

Awadh Narayan Choubey

Department of Geography, Faculty of Natural Sciences,
Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

Topic: Urban Corridors in India: A Study of the Delhi Centric Northern Corridor

Supervisor: Dr. Taruna Bansal

Keywords: Urbanization, Urban Corridor, Primate City, Beaded Urbanization

ABSTRACT

Urbanization is a process of concentration of population in urban settlements that can be mapped both space and time. It is a movement which usually initiates from a small town and culminates in a city; in present times what may be regarded as mega-city, city-regions or urban corridors.

The concept of Urban Corridors was first introduced by Whebell (1969) who describes urban corridors as a phenotype region. He clearly distinguishes this urban form where major urban places are connected by a well-developed network of transport infrastructure. Linearity and transport network are the two attributes of urban corridors. The relationship (both inter-urban and intra-urban) has re-established a mosaic of typographic space urban corridors. Therefore, one can say that these corridors are primarily those contiguous areas which are spaced usually around large cities and towns articulating urban and rural liaison at various levels.

Occupational shift from agricultural activities to industry and services along with demographic transformation from rural to urban settlements has supported urbanization in India. The process can be classified in two phases – *Colonial and Post Independence*. These patterns resulted in the development of a distinct urban system which mainly developed around the colonial primate port cities. Urban corridors are one such pattern along transport routes which provide linkages between major urban centres for flow of goods and people. The result is the growth of urban peripheries and densification of the present city cores.

In 1991, a study entitled 'India-Urban Corridors' was done by NATMO (National Atlas and Thematic Mapping Organization) based on 1991 Census which demarcated 25 urban corridors all over the country. The basic purpose of these corridors was to spread the functional and agglomeration economies of the urban centers to the rural hinterland along the well-developed transportation links; which would result in almost continuous ribbon of urban form characterized with some features of urban settlements.

In the above framework, the thesis has the following objectives -

1. Theoretically analyze the concept of corridor development and how it can lead to regional development.
2. Examine the pattern of settlement hierarchy and the urban system that exists in the Delhi Centric Northern Corridor.
3. Evaluate the levels of development along different axes of the Delhi Centric Northern Corridor.
4. To investigate that does the prevalence of urban corridors result in the growth and development of the adjoining rural hinterland and the small and medium towns.

In this study, the Delhi-centric Northern corridor has been taken as the case study, which includes the following five axes – **i) Delhi-Panipat-Chandigarh (NH1), ii) Delhi-Mathura-Agra (NH2), iii) Delhi-Gurgaon-Jaipur (NH8), iv) Delhi-Moradabad-Bareilly (NH24) and v) Delhi-Meerut-Dehradun, (NH58).** The entire Delhi Centric Northern Corridor has been analyzed at the district, town and village level. The present study has made an attempt to understand the process of urbanization and rural transformation in the Delhi Centric Northern Corridor and comes to an understanding that in such a setting the development of urban corridors is not possible.

In the analysis if Delhi is included it clearly emerges as a primate city. The largest cities have maintained their relative dominance over the other cities and towns. The study of the distribution of urban population across different class - size of urban settlements in this Corridor clearly indicates that like elsewhere in the country here too, population is concentrated in the class I towns or million plus cities. The process of rural transformation has been experienced by the entire corridor. In all the five axes villages have been transformed into urban centres from 1991 to 2011.

It can be said that in this Delhi Centric Urban Corridor ribbons (of smaller stretch like 50 - 75 kms) can develop as number of them have emerged in each axis but large urban corridors centered at Delhi is a far possibility as the settlement system as well as social space in this corridor is variegated. The pattern of modifications of urban system and the process of development shows that in this region the development of corridor is not possible. The answer can be in the form of **Beaded Urbanization** where small and medium towns grow and act as '**Beads of Growth**'.