

## **ABSTRACT**

The rising pace of urbanization leads to two different kinds of impacts i.e., i) a detrimental pressure on urban infrastructure, amenities, and facilities on the one hand, and ii) opportunities based on agglomeration for collective growth and development for better economic prosperities on the other hand. The coexistence of the twin but contradictory scenarios are beginning to attract researchers to search for a reconciliation and seek a complementary viewpoint of looking at development comprehensively within urban areas, especially in metropolitan urban agglomeration (MUA). Focusing on Kolkata Urban Agglomeration (KUA) India, as a key contribution, the present research has endeavored to best approach this reconciliation through an assessment of livability variations and its potentials of constituent Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) based on a set of Integrated Urban Geographic Factors (IUGFs). These factors represent the spatial interactive association of an individual with his/her urban environment.

A sequence of two objectives comprise the framework of research methodology, where the first objective identifies the potential nodes, based on i) identification of significant IUGFs and ii) subsequent clustering of ULBs, and finally arriving at a network of clustering by degree of livability potential, and objective two, which assesses the impact of potential zones of livability as governed by the current situation assessment, and recommends a Livability Potential Strategy, accordingly.

The results and interpretations have revealed an overall urban-rural dichotomy both as i) an impediment to desirable livability variations and ii) a catalyst to livability flows based on physical-environmental, socio-economic, and socio-cultural domains and their collective contributions to boost a network of livability nodes within a MUA. IUGFs appear to play a key role to discover the twin sides of the impact and transform their apparent contradictory patterns into a complementary process.

The present research takes a fresh attempt to identify the variables of livability potential assessment, in the light of IUGFs for best targeting good future augmentation of metropolitan development. The research has also drawn from a unique mosaic of India's largest multicultural MUA, which offers a specific case study-driven imperative for future research on assessment of livability variations and its potential on generic and similar cases around the world.

*Keywords: Livability Potential, Metropolitan Urban Agglomeration; Kolkata Urban Agglomeration; Integrated Urban Geographic Factors; Complementarity*