

**Rural Urban Migration and
urbanization in Bhutan**

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MBA (Rural Management)

2019 – 2021



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Acknowledgements

I would like to give my heartfelt gratitude to my mentors, professor Dr. Anuradha S. Palanichamy and professor Dr. Goutam Sadhu who gave me the wonderful opportunity to do my research on Rural Urban Migration and Urbanization in Bhutan which helped me in doing lots of exploration on trends of migrations in Bhutan. I am extremely happy and thankful to them for giving me room to enhance my knowledge through this research paper. Moreover, I would also like to thank my friends who helped me a lot in collecting data and finalizing this paper within the limited time frame.

Rural Urban Migration and urbanization in Bhutan

Abstract

Bhutan is a small developing country, yet it had experienced quick urbanizations in the course of recent decades. As indicated by the UNDP's human improvement report (2009), Bhutan's universal movement rate is the most elevated in South Asia. In this manner, rural – urban migration is a significant issue and is confronted by every pockets of the nation. To this end, rustic urban relocation has genuinely sabotaged customary socio – religious and social qualities back in the provincial zones. Up until this point, Urbanizations results because of normal development in the quantity of populaces and country urban movements caused either because of populace weight or absence of assets in the rural areas. Some move to the urban areas chasing their dreams and expectations. All though rural-urban migrations attract a lot of interest it also brings about growing concerns. Thus, this paper will be centered around the idea, causes and impacts of rural urban movements and urbanization. Further the paper also focused on urban sustainable development and the measures to reduce urbanization.

Key points: Rural- Urban Migrations, urbanization, Sustainable Development,

Introduction

Bhutan is a small country situated in the eastern Himalayas between the two big nations i.e India and China. In the past few decades Bhutan has undergone rapid urbanisations. Urbanisation was inescapable. The process of Urbanisation indeed brought a lot of positive changes and improvement in the country. Because of such processes it had brought a lot of economic opportunities which was of great advantage to the country, but together with all those advantages it also came along with a lot of challenges to the country. The population in the urban areas increased at rapid rate due to the rural-urban migrations. This is an unstable situation that is being experienced in most of the under-developing countries throughout the world. “Among all the Dzongkhangs (states), Thimphu (capital city of Bhutan) has the largest populations consisting of 19.1% of the total population where as Gasa being the list populated (far from Town)”. (Tobgay, 2017) There are several reasons behind people migrating from rural areas to urban cities. Every individual has their hopes

and dreams to be a better individual and set a comfortable live for their parents, for themselves and for their generations. So, with this notion they move towards a better life which they believe will be achieved in the developed regions. But all these puts forward a lot of challenges to the country as a whole and to the individuals themselves. So, this research will be mainly focussed on the concept of migration and the causes and impacts of rural – urban movements and urbanization in Bhutan. Further the paper also focuses on ensuring urban sustainable developments and reasons behind rural-urban migrations and measures that can be put forward to reduce the rural-urban migrations.

Aims and objectives

- ✓ To help migrants make informed positive choices through the provision of information, guidance and support.
- ✓ Raise awareness and create understanding of movement issues to construct a society where administrations are learned and competent in assembly the wants of migrants.
- ✓ To understand the challenges faced with rural urban migrations and to know what measures were taken by our government to reduced rural urban migration.

Research questions

1. What is migration?
2. What are the causes and effects of Rural Urban Migration?
3. How can we reduce rural urban migration?
4. what are the impacts of Urbanization?
5. Why is sustainable development considered important inurbanization?

Literature Review

In the tiny Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan, thousands are leaving their villages to search out a superior life in towns. In the course of the most recent decades,the pace of rural-urban movements has expanded essentially in Bhutan with major townships growing at the rate of 6.7% to 10% annually. This rate is often seen as being higher than that of national average output growth. Along these lines, it is assessed that a large portion of the populace will live in urban zones by the year 2020. Out-migration is highest from Eastern Dzongkhag

and Trashigang in particular. Of the 'push' factors, the absence of sufficient educational and business openings in country zones represent the two significant reasons driving provincial urban relocation. Of the 'pull' factors, the parts of relocating subsequent to making sure about an occupation, and moving with guardians or life partner, are significant. Other 'pull' factors are the commercialization and famous diversion openings related to urban ways of life. With young people less inspired in farming and anxious to grasp education and work openings somewhere else, rural regions are gradually discharging out. What's more, the old, aged more than 65, are left behind. (Tobgay, 2017) .

Today 30.40 % of Bhutanese households live in urban areas and 80.3 % of the totals live in Thimphu alone (or 15.5 % of the total population). (Tobgay, 2017) This trend has already imposed severe strains on available urban services and environmental health. Such condition undermines to accelerate the breakdown of the current urban foundation and make conditions ready for pandemics and national wellbeing emergency.

These conditions are exacerbated by the truth that underneath existing enactment, urban housing is illegal. Moreover, clog, inappropriate removal of trash, vehicular and mechanical outflows, and inadequately ventilated family unit ovens are a portion of the expenses related with urban swarming and it could blow up our hugely high-esteem pristine environment. Most importantly, there is a growing recognition that the Royal Government's development policies and expenditures, often biased towards urban development strategies at the expense of rural people, further encourages rural to urban migration. In spite of the fact that the subject of balanced provincial advancement has been a significant target of Bhutanese improvement designs, the circumstance of uneven advancement designs persists, and this has prompted further support of country to urban relocation.

Methodology

This study is mainly based on secondary data collected from population census reports, PHCB (population and housing census of Bhutan – National Statistics Bureau and some portion of data were gathered from newspaper, articles, and books. Moreover, a portion of data was collected from web and through YouTube videos. The data were collected on the variables such as population density, level of urbanization measured as the extent of urban to add up to populace, causes and impacts of rural urban migrations and so on. These variables, then are be grouped as “push” and “pull” factors to identify which factors – push and pull –

are more dominating in different region of states in causing variation of the out migration from the rural areas.

Research Findings

Concept of Migration and Urbanization

“Migration is defined as an inflow or outflow of population from a region to another region for permanent or semi-permanent settlement of habitation” (Mishra, 1981). Migration can be classified into:

An in migrant- a individual who enters a topographical zone crossing its limit from a spot outside it, within the same country.

An out migrant- an individual who leaves a topographical region crossing its limit to somewhere else outside it, within the same country.

Lifetime migrants- a individual whose region of habitation at the census date contrasts from the region of birth is a lifetime migrant. The migrants are characterized as individual who were recognised in an area other than the place where they were born. Moreover, the sorts of migration in Bhutan can be classified in four types:

1. Rural – Rural Migration
2. Urban – Urban Migration
3. Rural – Urban Migration
4. Urban – Rural Migration

Rural – Rural Migration: “The process of movement of people from villages either because of social or economic reasons, in search of fertile soil etc”. (Wangda, 2015)

Urban – Urban Migration: “The process of movement of people from town to town because of government job transfer, trade related reasons etc”(Wangda, 2015)

Urban – Rural Migration: “The process of movement of people from town to villages due to retirement from job, health problems, due to governmental policy in rural development programmes etc” (Wangda, 2015)

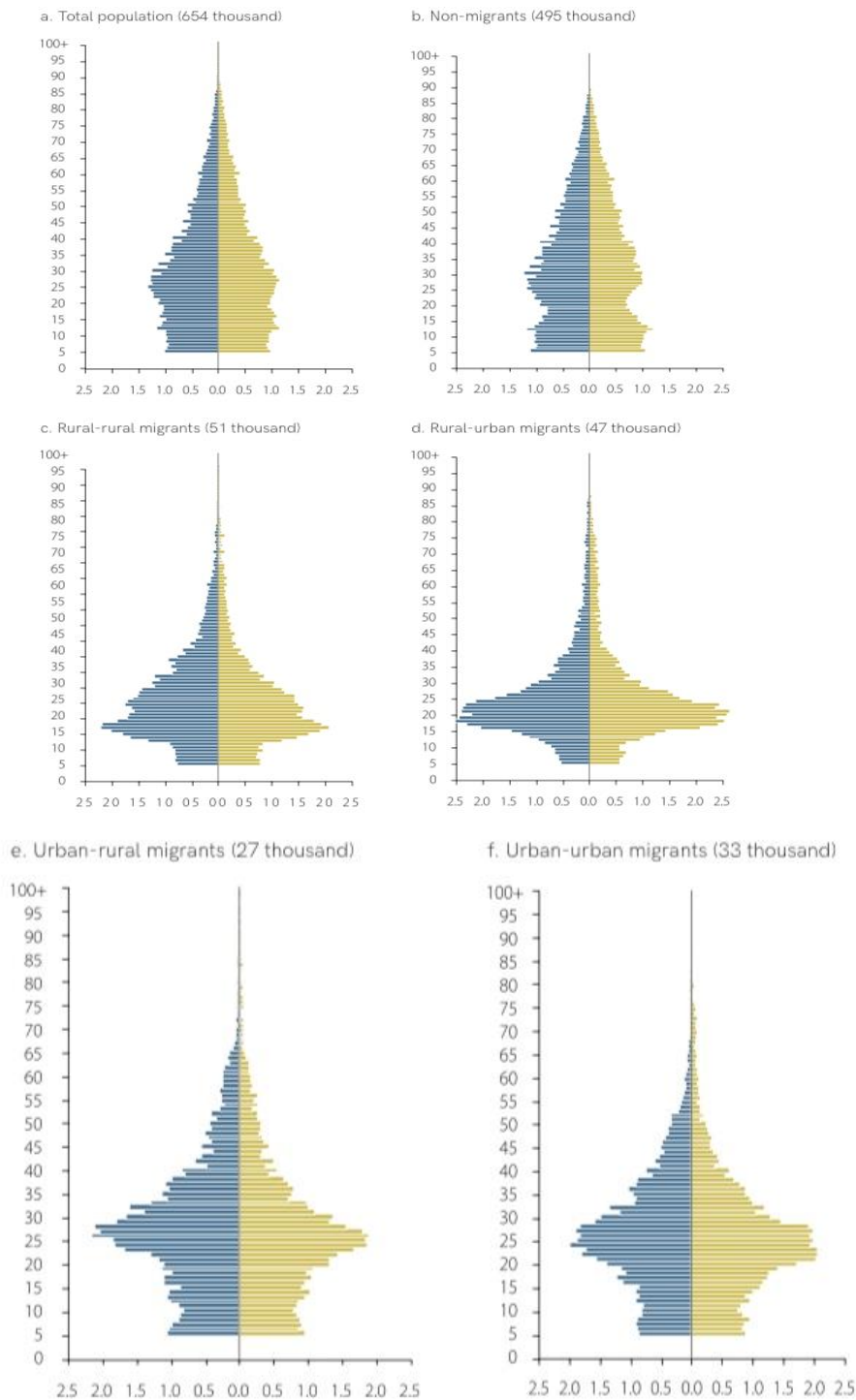


Fig 1.3: Resident population age 5 and over, a by sex age (in percentage) for recent internal migration status (b to f)

Rural Urban Migration:

The movement of individuals from villages to town area. so far in Bhutan, “Out of 686,697 people who were born in the mountainous nation, nearly half (48.7%) had migrated away from their place of birth to the urban areas”. (Tobgay, 2017)

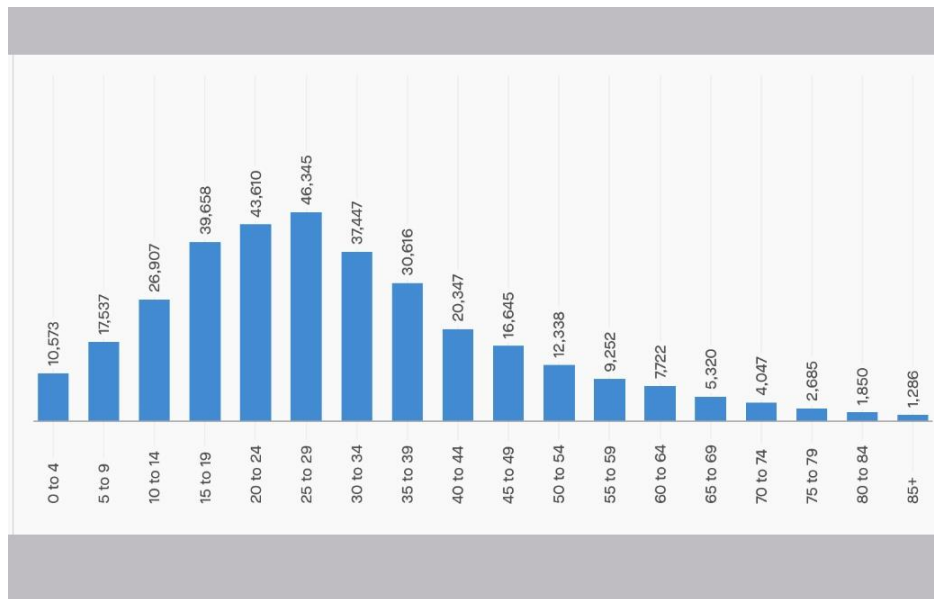


Fig 1. Migrants by age group in Bhutan as of 2017 (Data: Population and Housing Census of Bhutan 2017)

On the other hand, Urbanization, or urban float is the physical advancement of urban regions due to worldwide change. Urbanization is also described by the United Nations as the improvement of individual from provincial to urban region. Urbanization is firmly associated with industrialization, modernization, and the sociological method of justification.

Causes of Migrations

The Rural-Urban Migrations are caused by variety of factors,

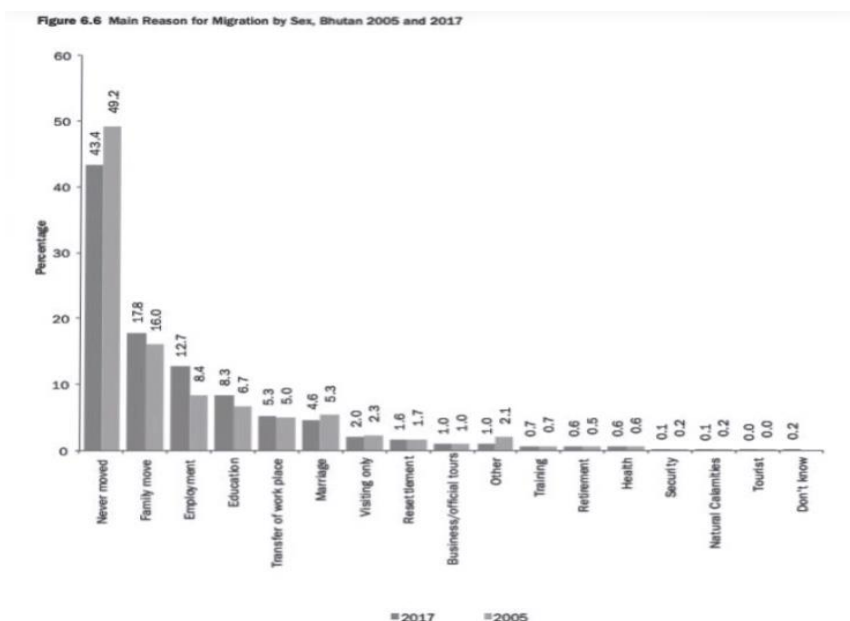


Fig:2 reasons for migration by sex, Bhutan 2005 and 2017

1. Employment opportunities in cities

In Bhutan the education is completely free and hence all kind of children have access to education. Since, all the children are educated and have the knowledge of the external world they don't want to waste their learnings just by working in the farm in some corner part of the country. They want themselves to be employed and enjoy the city life. In the rural area they depend solely on the agriculture. Since Bhutan is a developing country, there is no much development in the agriculture sector and hence the work involves a lot of physical strength and hard labour. Yet the agriculture sector generates only 17% of the national GDP and for that matter poverty is mostly concentrated in the rural areas. (Tshering, 2017) Hence, people try to escape the harsh agricultural work and move to the urban areas leaving only the aged in the village. 53% of the people are migrating for employment related work.

2. Limited access to basic service in the rural areas

Although Bhutanese youth are given free education regardless of the place they reside, there are still some difference in the kind of education the students receive in the rural and urban areas. Education is not just the things that are in their syllabus according to their standards, but includes many other things like knowing the digital world and more adaptability to the developing world like dancing, singing, using musical instruments, playing different and new games that help enhance the quality of life. All these new facilities are not available in the rural areas. Hence, for the better future of their children, some parents move to city areas by selling all the land they have in the rural areas. 30% of the people migrating are those who are going for their education. (Tshering, 2017) Further, the Urban areas also has other better facilities like better health care with better living conditions.

Impact of Rural-Urban Migration

Positive Impact of Rural-Urban Migrations

1. More Resource per Person in the Rural areas

Since, most people have moved out for betterment, those few people living in the villages gets to own more land for themselves can lead their life sufficiently.

2. Increase in Economically Active Elements of the Community.

More people in the area means, more people who can work and make economic developments.

Negative impact of Rural-Urban Migrations

1. Degradations of Culture

In Bhutan, the ancestor has preserved the precious culture and traditions of the country over their reign and now it is the responsibility of the upcoming youths to get hold of all those cultures and traditions. One such traditions include Agriculture Farming. With Modernisation, today's youth takes less interest in the agriculture work and are always eager to be in an urban area where they feel they get to experience more luxurious life. If this system of migrations from the rural area to urban areas continue only the aged people will be left in the villages. Being in the Urban area just leads the youth know more about the today's world but they can't know the simplest and important things about their culture. Those youths, that are in the town does not even have the idea of the cultivation seasons which may lead to the degradations of the culture soon.

One of the most common and popular traditions of Bhutan is the National dress of Bhutan (i.e. Gho for men and Kira for Women). When we observe the people living in the rural areas they always put on their national dress regardless of what work they do, even when they work in the farms with all those dust but as one visits the urban areas every people prefer to wear the western dresses which may also hamper the well-known culture of Bhutan.

Further, the dances of Bhutan are one important part of its culture. But as mentioned earlier, the youth when they reach the urban areas and those who are born there tends to prefer the western dance and music and takes more interest in them. Which may also lead to the degradations of culture.

2. Fewer Economically- active people left in the rural community.

With rural-urban migrations only the elderly or few of the young men remain in the rural area which lead to less economic activity taking place in the area.

3. Pressure on services and places to live in Urban areas

With more people living in the urban areas, it gives more pressure to urban services such as healthcare provision and education. Moreover, it becomes difficult to find a suitable place to live, According to the Bhutan Living Standards Survey 2012, in rural areas eight in ten household own the place they live (85 %) in where as in the urban areas only one in the six household own the place they live(17%) and most of them stays in rented areas (The 3rd UN Conference On Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, 2016). These leads to

overcrowdings in the urban areas and they aren't able to get the proper services including the clean and safe drinking water.

Causes of Urbanization in Bhutan

Urbanization is the increase in the number of individuals living in towns and urban communities. Urbanization primarily happens due to the movement of individuals from provincial zones to urban territories and results in development in the size of the urban populace and the degree of urban regions. Urbanization happens normally from person and corporate endeavours to decrease time and cost in commuting and transportation whereas progressing openings for employments, educations, lodging and transportation. Living in cities grants people and families to require advantages of openings of nearness, differences, and commercial centre competition. Urbanization in the developing nations occurs for two principle reasons;

1. Natural increases of population
2. Rural to urban migration (Study session 5 Urbanization: Trends, Causes, and Effects , 2020).

1. Natural increase of population

The difference between the quantity of births and the quantity of passings recorded over a period. In demography, the pace of characteristic increase is a measurement determined by taking away the unrefined demise rate from the rough birth pace of a given locale.

2. Rural to urban migration

“Rural-Urban Migration is both a financial marvel and a spatial handle including the development of individuals from rustic zones into cities, ether for all time or semi forever” (Tobgay, 2017) Bhutan being a developing country, people usually moved from countryside to settle in urban zones expecting a better standard of life. Individuals from the provincial territories typically moved to the urban zones as a large portion of them were affected by the monetary development and advancement and by technological change. It is completely determined by the draw factors that pulls in individuals to urban zones and push factors that drive individuals from the countryside.

The Population and Housing Census of Bhutan (PHCB) National Report that was conducted from 30th May to 01st June 2017 showed that rural-urban migrations is the highest when compared to other forms of migrations. 334,185 persons i.e. 48.7% born in Bhutan migrated from their birthplace and the main areas that gained people are dzongkhags like

Thimphu and Phuentshogling (Town Areas), while the losing are dzongkhags like Zhemgang, Lhuentse, and Trashigang (Most Rural Areas). The rural-urban migration accounts to 18% of the total population of Bhutan and 36.6% of the migrant population. (Tobgay, 2017)

Impacts of Urbanization

In Bhutan, although the individuals were pulled towards the upsides of urban zones, the impact of urbanization can be both Positive and Negative.

Positive impacts of urbanization

The towns and urban networks are a basic component of a prosperous national economy. The social affair of monetary and HR in one spot energizes growth and improvement in business, innovation, science and industry. Access to guidance, prosperity, social organization and social exercise is more promptly accessible to people in urban network than in rural areas. In urban networks, young people endurance rates are better than in rural region because of better access to human services. Some of the positive implications of urbanization are:

- Creation of employment opportunities
- Technological and infrastructure advancements
- Improved transportation and communication
- Quality education and medical facilities
- Improved living standard

Negative impact of urbanization

In most of developing nations the extensive urbanization generally brings about adverse impacts. Similarly, even in Bhutan due to the urbanization, there were various negative impacts such as:

1. Geographical Dimensions

Urbanization reduces the ratio of land to human beings, which is simply another way of saying that urbanization means an increase in the density of land use. As the lowlands are used for urbanization, farmers increasingly will have to move upland, which will have many consequences – it will increase fragility of farming because hillsides are never as productive

or as stable as flatlands, and it will vastly increase the difficulty of life for the farmers and make farming itself more difficult.

2. Economic and Administrative Dimensions

Urbanization is leading to a significant increase in land prices, and this, in turn, will lead to increased poverty conditions in urban centres. Rapid changes in the price of wood and the availability of wood due to urbanization will lead to the pressure on available resources, and this has important implications for the environment as well as for the construction market. The growing urban population requires a rapid movement of essential commodities and surplus food from rural areas.

1. Social Dimensions – e.g. housing problem, health, education, urban unemployment, and urban poverty

- ✓ The rapid inflows of rural populace to urban places give rise to housing issues and thus result in slums.

2. Environmental Dimensions – e.g. waste disposal, emissions – pollution, climate change

Urbanization influences land, water, air and wildlife in view of increase in the number of people, the measures of buildings and construction, and increased demands on the assets. It brings about environmental pollution, health hazards and so on. In the urban areas especially in Thimphu (capital of Bhutan) due to the rapid increase of population and lack of proper waste disposal areas people simply throws their waste everywhere in the open space and this brings about the pollution of ground water and surface water which could be used as a hotspot for drinking water. Further, the air qualities in town areas are usually very poor because of the air being contaminated from many different sources. These include:

- Vehicle exhausts
- Smoke from domestic fires
- Dust from construction works and city streets and so on

3. Economic and social systems

Urbanization brings about both positive as well as negative economic and social changes. The positive changes include economic developments, and proper education. However, urbanization also places weights on already existing social administration and framework.

Increase in Crime rate, prostitution, youngsters abusing drug and homeless people are all negative effects of urbanization. Moreover, the decrease in rural population effects the farming productions because of the lack of labours in rural areas.

Measures to reduce Urbanization

The main thing that should be done to alleviate some of Bhutan's rising socio-economic and environment issues lies in confining rural urban migration. This will be viable only by debilitating the push factor i.e. by improving infrastructure, quality of life and business openings in rural areas.

Improvement in rural areas

- Providing electricity and media transmission administrations to villages, starting projects to help agribusiness like circulating power tillers, introducing electric fencing and encouraging provincial credits through financing windows like the rural enterprise development corporation
- Focus on intensive farming and industrial agriculture through the utilization of advanced seeds and editing designs in order to meet the goals of accomplishing 100% food grains adequacy (currently at 65) and at the same time to increase income generation in rural areas.
- Provide better, progressively coordinated assistance which will be of conveyance to the rural communities in terms of health, welfare, horticultural augmentation and training divisions.
- Aim to upgrade pay and work era from the ranger services division by well organised plans that might empower trade of ranger service items.
- Developing the small and medium estimated house businesses such as weaving.
- Developing roads and other communications networks for remote areas.

Urban Sustainable Development

“Sustainable Development is a development which provides the current needs without compromising the ability of the future generations in achieving their needs and demands” (Shoja & Heidari, 2015). Sustainable development of the urban areas is significant for the developing countries as well as the most developed country. The concept of sustainability aroused from the insufficiencies of single-minded economic developments. In 1999 while charting its development course to 2020, Bhutan emphasised that the development path of the country must be socially, economically, culturally and environmentally sustainable (Shoja & Heidari, 2015). Over the recent decades the Gross Domestic Product of Bhutan has experienced critical changes. i.e before the contribution of primary sectors (agriculture, forestry, and mining) to GDP consist of 56% (1980) which gradually decreased to 27% in 2003 and by 2016 it eventually decreased to only 16.5%. on the other hand, the contribution from the secondary sectors which includes constructions and manufacturing has increased which indeed show how the Bhutan is moving towards a market which depends on modern Economy. While all these developmental changes are taking place leading to urbanisation there are many important steps that needs to be taken for making the urban area sustainable.

The principle idea of sustainable development revolves around human-environment and concentrates on the advancement of the economic opportunities through considerations of the environment and social justice. The principle components of Sustainable development are:

- Unity and coordination between environmental protection and development.
- Proving the main needs of people
- Providing Permanent protection and maintenance of ecology
- Protect cultural and social values
- Access to social justice.

Urban sustainable development mainly focuses on preventing urban and regional pollution, reducing the production of regional and national environment, enhancing recycling processes, avoiding harmful developments and alimentering the gap between the rich and the poor. It also focusses on the social and cultural aspects of the country. (Shoja & Heidari, 2015)

Bhutan aspires its development to be holistic, inclusive and sustainable. Although Bhutan is experiencing rapid urbanisation, the urban sustainable development is ensured guided by the nation's philosophy of GNH. The constitution of the country always mandates a forest cover of at least 60% of the land . Further, the royal government of Bhutan has committed to remain as a carbon neutral country. The country has taken all measures to develop the both urban and rural areas in sustainable way (Bhutan: In Pursuit of Sustainable Development, 2012)

Conclusion and recommendation

Migration is the movement of an individual from one geographical region to another and resulting in change of residence from the place of birth to the place of destination. The rural-urban migration along with the natural increase in quantity of people in the urban centres leads to urbanisations. The urbanisation and rural to urban migrations consist of significant impact on both the rural and urban area. There were several causes of rural-urban migrations. Some migrate in search of better services while some for economic purpose. Nevertheless, the urban areas shall be maintained sustainably so that the future generations need not compromise their needs and demands. The exploration that I have done on this context is just an introduction and the data or information gathered so far is very sketchy giving plenty of room for further research.

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