

An Enquiry into the Causes of Loss of Historically Important of Towns of India



Rajnish Kumar
Centre for the Study of Regional Development
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi 110067 India

The Second Conference: GIS Based History from Asian Perspective

4-5 October 2014
The University of Tokyo, Tokyo

Introduction

Significance of Urban Economy and Global History from Asian Perspective

Urban centres in the ancient and medieval period functioned as administrative and trading centres and provided multifarious services to the people living both within as well as outside these centres

Many well known cities of prehistoric and historic times exist today in the form of small mounds or ruins. This is true for South Asia where great cities like as Mohenjo daro, Harappa, Nalanda, Vikamshila, Vaishali, Taxashila and Vijayanagar disappeared.

Ancient historical cities survive to this day among them are Rajgriha, Pataliputra, Madurai. Kancheepuram, Ujjain Tanjore and Varanasi to name only a few

Introduction: Continued.....

In the last two centuries, cities have consistently provided the environment for institutional and technological innovation, and have often been referred to as 'engines of economic growth'; 'agents of change' and 'incubators of innovation' (Rakeh Mohan, 2005).

However, modern urban history of South Asian is characterised by low level of urbanisation

Issues resulting from the urban transformation in India became a major critical challenges facing the economy in the Twelfth Plan. In addition, the efficiency in implementation of urban development projects on the ground needs to be greatly improved (Ahluwalia: 2011).

New McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) research estimates that cities could generate 70 percent of net new jobs created to 2030, produce around 70 percent of Indian GDP and drive a near fourfold increase in per capita incomes across the nation (MGI: 2010).

Objective of the study

To study history of urbanisation in India

To understand the process of rise and fall of the historical towns of India

Research Questions

What were the factors for the evolution of the historical towns.

Why many of the historical towns could not sustained over time in terms of economic significance whereas some of them continued to maintain their primacy.

What happened to the state of trade and mode of production of the historical towns

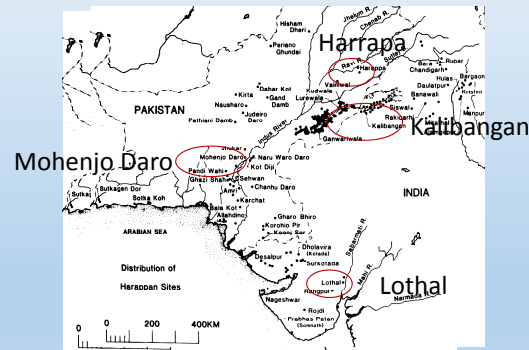
Research Methodology

Empirical in nature

Based on Primary and Secondary data sources

Application of GIS technique to understand the historical and contemporary phenomena

The **first urbanization** took place during the bronze age in the arid and semi-arid region of northwest India in the valleys of the Indus and the Saraswati rivers, the latter represented by the now dry Ghaggar–Hakra bed. This urbanization is known as the Indus or Harappan civilization which flourished during 3500–1500 B.C. (Mishra, 2001)



Map 1
Spatial Distribution of Settlements of Indus Valley Civilization

The **third phase of urbanization of India** began with the Turko-Afghans. The need for ruling over provinces led to some Turko-Afghan officials and nobles being stationed in the various provinces of the state which led emergence of new Towns
Spatial Expansion across North and East India: Delhi, Fatehpur Sikri, Agra, Lucknow, Jaunpur, etc.

Western, Central and South India also

Towns of Middle Ganga Plain

1170-1290: **Jaunpur, Benarus, Chunar Patna, Maner,** Gaya Rajmahal, Gaur and Lakhnaur (Khiljis) Ruled by MAMLUKS

1290-1390: **Jaunpur, Benarus, Chunar, Halhi simraioan, Sugauna, Patna, Maner,** Gaya, Bihar Sharif, , Gaur and Lakhnaur(Tughlaq)

1390-1526: **Jaunpur, Benarus, Chunar, Rohtasgarh, Sugauna, Patna, Maner,** Kahalgoan, Hajipur, Barh, , Gaur and Lakhnaur(Lodhi)

1526-1760: **Jaunpur, Benarus, Chunar, Rohtasgarh, Chausa, Sasaram, Patna, Monghyr,** Kahalgoan, Hajipur, Bihar, , Teliyagarhi, Pandua,

British Admin Division 1860: Bihar Saran, Tirhut, Monghyr, Bhagalpore, Purnea, Behar, Patna, Shahabad

(A Historical Atlas of South Asia: Edited by J E Schwartzberg)

The **second phase of urbanization of India**, marked by trade, coinage, script and birth of the first Indian empire, namely Magadha, with its capital at Pataliputra (modern Patna) also took place in this region in the sixth century B.C. (Mishra, 2001)

Middle Ganga Plains emerges as cradle of civilization with sixteen *Janpadas* found spread over North, Central and Eastern India

Sixteen Janpadas: Patna, Mathura, Ujjain
Southern India: Pandayas, Chola and Chera rulers
Tanjore, Madurai and Kanchipuram



European traders especially Dutch, Portuguese, British and French facilitated **fourth phase of urbanisation** which was influenced by western concept of civic body and town planning. Coastal belt of India and inland river ports was their favourite destination for the selection of town site

The Portuguese were the first to establish new port towns in India – Panaji in Goa in 1510 and Bombay in 1532. They were followed by the Dutch – Machilipatnam in 1605 and Nagapattinam in 1658; and the French – Pondicherry in 1673 and Chandranagore in 1690. The British established Madras in 1639 and Calcutta in 1690.

Urban Local Body

Madras : Corporation for urban governance in 1642

Calcutta: 1726 Urban local body

Emergence of Urban Local Body in Bengal:

Bengal District Municipal Act 1864

Lalganj Municipality 1869

Fourth Phase of Urbanisation:

Emergence of Colonial Towns:
Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Goa etc.

Fifth Phase of Urbanisation:

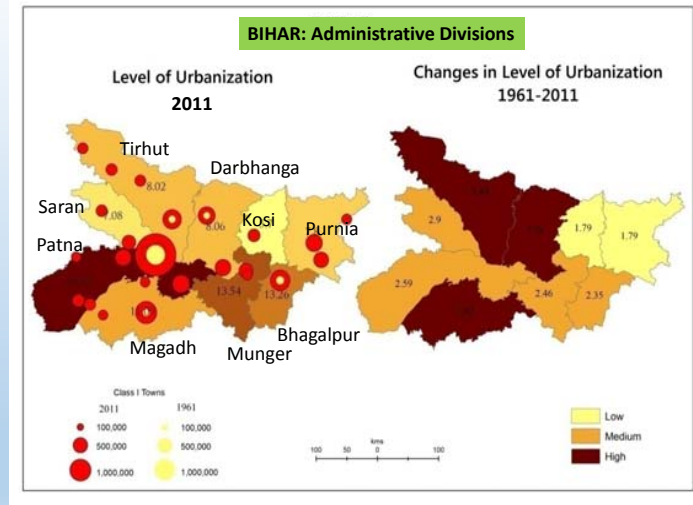
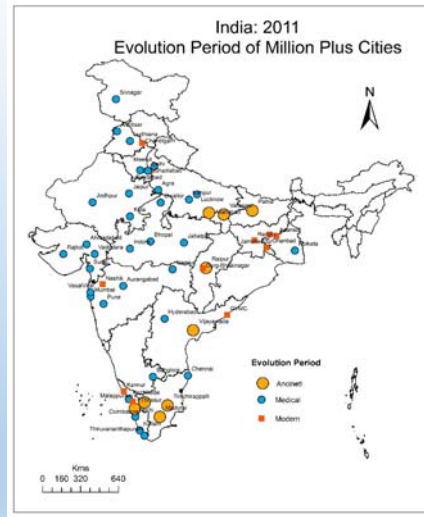
Modern Town Industrial: Bhillai, Asansole,
Dhanbad, Jamsedpur, Ludhiana, Faridabad

Census of India: 53 Million Plus City

Kerala has the highest, Odisha and North East has none

Middle Ganga plain and South India: Ancient towns like Patna, Benarus, Prayag, Madurai became million plus town

Majority of Million plus cities are historical towns which came into existence during medieval period. North, Central and Western India has dominance of million plus towns

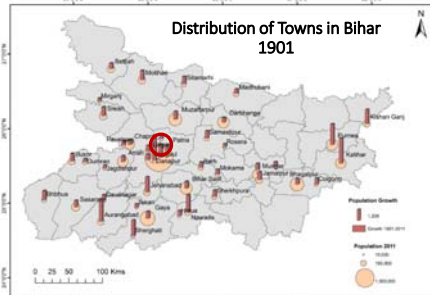


Spatio-temporal Pattern of Urbanisation in Bihar

PATNA: Only Million Plus City

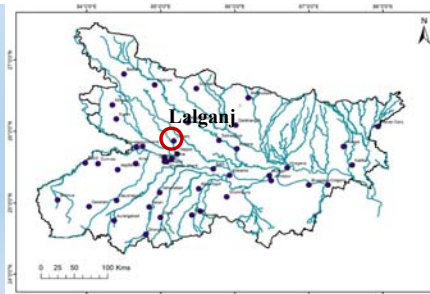
Kosi: Least Urbanised region

Purnia and Kosi: Stagnant Urbanisation Level during last 50 Years



As per Census Town Directory: 43 Towns in 1901

TOWN	ULB	AREA	POP 1901	POP 1951	POP 2011	Density
PATNA	M. Corp.	108.34	134785	283470	1684222	15546
BHAGALPUR	M. Corp.	30.17	75760	114530	400146	13263
LALGANJ	NP	7.86	11502	12394	37098	4720
PHULWARI SHARIF	NP	6.48	3415	0	81740	12614
SHERGHATI	NP	10.79	2641	7009	40666	3769



Town Growth Index (1901=100)

- Katihar (2467)
- Phulwari (2394)
- Aurangabad (2182)
- Patna (1250)
- Hajipur (690)
- Muzaffarpur (777)
- Lalganj (323)**
- Tekari (331)
- Mirganj (271)



A Study of Lalganj: A Historical Town, Vaishali, Bihar

- Location: Lalganj Nagar Panchayat is situated at the left bank of the river Gandak. It is connect with Hajipur, Patna and Muzaffarpur through road network. It is very near to Vaishali archaeological site
- History: Religious significance for Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist and Sikh
 Hindu religious literature: Ashram of Chaman Rishi and Shringi Rishi
 Jama Masjid: 300 year old mosque in the heart of the town
 Guru Govind singh: birth place of his son
 Buddha kotigram (biddupur) and Nadikagram (lalganj) reached Vaishali
 In Budhishist pali literature it has been identified as Singiya (pali *Simhika*) Riverport *vinaypapak and mahabhag: trade with patligram and rajriha*
- Influence of Muslim ruler of medieval period, it got Muslim name Lalganj by Lal Khan Hajipur (hazi Illias)
- Muslim settlements: Sarai, Ganj, Chak,
- Important cultural centre in freedom struggle (Sharda Sadan Library)



Emergence of Lalganj Town

- Agriculture surplus, trade and manufacturing
 Rice and sugarcane
 Cotton two main cash crop
 Oilseed, indigo, poppy, tobacco
 Raw silk
 Plantation of mulberry trees
- Land and water connectivity
- European traders realised Commercial potential of the region
- Jobe Charnock: 1659 instrumental in opening factory at Singia Indigo Factory, Lalganj
- Extreme proximity to primate city like Patna
- Served as transit town on way to Nepal.

Lalganj: A Centre of Trade and Manufacturing during 18th Centaury

- Textile, saltpetre, silk, sugar, indigo, metallic goods, agricultural tools swords, shields etc., boat making, oil processing
- Patna: main textile centre
- Saltpetre of good quality and great quantity: Three variety
 Doboras cobessa refined variety
 dabara and kutcha (raw)
 Refining is done by both local and European companies
- Sugar: brown sugar candy and white sugar
- Contemporary trading centres: Baikunthpur, Chapra, Gaya, Dumra, Hathidih, more, Mokamah, Pandarak, Barh, Athmal gola, Rani Sarie, Futuh (John Marshall)
- Hajipur (Minapore-pottery; Jahnabad-cotton goods Nanagaur nine mile saltpetre
- Spices

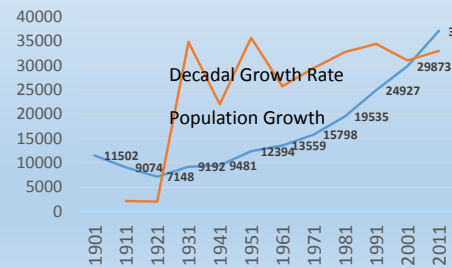
Lalganj Demography

Lalganj was important Qasba and river port. It was the part of Tirhut district and became Lalganj Municipal Board in 1869 with 11 Commissioners along with Hajipur and Sitamarhi.

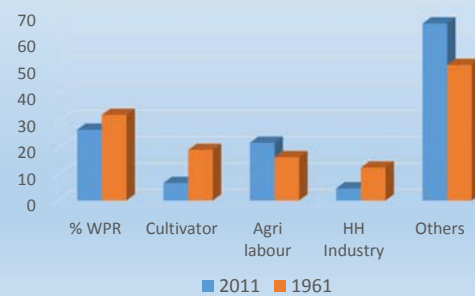
The town lost 3 sq miles area during 1951 Census.

Lalganj Municipality had 4 wards till 1972, 1981: 12 wards, 14 wards: 2001 and 19 ward: 2011

Population Growth



Employment Characteristics



Lalganj Town

Freedom struggle and Gandhiji

A Cultural Centre: Sharda Sadan

Library: Swami Satyanand Parivrajak

Earthquake of 1934

Lalganj serves as a local town of

Administration

Market

Education

Health

State of Urban Governance

Executive Office

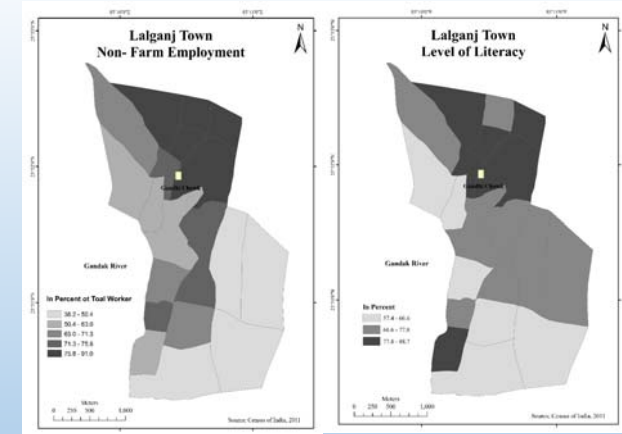
Basic infrastructure

No street light

Poor Waste collection

Poor Road connection

No public toilet



State of Development and Human Development at Lalganj

Human Capital: Low literacy in many southern wards
Economic Activities: Agriculture is still dominant in many of the municipal wards

Why Lalganj Lagged behind

Geographical :

Primacy of Neighbourhood towns like Hajipur. Muzaffarpur and Patna

Loss of hinterland

Regional backwardness

Economic:

Modern Technology: Decline of Inland water trade

Change in mode of production (Agriculture and manufacturing)

Decline in public investment

Political:

Quality of Governance

Historical:

Shift in Centre of Power:

Influx of Plague

Social: Social stratification and Leadership

Natural: Flood and Earthquake

Conclusion

The story of urbanization in India in historical times is a **story of spatial and temporal discontinuities**

The causative factors behind urbanization varied from time to time, leading to not one but several urbanization processes at different points in time

The history of major Indian towns do not match with theory of modern urbanisation.

Urbanisation is generally promoted by (i) economies of scale in production particularly in manufacturing; (ii) the existence of information externalities; (iii) technology development, particularly in building and transportation technology; (iv) substitution of capital for land as made possible by technological developments.

Indian urban centres have become a service hub where urban governance, basic infrastructure and manufacturing has not been given much priority

The Way Forward

Increasing disparity between urban agglomeration and metropolis like Dhaka, Delhi, Mumbai, Karachi and rural areas of South Asia demands balanced regional development where there should be synergies among all three sectors (primary, secondary and tertiary) of economy.

Exploring the possibility of rejuvenation of the less developed historical towns may become the pathway for sustainable urbanisation.

Function of Towns and Urban Morphology in the historical times witnesses significant change which requires further investigation. GIS can help us in better understanding of global history of urbanisation.

Thank You

rajnishjnu@gmail.com



4-5 October 2014



2nd Conference: GIS-based Global History from Asian Perspectives



4-5 October 2014

2nd Conference: GIS-based Global History from Asian Perspectives

