

Conversations on City Economy in India and the Global South Growth, Inclusion and Sustainability

Edited by Tathagata Chatterji, and Souvanic Roy

Anchored and supported by INHAF

20 March 2024

CALL FOR BOOK CHAPTERS

As the world at large is going through an urban turn, it has become fashionable to call cities engines of economic growth. However, there is little serious inquiry into understanding the economic underpinnings of urbanisation or city development especially in the context of the Global South. The Global South, extending across Asia and the Pacific, Africa, and Latin America, is experiencing accelerated urbanization, with a significant portion of the world's urban population growth occurring in new cities. This urban transition is reshaping economic landscapes, creating new challenges and opportunities that warrant in-depth exploration.

In conventional development theory, urbanisation is considered a natural progression of a nation's economic shift from agriculture to industry and services. Agglomeration economies of scale help lower production costs for firms and encourage innovation and skill transfer (Henderson 2003, Duranton 2015). However, it remains debatable whether urbanisation can stimulate economic growth or to what extent it does. While the Industrial Revolution was the driving force behind the 19th-century urbanisation wave in Western nations, recent decades have seen a similar trend of high economic growth and high urbanisation in China southeast Asian tiger economies, and Arab States in the Gulf region. On the other hand, several sub-Saharan African countries are also rapidly urbanising without adequate industrialisation (Gollin, Jedwab, et al. 2016). Economic imperatives behind India's urbanization present a complex interplay between the push and pull factors. Unlike the manufacturing-driven growth of China and other Southeast Asian countries, India's post-liberalisation economic boom is driven by the export of various other IT-enabled back-office services and the development of retail and hospitality sectors. Service sector domination has increased the importance of mega-urban regions as gateways to the global economy and has come to be associated with the rise of a new aspirational urban middle class. There is little opportunity, however, for job creation and unskilled migrants trying to escape rural poverty.

The disconnection between economic growth and employment generation has become a key issue of concern in India and many other countries in the Global South. Economic growth in the big cities is not generating adequate jobs for the bulging youth population. Opportunities for a surplus agrarian workforce being pushed out by a declining rural

economy are available only at the bottom tier of the urban informal labour market. Consequently, income inequalities are increasing within the cities, and social polarization is widening. Urban poor encounter challenging living conditions.

The overarching objective of this book is to trigger an informed policy debate about the economic underpinnings of urbanisation in India and the Global South. The primary audience for this book includes policymakers, journalists, urban planners, economists, researchers, development practitioners, and students interested in the economic development of cities in the Global South.

We are particularly keen to receive chapter proposals broadly around the following six thematic areas:

- **Theme 1:** Roles of cities in driving economic growth, demographic change, and migration
- **Theme 2:** Urban livelihoods, informality, and social inclusion
- **Theme 3:** Mega infrastructure projects, Transportation corridors, supply chain networks, special economic zones
- **Theme 4:** Climate change-induced livelihood vulnerabilities and opportunities for circular economy transitions
- **Theme 5:** Technological change, digitalisation and gig-economy
- **Theme 6:** Urban and regional planning policies, land-use regulations, governance and political culture

To address the policymakers and the wider audience, chapters are to be kept short (around 2000 words, excluding references) and are written in an easy-to-read, jargon-free manner.

About the Editors

Dr Tathagata Chatterji is a Professor of Urban Management and Governance and Head of the Department of Urban Management at Xavier University, Bhubaneswar. Broadly within the area of urban governance, his areas of interest are National Urban Policies and Sustainable Development Goals, Smart City Governance, Urban Economic Development and Livelihoods. He is the Co-Principal Investigator of two research projects to investigate the impact of the Smart Cities Mission, funded by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India; and a member of the technical advisory team for the Kolkata Climate Action Plan, initiated by the Kolkata Municipal Corporation. He received the Gerd Albers Award for Best Publication of the Year (2016) from the ISOCARP (International Society of City and Regional Planners). He is a member of the editorial board of the International Journal of E-Planning Research and Associate Editor (Governance) Frontiers in Sustainable Cities. He graduated in architecture from IEST Shibpur, did a master's in urban design from Kent State University USA, and received a PhD in urban planning and governance from the University of Queensland Australia. He is a Member of the Planning Institute of Australia and a Fellow of the Institute of Urban Designers India.

Dr Souvanic Roy is a Professor of Urban Planning and Founder Director of the School of Ecology and Human Settlements at the Indian Institute of Engineering, Science & Technology (IIST) Shibpur. His areas of interest are urban transformation & resilient cities, urban policy for inclusive growth and housing for the urban poor. He is presently the Co-Principal Investigator of a collaborative research project entitled “Redevelopment of West Bengal’s Jute Mills in Post-Industrial Kolkata” led by the Department of Urban Studies & Planning, MIT USA and the Principal Investigator in a sponsored research project entitled “Housing, Livelihood and Vulnerability in Urban Slums” funded by US India Consortium Research in Global South. He is a member of the Working Group for National Civil Society Consultation and contributed to the Delhi Declaration on "India's Urban Future: Choice Not Chance- Civil Society Contribution to Habitat III". He was advisor to the task force on West Bengal Urban Strategy. Prof. Roy has several publications to his credit and participated in dialogues and symposiums in international and national level. He graduated in Architecture from IIST Shibpur, did a master’s in Urban Planning from School of Planning & Architecture, New Delhi, Post Graduate Diploma in Housing & Urban Development from IHS, Netherlands and PhD in Urban Planning from IIST Shibpur.

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