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Q5(a)

Examine with suitable examples the recent trends in the growth of urban settlements in India.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2024 · Sociology GS 2 · 10 marks · Industrialization and Urbanisation in India

Industrialization and Urbanisation in India: Evolution of modern industry in India; Growth of urban settlements in India; Working class: structure, growth, class mobilization; Informal sector, child labour; Slums and deprivation in urban areas.

Core demand of the question

- Identify recent trends in Indian urban settlement growth with named examples
- Cover megacities, census towns, peri-urban sprawl, secondary cities, gated enclaves, and corridor urbanism
- Keep a sociological eye on class, caste and informality, not only skyline

Revision summary

- **Urban growth is more than four old metros:** NCR, Bengaluru and Hyderabad show sprawl and private urbanism.

Census towns mark in-situ urbanisation without municipal status.

Corridors, smart-city projects and gated enclaves fragment the city.

Secondary cities absorb education and services.

Class, caste and informality shape who gets infrastructure.

Introduction

Urban growth in India is not only the swelling of Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai. Recent decades show **sprawl, census towns, corridor cities and gated fragments**. The **Census** idea of an urban place-size, density, non-farm work-now covers settlements that still look like large villages. That mismatch is itself a trend.

Body**Metropolitan concentration and sprawl**

Million-plus agglomerations keep drawing migrants and capital. Mumbai-Pune, Delhi-NCR, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Ahmedabad-Gandhinagar illustrate **peri-urban growth: farms become plots, then gated colonies and logistics parks**. Gurgaon/Gurugram is a textbook of private urbanism beside villages that supply labour and land. Floods in Chennai and Bengaluru show that growth has outrun drainage as a public good.

Census towns, secondary cities and corridors

- **A large share of recent urbanisation is census towns:** statutory rural, functionally urban. This is in-situ urbanisation, often along highways, not a move into the old municipal core. Tier-2 cities-Indore, Coimbatore, Lucknow, Bhubaneswar-grow as service and education hubs. Industrial corridors and 'smart city' projects try to **plan** growth; much actual settlement remains

unplanned slum and peri-plot.

Gated housing, malls and SEZs produce **splintered urbanism** (a useful description even without the jargon as a brand): elite islands, informal work around them. Caste and religion still sort neighbourhoods. The trend is therefore dual: more urban people, and more unequal urban form.

Smaller towns along national highways in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu show ribbon development: workshops, marriage halls, coaching centres and rental rooms without a municipal plan. Hill towns and pilgrimage cities add a seasonal urbanism that the census captures poorly. Coastal peri-urban Goa and Kerala mix tourism capital with local land sale, which is another named trend: **urbanisation through real estate rather than through a mill**.

- **Recent growth is also** digital and logistical: warehouses, delivery hubs, and student PG belts around coaching and IT. That is urban settlement without a mill chimney, which matters for how we read industrialisation later in this paper.

Flow diagram

Megacity agglomerations -> Peri-urban sprawl
Census towns -> In-situ urbanisation
Gated SEZ islands -> Splintered city
Peri-urban sprawl -> Urban settlement growth
In-situ urbanisation -> Urban settlement growth
Splintered city -> Urban settlement growth

Conclusion

Recent urban growth in India combines megacity sprawl, census-town in-situ urbanisation, corridor and gated fragments, and strained infrastructure. Examples from NCR, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and census towns show a society becoming urban without becoming equal or fully municipal.

Facts & figures

Census town

A settlement that meets urban criteria but remains under rural administration.

NCR / Gurugram

Example of peri-urban private capital, villages, and migrant labour in one agglomeration.

Smart Cities Mission

Area-based urban projects that often sit beside unupgraded informal settlements.