



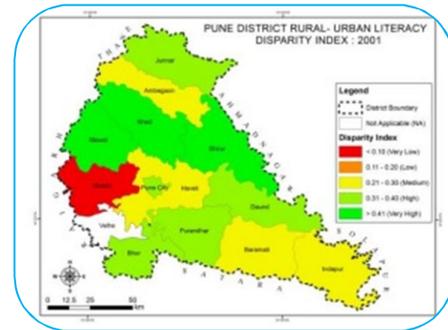
THE STATUS OF DEPRIVATION IN THE PUNE DISTRICT – URBAN AND RURAL

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the status of deprivation in Pune district, contrasting urban and rural contexts using 2011 Census data. Deprivation is conceptualized as multidimensional, encompassing housing, sanitation, education, employment, access to services, asset ownership, and health. The study employs comparative indicators, disparity indices, and spatial analysis to highlight intra-district variations. Findings reveal that urban areas outperform rural areas on most indicators, yet slums within cities exhibit intermediate levels of deprivation, often mirroring rural deficits in housing, sanitation, and overcrowding. Rural areas face acute challenges in sanitation (69% open defecation), electrification (55% coverage), and modern fuel use (11% LPG adoption). Literacy rates are high overall but mask significant rural-urban and gender gaps, while employment patterns diverge sharply between agrarian rural economies and urban industry-service sectors. Asset ownership and financial inclusion are concentrated in urban centers, with slums lagging behind. The analysis underscores the persistence of multidimensional poverty and spatial disparities, pointing to the need for targeted, context-sensitive interventions in sanitation, electrification, education, and financial inclusion. The study concludes that equitable development in Pune requires policies that address both rural deficits and intra-urban inequalities, particularly in slums and marginalized tahsils.



KEYWORDS: multidimensional, encompassing housing, sanitation, education, employment.

INTRODUCTION

Pune district, situated in the western Indian state of Maharashtra, stands as a microcosm of India's rapid urbanization, economic dynamism, and persistent socio-economic disparities. As of the 2011 Census, Pune was the second most populous district in Maharashtra and one of the most urbanized, with over 61% of its population residing in urban areas. The district encompasses a diverse landscape, ranging from the bustling metropolis of Pune city—often dubbed the “Oxford of the East” for its educational institutions—to remote rural tahsils characterized by agrarian livelihoods and infrastructural deficits. This duality renders Pune an ideal case for examining the multifaceted nature of deprivation, especially as India grapples with the challenges of inclusive growth, urban sprawl, and rural stagnation.

Deprivation, in the context of this study, refers to the lack of access to basic needs and opportunities that underpin human well-being. It is inherently multidimensional, encompassing not only income poverty but also deficits in housing, sanitation, education, employment, health, and access to essential services. The 2011 Census of India, with its comprehensive coverage and granular data, provides a unique opportunity to dissect these dimensions at the district, sub-district, and even village or ward level. By systematically comparing urban and rural areas within Pune, this paper seeks to

illuminate the contours of deprivation, highlight persistent gaps, and inform policy interventions aimed at fostering equitable development.

The significance of this inquiry is underscored by the broader national context. India's development trajectory has been marked by impressive gains in poverty reduction, literacy, and infrastructure, yet stark rural-urban disparities endure. Pune, with its juxtaposition of affluence and adversity, encapsulates these contradictions. Understanding the status and patterns of deprivation within the district is thus not only academically pertinent but also vital for evidence-based policymaking.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of this research paper are as follows:

1. To assess and compare the status of deprivation across urban and rural areas of Pune district using 2011 Census data.
2. To analyze key dimensions of deprivation, including housing quality, sanitation, education, employment, access to basic services, and asset ownership.
3. To construct and interpret comparative indicators and indices that capture the extent and nature of deprivation in both urban and rural contexts.
4. To explore spatial patterns and intra-district variations in deprivation, with attention to tahsil and ward-level disparities.
5. To critically engage with the literature on deprivation, poverty measurement, and urban-rural disparities, situating Pune's experience within broader theoretical and empirical debates.
6. To discuss the policy context, including government interventions, and to identify gaps and opportunities for future action.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Perspectives on Deprivation and Poverty

The conceptualization and measurement of deprivation have evolved significantly over the past decades. Traditional approaches, rooted in monetary poverty lines, have gradually given way to multidimensional frameworks that recognize the complex interplay of income, education, health, and living standards. The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), pioneered by Alkire and Foster, has gained prominence for its ability to capture overlapping deprivations across health, education, and living standards. In the Indian context, the Planning Commission and later NITI Aayog have adopted both monetary and multidimensional measures, with the latter drawing on data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) and the Census.

At the heart of these debates lies the rural-urban divide. Numerous studies have documented persistent disparities in poverty incidence, access to services, and human development outcomes between rural and urban India. While urban areas generally fare better on most indicators, the proliferation of slums and informal settlements has complicated the narrative, revealing pockets of acute deprivation within cities. The literature also highlights the importance of spatial disaggregation, as district and sub-district level analyses often uncover heterogeneities masked by aggregate statistics.

Empirical Studies on Pune District and Maharashtra

Pune district has attracted scholarly attention for its rapid urbanization, industrial growth, and educational prominence. Studies by Choudhar (2019) and Mundhe et al. (2017) have examined literacy trends and disparities, revealing significant gaps between rural and urban areas as well as between different tahsils. Research on housing and amenities underscores the challenges of affordable housing, slum proliferation, and infrastructural deficits, particularly in peri-urban and rural zones.

The District Census Handbook (DCHB) for Pune (2011) provides a wealth of data on household amenities, asset ownership, and access to services, enabling detailed comparisons across space and social groups. Secondary analyses, such as those by Pol (2024) and others, have leveraged this data to construct deprivation indices and to map spatial patterns of disadvantage.

Policy Context and Interventions

The period leading up to the 2011 Census witnessed several policy initiatives aimed at reducing deprivation. The Rajiv Awas Yojana (2011) and the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) targeted urban housing and infrastructure, while the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), launched in 2015, built on these efforts. In rural areas, schemes such as the Total Sanitation Campaign and the National Rural Health Mission sought to improve basic services. However, the literature points to persistent implementation challenges, especially in reaching marginalized populations and addressing the needs of slum dwellers and remote villages.

Methodological Debates

The measurement of deprivation is fraught with methodological challenges. Issues of data quality, comparability, and the choice of indicators are recurrent themes in the literature. The Census, while comprehensive, may underreport certain forms of deprivation, particularly in informal settlements. The use of composite indices, such as the MPI or Sopher's Disparity Index, offers a way to synthesize multiple dimensions but also raises questions about weighting and aggregation.

METHODOLOGY

Data Sources

This study relies primarily on the 2011 Census of India, specifically the District Census Handbook (DCHB) for Pune, the Primary Census Abstract (PCA), and the Village and Town Directory. These sources provide detailed data on population, housing, household amenities, literacy, employment, and asset ownership at the district, tahsil, village, town, and ward levels. Supplementary data are drawn from the Open Government Data (OGD) Platform India, Maharashtra State Data Bank, and published research articles.

Dimensions and Indicators of Deprivation

The analysis focuses on the following dimensions, each operationalized through specific indicators:

- **Housing Quality:** Type of structure (permanent, semi-permanent, temporary), number of rooms, overcrowding, slum prevalence.
- **Sanitation:** Access to latrines, drainage connectivity, bathing facilities.
- **Education:** Literacy rates (overall, male, female), school availability, proxies for enrolment.
- **Employment:** Work participation rates, sectoral distribution (cultivators, agricultural laborers, household industry, other workers), main vs. marginal workers.
- **Access to Basic Services:** Drinking water source and location, electricity, kitchen facilities, fuel for cooking.
- **Asset Ownership and Financial Inclusion:** Banking services, ownership of durable assets (TV, computer, vehicle).
- **Health and Medical Access:** Availability of medical facilities (hospitals, PHCs, sub-centers).
- **Transport and Connectivity:** Road access, public transport, mobile coverage.

Urban-Rural Classification

Urban and rural areas are defined as per the Census: statutory towns, census towns, and urban agglomerations constitute urban areas, while all other settlements are classified as rural. The analysis disaggregates data accordingly and, where possible, examines intra-urban and intra-rural variations.

Analytical Approach

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Calculation of percentages, rates, and ratios for each indicator, disaggregated by urban and rural residence.
- **Comparative Tables:** Construction of tables to juxtapose urban and rural values across dimensions.
- **Disparity Indices:** Application of Sopher's Disparity Index and other measures to quantify gaps.

- **Spatial Analysis:** Mapping of deprivation indicators at the tahsil and, where data permit, village/town level.
- **Synthesis:** Integration of findings across dimensions to construct a multidimensional deprivation profile.

Limitations

While the 2011 Census provides unparalleled coverage, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The data may underrepresent informal settlements and transient populations. Some indicators, such as school enrolment or health outcomes, are proxied rather than directly measured. The analysis is cross-sectional, capturing a snapshot as of 2011, and does not account for subsequent policy changes or demographic shifts.

Analysis

Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile

Pune district, as per the 2011 Census, had a total population of 9,429,408, with 60.99% residing in urban areas and 39.01% in rural areas. The district comprised 1,877 villages (1,852 inhabited) and 35 towns (16 statutory, 19 census towns). The sex ratio was 915 females per 1,000 males, with rural areas (932) faring better than urban (904). The overall literacy rate stood at 86.2%, surpassing the state average, but with notable rural-urban and gender disparities.

Table 1: Key Demographic Indicators, Pune District (2011)

Indicator	Total	Urban	Rural
Population	9,429,408	5,751,182	3,678,226
% of Total Population	100	60.99	39.01
Sex Ratio (F/1000 M)	915	904	932
Literacy Rate (%)	86.2	~90	~80
Households	2,151,503	1,320,000*	831,503*

*Approximate, based on proportional distribution

The demographic profile reveals a district in transition, with rapid urbanization, a relatively high literacy rate, and a growing but still significant rural population. The urban-rural divide is evident in the sex ratio and literacy rates, foreshadowing disparities in other dimensions.

Housing Quality and Overcrowding

Housing quality is a fundamental marker of deprivation. The 2011 Census classifies houses as permanent (pucca), semi-permanent, or temporary (kutcha). In Pune district, 84.3% of urban households lived in permanent houses, compared to 77.7% in slums and a lower proportion in rural areas. Overcrowding, measured by the number of rooms per household, was more acute in slums and rural areas.

Table 2: Housing Quality and Overcrowding, Pune District (2011)

Indicator	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Slums (%)
Permanent Houses	84.3	~70*	77.7
Semi-permanent Houses	11.6	~20*	16.0
Temporary Houses	3.2	~10*	5.3
Households with 1 Room	32.1	39.4	44.8
Households with No Exclusive Room	3.1	4.3	4.4

*Estimated from state and national patterns

Urban areas, especially non-slum neighborhoods, enjoy a higher prevalence of permanent housing and more spacious dwellings. However, slums—home to a significant share of the urban poor—exhibit overcrowding and a higher proportion of semi-permanent or temporary structures. Rural areas lag behind urban centers in housing quality, with a substantial minority still residing in kutcha houses.

Sanitation and Drainage

Sanitation is a critical dimension of deprivation, with profound implications for health and dignity. The 2011 Census reveals stark contrasts between urban and rural Pune in access to latrines, drainage, and bathing facilities.

Table 3: Sanitation and Drainage, Pune District (2011)

Indicator	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Slums (%)
Households with Latrine Facility	81.4	30.7	66.0
Water Closet (Flush Toilet)	73.0	19.0	57.7
Pit Latrine	7.0	11.0	6.2
No Latrine Facility (Open Defecation)	18.6	69.3	34.0
Households with Closed Drainage	44.5	6.0	36.9
Households with Open Drainage	37.3	31.0	44.3
No Drainage Facility	18.2	63.0	18.8
Bathing Facility within Premises	87.0	45.0	81.0

The data highlight a severe rural deficit in sanitation: nearly 70% of rural households lacked any latrine facility in 2011, compared to less than 20% in urban areas. Even within urban areas, slums lag behind non-slum neighborhoods, though they fare better than rural areas. Drainage connectivity is similarly skewed, with closed drainage systems prevalent in urban centers but rare in villages.

Access to Basic Services: Water, Electricity, and Cooking Fuel

Drinking Water

Access to safe and proximate drinking water is a core indicator of deprivation. In Pune district, 71.2% of urban households had water sources within their premises, compared to only 35% in rural areas. Tap water from treated sources was the main supply in urban areas, while rural households relied more on wells, handpumps, and untreated sources.

Electricity

Electrification rates were high in urban Pune (over 92%), but only 55% of rural households had electricity in 2011. The rural-urban gap, though narrowing, remained substantial.

Cooking Fuel

Fuel choice reflects both economic status and exposure to health risks. In urban Pune, 65% of households used LPG/PNG, compared to just 11.4% in rural areas. Firewood, crop residue, and cow dung remained the dominant fuels in villages, contributing to indoor air pollution and energy poverty.

Table 4: Access to Basic Services, Pune District (2011)

Indicator	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Slums (%)
Water Source within Premises	71.2	35.0	56.7
Households with Electricity	92.7	55.3	90.5
Households Using LPG/PNG	65.0	11.4	51.3
Households Using Firewood	20.1	62.5	25.8

The urban advantage is clear, but slums again occupy an intermediate position—better than rural areas on some indicators, but still deprived relative to non-slum urban neighborhoods.

Education: Literacy and School Access

Pune district boasts a high overall literacy rate (86.2%), but disaggregation reveals persistent gaps. Urban literacy rates approach 90%, while rural rates hover around 80%. Gender disparities are also evident, with female literacy trailing male literacy by nearly 10 percentage points.

Table 5: Literacy Rates, Pune District (2011)

Area	Total Literacy (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Urban	~90	~94	~86
Rural	~80	~87	~73
District Avg	86.2	90.8	81.1

Spatial analysis at the tahsil level reveals further heterogeneity. For instance, Velhe and Mulshi tahsils recorded the lowest literacy rates (67–68%), while Pune City and Haveli exceeded 76%. The urban-rural literacy gap, measured by Sopher’s Disparity Index, remains significant, reflecting both infrastructural and socio-economic barriers to education in rural areas.

School availability, as reported in the Village Directory, is nearly universal at the primary level, but access to secondary and higher education is concentrated in urban centers and larger villages. This spatial mismatch contributes to lower enrolment and higher dropout rates in rural areas.

Employment and Work Participation

Work participation rates (WPR) offer insights into economic deprivation and gender roles. In 2011, the overall WPR in Pune district was 42.9%, with rural areas (49.7%) surpassing urban areas (38.6%). However, the nature of employment diverges sharply:

- **Rural Areas:** High shares of cultivators (807,987) and agricultural laborers (464,271), with a significant proportion of marginal workers (short-term or seasonal).
- **Urban Areas:** Dominated by “other workers” (1,975,942), encompassing industry, services, and informal sector jobs. Female work participation is lower in urban areas (27.5%) than in rural (38.1%).

Table 6: Employment Structure, Pune District (2011)

Indicator	Urban	Rural
Work Participation (%)	38.6	49.7
Female WPR (%)	27.5	38.1
Cultivators	24,274	807,987
Agricultural Laborers	17,841	464,271
Other Workers	1,975,942	392,619

The data reflect the agrarian base of rural Pune and the industrial-service orientation of urban areas. Marginal employment, often a marker of vulnerability, is more prevalent in rural zones.

Asset Ownership and Financial Inclusion

Asset ownership and access to banking services are proxies for economic security and inclusion. In 2011, 67.8% of urban households in Pune availed banking services, compared to 54.4% in rural areas. Ownership of durable assets (TVs, computers, vehicles) was markedly higher in urban areas.

Table 7: Asset Ownership, Pune District (2011)

Asset	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Slums (%)
Banking Services	67.8	54.4	53.2
Television	76.7	33.4	69.6
Computer/Laptop	18.7	5.2	10.4
Mobile Phone	82.0	54.4	72.7
Two-Wheeler	35.2	14.3	22.0
Car/Jeep/Van	9.7	2.3	3.6

The digital divide is evident, with computer and internet access concentrated in urban centers. Slums, while better off than rural areas on some counts, lag behind non-slum urban neighborhoods.

Health and Medical Access

The Village and Town Directory (2011) lists the availability of medical facilities across Pune's settlements. Urban areas, especially Pune city, are well-served by hospitals, clinics, and specialized centers. Rural areas rely on primary health centers (PHCs), sub-centers, and occasional mobile clinics. The distribution of beds, doctors, and nurses is heavily skewed toward urban centers, with some remote tahsils (e.g., Velhe, Mulshi) facing acute shortages.

Transport and Connectivity

Road connectivity is nearly universal in urban Pune, with extensive public transport and proximity to highways. Rural areas vary: while many villages are connected to major roads, others remain isolated, especially in hilly or forested regions. Mobile coverage and internet access, as reported in the Village Directory, are expanding but remain patchy in remote areas.

Slums: The Urban Face of Deprivation

Slums constitute a significant share of Pune's urban population. According to the 2011 Census, 17.4% of urban households in India lived in slums; in Pune, the proportion is similar, with slums concentrated in Pune city and Pimpri-Chinchwad. Slum households face acute deprivation in housing, sanitation, and asset ownership, though they often have better access to electricity and water than rural households.

RESULTS

Comparative Summary of Deprivation Indicators

Table 8: Urban-Rural Comparison of Key Deprivation Indicators, Pune District (2011)

Dimension	Indicator	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Slums (%)
Housing	Permanent Structure	84.3	~70	77.7
	1 Room or Less	35.2	43.7	49.2
Sanitation	Latrine Facility	81.4	30.7	66.0
	Closed Drainage	44.5	6.0	36.9
Water	Source within Premises	71.2	35.0	56.7
Electricity	Electrified Households	92.7	55.3	90.5
Cooking Fuel	LPG/PNG Use	65.0	11.4	51.3
Education	Literacy Rate	~90	~80	~75*
Employment	Work Participation Rate	38.6	49.7	~35*
	Female WPR	27.5	38.1	~20*

Dimension	Indicator	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Slums (%)
Asset Ownership	Banking Services	67.8	54.4	53.2
	Computer/Laptop	18.7	5.2	10.4
	Two-Wheeler	35.2	14.3	22.0
Health Access	Hospital/PHC Availability	High	Moderate	Moderate
Connectivity	Mobile Coverage	High	Moderate	High

*Estimated from slum-specific studies and national patterns.

Key Findings

1. Urban areas in Pune district consistently outperform rural areas on most deprivation indicators, including housing quality, sanitation, electrification, and asset ownership.
2. Slums, while located in urban areas, exhibit deprivation levels intermediate between rural villages and non-slum urban neighborhoods, particularly in housing, sanitation, and asset ownership.
3. Rural areas face acute deficits in sanitation (nearly 70% open defecation), electricity (only 55% coverage), and access to modern fuels (over 60% rely on firewood).
4. Literacy rates, while high overall, mask significant rural-urban and gender gaps, with female literacy in rural areas lagging by over 10 percentage points.
5. Employment patterns diverge: rural areas are dominated by agriculture and marginal work, while urban areas concentrate in industry and services but with lower female participation.
6. Asset ownership and financial inclusion are markedly higher in urban areas, though slums lag behind.
7. Health and transport infrastructure are concentrated in urban centers, with rural and remote tahsils underserved.
8. Spatial analysis reveals intra-district disparities, with certain tahsils (e.g., Velhe, Mulshi) persistently deprived across multiple dimensions.

DISCUSSION

Interpreting the Urban-Rural Divide

The analysis confirms the persistence of a multidimensional urban-rural divide in Pune district as of 2011. Urban areas, buoyed by industrialisation, educational institutions, and infrastructural investments, enjoy superior living standards. However, this urban advantage is unevenly distributed: slums and informal settlements remain sites of concentrated deprivation, often rivalling or exceeding rural villages in certain deficits (e.g., overcrowding, tenure insecurity).

Rural areas, despite some progress, continue to lag in basic amenities. The near-universal reliance on firewood, high rates of open defecation, and limited electrification underscore the unfinished agenda of rural development. These deficits are not merely infrastructural but also reflect deeper socio-economic constraints: lower incomes, limited access to credit, and weaker state capacity.

Multidimensional Poverty and Deprivation Indices

Recent literature emphasizes the value of multidimensional poverty indices (MPI) in capturing overlapping deprivations. Nationally, the MPI headcount ratio in rural India was 19.3% in 2019–21, compared to 5.3% in urban areas. While district-level MPI estimates for Pune are not directly available from NFHS, the Census-based indicators suggest that rural Pune, though better off than many other districts, still harbors significant multidimensional poverty.

The intensity of poverty—the average number of deprivations experienced by the poor—remains similar across rural and urban areas, but the prevalence (headcount) is much higher in villages. This finding aligns with national patterns and underscores the need for targeted interventions in rural zones.

Intra-District and Intra-Urban Disparities

Spatial disaggregation reveals that deprivation is not uniformly distributed within urban or rural areas. Certain tahsils (e.g., Velhe, Mulshi, Daund) consistently underperform on literacy, sanitation, and asset ownership. Within cities, slums and peri-urban settlements face acute deficits, often exacerbated by insecure tenure and exclusion from formal service networks.

Gender disparities compound these patterns. Female literacy, work participation, and asset ownership lag behind male counterparts, especially in rural and slum contexts.

Policy Context and Effectiveness

The period preceding the 2011 Census saw the rollout of several flagship schemes: the Rajiv Awas Yojana (urban housing), JNNURM (urban infrastructure), and the Total Sanitation Campaign (rural sanitation). While these initiatives yielded gains—e.g., rising electrification and improved water access—the data reveal persistent gaps, especially in sanitation and housing quality. Implementation bottlenecks, resource constraints, and the challenge of reaching marginalised groups (e.g., slum dwellers, remote villages) limited the impact.

The subsequent launch of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) and Swachh Bharat Mission aimed to accelerate progress, but their effects are not captured in the 2011 data.

Methodological Reflections

The use of Census data enables granular, spatially disaggregated analysis but also entails limitations. Certain forms of deprivation—such as tenure insecurity, informal employment, or health outcomes—are only partially captured. The reliance on proxies (e.g., asset ownership for income) and the absence of direct consumption or income data constrain the analysis. Nonetheless, the breadth and depth of the Census make it an indispensable resource for district-level deprivation studies.

CONCLUSION

The 2011 Census paints a nuanced portrait of deprivation in Pune district. Urban areas, propelled by economic growth and infrastructural investments, have achieved substantial gains in housing, sanitation, education, and asset ownership. Yet, the persistence of slums and intra-urban inequalities tempers this narrative of progress. Rural areas, while benefiting from some improvements, remain beset by deficits in basic amenities, educational attainment, and economic opportunities.

The urban-rural divide is neither absolute nor immutable. Slums in Pune city and Pimpri-Chinchwad, for instance, share many characteristics with rural villages, including overcrowding, inadequate sanitation, and precarious livelihoods. Conversely, certain rural tahsils have made strides in literacy and asset ownership, reflecting the impact of targeted interventions and local leadership.

The findings underscore the need for a multidimensional, spatially sensitive approach to deprivation. Policy interventions must move beyond aggregate statistics to address the specific needs of marginalized groups—whether slum dwellers, remote villagers, or women and children. Investments in sanitation, electrification, education, and financial inclusion remain critical, as does the strengthening of local governance and community participation.

As Pune district continues to urbanize and diversify, the challenge is to ensure that the fruits of development are equitably shared. The lessons from 2011 remain salient: progress is possible, but only with sustained, inclusive, and context-sensitive action.

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