

# Distinct Population Patterns and Growth Trends: Evidence from Kerala

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## ABSTRACT

*Urbanisation is closely related to the three dimensions of development: economic, societal and environmental. There is a strong consensus that urbanisation is critically important to global development, but there is considerable confusion over what urbanisation actually is and how the ideas are to be conceived. Generally, urbanisation is tied up with economic and infrastructural advancement and thereby people preferred to stay at such places, resulting in large urban places, that we call metropolitan cities today. However, this idea need not hold true in all circumstances as there are other alternative models of urbanisation coming up. Kerala postulated a different model of urbanisation and it has now attracted the world by its urban agglomerations hitting the tag 'world fastest growing' in demographic terms. Therefore, the absence of polar urbanisation and the population-based urbanisation trend is the core of discussion in this paper. In addition, it compares the state patterns in urbanisation with those of metropolises in India.*

**Keywords:** *Urbanisation, Urban agglomeration, Census, Conurbation, Kerala*

## INTRODUCTION

India has been considered to be a major contributor to this urban explosion, because of both its large demographic weight and the dynamics of urbanisation. Several facts such as India's share of the projected world urban population increasing from the present 10 per cent to 14 per cent in 2050, and the increase in the number of 10 million-

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plus cities from zero in 1950 to three by the turn of the century have been cited as evidence of exceptional urban growth in India. (Mohan & Dasgupta, 2005).

Being the second most urbanised state in India (Census, 2011), Kerala shows distinct peculiarities in urbanisation patterns. Generally, an increase in the urban population growth rate is the result of the over-concentration of the population in the existing cities. However, in Kerala, the main reason for urban population growth is the increase in the number of urban areas as well as urbanisation of the peripheral areas of existing major urban centres. Kerala is very unique in settlement patterns also. In most of its parts, it is a continuous spread of occupancy without many open lands or fields separating habitations. So the settlement pattern itself gives scope for a pan state semi-urbanisation. Moreover, the infrastructural facilities available to the population, in general, do not vary much between rural and urban in the state, especially in the case of access to developmental institutions such as education and health care facilities. The socio-economic conditions and “better diffusion of urban features over space” has led to a neither rural nor urban” spatial pattern in Kerala (Sreekumar, 1990). It is in this context that the urbanisation trends of Kerala, with its unique settlement pattern and diverse socio-economic characteristics, stands out as a question before academicians.

This paper seeks to discuss the peculiar urbanisation pattern in Kerala in relation to regular and established urban places in India. It is indeed difficult to understand the urbanisation trend of Kerala since it shows some distinct features such as mushrooming urban agglomerations while no metropolitan concentration and the paper applies a comparative perspective to understand the scenario in the context of *The Economist's* report on the world's fastest-growing cities (2020). The urbanisation patterns in Kerala are explained in the context of development and demographic paradigms in Kerala over the years and possible and relevant comparisons are made to highlight the phenomenon. The report by *'The Economist'* throws light on these distinguished urbanisation patterns in the state. It is apparent that all the three in the top 10 world's fastest-growing Indian cities (2020) – Malappuram, Kozhikode and Kollam – are from Kerala which is neither the state capital (Thiruvananthapuram) nor the financial capital of the state (Ernakulam/Cochin). Interestingly, two out of the three are from northern Kerala which seems to be less developed in regional disparity terms (Pulikkamath, 2017). Therefore, the paper attempts to map the distinguished trends in the urbanisation process in Kerala, which can be contrasted with the rest of India. In this background, discussing Kerala's development paradigm may shed some light on this distinct

urbanisation pattern and for better comprehension. understanding of the discussion.

#### THE BACKDROP : HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT IN KERALA

The development history of the state of Kerala has completed 65 years as a state and also as a regional economy (2021). Kerala has been experiencing a two-fold pattern of development at economic and social fronts for the last six decades. Development as a process necessitates shifts from the primary sector to secondary and tertiary sectors or rurality to urbanisation (Todaro & Smith, 2014). Kerala postulates this shift in a unique way. In spite of stagnation of the secondary sector and prevalence of severe unemployment, it managed to catch-up with rapid urbanisation vis-a-vis development by cashing on in its higher human development. Certain demographic indicators such as migration and remittances have undue weight in the process of Kerala's development (Zachariah & Rajan, 2010) and the urbanisation process. In this context, the history of Kerala's development can be divided into three phases namely the first phase (1956-75), the second phase (1976-91) and the third phase (post-1991) (Prakash, 2005). The urbanisation of the state can also be overarched with these phases, but most of the radical urbanisation trends are visible in the later stages.

##### **First Phase (1956-75)**

Kerala remained as a backward economy as it was a traditional primary sector that resulted in low productivity levels at the time of formation of the state in 1956. The state's major agricultural products were produced and sold as agricultural raw materials only. The agricultural operations were mostly uneconomic, labour-intensive industries like coir, cashew, handloom, etc. as the majority of the farmers had very small or marginal agricultural holdings. The two fundamental socio-economic problems faced by Kerala during this period were massive poverty and unemployment. On the other hand, the policies followed for industrial development, educational achievements and agricultural developments were sensible (Prakash, 2005).

With the above-said challenges for the newly formed state, the strategy of development pursued by Kerala during the first phase was a state-sponsored, state-funded development through planning and public expenditure with a focus on social welfare. The state neglected the importance of production, productivity, technological changes and the creation of more goods and services through a policy of non-prioritising productive sectors. Hence, the strategy has ignored the important role of the private investment of the people in accelerating the economic growth that may lead to the development process including urbanisation.

This phase shows a stunted urbanisation trend, as more than 80 per cent of the population remained in rural areas, essentially attached to primary sectors (Kerala Economic Reviews, 1960-76). The decadal urban population growth rate during this phase was 40 per cent (1951-61) 36 per cent (1961-71) and 38 per cent (1971-81). This growth rate was considerably low and regressive when compared to the earlier decade 1941-51 (53 per cent), in the wake of the Independence of India and state formation. The pace of urbanization during this phase was five per cent whereas the same was higher (6 per cent) at the national level. In the same fashion, the total number of towns (all types) in the state has nominally increased from 94 to 106, marking a sluggish growth during this period.

### **Second Phase (1976-91)**

The gulf migration and the consequent economic boom is the highlight of this phase. Development in Kerala began to witness fast changes with the migration of Keralites to gulf countries for employment in the mid-1970s. The total stock of Keralite emigrants across the globe increased rapidly over years and so did the remittances received from the Keralite emigrants. It is evident that migration has helped migrant households to attain a higher level of income, consumption, acquisition of assets compared to non-migrant households (Zachariah & Rajan, 2010). Thus the migration and the consequences had a remarkable role in Kerala's economic growth and development with extraordinary economic changes pertaining to the labour market, consumption, saving, investment, poverty, income distribution and regional development.

The expected rural to urban transition in the development process (Todaro & Smith, 2014) has happened in Kerala in the form of outmigration due to the peculiarities of the economy, such as high human development coinciding with relatively less economic and physical development. Hence, urbanisation in the state can be perceived as a result of this social mobility induced large volumes of private investments also. This phase shows a gradual but nominal growth trend in the urbanisation process (Kerala Economic Reviews, 1976-91). The decadal urban population growth rate during this phase is 38 per cent (1971-81) and 61 per cent (1981-91). This growth rate is a notable progression when compared to the earlier phase, where it was regressive. The pace of urbanization during this phase was eight per cent whereas the same was lower (5 per cent) at the national level, which is a paradigm shift from the earlier phase. In the same fashion of growth rate, the total number of towns (all types) in the state got almost doubled from 106 to 197, marking a massive growth during this period.

### **Third Phase (Post 1991)**

The third phase is obviously moulded on the foundations of the new economic policies of 1991 by India. Besides this, the third phase has been influenced by three other major factors, viz. the state policies and public expenditure, increase in investment, migration and flow of remittance (Prakash, 2019). With regard to neoliberal policies in 1991 and post that, the Congress led United Democratic Front (UDF) Government in Kerala during 1991 was proactive, but the successor Left Democratic Front (LDF) Government was totally against this structural reform. This created utter confusion in the development path of the state, at least for a decade (Kerala Development Report, 2008). Since then the state has witnessed an alternative choice between these two ideologies for each term as UDF and LDF have been coming to power alternatively (except 2021), the confusion between ideologies continues.

The Kerala Development Report (2008) observes that there was an absence of conscious effort towards promoting the industrial sector in the state, resulting in a negative economic development. Although the tertiary sector improved its growth, it was driven by producer services with limited linkages to the production sector in the state (Pillai & Shanta, 2005). The peculiar structural shift with an overconcentration of the service sector adversely affected the revenue earning capacity of the state, resulting in a revenue deficit. This has led to the undermining of the state's capability to undertake developmental expenditure (Mohan & Shyjan, 2005). On the other hand, this phase also demonstrates the 'gulf boom' effect in the state. As a result, the human development in the state upgraded well due to private investments in key areas such as education and health.

Consequently, the phase was marked by rapid urbanisation, earmarked with a twofold increase rate from 1991 to 2021. The decadal urban population growth rate during this phase is 92 per cent (1991-2011) and the growth rate is historically high when compared to the earlier phases. The pace of urbanization during this phase was also very high (21 per cent) when compared to the national trend (6 per cent). In the same fashion, the total number of towns (all types) in the state had drastically increased from 197 to 520, adding a wow factor to the arena.

### DEMOGRAPHIC AND URBANISATION PARADIGMS IN KERALA

The state of Kerala has completed six decades of its existence as a state and it has also coined the renowned 'Kerala Model of Development' (CDS-UN Report, 1975) with its notable human development achievements in due course of time.

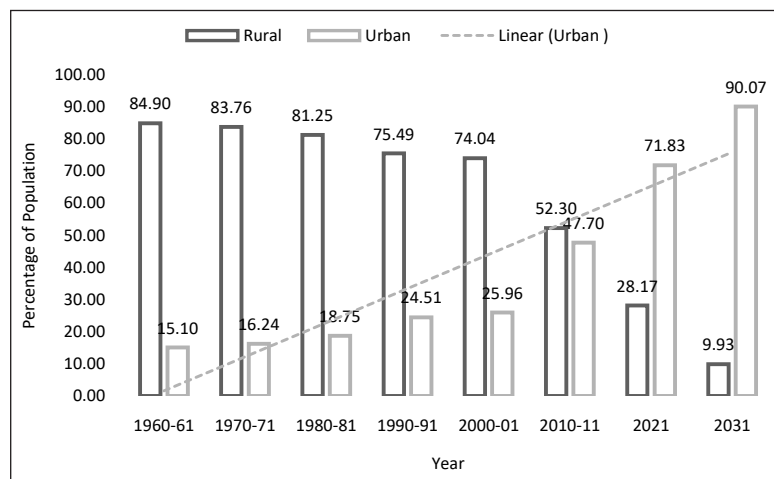
TABLE 1: GEOGRAPHIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF KERALA (1960-2021)

Particulars	Units	Years								
		1960-61	1970-71	1980-81	1990-91	2000-01	2010-11	2019-20		
<b>Administrative Setup</b>										
Geographical Area	000 Sq Km	38856.7	38864	38863	38863	38863	38863	38863	38863	38863
Districts	Do	9	10	12	14	14	14	14	14	14
Talukas	Do	55	56	58	61	63	63	63	63	75
Villages	Do	NA	1326	1331	1364	1452	1532	1532	1532	1664
Towns	Do	92	88	106	197	159	520	520	520	520
Population as per Census										
Total (in 000s)	(in 000s)	16903.72	21347.38	25453.68	29098.51	31843.8	33406.06	33406.06	33406.06	35,489
Male	Do	8361.93	10587.85	12608.74	14288.99	15468.61	16027.41	16027.41	16027.41	17,043
Female	Do	8541.89	10759.52	12885.08	14809.52	16372.76	17378.65	17378.65	17378.65	18,447
Density per sq km	Do	435	549	655	749	819	860	860	860	860
Literacy Rate (Percentage)	Do	55.08	60.42	70.42	89.81	90.9	94	94	94	94
Sex Ratio Females per 1000 males	Do	1022	1016	1032	1036	1058	1084	1084	1084	1084

Source: Author. Compiled from Kerala Economic Review Reports (1960-2020), Census Reports (1951-2011) and Census of India 2011 Population Projections for India and States 2011-2036 Report (2020).

Table 1 exhibits a macro picture of the economic and demographic changes over time. There is a declining growth rate of population in the state except during the decade 1960-70, strongly backed by the successful awareness creation about family planning. This situation is in turn one of the results of universal education and social development in the state which paves a strong base of the Kerala Model development. Remarkably, the higher female to male sex ratio in the state is consistent across decades. Alongside, population density in the state is also increasing which could contribute to the less rural-urban disparity in population distribution in the state. However, the increase in the towns in the state is drastic; there is a five-fold increase in the number during the six decades.

**Fig. 1: Temporal Transition of Urban-Rural Population in Kerala (1960-2031)**



Source: Author. Compiled from *Kerala Economic Review Reports (1960-2020)*, *Census Reports (1951-2011)* and *Census of India 2011 Population Projections for India and States 2011-2036 Report (2020)*.

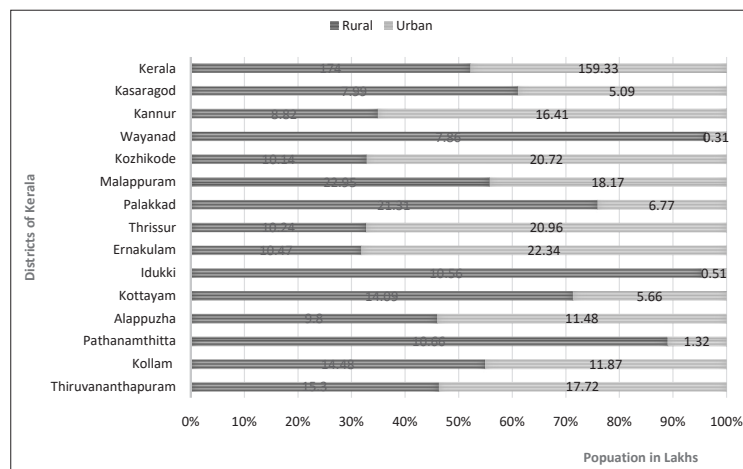
The gap between rural-urban population is drastically declining in the state and a convergence had happened in 2010-11. Further, it is projected that the urbanisation trend is going to be positive in the future. (Fig. 1). In another two decades from 2010-11, Kerala witnessed a scenario of more than 90 percent of its population living in urban places. The trendline of urbanisation shows that there is an evident positive and rapid temporal transition of rural to urban population. This is a reversal of the scenario in 1960-61 where close to 85 per cent of the population in the state lived in rural localities.

As there is no metro or megacities in the state like the rest of India,

it indicates that the state remains successful in nurturing infrastructure development which resulted in a pan Kerala semi-urban featured small cities or reduced the gap between villages and towns. According to the census data, Kerala has a phenomenon of mushrooming census towns besides administrative and political towns/municipalities in the state. It implies that the urbanisation or access to urban facilities are handy for rural people as well though they are not residing in an urban area.

There are fourteen districts in the state which are formed as a district mostly on the basis of geographical features or historic backgrounds, at different periods. As shown in Table 2, the differences in population are also huge between the districts, Malappuram district tops in population with 41 lakhs of people followed by Thiruvananthapuram (33 lakhs) and Ernakulam (32 lakhs) districts. Here it is again noteworthy that the populous districts are not necessarily those districts with major cities as in other states of India. The most populous district Malappuram has no major city and the district with the major city - Kochi - of Kerala (Ernakulam district) ranks at a third position only. However, Ernakulam district has a higher urban population (22 lakhs) followed by Thrissur and Kozhikode (21 lakhs) districts. Thiruvananthapuram and Alappuzha are the most population-dense districts (1500 per square km) followed by Kozhikode (1300 per square km) and all districts in the state except Palakkad (88 per cent) have a literacy rate over and above 90 per cent. Palakkad, Wayanad and Kasaragod districts are below 90 per cent in female literacy as well. Apparently, all of these three districts in northern Kerala have a less urban share of the population.

**Fig. 2: Urban-Rural Population Distribution among Districts in Kerala (2020)**



Source: Author. Compiled from *Kerala Economic Review Reports (1960-2020)* and *Census Reports (1951-2011)*.



TABLE 2: GEOGRAPHIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF DISTRICTS IN KERALA

Particulars	Thiruvananthapuram	Kollam	Pathanamthitta	Alappuzha	Kottayam	Idukki	Ernakulam	Thrissur	Palakkad	Malappuram	Kozhikode	Wayanad	Kannur	Kasaragod
Administrative Setup														
Geographical Area (000 sq km)	2192	2491	2637	1414	2208	4358	3068	3032	4480	3550	2344	2131	2966	1992
Talukas	4	5	5	6	5	4	7	5	5	6	3	3	3	2
Villages	100	98	68	92	97	65	119	234	152	128	106	49	123	122
Population as per Census														
Total (lakhs)	33.01	26.35	11.97	21.28	19.75	11.09	32.82	31.21	28.1	41.13	30.86	8.17	25.23	13.07
Density per sq km	1508	1061	5452	1504	895	255	1072	1031	627	1157	1316	384	852	657
Literacy Male	94.16	95.83	97.7	97.9	97.17	94.84	97.14	96.98	92.27	95.78	97.57	92.84	97.54	93.93
Literacy Female	90.89	91.95	96.26	94.8	95.67	89.59	94.27	93.85	84.99	91.55	93.16	85.94	93.57	86.13
Literacy Rate Percentage	92.52	93.89	96.98	96.35	96.42	92.21	95.70	95.41	88.63	93.66	95.36	89.39	95.55	90.03

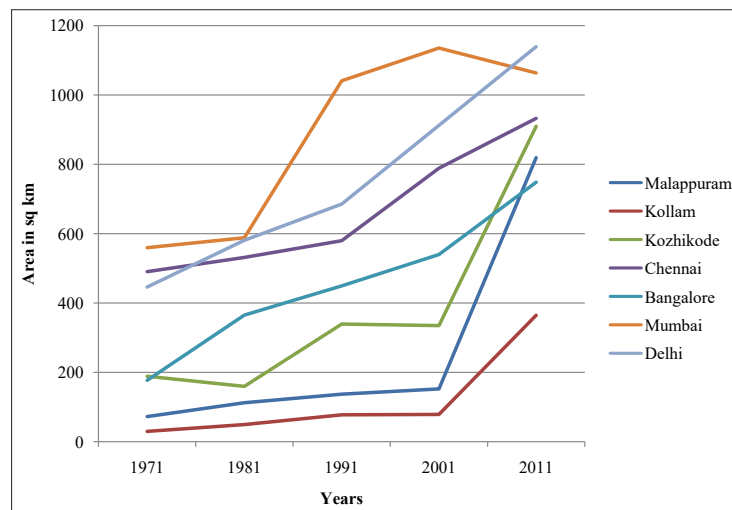
Source: Author. Compiled from Kerala Economic Review Reports (1960-2020) and Census Reports (1951-2011).

The district-wise distribution of the rural-urban population in Kerala is illustrated in Figure 2. The districts of Kannur, Kozhikode, Thrissur, Ernakulam, Alappuzha and Thiruvananthapuram show a higher urban population while other districts have rural population as majority. Notably, all the major urbanised cities are included in the list. However, the rural-urban disparity is negligible in Kasaragod, Malappuram and Kollam, indicating a sooner convergence. As a whole, nine out of fourteen districts are in the rapid growth of urban population and the sustaining rural districts such as Wayanad and Idukki have their geographical constraints (hilly terrains) to have less human occupancy there. This in turn tells us a different pattern of urbanisation in Kerala that the otherwise rural districts are moving towards population induced urbanisation in Kerala.

### Convergence of World’s Fastest-Growing Cities and Kerala’s Urban Agglomerations

According to *The Economist* (2020), three cities from Kerala were among the top ten fastest-growing urban areas across the world during 2015-2020. During this period, Kerala’s Malappuram had 44.1 per cent growth followed by Kozhikode (34.5 per cent) and Kollam (31.1 per cent). These are the cities from India to feature in the top ten rankings which again implies the peculiar urbanisation pattern in the state. In Kerala, urbanisation is driven by a shift from agriculture to other sectors which leads to change in rural areas or village’s census classification

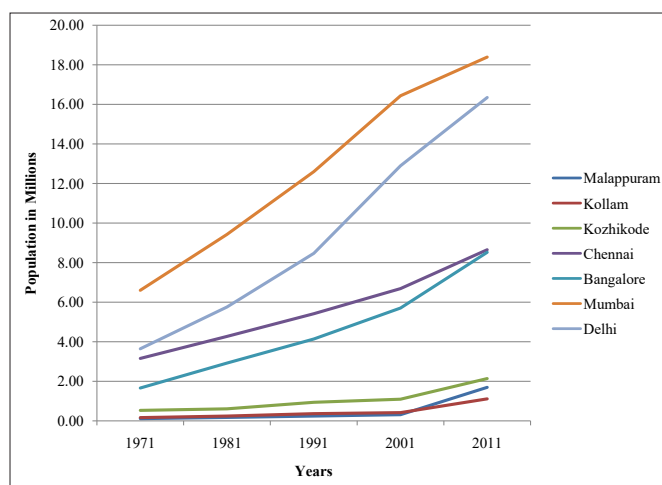
**Fig. 3: Comparison of ‘Fastest-Growing Cities in the World’ with Indian Metropolises (Area)**



Source: Author. Compiled from Census Reports (1951-2011).

status. This steady improvement in rural areas in Kerala paralleled by migration (both emigration and immigration) reinforces people to move from primary sectors, which changes the status of a village to a census town. Another distinct feature is that the total fertility rate (the number of children a woman is likely to have in the childbearing age of 15-49) in Kerala is 1.8 as per NITI Aayog data from 2016, which is below the replacement rate of 2.1. This implies that the increase in the population of Malappuram and other cities is not because of high fertility, rather more villages are being transformed into towns and city borders are expanding.

**Fig. 4: Comparison of 'Fastest-Growing Cities in the World' with Indian Metropolises (Population)**



Source: Author. Compiled from Census Reports (1951-2011).

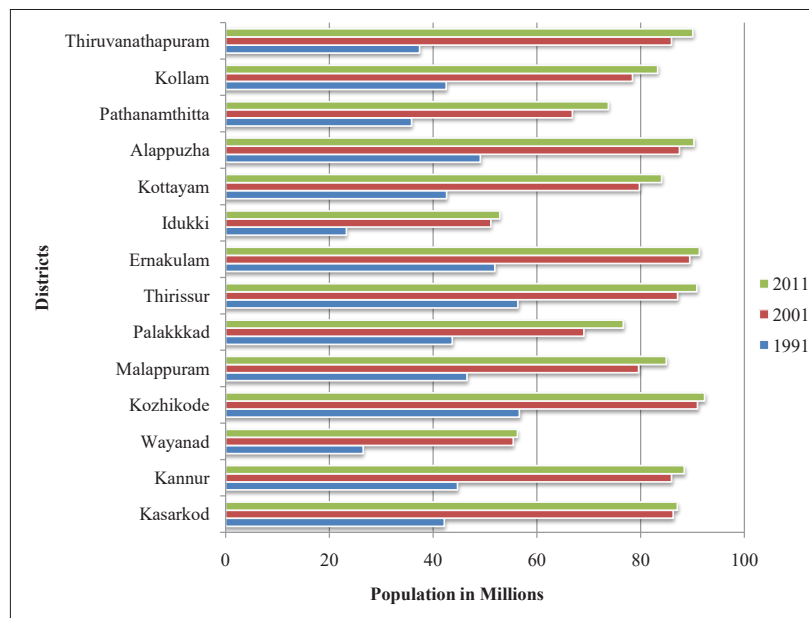
The growth in the area in square kilometres and population of Kerala Urban Agglomerations - Malappuram, Kozhikode and Kollam - in comparison with some of the metropolises in India like Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore and Delhi are illustrated in Figure 3 and Figure 4 respectively. A pattern that stands out is that the Kerala Urban Agglomerations had a sudden increase in area and became comparable to Indian metropolises such as Bangalore and Chennai. However, comparing the population growth shows that these Kerala Urban Agglomerations have significantly lower populations compared to the metropolitan cities.

### Distinct Features of Kerala's Urban Agglomerations

The previous section discussed the trend of urbanisation with respect to density and growth of population leading to the state of Kerala becoming

the second largest urbanised state by retaining distinct identity such as urban agglomeration. This section discusses the unique urbanisation pattern occurring in Kerala.

**Fig. 5: Distribution of Non-Agricultural Labor Force in Kerala (in per cent)**



Source: Author. Compiled from Primary Census Abstract for Kerala for the years 1991, 2001 and 2011.

Although the natural growth in population and increase in population density played a role in more areas getting classified as urban in the state, one another most important factor in Kerala's context is the fast decline in agricultural employment in and around the existing Urban Agglomerations (Figure 5). Urbanisation is a finite process, a cycle through which a nation passes as they evolve from agrarian to industrial society (Davis, 1962). As demonstrated in Figure 5, a major shift from agricultural labour to non-agricultural labour happened during the 1990 to 2011 period. This has resulted in reclassifying several villages as towns in the state, thus leading to the birth of world's fastest-growing cities. Those fastest-growing Urban Agglomerations from Kerala – Malappuram, Kozhikode and Kollam – also show a growth rate of non-agricultural labourers of about 83.95 per cent, 91.35 per cent and 82.3 per cent respectively.

Another important fact behind this increase was the increase

in the number of census towns that are not governed by urban local governments. Census has defined census towns as “places that satisfy three-fold criteria of a population of 5000, 75 per cent of the male main working population engaged in non-agricultural pursuits and density of 400 persons per sq. km.”. They can be easily defined as transitional urban areas at various levels of transition which is also known as ‘urbanisation by implosion’ (Qadeer, 2004) where the massive density of population, economic change and access to a good level of public services leads to urban growth.

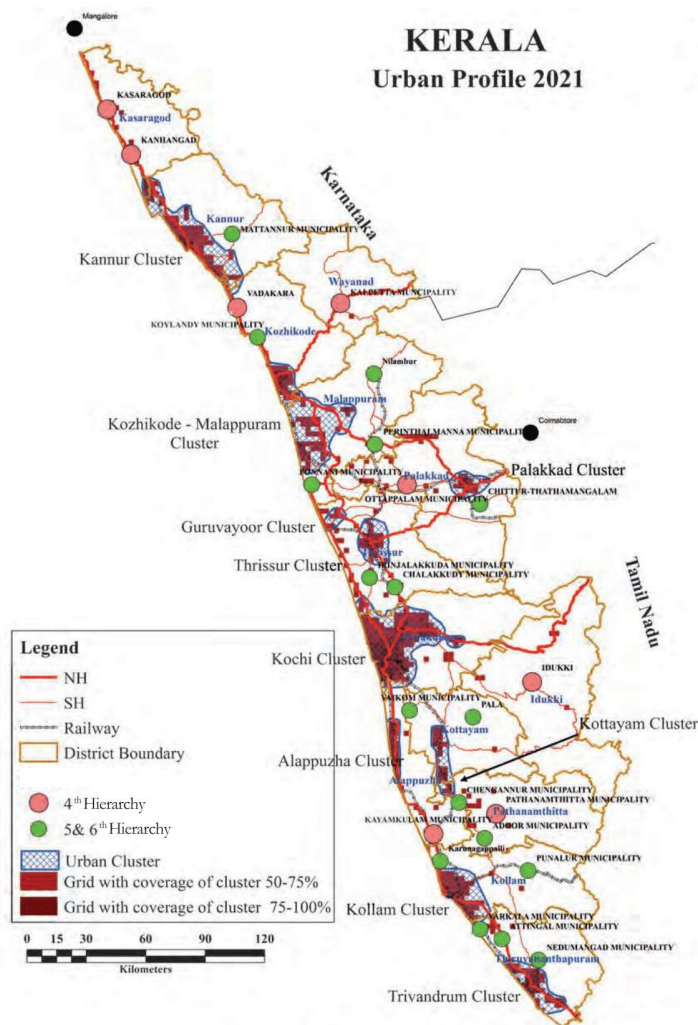
In the case of census towns in Kerala, a quantum jump by almost four times from 159 towns in 2001 to 520 towns in 2011 has occurred. It is noteworthy that, there has been an increase in Class III to class VI towns along with a decline in class I<sup>1</sup> and II<sup>2</sup> towns of Kerala. The class III<sup>3</sup> towns that are borders of class I and class II towns have increased from 72 in 2001 to 254 in 2011. The number of class IV<sup>4</sup> towns increased from 37 to 159 during the period of 2001-2011, which is again an unprecedented increase. Similar trend is observed in the case of class V<sup>5</sup> towns (15 towns in 2001 to 61 in 2011) and class VI<sup>6</sup> towns (1 town in 2001 to 8 towns in 2011) (*State Urbanisation Report-Kerala, 2012*). This indicates that the growing urbanisation in Kerala is also a result of amalgamation of surrounding areas in higher order towns showing the spreading nature of urbanisation pattern. The massive growth of lower-tier census towns in Kerala over the period 2001 and 2011 demonstrates this pattern (non-polar urbanisation) evidently and endorsement by international institutions such as *The Economist* may now ignite discussions in this line.

Figure 6 depicts the projected picture of urbanisation by implosion in Kerala. It is evident that the lower-tier urban centres are spatially spread across the state, however with certain pockets of concentration, resulting in urban agglomerations. Certain urban agglomerations projected in the past (*State Urbanisation Report-Kerala, 2012*) are now a reality (*The Economist, 2020*). The Kozhikode-Malappuram Cluster Urban Agglomeration is the best example in this regard. This cluster was projected to be the biggest Urban Agglomeration in the state by 2021, and that came true. This scenario further led to the discussions of spatial shift in the urbanisation of Kerala from south to north.

Figure 7 shows that there is an evident shift of spatial urbanisation in Kerala over the past five decades. In the earlier phase, the southern part of the state used to be more urbanised with higher concentration of population. The historical advantage of southern Kerala in development discourses has been widely acknowledged in development research (Pulikkamath, 2017). In the latter phase, northern Kerala including

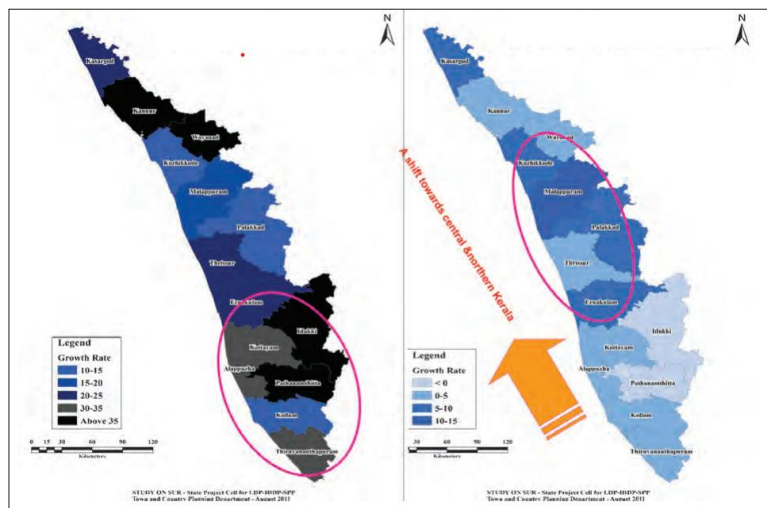
Malappuram and Kozhikode have been identified as the centre of urbanisation by 2010-11. This explains the demographic transition in the state and urbanisation by implosion in the state. In Kerala, the transformative force of high density for spatial urbanisation has been supported by other factors such as higher rates of literacy, higher wage rates and remittances from migrants to transform villages into active towns. Further, the private investments required for the new urbanisation by implosion in the northern Kerala can be attributed to higher number of Muslim migrants to gulf from this region.

**Fig. 6: Projected Urbanisation Trend in Kerala - 2021**



Source: *State Urbanisation Report-Kerala (2012)*.

**Fig. 7: Spatial Shift in the Urbanisation Trend in Kerala (1951-61 to 2001-11)**



Source: *State Urbanisation Report-Kerala (2012)*.

In Kerala, the growth of urbanisation in northern Kerala can also be attributed to the improvement of transport facilities, a massive decline of the male workforce in agriculture and related activities along a shift to the tertiary sector. A large portion of this process can be claimed by the extensive out migration from northern Kerala including Malappuram and Kozhikode. Because, urbanisation by implosion refers to in-place population growth in rural areas which lead to expansion of villages, multiplication of homesteads and sprouting of homes amidst fields and barrens. In other words, this is a process of urban agglomeration through the densification of human settlements. Often, such urbanisation which is popularly prevalent in Kerala, especially due to private investments backed by migration, remained unrecognized or unacknowledged in the development discussion arenas.

## CONCLUSION

A notable instance of rapid urbanisation is happening in Kerala, but not in a metro polarized way as in other parts of India. The state has recorded the highest increase in urban population growth rate than any other state in India from 2001 to 2011. For the first time in post-Independent India, the absolute increase in urban population is more than growth in rural population. The volume of the urban population grew a hundred per cent during the same period. Among the major states in India, Kerala has always occupied a unique position in many development indicators and set good models for others. Urbanisation

in Kerala is also coming in that line as it is not limited to the designated megacities and towns as in other states.

In the future, conurbation is bound to happen in the state. Conurbation refers to Kerala becoming one large urban continuum formed by the expansion of several independent cities or towns from one end to another end. By blurring the boundaries of western coast and the midland in the state, there is an established way to a rural-urban continuum (Vijayanunni, n.d.), which is a situation where “emerging spatial form is neither rural nor urban” (Sreekumar, 1990; Firoz, 2014). The newly proposed ‘Silver Line’ semi-speed rail corridor<sup>7</sup> between Kasaragod to Thiruvananthapuram may accelerate conurbation in the state, by connecting the independent urban places in a single string, and considerably reducing the travel time. Further, there is a clear indication of spatial shift of urbanisation from south to north, explaining how population and private investments can induce unique urbanisation patterns. This may result in a paradigm shift in the development history of Kerala, which was historically south faced.

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### Footnotes

1. Class I, towns with more than 1, 00,000 population.
2. Class II, towns with 50,000 to 99,999 population.
3. Class II, towns with 20,000 to 49,999 population.
4. Class IV, towns with 10,000 to 19,999 population.

5. Class V, towns with 5000 to 9,999 population.
6. Class VI, towns with less than 5,000 population.
7. The 529.45 km Silver Line corridor connecting Kasaragod and Thiruvananthapuram, with an operating speed of 200kmph, eases the transport between North and South ends of the state and reduces the total travel time to less than 4 hours, compared with the present 10 to 12 hours. The intermediate stations include Kollam, Chengannur, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Kochi Airport, Thrissur, Tirur, Kozhikode and Kannur. (<https://keralarail.com/silverline/>).