

Urban Development in Western Odisha: a study on Burla Town

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Abstract: *This study examines the urban growth of Burla town along with its importance. How different factors like industrialization at nearest cities, communicational facilities and educational development led this growth also discussed in this paper. Burla is a town (NAC) of Sambalpur District of Western Odisha which became quite urban due to Hirakud Dam Project and MCL. Through a detail theoretical study and observation this paper analyzes the process of urbanization in Burla and trying to prove. For more accuracy official records are examined.*

Keywords: *Burla, Sambalpur, Urbanization, Western Odisha,*

I. Introduction

The 21st century is known as the urban century¹ and urbanization is not only a part of economic development but also an indicator of transformation from traditional rural economies to modern industrial one which generates a substantial proportion of total jobs and contributes to national economy. The demand for non-food goods and non-agricultural activities demand for labour simulates urbanization is an unremitting trend and its speed is accelerating². Urbanization is the sociological process of rationalization of human population. United Nation defines urbanization as **‘the movement of people from rural to urban areas in search of employment and better standards of life and immigration is the only factor behind this process’**. Urbanization is also caused by the growth of city population itself which is closely linked with industrialization, modernization and globalization. It indicates a change in the pattern of people’s mainstay profession. While most of the times, urbanization is the engine of social change or is a product of the social change itself.

Historically, urbanization started in the developing countries a few centuries later than European countries. The American cities have invented new institutions and technologies to survive with two centuries of massive urbanization³. Urbanisation is an old age phenomenon but large scale urbanization began with industrial revolution⁴. According to the census of India, 2001 two types of towns were identified⁵. The first one declared by State Law is Statutory towns may be a municipality, corporation, cantonment board or notified town area committee etc.. Another one is Census towns having a minimum population of 5000 with satisfying criteria of “at least 75 percent of male working population engaged in non-agricultural pursuits” and “a density of population of at least 400 persons per sq.km.”

II. Urban Trend

The rising trend towards urbanization is caused by mainly three heads⁶ as natural population increase, migration and boundary changes. In India, the growth of urbanization during pre-independence period was slow. But during the post-independence years, urbanization has shown its phenomenal growth because of pressure of growing population, rapid industrialization, rural to urban migration and the increasing stroke of modernization. As a result, new towns are coming up and existing towns are expanding to accommodate the immigrants. Thus, the census figure of 25.7% of Indian urban population in 1991 has increased to 27.8% in 2001⁷ and 31.80% in 2011⁸ and presently comparably 28 out of every 100 persons live in urban areas⁹. Many people are moving to cities because of the available opportunities and the availability of infrastructure facilities are causes to this rapid growth. In fact there is a tendency in the human society to move from less advanced areas. In this way the nature and process of urbanization in the 2nd half of the 19th century and early 20th century is qualitatively different from the nature and type of urbanization during the medieval period¹⁰. With the growth of industrial revolution, industry became the main constituent of an urban centre¹¹. In modern India, urbanization was greatly facilitated by the British government. The East India Company selected sites, which had both commercial and strategic importance. Since in the beginning their trade was mainly seaborne and water transport was the main means of conveyance everywhere in the world. They choose those sites, which were close to the sea to have their settlement in the uninhabited or slum areas near the sea¹².

In Orissa Urbanization developed through a long process of evolution like other parts of India from the pre- historic times to medieval times and agrarian economy got transferred into urban economy. This period, through regrouping and restructuring of social relationships, a distinction between economic development and cultural changes made importance of one over the other in the process of urbanization is responsible for the rise

and growth of urban centres in medieval period¹³. The towns developed in early medieval Orissa as centres of administration, pilgrimage and trade. Processing a long coastline, Orissa had a number of sea-ports through which it established commercial and cultural inter course with the outside World. Places like Pithunda, Palura and Konark etc. became famous in the international map¹⁴. The present Orissa is economically a poor state and notoriously known for the least urbanized state in the country. Though, this state is rich in mineral deposit and forest wealth is the second lowest per capita income generating state. The stumpy rate of cumulative exploitation of graphite and manganese ores provide enough condition for the establishment of metallurgical and non-metallic mineral based Industries on a large scale. There are around 15% population of Orissa is urban population indicating a decimal growth rate of 2.73 almost close to the growth rate of the nation (Census 2001). Around 3.2% workers earning their livelihood in household sector industries and 27% of main workers are engaged in nonfarm activities¹⁵.

III. Historical Overview

For the first time in Orissa, the existence of urban centres known from the excavation of Sisupalgarh and Jaugad were early settlements¹⁶. Under the 'Non-Aryan' Orissa started to developed since second millennium B.C with own civilisation and culture¹⁷. The archaeological records of Orissa like black-and-red ware, diagnostic ceramic of the metal age and early Iron Age culture also clearly dated to 2nd millennium B.C¹⁸. In 6th century B.C state formation was started as capital city under the chiefdom¹⁹ or Mahajanapadas for both political necessity²⁰ and economic potentiality were coeval with urban growth²¹ and Anguttara Nikaya²² mentioned that 'Kalinga' the ancient name of Orissa was a part among them. In Western Orissa, the ancient habitation as Vikramkhol²³ and Badmala²⁴, the other medieval urban centres like Suvarnapura, Pattna, Murasimhapura Pattna, Dhritipura etc. are the important. In course of time Sambalpur was a part of South Kosala (a part of a Janapada)²⁵ and from about 14th Century A.D it was under the Chauhan rule of Patna, which finally lapsed to the East India Company in 1849. After a long gradual changes of administrative and political jurisdiction, in the year 1993 it was divided into four separate districts viz., Bargarh, Deogarh and Jharsuguda apart from Sambalpur, and Burla (Notified Area Committee) is a major town of Sambalpur district of Western Orissa.

IV. Physical Features

The Sambalpur district contained a vast area of plain land and consequent upon the construction of Hirakud Dam, it has become most fertile tract. Irrigation provided by the Hirakud Dam in Sambalpur and Bargarh subdivisions had caused a "green revolution". The district is noted for "tie and dye". Sambalpur, in 17th century was probably known for its diamond trade²⁶, which became unsuccessful with the East India Company in 1766, due to the disturbances in Sambalpur²⁷. So it is believed that there is a town which given the name 'Hirakud' and the dam located in Mahanadi known as Hirakud Dam. Similar to Hirakud, 'Burla' a small town on the banks of Mahanadi, 15 kilometres distance from Sambalpur located at "21°30'N 83°52'E 21.5°N 83.87°E". It has an average elevation of 173 metres (567 feet). The town lies below the Hirakud Dam, at the distance of around 2 kilometre surrounded by the dam, the lake and the forests of Barapahad (12 hills), Durgapali and Laxmi Dunguri Reserve Forest, Chandali Dunguri Reserve Forest and Mahanadi River. A watercourse originated from power house of Hirakud Dam named 'Power Channel' divides the town in to two parts and creates a small lake below the town. The city centre is small and divided into 'Kaccha Market' and 'Pukka Market' containing numerous small stores and stalls, mostly family based small business enterprises. The famous stores are the 'Choudhry's', the 'Sindhi's', the 'Acharya's' etc. The Lake of Hirakud Dam and power channel attracts various birds in the month of winter and the surrounding forests are full of wildlife. In summer, temperatures reach 47⁰ Celsius and in winter, it can go as low as 5⁰ Celsius.

V. Origin And Development Of The Burla Town

The Burla town (Fig. 1) was developed during the then Primeminister Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru in the period 1951 to 1960²⁸. When foundation stone of Hirakud Dam was laid by Sir Howthorne Lewis, the then Governor of Orissa, on 15th March 1946 and construction work was started, some official workers came and settled down in present Burla. In later phase, due to the submerged of Rapaluga, Deuli, Sahasbaga, Kutgarh, Khajurdihi, Sareipali, Malda etc. and a major portion of Mahadevpali, Mura and Rampella Police Stations in the Hirakud Reservoir some families were displaced and settled down in Burla. About 195 families displaced from Pakistan was relieved in the Sambalpur for rehabilitation during 1950. Out of them 13 families were settled at Burla²⁹. According to the people of Burla, there was a small village named "Old Burla" before the construction of Hirakud Dam³⁰. Gradually, many families migrated in search of work from many parts of Orissa and other states of India, engaged in Hirakud Dam Project, and at last settled at Burla. Later, with the establishment of Sambalpur University, VSSUT, VSS Medical College, NAC College, and MCL etc in the year 1973, 1956, 1959, 1979 and 1997 respectively, many employees as faculty came to Burla. We may find different caste and

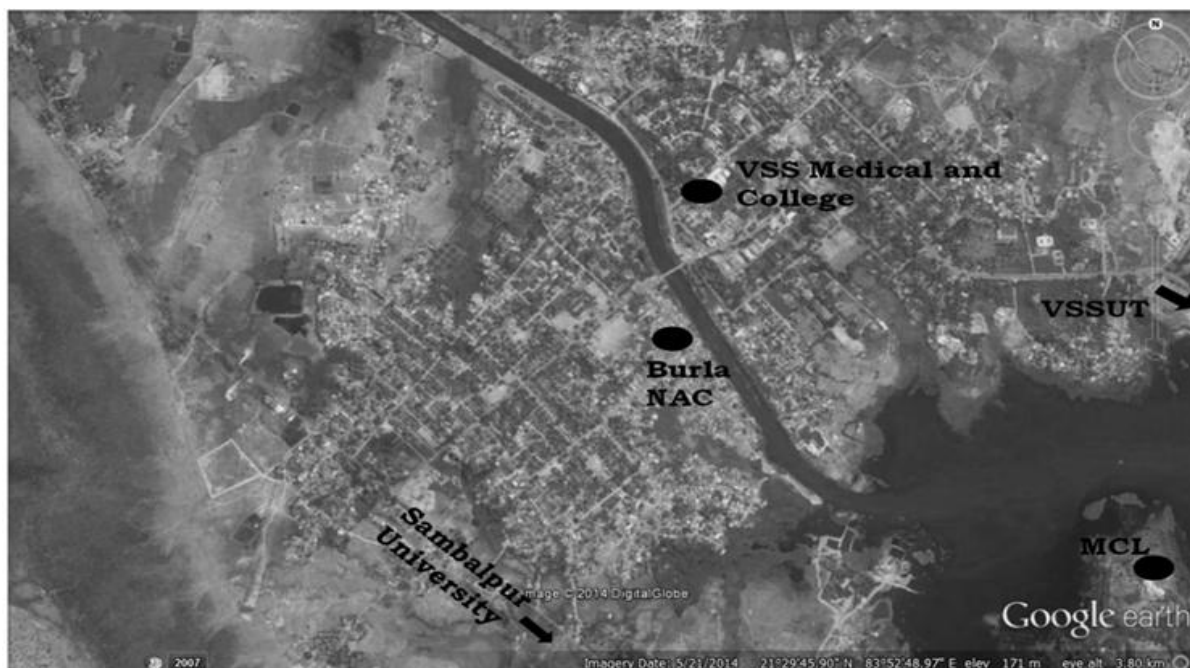


Fig. 1: Burla Town

religion here as Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikhs etc. The plan of using residential land of government was systematic here and quarters were constructed on the both sides of the street and in rectangular shape. In 1961 the total number of residential houses was 2604, which had been increased to 3138 in 1971³¹ consisting of Government Staff Quarters, Fisheries Staff Quarters and Private Quarters. From the year 1948 to 1962 the NAC, Burla was under the control of Central Government but later in 31.03.1962, it formed, with the Govt. of Orissa (order no. 3597), consisting Old Burla, Sadaipali, Majhipali, Gaudpali, Golgunda, Kiriba and Bukamunda with the area of 194.2 sq. km.³² According to 2011 Census, Burla has the population of 42,625 and about 56 percent people are migrated people from outside. From the beginning for the ease administration Burla was sub-divided into 9 wards³³ but now there are 15 Wards, 9,372 Houses, 2,409 BPL Holders and 29,305 Voters. The Literacy rate of Burla is 67.25% and the growth of Urbanisation rate in the town is 27.12 %³⁴.

Table No.1: Population Of Burla, According To 1961, 2001 & 2011 Census.

Census	Area (sq.km)	Population (per sq.km)	Population (per sq.mile)	Total population	Male	Female
1961	194.2	167	434	32,546	-	-
2001	194.2	210	522	39,204	-	-
2011	194.2	219	568	42,625	21,590	21,035

VI. Transportation And Commerce

During early times, some important roads connecting northern India with the Deccan were passing through the present district of Sambalpur. The Allahabad Pillar inscription reveals that a road from Kausambi passed through Sambalpur to coastal tract of Kalinga³⁵. The kings of Kalachuri and Panduvamsi used to march from Central India through this region up to coastal Orissa and during the later period, under the Chauhans, the conditions of communication further improved³⁶. According to J.B. Fuller it was a salt route from Ganjam to Sambalpur³⁷. In the last decade of 19th century communication in the district was developed considerably. The main line of the then Bengal-Nagpur railway was extended through the north of the Sambalpur subdivision in 1890. Another branch line from Jharsuguda to the town of Sambalpur was opened in 1893 has extended up to Titilagarh where it joins Raipur-Vizianagaram Branch line of the South Eastern railway³⁸. It all lines has link with Hirakud Railway station is nearer to Burla town. A rail-cum-road bridge over the Mahanadi was constructed in 1951 which made Burla easier to contact with Sambalpur. The National Highway no. 42 and 6 passes through Sambalpur which links Cuttack, Bombay, Nagpur, Raipur and Calcutta respectively. Other things like Posts, Telegraphs, Telephone and Courier are enormously affecting the communication system of the town.

According to the English traveller T. Motte, Sambalpur was famous for its cottage industries and the centre of trade and commerce. This shows that for trade Indians of different region and foreigners has been regularly visiting this area through centuries³⁹. In North Orissa, Rourkela, Brajrajnagar and Sambalpur the industrial centres are quite dominated by aluminium, cable, cement, sugar and paper. Moreover some

metallic mineral based industries; the Hirakud Hydel Power Station has been mainly responsible for the new pole of growth and industrialization⁴⁰.

But the industries at the Burla were small establishments run by manual labour of village artisans. With the exception of silk and family cotton fabrics, few of the manufactured articles were exported⁴¹. A number of small-scale industries have been developed in Burla during the years especially after the construction of the Hirakud Dam Project. In addition, the State Government has been giving various aids for the development of these industries under the State Aids to Industries Act⁴². There are 22 industries established from 1967 to till 2010. The highest rate of investment is 54.15 Lakh while the lowest rate of investment is 0.45 Lakh. Another industrial development grown with the establishment of Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) in 1997 on the bank of Power channel at Burla has achieved a total production of 104.08 million tons coal in the year 2009-10 with a gross profit of 3010 crore⁴³.

VII. Conclusion

As the pull factor not only the rapid migration during the construction of Hirakud Multi Dam Project and the establishment of MCL led a spontaneous growth of population in Burla but also with the institutional developments like medical college and other educational institutions are extremely responsible for the growth of population in many phases. All over again the natural increase of population through birth rate has a higher contribution towards the urban population of Burla. The figure presented in table no.1 shows the growth of population in phases in 1961, 2001 and 2011. It is clear that, according to the classes of towns/cities by India's urban population, Burla is a 'class-iii' town consisting of 42,625 populations till the year 2011 and by the census of India, 2001, it is a Statutory town.

The town's economy is motivated by education, medicine, civil engineering, electrical engineering etc. VSS Medical College Hospital is the biggest hospital in Western Odisha. VSS Institute of Technology (VSSUT) and Sambalpur University are the oldest Universities in Odisha. The higher learning through all these institutes makes Burla a top-tier destination for thousands of students. The Hirakud Dam, not only the longest earthen dam in the world, but also caters hydro-electric power to the State. Due to above all, lecturer, professors, doctors, many civil and electrical engineers reside in Burla. The town also headquarters Mahanadi Coal Fields Ltd., a subsidiary of Coal India Ltd. Historically, like other ancient or medieval urban centres of western Orissa, Burla doesn't have any inscriptional record but now days it has a great importance in the field of medical, education and engineering. Within about sixty years from 1951 to 2011 it has shown a rapid growth of 27.12% which is a remarkable progress.

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