

Colloquium

What do Night time Lights tell us About Patterns of India's Economic Growth and Spatial Development in the Post-Reform Era?

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Between 2000 and 2014, India added nearly 127 million new residents to its towns and cities. Over the next 15 years, India's urban population is projected to grow by another 177 million. Despite this large growth of its urban population, there exists relatively little rigorous empirical research on patterns and drivers of urban and spatial development in India. This paper seeks to help fill this gap by providing empirical evidence on key features of India's recent urban and spatial transformation based on the analysis of a combination of satellite, census, and survey data. The paper first documents key empirical relationships at the district level, providing, among other things, evidence of convergence in levels of development and on the importance of improvements in market access. The paper then drills down to urban areas, analyzing the relationship between various dimensions of a city's urban form and its subsequent growth for a sample of 479 cities. In doing so, the paper provides evidence that cities with more compact urban forms in 2002 exhibited significantly faster growth over the period 2002–2011 controlling for both initial differences in city size and development.

Tuesday, Jan 7th 2020

4:00 PM (Tea/Coffee at 3:30 PM)

Auditorium, TIFR-H