

Spatial Analysis of the Trends, Patterns, and Potentials of Urbanization in North Bengal Division of West Bengal, India

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Abstract

West Bengal is the fourth largest urbanized state in India, in terms of urban population, as per 2011 census. North Bengal division is a less urbanized region with only 18.70 percent urban population recorded which is below the state as well as the country average. Although there are many rural settlements in West Bengal and North Bengal division meet the first two criteria of the definition of urban settlement given by census of India but due to agriculture dominant state, these rural settlements do not fulfilled the third criteria i.e., 75 percent of male working population engaged in non-agricultural activities for being an urban settlement. They are potential urban centres that may include urban settlements or mini-towns. This paper analyzes the trends and patterns of urbanization in the North Bengal division. It also attempts to examine the pattern of potential urbanization in North Bengal division. In this paper secondary sources of data, basically Census of India, District Census Handbook, District Statistical Handbook data and other relevant literature have been used. The rural settlements with 10,000 or more population in North Bengal division has considered as a potential urban centres.

Keywords: Settlement, Urbanization, Urbanization Trends, Potential Urbanization, Urbanization Pattern.

Introduction

Population redistribution and a shift in the demographic balance between rural and urban areas are referred to as urbanization. This notion of urbanization is based on demographics. The progress of urbanization is never uniform. Some urban regions grow faster than others (Srivastava, 1991). Urbanization is the proportion of the population that is concentrated in urban areas, or an increase in this proportion (Davis, 1965). The movement of people from small villages that are mostly or exclusively focused on agriculture to larger communities whose activities are mostly concentrated on management, manufacturing, trade, and other associated activities is known as urbanization (Stamp, 1961).

However, urbanization is sometimes concealed in official statistics, and urban populations are believed to be significantly misinterpreted (Ellis and Roberts, 2016). This concealment refers to locations with strong urban characteristics that are not included in urban population statistics (Van Duijne, 2019). The term "hidden urbanization" first appeared in the 1990s. McGee (1991), who was researching the nature of rural urbanization in Asia, described hidden urbanization as "Desakota," or villages turning into cities, and they emerged along the transportation corridors with mixed economic activities, such as agricultural and non-agricultural. McGee's research was used by Guldin (1996) to study de-agriculturalization in rural areas, where a large number of individuals leave farming but stay in villages. From geography and sociology to political sciences, economics, and developmental studies, concealed urbanization has now been identified as a significant problem (Satterthwaite, 2010). Therefore, the present study mainly focuses on trends as well as patterns with hidden or concealed urbanization, i.e., the potential of urbanization in the North Bengal Division of West Bengal.

Literature Review

The Geopolis concept, which classifies settlements with a population of 10,000 or more as urban centers, was highlighted by Eric Denis and Kamala Marius-Gnanou (2010). They argued that Geopolis estimates the urban population at 37% for 2001, which is 10% more than the official Census estimate. According to the Geopolis concept, the country's level of urbanization would be approximately 42% in 2011, and the average maximum distance between agglomerates to the closest town (in a polygonal subdivided space) would be less than 10 km. Kumar and Rai (2014) analyzed that urbanization always plays a positive role in the socio-economic development of any region. Rahman and Akram (2023) highlighted the trends, patterns, and potential of urbanization in Patna division. They also argued that rural settlements with a population of 10,000 or more have been classified a potential urban centre. Deo and Chaudhary (2026) examined the trends, challenges and implications of urbanization in Nepal. They analyze key issues like inappropriate definition of urban areas, poor institutional capacities, unplanned urban expansion, and also said that urbanization is predominantly mathematical rather than functional in the study area. Fatima (2021) analyzed the growth of towns and urbanization in Patna division and observed that most of the town has expanded naturally except Patna and Dehri. Singh (2017) examined the pattern and potential of urbanization in north-east Bihar, and rural settlements with a population of over 20,000 can be developed as an urban centre. He also emphasized that rural settlements should be given the status of an urban centre. Banerji (2016) highlighted the pattern and potential of urbanization in Khordha district of Odisha by following the census criteria; the potential village can be future towns. Anjum (2026) studied on urbanization and economic development in Punjab. Punjab has experienced rapid urbanization because of a decrease in agricultural activity and movement of people from rural to urban areas, and also been found that economic growth is affected by urbanization. Cohen (2006) found that about half of the world's population now lives in cities, as do more than 75% of people in high-income nations. Chandrasekhar and Sharma (2015) assert that methods for simultaneously measuring migration and urban expansion need to be developed. According to Henderson (2003), urbanization is not a growth stimulant in and of itself, but rather a reflection of shifting economic trends as development progresses. Bhagat (2018) discovered that, according to the growing urbanization pattern, the majority of central, eastern, and northeastern India has a low degree of urbanization and low levels of economic development. Van Duijne (2019) used the case study of Samastipur City and the nearby villages to emphasize the concealed urbanization in rural Bihar. He also attempted to introduce the local politics of decentralized governance in the exaggeration of urbanization data.

Singh (2019) examined urbanization in India using two geographical areas, such as Mizoram and North-East Bihar, to comment on the criteria and contradictions of the urban settlements. It was discovered that Mizoram, a hilly tribal state in the northeast, had a high rate of urbanization, with over half of the population residing in urban areas, despite the fact that just three of the state's 23 urban areas meet census criteria. However, due to the state's and stakeholders' reticence, northeastern Bihar, which has a flat landscape, abundant water resources, and a well-developed transit system, has the lowest level of urbanization (7.4%). As a result, numerous areas with more than 20,000 residents are still classified as rural, and came to the conclusion that the Census of India needs to reconsider the requirements, especially those pertaining to the inclusion of women in the workforce and the relaxation of the requirement that 75% of the workforce engage in non-agricultural activities. Nonetheless, a number of studies on urbanization trends and patterns have been conducted, but researchers have not given much attention to the study of concealed urbanization. This work fills that gap by investigating the pattern of hidden urbanization in the study area.

Objectives

- I. To examine the trends of urbanization in the North Bengal division since independence,
- II. To analyze the pattern of urbanization in the study area, and
- III. To assess the potential urbanization in the study area.

Database and Methodology: The present paper is fully based on secondary data. Secondary data has been collected from different published and unpublished sources. It includes the Census of India, 2011, District Census Handbook-2011 of the respective districts of the study area, West Bengal Statistical Handbook, 2019, Town Directories, West Bengal Economic Survey, 2019 and other related literature. To determine the prospective urbanization, the rural settlements having 10,000 or more population have been used. The simple percentage method has been applied for data representation. MS Excel has been used for statistical operation as well as for the preparation of maps, ArcMap 10.5.2 has been used.

The following formula has been used for the potential level of urbanization-

$$P.L.U = [(T.U.P+P.U.P)/T.P]*100\%$$

Where,

P.L.U = Potential Level of Urbanization

T.U.P = Total Urban Population

P.U.P = Potential Urban Population (Population of rural settlement with a population of more than 10,000)

T.P = Total Population

Potential or % Change = (P.L.U-L.U)

Where,

P.L.U = Potential Level of Urbanization

L.U = Level of Urbanization

North Bengal Division:

The northern districts of West Bengal, India, which are located north of the Ganges River between latitudes 25°53' and 27°13' N and longitudes 88°15' and 89°53' E, are referred to as the North Bengal division. The region extends from the Ganges plains near South Bengal in the south to the Himalayan foothills near Sikkim and Bhutan in the north. Boundaries include the districts of South Bengal (south), Bihar and Nepal (west), Assam and Bangladesh (east), and Sikkim and Bhutan (north). The main route that connects it to Northeast India is Siliguri. It includes six (till the 2011 census) district, i.e., Darjiling, Jalpaiguri, Koch Bihar, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, and Maldah. For the administrative purposes north Bengal division is divided into 18 sub-divisions and 69 development blocks, while it has 7236 inhabited villages. As per the 2011 census, total area of the North Bengal division is 26,282 sq. km. and a total 17211010 people reside in North Bengal division, among which 3217931 people live in urban areas. The total numbers of urban centre is about 131 and about 115 village settlements having a population 10,000 and above have been taken as a potential urban population, and their population varies from 10,000 to 44,000.

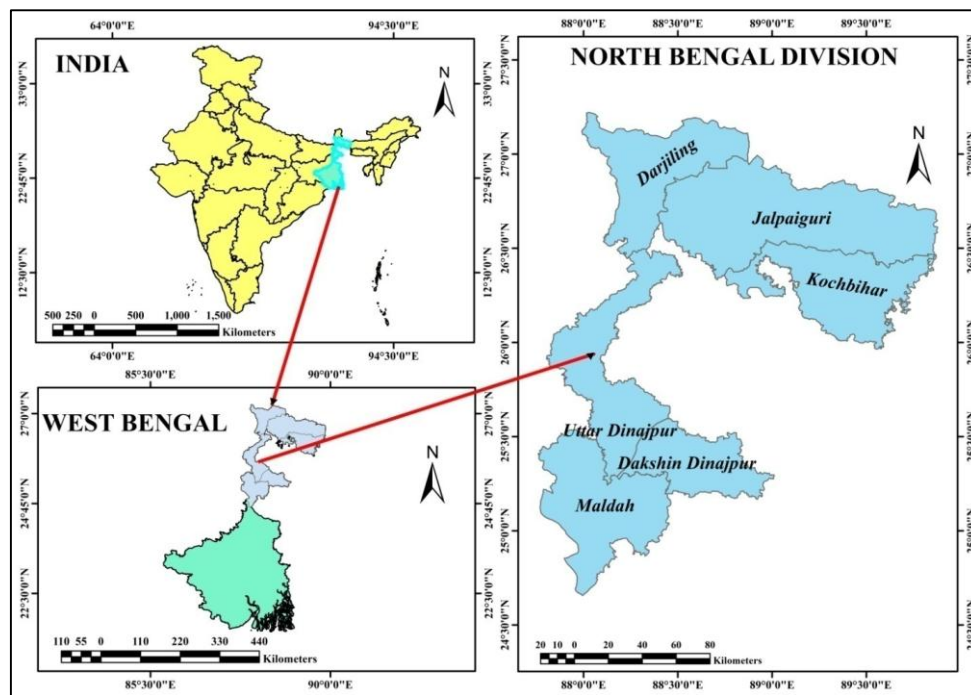


Figure. 1: Location Map of Study Area

Theoretical Framework: The identification of an urban centre varies from person to person and region to region. There is no definite pattern for identifying the urban centre. But different countries and different scholars define an urban centre by adopting various criteria, which have been discussed accordingly. As per United Nations Report an urban centre is defined based on five factors, such as size of population, expansion of local government, administrative area, dominant economic activities, and urban features (Zingan, Bhat and Desai, 2005). The increase in population in urban areas relative to rural areas is referred to as urbanization (Deepika, 2020). It is a geographical phenomenon as well. Urbanization is the process by which population density, concentration, and growth lead to modifications in the social structure of human settlements. Urbanization is defined structurally by changes in demographic functions and socioeconomic structures that modify the layout of urban areas. In general, there are two primary characteristics of urbanization: the movement of people from rural to urban areas in pursuit of non-agricultural occupations and activities, which results in increased density and altered land use. People's lifestyles are changing, along with their views and values, which encourages new kinds of behavior (Shokuie, 1995).

For identifying urban centre the Census of India set up certain parameters since 1901, although they made some changes from time to time. However, there have been no significant changes in these criteria since 1981. According to the 2011 Indian Census, the most recent criterion for identifying urban centers is as follows.

- (i) Any settlement that has the recognized urban governing body (such as a municipality, and municipal corporation), or
- (ii) Any other settlement which satisfies the following criteria;
 1. Population of at least 5,000 or more

2. With a population density of 400/ sq.km.
3. At least 75% of the male working population engaged in non-agricultural activities.

On the basis of the above-mention criteria urban centre has been divided into two categories- Census town and statutory town. Based on demography census town has been classified into the following categories;

1. Town- Urban area with a population of below one lakh.
2. Cities- Urban area with a population of one lakh to ten lakh.
3. Metropolitan area- Urban area with ten lakh or more people.

Based on population size, the Census Organization of India classifies towns into six main types.

- (i) Class I town- Urban settlements having 100,000 or more population.
- (ii) Class II town- Urban settlements with a population between 50,000 to 99,999.
- (iii) Class III town- Urban settlements with a population between 20,000 to 49,999.
- (iv) Class IV town- Urban settlements with a population between 10,000 to 19,999.
- (v) Class V town- Urban settlements with a population between 5,000 to 9,999.
- (vi) Class VI town- Urban settlements with a population below 5000.

Urbanism is an urban movement associated with the evolution and development of society (Varma, 2017). Urbanism characterizes people's interest in the city, which is fuelled by social consciousness and a feeling of community. The study of the cultural, political, economic, social, and geographical facets of cities is known as urbanism in its broadest sense (Deepika, 2020). According to Louis Wirth (1938) and Theodorson and Theodorson (1969), it is a way of life (Agalgatti, 2008; Theodorson and Theodorson, 1969; Wirth, 1938). In large cities and metropolises, this way of life has been linked to alienation, rationalization, individualism, and identity loss (Fischer, 1982; Simmel, 1971).

Urbanization from Global to the Regional level: Urbanization has now spread throughout the world, with rates ranging from 13% (220 million) in 1900 to 29% (732 million) in 1950 and 52.1% (3.63 billion) in 2011 (UN, 2011). India has been known as the land of villages since its urbanization level (31.16%) was less than one-third of the country's total population in 2011, which is far below the global average. In 2007, the world's urbanization crossed the 50% mark. However, on a regional scale, India is one of Asia's major urbanizing nations and one of the world's developing nations. India's urban population is 377.10 million, with an annual growth rate of 2.76%, according to the 2011 census. In 1901, it was 11.4%; in 2001, it was 28.53%; and in 2011, it was 31.16%. The total number of towns increased from 5161 in 2001 to 7742 in 2011, a net increase of 2581. Similarly, the number of class I cities increased from 394 in 2001 to 468 in 2011. It suggests that India's urbanization trend is accelerating. West Bengal rank forth in terms of population in India, with a population of 9.13 crore. Whereas, 2.90 crore population is urban. The urbanization rate of west Bengal varies from 23.38% in 1951 to 31.89% in 2011, which slightly higher than the national average i.e., 31.16%. West Bengal experienced rapid urbanization from 28.03% in 2001 to 31.89 in 2011. As per 2011 census, there are 125 statutory towns, 147 agglomerations and 491 census towns. In recent years, numerous studies have emphasized the importance of small and medium-sized towns as hubs for urbanization and a center of demand (Denis et al., 2012). Small and medium-sized towns play a crucial role in achieving balanced urban growth as well as decongesting the large urban centers. Many large rural settlements in West Bengal meet the first two requirements of the definition of urban centers; however, because the state is dominated by agriculture, these settlements do not meet the third requirement, which calls for 75% of the working male population to engage in non-agricultural activities.

Trends of Urbanization in North Bengal Division: The population is an ever-changing entity. It is constantly evolving, either in a good or a bad way. Similar to this, the urban population fluctuates over time and space. The primary factors influencing these fluctuations include migration from rural to urban areas, birth rates, and death rates (Bhagat, 2018). As the world goes through several phases of development, remarkable changes have been observed. Urbanization has increased as a result of growth brought about by the growing industry and the expansion of the service sector. With more than half of the world's population now residing in cities, cities are turning into the center of human activity (UNDESA, 2019).

Table.1: Temporal Variation in Urban Population in North Bengal Division

| Year | Total Population (Lakh) | Decadal Population growth (%) | Urban population (Lakh) | % Decadal Variation in Urban Population |
|------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| 1951 | 39.45 | | 2.88 | |
| 1961 | 55.49 | 40.66 | 4.90 | 70.07 |
| 1971 | 74.19 | 33.68 | 6.87 | 40.23 |
| 1981 | 94.48 | 27.35 | 10.82 | 57.51 |
| 1991 | 120.36 | 27.40 | 16.28 | 50.48 |
| 2001 | 147.25 | 22.34 | 20.85 | 28.12 |
| 2011 | 172.11 | 16.88 | 32.18 | 54.32 |

Source: Calculated by Authors from Census of India.

The urban population of North Bengal division is dynamic; it changes from one census to another. However, it has been found that there is a positive change in urban population of North Bengal division since independence (Table.1). Since independence, there has been an increase of 2.9 million urban populations in North Bengal division. In the study area, there was an increase of 13.2 million total populations. There was a constant increase of urban population since independence, but the highest growth of urban population was observed in 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011 with an increase of 0.3, 0.5, 0.4, and 1.1 million, respectively. Whereas, highest decadal growth of urban population was observed in the 1951 to 1961, i.e., 70.07%. During 1991 to 2001, the lowest decadal population growth was found (28.12%), which is the lowest growth of the urban population since independence. Again positive decadal growth rate of the urban population was recorded from the census 2001 (28.12%) to 2011 (54.31%).

Table.2: Level of Urbanization since Independence

| Year | North Bengal Division | West Bengal | India |
|------|-----------------------|-------------|-------|
| 1951 | 7.30 | 23.38 | 17.3 |
| 1961 | 8.82 | 24.45 | 18 |
| 1971 | 9.26 | 24.75 | 19.9 |
| 1981 | 11.45 | 26.47 | 23.3 |
| 1991 | 13.52 | 27.48 | 25.7 |
| 2001 | 14.16 | 28.03 | 28.2 |
| 2011 | 18.70 | 31.89 | 31.16 |

Source: Calculated by Authors from Census of India.

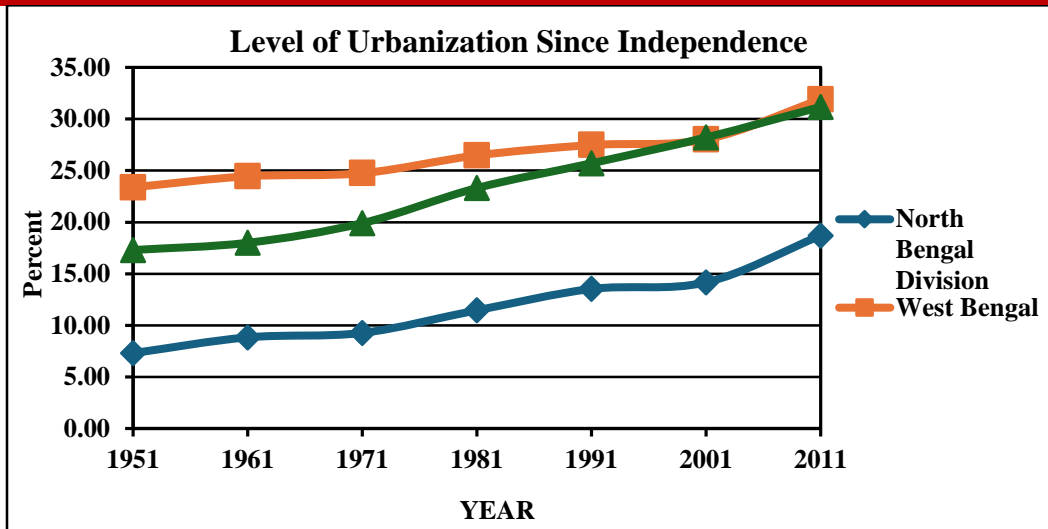


Figure.2: Level of Urbanization since Independence

One crucial component of any region's socioeconomic development is its level of urbanization, which is defined as the proportion of people living in an urban area to the overall population in a certain region or nation at a given time (Deshmukh, 2015). It is believed that the higher urbanization is related to the higher level of socio-economic development and vice versa. As indicated by Sadashivam and Tabassu (2016), Narayan and Tufail (2014), Kundu (2011), West Bengal urbanization is slightly higher than India. But North Bengal division has always recorded the least urbanization in the West Bengal as well as India. It is clear from the Table.1 that the increasing level of urbanization has been recorded in the study area since independence. The increasing levels of urban population from 7.30% in 1951 to 28.70% in 2011. In the study area more or less uniform level of urbanization has been observed, but the highest increase of urbanization was recorded at about 5% in 2011. Although, West Bengal is slightly above the national average (Table.2 and Figure.2) in terms of urbanization, North Bengal division urbanization is much below the state and national average.

Pattern of Urbanization in North Bengal Division

The pattern of urbanization is not uniform. It varies from region to region and country to country. Even though it is found that there is a variation within states as well as district also and, the study area is not an exception. Table.3 depicts that Darjiling (39.42%) is the most urbanized district, followed by Jalpaiguri (27.38%), Dakshin Dinajpur (14.10%), Maldah (13.58%), Uttar Dinajpur (12.05), and Kochbihar (10.27%). Only Darjiling district is above the state and national average in terms of urbanization. Fig.3 shows that the pattern of urbanization in North Bengal division, which has been divided into three categories-

- i.Highly Urbanized District- Highly urbanized district includes a district which urbanization level is above the divisional level. Darjiling (39.42%) and Jalpaiguri (27.38%) districts are highly urbanized.
- ii.Moderate Urbanized District- Maldah and Dakshin Dinajpur districts are included under moderate urbanized district.
- iii.Low Urbanized District- includes the district urbanization ranges below the divisional and state average; Uttar Dinajpur (12.05%) and Kuchbihar(10.27%) districts are included in this category.

Table.3: District-wise Level of Urbanization in North Bengal Division

| District | Total Population | Urban Population | Level of Urbanization |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Darjiling | 1846823 | 727963 | 39.42 |
| Jalpaiguri | 3872846 | 1060351 | 27.38 |
| Koch Bihar | 2819086 | 289434 | 10.27 |
| Uttar Dinajpur | 3007134 | 362228 | 12.05 |
| Dakshin Dinajpur | 1676276 | 236295 | 14.10 |
| Maldah | 3988845 | 541660 | 13.58 |
| Total | 17211010 | 3217931 | 18.70 |

Source: Calculated by Authors from Census of India.

Potential Urbanization in North Bengal Division

Potential urbanization refers to the inclusion of such rural settlements as a small town or mini town. The potential urban center can be thought as a rural settlement that has the potential to be an urban node and serve its surroundings as a market centre. Many of the state's villages satisfy the first two requirements for urbanization, but because West Bengal's economy is mostly based on agriculture, many of them do not satisfy the third requirement, which calls for 75% of males to engage in non-agricultural occupations (Endow, 2017). In North Bengal division, there are about 115 rural settlements with a population more than 10,000, which have the potential to be small towns by their population as well as population density. Among them nineteenth settlements have more than 20,000 populations, these settlements have the potential to be medium size town, but due to a lack of employment in the non-agricultural sector, these villages have been classified as "market" or "large" village by the Indian census. Still, all these settlements are recognized as growth points because they provide goods and services to their surrounding villages. Table.4 shows the district wise potential urban population in the study area. It also reveals that about 10% increase of urban population if include the population of village more than 10,000 as an urban area. Again Table.4 indicates that the Darjiling district's actual urbanization was 39.42%, but due to addition of potential nodes, the actual urbanization transforms into potential urbanization, and it has changed from 39.42% to 43.10%. In a similar way, Jalpaiguri district urbanization changed from 27.38% to 41.63%. Simultaneously, Kuchbihar and Uttar Dinajpur districts have 22.26% and 18.80% potential urbanization respectively. At the same time, Dakshin Dinajpur and Maldah districts have 15.83% and 28.30% potential urbanization, respectively. Table.4 also shows the district wise potential or percent of change in the study area. The highest percent of potential change 14.72 % found in Maldah district, followed by Jalpaiguri (14.25%), Kuchbihar (11.99%), Uttar Dinajpur (6.75%), Darjiling (3.68%) and Dakshin Dinajpur (1.73%), which is the least potential urbanization in the study area. Figure.4 shows the pattern of potential urbanization in North Bengal division. The district of the study area has been divided into the following three categories-

- i.High Potential Urbanized Districts have more than the divisional potential (29.02%) level of urbanization. Darjiling (43.10%) and Jalpaiguri (41.63%) districts are included in this category.
- ii.Moderate Potential Urbanized Districts only Maldah (28.30%) district has been included in this category.
- iii.Low Potential Urbanized Districts have the potential level of urbanization between 22.27% to 28.30%. It covers the districts of Dakshin Dinajpur (15.83%) Uttar Dinajpur (18.80%), and Kuchbihar (22.26%).

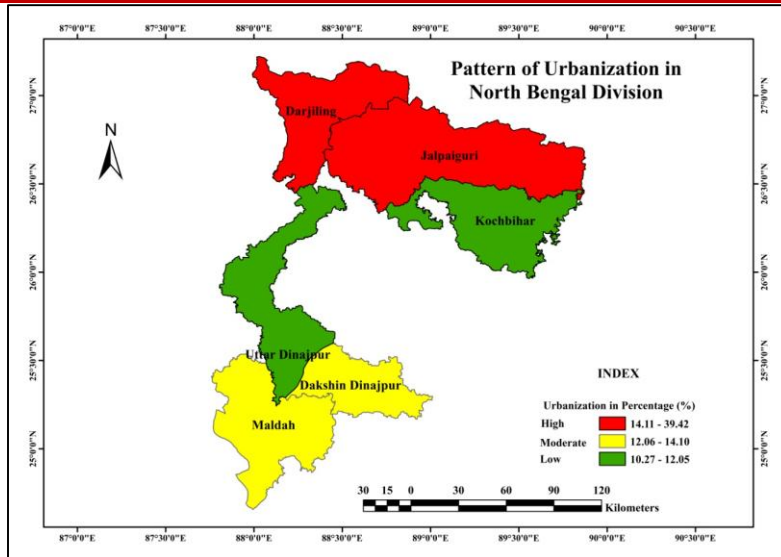


Figure.3: Pattern of Urbanization in North Bengal Division, 2011

Discussion

In Jalpaiguri districts three village having population of more than 40,000, and population density varies from 603 to 6871 people, Such as- Patkata (43360 person) village population density 603/sq.km, Birpara Tea Garden (42080 person) village population density 6871/sq.km, Birubari (41593 person) village population density 648/sq.km. Others village are Junglee Mohal, Simulguri, Lalitabari, Mantadari, Kamarbhita, Mehendigachh, Ambari Falakata, Gadheganj, Jugibhita, Shikarpur, Guzrimari, Chhat Guzrimari, Kismat Sukani, Araji Bhelakoba I, Pani Kauri, Araji Bhelakoba II, Araji Bhelakoba III, Chhat Shikarpur, Araji Binnaguri, Balai Gachh, Mahanbhita, Badlagachha, Patharghata, Sannyasikata, Sukani, Kukurjan, having more than 10,000 population and population density more than 400/sq. km. The above village fulfils the first two criteria of an urban centre, but the third criterion, i.e., more than 75 percent male population engaged in non-agricultural activities not fulfilled. So, these villages remain rural in character. In Kuchbihar District, three villages have more than 30,000 population. They are Bara Haldibari (population 37052 and density 706/sq.km), Andaran Khasbash, and Bakshiganj Andaran Khasbash. The villages with more than 10,000 population are Debottar Bakshiganj, Bakshiganj, Pushnabandh Hat, Dakshin Bakshiganj, Paschim Hudumdanga, Hemkumari, Tattaram, Dakshin Pran Majumder, Dakshin Bajejama, Dakshin Samilabas, Basa Mansing Kumar, Golapdi, Samilabash, Madhya Hudumdanga, Dakshin Chhota Haldibari, Jnandas, Paschim Fate Mamud, Paschim Samilabas, Chhota Haldibari, and Dakshin Basarajbala. In Darjiling district, three villages have more than 10,000 population, such as Mangpu Cinchona Plantation village, which is a highly populated village in the district, i.e., 13768 person with a population density of 113/sq.km followed by Paschim Madati village population 13523 with a population density of 825/sq.km, and Lahugaon village population 12710 with a population density of 1277 sq.km. In Uttar Dinajpur district, seventeenth village has more than 10,000 population, in which highest population is found in the Chitalghata village with a population density of 909/sq.km and Pawakhali village has the highest population density of 2969/sq.km with a population of 12376. In Dakshin Dinajpur, only Dehata village has more than 10,000 people, with a population density of 2352. In Maldah, about forty villages have a population of over 10,000, among them Bijhat is the highest populated village in the district with a population density of 4379. The entire village in study area fulfilled the two criteria of urban centre (except Mangpu Cinchona Plantation village of Darjiling district which has a population density of only 113/sq.km.), but the third criteria did not fulfilled because of unavailability of the more than 75 percent of the male working population engaged in non-agricultural activities.

Table.4: District Wise Analysis of Potential Urbanization in North Bengal Division

| District | Total Population (Lakh) | Urban Population (Lakh) | Level of Urbanization | Potential Urban Population (Lakh) | Potential Urban Population (%) | Potential or (% of Change) |
|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Darjiling | 18.47 | 7.28 | 39.42 | 0.68 | 43.10 | 3.68 |
| Jalpaiguri | 38.73 | 10.60 | 27.38 | 5.52 | 41.63 | 14.25 |
| Koch Bihar | 28.19 | 2.89 | 10.27 | 3.38 | 22.26 | 11.99 |
| Uttar Dinajpur | 30.07 | 3.62 | 12.05 | 2.03 | 18.80 | 6.75 |
| Dakshin Dinajpur | 16.76 | 2.36 | 14.10 | 0.29 | 15.83 | 1.73 |
| Maldah | 39.89 | 5.42 | 13.58 | 5.87 | 28.30 | 14.72 |
| Total | 172.11 | 32.18 | 18.70 | 17.77 | 29.02 | 10.32 |

Source: Calculated by Authors from Census of India.

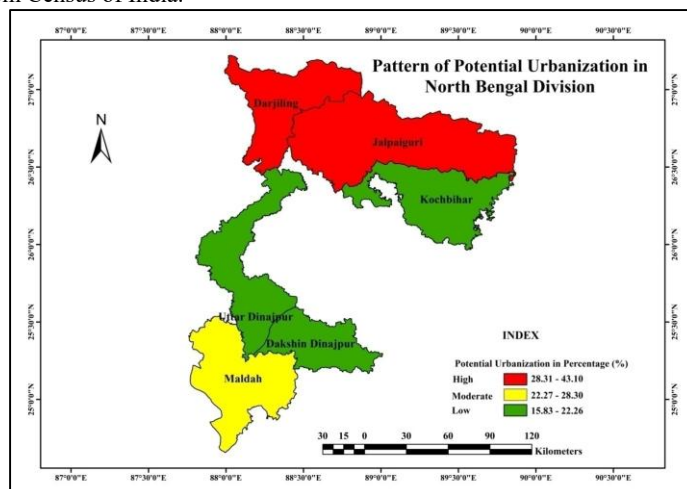


Figure.4: Pattern of Potential Urbanization in North Bengal Division, 2011

Conclusion

From the aforesaid analysis, it is found that the urbanization in North Bengal Division is not higher than the state average or the country average. But this region has lots of possibilities and prosperity for the growth of an urban centre. About 115 villages have the potential to become an urban centre, but due to a lack of secondary and tertiary activities, these villages are lagging behind the urban centre. Darjiling district have high urban population in terms of percent. But in terms of the number of urban population is concern Jalpaiguri district is high. The moderate urban population was observed in Maldah district. Dakshin Dinajpur is one of the least urban districts in North Bengal Division, followed by Kuchbihar and Uttar Dinajpur. Whereas, the highest percent (14.72 %) of potential change of urban population was found in Maldah district followed by Jalpaiguri (14.25%), Kuchbihar (11.99%), Uttar Dinajpur (6.75%), Darjiling (3.68%), and Dakshin Dinajpur (1.73%) is the least potential urbanization in the study area.

In Dakshin Dinajpur district recorded least level of urbanization and level of potential urban population due to the district mainly depending on agriculture and absence of a big urban centre, and lack of big industry. Except Darjiling and Jalpaiguri district rest of districts recorded a similar level of urbanization. Whereas, Maldah and Jalpaiguri districts demonstrate high potential urbanization and rest of the district show more or less similar potential urbanization. Therefore, administrators, policymakers, politicians, and residents of the Dakshin Dinajpur district consider it since urbanization is not only a source of data, but also a crucial measure of development.

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