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Abosa Hadoud^{1*}

** Bani Waleed University, Faculty of Art, Department of Geography, Bani Walid, Libya*

URBAN CHALLENGES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Abstract: Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has one of the world's most rapidly expanding populations. Urban areas are the primary locus of this growth, as urban share of total population grew from 48% in 1985 to close to 60% in 2017, and it is expected to exceed 70 % by 2027. Against this very high rate of urbanization and the provision of adequate infrastructure and public services for the increase in the rates of urban, the key urban challenge the accumulation of population in urban areas and lack of services and the increasing pressure on the fragile environment from urbanization. Another major challenge in MENA is the very high percentage of informal housing, reaching 20-40% in some parts of the region creating social pressures and linking to economic opportunity for lower income groups. As well as the problems of unemployment. Finally, there is also need to develop the capacity to manage natural disasters protection of the environment.

Key words: Middle East, North Africa, rapid urban population growth, deterioration of the urban environment, uncontrolled sprawl

¹ abosa315@bwu.edu.ly (corresponding author)
Abosa Hadoud (<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-5999-8170>)

Introduction

The process of urbanization is a major aspect of change in North Africa and Middle East (MENA). The process of urbanization is a major aspect of change in North Africa and Middle East (MENA). Rapid urban growth in cities and population migration from the countryside to the cities and focused services within the urban areas that were the reason for the large rapid urbanization in the cities of the Middle East and North Africa. Compared with other developing countries, this rate of urbanization comes just after that of Latin America. The urban (explosion) that has occurred is not shown only in (MENA) the spectacular growth of the major cities and large regional centers, but also in the rapid development of small and medium-sized towns during the last twenty years. Although these changes show a sustained increase in the (MENA) they give rise to a process of urbanization that is far from uniform. The diversity of national situations and the existence of urban traditions in each country (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Syria), explain the heterogeneity of the urban contexts. This urbanization, which is spatially differentiated, is a sustainable phenomenon that will intensify during the coming decades. Its development is linked to a high natural growth rate (high birth rate of 4.25% a year, and lower death rate) (Yousef, 2017) and heavy migratory pressure, all features that can be found in developing countries as a whole. In fact, in all the Arab countries, urban population is growing at a higher rate than the national population. Two geographic groups should be distinguished, one where urbanization is very high (above 70%), and other where urbanization is slowly. Firstly, there are the Gulf States, Saudi Arabia and Libya which have undergone spectacular urban transformations in just a few years, owing to petroleum revenues. The urban growth rates in Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates are among the highest in the world. In 2020, towns accounted for 90% of the total population (Salama Ali, 2021). Secondly, in the Maghreb countries (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia) which have unequal resources and are undergoing a process of social change. In this section, I should point out that urbanization as a phenomenon has characteristics which differ from one urban area to another. In general, the rate of urbanization of the population of (MENA) has been quite spectacular during the post-independence period. (MENA) are changing very rapidly and the cities are experiencing high population growth combined with urban problems. Many of these problems stem from the speed with which the city has grown, and the majority of people residing in the region are concentrated in the coastal area. Urban area has grown, and grown a lot of problems with congestion in cities and population growth unplanned, and lack of services, water and pollution problems and unemployment.



Fig. 1. Middle East North Africa

Results

Population and Urban Growth

Over the past 50 years, MENA region has experienced the highest rate of population growth of any region in the world. Its total population has increased from around 100 million in 1950 to around 457 million in 2018 — an addition of 380 million people in 60 years. During this period the population of the MENA region increased 3.8 times, more than any other major world region, (Figure 2). The introduction of modern medical services and public health interventions caused death rates to drop rapidly in the developing world after 1950, while the decline in birth rates lagged behind, resulting in high rates of natural increase (the surplus of births over deaths). The declines in mortality that occurred in the past 50 years in the developing world mostly benefited infants and young children. In MENA, infant mortality dropped from close to 200 deaths per 1,000 live births in the early 1950s to fewer than 50 deaths per 1,000 live births at the turn of the 21st century. Despite this sharp decline and the fact that infant mortality rates in some oil-rich (Arabic Gulf) states are quite low (Kuwait's infant mortality is as low as the average for Europe), the regional infant mortality rate in MENA remains higher than that of Latin America and East Asia (Figure 3). While the "demographic transition," the shift from high to low mortality and from high to low fertility, is well under way throughout the region, individual countries are at different stages (Figure 4). Some indicators in MENA region can be seen in (Table 1), about total population in MENA region's countries, level of urbanization, population projections, with a special mention to the people living in urban areas as a percentage from the total population.

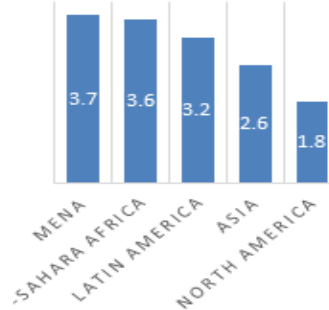


Fig. 2. Ration of population size in 2000 to population size in 1950 by major World region (source: Tarik and Kafar, 2019)

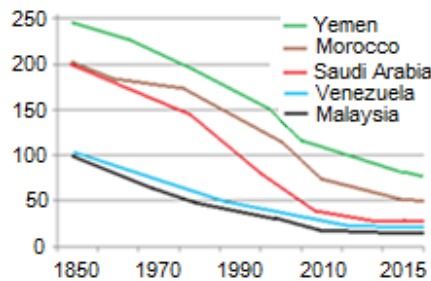


Fig. 3. Decline in infant mortality - Number of deaths under age 1 per 1,000 live birth (source: Tarik and Kafar, 2019)

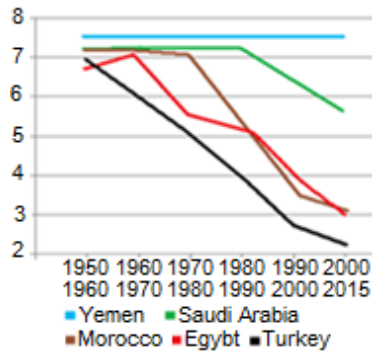


Fig. 4. Total fertility rates - Average number of births per woman (source: Tarik and Kafar, 2019)

Tab. 1. Selected Demographic and Reproductive Health Indicators

	Pop. Mid-2010 (millions)	Rate of Natural Increase (%)	Level of Urbanization (%)	Projected Pop. (millions)		Percent of Pop. Age 2015
				2020	2050	
MENA	457.8	2	45	568.7	719.4	5
Algeria	36.0	1.8	59.1	43.2	51.5	2
Bahrain	1.3	1.3	93.1	1.7	2.9	2
Egypt	80.4	2.1	42.7	96.2	114.7	4
Iran	75.1	1.3	65.1	88.4	100.2	5
Iraq	31.5	2.6	67.5	40.3	53.6	3
Israel	7.6	1.6	92.0	8.9	10.6	10
Jordan	6.5	2.6	78.9	8.7	11.8	3
Kuwait	3.1	2.0	97.0	4.2	6.4	2
Lebanon	4.3	1.5	89.9	5.4	5.8	10
Libya	6.5	1.9	89.7	8.3	10.8	4
Morocco	31.9	1.5	55.6	40.5	48.4	5
Oman	3.1	1.8	76.5	4.9	7.6	2
Palestine	4.0	2.8	40.5	7.4	11.2	3
Qatar	1.7	0.8	94.1	0.8	0.9	1
Saudi Arabia	29.2	2.6	86.8	40.9	60.3	2
Syria	22.5	2.5	52.1	27.1	35.2	3
Tunisia	10.5	1.2	66.1	12.5	14.2	7
Turkey	73.6	1.2	66.1	85.2	97.2	7
UAE	5.4	1.4	87.5	4.5	5.1	1
Yemen	23.6	3.0	24.9	39.6	71.1	3

Source: 2010 World Population Data Sheet. And UNICEF, the State of the World's Children 2010

As MENA's total population increases, so does its elderly population and with it a health burden that has important implications for the cost and configuration of health systems. For example, the elderly population of Egypt (60 years and older) is expected to 23.7 million in 2050. Saudi Arabia's elderly population is expected to 7.7 million in 2050. Regardless of the level of economic development or national income, MENA governments are increasingly challenged to provide the basic needs for a growing numbers of citizens – adequate housing, sanitation, health care, education, and jobs – and to reduce poverty, narrow the gap between rich and poor, and generally improve the standard of living. In addition, the region's scarce water resources need to be managed in the face of growing demand. Unfortunately, MENA countries are currently more likely to experience "brain drain," as large flows of educated people leave the region for Europe, North America, and other parts of the world.

High rates of unemployment and illiteracy in MENA

Unemployment is considered the major challenge facing MENA countries at present, and, in view of the coming surge in the proportion of job seekers, it is expected to be an even bigger problem in the future. As a consequence of demographic increases, several of the MENA countries have experienced fast growth in their labor force – i.e., population between age 15+ and 59 – over the years between 1990 and 2010 (Omran, 2009). The rate of growth was 30% in Algeria, 35% in Iran, 48% in Lebanon, 68% in Jordan, and 80% in Yemen over the last decade, and the same trend is expected to continue in the next decade in several of the MENA countries (Assaad & Barsoum, 2019). While growth in working age population is high, unemployment is one of the most severe problems of the region, reaching 30% in Algeria (Epstein, 2003), 15% and 14% in Iran and Lebanon respectively.. Underemployment is estimated to be around 25% in Yemen. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), the only countries with a dependency ratio of two or higher (an average of two or more persons not economically active per one economically active person) are found in the MENA region. MENA's unemployment rate is the highest between 1996 and 2015; MENA economies will need to create half again as many additional jobs as those that existed in 2010 in order to prevent the region's unemployment rate from increasing above its mid_1990s' rate of about 14 % – assuming the proportion of working-age population who enter the labor market remains unchanged. (Mostafa Madbouly, *Revisiting Urban Planning in the Middle East*) The Egyptian economy, for example, needs to create an additional 500,000 new jobs each year to absorb new entrants into its job market. Even some of the oil-rich countries in the Gulf, such as Saudi Arabia, which have traditionally had no unemployment, are faced with youth unemployment. According to the World Labor Report 2002, in Jordan in 1997, three-quarters of the unemployed were 15 to 29 years of age, and the female unemployment rate was twice as high as that of men. Women in MENA face the highest rate of unemployment in the world. According to the ILO, the largest gender gaps in unemployment are found in MENA. Unemployment rates in Egypt were reported to be 24 percent for women in 1995, compared to 7 percent for men. To prepare its growing working-age population for the era of economic globalization, MENA requires a much greater investment in human resources. Despite governments' efforts in the area of education, the number of illiterate adults continues to increase in some countries. In Egypt, between 1980 and 1995, the literacy rate among the population age 15 years and older increased from 40 percent to 50 percent, but the total number of illiterate Egyptians still grew from 16 million to 19 million. Morocco's illiterate population grew from 8 million in 1980 to 9.5 million in 1995, despite the increase in its literacy rate from 29 percent to 44 percent. Two-thirds of MENA's illiterate adults are women (UN HABITAT, DFID, DPU, 2002).

MENA's Rapid Urbanization

The population of the region has grown rapidly over the past few decades, faster than all regions of the world, except sub-Saharan Africa.

Increase in population has been accompanied with high rates of urbanization. Except Egypt, Syria and Yemen, all the countries in the region are highly urbanized and have experienced significant growth in urban populations comparing 1990s, 2000, 2010 and 2020. Managing rapidly growing urban populations in the face of housing shortages and inadequate infrastructure is also becoming more of a challenge. The populations of cities are growing faster than the populations of the countries as a whole, as population growth in the rural areas feeds a pool of potential rural-to-urban migrants. Currently, Cairo (10.6 million), Istanbul (9.6 million) (Ozden, *Strategic spatial planning approach in Turkey: New expectations*, WIT, 2021)

Tab. 2. Level of Urbanization in MENA countries

Countries	Urban Population-projections 1990	Urban Population-projections 2000	Urban Population-projections 2010*	Urban Population-Estimates & projections 2020**
Algeria	52.1	59.8	66	67.6
Bahrain	88.1	94.6	89	98.4
Egypt	42.5	43.5	43	43.1
Iran	56.3	64.2	71	71.1
Iraq	69.7	67.8	66	66.4
Israel	90.4	91.4	92	92.1
Jordan	72.2	80.4	79	84.1
Kuwait	98.0	98.2	98	98.5
Lebanon	83.1	86.0	87	87.4
Libya	78.6	83.1	78	87.1
Morocco	48.4	55.1	58	60.2
Oman	65.4	71.6	73	73.1
Palestine	67.9	71.5	71	72.1
Qatar	92.2	94.9	96	96.3
Saudi Arabia	76.6	79.8	82	82.4
Syria	48.9	50.1	51	51.1
Tunisia	59.6	63.4	67	68.1
Turkey	59.2	64.7	70	70.2
UAE	79.1	77.4	84	84.1
Yemen	20.9	25.4	26	26.1

Source: 2010 Central Intelligence Agency, Urbanization in the World. www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world. 2001 World Population Data Sheet; and UNICEF, The State of the World's Children 2001, Table, 2003 GRHS, Statistical Annex.

Muhammad Hassan Abdou, University of Baghdad, the population growth in the Arab world, Conference. University of Baghdad 2021.

Tab. 3. Inadequate Infrastructure in MENA countries

Countries	Improved drinking water coverage Total (%) - 2015	Household connection to improved drinking water Total (%) - 2015	Improved sanitation coverage Total (%) - 2015
Algeria	85	41	92
Bahrain	87	78	98
Egypt	98	85	70
Iran	92	81	82
Iraq	81	74	79
Israel	100	100	100
Jordan	97	93	93
Kuwait	98	82	92
Lebanon	100	98	98
Libya	67	52	97
Morocco	81	57	73
Oman	78	68	88
Palestine	92	81	73
Qatar	100	94	100
Saudi Arabia	93	90	98
Syria	93	84	90
Tunisia	93	74	85
Turkey	96	92	88
UAE	98	89	98
Yemen	67	23	43

Source: Karol Jamul, Low infrastructure services in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, Saida Journal. University of Beirut. 2020.

Transactions on Ecology and the environment, WIT Press and Tehran (7.2 million) are ranked 19th, 22nd, and 28th in the world, respectively. By 2015, Cairo (13.8 million) and Istanbul (12.5 million) are projected to rank 16th and 17th, according to the UN's latest estimates.

MENA's Severe Water Shortage Problem

Rapid population growth threatens MENA's sustainable development, as the region is faced with the most severe water shortage of any region in the world. While it is home to 6.3 percent of the world's population, MENA holds only 1.4 percent of the world's accessible fresh water (14-The Government of Egypt (2021). Between 1980 and 2015, population growth caused the available renewable fresh water resources per person in MENA to drop by more than half: from 3,300 to 1,500 m³/person/year. (www.marefa.org/index) The per capita fresh water resources available are projected to decline to around 1,000 m³ by 2030, the internationally recognized threshold for water scarcity. Today, much of the region is already below the international standard, since nearly 80 percent of available fresh water in the region is found in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. In countries such as Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia, the national average is below 200 m³/person/year. Although there were many improvements in drinking water and sanitation coverage, the household connection to improved drinking water is still not improved by the same degree, as shown in the previous table.

MENA's Peace and Political Stability Problems

Peace and political stability in the region are necessary for governments to address some of their population challenges, particularly those of refugees. According to the U.S. Committee for Refugees, MENA, home to more than 6 million refugees, has the largest refugee population in the world (Ismail, 2017). Iran has the largest number of refugees living in its territory. Palestinian refugees are the largest and oldest refugee population in the world. In addition to a commitment to peace and political stability, sound environmental, social, and economic policies are needed to address these and a variety of other population-related challenges, such as labor migration and environmental degradation. Different policies ranging from labor and trade laws and regulations to those related to raising the status of women and protecting the environment all need to take into account the population factor.

MENA's Informal Settlements and Slums

Informal (unauthorized) housing: defined as the housing stock which is not in compliance with current regulations, where "Slums" refer to deteriorated living conditions and low levels of access to basic services none of the countries in the region except for Egypt is above the informal settlements trend line, comparing with other developing countries. But, numbers show clearly that demand is not translated into formal supply. There are also signals that informal housing stocks increase, primarily in Morocco, Algeria, Jordan and Iran. Slum upgrading policies and programs to improve the living conditions of existing poor neighborhoods appear to be a major priority in all the countries of the region, but especially in Iran, Yemen, Morocco, and Egypt. Experiences of Jordan and Tunisia in slum upgrading would be useful for the other countries in the region. Tunisia and Jordan have implemented successful long-term policies for slum upgrading and these countries seem to be now on the right track to solve their slum problems, without further WB assistance. The high cost of land and poor public land

management, coupled with the high price of housing available in the formal sector, has contributed to create slums and informal/squatter settlements in cities throughout the region. Over 30% of Egypt's urban population lives in such conditions of limited, if any, tenure security and poor access to basic infrastructure services (www.urbanagendaplatform.org/Regional-reports).

MENA's Poverty

Although largely a middle-income region, poverty and vulnerability are affecting a large and growing proportion of MENA's population. In 2010, 23.2% of MENA's population lived on less than \$2 per day. The 2000s witnessed 20 million more persons living on less than \$2 per day despite higher growth than the previous decade, which saw a reduction in poverty (UNICEF, report April 2019). Such increasing vulnerability of the population is alarming in a region that is witnessing frequent conflicts and natural disasters, and which suffers from major natural resource constraints, especially water supply, also adding enormous pressures on cities to deliver infrastructure, services, housing and jobs to meet the growing demands and needs of the urban poor. Over the period 2000-2015, the poverty rate in MENA has been declining, although at a slower rate than in LAC or ECA. The number of people in poverty, however, has not declined since 1990 due to rapid population growth, and by 2005 remained around 50 million. (Under \$2 a day). Comparing number of poor under different poverty lines, \$1.25, \$2.00 and \$2.50 per day at PPP, reveals very high concentration of population. Hence, as many as 17 percent of Egyptians, 15 percent of Yemenis and 10 percent of Moroccans have consumption levels which are no more than 50 cents per day above the international line of \$2 a day, suggesting high vulnerability to economic shocks. Poverty reduction is one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set by the United Nations in the context of its Millennium Summit held in New York 2000 (<http://www.ejtemay.com/showthread.php>). Prior to the Millennium Summit poverty reduction goals were articulated by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in the form of the International Development Goals (IDGs). In this respect, and in a foreword to the report titled "A Better World for All", the representatives of the international community declared that poverty "in all its forms is the greatest challenge to the international community.

MENA's Economic Policy and Governance Reforms' Slow implementation

MENA countries are overall lagging behind in implementing needed economic policy and governance reforms, which are critical to improve the investment climate and address the inefficiencies caused by a large and inefficient public sector, and an embryonic and relatively non dynamic private sector. Progress in decentralization has overall been limited. In Tunisia and Jordan, local government expenditures as a share of total government expenditures are 3.1% and 5.5%, respectively (World Bank Group 2020). The limited fiscal transfers and human resources at hand, and the limited financial and political autonomy severely impede local government capacity to finance, deliver and manage urban services.

MENA's Lack of Secure Property Rights

The overall lack of secure property rights, particularly concerning land and real estate, and difficulties in accessing land have been identified by firms in most MENA countries as a constraint to investment (Kabbani, 2019) The lack of secure property rights severely hinders the ability to use land and real estate as collateral to access

finance, which in large part explains why housing mortgage finance markets in the region remain undeveloped (Jordan and Tunisia are exceptions). Recently, in 2018 Egypt has embarked on an ambitious plan to stimulate financial markets and create its first-ever mortgage industry by freeing up the billions of dollars in capital that are trapped in unregistered real estate properties. The centerpiece of this progressive economic program is the development of a parcel-based deeds registration system in Cairo that will make it easier for the lower and middle classes to have their landownership rights recorded by the government. GOE has observed that low-income people in Egypt, like any other place in the world, often have only one asset—the property they occupy. This property represents an untapped resource in many urban areas because these landholders usually have no officially recognized right to own or occupy the property. In addition, many formal systems do not recognize informal or customary forms of land tenure. Without a registered deed, title, or lease, the owner cannot use the land as collateral and improve the property or start a business. For an emerging market, this untitled land is a major impediment to economic development. While the benefits of land registration are many, the disincentives are often considerable. In many parts of the world, poor people don't trust land registries or formal government out of fear that those systems will only result in taxation. Another common drawback is the formal registration process itself, which is often complex and expensive for anyone but a wealthy landowner to attempt to navigate. In Cairo, only 5 percent of the roughly three million real estate properties are registered in the existing paper-based deeds system. The land registration process, which lacks computerized automation, takes an average of 193 days to complete, involves many complex steps, and has high fees. The typical landowner doesn't view the process as worth the time and money involved. (Salem Alstaa, obstacles to economic development in Libya). The Egyptian government recognizes the long-term economic benefit of bringing the other 95 percent of Cairo's private properties into the formal system (Malik, Adeel and Awadallah, 2013) With encouragement from a rising middle class that increasingly wants to take advantage of mortgages, Egypt is streamlining the process and replacing the manual registry index in Cairo with a parcel-based deeds registration system that is linked to a digital cadastre using GIS technology.

Discussion

In order to face the above-mentioned challenges, MENA's regional urban strategy focuses on creating livable cities that are able to fully tap their productive potential and deliver on their promise of development for all residents. This requires that cities be efficiently managed, economically competitive and financially viable. And while cities are in an increasingly important position to maintain social cohesion and drive productivity within countries, most still need to catch up with infrastructure and housing deficiencies and take needed steps toward sustainable urban management. To bring better quality of life, social equity, and in particular services to the poor, it is crucial to improve the overall regulatory environment for urban and housing development (infrastructure and housing delivery, preservation of key heritage sites), management of cities (capacity building of municipal governments and strengthening their fiscal base), and access to capital markets (housing and municipal finance). MENA's urban development can be achieved, focusing on four strategies.

First, improving decentralization and service delivery. Providing policy guidance and building local government management capacity to further decentralization, strengthening municipal financing of basic urban service delivery, improving asset management and maintenance, expanding the involvement of the private sector in public-private partnership (PPP) arrangements, and responding to population pressures by financing needed infrastructure and urban services, are all central to this area of focus.

Second, strengthening local economic development: Assisting cities to respond to competitiveness pressures by enabling the participatory formulation of city development strategies (CDS), helping to improve strategic, physical and investment planning capacity, streamlining administrative procedures and creating an attractive local business environment are all critical measures needed to attract investment, create jobs and contribute to growth and poverty reduction. Such upfront strategy and local economic development work is being carried out in Yemen (through the Port Cities Development Program), and in Lebanon, with likely expansion to Tunisia and Morocco (Blue Plan Papers, Urbanization in the Mediterranean Region from 1980 to 2015, Blue Plan- October 2019).

Third, development of efficient housing and land markets: This strategic area provides assistance to national and local governments in formulating sound housing policies and programs intended to provide adequate shelter for all, based on stronger property rights, improving access to mortgage finance, rationalizing housing subsidies, and providing infrastructure for residential land development. In addition, policy guidance is provided for the development of efficient urban land markets through enhancing registration of land and property rights, reducing transaction costs and regulatory obstacles to access and develop land, putting in place transparent and efficient public land management and disposition procedures, as well as efficient property taxation systems.

Fourth, providing effective emergency assistance. Developing rapid and responsive interventions in post-conflict (West Bank and Gaza, Iraq) and natural disaster situations (earthquakes in Iran, floods in Algeria and Djibouti) is critical to enable cities and countries to rebuild destroyed economic and social infrastructure assets, and resume the path of growth and poverty reduction. More recently, MENA's urban unit has launched a disaster mitigation program that is gaining increasing interest from client countries interested in preparing and reducing vulnerability to natural disasters (Mostafa Madbouly, Revisiting Urban Planning in the Middle East).

Conclusion

Urbanization is a problem which has assumed gigantic dimensions in some of the technically and industrially advanced countries of the world. It means the concentration of population in the economically developed and industrialized centers and other big cities. This leads to much congestion and many social and economic problems. The most noticeable evil associated with over urbanization is the marked deterioration in the environment of the city and the appearance of slums. Modern cities have grown in a haphazard and unplanned manner due to fast industrialization. Cities in developing countries become overpopulated and overcrowded partly as a result of the increase in population over the decades and partly as a result of migration of persons from the countryside to the big industrialized cities in search of employment, or in search of a higher standard of living and better living conditions. As decent habitation is not possible for them to afford, the poor

are driven by necessity to living on foot paths or in slums under most intolerable conditions of incredible squalor, dirt and disease, in fact, they are unfit for habitation, a disgrace to the community. Being devoid of hygienic and sanitary considerations, they breed all kinds of epidemics. They become the nerve centers of all the worst vices and crimes, for all kinds of persons earning their livelihood by dubious means beggars, thieves, pickpockets, vagabonds, gamblers and drug and the like come to live in slums. Urbanization has created another vital problem, that of population of the environment. According to a biologist, the price of pollution could be the death of person. Pollution is the direct outcome of the application of science and technology to human problems. The invention, preparation and experiments of nuclear weapons, the increasing use of science and technology in industry and agriculture, the carbon and smoke emitted by chimneys and motorcars, and chemical wastes and poisonous exhausts this has been causing disastrous environmental pollution in big industrial cities. Another serious and insurmountable problem is that of housing the ever-growing and migrating population in big cities. Due to the paucity of houses to accommodate the people, the once beautiful cities are being reduced to slums. This pressure of population has led to the construction of vertically rising skyscrapers to accommodate the maximum number within the minimum space. But they have themselves given birth to many problems such as fire hazard, in sanitary conditions, lack of civic amenities like parks, playgrounds and parking space, congestion, traffic jams. Urbanization consequent upon industrialization has denied to a large section of the people even elementary civic amenities pure drinking water, underground drainage, electric supply, hospitals and dispensaries, well-built and well-run schools and colleges and roads. The absence of these amenities raises the mental and health problems.

Urbanization disturbs the equilibrium between demand and supply in the economic market, resulting in larger demands and lesser supplies. It is very difficult to get pure food. Last, but not the least, the most effective way to tackle the problem of urbanization is to make the economy of the villages and small cities fully viable. It can be revitalized if the government undertakes a massive rural development programme. Surplus rural manpower should be absorbed in the villages themselves. In this way the village economy shall become self-sufficient and autonomous. Then old cities, should be made cleaner and fit places for poor habitation by demolishing slums and by constructing neat and spacious houses for the poor at subsidized rents. Expansion of buildings should be horizontal and well spread over. All civic amenities should be religiously provided and ensured. Also, the Government should not allow any new industries to be set up in the already congested big industrialized cities. Industries, Government offices and headquarters should be diffused and decentralized and shifted at smaller centers. It is within the power of man to create a healthy environment for the human race. What is needed is a readjustment of social and moral values.

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