Urbanisation: The Changing Face of Settlements

From the fields to the factory—understanding the geography of human aspiration.

THE FIELD

THE FACTORY

Tatya's Fear: "Suresh, I will come late to the field today... But what about our fields? Will you be able to manage all this?"

Suresh's Vision: "I think I should work in that factory... I will get a monthly salary, overtime, and a bonus. Our village will change drastically... huge buildings will stand tall."

The Catalyst: The shift from primary (agriculture) to secondary (industrial) occupations driven by economic promise.

Defining the Shift: When Does a Village Become a City?

**Occupation:** >75% male working population in non-agricultural sectors.

Population Size: Settlement population > 5,000.

Density: > 400 persons per sq. km.

Key Insight: Urbanisation is a structural shift in governance. The Gram Panchayat gives way to a Municipal Council or Corporation to manage water, roads, and street lighting.

The Indian Growth Story (1961–2011)

Urban Population Percentage

- 17.79%
- 19.11%
- 23.34%
- 25.72%
- 28.06%
- 37.07%

1961 · 1971 · 1981 · 1991 · 2001 · 2011

Rapid Acceleration:
Growth surged to 13.73% in this period.
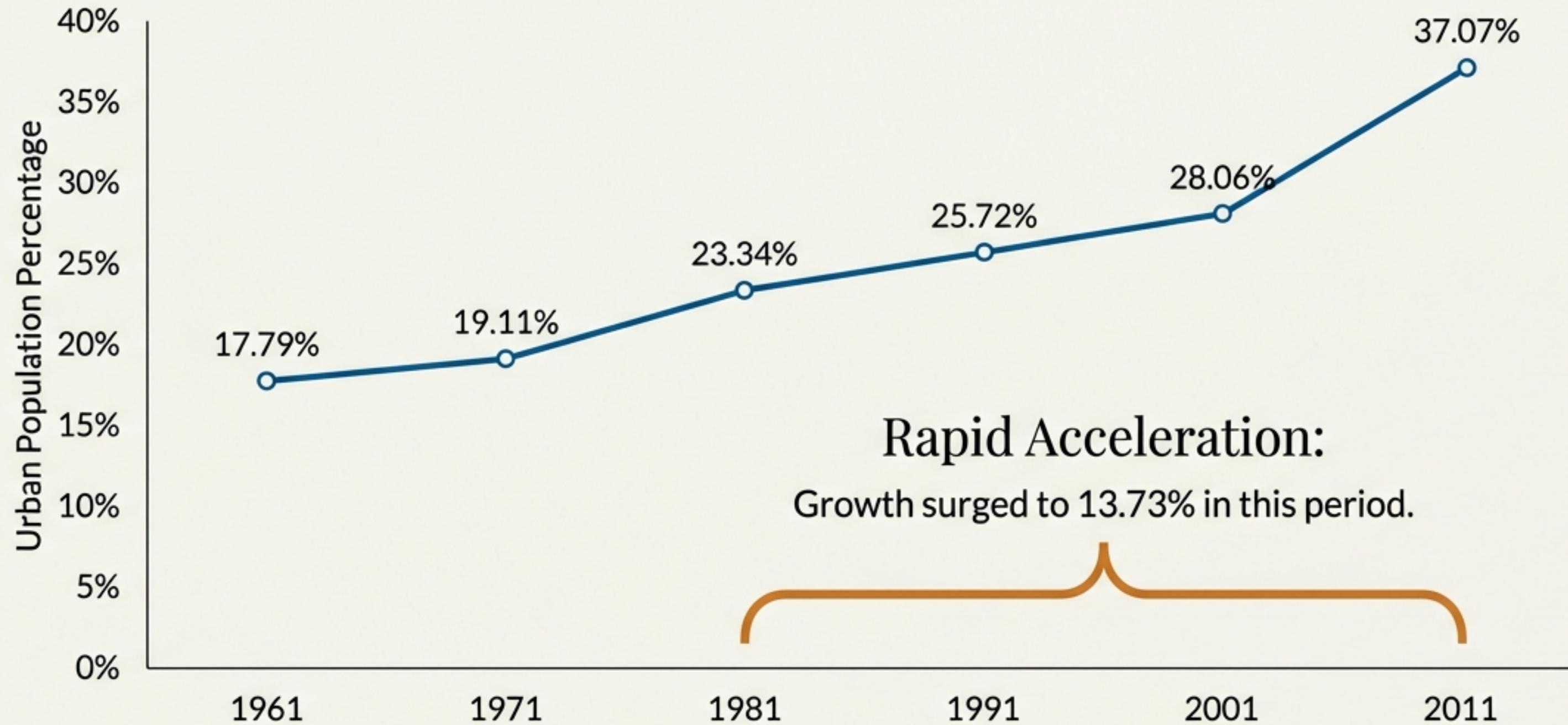
Conclusion: The urban population in India is increasing consistently and rapidly.

Engines of Growth: Industry and Trade

Industrialisation

19th-century textile mills in Mumbai
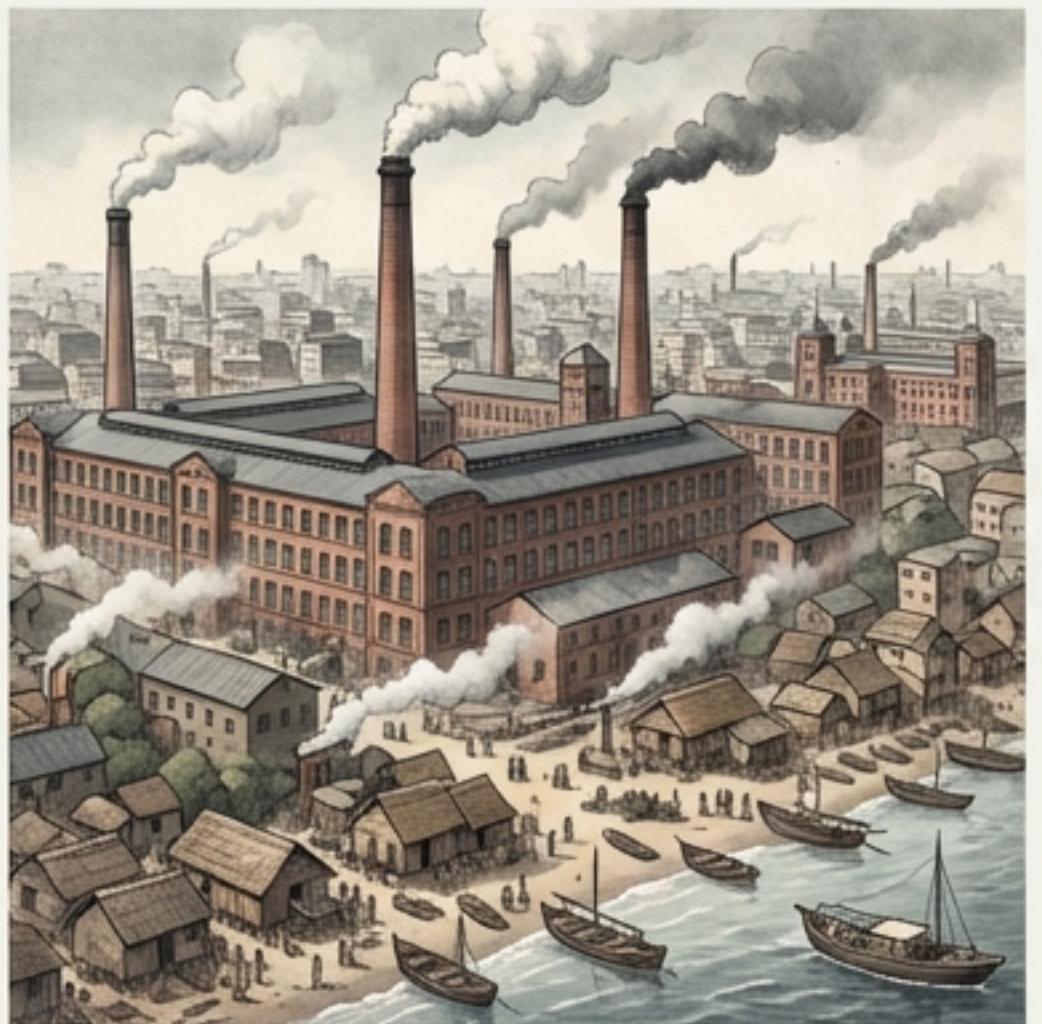
Industries attract manpower, absorbing surrounding villages into metropolitan areas.

Trade

Nagpur

Favourable transport and storage locations create trade hubs.

Connecting the Dots: Transport and Technology

Mechanisation (The Push)

Agriculture becomes mechanized
-> Reduced need for manpower
-> Rural workers seek new jobs

Transport (The Catalyst)

Konkan Railway

Bhusawal Junction

Savarde

Roads and railways accelerate urbanisation of small settlements.

Urban Growth

The Great Migration

The Driver:
Attraction of a **higher standard of living.**

The Flow:
Rural to Urban,
Rural to Rural,
Urban to Urban.

The Duration: Short-term,
Long-term, or Permanent.

Mumbai

Pune

The Urban Reality: The Housing Crisis

The Gap: Population growth > Housing capacity.

The Consequence: Slums.

- Illegal, temporary structures.
- High density, narrow roads.
- Lack of basic facilities and sanitation.
- Driven by low incomes and high land prices.

Infrastructure Under Pressure

Sprawling suburbs increase commute times. Public transport strain leads to more private vehicles.

Crime & Social Tension

Unemployment leads to illegal means of earning.
Strain on police/judicial systems.
Tension due to soaring land prices.

The Environmental Cost: Pollution

Air Pollution: Smoke billowing from industrial chimneys over a city.

Water Pollution: Dark, untreated wastewater pouring into a river.

Adverse effects on health, accumulating waste, and disease spread.

Managing the Future: The Smart City Mission

Objective: To update cities using Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Goals:
- Handle urban assets efficiently.
- Planned development.
- Strengthen transport and communication.
- Improve emergency response times.
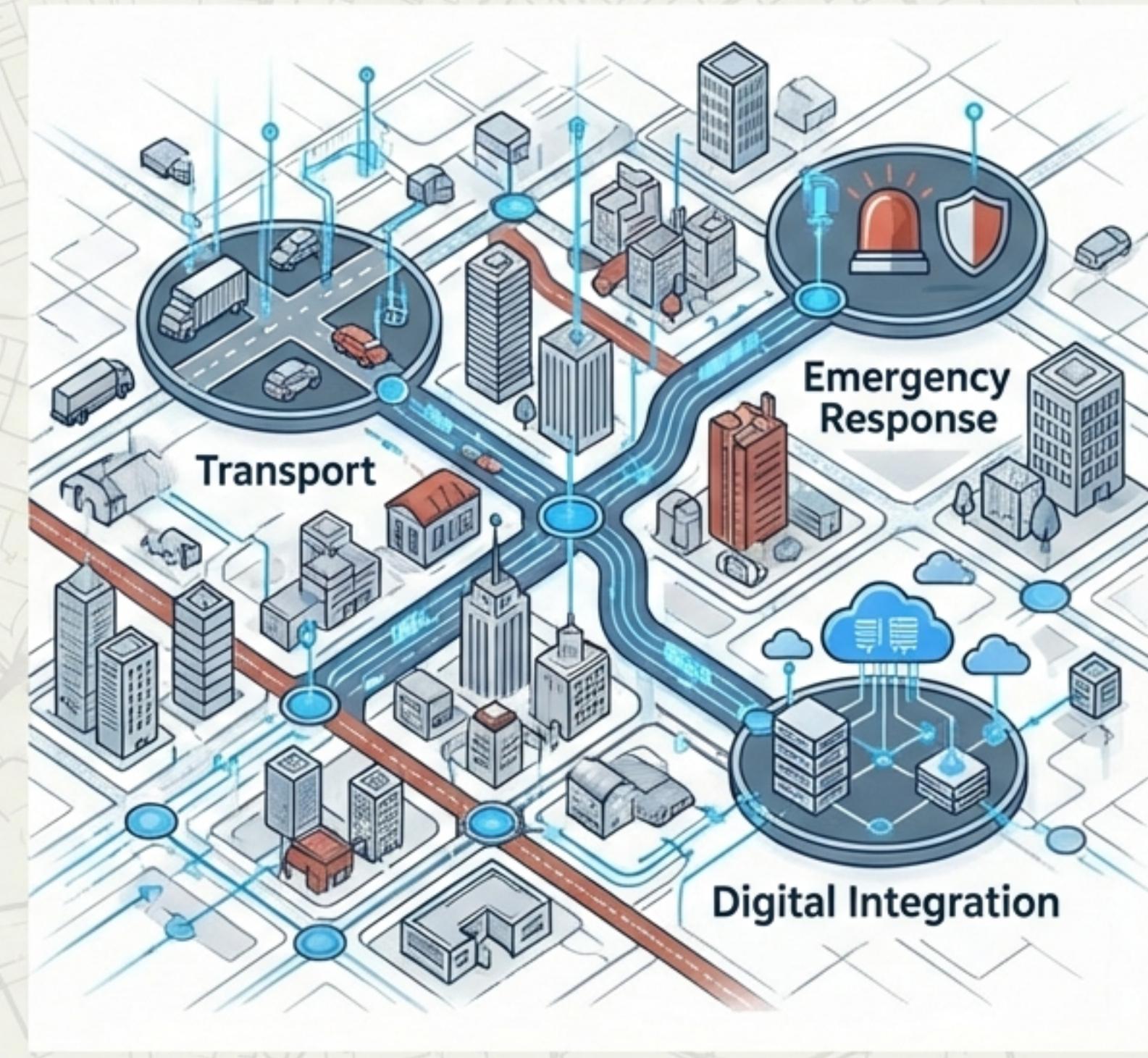
A Clean Slate: Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

स्वच्छ भारत

एक कदम स्वच्छता की ओर

- Improving sanitation and health in urban areas.

- Addressing the waste management crisis.

- Creating a culture of cleanliness.

Summary: The Urban Continuum

Rural (Agriculture)

Migration

Urbanisation (Industry/Trade)

Opportunities (Amenities, Modernisation)
Improved services, technology, better lifestyle.

Challenges (Slums, Pollution)
Overcrowding, environmental degradation, inequality.

Future (Smart Cities)
Sustainable, efficient, technology-driven urban living.

Give it a try: Look at the main transport routes in your own surroundings—how have the settlements there changed in the last five years?