



TREND OF URBANIZATION IN BARDDHAMAN DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The present paper is an attempt to analyze the trend of urbanization in Bardhaman district, West Bengal, India. The district shows an increase in percentage share of urban population from 1901-2011. Level of urbanization in is higher than the state and national averages. Number of urban units also shows an increasing trend from 1901 onwards. Decennial growth rate and rate of urbanization in the district fluctuates from one census to another. There exists intra district variation in the level of urbanization.

Key words:

Urbanization, Growth of towns, Decadal Growth rate of urban population, size categories of Town. Urban Growth Rate, Rate of Urbanization.

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INTRODUCTION

Urbanization is the process through which rural areas transform into urban areas as agricultural pursuits common to villages change into non-agricultural and corresponding change of behavioral patterns also takes place. Urbanization means the process whereby people acquire material and nonmaterial elements of culture, behavioral patterns and ideas that originate in or are distinctive of city. Thus, the concept ‘urbanization’ has three different elements of interpretation: demographic, structural and behavioral (Johnston, 1981, P-363). The demographical interpretation of the concept relates it with a process by which the population of an area gets concentrated into urban places and an increasing proportion becomes concentrated in the largest urban centre. The structural interpretation relates to the social and economic changes taking place due to industrialization and activities of trade and commerce in the urban centers. The behavioral interpretation is based on the fact that urban centers, especially large cities are centers of social change. Various ideas of social change originate from these places and diffuse to the surrounding areas. Thus, the process urbanization has many dimensions, varying from physical spread of land to the social processes by which urbanism inculcates into a population. In between these two extremes, there are other dimensions of urbanization such as the proportion of population living in urban places, the absolute number of urban dwellers, the growth of the proportion of people living

in urban centers and the growth rate of population living in urban places (Clarke, 1972, P. 49). There can be no denying the fact that one of the most significant aspects of all demographic phenomena all over the world is the rapid growth of cities in the developing countries. About sixty five years ago in 1950, 275 million people had been living only in the cities of the Third World countries: this was merely 37.98% of 724 million total urban people of the World. According to the estimates of the United Nations, the World’s population of the urban areas had reached 1.56 billion by 1975 and more than half of those people had lived in metropolitan areas of the developing countries. From another estimate made by the United Nations it is known that in 2000 over 2.12 billion or 66% of the urban dwellers of the World will take shelter in less developed countries. This is the overall trend of urbanization across the World. Undoubtedly, India and for that matter West Bengal Particularly the district of Bardhaman is no exception to this common trend.

Census of India, 2011 defines an urban area as: (a) all places with a municipality, corporation, cantonment board or notified town area committee, etc. (Statutory towns); and (b) all other places with the criteria of a minimum population of 5000 at least 75% of the male working population engaged in non-agricultural pursuits and a density of population of at least 400 persons per sq. K.M. (census towns).

Interesting fact is number of census towns in India has increased more (2532) than the statutory towns (242) in 2011. According to 2011 census West Bengal Constitutes 780 census towns and is the highest among all the states in India. As per census of India, 2011 Bardhaman district (22°56' N to 23°53' N and 86° 48' E to 88°25' E) holds 4th position (31.16%) in

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percent share of urban population in the state, level of urbanization is high (39.87 percent) than the state and national averages. Decadal growth rate (2001-2011) of urban population in the district is 20.91. The district has 86 census towns and ranked third in the state (after Haroa: 135 and South Parganas: 111). Many urban centers were developed in Bardhaman district in the past on the fertile flood plains of the Damodar, Bhagirathi and Ajoy rivers. These urban centres flourished as centres of trade and commerce, religion and culture or as centres of small scale industries. Urban growth in this district was initiated in this fertile alluvial tract of the east, earlier than its western counterpart, being a barren rugged lateritic plateau unfit for farming in those days of primitive technology. Prior to industrial revolution of mid- 19th century, urban growth in the district was associated with the development of agricultural classes could cluster because of Surplus food. The process thereby promoted urbanization.

Possibly the most Spectacular feature of the urban scenario as it has emerged in the post independence period in West Bengal, is the growth of a clustered of towns in the western side of Bardhaman and Kolkata Howrah industrial belt. There exists intra district Variation in level of urbanization too. Several small towns have sprung up in Western Bardhaman in recent years.

Objectives

The main aim of the paper is to analyze the trend of urbanization in Bardhaman district, West Bengal, India from a geographical perspective since 1901. The paper also highlights the level of urbanization rate of urbanization and decadal growth rate of urban population in Bardhaman district.

DATA BASE AND METHODOLOGY

The study is based on secondary data obtained from census of India. Data thus collected is calculated by following method.

$$1. \% \text{ of urban population to the total Population} = \frac{\text{Urban Population}}{\text{Total Population}} \times 100$$

$$2. \text{Rate of urbanization (Say) between 1901 and 1911} \\ = \frac{(\% \text{ of urban people in 1911} - \% \text{ of urban people in 1901})}{\% \text{ of urban People in 1901}} \times 100$$

$$3. \text{Urban Growth Rate (Say) between 2001 and 2011} \\ = \frac{(\text{Urban people in 2011} - \text{urban people in 2001})}{\text{Urban People in 2001}} \times 100$$

Calculated data is represented by graphical method whenever wherever required.

Study Area

The Bardhaman district of West Bengal lies between (22°56' N to 23°53' N and 86°48' E to 88°25' E) with an area of 7024.0 sq. kilometer. It is bounded in the north by the Santal Parganas of Bihar, Birbhum and Murshidabad of West Bengal on the east by Nadia, on the south by Hughli and Bankura and on the west by puruliya of West Bengal and Dhanbad of Bihar. The district lies between the Ajoy, Damodar and Hughli rivers. Ajoy forms a natural boundary on the north, in the south the Damodar, runs parallel to the Ajoy for a considerable portion of its course, forming the main boundary. On the West, the Barakar passes along the north-western boundary and Hughli flows on the east. The district Bardhaman has as many as 107

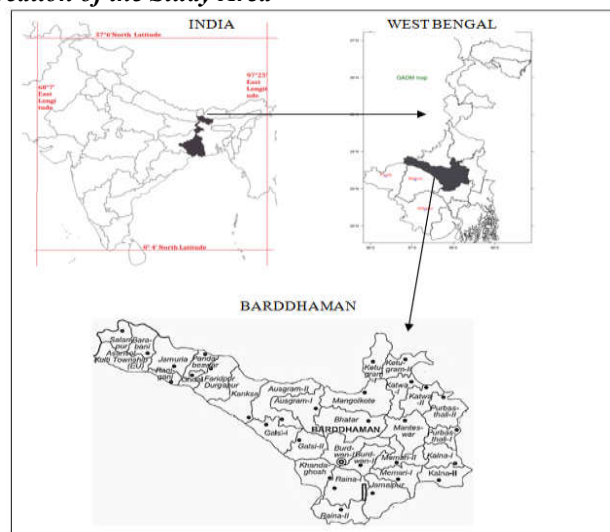
coal mines within its jurisdiction. The coals are being mined at Raniganj coalfield. Raniganj coalfield also contains large reserves of iron ore occurring chiefly as nodules. Good quality fire clay occurs in the Raniganj area. The Asansol and Durgapur Subdivision of the district is one of the major industrial regions in West Bengal, the most important centre of which is Durgapur. It has been built up as an industrial complex. Besides, Durgapur other industrial centres are found at Kulti, Hirapur, Burnpur, Chittaranjan, J.K. Nagar, Raniganj etc. The Bardhaman district is also a predominant agricultural district of the state. The district is popularly known as the granary of West Bengal.

Bardhaman is the only district in the state of West Bengal that is fortunate both in industry and agriculture. On an average about 58 percent of the total population belongs to the agricultural population while the non-agricultural sector accounts for the remaining 42 percent.

The eastern, northern, southern and central areas of the district are extensively cultivated but the soils of the western portion being extreme lateritic type are unfit for cultivation except in the narrow valleys and depressions having rich soil. Rice is the most important crop of the district. Paddy covers maximum of the gross cropped area. Among commercial crops, jute, sugarcane, potato and oilseeds are major crops. As per census of India, 2011 Bardhaman district holds 4th position (31.16%) in percent share of urban population in the state. Level of urbanization is high (39.87%) than the state and national averages. Decadal growth rate (2001-2011) of urban population in the district is 20.91. The district has 86 census towns and ranked third in the state (After Haroa: 135 and South 24 Parganas: 111). According to Census of India, 2011, there are Six Sub-Divisions in this district. They are as follows - 1. Asansol 2. Durgapur 3. Bardhaman (North) 4. Bardhaman (South) 5. Kalna and 6. Katwa. Under all these Sub-divisions, there are 31 blocks exists in this district. The blocks are as follows -

1. Salanpur, 2. Barabani 3. Raniganj 4. Jamuria 5. Galsi - I 6. Andal 7. Faridpur- Durgapur 8. Pandabeswar 9. Kanksa 10. Burdwan - I, 11. Burdwan - II, 12. Aushgram - I 13. Aushgram -II 14. Bhatar 15. Galsi - II 16. Memari - I, 17. Memari - II 18. Jamalpur 19. Raina - I, 20. Raina II, 21. Khandaghosh 22. Mongalkote 23. Ketugram - I 24. Ketugram - II 25. Katwa - I, 26. Katwa - II, 27. Purbasthali - I 28. Purbasthali - II, 29. Kalna - I, 30. Kalna - II 31. Monteshwar.

Location of the Study Area



Trend of urbanization in Bardhaman District

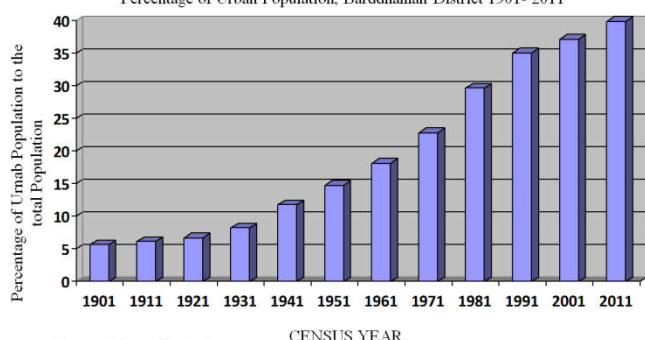
Urbanization refers to the increasing amount of people that live in urban areas. It predominant by results in physical growth or urban areas, be it horizontal or vertical. According 2011 census, a population of 3078299 of which 39.89% lived in urban areas and while remaining 60.11 lived in rural areas. The district's share or urban population is much higher than state and national level.

Table No 1 Percentage distribution of urban and rural population in Bardhaman District (1901-2011)

Census Year	% of urban Population total Population	% of Rural Population to Total Population
1901	5.67	94.33
1911	6.14	93.86
1921	6.67	93.33
1931	8.24	91.76
1941	11.80	88.20
1951	14.78	85.22
1961	18.20	81.80
1971	22.77	77.23
1981	29.65	70.35
1991	35.09	64.91
2001	37.18	62.82
2011	39.89	60.11

Source: Census of India.

The Table -I clearly indicates that between 1901 to 1921 the percentage of people living in urban Percentage of Urban Population, Bardhaman District 1901- 2011



Source : Drawn by Author.

areas increased very slowly, from 5.67% to 6.67% . After that there is a steady increase of urban population by 8.24% in 1931 to 22.77% in 1971. The percentage of urban population recorded a highest growth between 1971 and 1981 because of and serialization in the western part of the district After that share of urban population to the total population increased steadily from 35.09% in 1991 to population increased steadily from 35.09% in 1991 to 39.89% in 39.89% in 2011. In 2011 Census.

The district showed high level of urbanization in comparison to West Bengal. On the Contrary, the % of rural population decreased very slowly upto 1931, after that it reached 77% in 1971. Between 1971 and 1981, the share of rural population decreased abruptly and 1981 onwards the figure reached 60.11 in 2011.

Table - 2 clearly indicates that number of urban population was 86728 in 1901 and reached 323.941 and it became 3078299 in 2011. Between 1911 and 1921, only few urban people added to the total population due to high death rate, Caused by star vation, poor medical facilities. After 1921, district added a very good number of urban People to the total people at a very high decadal growth rate over the last 10 years, % of urban people to the total people, number of urban units increased at a faster rate. In 1901, only 5.67% of total population was urban, now it reached about 40%. Whereas number of urban units was 6 in 1901. 49 in 1981 and it became 97 in 2011. As for as density of urban population is concerned, it was only 12 in 1901. And upto 1931 it was 32. After that derisity increased at a moderate rate up to 1951. Due to industrialization, Liberalization, modernization, the density of urbad population tremendously increased after 1951. As it was 80 in 1961, 302 in 1991 and it became 438. As for as decennial growth rate is concerned, it was 8.60 between 1901 and 1911. Lowest decennial growth rate is recorded between 1911 and 1921. Afterwards, it increased shareply upto 1961. Between 1961 and 1991 decadal growth rate declined. Now it declined so steeply that it reached 21.17% in 2001, it became only 19.67% in 2011 which is much lower than the rate between 1931 and 1961. Rate of urbanization in the district was stagnant between 1901 and 1921. Highest rate of urbanization was recorded highest (43.20) in 1941. And after 1941, it declined to the figure 25.11 in 1971. Rate of urbanization was also high in 1981. Again the rate of urbanization became slower after 1991. Lowest rate of urbanization is recorded in 2001 and it reached at 7.29 in 2011.

Table 3 Display that between 1901 and 1921 there ws no growth in the number of urban units in Bardhaman district. In fact, the decadal trend of growth rate of urban units in the finest half and last half if century were calculated to be 133% and 400% respectively. In the entire period of 100 years between 1901 and 2001. The decadal growth rate of urban units in Bardhaman was 1066%. However there was a slow growth rate of urban units up to 1971. District registered a huge number of urban units between 1971-1981 and 2001-2011.

Table No 2 Trend of Urbaniation in Bardhaman District (1991-1911)

Census Year	Total urban Population	P.C. of urban Population to total Population	No. of Urban Centers	Density (Per Km)	Decennial Growth Rate Urban (P.C.)	Rate of Urbanization
1901	86728	5.67	6	12	-	-
1911	94186	6.14	6	13	8.60	8.28
1921	95741	6.67	6	14	1.65	8.63
1931	129885	8.24	9	18	35.66	23.54
1941	223154	11.80	10	32	71.81	43.20
1951	323941	14.78	14	46	45.16	25.25
1961	561078	18.20	19	80	73.20	23.13
1971	891990	22.77	22	127	58.98	25.11
1981	1422659	29.65	49	203	59.83	30.22
1991	2122992	35.09	56	302	49.22	18.35
2001	2572423	37.18	70	366	21.17	5.96
2011	3078299	39.89	97	438	19.17	7.29

Source: Computed from information collected from relevant censuses.

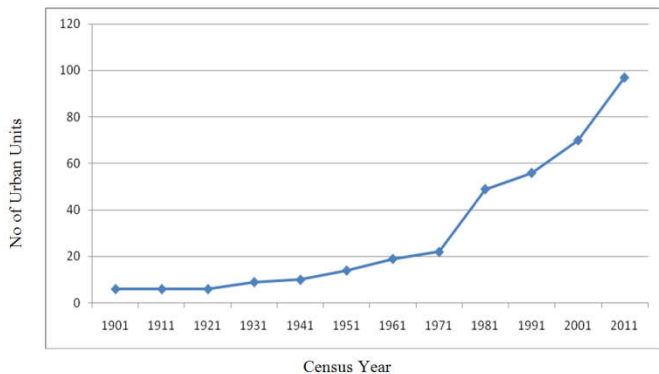
Table No 3

Census Year	No. of urban units	Rate of Growth % over Previous year
1901	6	
1911	6	0.00
1921	6	0.00
1931	9	50.00
1941	10	11.11
1951	14	40.00
1961	189	35.72
1971	22	15.79
1981	49	122.73
1991	57	16.33
2001	70	22.81
2011	97	38.57

Source: Date Calculated by Author

Through growth rate over previous year declined between 1991-2001. The total number of urban units in the state in 1991 increased to 57. In 2001 it became 70 and that in 2011 it rose to 97. Fig clearly demonstrates that there is a visible increment in number of urban units in West Bengal after 1931. Between 1931 and 1971 there was a slow growth in number of urban units and after 1971 there was steep growth in number of urban units till 2011.

Growth of Urban Census in Bardhaman District (1991-2011)



Source: Drawn by Author

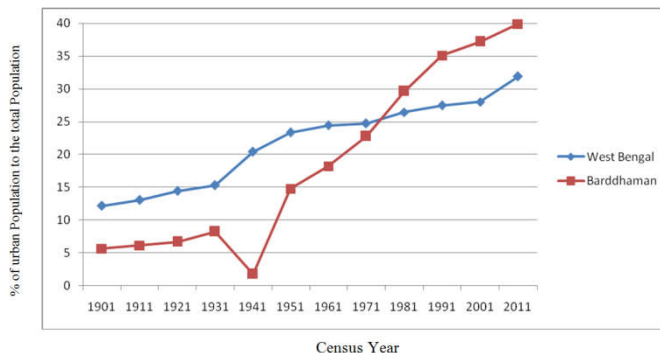
Table No 4 Trend of Urbanization: A comparison between West Bengal and Bardhaman District

Census Year	% of urban Population to the total population	
	West Bengal	Bardhaman District
1901	12.20	5.67
1911	13.05	6.14
1921	14.41	6.67
1931	15.32	8.24
1941	20.41	1.80
1951	23.38	14.78
1961	24.45	18.20
1971	24.75	22.77
1981	26.47	29.65
1991	27.48	35.09
2001	28.03	37.18
2011	31.89	39.89

Source: Census of India

Table No. 4 states that both West Bengal and Bardhaman District goes parallel in terms of % share of urban population to the total population upto 1931. During 1931-41, West Bengal registered a large number of urban population to the total population.

Trend of urbanization: A Comparison between West Bengal and Bardhaman District



Source : Drawn by Author

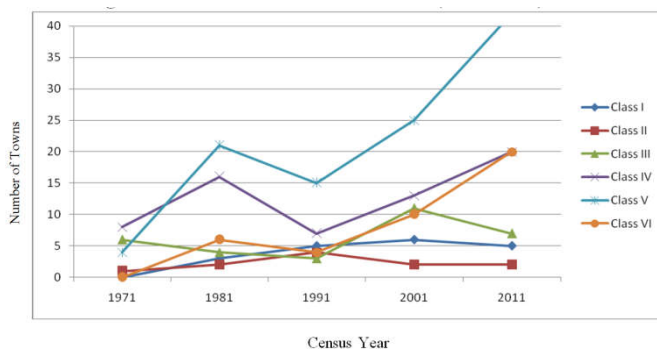
After 1941, West Bengal experienced a steady rise of % share of urban population to the total population up to 2001. In the last decade (2001), West Bengal's share increased by around 4% whereas after 1931 Bardhaman District recorded a steady share of urban population up to 1961. Between 1971 and 1991, Bardhaman District's share of urban population to the total population increased by around 6% due to industrialization, rural urban migration, etc. After 1981, the district maintained a higher % share of urban population to the total population in comparison to states to states share till last census. 2011 Bardhaman district, % share of urban population reached up to about 40%.

Table No 5 Size categories of towns in Bardhaman District, 1971-2011

Census Year	Class I (100,000 or more)	Class-II (50,000-99,999)	Class-III (20,000 - 49,999)	Class-IV (10,000 - 19,999)	Class-V (5,000 - 9,999)	Class-VI (Below 5,000)
1971	0	1	6	8	4	0
1981	3	2	4	16	21	6
1991	5	4	3	7	15	4
2001	6	2	11	13	25	10
2011	5	2	7	20	42	20

(Sources: Census of India 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011)

Size Categories of Towns in Bardhaman District (1971 - 2011)



Source: Drawn by Author

One of the important aspects of urbanization in Bardhaman district is that due to continuous changes in town designations in the successive censuses, some towns get disappear while some towns merge with another town. Table 5 displays that class I town did not exist in 1971 but its number started to increase in the following decadal year due to rapid industrialisation. Class III, IV, V, VI towns show much fluctuations unlike class I town. The censuses often fail to demarcate urban areas properly. For instance, in 1971 Kulti was designated as UA (Urban Agglomeration) and in 2001

census as a municipality. It repeats in case of Niamatpur, Disar garh and Burnpur also.

Table No 6 Sub-division wise level of urbanization in Barddhaman District in 1991 and 2001

Sub-Division	1991		2001		1991	2001	Decemial Growth Rate (%)	Difference / Growth
	T.P.	U.P.	T.P.	U.P.	% of U.P to the T.P.	% of U.P to T.P		
Asansol	138 5795	104 3569	148 7174	12025 40	75.360	80.86	7.38	5.56
Durgapur	108 1521	65 60 67	123 9730	7888 65	60.66	63.63	4.90	2.97
Burdwan Sadar (N+S)	201 9055	292 764	2333 906	3536 76	14.50	15.15	4.48	0.65
Katwa	738 238	75890	853476	99852	10.28	11.67	13.52	1.39
Kalna	828 996	54702	981228	102115	6.62	10.41	57.25	3.79

Source : Census of India & data calculated by Author.
T.P. – Total Population, U.P. – Urban Population.

Trend of urbanization across the Sub-Division Level

Trend of urbanization also vary from one Sub-division to another Table 6 states that Asansol and Durgapur Sub-division showed a steady increase of urban population from 1991 to 2001. Highest growth recorded by Asansol Sub-Division between 1991 and 2001, Asansol's industrial character in 2001, Asansol and Durgapur where 80.86% and 63.63% of population lived in urban areas respectively. Decadal growth was highest in Kalna Sub-Division. Burdwan Sub-division recorded a very low decadal growth of urban population from the table 6. It can be concluded that % share of urban population to the total population among all the Sub-division increased substantially from 1991 to 2001. But the rate of it varies from one Sub-division to another obviously, Durgapur and Asansol maintained a high degree of urbanization in the district due to its industrial development.

Table No 7 Pattern of urbanization among Sub-division of Barddhaman District, 2001.

Category	Index	No. of Sub-Division	Name of Sub-Division
High	> 25	2	Asansol, Durgapur
Medium	15-25	1	Barddhaman
Low	< 15	2	Katwa, Kalna

Source: Computed by Author

Sub-division wise Pattern of urbanization depicted that out of 5 Sub-divisions of Barddhaman District Asansol recorded the highest degree of urbanization where 80.86% of total population lived in urban areas. Asansol and Durgapur Sub-division where more than 25% of total population lived in urban areas. Were classified as areas with high degree of urbanization due to high level of industrial development. Strategic location, etc. Barddhaman. Comes under moderate degree of urbanization where only 15.15% of total population lived in urban areas in 2001. The reasons are urban to urban migration, medium Job opportunity, medium industrial Development, Katwa and Kalna comes under was with low degree of urbanization having less than 15% urban population. The reasons behind this low degree of urbanization are low agricultural and industrial development. Socio cultural backwardness, low literacy, communication gap, etc.

CONCLUSION

Urbanization is a dynamic phenomena. Barddhaman in one of the most urbanized district in West Bengal. Level of urbanization is high in comparison to West Bengal and India over the past 100 years the district recorded a very low rate of urbanization upto 1961 and afterwards it maintained a steady growth of urbanization. The district occupied a important place in the country due to its educational and industrial development. The trend, pattern and level of urbanization vary across the Sub-division and block-level. Level of urbanization is very high in Western Barddhaman because of the presence of Durgapur, Asansol industrial belt. Presence of industrial development, migration, vocational advantage, educational facilities, etc causes higher trend of urbanization in Western Part of the district and absence of those causes medium to low rate of urbanization from 1901 to 2011 in eastern part of the district. Though over urbanization may cause serious damage environmental, social, cultural to the inhabitants concerned. Overall, it can be concluded that trend of urbanization is on the right way for the district till date and if the proper strategies for urban development is maintained by policy makers the district will occupy an important place in times to come in West Bengal's urbanization map due to its sound industrial infrastructure & educational base.

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