

# **Unrecognised Urbanisation in Uttar Pradesh: Issues and Approach**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state in India falls amongst the states experiencing moderate urban growth but quantum jump in the emergence of census towns, as per census 2011. The increase was quadrupled over 2001. The eastern part of the state has larger number, but smaller census towns, in comparison to its western counterpart which is more urbanised, commercialised and industrialised. These towns contain about eight per cent of the state's urban content, but are administered rurally. The Ministry of Urban Development has advised the states to convert these census towns to statutory towns with urban local body on priority. The state government seems determined to expand its urban network provisioning basic services to a large segment of the population. In last decade little more than a score of census towns have been converted to statutory towns, whereas about 80 new towns with municipality have been created. It is advisable that census towns near to statutory towns should be merged with existing statutory towns. Census towns in western region containing large population should be converted to statutory towns with municipality on priority.*

**Keywords:** *Urban Growth, Enhanced Revenue, Hidden Urbanisation, Visible Urbanisation and Dimension*

## **DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF URBAN UTTAR PRADESH**

**U**ttar Pradesh is the most populous state in the country, accounting for 16.4 per cent of the country's population. It is also the fourth largest state covering 6.88 per cent of the country's total geographical area, encompassing 2,43,290 sq km. The state is still in the early stages of its urbanisation process. The pace of urbanisation has been lower than most states in the country. The numbers of urban centres with more than one lakh population have grown slowly over the last 30 years.

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The growth of urban centres with population less than five thousand have, on the other hand, have grown more significantly and these centres have grown in larger numbers in the western part of the state. Urban population, however, has been concentrated in larger urban centres, showing heavy-up bias. Further, the tremendous increase in number of Census Towns (CTs) from 43 in 1991 to 66 in 2001 further to 267 in 2011 (Census: 2011) has added another but acknowledged management complexities, though unrecognised by the urban policy makers and planners, so far. Demographic details of the state are compiled in Table 1.

TABLE 1: UTTAR PRADESH: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE, 1901-2011

<i>Year</i>	<i>Population (crore)</i>	<i>Decadal Growth (%)</i>	<i>Urban Population (crore)</i>	<i>Decadal Growth (%)</i>	<i>Level of Urbanisation (%)</i>
1901	4.86	-	0.54	-	11.09
1911	4.82	(-)0.97	0.49	(-)8.98	10.19
1921	4.67	(-)3.08	0.49	0.61	10.58
1931	4.98	6.66	0.56	12.81	11.19
1941	5.65	13.57	0.70	26.00	12.41
1951	6.03	6.61	0.86	22.93	14.31
1961	7.38	22.37	0.95	9.90	12.85
1971	8.83	19.78	1.24	30.68	14.02
1981	11.09	25.49	1.99	60.54	17.94
1991	13.21	19.12	2.60	36.63	19.67
2001*	16.62	25.85	3.45	26.82	20.78
2011	19.98	20.23	4.45	28.75	22.28

Source: Compiled from different Census Reports; Population of Uttar Pradesh retrieved from Statistics Times.com on August 29, 2019.

\*A new state of Uttarakhand (comprising hilly region) was created out of Uttar Pradesh in 2000.

As per 2011 census, Uttar Pradesh has 915 towns, consisting of 648 statutory towns (containing about 92 per cent of the total urban population) and 267 CTs (inhabiting about eight per cent of the total urban population) See Table 2. The statutory towns consist of 630 municipal towns, five industrial townships (containing a meagre portion of 0.21 per cent of the total urban population or 0.23 per cent of the population contained by statutory towns) and 13 towns

administered by Cantonment Board. Number of municipal towns has since increased to 707(as of November 2020) as many new municipalities of different types have been created. A number of proposals for constituting new municipalities are under consideration by the state government. Administratively, about eight per cent of urban population inhabiting in these census towns in the state is beyond the purview of municipal laws and is still governed by rural laws.

TABLE 2: TOWNS IN UTTAR PRADESH

Year	Statutory Towns		Census Towns		Total	
	Number	Variation (%)	Number	Variation (%)	Number	Variation (%)
1991*	710	-	43	-	743	-
2001	638	(-10.14)	66	53.49	704	(-5.25)
2011	648	1.57	267	304.55	915	29.97

\*Including Uttarakhand, created in 2000.

Source: Census of India, Town Directory of Uttar Pradesh; Population Statistics 1991, 2001 and 2011.

### Emergence of Census Towns

The definition of urbanisation in India is rather restrictive. It is the only country to use population, density and economic character together as criteria. In addition to India's 'hidden' urbanisation (Mukhopadhyay et al., 2016), the successive census reports post-Independence have been highlighting a new feature in its urban transformation in the emergence of settlements identified as Census Towns (CT). Census Towns are part of India's "visible" urbanisation (Mukhopadhyay: 2016), since they satisfy the three criteria set by the Registrar General of India Census Operations for defining an urban area: population of at least 5,000, density of at least 400 persons per square kilometer and workforce of at least 75 per cent of male main workers in the non-farm sector (earning their livelihood from non-agricultural activities). The remarkable increase in number of CTs in the state between 2001 and 2011 means that a large number of settlements were reclassified from rural to urban, because of the change in their demographic and workforce characteristics. Census Towns are areas that are not defined as towns by the census operation having urban characteristics, but no urban local body. Kumar (2019) suggests that the emergence of CTs is a result of people in rural areas shifting from agriculture to non-

agricultural sectors such as construction, trade and manufacturing. So it is only Uttar Pradesh which has experienced many new census towns notwithstanding moderate urban growth. However, it can partly be attributed to its sheer size – as it is one of the states which has a highest number of districts and the largest population.

The administrative dimension distinguishes between: (i) Statutory Towns, which are administered by different types of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), Cantonment Board (CB) and Industrial Townships (ITs); and (ii) Villages, which are administered by village councils (*Gram Panchayats*). The two categories of local governments in the country function under different principles outlined in the 73<sup>rd</sup> (rural) and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitution Amendment Acts, 1992. Therefore, among settlements, Census Town (CT) is a specific subgroup defined as urban by the Census of India but under rural governance. The existing separation between rural and urban structures is not in sync with the spatial and economic reality of these settlements. Various options can be envisaged that require more or less interventions ranging from evolving solutions to activate efficient District Planning Committees (DPCs) to more radical solutions such as ending the binary rural/urban status created by the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitution Amendments on decentralisation (Roy & Pradhan: 2019).

### **Characteristics of Census Towns in Uttar Pradesh**

#### *(i) Location of CTs*

Uttar Pradesh presently is divided in 75 administrative units--districts. The analysis (Table 3) shows the existence of Census Towns only in 54 districts in the state. The district of Varanasi (eastern region) has the most number (34) in the state, followed by Ghaziabad (western) and *Prayagraj*, earlier known as Allahabad (eastern region). The remaining districts (21) showing non-existence of CTs are least urbanised ones.

#### *(ii) Classification by Economic Regions*

The state is generally divided into four economic regions – Western (most urbanised, industrialised and developed); Eastern (less urbanised and less developed); Central (urbanised, having large urban centres, industrialised and developed); and *Bundelkhand* (sparsely urbanised and less developed). On further analysis, it is found that Eastern Zone has (about 49 per cent) the most number of census towns, followed by Western Zone (about 41%). *Bundelkhand* has the least (meagre 2%). In Eastern zone Varanasi district tops, whereas the district of Ghaziabad

TABLE 3: DISTRICTS WITH CENSUS TOWNS (2011)

No. of CTs & Districts	Name of the Districts
34 (1)	Varanasi
15 (2)	Ghaziabad, Prayagraj
13 (1)	Agra
12 (1)	Aligarh
10 (1)	Bareilly
08 (4)	Azamgarh, Bijnor, Sonbhadra, Mathura
07 (3)	Gautam Buddha Nagar, Mau, Muzaffarnagar
06 (2)	Chandauli, Gorakhpur
05 (5)	Jaunpur, Mirzapur, Moradabad, Saharanpur, Sultanpur
04 (6)	Bulandshahr, Gonda, Kanpur Nagar, Kheri, Meerut, Sant Ravidas Nagar
03 (7)	Ayodhya, Barabanki, Ferozabad, Hathras, Jhansi, Kanpur Dehat, Unnao
02 (13)	Ambedkar Nagar, Auraiya, Ballia, Balrampur, Farrukhabad, Kaushambi, Lalitpur, Lucknow, Pratapgarh, Pilibhit, Rampur, Sant Kabir Nagar, Siddharthnagar
01 (8)	Amroha, Bheraich, Chitrakoot, Etah, Kasganj, Kushinagar, Maharajganj, Sitapur
0 -no census towns	21 Districts

Source: Analysis done on the basis of Town Directory, UP, 2011.

Figure in ( ) denotes number of districts

is at the top in Western zone. In Central region, Kanpur *Nagar* has the most (4), and the district of Jhansi tops in the *Bundelkhand* region with three Census Towns (Table 4).

However, the content-wise analysis is quite revealing. The western region having second highest number of CTs shared more than half (more than 58 per cent) of the total population of such towns in 2011. This shows that the census towns falling in western zone are highly populated and have industrial and commercial base. NOIDA and Greater NOIDA are its examples. The CTs in eastern region cumulatively contains less than one-third of population, because they are small in size and content. The village hamlets therein are transforming their livelihood nature, as agricultural holdings

TABLE 4: DISTRIBUTION OF CTs BY ECONOMIC REGIONS (2011)

Economic Regions	Number	Population	Percentage Distribution		District having highest numbers of CTs in the region
			Numbers	Population	
Eastern	130	1153,463	48.67	32.23	Varanasi (34)
Central	21	300,841	07.89	08.41	Kanpur Nagar (4)
Western	110	2079,513	41.20	58.12	Ghaziabad (14)
Bundelkhand	06	44,318	02.24	01.24	Jhansi (3)
STATE	267	3578,155	100.00	100.00	

Source: Calculated on the basis of Town Directory, UP, 2011.

\*Details are given in Endnotes of this paper.

in this part of the state are quite small and people are able to earn their livelihood mainly from agriculture only, in view of their weak commercialized base and less urbanisation.

#### *(iii) Classification by Population-size*

The content-wise analysis is quite interesting. More than half (about 63 per cent) of the census towns are small and have population less than 15,000. Surprisingly, a number of towns (21) contain the less population than the population size for categorising as census towns is taken into account by the Registrar General of Census Operations. It may be that these small compact settlements are separately situated from the main village. Actually these should fall under 'ignored' CTs. Only 22 towns, having population of 20,000 or more have two-fifth (40%) of the total population of Census Towns in the state (Table 5).

#### *(iv) Distribution by Region and Population size*

It is seen from data compiled in Table 6 that more than three-fourths (about 77%) of the small Census Towns having a population of minimum size prescribed by the Census Operations (5,000) exist in eastern region of state. A little less than one-fifth (about 18%) is found in western region. Strangely, one settlement situated in Ghaziabad district has a population of less than one thousand (757). Such small towns account for about eight per cent of total CTs. This seems that these settlements are far away from the main village and are dependent on non-agricultural activities for their livelihood.

More than half (about 55%) of the CTs fall in 5000-10,000 category.

Out of these more than half (53%) are situated in eastern region.

TABLE 5: DISTRIBUTION OF CTs BY POPULATION SIZE (2011)

<i>Population</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Per cent to total numbers</i>	<i>Per cent to total population</i>
Less than 5,000	22	89,713	08.24	02.50
5,000-10,000	147	1041,622	55.06	29.11
10,000-15,000	58	697,206	21.72	19.49
15,000-20,000	18	316,143	06.74	08.84
More than 20,000	22	1433,471	08.24	40.06
STATE	267	3578,155	100.00	100.00

Source: Calculated on the basis of Town Directory, UP, 2011

This constitutes more than one-fourth (about 29%) of the total number of Census Towns in the state. Western zone comes next with about two-fifths of towns in the category.

TABLE 6: DISTRIBUTION OF CTs BY REGION AND POPULATION SIZE

<i>Regions</i>	<i>Population Size</i>					<i>Total</i>
	<i>Less than 5,000</i>	<i>5,000-10,000</i>	<i>10,000-15,000</i>	<i>15,000-20,000</i>	<i>More than 20,000</i>	
Eastern	17	78	21	07	07	130
Central	-	06	11	-	04	21
Western	04	59	25	11	11	110
Bundelkhand	01	04	01	-	-	6
STATE	22	147	58	18	22	267

Source: Calculated from data compiled in Town Directory, UP, 2011

Situation in respect of higher population brackets is quite different. Both the regions (eastern and western) contribute almost equal in number, reflecting a marginally upper hand of western zone. This corroborates the fact stated earlier that eastern part of the state experiencing less urbanisation and less development and lacking industrialisation has census towns more in numbers, but less in population, contrary to its western counterpart which is more urbanised, more industrialised and more developed having such settlements less in number, but more population content. Census Towns in eastern region are small in size, whereas the same in western zone are large. A good part of western zone falls under National Capital Region, hence it is more commercialised and developed.

#### (v) Existence of Civic Service

Since Census Operations differentiate such settlements from rural

villages mainly on the basis of measures adopted for earning their livelihood and population density. Availability of services therein is not a criterion at all; hence it is assumed that in terms of service provision, the level of basic amenities would remain very low. In addition to increasing population densities, and even in the absence of radical economic transformations, CTs appear as emerging centralities in their respective territories. Since these CTs are sites where increasing numbers of people live and work, public investment to ensure higher levels of service provisions such as water and sanitation needs to be called for. These towns by the expansion of local markets bring demands for improvement in the provision of services such as solid waste management and street lighting, which are mostly non-existent therein (WB: 2016). It is illustrated that across India villages are getting urbanised, the extent may vary. In Uttar Pradesh majority (about 78%) of population still lives in rural areas. Despite moderate urbanisation the state shows quantum jump in the number of CTs from 26 (in 1981) to 43 (in 1991) to 66 (in 2001) and further to 267 in 2011. This warrants a comprehensive study and an appropriate approach to deal with this hidden, unrecognised and ignored urbanisation in the most populated state in the country.

### **Approach**

The future discourse of CTs calls for more attention for the development of this rurally administered urban population which is driven by a variety of processes. There are a number of issues that are important in this regard. These spaces are transforming, both socially and economically. The provision of infrastructure is one of these key drivers (Asher: 2016). One of the other activity which is flourishing in these places is investment in housing and construction, which can be encouraged by not only providing support to rural housing, but also reducing the disjoint in terms of basic services provided to places which are governed as urban (Statutory Towns) and counted as urban (STs and CTs).

Towns emerging as a transformation process occurring in the rural areas are indeed an important aspect of urbanisation in India. Population growth and diversification of activities in the rural areas are an endemic part of this transformation process. However, there is ample evidence to suggest that a large component of the rural non-farm sector activities is not induced by demand side factors alone. Agricultural stagnation, small land holdings, especially in eastern part of the state and the lack of scope to enhance productive employment opportunities in the agriculture sector are some of the possible factors responsible for a residual

absorption of labour in low-productivity non-farm activities. The lack of rural industrialisation seems to have aggravated the 'employment problem' in the rural areas. On the whole, these census towns do not seem to have emerged in response to agricultural prosperity (Mitra & Kumar: 2015).

Urban development in India depends substantially on the pattern of emergence of these new urban centres (Census Towns). Small towns can be instrumental in improving the rural-urban linkage and enhance market-based agricultural activity. Further, they promote non-farm employment. Planned urban development requires conversion of Census Towns into statutory Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). As per the guidelines of Fourteenth Finance Commission issued by the Ministry of Finance a weightage is accorded to the extent of urban areas within the state. The guidelines for Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) also provide for 50 per cent weightage to be given to the number of STs in a state for determining the allocation from funds among the states. The conversion of Census Towns into statutory ULBs entitles states to central assistance. In May, 2016, the states were asked by the Ministry of Urban Development to take immediate and necessary action to convert Census Towns into Statutory Towns.

The letter states that "*....timely declaration of a habitat having urban characteristics as a statutory urban local body is the first step towards coordinated infrastructure development, enhancement of revenues and efficient delivery of citizen's services leading to the overall growth of economic activities. The opportunity of planned urban development might get lost if unplanned construction and ad hoc provisioning of infrastructure is allowed to take place over a long time*" (in Census Towns). The letter further reiterates that "*this (conversion from Census Towns to statutory ones) will not only trigger the process of preparing land use master plans leading towards planned growth but also will support provisioning urban infrastructure by leveraging resources available through various schemes/programmes and devolutionary grant*". (MoUD: 2016)

Generally, states are reluctant to notify Census Towns as Statutory Towns since granting the former ULB status requires funds for infrastructure development. This has led to the haphazard growth of emerging urban centres (Census Towns), and these lack the facilities and services which are present in Statutory Towns governed by ULBs (Kumar: 2019). Urban scholars and researchers have diverse opinions. Some feel that converting all CTs into STs is the right approach. It should be done on a case by case basis. The minimum criterion of population content is not uniform across states. So, unless states use their

prerogative power or combine settlements to achieve that population threshold, it is unlikely to convert all CTs into STs. Conversion of CTs into STs could be useful for planned governance of some of the CTs, in particular, for some of the larger ones. However, the applicability of this particular mechanism to all CTs is very doubtful. For example, if a CT is in the periphery of a large city, merging the CT into the city could be more helpful. Similarly, if multiple CTs lie close to each other, they can be combined together to make a larger ST (Pradhan: 2017).

## CONCLUSION

The state government seems determined to extend urban basic civic services to a large segment of population by expanding the geographical area of existing urban local bodies and/or converting large villages to Statutory Towns with urban local body. To address the growing urbanisation and to ensure planned development in the state 14 Census Towns (as of date) have been converted as Statutory Towns with urban local body whereas some 56 new *Nagar Panchayats* have been created in December 2019, 41 municipalities got their boundaries extended, and two *Nagar Panchayats* were upgraded to *Nagar Palika Parishad* (Municipal Councils). Further the government has approved to create 28 new *Nagar Panchayats*. Besides, the area of some 12 *Nagar Panchayats* and nine *Nagar Palika Parishads* (Municipal Councils) and two Municipal Corporations either has also been expanded or under the process (ToI: 2020). It is a welcome move. The state government should consider the gravity of about a little less than one-tenth of the state's urban population administered by rural laws and deprived of urban basic services. Western part of the state is most industrialised and urbanised; has Census Towns with large population. The Census Towns in this part should be given priority in conversion process. On the contrary in eastern part smaller CTs should either be merged with existing nearby STs or consolidated together to form the statutory town with municipality, if viable. The government should decision on case-to-case basis while converting them.

### Endnotes

1. Regional Classification of Uttar Pradesh (showing districts having census towns in 2011)
2. Eastern Region Districts: Chandauli, Sonbhadra, Mau, Gorakhpur, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Azamgarh, Mirzapur, Jaunpur, Gonda, Ayodhya, Sant Kabir Nagar, Pratapgarh, Ballia, Ambedkar Nagar, Balrampur, Siddharth Nagar, Bahraich, Maharajganj, Kushinagar, Sant Ravidas Nagar, Sultanpur, Kaushambi
3. Central: Lucknow, Kanpur Nagar, Kheri, Unnao, Barabanki, Sitapur, Kanpur Dehat, Auraiya

4. Western: Ghaziabad, Agra, Aligarh, Bareilly, Bijnor, Mathura, Muzaffar Nagar, Saharanpur, Gautam Budh Nagar, Moradabad, Meerut, Bulandshahr, Ferozabad, Hathras, Rampur, Farrukhabad, Pilibhit, Kasganj, Amroha, Etah
5. Bundelkhand: Jhansi, Lalitpur

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