Bridging The Urban–Rural Gap in India: Pathways to Balanced and Inclusive Growth

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Abstract. India's development path remains strongly influenced by a continuous urban rural divide evident in disparity across income, education, healthcare, infrastructure and employment. This study evaluates policy initiatives such as Providing Urban Rural Amenities, the urban mission, and Kerala urban rural continuum, assessing their effectiveness in promoting spatial equity and balanced regional growth fully stop drawing on secondary data and guided by OECD inclusive growth framework, the research focuses on Faridabad district in Haryana as a representative case of India's urban rural interface. The finding indicates enhanced connectivity, agro industrial integration, and decentralized governance of our key drivers in minimizing regional inequalities and fostering inclusive, sustainable development.

Keywords: Urban–Rural Gap, Inclusive Growth, Rurbanity, OECD

1 Introduction

India, the world's most populous nation, is experiencing rapid development. The development is accompanied by swift social and economic development. Though the initiatives are taken by the government to develop both the urban and rural areas, there still exists a huge gap between the two areas. Cities usually have higher income, better schools, hospitals, roads, jobs, and services (See table 1). Rural areas depend mainly on agriculture and natural resources, and often face poverty, weak infrastructure and a few non-farm jobs [1][2][3][4]. This gap limits social mobility, pushes people to migrate to cities, and puts pressure on urban housing, transport and basic services. Many factors are responsible for creating and supporting this divide. E.g unequal public investment, urban focused policies, slower infrastructure growth in villages, and structural change that favours cities and services over agriculture [1][3][4][5]. Studies show that rural India lags in health, education and basic amenities, even when income gaps narrow down slightly in some areas [1][3][5]. India's urban–rural classification is based on population size, density, and share of non-farm workers, with areas that do not meet these criteria governed by gram panchayats and typically having weaker infrastructure. To shrink this divide, the government has launched initiatives such as PURA, which aims to bring urban type amenities to rural clusters, and the Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Rurban Mission, which builds "rurban" clusters that keep a rural character but provide with better infrastructure and services [4][6][7]. Evidence from states like Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh suggests that integrated infrastructure and

R. Mehta et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the International Conference on Infrastructure Development and Sustainability (ICIDS 2025)*, Atlantis Highlights in Sustainable Development 9,
https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6239-685-2_26

cluster based development can help reduce disparities if well implemented [1][6][7]. Global planning ideas like Howard's Garden City and agriculture based industrial clusters support mixed land use, local employment and stronger rural–urban linkages, aligning with inclusive growth and SDG oriented approaches [5][8][9].

This paper uses Faridabad district (Haryana)—a peri urban, industrialising area with rural fringes—to demonstrate how these policies and models can be applied in practice by adopting the principles of equity, service delivery and sustainability to suggest routes for balanced and inclusive development across India [8][9][10][11].

Table 1. Core Dimensions of urban-rural disparities

Dimension	Urban situation	Rural situation	Citations
Income & jobs	Diverse non-farm jobs, higher wages	Agriculture-dependent, fewer opportunities	[1][4][5]
Education & health	Better access, infrastructure	Inadequate facilities, access gaps	[1][3]
Basic amenities	Better services, though with inequality	Persistent gaps in water, sanitation, energy	[3][5][7]

2 Literature Review

2.1 Overview of Schemes/Models

India has used several schemes and models to bridge the urban–rural divide by combining infrastructure, connectivity and value chain development [12][13]. The Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA) concept (2003) proposed village clusters that are physically connected (roads, water, power), electronically and knowledge connected (ICT, skills, education), and economically connected (markets, enterprises) [13]. Pilot projects such as Periyar PURA in Tamil Nadu showed how community participation can improve water supply, sanitation, street lighting and tourism facilities at the village cluster level, but the model was not scaled up nationwide, revealing a gap between concept and implementation [13].

The Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (National Rurban Mission), launched in 2016, translates these ideas into practice by developing about 300 rural clusters with urban like infrastructure and services while retaining a rural character, aiming to reduce migration and support balanced regional growth [14][15][16][17][18].

At the state level, Kerala's rural–urban continuum challenges the strict rural–urban binary by recognising dense, mixed settlements and strong functional linkages. Research on Kerala shows the need for an RUC code and continuum-based spatial planning instead of dichotomous classification [19].

In agriculture and rural industrialisation, agro hubs and Mega Food Parks link production, processing, storage and marketing to cut post-harvest losses and generate local non-farm jobs, while connecting rural producers to urban and export markets [6][14]. Cooperative value chains such as AMUL demonstrate how community-based dairy networks can integrate rural producers into national markets and support inclusive rural development [20].

Together, these approaches—connectivity (PURA), cluster based growth (Rurban Mission), spatial continuums (Kerala model) and value chain integration (agro hubs, AMUL)—offer complementary pathways toward more balanced and inclusive regional development in India [14-18][19][20].

2.2 Theoretical Context of Schemes/Models

The schemes and models discussed in this paper are grounded in the ideas of inclusive growth, balanced regional development, and integrated spatial planning. The OECD's inclusive growth agenda stresses that development must improve overall prosperity while also ensuring fair access to opportunities and social inclusion across places and population groups [21][22][23]. Balanced regional development theory further argues that reducing territorial disparities between regions is essential for sustainable national growth and social stability [23][24].

Early spatial planning ideas such as Howard's Garden City model proposed self-contained settlements that combine housing, industry and agriculture within a surrounding greenbelt, aiming to balance urban efficiency with rural quality of life. Contemporary spatial planning research similarly calls for integrated approaches that link urban, peri urban and rural spaces rather than treating them as separate, competing zones [23][25][26]. This is highly relevant for India, where combining urban level services with rural livelihoods in integrated nodes can help overcome the rigid urban–rural divide [14][25].

Cluster based development, which underpins India's Rurban Mission, draws on agglomeration and regional development theories: grouping villages and peri urban settlements can generate economies of scale, shared infrastructure and local growth synergies when supported by appropriate governance and investment [14][16][24]. The connectivity logic in PURA reflects work on urban–rural linkages and "rurbanity", which shows that improving physical, digital and knowledge flows can reduce isolation and integrate rural areas into wider economic and social networks [27][28][29].

In agriculture led growth, agro industrial linkage theory highlights that integrating the value chain—from farm production to processing, storage and marketing—can transform rural economies, embed growth locally and moderate distress migration [29][30]. At the same time, continuum concepts such as the rural–urban continuum and "rurbanity" argue that rapidly urbanising countries are better understood as a functional spectrum, where rural and urban characteristics coexist and interpenetrate, rather than as a strict binary [14][26-28]

Taken together, these theoretical strands support integrated, context sensitive planning instead of one size fits all "urbanise the rural" or "protect the rural from the urban" approaches (See table 2). They emphasise connectivity, cluster formation, functional graduation along a rural–urban spectrum, and value chain linkages as key mechanisms for inclusive territorial development [24-28][29]

Table 2. Core theories underpinning India's rural-urban schemes

Theoretical strand	Main idea for policy design	Citations
Inclusive growth (OECD, SDGs)	Growth must be broad based and spatially inclusive	[22-24][29]
Rural–urban continuum / rurbanity	Rural and urban co exist; need integrated planning	[14][26-28]
Cluster / agglomeration logic	Village/peri urban clusters create scale and synergies	[14][16][24]
Agro industrial linkages	Farm–to–market integration drives rural transformation	[29][30]
	Growth must be broad based and spatially inclusive	[22-24][29]

2.3 Problems Associated with Models

Despite the solid theoretical foundations, practical implementation of these models has repeatedly faced challenges. Historically, Garden City experiments in the UK struggled with financing, land assembly and governance complexity, highlighting the difficulty of translating ideal spatial forms into viable projects [26].

In India, evaluations of PURA note that, although its connectivity concept is sound, scaling remained limited due to weak public–private partnerships, unclear or fragile business models, insufficient local institutional capacity and discontinuous funding [28][31][32].

The National Rurban Mission is more firmly institutionalised, but evidence from Indian states shows uneven implementation. Cluster outcomes vary with state capacity, and problems include delays in fund release, overlapping departmental mandates and weak local level planning and coordination structures [14][16][24][32].

Similarly, agro hubs and Mega Food Parks have faced operational constraints: inadequate cold chain infrastructure, weak aggregation mechanisms for smallholders, limited access to credit, and unreliable logistics and market linkages have slowed progress toward inclusive value chain integration [30][31].

Models based on a rural–urban continuum or "rurbanity" also bring new governance and environmental challenges. Research on peri urban and rurban regions points to land use conflicts, environmental pressures, unchecked sprawl and institutional fragmentation, with rural–urban fringe areas often falling between formal rural and urban jurisdictions [23][26-28].

Overall, there is a clear concept to scale gap. Many initiatives remain at pilot or project level and lack enabling institutional arrangements, strong community ownership, context specific adaptation and long term governance frameworks needed for sustained, scalable impact [31][32][24][25][14][23].

2.4 Existing Scenario of Schemes/Models in India

By the early 2020s, these policy instruments show mixed but cautiously positive results. PURA pilots and village level plans demonstrate that clustered infrastructure provision can improve roads, lighting, water supply and social amenities, but the initiative has not been mainstreamed at a national scale [31][32].

The Rurban Mission (SPMRM) reports around 300 approved clusters aimed at providing urban like infrastructure and economic opportunities in rural regions [14][16][24][32]. However, analysis from states such as Uttar Pradesh indicates that the benefits for migration reduction, livelihood diversification and rural value chain transformation are highly uneven, with some districts receiving little support and facing persistent disparities [16][24].

The Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) and related reports describe a growing number of Mega Food Parks and agro processing projects, along with rising investment in cold chains and processing capacity, though many projects remain under construction or in early operational stages [30][31].

Research on rural–urban continuums in India (for example, in Kerala and peri urban West Bengal) finds strong functional integration between urban and rural spaces, with dense mobility, mixed land use and social interactions that support livelihoods and

service access, but also raise concerns about environmental degradation, land pressure and complex governance demands at the rural–urban interface [14][26-28].

Taking together, existing evidence suggests that these schemes and models have improved connectivity and infrastructure in selected areas and have begun to reduce spatial inequities, but their impacts remain patchy. Institutional weaknesses, financial constraints, market failures and limited local capacity significantly restrict outcomes. Moving from promising pilots to broad, sustainable impact requires context sensitive design, stronger multi-level governance, empowered local leadership and long term sustainability planning [31][32][14][16][24-26].

2.5 Case Example: Faridabad District

Faridabad district in Haryana offers a representative example of India's urban–rural transition. Located within the National Capital Region and adjacent to Delhi, it brings together a dense industrial–urban core and surrounding peri urban and rural settlements, similar to "rurban" mosaics observed in other rapidly urbanising regions [14][26-28]. This combination of advanced urbanisation, rapid industrial growth and residual agrarian landscapes makes Faridabad a useful microcosm for analysing how connectivity, governance and value chain linkages affect inclusive regional development.

Demographically, Census 2011 data show that Faridabad had about 1.8 million residents, with roughly 79.5% urban and 20.5% rural population, and a density of around 2,444 persons per km², indicating intense urban concentration. The sex ratio of 873 females per 1,000 males reflects demographic imbalance. Literacy patterns underline the spatial divide, with urban literacy near 84% versus about 73% in rural areas, and rural female literacy around 60%, signaling persistent gaps in education and human development for rural women despite overall urban dominance [25][26].

Economically, Faridabad functions as a major industrial hub within the NCR, supported by highways and metro connectivity that link it closely to Delhi's markets and service economy. Regional and municipal planning documents (including development plans to 2031) foresee substantial expansion of water supply and sewage treatment capacity, but rapid urbanisation has produced mounting infrastructure pressure, environmental stress and growing service gaps between urban and rural or peri urban zones, consistent with findings for other Indian fringe regions [23][25][26]. Faridabad regularly ranks among India's most polluted cities, and under utilisation of clean air funding and regulatory tools has been noted in broader analyses of NCR environmental management.

The peri urban fringe around Faridabad (See table 3) is marked by fast land use change, informal development, and fragmented jurisdiction, mirroring the governance and planning challenges documented for rural–urban fringes elsewhere [23][25][26]. While the district's economic growth is driven mainly by industry and services, many rural

residents remain only weakly connected to industrial and agro processing value chains, limiting their share in local prosperity. Strengthening logistics, agro industrial clusters and rural–urban value chain integration could expand non farm employment (See figures 1 and 2), reduce distress migration and help turn peri urban spaces into engines of inclusive growth, in line with inclusive growth and rural–urban linkage frameworks (See table 4) [21][23][29][30].

Table 3 Socio-Economic and Infrastructure Indicators: Faridabad District (2023)

Indicator	Urban	Rural	Source
Population Density (per sq. km)	2,800	1,150	[48][49]
Literacy Rate (%)	86.3	74.1	[50]
Access to Piped Water (%)	94	68	[46]
Internet Penetration (%)	78	42	[51]
Health Centres per 10,000	3.5	1.2	MoHFW 2023

Table 4 Comparative Overview of Major Rural–Urban Integration Schemes in India

Scheme/Model	Key Features	Implementation Period	Status/Challenges
PURA	Four-fold connectivity (physical, knowledge, electronic, economic)	2003–2012	Limited PPP response
Rurban Mission	Cluster-based infrastructure and livelihoods	2015–Present	Uneven progress across states
Kerala RUC	Naturally evolved urban–rural integration	2000–Present	Resource management issues
Agro-Hubs	Agri-industrialclusters with value chains	2010–Present	Finance and logistics constraints
Mission 2031 (UP)	Smart village model with digital linkages	2021–2031	Ongoing; policy integration phase

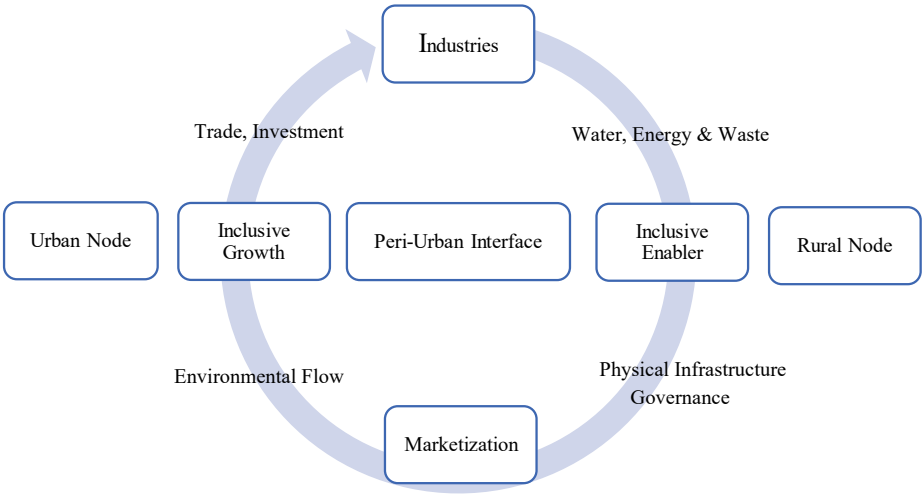

Fig.1. Urban Rural Linkage & Inclusive Framework

Value chain integration (VCI) helps bridge the economic and social gaps between urban and rural areas by creating a seamless, collaborative network connecting rural producers directly to urban markets. By aligning production with consumer demand, VCI transforms traditional, subsistence-based farming into a modern, profitable, and sustainable system that addresses rural poverty, food insecurity, and urban supply constraints.

Fig.2. Faridabad's Spatial Context within the National Capital Region (NCR)

2.6 Implications for National-Level Application

Using Faridabad as a representative model provides valuable insight for national policies aimed at bridging the rural–urban divide. Districts with a high share of urban population but a significant rural hinterland are well suited for targeted interventions that integrate rural villages into industrial and service sector growth through improved connectivity, value chain participation and digital inclusion, which is central to narrowing spatial and digital divides [34-38].

A mixed mode development approach that explicitly recognises the rural–urban continuum is essential for more holistic planning of infrastructure, governance and service delivery [33][36][38][39]. Prioritising an "infrastructure first" strategy—focusing on water, sanitation, transport and digital access—under national initiatives such as PURA and the Rurban Mission can accelerate balanced regional growth, in line with evidence that infrastructure and digital networks are core drivers of poverty reduction and inclusive development [35][40][41].

Embedding agro processing units, logistics hubs and digital platforms in peri urban areas can strengthen rural livelihoods, reduce distress migration and connect agricultural producers more effectively to urban markets, consistent with research on rural e commerce and smart village or digital village models [34][36][37][42]. Strengthening governance linkages between panchayats, municipalities and regional planning authorities is also crucial to manage peri urban zones where overlapping mandates and fragmented responsibilities often hinder coordinated development [33][43][44].

Including sustainability metrics—covering service access, pollution control, literacy and value chain integration—would support continuous monitoring and adaptive policymaking, echoing wider calls for integrated evaluation systems in urban–rural governance (Fang, 2022; Zyoud et al., 2025; Zhan et al., 2023; Rouse, 2014; Ye et al., 2022). Although Faridabad benefits from its NCR location and industrial ecosystem, its emerging practices of cluster development, infrastructure integration and inclusive, continuum based planning have replicable potential for many transitional districts across India [33][45][43][36].

Table 5. Key Indicators of Faridabad District (Representative Model for Urban–Rural Continuum in India.

Indicator	Value / Description	Source
Total Population (2011)	1,809,733 persons	[48] Census 2011 India+1
Urban Population (%)	79.51 % (~1.44 million)	[48] Census 2011 India+1

Rural Population (%)	20.49 % (~0.37 million)	[48] Census 2011 India+1
Urban Literacy Rate	83.82 % (Male 89.59 %; Female 77.25 %)	[48] Census 2011 India+1
Rural Literacy Rate	73.18 % (Male 84.66 %; Female 60.13 %)	[48] Census 2011 India+1
Planned Water Supply (2031)	Expansion from 330 MLD → 450 MLD	[53]
Planned Sewage Capacity (2031)	Expansion from 272.5 MLD → 630 MLD	[53]

In summary, Faridabad district act as a microcosm of India's urban rural challenges and provides actionable insight for skilling balanced, inclusive growth (See table 5). It highlights how urban pressure, rural hinterlands, regional value chains and infrastructure deficits coverage and how national schemes can adaptively deploy in such context.

Table 6. Comparative Overview of Models

Aspect	**Ebenezer Howard's Garden City**	**PURA Scheme (Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas**	**Rurban Mission (Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission)**	**Agro Hub (Agro-Industrial Cluster)**	**Kerala Rural–Urban Continuum (RUC)**
Originator / Period	Sir Ebenezer Howard (UK, 1898)	Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (India, early 2000s)	Government of India (Launched in 2016 by MoRD)	Government of India (through MoFPI and State Initiatives)	Natural evolution, studied by researchers [19]

Main Idea	Create self-contained towns combining the benefits of city and countryside	Bring urban-level amenities to rural areas	Develop clusters of villages (rurban clusters) with urban facilities while retaining rural essence	Create industrial clusters focused on agriculture and food processing	Seamless integration of rural and urban settlements; blurred boundaries
Goal / Vision	Balance between urban life and nature	Reduce rural–urban migration and improve rural quality of life	Promote integrated rural development and employment	Increase farmers' income through value addition and rural industrialization	Understand and manage continuous rural–urban development ; sustainable regional growth
Focus Area	Urban design and community planning	Rural infrastructure and connectivity	Rural–urban integration through cluster-based development	Agricultural economy, processing, and market linkages	Spatial planning, settlement integration, socio-economic continuity
Key Features	Greenbelts- Self-sufficient town- Community-owned land	Four connectivity: physical, electronic, knowledge, economic- Public–Private Partnership model	Cluster of 15–20 villages- Infrastructure (roads, water, power, housing)- Economic and social amenities	Food processing units- Warehousing and cold storage- Skill training- Export and market linkage	Dense, continuous settlements - Integrated infrastructure - Strong social & cultural networks
Scale of Implementation	Few towns (e.g., Letchworth, Welwyn in UK)	Pilot projects in selected regions (e.g., Periyar PURA)	298 clusters across India	Multiple food parks and agro-industrial zones (state-level)	State-wide; all districts exhibit blurred rural–urban boundaries
Economic Model	Cooperative and community-based	Public–Private Partnership (PPP)	Government-funded with convergence of schemes	Mix of public investment and private sector participation	Mixed rural economy; informal & formal sectors coexisting

Success Level	Partially successful; became suburbs	Limited success: pilots not scaled up	Moderate success; better coordination and ongoing support	Mixed success; progress in some states but uneven nationally	Observed high integration; challenges in planning but socio-economically cohesive
Limitations	Financial limitations- Industrial reluctance- Urban sprawl	Weak PPP response- Poor coordination- Limited awareness	Delays in fund release- Coordination between departments- Maintenance issues	Infrastructure gaps- Market instability- Lack of skilled manpower	Planning difficulty due to blurred boundaries - Resource allocation - Environmental and social pressures
Example / Case Study	Letchworth & Welwyn Garden City (UK)	Periyar PURA (Tamil Nadu)	Rurban Cluster in Telangana, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh	Amul Dairy (Gujarat), Mega Food Parks (Patanjali, Sri City)	Statewide Kerala settlements; studied in [19]
Outcome / Legacy	Inspired modern "new towns" and urban planning worldwide	Inspired future rural development and digital village models	Strengthened integrated rural development approach	Boosted agro-based entrepreneurship and food processing	Provides a paradigm for managing continuous rural–urban integration in high-density states
Overall Vision	Balance city and countryside	Balance rural and urban life	Balance rural growth with urban-style amenities	Balance agriculture with industry and market access	Balance settlement continuity with socio-economic cohesion
Originator / Period	Sir Ebenezer Howard (UK, 1898)	Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (India, early 2000s)	Government of India (Launched in 2016 by MoRD)	Government of India (through MoFPI and State Initiatives)	Natural evolution, studied by researchers [19]

Table 7. Comparative Analysis of Reasons for Failure of Rural–Urban Development Models

Model / Scheme	Reasons for Failure / Limited Success
Ebenezer Howard's Garden City (Welwyn City, UK)	- Deviation from original vision of community-owned, self-sustained settlements - Insufficient financial and institutional support - Industrial reluctance to relocate to new towns - Absorption by metropolitan expansion (urban sprawl) - Overly idealistic planning not suited to economic realities.
PURA Scheme (Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas, India)	- Weak participation from private sector due to low profitability - Poor inter-departmental coordination and monitoring - Inadequate financial allocation for pilot projects - Limited community awareness and engagement - Lack of upscaling beyond initial pilot phase.
Rurban Mission (Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission, India)	- Delay in fund release and project execution - Coordination issues among central, state, and local agencies - Weak maintenance and post-project sustainability - Uneven regional implementation across states - Limited community participation in decision-making.
Agro Hub (Agro-Industrial Cluster, India)	- Lack of basic infrastructure (power, transport, storage) - Financial constraints for farmers and small entrepreneurs - Price fluctuations and market instability - Shortage of skilled manpower and modern technology - Regional imbalance and policy overlaps.

3 Methodology

This study employs a qualitative and exploratory research designed to examine the urban rural divide in India and assess policy intervention aimed at narrowing it. The approach is both descriptive and analytical. Focusing on disparity in education, healthcare and livelihood, while critically evaluating key government initiatives such as pura the Rurban mission and Kerala urban rural continuum model. By documenting and interpreting this variation, the study seeks to understand the structural and policy related dimensions that shape India's uneven development landscape.

Our comparative analytical framework is adopted to juxtapose global urban planning model particularly Ebenezer Howard Garden City concept with Indian rural development program. This facilitates the identification of conceptual parallels, practical contrast, potential lessons for implementing sustainable and inclusive development strategies tailored to India's socioeconomic realities. The research relies entirely on secondary data sources including government policies documents, reports from the ministry of rural develop, census of India datasets, and URDPFI guidelines, complemented by peer reviewed articles, books and studies from databases such as web science Scopus and Google Scholar.

Using qualitative content analysis that study identify recurring themes of rural empowerment accessibilities of services infrastructure provisions and sustainable livelihood program implementation outcome SuccessFactors and challenges are systematically reviewed to provide a nuanced understanding of their effectiveness. Ultimately this methodology approaches synthesizes evidence of rural urban integration highlights persistent structural bottlenecks and purposes actionable insight for achieving balanced, inclusive and sustainable regional development in India.

4 Findings and Analysis

India's urban rural divide remains A pressing challenges, spanning disparity in income, infrastructure, health care, education, employment, and overall quality of life. Current trends show that while nearly 2/3 of India's population still sites in rural area which is 64.5% in year 2022, urbanization is rapidly accelerating, with projections indicating that over half of the population will live in cities by 2050. This demographic shift, if unaddressed, may exacerbate urban congestion, pollution, and infrastructural stress while leaving rural region underdeveloped and depopulated.

Bridging the divide requires a holistic and inclusive development approach that equips rural areas with essential urban amenities, including schools, healthcare facilities, sanitation, digital connectivity, and renewable energy fully stop programs such as PURA, Rurban mission, Kerala’s urban rural continuum Illustrates different strategies

for integrating rural and Urban Development, each with varying degrees of success. Age groups further strengthen this approach by fostering rural entrepreneurship, creating local employment, supportive value addition in agriculture and connecting farmers to urban market through digital platforms.

The comparative evaluation of hardware reveals that urban rural integrations required robust institutional linkages and participatory governance (See tables 6 and 7). While the district benefits from NCR's economic spillover, peripheral villages face services deficit and agriculture. Data shows that rural households earn 40% less than urban counterparts, despite geographic proximity [46]. Integration of agro hubs and rural industrial parks could mitigate this disparity [47]. Lesson from Garden City model adopted in India socioeconomic realities, emphasizes polycentric growth and local self-reliance.

Table 8. Urban Rural Population of India

Year	Rural Population	Urban Population	Total Population
2001	742 million (72.2%)	285 million (27.8%)	1,027 million
2011	833 million (68.8%)	371 million (31.2%)	1,210 million
2022	919 million (64.5%)	506 million (35.5%)	1,425 million
2030	918 million (60.2%)	607 million (39.8%)	1,525 million
2040	878 million (54.1%)	744 million (45.9%)	1,622 million
2050	803 million (47.8%)	877 million (52.2%)	1,680 million

This demographic shift presents dual challenges: urban areas face congestion, pollution, and infrastructural strain, while many rural regions continue to struggle with underdevelopment, limited livelihood opportunities, and migration pressures.

5 Conclusion

Disparity exists between the Urban and rural areas in terms of infrastructure, livelihood, access to services and governance. The Urban centres suffer with overpopulation, congestion and resource crunch (See table 8). While the Rural Communities suffer from

limited access to healthcare, education and employment opportunities. Nevertheless, social and economic inequalities become the most critical factor to increase the pace of migration from rural to urban areas, thus causing the overpopulated, resource-strapped urban areas. It has been noted that fostering a strong connection between the urban and rural areas is a necessity for balanced and inclusive growth, and societies can make progress when the progress is shared equitably and sustainably. Education, Technology, particularly digitisation, Networking, Power connections and road network can strengthen rural areas. Further Agriculture innovation, skill development and Entrepreneurship models like Agrohub can reduce the disparities, foster economic growth by uplifting rural livelihood. The urban-rural continuum can nurture growth by integrating infrastructure, services, and access to resources, which can go a long way to create sustainable communities. Government policies and community-driven programs must transcend geographical boundaries to improve cultural ties, resource sharing, access to healthcare, education, and housing, thus reducing inequalities in living standards.

"Rurban clusters" that combine the best of rural and urban features can create planned clusters to stimulate local economic development through skill training, entrepreneurship and small industries. In a nutshell, by creating opportunities in rural, semi-urban and peri-urban zones, the migration pressure can primarily be stopped and bring harmony in the two distinct Urban and Rural areas.

Declaration of Generative AI in Scientific Writing

Chat GPT has been used to check the grammatical errors.

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