgrounds spanning sociology, social work, urban planning, law, ecological and gender studies. Over seven days, UAS'23

facilitated intensive discussions and insights to unravel the intricate dynamics between urban and rural spaces, gathering experts, policymakers, and stakeholders to delve into the blurred lines, changing ecosystems, governance structures, and the impact on marginalised communities. Participants engaged in discussions, fieldwork, and policy ideation, culminating in a reflective session focused on charting a way forward. This publication aims to capture the valuable insights and knowledge exchanged during the week-long course.

The first unit, "Urban Rural Divide: Blurring Boundaries in the Indian Context", explores the evolving relationship between urban and rural areas in India. With rapid urbanisation altering traditional distinctions, the unit analyses the drivers, trends, and consequences of this transformation. By exploring the dynamics of urban growth, challenges in regional development, and the unique case of Kerala, the unit provides a comprehensive overview of the complexities shaping India's urban and rural spaces, as well as the emerging urban-rural continuum.

The second unit, "Industrialization & Urbanization: Interconnections and Divergence in the Global South" and it delves into the intricate relationship between industrialization, urbanisation, and societal development in the Global South, with a particular emphasis on India. It traces the historical evolution of Indian urban centres, critically examines conventional developmental stages through the lens of industrialization, and investigates the diverse manifestations of industrial expansion within the urban-rural continuum. By shedding light on the complexities and nuances of urbanisation in the Global South, the unit provides valuable insights into how urbanisation occurs, with or without industrialization.

The third unit, "Navigating Vulnerabilities in the Continuum", examines the various vulnerabilities within the urban-rural continuum that affect communities and regions differently. These include migration dynamics, food security issues, and the impacts of climate change. It also addresses the unique challenges related to the urbanisation taking place in the frontier states of northeast India.

The fourth unit, "Communities at the Cusp", focuses on the communities who are the most vulnerable in light of the changing urban-rural dynamics. It discusses the role of unorganised workers in shaping the urban-rural continuum and explores challenges such as agrarian distress and access to

public services for marginalised groups, particularly tribal communities. It provides valuable insights into navigating vulnerabilities and fostering inclusive development in the continuum of urban-rural dynamics.

The fifth unit, "Planning for Sustainable Regional Growth" explores the approaches to planning for sustainable regional growth within the urban-rural continuum. It emphasises the need to consider the interconnectedness of urban and rural areas and discusses strategies for achieving balanced growth dynamics. The unit also highlights the importance of people's participation in governance processes in the changing landscape.

The final unit, "Future of Urbanisation and Sustainable Development" looks towards the future trajectory of urbanisation and its implications for sustainable development, focusing on the need for inclusivity in the continuum of progress and ensuring that no community is left behind.

Unit 1
Urban Rural Divide: Blurring Boundaries in the Indian Context

Urban Growth in India: Trends[1]

India, the home of the world's second-largest urban community, has experienced a significant growth in urban population, escalating from 114 million in 1971 to an estimated 470 million in 2021. Forecasts predict that the bulk of global urban population growth between 2021 and 2050 will be concentrated in a select few nations, including India, China, and Nigeria, accounting for 35% of the expansion[2].

Projections indicate that India is on track to reach a 50% urban population share by 2050. However, in contrast to the global trend where over half the world became urbanised in 2008, India's pace of urbanisation and urban population growth has remained relatively low, even among South Asian countries.

The urban-rural divide in India intensified during the colonisation era, manifested in a stark contrast between urban and rural areas at independence. Within urban zones, data on town classification by population size from 1900s to 2011 highlights a gradual shift, with a rising percentage of the urban population getting concentrated in Class

1. Based on the lecture and presentation at Urban Action School 2023 by Dr. Amitabh Kundu.
2. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision. 2019.*

I towns and a subsequent decline in the population share of smaller towns. This shift saw a substantial increase in the population residing in Class I towns from a quarter in the 1990s to over two-thirds by 2011, causing a contraction in Class II - VI towns. Notably, while the number of Class I towns grew, fewer new smaller towns emerged, impacting the connectivity and linkages provided by small and medium-sized towns to rural hinterland. A substantial 23.5% of India's urban population resides in cities with over 5 million inhabitants, surpassing the global average of 15.5%. This top-heavy structure poses challenges such as elevated infrastructure costs, regional disparities and threat to sustainable development.

Interestingly, in the past one and a half decades, the rural urban divide has gone down. This can be attributed to the growth in the peripheries and emergence of a large number of census towns. Census Towns, identified based on specific criteria set by the Census of India, denote areas as urban if they meet thresholds such as a minimum population of 5,000, population density of at least 400 persons per square kilometre, and a workforce of at least 75% of the male main working population engaged in non-agricultural pursuits. In the 2011 Population Census of India, over 2,800 new towns were identified (against the average figure of less than 500 in the previous Censuses), resulting in over 30 percent as in situ urbanisation,, with only 15.5% attributed to migration. The 2011 census data also reveals encouraging shifts in several states where the top-heavy urban structure has diminished, allowing small and medium towns to witness increasing shares.

An analysis of the 2022 Periodic Labour Force Data echoes this narrative, highlighting a substantial surge in rural employment. Manufacturing sector employment particularly saw a boost in rural areas due to constraints in urban space, as reported by NITI Aayog. An interesting and positive development is that rural income growth has, for the first time, surpassed that of urban income. However, the growth in manufacturing and industrial areas is primarily observed

in the peripheries of the urban centres. This distinction is crucial, as the surge in economic activities is not uniformly distributed across all rural areas but is concentrated in the peripheries, not extending to remote areas.

The metropolitan peripheries are the areas of concern as studies have highlighted the phenomenon of "degenerated peripheralization," emphasising a concerning trend where development indicators plummet beyond a 10-kilometre radius from major cities[3]. This discontinuity in the gradient of development around urban centres results in a decline in quality of life, sometimes worse than rural areas as these peri-urban areas are characterised by poor physical and social infrastructure, absence of appropriate planning bodies, severe economic inequities and a high ecological footprint. Despite this, government missions and civil society activism seems more concentrated in rural and urban sectors, often overlooking the critical issues in the urban periphery.

The existing disparities in access to public services between urban, peri-urban, and rural areas continue to persist. Initiatives like the Swachh Bharat Mission have successfully addressed deficits in rural toilet infrastructure, but disparities persist. While in electricity and drinking water, disparities between urban and rural areas are relatively marginal, a substantial gap exists in indicators of sanitation, LPG availability, education and health. Urban areas face their own set of challenges, with inequalities prevalent even within different tiers of urban centres, spanning employment, healthcare access, and educational opportunities. Inequalities in access to employment and basic amenities, is notable across the size class of urban centres Small Census towns face severe deficiencies across multiple dimensions due to lack of support from state agencies.

3. Kundu, Amitabh. "Dynamics of growth and process of degenerated peripheralization in Delhi: An analysis of socio-economic segmentation and differentiation in micro-environment." *Scaling urban environmental challenges: From local to global and back,* 2012, pp. 156-179

Despite the emergence of new urban centres and some acceleration in rural urban migration in recent years, the pace of urban expansion in India has been relatively restrained due to stringent criteria for identifying new census towns and restrictive measures in incorporating peripheral areas within urban limits, besides COVID-19. The World Bank Satellite data based on built-up area and geographical continuum, calculated 52.4% of the population in the country already living in 'urban' setting[4]. World Bank projects Indian urban population would officially cross the 50 per cent level much before 2050. However, the estimated level of India's urbanisation by 2050 is 48% only, based on the projected figure of 39% in 2036 by the government of India, This underlines a need for reconsideration of the discrepancies and their alignment, using the observed macroeconomic data.

Recognition of the burgeoning development in the peripheries and the imperative to integrate these areas into urban planning has become increasingly important. The World Bank's 2015 observation underscores the challenge India is facing in tackling the problem of "messy urbanisation" around major cities[5], as also remote backward areas, marked by subaltern urbanisation rather than planned development[6].

India's urban landscape has indeed witnessed remarkable positive shifts in recent years but, addressing the challenges posed by evolving peripheries remains pivotal for sustainable and equitable development.

4. Lall, Somik V., Lebrand, Mathilde Sylvie Maria & Soppelsa, Maria Edisa. "The Evolution of City Form: Evidence from Satellite Data," *Policy Research Working Paper Series 9618,* World Bank, 2021.

5. Ellis, Peter, and Mark Roberts. *Leveraging urbanization in South Asia: Managing spatial transformation for prosperity and livability*. World Bank, 2015.

6. Denis, Eric and Marie-Helene Zerah. *Subaltern Urbanisation in India: An Introduction to the Dynamics of Ordinary Towns*. Springer, 2017.

Changing Patterns of Urbanization for Balanced Regional Development[7]

Ever since the National Urbanisation Commission Report in 1988, cities have been referred to as 'engines of economic growth'. By enabling capital and workers to interact closely, these urban centres generate an increase in productivity through several channels, collectively characterised by agglomeration of economies. Globally, over 80% of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is generated from cities, while in the context of India, despite occupying a mere 3 percent of the nation's land, urban areas contribute about 63% of the GDP[8].

However, the prevailing concentration of economic activity within cities doesn't inherently add up to true development; it rather exemplifies an accumulation of resources. The evolving landscape witnesses a surge in the concentration of industry and industrial support systems—banking, stock exchanges, and insurance companies—symbolising the regulation of daily life through the management of capital, with urban areas serving as focal points for capital accumulation. There's a prevalent notion among some scholars that capitalism, as a concept, is rooted in 19th-century industrial logic. The advent of technology challenges the necessity for physical clustering, redefining the traditional notion of cities as machines, born from the industrial revolution. The transition from industrial capital to the dominance of electronic capital marks a significant shift fuelled by innovative technological changes, altering the fabric of urban areas. This transformation heralds a disruptive paradigm where our control over change is seemingly slipping away, a defining characteristic of contemporary urban centres.

7. Based on the lecture and presentation at Urban Action School 2023 by Prof. KT Ravindran.

8. NITI Aayog. *Cities as Engines of Growth.* 2022. https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2022-05/Mod_CEOG_Executive_Summary_18052022.pdf

There's an argument posited by radical scholars that contrary to the perception of cities solely as centres of growth, they function as hubs for surplus generation and exploitation. Within these urban domains lie stark realities of spatial marginalisation, marked by the corporatization of cities, deprivation of social amenities, inaccessible formal housing, income insecurities, and immense regional imbalances. The COVID-19 pandemic served as a litmus test, unveiling the gaping urban-rural divide. The abrupt lockdowns triggered a mass exodus of people, exposing the inherent inequities within cities and the lack of security for workers who are the real builders of cities.

For cities to genuinely serve as engines of growth, their role transcends mere concentration; they must forge symbiotic links with regional settlements. By 2050, a staggering 6 billion people, roughly 69% of the world's population, will call cities their home. This unprecedented urban growth surpasses anything seen in history, challenging traditional planning and development approaches. The evolution from hierarchical clustering to networked constellations of cities is now transitioning further towards linear, transportation-driven networks, signifying a major shift in urban development. This transition marks a pivotal moment where movement emerges as the new engine of growth.

In the context of networked constellations of cities, a structured hierarchy and interconnectedness among cities and their surrounding rural areas is witnessed. Resources, human capital, and wealth flow predominantly towards cities, sustaining the urban-centric model. On the other hand, linear, transportation-driven networks introduce infrastructure-based corridors that redefine the relationship between urban and rural spaces. This shift has the potential to blur the urban-rural divide, possibly leading to the emergence of new urban agglomerations, nested within the rural.

Linear connectivity emerges as the key factor driving these engines of growth. This change is not solely a demographic shift; it's a crucial determinant of economic progress. The trajectory of urbanisation significantly influences economic growth. Danny Rodrik's concept of premature deindustrialization[9] sheds light on how developing nations overly reliant on global markets through major cities might face economic slowdowns due to global uncertainties impacting their economies. When cities engage with smaller towns, leveraging local demand as envisioned by Sustainable Development Goal 11, they can bolster growth. However, overreliance on the global capital market and the global city system poses risks, potentially resulting in premature deindustrialization and a slowdown in urban growth rates. Therefore, cities should act as catalysts for growth by linking with regional settlements.

Cues can be drawn from regional planning initiatives like those in Andhra Pradesh, where efforts have been made to distribute development across different regions and communities, emphasising balanced regional plans[10] . Three possible approaches on the question of a new capital were explored, namely, a greenfield location in which a single/super city is created, expanding the existing urban settlements and finally a distributed development. The last was adopted. It was found that there is no need for a 'single super capital city' for the state in this new age of communication system where physical distances will have no role in running a government. Amongst the alternatives proposed by the Sivaramakrishnan Committee, the chosen alternative sought to decentralise governance by establishing three capital zones: Amaravati for legislative functions, Visakhapatnam for executive activities, and Kurnool for judicial functions. From a spatial planning

9. Rodrik, Dani. "Premature deindustrialization." *Journal of economic growth,* 21 ,2016, pp. 1-33.

10. Joshi, Bhanu et al. *Report of the Expert Committee on the New Capital for Andhra Pradesh. Expert Committee, Ministry of Home Affairs,* 2014.

perspective, this tri-capital zone model envisioned a more equitable distribution of resources, development, and opportunities across diverse geographical areas within the state. A pivotal advantage of decentralised development lies in the accelerated pace of mobility and communication, both physical and virtual, contributing significantly to balanced, equitable progress in the state.

Cities can take the lead in upliftment of the entire regional system. The essence of genuine urban development lies in the harmonious integration and balanced growth between urban centres and their surrounding regions.

Kerala's Urban-Rural Continuum[11]

The urban-rural continuum in Kerala paints a picture of development closely tied to geographical features and historical trends. Kerala's narrow landscape, characterised by backwaters, wetlands in the South, laterite-rich highlands has facilitated the growth of high-density settlements along natural corridors. This linear geography, combined with a well-connected road and railway network, has blurred the boundaries between urban and rural areas, reshaping the traditional understanding of these divides.

This continuum is marked by a series of zones – the coastal area, midlands, and high ranges – all linked by a network of approximately 40 rivers flowing east to west, hosting ancient ports at their estuaries. The result is a linear infrastructure of roads and railways, creating a continuous belt of cities and smaller settlements interspersed with agricultural lands and it is this disposition of infrastructure that blurs the lines between urban and rural.

11. Based on the lecture and presentation at the Urban Action School 2023 by Mr. Rajesh T.N.

Over the years, Kerala has witnessed rapid urbanisation, particularly between 2001 and 2011. Coastal regions have transformed almost entirely into urban areas. The number of towns and urban centres has significantly increased, indicating a six-fold rise in urban areas, not solely due to in-migration or natural population growth, but largely attributed to areal reclassification.

The state's growth has predominantly centred around health and education, lacking a strong industrial or agricultural revolution. Urbanisation has predominantly fuelled a service and tourism-based economy without a robust production sector to support it. Additionally, the planning process is heavily influenced by politics, with alternating leadership focusing on different aspects of the economy—one party emphasising generation while the other focuses on distribution.

The settlement pattern in Kerala is notably different, primarily due to the cultural inclination to reside in one's homeland, coupled with a shared emphasis on education and health. While this setup is often perceived as desirable, given its minimal traffic congestion and pollution, critical issues arise. The state lacks a solid economic base that aligns with the service sector economy it heavily relies on. Housing preferences across income groups demand larger spaces, further impacting land use and availability.

Hence, even though the state has witnessed significant urbanisation, the population distribution within these urban areas reveals a unique pattern where while the core urban areas show a slight increase in population density, the overall density of urban areas decreases. This is due to the addition of outgrowths with lower population density to the urban core. There's a necessity for a certain level of dispersion, but excessive spread encroaches upon sensitive areas, leading to undesirable conversions. Approximately 49% of the urban population is concentrated in the low-lying coastal region, 45% in the agricultural

midlands, and 6% in the environmentally sensitive highlands. This expansion has affected rural areas, increasing their population density while only marginally impacting urban density.

This expansion has also resulted in a significant increase in the per capita cost of basic amenities like water supply, electricity, and sanitation, surpassing even the expenses incurred in cities like Delhi or Mumbai. Most development occurs along transport belts, altering the characteristics of rural spaces. The pressure of urbanisation has squeezed rural areas, diluting their distinctive ambiance. Moreover, events like the Kerala floods underscore the urgency to halt urban sprawl and focus on developing an economic base linked to local communities. To address these issues, Kerala's State Urbanization Report has highlighted the need for compact urban development, re-densification of core areas, and low-intensity development in intermediary zones.

In recent years, a rural-urban continuum has emerged across different regions of the country, influenced by unique factors, distinct from those observed in Kerala. This trend manifests through the expansion of urban industrial networks, connecting not only rural areas but also smaller towns surrounding major cities and urban corridors that delve into rural hinterlands, as is discussed in the subsequent Unit.

Unit 2
Industrialization & Urbanization: Interconnections and Divergence in the Global South

Genesis and Growth of Indian Urban Centres[12]

The contemporary Indian city is not a mere product of recent urbanisation but an intricate tapestry woven over centuries of continuous civilization. The genesis and growth of Indian cities can be traced through the lens of pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods, each marked by unique influences, architectural styles, and social dynamics. Cultural assimilation and hybridization have played a pivotal role in shaping the historical legacy of Indian cities, reflecting the diverse and multi-layered nature of Indian civilization.

The earliest chapter in the evolution of Indian cities dates back to the pre-colonial period, around 2500 BC to 1700 BC, marked by the emergence of the great cities of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa in the Indus Valley. These cities exhibited advanced urban planning with right-angled streets, planned sewage systems, and remarkable drainage systems, showcasing a Bronze Age sophistication. What is intriguing about these cities is the absence of a ruling class or managerial elite, challenging conventional notions about the relationship between urbanisation and inequality. The egalitarian nature of the Indus Valley Civilization highlights the role of collective action in building non-residential structures.

12. Based on the lecture and presentation at Urban Action School 2023 by Tikendar Singh Panwar (with inputs from Dr. Veena Naregal).

Around 1000 BC, urban settlements flourished in the Gangetic Basin, with cities like Kashi, Ayodhya, Ujjain, and Taxila taking centre stage. These cities, characterised by palaces, forts, and temples, saw the dominance of the Varna system in shaping social, economic, and political life. Apart from kings and rulers' other groups with financial and social authority also developed during this period. They comprise corporate groups like guilds and traders' groups, land owners, nuns and monks and donations were made to religious institutions. Approximately 60 urban settlements, each occupying 50–300 hectares, showcased the diversity and complexity of urban life during this period.

The Mughal period ushered in a more urban-based economy, witnessing the flourishing of cities like Agra, Old Delhi, Surat, and Ahmedabad. The landscape was marked by new architectural structures such as mosques, tombs, colleges, bazars, and serais. The city was surrounded by thick walls and gateways and urban sprawl was seen outside these walls. The concept of Mohalla's also developed during this period and people migrated from different parts of the country to the city core.

Pre-colonial Indian cities thrived on informal agreements between neighbours, fostering a communal ethos that defied conventional hierarchical structures. The absence of a clearly defined ruling class challenged prevailing notions about urban development. Social coding, a set of informal norms governing interactions, played a pivotal role, ensuring order and cohesion within these urban centres. Within this framework, trade and commerce flourished as driving forces of growth and sustenance, forming the backbone of the vibrant urban culture of the time.

The colonial period, spanning nearly 200 years, brought about transformative changes in Indian cities, driven in part by the 1857 uprising. It reshaped urban areas, marking the dominance and imprint of British authority on Indian soil. The echoes of this period can still

be traced through the architectural remnants and social structures in present-day India.

One of the defining aspects was the segregation between civil and military lines within cities. This segregation was a physical manifestation of power dynamics, with the civil lines housing administrative offices and residences of officers, while the cantonments accommodated the military. The planned construction of these areas, characterised by low density and spacious layouts, created a stark contrast to the existing native towns, emphasising a duality within the cities—a divide between the anglicised, well-structured areas and the older, indigenous parts.

Architecturally, the colonial period introduced a fusion of European styles such as Tudor, Gothic, and Victorian, leading to the construction of public buildings that showcased the might and authority of the British Raj. This architectural imposition further emphasised the emerging urban dualities, echoing the power differentials between the colonisers and the native populace. For instance, in Shimla, a discernible contrast in architectural styles can be observed, notably in the residences designed for British officers, exemplified by the Shimla British resort, as opposed to the working-class residences like the 5 Ghar Ki Line. These architectural distinctions served as tangible representations of the socio-economic disparities prevalent during the colonial era.

Moreover, the colonial period witnessed the establishment of new towns and cities across India, varying from small hill stations to bustling port cities like Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai. These new urban centres represented a departure from traditional indigenous towns, introducing modern planning and infrastructure.

The introduction of industrial capitalism via railways, ports, factories, and warehouses was a defining feature of colonial urbanisation.

This transformation not only altered the physical landscape but also reshaped the social fabric of cities. Rural-to-urban migration brought in a diverse workforce to cities like Bombay, Calcutta, Bangalore, and Madras, significantly changing their social and economic dynamics. The emergence of a working-class culture, relatively free from traditional social sanctions, reshaped the urban societal structure.

Furthermore, the colonial era brought forth ideas of modernity, particularly through Western education and legal systems. This had a profound impact on the local elite, shaping their ideologies and societal roles. However, this modernity carried a strong colonial imprint, evident in the stark contrast between well-maintained civil lines and the crowded, neglected indigenous parts where the less privileged, including migrant workers, resided.

The transition from colonial rule to independence set the stage for monumental changes in the urban landscape and the socio-economic fabric, marked by the Nehruvian model, massive migrations, and the accommodation of millions of refugees.

One of the foundational aspects of this era was the Nehruvian vision, encapsulated in the Bombay Plan of the 1940s. This plan, proposed by industrialists such as JRD Tata, GD Birla and Lal Shri Ram, emphasised industrial capitalism as a means to build a nation reeling from the aftermath of Bengal famine and World War II. Nehru sought to drive economic growth by focusing on heavy industries like steel production, a move that led to the establishment of pivotal sites like Durgapur and Bokaro. Urban planning was a cornerstone of this developmental phase. The establishment of new towns and the metamorphosis of existing ones became the norm. The birth of Chandigarh, designed by the French Architect Le Corbusier, exemplified the essence of Nehruvian ideology—emphasis on indigenous materials and planned, functional spaces devoid of extravagant elements.

Another facet of urbanisation in India emerged as a response to the impending crisis of overpopulation in metropolitan centres. The government advocated for the development of new townships close to major cities to alleviate congestion. However, these new towns functioned more as a means to bypass the older metropolitan centres rather than decongest them, diverging from the urban regeneration approach witnessed in Western cities.

Navi Mumbai serves as a prime example of this urban bypass strategy. Envisioned as a means to decongest Mumbai, it evolved into a centre for tertiary sector employment. However, government offices' relocation, a key aspect of its development plan, did not materialise. The economy of Navi Mumbai thrived on knowledge-based activities, neglecting those who lost industrial jobs or were displaced without adequate compensation during its development. The city's local economy thrived with a mix of temporary migrant labour in construction, a permanent low-wage workforce, and displaced villagers forming the core of a non-agricultural economy.

A significant facet of post-colonial cities was the dichotomy within them. The urban landscape portrayed a duality with slums and non-slum areas, accentuating the socio-economic disparities. This trend was further compounded by the shift from manufacturing to the service sector, leading to job fluctuations in cities like Mumbai and Ahmedabad.

The National Urban Commission, under the leadership of Charles Correa in 1986, laid a foundational framework for the expansion and development of Indian cities. With recommendations emphasising the creation of employment, opening hinterlands, and promoting equitable wealth generation, the commission aimed to transform cities into engines of growth and catalysts for social transformation. This led to the identification and classification of cities based on economic momentum, prioritising their roles in national and state development.

Despite ambitious plans and a surge in urbanisation, the ground reality often diverged from the envisioned blueprint. Rapid urbanisation led to a threefold increase in the urban population of the country, creating a disparity between planned development and actual execution. The concentration of population in larger cities intensified, leading to the emergence of metropolises. From four metropolitan cities in 1951 to 23 by 1991, India witnessed the rise of these urban giants. The post-colonial period until 1991 delineated the contrasts within Indian cities, reflecting a societal structure with an entrenched elite, an emerging middle class, and a growing informal sector.

The advent of globalisation and economic reforms in 1991 brought about a new phase in urban development. The opening up of the Indian economy in 1991 ushered in a shift from industrial capitalism to a service-oriented economy. This change attracted global capital, leading to the dominance of IT-based industries, altering the role of municipalities and introducing project-oriented approaches to urban development. The impact on the built environment was profound. The infusion of global expertise in planning and design, coupled with advancements in information technology, revolutionised urban spaces. Concepts of design, usage, and typologies evolved, introducing modern elements like glass, and targeted investments in specific corridors further reshaped cityscapes, with regions like Pune-Mumbai emerging as hubs for such developments. The evolving cityscape exhibited two dominant processes: gentrification and informalisation. 92% of India's workforce is in the informal sector. While gentrification attracted the affluent, driving up property values and altering neighbourhoods, informalisation expanded the informal economy, catering to both the poor and the middle class. However, this development also witnessed the centralization of finance and the communalisation of spaces, particularly in recent years. Migration to urban areas surged, bringing about significant demographic changes. This influx also highlighted the segregation within cities, mirroring

caste and religious structures from rural areas, challenging the notion of cities as engines of pure upward mobility.

From ancient civilizations to the modern-day metropolises, the growth of these urban hubs showcased the dualities of urbanisation and the distinctive trajectories shaped by the absence and subsequent presence of industrialization, unveiling a nuanced evolution of the Indian cities.

Rethinking Developmental Stages[13]

The evolution of societies traced through stages of industrialization and urbanisation, taken as a hallmark of human progress, are narratives central to modern social sciences, particularly, to development economics and to the theory of modernization. At the heart of these narratives of progress and social development are societal shifts as observed from the vantage point of late 18th century Western Europe: with its stages of development: from hunting societies to pastoral, agricultural, and finally to commercial societies, where mercantile activity emerged as a vital force driving economic advancement.

Adam Smith's seminal work, "The Wealth of Nations" (1776), captured this evolution, providing a descriptive account of what was happening in Europe at that time. Smith emphasised the transformative nature of commercial society, which he viewed as distinct due to its potential for significant advancements in production techniques. This period marked a substantial increase in the scale of production and a remarkable rise in labour productivity. Though he highlights the importance of the division of labour as enabling these advances, it is interesting to note that Smith didn't explicitly use the term "industrial society" to describe this stage of societal evolution.

13. Based on the lecture and presentation at Urban Action School 2023 by Dr. Veena Naregal.

From Smith's account, it is equally clear that colonial trade played a crucial role in the emergence of commercial society, both in connecting nations and in stimulating the birth of political economy. Smith highlighted the contributions of commercial and manufacturing towns to the 'improvement and cultivation' of their respective countries, impacting markets, land ownership, and socio-political landscapes. Firstly, cities and towns provided a substantial and accessible market for the raw produce of the country, benefiting not just the nations where these towns were situated but also extending their impact to those involved in trade with them. Secondly, the wealth accumulated by the inhabitants of these cities often led to the purchase of lands, frequently uncultivated, by merchants, with a view to render it profitable. This acquisition of land was not aimed merely at enhancing prestige or as a symbol of power. Unlike their previously elite predecessors, country landowners, who had maintained their land as a symbol of status and power rather than optimising the land for increased yields, the new urban merchants sought to acquire country estates entirely to enhance the profitability and/or productivity of that land. Thirdly, commerce and manufacturing introduced a semblance of order and good governance, gradually impacting both urban centres and rural areas. This influence was instrumental in shaping the socio-political landscape of the nations involved.

The first phase of colonial trade had progressively enlarged the volume and canvas of trade of European nations, primarily through their trade connections with the Americas. Published in 1776, *Smith's The Wealth of Nations* was written against the backdrop of the impending American Independence, appearing in print at the very juncture marking the conclusion of this first phase of colonial expansion. Coinciding with American Independence, at this point, simultaneously Britain and other European nations were contemplating the advantages arising from their expanding links and presence in Asia and Africa. Political economy, as a discipline, emerged during this crucial juncture in global history, seeking to theorise this interconnectedness as it was

emerging through the scope of trade opening up between Europe, Asia and Africa. Smith's study aimed to analyse these dynamics from the vantage point of what Smith and his contemporaries termed "home countries,"; perspectives that we might now describe as European or metropolitan viewpoints.

Adam Smith and thinkers of his time formulated a descriptive framework for understanding societal evolution, framing it as a progressive journey. However, in subsequent phases, this model evolved beyond these descriptive intentions into a normative framework guiding how societies should evolve, a belief echoed by economists and development thinkers. Through the expansion of colonial empires in Asia and Africa in the nineteenth century, there came to be underlying assumptions that industrialization, following the pattern set by British industrial experience, would universally shape the evolution of all societies in a singular trajectory. However, this notion of a universal path of development faced challenges when applied to diverse contexts.

While the Global North witnessed urban development propelled by industrialization, countries of the Global South have undergone urbanisation with or without direct industrialization. The narratives of a 'smooth' and 'inevitable' transition from peasants to industrial workers, particularly in contexts like colonial Bombay, where workers maintained strong rural ties despite successive phases of industrial growth over several decades, diverged from European trajectories in major ways[14]. These connections served as crucial support networks in urban life, influencing work, housing, and economic access, and were the basis of very different patterns of rural and urban linkages that have come to characterise the social worlds of post-colonial developing societies.

14. Chandavarkar, Rajnarayan. "Industrialization in India before 1947: Conventional Approaches and Alternative Perspectives". *Modern Asian Studies,* 1985, Vol. 19, No. 3.

Such divergences challenge the presumed universality of developmental stages, while emphasising the significance of diverse historical and cultural contexts on the connections shaped between industrialization and urban development in the nineteenth and more late twentieth centuries.

The decline of industrial economies and rise of informational economies in the late twentieth century ushered in many changes to overhaul the physical, social, economic and environmental character of urban spaces of leading erstwhile industrial cities of the West. As western underwent transformations to reclaim a position in the new global economy, these shifts had repercussions for the cities of Global South too as they triggered a push towards a second phase of post-colonial urban development and expansion, where governments, planners and experts sought to respond with ways to put Indian cities, new townships and their aspiring elites on the map of the emerging globalised information economy.

Recognizing these differences at different historical junctures is crucial to understanding the nuanced transitions from rural to urban settings and acknowledging historical and empirical realities that shape these processes variously across the cities of the Global North and the Global South. Equally acknowledging these historical trajectories and divergences are necessary to formulating inclusive and contextually relevant development strategies in the present.

Industrial Expansion in the Urban-Rural Continuum[15]

Industrial expansion has been an undeniable force driving the evolution of societies across the globe. The evolution of industrialization is not merely a shift from agrarian to urban environments; it's a dynamic

15. Based on the lecture and presentation at Urban Action School 2023 by Dr. Anil K Roy (with inputs from Ambili TB).

process that alters territorial landscapes and reshapes cultures, behaviours, and lifestyles worldwide. However, the impact and manifestation of industrialization and urbanisation vary significantly between the Global North and the Global South. The models of urbanisation in these regions exhibit distinctive characteristics. In the Global North, industrial-induced urban development has been more prominent, with cities evolving around industrial hubs. Conversely, in the Global South, as seen in the growth of Indian cities, urbanisation can occur with or without industrialization, creating unique urban landscapes.

In the context of South Asian countries, the concept of Extended Metropolitan Regions (EMRs) has emerged as a paradigm shift in understanding urban-rural integration. EMR challenges the application of traditional western dichotomy of rural and urban in Asia as there is no tidy division between rural and urban. It is the urbanisation of the country-side. As industrial activities emerge and expand within areas traditionally considered rural, they give rise to areas where urban and agricultural forms of land use and settlement coexist and are intensively intermingled. The notion of Extended Metropolitan Regions encompasses vast areas where urban and rural landscapes converge, presenting a unique blend of small farm plots, housing, and industrial activities.

The Desakota area, a term coined by T.G. McGee's and derived from the fusion of "desa" (village) and "kota" (town), exemplifies the amalgamation of agricultural and non-agricultural activities within these regions. This spatial and economic phenomenon serves to promote urban economic integration and land development over expansive areas, effectively integrating peasant households into metropolitan economic networks.

EMRs exhibit diverse characteristics, as exemplified by three distinct types. Type 1 regions, exemplified by South Korea and Japan, feature

a mixture of small farm plots, housing, and industry. Type 2 regions, such as Taiwan's Taipei-Kaosiung corridor and the Calcutta region in India, experience rapid economic growth concentrated in urban cores and adjacent regions. Meanwhile, Type 3 regions, including Kerala in India and Jakarta in Java, face slow economic growth, high population growth, surplus labour market and persistent low productivity in both agriculture and non-agriculture. As urbanisation of the countryside takes place, the lines between rural and urban blur. The Zhujiang (Pearl) River Delta in China stands as a prime example of this fusion, with a network of interconnected cities blurring the boundaries between rural and urban landscapes.

This perspective challenges the conventional notion that urban sprawl is inherently undesirable as the development of EMRs is generally perceived as a positive phenomenon, fostering the flow of economic vitality and flexibility. One significant advantage is the alleviation of migration pressure towards existing urban centres. People can actively participate in the urban economy while remaining in their extended family setups in rural hinterlands. EMRs are regarded as a natural and inevitable form of urbanisation in Asia's densely populated rural areas. Within EMRs, the metropolitan area serves as the main transactional centre, managing, controlling, and distributing production, resources, and capital over vast territories. Urban centres within EMRs engage in production, consumption, transportation, and management activities as integral components of the transactional space. Desakota areas, identified as rural areas in transformation, witness the coexistence of industrial production and rural extraction, driving economic development and population movements.

The industrial landscape in India offers a diverse canvas of growth, challenges, and the intersection of urbanisation with industrial expansion. The state of Gujarat is witnessing industrial-induced urbanisation, with major city-hubs like Surat and Ahmedabad regions which are known for their industrial prowess. However, in Gujarat

only a third of the industries are within city boundaries. The Surat to Ahmedabad corridor exemplifies this concentration of industries along a corridor, raising concerns about pollution and the quality of life. For instance, Changodar's rapid industrialization, fueled by its proximity to Ahmedabad, has led to haphazard growth and the proliferation of slums. Inadequate infrastructure like roads, water supply, and waste disposal poses challenges. Proposals for special economic zones have been made but there is a need for robust institutional frameworks to manage its rapid development. Morbi's industrial growth in the ceramic sector, showcases specialisation within a specific industry, where the growth of industrial sector within a rural context has spurred urban expansion. Vatwa's industrial development showcases issues of infrastructure, environmental impact, and demographic shifts. The growth has led to high-density rural settlements on the verge of urbanisation, transforming the socio-economic landscape.

These cases underscore the multifaceted consequences of industrial growth: demographic shifts, economic diversification, and the informalisation of economies. The linkages between rural households and urban economies blur traditional distinctions between rural and urban spheres. However, this industrial expansion has also led to negative environmental externalities such as air and water pollution. Gujarat, despite its industrial prowess, grapples with inadequate waste handling capacities and land degradation, prompting a need for better environmental management practices. The state's response involves environmental regulations, waste management rules, and technological improvement initiatives. The establishment of cleaner production centres and eco-industrial parks, exemplified by the Naroda Eco-Industrial Park, showcases the potential for sustainable industrial development.

In contrast to Gujarat, the industrial sector of Kerala is relatively underdeveloped. In Kerala, urbanisation has occurred without urbanisation. The distinctive feature of Kerala economy is that it has

a high standard in human development, despite having a very low industrial development. Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (KINFRA) has played a pivotal role in catalysing industrial growth. By creating industry-specific infrastructure and attracting investments, KINFRA aims to strike a balance between industrial expansion and the preservation of Kerala's unique socio-cultural identity. Upcoming and ongoing projects include the Kochi Bangalore Industrial Corridor, Integrated Manufacturing Cluster in Palakkad, Global City in Kochi, Petrochemical Park in Kochi, International Exhibition Cum Convention Centre in Kochi, and the Industrial Land Bank in Kannur. Kerala's imminent urbanisation, fueled by developments such as national highway expansions, new airports, seaports, and industrial corridors, necessitates careful optimization of resources and a holistic network planning approach. A dual model of urban development accommodating both industrialised and non-industrialized regions, coupled with sustainable practices like eco-industrial parks, circular economies, and industrial symbiosis, could present a path for balanced and inclusive growth.

The diverse narratives from across the country converge on a common imperative: the need for sustainable, inclusive growth. The interplay between industrial expansion, demographic shifts, and environmental impact necessitates comprehensive frameworks.

Unit 3
Navigating Vulnerabilities in the Continuum

Understanding Migration Dynamics[16]

Migration in India is a result of economic aspirations, social dynamics, and historical legacies. The country exhibits intricate patterns of migration, with significant implications for both urban and rural areas. India, with over 300 million migrants, sees more than 30% of its population and 20-30% of its workforce engaged in migration. The international diaspora comprises around 30 million individuals, with 15-20 million emigrants. Circular migration is a significant aspect, involving over 100 million circular migrant workers[17]. These statistics underscore the magnitude and impact of migration on the Indian demographic landscape.

Indian migration manifests in various forms, categorised by its duration into temporary/seasonal, semi-permanent, and permanent. Temporary migration, often driven by factors like wage differentials, anonymity of cities, and social networks, involves individuals moving for short durations. Semi-permanent migration, on the other hand, extends beyond a year but lacks the intention to settle permanently. Permanent migration involves individuals relocating with the intention of settling down in the new location. The decision to migrate is influenced by a complex interplay of push and pull factors. Pull

16. Based on the lecture and presentation at Urban Action School 2023 by Dr. Chinmay Tumbe.

17. Estimates by Dr. Chinmay Tumbe based on NSS 2007 - 2008 64th round unit-level data.

factors include wage differentials, the allure of urban anonymity, peer pressure, social networks, marriage, education, and the prospect of improved living conditions. On the flip side, push factors such as economic distress, natural disasters, and political turmoil compel individuals to seek opportunities elsewhere.

The migration in India can be referred to as the Great Indian Migration Wave. Characterised by several distinctive features, this migration wave showcases a male-dominated trend, pervasive across every state in India. It's intriguing how migration isn't solely about relocation but rather a deeply ingrained part of the societal fabric, with nuances often overlooked. One prominent aspect is the overwhelming male dominance in migration patterns. While districts across India witness significant outbound migration, some regions, like Udupi, have long grappled with mass emigration. Interestingly, women's migration, primarily tied to marriage, remains largely unquantified despite almost every adult woman in India being a migrant in this context. This gendered migration narrative, where women migrate for matrimonial reasons, contrasts starkly with the male-dominated visible migratory patterns.

The temporality of this migration wave adds another layer of complexity. Migration spans a spectrum, from permanent resettlement to seasonal short-term stints in agricultural domains, and the intermediate semi-permanent status. In the latter, migrants reside away from home for extended periods—9 to 11 months—without the intent to settle permanently. Their primary objective revolves around remittances, a fundamental component shaping the psychology of migration. This aspect, often underestimated due to census limitations that fail to account for return migrants, elucidates the underreported nature of lifetime migration experiences.

The economic underpinning of this migration wave lies in remittances. Money flows from urban to rural areas, creating significant impact and

dependency. Kerala stands out as a prime example, with a staggering 30% of its GDP sourced from remittances from Gulf countries. This influx, however, creates labour shortages in Kerala, a stark contrast to Bihar, where domestic remittances pale in comparison to foreign remittances, reflecting a different economic landscape within the same migration narrative.

The urban-rural continuum in India faces challenges due to factors like high living costs and lack of social security in cities. The quest for economic security in urban areas contrasts sharply with the denied social security in villages, leading to a slow process of urbanisation and a net migration pattern where settling permanently is rare. The preference for return migration is influenced by socio-cultural factors, including gender norms, patriarchal mindsets, and attachments to cultural practices, such as burial and land ownership. Even when destination-side factors are not barriers, migrants often express a desire to return, complicating the notion of settlement. Hence, despite high levels of migration, settlement rates remain low due to destination-side factors like high urban living costs and sociocultural preferences. This trend results in slower urbanisation but rapid urban growth, creating a paradox between the North and the South.

Migration also intersects with caste and religion, with longer duration migrations often showing overrepresentation from the general category, while shorter ones tend to include more vulnerable groups. Additionally, historical factors and initial capital requirements have historically influenced migration patterns, often favouring upper castes and specific religious communities.

Efforts to manage migration have seen diverse perspectives, from Gandhi's emphasis on rural development to Ambedkar's view of cities as liberators from caste oppression. Current policies aim to facilitate safe migration and acknowledge its inevitability, but challenges

persist, such as the pandemic's impact, violence against migrants, and demands for nativism in the private sector.

Improving the continuum requires unlinking social security from birthplace and implementing policies for safe migration[18]. Portability of benefits, like the Public Distribution System, within states has shown progress but faces challenges of awareness and implementation. Tracking migration and ensuring access to welfare schemes and social security for migrants remain pivotal for a balanced and inclusive urban-rural continuum.

Food Security and Entitlements[19]

In the urban rural continuum, the challenge of food security takes on a multifaceted form, and the COVID-19 pandemic brought this urgency to light, especially for migrant workers. The Right to Food, enshrined as a fundamental right under Article 21, embodies the essence of food security for all citizens. The National Food Security Act (NFSA) of 2013 aimed to reform the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), replacing the near-universal system introduced in 1997. However, challenges persisted, leading to exclusion, bogus cards, and leakages, prompting calls for digital intervention. Recognizing these issues, the SC-appointed Justice Wadhwa committee recommended the computerization of the entire PDS operations.

The NFSA 2013 aimed to overhaul the TPDS and redefine beneficiary criteria, shifting from poverty estimates to population data from the 2011 Census. Approximately 2/3rd of the country's population, divided into Antodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households and Priority Households (PHH), became entitled to highly subsidised food grains.

18. Report of the Working Group on Migration. Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, 2017.

19. Based on the lecture and presentation at Urban Action School 2023 by Dr. Veena Naregal.

The Act empowered State/UT governments to frame their criteria for identifying beneficiaries, emphasising the eldest woman as the 'Head of Family.' Criteria for coverage, based on the 2011 census, were designed to include 50% of the urban population, relying on state-defined parameters. The NFSA set state-wise quotas for food grains, cementing these limits in the March 2015 order. Crucially, these figures haven't been revised, and no increase in coverage under TPDS is mandated until the new census data emerges.

The One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) program, initially launched in 2017, gained momentum during the pandemic. ONORC, a part of the NFSA, is a PDS that enables portability in accessing ration allotments. It leverages digital technology, allowing beneficiaries to claim food grains at any Fair Price Shop (FPS) across the country. The program's key claims include technological platform for national-level portability, de-duplication of ration cards, and seamless lifting of ration anywhere in the country.

Amid the migration crisis, a petition in the Supreme Court highlighted the gaps. The government cited ONORC as a solution, intending to facilitate distribution rather than expanding coverage. The SC's order in June 2021 underscored the importance of implementing ONORC, ensuring food security for migrants.

However, interstate portability under ONORC faced challenges in uniform implementation across states. Distribution schedules, connectivity issues, and uncertainties persisted, affecting the efficiency and access of the program. Despite the challenges, interstate transactions witnessed significant participation from migrants, especially from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

Issues also emerged due to the reliance on 2011 data, creating a significant gap in catering to the massive migrant population that

emerged post-NFSA implementation. The primary objective of ONORC wasn't to widen coverage but to assist those already within the PDS ambit. For instance, Delhi, with a population of 1.6 million, had a coverage estimate of 72 lakhs, leading to tensions, where migrant workers faced local conflicts at PDS shops. These conflicts often resulted in loss of income due to the time spent queuing for rations. Digital issues plagued state portals, impacting accessibility for migrant beneficiaries. Interestingly, Delhi accounted for 67% of inter-state transactions under ONORC, primarily serving two states—Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Additionally, intra-district transactions were prevalent, with 93% occurring within states, shedding light on the complexities of urban food security and access.

The data on ONORC implementation raises questions about the true objectives of portability and the feasibility of targeting specific beneficiaries. Evidence suggests that states with universal or near-universal access experienced lower leakages.

The amalgamation of NFSA and ONORC in the urban landscape unveils challenges in addressing the evolving needs of migrants and urban populations. Revisiting definitions, addressing digital disparities, and reorienting policies are imperative to ensure comprehensive food security, particularly for the migrant workforce in urban centres. Efforts must pivot from fixed quotas to adaptive strategies, embracing inclusivity and responsiveness to dynamic demographic shifts for true food security in urban India.

The urban setting redefines the parameters of food security, necessitating a critical re-evaluation of existing terms. Moving away from a dichotomous view to a continuum is crucial, considering the evolving dynamics of migration, urbanisation, and access to essential resources like food.

Climate Change and Ecological Resilience[20]

Climate change is an indiscriminate force reshaping the world. The intricate relationship between global warming and human understanding, likened to a frog in boiling water, reflects the gradual acclimatisation to a changing environment without fully comprehending the imminent danger. Human activities, particularly the release of greenhouse gases like CO2, methane, and nitrogen oxide, have spiked global average temperatures from 13°C to 14.2°C approximately, altering life as we know it.

Historically, climate shifts, like ice ages and safe zones, have heavily influenced agriculture and societal structures. However, the industrial revolution catalysed a drastic change with the advent of fossil fuel usage, leading to a 1.2°C increase in temperatures within a relatively short span. This warming disrupts Earth's delicate balance, pushing ecosystems towards irreversible tipping points. The repercussions of these changes are evident globally. Melting ice caps, rising sea levels, erratic weather patterns, and extreme climatic events impact livelihoods, water access, and prompt mass displacements. India, for instance, grapples with soaring temperatures, altered monsoons, glacier melt in the Himalayas, and increased vulnerability to cyclones and droughts.

The impacts of climate change reverberate across communities, but it's the marginalised, both urban and rural, who face disproportionate adversities due to their socio-economic vulnerabilities. While marginalised communities often have the smallest carbon footprint, they suffer the most. The repercussions of climate change on these communities are multifaceted, encompassing socio-economic, health, and ecological dimensions. Women, often in inferior socio-economic

20. Based on the lecture and presentation at Urban Action School 2023 by Advocate M. Vetri Selvan and Dr. Simi Mehta.

positions, face heightened vulnerabilities due to cultural norms, lack of financial independence, and biological susceptibilities. This manifests in higher mortality rates, limited access to resources, and increased violence during climate-related crises[21].

In developing countries, resource distribution exacerbates the problem. Limited access to crucial resources amplifies the impact of climate change. Moreover, marginalised groups, including farmers and labourers, face increased health risks due to rising temperatures, affecting their productivity and livelihoods. Instances of extreme weather events, such as cyclones and floods, further deepen the socio-economic disparities by disproportionately affecting these communities[22].

There's a need to empower these communities by incorporating their insights and practices into adaptation strategies. Their traditional knowledge often holds valuable solutions for sustainable living in changing environments. Further, the issue extends beyond immediate impacts. Changes in ecosystems, such as altered migration patterns of species and loss of biodiversity, affect the delicate balance of nature. Documenting these changes and understanding their implications is crucial for devising effective strategies. Mitigation and adaptation strategies must be inclusive and consider the unique needs of marginalised communities. This involves not only immediate relief efforts but also long-term planning that ensures their active participation and empowerment. It also entails rethinking urban planning, energy production, and resource allocation to create a more equitable and sustainable future.

21. Desai, Bharat H., and Moumita Mandal. "Role of climate change in exacerbating sexual and gender-based violence against women: A new challenge for international law." *Environmental Policy and Law,* vol. 51, no. 3, 2021, pp. 137-157.

22. International Labour Office. "Working on a warmer planet: the impact of heat stress on labour productivity and decent work." *International Labour Organization,* 2019, Geneva.

The discourse on climate change demands a fundamental shift in individual behaviours, but it's equally crucial to hold larger entities accountable. Developed nations, with higher emissions and lifestyles that significantly impact the environment, bear a considerable responsibility. Global policies should aim for equitable solutions that don't burden vulnerable populations or hinder their livelihoods. Shifting to sustainable practices, inclusive policies, and prioritising marginalised voices in decision-making are crucial steps. Creating gender-sensitive disaster preparedness plans, empowering women in agriculture, and promoting localised, renewable energy sources are imperative in building resilience.

Adopting a systemic approach is key. Rethinking urban planning, redistributing resources equitably, and challenging patriarchal structures that impede adaptation efforts are vital steps toward a sustainable future. Moreover, fostering international cooperation, advocating for climate justice, and acknowledging the intersectionality of climate impacts are essential in crafting comprehensive solutions.

Transformative Processes in Frontier Spaces[23]

Frontier and borderland areas are often ignored in urbanism discourse, assuming they are backward rural locations. In India, the northeast frontier faces challenges stemming from geography, terrain, border security, and indigenous populations, factors that might seemingly impede urban development. However, this region is experiencing rapid urbanisation with decadal (2001–2011) urban growth rates ranging from 13 percent in Sikkim to 27 percent in Meghalaya. Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh have growth rates higher than the national average of 17 percent. Therefore, the narrative of low urbanisation needs to be revisited. Unlike other parts

24. Based on the lecture and presentation at Urban Action School 2023 by Dr. Shrawan Kumar Acharya.

of India, urbanisation here is primarily propelled by the expansion of small and medium-sized towns, extending beyond the confines of officially designated large urban local bodies. Additionally, the architectural structures, consumption patterns, and lifestyles observed beyond the formal urban boundaries in the Northeast exhibit urban characteristics, blurring the urban rural divide and giving birth to an urban-rural continuum, in the region.

In contrast to other regions in the country where subaltern urbanisation has been observed, the Northeast has experienced the development of a rural-urban continuum influenced by distinct factors unique to the area. This evolution is not solely dependent on metropolitan economies but is shaped by a myriad of elements. The rural-urban continuum in the region represents a complex interplay of flows and processes, encompassing economic, demographic, socio-cultural, ecosystem services, and digital realms. These flows raise critical questions regarding how the continuum operates in less developed or urbanised frontier regions like Darjeeling, Sikkim, and the Northeast.

The urban typology within the Northeast region encompasses a diverse range of urban centres, each characterised by distinct functions and features. Foothill towns stand as vibrant trade hubs, pivotal for the break of bulk and transitions in transportation modes, facilitating dynamic commerce and exchange. Trans-border trade centres embody the essence of international commerce and cultural interplay. Urban areas positioned along roads and rivers serve as pivotal points of connectivity and accessibility, leveraging both road and river networks for trade and transportation. Administration headquarters act as the core of governance, policy-making, and public service provision, steering regional development. Plantation enclaves represent specialised economic zones centred around agricultural production, and are a classic example of how capitalism flows into the rural hinterland. Strategic and defence outposts strategically positioned in border areas serve critical geopolitical purposes.

Lastly, towns nestled in hills or plateaus assume multifaceted roles as administrative centres, healthcare hubs, and tourist attractions, leveraging their scenic beauty and geographical uniqueness

The economic foundation of the rural-urban continuum in the Northeast comprises several key pillars. The tourism sector, drawing upon the region's natural beauty and cultural heritage, stands as a cornerstone, fuelling economic growth and employment opportunities. Administrative functions not only govern but also generate economic activity, serving as centres for public services and employment. Local trade and markets form economic nodes, sustaining livelihoods and fostering entrepreneurship within communities. Health facilities and sanatoriums play a pivotal role, attracting health tourism and catering to the healthcare needs of both locals and visitors. Education, centred around schools and educational institutions, attracting students and generating employment in the education sector. The defence sector, given the region's strategic significance, also contributes significantly to the economic landscape by providing employment and infrastructure development. Historically, trans-border trade was a key driver of economic activity, particularly in areas like Sikkim and Darjeeling before 1962. Although limited to small-scale and symbolic trade today, the potential for its resurgence exists, contingent upon the resolution of border disputes with China and the materialisation of the Look East policy with Southeast Asia.

The conceptual framework to understand the flows and process behind context specific urbanisation in the northeast encompasses a broad spectrum, ranging from historical influences like precolonial societal structures and spatial dynamics to the impact of colonial institutions and infrastructural investments. The establishment of enclave economies, such as plantations, and the significance of trans-frontier trade have further shaped this continuum. Additionally, the region has been influenced by missionary activities as well as events like the Indo-China war of 1962, which have significantly impacted its social

and economic fabric. The process of state formation, reorganisation, and mergers, coupled with movements for regional identity, has played a pivotal role in defining the unique trajectory of urban development in the Northeast. Moreover, post-colonial development planning and interventions, alongside post-liberalization initiatives, have contributed to shaping the region's urban landscape in ways distinct from the rest of the country.

Today, the Northeast region of India stands at a crossroads of unprecedented change, marked by urbanisation, economic shifts, cultural transformations, and socio-political challenges. The hills are becoming more urbanised than the valleys, with Mizoram outpacing Assam in this transformation. This unexpected shift challenges the established norms linking industrial development to urban expansion. Moreover, the rapid emergence of census towns blurs the distinction between urban and rural classifications, presenting a statistical challenge in accurately capturing this dynamic process.

Sikkim, at the forefront of growth in the region, showcases an intriguing blend of progress and challenges. The state is witnessing significant industrial corridors like Rangpo-Gangtok, Ranipool-Gangtok, and Melli-Jorethang, especially along rivers, fostering major pharmaceutical industries and infrastructure projects. Simultaneously, the push for dam projects, generating power for the mainland, introduces urban processes while also posing environmental threats. Moreover, the surge in tourist arrivals, exemplified in Sikkim's tourism sector growth (a growth rate of 121% from 2004 to 2016), translates the continuum into burgeoning tourist destinations, altering consumption patterns and amplifying transportation needs.

Global ambitions and the Smart City initiative within the frontier align with the Look East policy, marketing the region as an attractive destination for investment and development. This shift has led to a reconfiguration of traditional settlement networks, with smaller

centres gaining prominence alongside major cities like Kolkata and Guwahati, while traditional areas lose their importance. An illustrative example of this shift can be seen in Darjeeling, historically a colonial centre of importance. However, with Sikkim gaining statehood and the subsequent emphasis on development within Sikkim, the relevance and centrality of Darjeeling have waned.

Digitalization has fundamentally altered the landscape of the Northeast, compressing geographical boundaries and disrupting traditional hierarchies. This shift is evident across various sectors, exemplified by the emergence of online trade, financial markets accessible through digital platforms, and a transformed real estate landscape influenced by online transactions. Moreover, digital channels have impacted the tourism industry, shaping travel patterns and hospitality services. Services such as education have undergone a paradigm shift, with digital platforms revolutionising access and delivery methods.

The region is also experiencing a dual shift in demographics: local low-skilled and white-collar workers are migrating to larger urban centres seeking better opportunities, potentially impacting local economies, while outsiders, including professionals, construction workers, and low-wage labourers, are arriving for employment prospects.

However, amidst these transformations, challenges persist. Conflicts arise concerning indigenous rights, identity, land access, and urban-rural boundaries. Dispossession, resource shifts, and ecosystem conflicts exacerbate tensions between upstream rural areas and cities, impacting water and waste disposal systems. Cultural changes, loss of traditional knowledge and lifestyle, and shifts in power structures mark this transitional phase. The evolving power dynamics see the rise of new elites, bureaucratic influences, and tensions between traditional aristocracy and neo-rich politicians, bureaucrats and business community. Identity assertions, and governance dilemmas confront the region, particularly in its integration with larger metros.

Issues surrounding livelihoods, education, health, and services persist, fostering a complex relationship between the periphery and metropolitan centres.

The conceptualization and theorization of the rural-urban continuum in this frontier region pose intriguing questions. Governance mechanisms, conflict resolution, and research methodologies require nuanced approaches to capture the complexities of this evolving landscape. As the region navigates through its urban transformation, it grapples with the need for sustainable development, cultural preservation, and inclusive growth. Understanding and addressing these multifaceted challenges will be crucial in shaping the Northeast's trajectory in the larger context of India's urban evolution.

Unit 4
Communities at the Cusp

City Makers: Shaping the Urban-Rural Continuum[24]

The backbone of urban development often rests on the toil and sweat of migrant workers who flock to cities seeking opportunities and a better life. However, despite their integral role, the treatment and safeguarding of their rights have been largely overlooked. The absence of effective implementation of crucial acts, such as the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979, has created a vacuum of protection for these workers, leaving them vulnerable and exposed, especially evident during times of crises like the recent lockdowns.

The stark reality of the migrant worker situation was unveiled when approximately 33 million lost their jobs abruptly due to the lockdown measures. This catastrophe laid bare the urgent need for a robust national policy dedicated to managing and safeguarding the rights of these migrant workers, whose contributions fuel the growth of urban centres.

The symbiotic relationship between the growth of cities and the labour force cannot be overstated. Communities and the working class often play a pivotal role in shaping urban development through their demands and movements. For instance, the strengthening of Delhi's public transport system stemmed from the people's demands, while housing for workers in the historical textile mills in the city also created spaces for social movements to flourish.

24. Based on the lecture at Urban Action School 2023 by Comrade Amarjeet Kaur (with inputs from Dr. Esther Mariaselvam).

However, amidst urbanisation, the narrative often shifts to one dominated by corporations and policymakers, sidelining the concerns and needs of the working masses. This negligence results in unplanned urban development, leading to inadequate civic amenities, housing shortages, and the proliferation of exploitative practices by placement agencies. The lack of comprehensive planning not only affects the living conditions of workers but also exacerbates issues like homelessness and exploitation within the workforce. Basic necessities like affordable housing and proper sanitation are often disregarded, resulting in the proliferation of slums and substandard living conditions for many migrants. Even in disaster relief, this pattern persists, compelling the clearance of slums and informal settlements. For instance, during the 2004 Tsunami, many were displaced and relocated to distant areas under the guise of disaster. Similarly, in Kerala's 2018 floods and landslides, people faced relocation.

Distressed migration, as opposed to planned migration, has become the norm, illustrating the failure of cities to accommodate and provide for their labour force. A glaring issue is the disparity in wage rates across different states, compelling workers to migrate from one region to another in search of better-paying opportunities. For instance, in Gujarat, the daily wage for construction workers stands at Rs. 322, lower than the national average of Rs.393. Kerala, in contrast, provides significantly higher wages to construction workers, with a daily wage of Rs. 852[25] . This disparity not only affects the livelihoods of the workers but also triggers shifts in industries, as exemplified by the movement in the beedi industry. The need for a uniform national minimum wage in sectors like the beedi industry becomes imperative to ensure fairness and prevent the migration-induced industry shifts.

The exploitation of workers, particularly in the context of their vulnerability in the face of evolving labour laws, remains another

25. Handbook of Statistics on the Indian Economy 2022-23. *Reserve Bank of India*, 2023.

pertinent issue. While the introduction of the consolidated four labour codes appeared promising, the incorporation of the provisions of the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979 into the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 has raised concerns as there is a pressing need for policy interventions that specifically address the plight of migrant workers, prioritising their rights and well-being. Other changes in labour laws due to the new labour codes have the possibility of reducing the power of workers as they seem to tilt the balance in favour of employers, affecting union registration and the rights of workers to strike. The arbitrary threshold of 300 employees for an owner to close a business raises concerns about job security and leaves workers vulnerable to the whims of management decisions. Additionally, restrictions on apprentices' right to unionise and the exemption further erode the collective bargaining power of workers. Such changes, if implemented, might undermine the very principles that workers fought for in the post-independence era, including the right to organise and demand fair treatment. The dilution of these hard-fought rights and the neglect of labour conferences over the years highlight a concerning trend. The collaborative process involving trade unions, employers, and the government in shaping labour laws has become skewed, with the working class finding itself at a disadvantage.

Examples such as the banning of Delhi rickshaw pullers and the tragic incident at Pashupatinath mill in Haryana shed light on the vulnerability of workers when their rights are neglected. The incidents in Visakhapatnam[26] and Bawana[27] shed light on the lax enforcement of regulations and the dire consequences of such negligence. The failure

26. A gas leak from the LG Polymers plant in Visakhapatnam, which was operating without environmental clearance for over two decades, killed 12 people and sickened hundreds in 2020.

27. In 2018, 17 of the 41 labourers inside a factory in Bawana Industrial Area had died in a fire incident. The factory, which was supposed to run a packaging unit, was manufacturing firecrackers without a permit. The fire safety regulations were also not followed.

of a factory to apply for clearance for a decade in Visakhapatnam and the tragic loss of lives in Bawana point to a severe lack of oversight and accountability. The stopping of inspection systems and the presence of facilitators who cater to employers rather than ensuring worker welfare risk the well-being of the workforce. The discriminatory hiring practices, such as preferring unmarried women to avoid maternity benefits, expose a darker side of the labour market where profit takes precedence over the rights and dignity of workers.

The working masses arrive in cities aspiring for improved livelihoods; however, they find themselves marginalised, pushed to the outskirts, devoid of livelihood opportunities, and barred from essential public services. They are the city makers yet they lack a rightful place to call home.

Agrarian Distress in Urbanizing India[28]

The trajectory of urbanisation in India has been rapidly shifting, with a growing orientation towards urban life. At the heart of this transition lies the agrarian crisis, a pivotal force propelling the migration of farmers and peasants to urban centres. The historical process of urbanisation has been marked by the pauperization and exploitation of the agricultural workforce, creating a complex interplay between different classes within society. In the capitalist system, two major classes emerge—the owners of the means of production and the working class, who sell their labour power for wages. This inherent contradiction in interests often leads to conflicts, with owners relying on the labourer for capital creation, while the worker becomes a wage slave under the capitalist system, as highlighted in the works of Marx and Engels.

28. Based on the lecture at Urban Action School 2023 by Mr. P Krishna Prasad.

The shift from state-sponsored economic growth to the liberalisation, privatisation, and globalisation (LPG) policies post-1991 has significantly impacted the agrarian landscape. Land reforms were inadequately implemented, favouring landlords' interests and transforming them into capitalist landlords. This transition has exacerbated the agrarian crisis which manifests in various dimensions, including the commodification of land, fluctuations in crop prices, and the absence of subsidies.

Examining daily wage data across different states reveals stark disparities in wages[29], with Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh exhibiting lower wages than the national average . For farm workers, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh exhibit notably lower daily wages compared to the national average and Kerala. In Gujarat, farm workers earn Rs. 245, while in Madhya Pradesh, the daily wage stands at Rs. 221. These figures fall considerably short of the national average of Rs. 393 and are significantly lower than Kerala, where farm workers earn Rs. 764.3 per day.

The agrarian quagmire further deepens with issues concerning land and product prices. The concentration of land in the hands of a minuscule percentage and the shift from protected domestic markets to exposed, volatile market dynamics post-LPG created tumultuous ripples. The promise of agrarian stability through the removal of protectionism remains unfulfilled, with instances like the rubber industry's roller-coaster ride of price fluctuations post-ASEAN agreements.

There is also a disparity between the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and actual prices, which is exacerbated by the absence of a robust procurement system and has plunged farmers into financial vulnerability. The agrarian community grapples with escalating

29. Handbook of Statistics on the Indian Economy 2022-23. *Reserve Bank of India*, 2023.

production costs due to the removal of subsidies and rampant land acquisition, exacerbating their precarious situation. The resultant domino effect propels farmers into a vortex of debt, leading to distress sales of land and migration to urban areas in pursuit of alternative livelihoods.

Urbanisation thus emerges as a consequence, borne on the toil and tribulations of the very farmers whose livelihoods are imperilled.

Access to Public Services for Tribal Communities[30]

As the wheels of modernization turn and urban centres grow, the traditional tribal communities are finding themselves at an intriguing juncture, grappling with the dynamics of change while striving to preserve their unique identity and heritage. The Kerala Model, celebrated for its social indicators and development initiatives, often overlooks the concerns of marginalised communities, particularly the tribal population. The representation of Scheduled Tribes (ST) in various sectors remains meagre, especially concerning their political representation and decision-making roles within the administration.

When analysing the Urban-Rural Continuum, there's an urgent need to reframe it to incorporate the tribal communities. The prevailing classification often fails to adequately address the unique challenges faced by tribal populations living in areas where urbanisation is encroaching upon their traditional habitats. The consequences of this encroachment are dire, as evidenced by distressing statistics such as the high infant mortality rate in tribal areas like Attapadi, reaching a staggering 66 deaths per 1000 births. Wayanad, though known for its tribal population, continues to grapple with issues of geographical isolation and high dropout rates among tribal children, especially concerning school education.

30. Based on the lecture at Urban Action School 2023 by Mr. Subash V.S.

Geographical isolation, compounded by historical neglect, has perpetuated the disparity faced by tribal communities. Despite being geographically concentrated in certain regions, like Attapadi and parts of Wayanad, the absence of proper recognition and protection of their lands has led to encroachments, exacerbating their vulnerabilities.

Furthermore, the shift in agricultural practices and dietary habits has adversely affected tribal communities. The government's focus on providing rice, which is not a staple food for many tribes, while the sale of millets (their traditional produce) to external markets, has disrupted their traditional cultivation systems. There's an urgent need to revive and support these traditional agricultural practices to ensure both food security and cultural preservation.

Political empowerment and inclusive policy development are essential for the upliftment of tribal communities. However, the administration's lack of tribal representation and consultation in policy-making processes has widened the gap between policy formulation and ground realities. The State Planning Board's economic assessments often fail to accurately capture the socio-economic status of tribal communities, necessitating the development of a dedicated tribal policy that caters to their specific needs and aspirations. A holistic integration approach is imperative, acknowledging that urbanisation and developmental activities often conflict with the traditional way of life of these communities. The National Education Policy (NEP) should incorporate the cultural history and practices of tribal communities into the curriculum to ensure a more inclusive and relevant education system. Healthcare disparities also persist, with traditional medicinal practices of tribal communities often overlooked by the government's health policies. Integrating these traditional practices into mainstream healthcare facilities can significantly reduce hardships faced by tribal communities in accessing healthcare services.

Sustainable development strategies that prioritise the inclusion and empowerment of tribal communities while promoting their cultural heritage are essential for a harmonious coexistence between urbanisation and indigenous tribal communities.

Unit 5
Planning for Sustainable Regional Growth

Urban-Rural Continuum as an Approach to Planning[31]

False dichotomies, often entrenched in societal perceptions, are known to fuel discord and oversimplify complex issues. There is a need to move beyond such rigid classifications of rural versus urban, developed versus developing, agriculture versus the rest of the economy, and internal versus international migration which oversimplify the intricate fabric of societies. In the case of traditional dichotomy of rural and urban, and the accordingly mandated governance structure, they seem inadequate to understand and act upon poverty, undernourishment, education, health, environmental management or even development. For, between the two extremes lies an intermediate settlement formation which is marked by a continuum where boundaries blur, and interactions between rural and urban spheres shape socio-economic dynamics. Identification of such areas is integral to understanding the urban-rural connections, which is important for making policy decisions across development sectors.

The Urban Rural Catchment Areas (URCA) dataset and Global Human Settlement Layer (GHSL) data have been instrumental in mapping this intricate interplay, illustrating how economies are intricately tied to urban centres while revealing the significance of secondary cities

31. Based on the lecture and presentation at Urban Action School 2023 by Dr. Andrea Cattaneo.

in global demographics. The data shows that globally, 35% of the population lives around big cities, while 25% around medium cities and 38% around small cities and towns. In South Asia 36% reside in small cities[32]. Further there is a negative correlation between people living in large and intermediate towns and poverty, while remote areas exhibit a positive correlation. This highlights that the Intermediate and small cities wield substantial influence in alleviating poverty, challenging the conventional belief that development pivots only on a single urban centre, also evident in the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. This reorientation necessitates acknowledging the importance of secondary cities in shaping regional prosperity.

Moving beyond a single urban centre of reference, is the exploration of the polycentric city-region systems. The evolution from URCAs to city-region perspectives illuminates the diverse functions and spatial dynamics within urban conglomerates. By understanding how different nodes contribute to development, policymakers can implement strategies that foster balanced and inclusive growth across the entire urban network.

The Universal Visitation Law of Human Mobility law emphasises how human movement and visitation patterns are influenced by both frequency and distance, ultimately shaping the functions and significance of various urban nodes within a polycentric framework. Within this context, larger cities are recognized as centres offering specialised functions that attract visitors from farther distances. This aligns with the concept that people are willing to travel further for specific services or amenities that are more specialised and concentrated in larger urban areas.

Examining the hierarchy of urban centres—from towns to small cities, intermediate cities, and large cities—reveals a spectrum of services

32. Data is from Global Urban Rural Catchment Areas (URCA) Grid - 2021.

and facilities available at different scales. This hierarchy corresponds to varying levels of human mobility, where individuals travel varying distances based on the frequency and specialised nature of services offered. For instance, towns might primarily cater to everyday needs like groceries and primary education, attracting individuals from nearby areas due to their high visitation frequency. Small cities extend services like supermarkets and technical education, drawing people from slightly farther distances due to their increased specialisation. Intermediate cities host facilities such as universities and hospitals, attracting individuals willing to travel longer distances for these specific services. Large cities provide even more specialised services like international airports, large sports centres, and cultural hubs, prompting people to travel greater distances owing to the uniqueness and scarcity of these offerings. This variance in urban structure influences how individuals perceive and access essential services based on their location and proximity to urban centres. Moreover, the variation in city sizes across regions, as seen in places like France, reflects the diverse spatial distribution of specialised functions and the different scales at which these services are available.

The share of the population living within certain travel distances from different types of urban centres sheds light on the accessibility and utilisation of urban services. This information is critical in discerning how different segments of the population interact with and benefit from urban amenities, forming the basis for informed policy decisions regarding resource allocation and infrastructure development. In India, only 2% of the Indian population has to travel more than one hour to reach a small city or larger city. This is considerably lower than the global average of 11%.

Transitioning from the URCA perspective to the City Regions approach facilitates a more detailed examination of daily accessibility. This

shift recognizes that while a large city may have a significant regional influence, residents' daily activities and access to services are often centred around the urban hub that is closest to them.

The city region framework serves as a fundamental building block for urban planners and researchers engaged in applied studies. By combining diverse datasets, planners can create comprehensive models that accurately depict the complex interactions within polycentric city-regions. This facilitates a more nuanced understanding of the spatial and demographic dynamics, aiding in the formulation of targeted and effective urban policies. It is also instrumental in spatial analysis for regional planning. Planners can overlay socio-economic data onto the polycentric city-regions model to identify areas of need and assess the distribution of essential services such as schools, hospitals, and other infrastructure. This approach enables a more precise allocation of resources, ensuring that urban and rural areas alike receive the necessary support for sustainable development. Access to cities plays a crucial role in shaping economic conditions, particularly in relation to poverty and food security. Employing a polycentric lens allows for a detailed economic analysis of how the different urban centres contribute to poverty alleviation and food security[33].

The URCA and city region approaches can enable researchers and policymakers to identify disparities, understand the economic functions of various city nodes, and formulate targeted interventions to improve the well-being of diverse populations. This approach would support geographically nuanced perspectives in development, required to address increasing spatial inequality.

33. The State of Food and Agriculture 2017: Leveraging food systems for inclusive rural transformation. *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*, 2017.

Urban-Rural Dynamics: Ideating on a Balanced Growth[34]

The dynamics between urban and rural areas play a pivotal role in shaping societal progress and sustainable development. In recent years, a noticeable trend has emerged: a significant outflow of young individuals from rural settings to urban centres in pursuit of education, employment, and better prospects for livelihood. This migration has posed challenges for the sustainable development of rural communities. However, amidst these challenges lies an opportunity to reverse this trend and create thriving rural spaces that attract and retain the younger generation.

Recognizing the significance of this issue, the Nordic Regional Ministers initiated the Nordic Rural Youth Panel in 2023. The panel extensively deliberated on crucial themes such as education, labour markets, housing, transportation, community engagement, health, and youth participation. The recommendations stemming from the Nordic Rural Youth Panel underscored the pressing needs of rural youth: accessible and efficient transportation options, more affordable and diverse housing options, accessible and dynamic education opportunities at all levels, visibility of existing and potential opportunities in their local labour markets, access to safe spaces and tools, funding for public meeting spaces and the need to be met and reached on their terms. Drawing insights from Nordic countries and their reconsideration of the urban-rural relationship, it becomes apparent that re-evaluating urban-rural dynamics is essential.

Various regions globally have implemented strategies to preserve and revitalise rural areas. Italy's success with revitalising rural towns through refugees offers a compelling model of inclusive strategies.

34. The State of Food and Agriculture 2017: Leveraging food systems for inclusive rural transformation. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2017.

When refugees settled in Italy's rural areas, they not only found sanctuary but also became integral to the community's revitalization. By participating in local economies and cultural exchange, they injected new life into these towns. This experience illustrates the transformative power of inclusivity in preserving rural communities. On the other hand, Japan's Kunisaki Peninsula provides an educational paradigm by exposing students to rural life. The immersive experience cultivates qualities such as creativity, a spirit of action, and a commitment to service. Students learn first-hand about the interconnectedness of nature and society, gaining a deeper appreciation for rural life's values. Rural America is also striving to make communities development-ready, while West Australia's Planning Commission has introduced master plans that include rural areas, prioritising agricultural land, fostering rural living conditions, addressing regional economic variations, managing extractive industries, nurturing tree farms, and maintaining environmental and landscape attributes. Europe, through the European Commission's Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas, endeavours to redefine the role of rural areas in contemporary society. This vision aims to revitalise rural life by engaging local communities, authorities, and residents in a consultative process. By analysing data, forecasting future trends, and gathering insights from public consultations, this initiative seeks to craft a renewed narrative for rural areas, potentially enhancing their socioeconomic standing. Scotland's initiative of nature baths and the concept of "biophilia" emphasises the intrinsic connection between humans and nature. This approach underscores the importance of integrating natural elements into urban and rural environments to enhance well-being and foster a sustainable, harmonious relationship with the ecosystem. UN HABITAT's guiding principles on Urban-Rural linkages serve as a foundation for understanding the interconnectedness between urban and rural areas. These principles advocate for locally grounded interventions, balanced partnerships, and evidence-based strategies. By acknowledging the interdependence of urban and rural spaces,

these principles promote holistic and inclusive development, ensuring that the growth of one does not come at the expense of the other.

Kerala, whose development model is often compared with Nordic countries, is undergoing a fast-paced transformation. The National Commission of Population estimates a staggering 96% urbanisation in Kerala, demanding careful consideration for a sustainable growth approach.

Nationally, initiatives like the Shayama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission and the Aspirational District Program exemplify efforts to empower smaller clusters and districts, recognizing their potential for self-development. The rurban mission targets clusters comprising populations between 25,000 to 50,000, allowing these regions to design and implement their development plans. In Kerala, this initiative spans 13 clusters, covering 25 panchayats, including the Kannur cluster. The focus lies in bridging the rural-urban gap by infusing urban amenities and services into rural areas, encouraging comprehensive development that retains the essence of rural life while providing essential urban facilities. Covering a broader spectrum with 115 aspirational districts, the Aspirational Districts program focuses on uplifting regions that lag in various developmental indices. Key thematic areas encompass health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion, skill development, and more. By targeting these crucial sectors, the program aims to catalyse holistic development and bridge the gaps between developed and underdeveloped regions. Wayanad is the only aspirational district in Kerala.

The accelerated pace of urbanisation should not overshadow the significance of rural environments, their potential, and the opportunities they offer. Neglecting these aspects risks transforming every territory into urban landscapes. This highlights the pivotal role

of regional planning, providing insights into the evolving dynamics of a region. For instance, the Guruvayur block in Thrissur, is experiencing a surge in urbanisation due to a cluster effect, attracting a substantial migrant population. Similarly, Alappuzha, a hinterland renowned for its picturesque backwaters and natural beauty, is witnessing swift urbanisation.

In this context, understanding how regions are evolving is crucial. Regional plans serve as navigational tools, offering a comprehensive view of changing trends, influencing factors, and growth patterns within a region. They guide sustainable development strategies, ensuring a balance between urban expansion and the preservation of rural charm and resources.

While urbanisation is happening at a fast pace, the needs and opportunities provided by the rural environment must not be ignored. In absence of this, every territory will be urbanised. And this is where the role of regional plans comes in as they add to the understanding of how the region is changing. For instance, the Guruvayir block in Thrissur is being propelled into rapid urbanisation due to cluster effect and absorbing a lot of migrant population. Similarly, Alappuzha, known for its scenic backwaters and natural landscape is also rapidly urbanising.

Regional planning initiatives are underway in Kerala. These include the District Spatial Strategies for Kottayam, Idukki, Alappuzha, and Pathanamthitta Districts, facilitated by KfW's AM Grant. Additionally, the Thrissur Management Association and the School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal, are collaborating on the Climate Resilient Regional Plan for Thrissur District (Thrissur 2047), supported by KILA as a Knowledge Partner. The strategic delineation of thematic clusters focusing on the Wellness Economy (Shoranur-Nilambur-Kottakkal), Cultural Economy (Guruvayoor-Kunnamkulam-Chavakkad), and Climate Smart Economy (Kannur-Mattannur-Thalassery) is in

progress. These clusters aim to align economic activities with local strengths, promoting sustainable development tailored to each region's unique attributes and needs.

Ultimately, the swift urbanisation pace highlights the need to balance rural needs with the allure of urban life. Amidst the rapid urbanisation, it is imperative to recognize the importance of a green-blue environment for the overall quality of life.

Governing the Urban-Rural Continuum: Prioritising People's Participation[35]

India's growing cities are highly segregated. The prevailing religious and caste affiliations among urban residents significantly forecast their access to public services and socioeconomic standing within specific neighbourhoods. Marginalised groups, such as minorities and dalits, often find themselves residing in highly segregated areas. The rapid expansion of India's cities, celebrated as catalysts for social advancement, has, to a significant extent, mirrored and perpetuated the entrenched caste and religious frameworks prevalent in its rural areas. The hollow promises of neoliberal urbanisation exposed deep-rooted issues, including inequality, unemployment, inadequate access to basic services, housing crises, and sustainability challenges.

Despite constitutional amendments and ambitious urban renewal plans like Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, the involvement of private corporations superseded elected bodies, raising concerns about democratic governance in city planning and management. The JNNURM consisted of two sub-missions focusing on Urban Infrastructure & Governance and Basic Services to the Urban Poor. Its overarching goal is to transform cities into

35. Based on the lecture and presentation at Urban Action School 2023 by Dr. Jiju P Alex and Tikender Singh Panwar (with inputs from Dr. Jos Chathukulam and Mr. AR Ravi).

economically productive, efficient, equitable, and responsive urban centres. However, the program's execution has faced criticism due to a fundamental flaw: an overemphasis on public-private participation, leading to greater influence wielded by private corporations over elected bodies. The allure of significant financial incentives, amounting to Rs 100,000 crore, incentivized state governments and urban bodies to hastily formulate development plans to access JNNURM funds. In the rush to meet requirements, consultants were hastily hired to prepare plans within extremely short timeframes, often less than a month, while purportedly conducting "active public consultation" as mandated by the mission. The appraisal process for these plans was expedited as well. Appraisal agencies employed by the Center swiftly assessed these plans. Within just three months of JNNURM's launch, over 23 infrastructure projects worth Rs 86,482.95 crore were greenlit. The rapid pace at which plans were prepared and approved raises concerns about the depth and authenticity of public engagement, critical for inclusive and participatory urban development. Moreover, the substantial involvement of private entities in the decision-making process, coupled with expedited procedures, raises questions about transparency, accountability, and the long-term impact of these projects on communities.

The commercialization of public goods within the urban landscape has become a major area of concern, particularly regarding essential services like utilities, health, education, and urban planning. Privatised systems might prioritise profitability over providing affordable services to underserved populations. The focus on technology-driven development and capital-intensive projects highlighted exclusivity, skewing access to essential services based on socio-economic status and leaving behind concerns of equitable urban growth. An illustrative case is the hepatitis and jaundice outbreak in Shimla. The issue stemmed from the management of the water supply, where the distribution was handled by the Municipal Corporation while the water itself was supplied by private entities. Contaminated water found its

way into the city's water supply schemes, located downstream from the sewage treatment plants. The problem was exasperated in winter months due to fluctuations in rain levels which led to variations in the concentration of sewage in the water. Upon investigation, the National Institute of Virology identified the same virus in both sewage and water samples, providing evidence linking the contaminated water to the outbreak of jaundice and hepatitis. Following public outcry and legal action, a Special Investigation Team (SIT) was formed, resulting in the imprisonment of six engineers allegedly involved in negligence. Additionally, corruption allegations were made against the Pollution Control Board, citing bribery influencing the water sample testing process. Ultimately, these events led to the transfer of control over the water utility from private entities to government administration to mitigate such occurrences and ensure better management and regulation of the water supply in Shimla.

However, in the past decade, flagship programs like the Smart City Mission continued the trend of privileging private participation, leading to a project-oriented approach that often sidelined elected councils. Municipalities transformed from mere managers to entrepreneurial entities, ushering in privatisation and marketization of urban services. The rise of Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) redefined the governance structure, posing challenges to the essence of the 74th Amendment, which aimed to decentralise power to local bodies.

The emphasis on attracting private capital, a trend dating back to the 1990s, hasn't substantially bridged the significant gap between the required funds for urban development and the available financial resources highlights a crucial challenge faced by governments in ensuring sustainable urban growth. The World Bank's staggering estimate of $840 billion (Rs. 70 lakh crore) needed for urban development contrasts starkly with the relatively limited financial allocations from programs like the Smart City Mission, AMRUT, and PMAY, totaling around Rs 2 lakh crore over five years. Despite three

decades of reforms, government funding remains the primary source for urban finance. The allocation breakdown reveals that 48% comes from the central government, 24% from state governments, and only 15% from city governments. PPP projects and commercial debt contribute a mere 3% and 2%, respectively. This discrepancy between the enormity of financial requirements and the limited contributions from various sources poses significant hurdles to comprehensive urban development.

In this landscape, Kerala has emerged as a beacon of success in this endeavour through its progressive model of democratic decentralisation. The state's success lies in its commitment to the principles of democratic decentralisation embedded in the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Indian Constitution and has three pillars.

Firstly, Kerala has devolved approximately more than 30% of planned funds to local governments, empowering them with financial autonomy. This financial independence has been instrumental in steering local development initiatives, ensuring that both urban and rural areas receive their fair share of resources.

Secondly, Kerala's governance model goes beyond mere financial devolution. The state has transferred vital departments to local governments, allowing for administrative decentralisation. Officers are stationed at the disposal of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to facilitate effective implementation of policies, aligning governance more closely with the unique needs of local communities.

Lastly, the process of engaging people in planning involves a systematic and participatory approach that promotes active involvement of citizens in decision-making processes through Gram Sabhas and Nagar Sabhas at the grassroot level. These discussions revolve around identifying and prioritising development projects that cater to the specific needs and aspirations of the community. Once

these deliberations are concluded, the outcomes are transformed into actionable plans. Multiple development projects, drawn from the collective insights of the gram sabha, are compiled to create comprehensive plans. These plans are then presented for government consideration. The government allocates funds to implement these plans, and the financial backing provided by the government is a crucial enabler, allowing for the execution of projects. The execution of these plans is overseen by government officials working under the supervision of the Gram Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies. This ensures that the projects are implemented efficiently and effectively, while also maintaining a close connection to the local communities. The involvement of the panchayats and local bodies reinforces the accountability and transparency of the entire process.

To further strengthen the accountability of local governance, Kerala has incorporated mechanisms such as the Ombudsman and Grievance Redressal Forums at district and state levels. These structures provide avenues for citizens to address grievances, fostering transparency and trust. Periodic social audits further enhance accountability, allowing citizens to lodge complaints and actively participate in the oversight of public services.

The transformative impact of this participatory process is evident in Ollukara Block Panchayat in Kerala comprising 12,000 to 15,000 families. At the heart of this success is the Panchayat's dedication to tailoring projects to meet local needs. In a strategic move to invigorate agriculture as a livelihood option among the youth, the Block Panchayat has pioneered initiatives fostering entrepreneurship. Over 40 units have received support to process raw materials for creation of value-added products and the processing unit dedicated to moringa leaves stands out as a resounding success. Additionally, the Block Panchayat has initiated collaboration with the agricultural university. The health sector has also been a pivotal focus area for Ollukara Block Panchayat. Based on the felt-needs of the people,

child healthcare centres have been introduced. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Panchayat ensured the elderly received door-to-door health services through Vaayumitram. Funds were also allocated to combat the widely spreading vaccine-related misinformation. Ollukara emerged as the best-performing Block Panchayat for senior citizens' healthcare due to its community-centric approach to eldercare. Further, the Block Panchayat has taken measures to incorporate the needs of the tribal community. Quarterly visits to tribal habitats are undertaken to facilitate meaningful engagement, and initiatives such as physical training and Public Service Commission coaching have been initiated to empower marginalised communities. In a bid for self-sufficiency, Ollukara Block Panchayat has installed a 13kW power plant. Concurrently, efforts to develop scientific temper demonstrate a commitment to dispelling superstitions and fostering a progressive mindset within the community. The example of Ollukura Block Panchayat illustrates the immense advantages and potency of grassroots engagement and community-driven governance. It showcases how this approach not only facilitates swift and efficient crisis response but also effectively addresses the diverse needs of the community, laying the foundation for resilient and inclusive societies.

While Kerala's model is commendable, challenges persist in urban areas. There's a growing consensus that the weaknesses in India's urban governance can be attributed in part to the lack of robust city-level institutions. One proposed solution involves empowering the office of directly elected mayors in major Indian cities. This shift to direct elections for mayors could potentially enhance accountability, decision-making efficiency, and overall governance. The governance structure in Indian cities follows a system where Councillors are elected via the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system, and Mayors are indirectly elected from these Councillors. This structure has often been criticised for leading to weak city-level institutions and governance issues. Contrasting this, South Africa employs both the FPTP system for ward

Councillors elected by citizens and a Proportional Representation (PR) system using the list system for PR Councillors. The system in South Africa, integrating both FPTP and PR, allows for a more diverse representation and potentially more balanced governance within municipalities. This differs significantly from India's approach, which primarily utilises FPTP and has a 'wall-to-wall local government' structure extending from wards to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), then to Municipalities and Corporations.

Moreover, South Africa's 'wall-to-wall Municipalities' model, offering a more comprehensive and unified municipal structure, contrasts with India's fragmented system that encompasses multiple layers of local governance. Streamlining these structures in India to enable more cohesive and accountable urban governance might prove beneficial. The adoption of direct elections for mayors and a restructuring of urban governance to create more cohesive and empowered municipal bodies could address some of the deficiencies in India's city governance.

As India navigates the complexities of urban-rural continuum governance, global and local experience calls for the need to reconsider the very essence of governance: one that places the agency of the people at its core, paving the way for a more just and participatory urban landscape.

Unit 6
Future of Urbanization and Sustainable Development

Leaving No One Behind: Ensuring Inclusivity in the Continuum of Progress[36]

In today's complex city landscapes, numerous interconnected challenges hinder the creation of fair and inclusive cities. The concept of the "right to the city" emerges as a guiding principle, echoing the call for a fundamental shift in power dynamics within urban spaces. This notion encapsulates the collective struggle for marginalised populations to claim agency, access, and dignity in shaping their urban environments.

One of the critical facets within this discourse is the recognition of power differentials among city dwellers. In India, the term "city-makers" has been used to refer to urban informal workers, often homeless, who help make the city more liveable for its inhabitants, while themselves being compelled to live in most precarious conditions without secure livelihood or decent housing. This marginalised segment, exists within the realm of invisibility, and is removed from the decision-making processes that shape their lives.

Understanding the urban-rural continuum demands an awareness the intertwining of the agrarian crisis with the urban crisis, seen most crucially in the expanding numbers of "surplus population" that are

36. Based on the lecture and presentation at Urban Action School 2023 by Sandeep Chachra and Joseph Mathai (with inputs from Dr. Jos Chathukulam).

needed less and less in both agriculture and industry, in what has been termed as "jobless growth" and the now evident "job-loss growth". At a global scale this "surplus population" can be seen feeding the 110 million people that the UNHCR sees as being forcibly displaced as on June 2023. This resonates with what the ILO report in 2018 stated that 2 billion people, more than 60 per cent of the world's employed population, work informally, the majority of whom lack social protection, rights at work and decent working conditions. To these majorities of people, we also need to add a count of people out of work, a number which has only grown over the years. With pressures of surplus populations, informality is not just restricted to the informal sector but also seeps into formal and organised sectors with the rise of contract labour and growing precarities of organised labour.

Building people's organisations is the need of the hour to help more and more vulnerable communities' access and assert rights and entitlements. People's organisations and assertions for collective rights across diverse community and occupation agendas needs to be seen in this context. The focus of rights assertions needs to look beyond employers to encompass demands for social security from the state. Activating knowledge-based activism and incorporating the pedagogy of struggle into conscientization processes is pivotal. Action research, involving communities in understanding the multifaceted impacts of various factors, from climate change to economic shifts, is imperative to empower and uplift these communities.

It's crucial to recognize that power, in varying forms, exists within each individual. The narrative portraying the poor as lacking needs a paradigm shift. It's vital to draw attention to the strengths and experiences of these communities amidst adversity, fostering confidence and agency within them. By reframing the discourse from one of despair to one highlighting vision and the capacity to carve a new path embedded with inherent rights, a climate for inclusive progress can be cultivated.

Navigating the multifaceted issues in the continuum demands a concerted effort—aligning policy, community empowerment, ethical practices, and technological advancements toward a vision of inclusive, equitable, and empowered rural landscapes.

Further, efforts should be made for forging alternative structures and creating opportunities to tackle emerging challenges. For instance, as the world enters the fourth industrial revolution, marked by the advent of artificial intelligence, a significant reduction in job opportunities in South Asia is anticipated. In this era of jobless growth, the time is ripe for entrepreneurial endeavours. Collective enterprises and skill-building initiatives should be promoted and pivoted towards elevating value chains and service provision.

Planners, with their expertise in urban dynamics, wield the power to design and implement policies that profoundly influence the accessibility and inclusivity of spaces. Collaborating closely with communities, planners can co-create solutions that mitigate marginalisation, fostering social cohesion and equitable access to essential services and opportunities within the continuum.

Ultimately, leaving no one behind in the rural-urban continuum of progress requires a holistic approach with inclusivity as the guiding principle, ensuring that every individual, irrespective of their geographical location and socio-economic status has equal opportunities to thrive and contribute to the shared progress of society.

Empowering Change: The Foundational Role of Generating Evidence[37]

The management of urbanisation involves addressing resource allocation in developing urban centres and ensuring sustainable

37. Based on the lecture and presentation at Urban Action School 2023 by Dr. Ajith Kaliyath.

systems for rural livelihoods. Equitable development demands a comprehensive understanding of the spaces in the urban-rural continuum, necessitating strategic planning and interventions based on a robust foundation built upon evidence. In the realm of planning, the journey begins with the diligent pursuit of evidence—a cornerstone for initiating, refining, and ultimately catalysing change.

For policymakers, researchers, planners, and civil society organisations alike, evidence forms the cornerstone of informed decision-making. The ability to generate, refine, and communicate evidence is a shared competency that fuels their efforts. This iterative process doesn't conclude with the end of a program; rather, it fosters ongoing collaboration, embracing a cohort-based approach that amplifies contextual knowledge and intervention strategies.

Innovation stands as a common denominator guiding these professions toward impactful change. The impetus for innovation stems from a refusal to accept the status quo, compelling professionals to carve new paths toward societal transformation. It's the innovative thinking ingrained within these professions that fuels progress and adaptation to changing societal landscapes.

Data sensitivity is another linchpin in this process. Decoding hyper-local data and discerning patterns within them unveils nuanced insights crucial for targeted interventions. Understanding these patterns empowers professionals to navigate complex societal systems effectively, fostering adaptability and resourcefulness in achieving desired outcomes.

Within the realm of evidence, robust analysis is pivotal. Strengthening data sources such as the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), Census, and National Sample Survey (NSS) systems becomes imperative. Bridging the gap between research communities and ground realities

is equally essential, allowing for a deeper understanding of data collection systems to ensure accuracy and mitigate manipulation.

Data can be used to drive social change and advocate for specific causes by relying on data-backed evidence to highlight societal issues, influence policies, and rally support for change. To effectively ground and root knowledge, it's crucial to integrate data within the cultural and contextual frameworks of communities. This requires engaging with local stakeholders, understanding their unique needs, and integrating traditional knowledge with modern insights. By embedding data within community contexts, trust is established, fostering community buy-in and ensuring that solutions align with their realities. Moreover, data plays a pivotal role in monitoring and implementing sustainable practices beyond economic realms, encompassing communal well-being. By employing data-driven approaches, communities can track progress and make informed decisions regarding environmental conservation, social equity, and cultural preservation. This holistic use of data facilitates the implementation of sustainable initiatives that cater to the broader needs of communities, fostering inclusive growth.

ANNEXURES

Annexure 1:
Urban Action School 2023 Program Schedule

Day 1: Monday, 20th November 2023	
From Urban Resilience to Climate Just Cities: Locating Justice in Urban Climate Action **Learning Objective:** To understand the concepts behind the separation of urban and rural, their place in the Indian reality, and to explore the alternate perspective of the continuum.	
Session Details	**Speakers**
9:30 am to 10:45 am	Registration
10:45 am to 11:00 am	Tea Break
Session 1 Inaugural Ceremony 1:00 am to 1:00 pm	**Dr. Jiju P. Alex** Member, Kerala State Planning Board **Dr. Joy Elamon** Director General, Kerala Institute of Local Administration **Dr. Amitabh Kundu** Former Professor, JNU **K T Ravindran** Urban Designer & Senior Academic Advisor, RICS School of Built Environment **Nadja Dorschner** Resident Representative, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, South Asia **Dr. Esther Mariaselvam** Associate Director, ActionAid Association

01:00 pm to 02:00 pm	Lunch
Session 2 Urban Rural Continuum: The Conceptual Framing 02:00 pm to 03:30 pm	**Dr. Amitabh Kundu** Former Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University
03:30 pm to 04:00 pm	Tea
Session 3 Spaces in an Urban-Rural Continuum 04:00 pm to 05:30 pm	**Dr. Jiju P. Alex** Member, Kerala State Planning Board
Day 2: Tuesday, 21st November 2023	
How and why the urban-rural continuum exists, with a focus on Global South perspectives **Learning Objective:** To explore examples of how the lines between urban and rural are blurring, and how ecosystems are changing in both urban and rural areas.	
Session Details	**Speakers**
Session 1 Blurred space & changing ecosystems in the continuum: reasons and reality 9:30 am to 11:30 am	**K T Ravindran** Urban Designer & Senior Academic Advisor, RICS School of Built Environment **Rajesh T N** Secretary, Greater Cochin Development Authority (GCDA)
11:30 am to 11:45 am	Tea Break
Session 2 Urban-Rural Dynamics: Ideating on a balanced growth 11:45 am to 1:15 pm	**Dr. Ajith Kaliyath** Urban Chair Professor, Kerala Institute of Local Administration
01:15 pm to 02:15 pm	Lunch

Session 3 Effect of industrial growth and other factors on the urban-rural continuum 02:15 pm to 04:15 pm	**Dr. Anil Kumar Roy** Sr. Associate Professor, Faculty of Planning, CEPT University **Ambili T B** KINFRA (Kochi-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor)
04:15 pm to 04:30 pm	Tea
Session 4 Urban-Rural Continuum as an Approach to Planning 04:30 pm to 06:00 pm	**Dr. Andrea Cattaneo** Senior Economist Food and Agricultural Organisation
Day 3: Wednesday, 22nd November 2023	
Communities at the Cusp **Learning Objective:** To understand and unpack the relations between the continuum and agrarian distress, cyclical migration and marginalised communities among others.	
Session Details	**Speakers**
Session 1 Agrarian Crisis and the Urban Rural Continuum 9:30 am to 11:00 am	**P Krishnaprasad** Finance Secretary, All India Kisan Sabha
11:00 am to 11:30 am	Tea Break
Session 2 City Makers in the Urban Rural Continuum 11:30 am to 1:30 pm	**Amarjeet Kaur** General Secretary All India Trade Union Congress **Dr. Chinmay Tumbe** Associate Professor IIM, Ahmedabad
01:30 pm to 02:30 pm	Lunch

Session 3 Rural Urban Continuum: Processes Transforming Frontier Spaces and Society 02:30 pm to 04:00 pm	**Dr. Shrawan Kumar Acharya** Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University
04:00 pm to 04:30 pm	Tea
Session 4 Impact of the Urban Rural Continuum on Marginalised Communities 04:30 pm to 06:00 pm	**Sandeep Chachra** Executive Director, ActionAid Association

Day 4: Thursday, 23rd November 2023

Communities at the Cusp

Learning Objective: To understand and unpack the relations between the continuum and climate change, food security, and changing governance structures.

Session Details	Speakers
Session 1 Impacts of Climate Change in the Continuum 9:00 am to 10:30 am	**M Vetri Selvan** Advocate, Madras High Court **Dr. Simi Mehta** CEO, Impact and Policy Research Institute
Session 2 Impact of the Continuum on Food Security and Entitlements 10:30 am to 11:30 am	**Dr. Veena Naregal** Professor, Institute of Economic Growth
11:30 am to 11:45 am	Tea Break

Session 3 Access to Public Services in the Rural Urban Continuum 11:45 am to 1:00 pm	**Subash V S** Research officer, Kerala Institute for Training and Development Studies (KIRTADS)
01:00 pm to 02:00 pm	Lunch
Session 4 Urban Governance and Impacts on Marginalised Communities 02:00 pm to 03:30 pm	**Tikender Singh Panwar** Former Deputy Mayor, Shimla
04:00 pm to 04:30 pm	Tea
Session 5 Public Seminar on Urban Sociology and Governance 04:30 pm to 06:00 pm	**A R Ravi** Block Panchayat President, Ollukara **Dr. Jos Chathukulam** Director, Centre for Rural Management

Day 5: Friday, 24th November 2023

Fieldwork

Learning Objective: To explore real-world examples of the urban-rural continuum through direct engagement with local communities and governance structures.

Session Details	Coordinators
Field visit to Thiruvilwamala Gram Panchayat & Kuthumpully Weavers Cluster	**Antony Augustine** Research Fellow, Kerala Institute for Local Administration
Field visit to Wadakanchery Municipality Office	**Irene Antony** Research Fellow, Kerala Institute for Local Administration

Day 6: Saturday, 25th November 2023	
Towards an alternative perspective on the urban-rural dichotomy **Learning Objective:** To understand and explore how to advocate for and build policies based on the urban-rural continuum that reflect reality and the way forward.	
Session Details	**Speakers**
Session 1 Reflections from Field Visit 9:30 am to 11:00 am	Group Discussions
11:00 am to 11:30 am	Tea Break
Session 2 Resolutions and Methods 11:30 am to 1:00 pm	**Tikender Singh Panwar** Former Deputy Mayor, Shimla **Dr. Ajith Kaliyath** Urban Chair Professor Kerala Institute of Local Administration **Joseph Mathai** Communications Head, ActionAid Association
01:00 pm to 02:00 pm	Lunch
Session 3 Planning for Sustainable Regional Growth 02:30 pm to 04:00 pm	**Prem Ranjan** Head, Policy and Research ActionAid Association
04:00 pm to 04:30 pm	Tea
Session 4 Planning for Sustainable Regional Growth 04:30 pm to 06:00 pm	Group Presentations

Day 7: Sunday, 26th November 2023	
Reflections and Way Forward **Learning Objective:** To build the momentum for further action on the urban-rural continuum by revisiting the learnings from the UAS and preparing a plan of action	
Session Details	**Speakers**
Session 1 Reflections from UAS'23 9:30 am to 11:00 am	Group Discussion
11:00 am to 11:30 am	Tea Break
Session 2 Valedictory Session 11:30 am to 1:00 pm	**Dr. Joy Elamon** Director General Kerala Institute of Local Administration **Rajiv Kumar** Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, South Asia **Dipali Sharma** Director, Programmes Partnerships and OE ActionAid Association

Annexure 2:
Profile of Resource Persons

A R Ravi is the President of Ollukara Block Panchayat in Kerala.

Dr. Ajith Kaliyath is the Urban Chair Professor at Kerala Institute of Local Administration, Kerala, India. He is an urban and regional planner by training. He has 22 years of professional experience which include technical, research and academic positions

Amarjeet Kaur is the General Secretary of the All India Trade Union Congress and a National Secretariat Member of the Communist Party of India. Having started her political journey as a student leader, she became the first woman to head a central trade union in India.

Ambili TB is the Manager (Kochi-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor) at the Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation.

Dr. Amitabh Kundu is a Senior Fellow with the Sustainable Cities and Transport program at WRI India. He was Professor and Dean of the School of Social Sciences at Jawaharlal Nehru University, a member of National Statistical Commission and is in the Editorial Board of a large number of national and international journals. Currently, he is chairing a committee to monitor the national survey, being conducted for Swatch Bharat Mission for the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.

Dr. Andrea Cattaneo is a Senior Economist at the Food and Agriculture Organization and Team Leader of its annual flagship publication "The State of Food and Agriculture". He has over 25 years of experience and an extensive publication record in peer-reviewed journals on economic issues relating to development, food security, and climate change.

Dr. Anil K. Roy is an Associate Professor with the Faculty of Planning, CEPT University, Ahmedabad. Previously, he was the National Coordinator for Indian Heritage Cities Network, UNESCO. He holds a PhD degree in Urban Geography from JNU, New Delhi and was awarded the Canadian Studies Doctoral Fellowship.

Dr. Chinmay Tumbe is a faculty member in the Economics Area at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. He is a member of the The Lancet Covid-19 India Taskforce and was a member of the Working Group on Migration of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation in 2016-17.

Dipali Sharma is a development worker with over 25 years of experience in the social sector and currently works as Director-Organisational Effectiveness in ActionAid Association India. She also leads and guides partnership processes including programme reviews, appraisals, monitoring, impact assessment and evaluations.

Dr. Esther Mariaselvam is a development professional with over three decades of experience in programme management, organisational leadership, humanitarian action, campaigning, and advocacy for disadvantaged communities' human rights. She is currently work with ActionAid Association in India as an Associate Director.

Dr. Jiju P Alex is an expert member of the Kerala State Planning Commission. He teaches at the Kerala Agricultural University and was instrumental in designing the training methodology of the e-governance programmes of local self-government institutions. At the State Planning Board, he deals with decentralisation, housing and art and culture.

Dr. Jos Chathukulam is the Director of Centre for Rural Management. He is the former Chair Professor, Sri. Ramakrishana Hegde Chair on Decentralization and Development, Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Bengaluru. He is a researcher and national level consultant in Panchayati Raj and Local Level Planning.

Joseph Mathai is a professional with over four decades of experience in social issues and cultural activities. Since 1989, he has been actively involved in book publishing and currently serves as the head of communications at ActionAid Association.

Dr. Joy Elamon is the Director General of Kerala Institute of Local Administration. A medical doctor by training, his areas of interest and expertise include decentralisation and local governance, participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation, climate change, and development among others.

K.T. Ravindran, is an urban designer along with being a Senior Academic Advisor, RICS School of Built Environment, Chairman of the Architectural Heritage Advisory Committee of INTACH, Trustee of the Indian Heritage Cities Network Foundation and was Member of the Advisory Board for the United Nations Capital Master Plan, New York.

M. Vetri Selvan is an experienced advocate with a 17-year track record of active practice before the Madras High Court. He is a vocal advocate for climate governance and a just transition within State Policy. He has authored three books in Tamil, covering topics such as farmers' rights on seed, the legal challenges surrounding Kudankulam, and political ecology.

Nadja Dorschner is the Resident Representative at Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung South Asia.

P. Krishna Prasad is the finance secretary of All India Kisan Sabha (36 Canning Lane) and the former CPI(M) MLA from Sulthan Bathery. He is also the chairman of Brahmagiri Development Society, a worker – peasant cooperative in Kerala.

Prem Ranjan is the Head of the Policy and Research Unit, ActionAid Association. He has been working for the empowerment

of marginalised groups through grassroots intervention, advocacy, policy, and research for more than two decades.

Rajesh TN is the Secretary, Greater Cochin Development Authority.

Rajiv Kumar is a project manager with the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, South Asia regional office in New Delhi. He works on labour affairs, supply chains, climate justice etc.

Sandeep Chachra is the Executive Director of ActionAid Association and the former Co-Chair of the World Urban Campaign of the UN-HABITAT. A social anthropologist by training, he has been working in the arena of social development for the last three decades, in India and globally and is one of the founders of the Agrarian South Network.

Dr. Shrawan Kumar Acharya is a professor in Centre for the Study of Regional Development, School of Social Sciences. He has previously been a professor at CEPT University, Ahmedabad. He specialises in Urban and Regional Planning, Urban Governance, Poverty, Urban Revitalization, and Sikkim and Darjeeling Himalayas Environment.

Dr. Simi Mehta is CEO and Editorial Director, IMPRI Impact and Policy Research Institute. Her areas of research include gender in foreign policy, international security studies, sustainable development, climate change, gender justice, urban environment and food security.

Subash VS is a Research Officer at the Kerala institute for Research Training & Development studies of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (KIRTADS), Government of Kerala.

Tikender Singh Panwar is the National Convener of the National Coalition for Inclusive & Sustainable Urbanisation. He has served as the former deputy mayor of Shimla and was also a member of the national task force to review the implementation of 74th Constitutional Amendment.

Dr. Veena Naregal is a social scientist. She is based at the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi and has published scholarly articles on the cultural and political history of western India and on media reform and distribution in India since liberalisation.

Annexure 3:
Profile of the Participants

Anil Augustine is a development professional from Karnataka. He has over seven years of experience in the social sector. He is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Development and aspires to be a developmental political activist.

Anisha Das is a professional from West Bengal, currently working at Good Business Lab, focusing on the intersection of gender and labour, particularly women's participation in the labour force.

Anjali J is a professional from Kerala, associated with Azad Foundation, actively working towards empowering urban resource-poor women through various initiatives.

Arunjith KP is a former Assistant Professor from Kerala, currently affiliated with the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology. He holds a degree in Sociology and is interested in climate change and rural studies.

Asief Aliyar is a research scholar from Kerala with interests in labour rights, environmental justice, and sustainable development. He holds an MPhil in Planning and Development and actively engages in social, economic, and ecological justice issues.

Benison George is an academician from Kerala with a background in Urban and Regional Planning.

Biju E V is associated with Payyavoor Grama Panchayath in Kerala. His area of interests include disaster management, gender equality, and rural management.

Chandanapriya Dhanraj is a student and independent researcher from Karnataka with 2.5 years of experience studying urban informality and waste management in Bangalore.

Dharsana V Radhakrishanan is associated with the Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA), with expertise in social work and research methodology.

Elizabeth Minu Mathews is a law graduate from Kerala. She is associated with the Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA) as an Associate in a project focussed on strengthening child-friendly local governance in India.

Gouri S Kumar is a policy maker from Kerala, previously interning at Thiruvananthapuram District Administration, with interest in research methodology, public administration, and poverty eradication.

Hari Raghunath is a practitioner from New Delhi, previously associated with the Delhi Legislative Assembly. He is currently involved with NREGA Sangarsh Morcha, focusing on urban informal economy and social protection.

Hemachandran J is a professional from Kerala, working as the Training and Research Associate at the Kerala Institute of Local Administration. He has worked as a young fellow with Alappuzha District Administration and is presently pursuing his Masters in Development Studies.

Irene Antony is a Kerala-based professional with a Master's in Urban Planning. She is engaged as a Research Fellow at Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA).

Laxman Gurung is an Associate Researcher at Tax and Fiscal Justice Asia (TAFJA), Nepal. He has also served as the Central Committee Member, Department of Agriculture and Land Reform, Nepal.

Leela Jerard Kurian is working part-time as a resource person and researcher at Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA), with interest in sustainable development, urban-rural linkages, and policy advocacy.

Mallika Ghoshal is a professional from Uttar Pradesh associated with Development Alternatives, working on rural development, climate change, and gender-inclusive policies.

Mukesh Kumar is an academician from Madhya Pradesh and has more than five years of experience in urban study research. He is affiliated with the Bhopal School of Social Sciences. He holds an M.Phil and is finalising a PhD thesis, concentrating on agrarian transformation and urbanisation.

Nabanita Samanta is a researcher from Maharashtra, involved in academia and research for several years. Currently associated with the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, focusing on ecological justice, politics, and activism.

Nayanjyoti Bhuyan is a social development and media professional from Assam with more than a decade of experience in the social sector.

Nivedita Tuli is a professional from Uttar Pradesh, working as a Project Associate at the Department of Forests and Wildlife, Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi.

Pooja Kishan Ashar is an advocate from Gujarat. She has been practicing as an advocate for over nine years and is presently associated with Office of Government law officers at Hon'ble High Court of Gujarat at Ahmedabad as an Assistant Government Pleader.

Preethi Solomon is an academician from Kerala with a background in social work and research. She is engaged in studying democratic decentralisation and environmental justice.

Sethu C A is a professional from Karnataka associated with the Foundation for Agrarian Studies, focusing on new urban spaces in rural areas and rural development.

Shruthi Ramesh is an Architect and Urban Designer with an experience of over six years. She holds a Master of Architecture in Urban Design and is engaged in researching socio-spatial inequalities, particularly focusing on housing equality in Kerala.

Sujata Hati Baruah is a Research Scholar from Assam with 11 years of experience as an Assistant Professor and holds educational qualifications in Political Science, Gender and Development, Women and Gender Studies.

Tejeswar Karkora is a researcher from Odisha, specialising in human rights, gender, migration, and poverty. With over 4 years of experience, he has worked extensively on human trafficking and women's issues in South Asia.

Vaishali B Katke is a professional from Karnataka with a PhD in Sociology and expertise in social work, poverty, and research methodology.

Yoginder Singh is a professional and practitioner from New Delhi, affiliated with Indo-Global Social Service Society, specialising in urban issues, land and housing rights, and climate change effects on cities.

Annexure 4:
Profile of the Organizers

Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA) is an autonomous institution functioning for the local governments in Kerala. It was registered under the Travancore-Cochin Literary, Scientific and Charitable Societies Act 1955. The Central university of Kerala has recognised it as a research centre attached to the Department of International Relations since 14th July 2014. Since its inception in 1990, KILA has been engaged in a myriad of capacity building interventions on local governance and decentralisation that include training, action-research, publications, seminars and workshops, consultancy, documentation, handholding, and information services.

Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung (RLS) is a German foundation that is a part of the grassroots movement of democratic socialism. Bearing the name of Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919), RLS works within the tradition of workers' and women's movements. It serves as a forum for debate and critical thinking about political alternatives, as well as a research centre for progressive social development. The RLS South Asia office, situated in New Delhi, is responsible for organising and coordinating the foundation's activities in South Asia. The main areas of their work are social transformation, gender equality, labour rights, and agriculture.

ActionAid Association (AAA) is an organisation that works in solidarity with the most marginalised communities to achieve a greater modicum of social and ecological justice. ActionAid has been engaged with the most marginalised communities in India since 1972. In 2006, it was registered as an Indian organisation, governed by an independent General Assembly and a Governing Board. ActionAid believes in the leadership and empowerment of the marginalised and

socially-excluded communities, in combating poverty and injustice, and for a life of dignity for all. ActionAid Association draws inspiration from the Constitution of India and other international covenants that envision a just and equal world.

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ActionAid Association is an Indian organisation working for social and ecological justice in 25 states and three Union Territories. Together with supporters, allied organisations, communities, institutions and governments, we strive for equality, fraternity and liberty for all.