

What is rural-urban migration?

Rural-urban migration is the movement of people from the countryside to the city.

This causes two things to happen:

1. Urban growth - towns and cities are expanding, covering a greater area of land.
2. Urbanisation - an increasing proportion of people living in towns and cities.

Mega cities - those with over 10 million people.

What is rural depopulation?

Rural depopulation is usually when numbers of working age people migrate from the countryside to earn more money in the city. They leave behind the old and the young.

Shanty towns

HOUSING - is often a collection of primitive shacks made from any available material. Most houses lack such basic amenities as electricity, gas, running water and sewerage. No refuse collection.

HEALTH - lack of clean water, no disposal of human waste and rubbish lead to disease. Can't afford doctors.

EDUCATION - is limited as there are very few schools. Many, even by the age of 6, are trying to earn some money.

TRANSPORT - earth tracks that often just fill up with rubbish. Few public transport systems.

FAMILY LIFE - is under constant threat. The factors listed above can lead to break down of marriages. Increase in crime and 'street children'.

Problems faced in LEDC cities

- Poor electricity and power supplies
- Pollution
- Lack of clean water
- Few employment opportunities
- Traffic problems
- Poverty
- Drugs, gangs and violence
- Poor education and health provision
- Poor sewerage systems
- Poor rubbish collection
- Lack of shelter

Push and pull factors

PUSH	PULL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Famine, drought, natural disasters • Poor living conditions - housing, education and health care • Agricultural change (see notes on the Green Revolution). • Unemployment • War and conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment • Higher incomes • Better healthcare and education • Urban facilities and way of life • Protection from conflict

Rural-Urban Migration in LEDCs

Improving life for the urban poor

Although most governments would like to remove shanty towns from their cities, they cannot afford to build the necessary replacement accommodation. Two government-assisted schemes in Sao Paulo aimed at improving the quality of life in the shantytowns are:

Low-cost Improvements

Existing housing is improved by re-building with cheap, quick and easy to use breezeblocks. A tank of water on the roof collects rainwater. Electricity and sewerage may be added. Most people who live in these will have some sort of employment so that they can pay low rents.

Self-help schemes

Groups of people are encouraged to help build their new homes. Each group will do basic work such as digging the ditches to take the water and sewerage pipes. The local authority will then provide breezeblocks and roofing tiles, and the group will provide the labour. The advantages of this is that it can be done in stages and create a community spirit.

Examples of push factors from rural areas

1. Modernization of agriculture in countries such as Brazil has resulted in more machines and the need for fewer workers. Many workers have migrated to the cities e.g.. Sao Paulo.
2. Flooding in Bangladesh destroyed the food crops for millions of people. In these circumstances people may have no option but to move to the city.

Attraction to the urban areas

People are attracted to urban areas because they think that they will have greater opportunities there. For many, life is better but some end up in poverty.

Sao Paulo, Brazil

- Sao Paulo is a cosmopolitan, industrial city with nearly 18 million people, with 11 shopping malls, many apartment blocks for the rich, and lots of entertainment.
- In the early 1970s the city was one of the fastest-growing places in South America with 150 migrants arriving every hour, attracted by the prospect of jobs. Many of these put up shacks on land that was at the edge of the city.
- In the next 25 years most of the housing was built with very little control or regulation.
- Conditions were very poor, living spaces cramped, clean water was expensive and sewage a problem.
- Crime was rife and new rural families were vulnerable to gangs who occupied land and illegally sold off plots to newcomers.

This module is about why people move from the countryside to the cities in POOR (LEDC) countries.