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Q6(b)

Discuss the trend of urbanization in India. Do you think that Industrialization is the only precondition of urbanization? Give you arguments

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2025 · Sociology GS 2 · 20 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

- **Describe India's urbanisation trend:** level, metro concentration, **census towns**, peri-urban, informal housing
- **Argue that industrialisation is not the only precondition:** tertiary growth, administrative towns, transport, distress migration, **exclusionary urbanisation**
- Use census ideas, Kundu, Breman, peri-urban research

Revision summary

India's urbanisation is rising but remains metro-concentrated and full of **census towns** and slums.

Kundu's **exclusionary urbanisation** captures labour demand without inclusive housing.

Tertiary growth, administrative history, transport and agrarian distress urbanise besides factories.

Industrial belts exist and matter; they do not exhaust the trend.

Policy that waits only for industry misses actually existing urban India.

Introduction

India is urbanising, but **slowly by East Asian standards** and **unevenly**. Metros swallow growth; small towns proliferate as **census towns** without municipal capacity. Industrialisation of the classical mill-town sort is **one** pathway. It is not the only precondition, and in many places it is not even the main one.

Body

The trend

The urban share crossed 31 percent in 2011 and has continued upward through metro regions (Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai, Kolkata, Pune, Ahmedabad). A large part of recent urban increase is **reclassification**: settlements that look urban in density and non-farm work but remain rural on paper until they become **census towns**. **Peri-urban** belts mix factories, farm remnant, and gated housing. Slums and informal rental rooms absorb labour. **Amitabh Kundu** stressed **exclusionary urbanisation**: the poor are needed as labour and pushed to the edge as residents.

Not only industry

Tertiary employment-trade, transport, public administration, education, health, IT and domestic service-now urbanises without a matching manufacturing boom. Colonial **presidency cities** and **railway / cantonment / district** towns were administrative before they were industrial. **Hill stations and temple towns** urbanised through services and pilgrimage. **Distress migration** after agrarian squeeze fills construction, not a Fordist plant. **SEZs and IT parks** create a thin formal core and a thick informal periphery (**Breman** again).

Census 2011 already showed that male non-farm work in large villages produces urban numbers without chimneys. **Smart cities** and AMRUT invest in selected statutory towns; **census towns** lack the same pipes. Gendered urbanisation matters: women in domestic work and garments urbanise the labour force while remaining invisible in master plans. **Gated communities** are a class form of the city; they need guards and maids who cannot afford to live beside them.

If industrialisation were the only precondition, India's modest manufacturing share could not explain census-town growth. **Transport corridors, education markets, and state employment** urbanise. The risk of the "only industry" thesis is policy that waits for factories while **unserved urbanisation** proceeds.

- **True industry still matters:** Tiruppur, Morbi, Ludhiana, the auto belts. They are necessary chapters, not the whole book. A sociological answer therefore rejects industrialisation as the only precondition, while still granting it as a major one.

Flow diagram

Manufacturing towns -> Urbanisation
 Services and IT -> Urbanisation
 Admin and census towns -> Urbanisation
 Distress migration -> Urbanisation
 Urbanisation -> Exclusionary edge

Conclusion

Urbanisation in India is metro-led, informal, and increasingly tertiary. Industrialisation is a major engine, not the sole precondition. **Census towns**, services, administration and distress migration urbanise without a mill.

Facts & figures

Census towns

Settlements that meet urban criteria of population, density and male non-farm work but are not statutory towns.

2011 urban share

About 31 percent; subsequent growth is driven by metros, reclassification and peri-urban spread.

Exclusionary urbanisation

Amitabh Kundu's thesis that Indian cities restrict poor in-migrants' access to housing and services even as they use their labour.

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