Urbanization In Japan: Advantages And Disadvantages

Urbanization Part I: Advantages

Nowadays, 13 million people live in Tokyo. The population makes up 10% of the total Japanese population. Tokyo is one of the cities with the largest population in the world; it is a “megacity”, according to the statistics of the United Nations. Why does this megacity hold the general public’s heart and why won’t it let go? There are four major factors that can answer this question: superior education, outstanding medical services, more job opportunities, and a more convenient lifestyle. As a result, there is rapid and massive population growth in the city. We can argue that these are definitely advantages to living in Tokyo; however, we can’t ignore the dark side of these elements, which encourage urbanization.

First, people living in urban areas can receive a good education. For example, Tokyo has a great variety of cram schools: English cram schools, intellectual development cram schools, and painting cram schools. For that reason, city children have more opportunities to learn than country children. They can learn not only in their schools, but also in additional tutoring. Besides, there are many conferences for teachers to help improve their teaching skills in Tokyo. Since training seminars for teachers are often held in massive schools, teachers can upgrade the quality of their teaching regularly. Country children, in contrast, learn only in their schools. If they want to learn special skills, such as tennis or painting, they have to travel a long way to learn, because there is no place close by where they can learn from an expert teacher.

Additionally, people in urban areas can have better health care. In fact, medical students want to have practical internships in hospitals in Tokyo, because there are more opportunities to practice. Because the population in Tokyo is huge, there are many patients. Thus, there are plenty of demands for medical treatment. Not only students but also doctors prefer to go to an urban area. Moreover, hospitals in Tokyo are open late. Even though some people are too busy to go to a hospital because of their job, they can finish their work first before going there.

Another advantage that we cannot ignore is that Tokyo has better job opportunities. According to the statistics from the Tokyo Government, the number of offices in Tokyo is 664,562, which accounts for 11.6% of all Japanese companies; it is the highest number in any other province in Japan. In addition, the number of employees, 7,752,604, is also the highest in Japan, which amounts to 14.7% of the total number of Japanese employees. Notably, the number of ICT industry rates is large. Not only are there numerous companies in Tokyo, but it also has the largest scale companies located there. Generally speaking, the salaries in large scale companies, such as SONY, HONDA, TOSHIBA, which are all ICT companies, are particularly higher than salaries in other companies, hence many people want to work at a large scale company. This is why people are eager to seek their jobs in Tokyo.

Finally, city people can assert that a highlight of all the benefits in Tokyo is convenience. One important factor that makes life splendid is the transportation system. The transportation system is extraordinarily developed. Tokyo, surprisingly, has 13 subways, 138 railways, and 882 station exits. These enable citizens to go anywhere. There are no places where citizens cannot go. Moreover, trains come to the stations every 2 minutes; passengers do not have to wait.

Urbanization Part II: Disadvantages

Although superior education, outstanding medical service, better job opportunities, and more convenient lives have always attracted people to Tokyo, it has also resulted in overcrowding, and the worsening the quality of life. Living in Tokyo also comes with a dark side: unavailable nursery, unemployment, and environmental problems.

The first dark side is the lack of nurseries. Though parents apply for admission to a nursery, many children cannot be accepted because there is no room. The number of rejected children has totaled 8,435, which is the highest in Japan. People who raise a child alone are especially frustrated. Those people have to earn their living, but they can't go to work if they have a young child who can't stay at home alone. Consequently, they not only have the difficulty of child-rearing alone, but they also become poor and suffer lower living standards.

Unemployment also makes the problem worse. Though there are numerous companies, it has become harder and harder to get a job. Three million people are unemployed in the city. To make matters worse, a hundred thousand new graduates couldn't get a job in 2010, according to a study by the Japanese Ministry of Education. Likewise, the number of NEET, (Not in Education, Employment or Training) people, reached 3.7 million; no province is worse than Tokyo. NEET is a serious problem; most of them are depressed, and they are more likely to develop mental illnesses compared to the common people.

Perhaps the worst part of urbanization is environmental pollution. According to a WHO survey, the degree of air pollution contamination in Tokyo exceeded the standards for measuring air pollution. In fact, the people living in Tokyo have been suffering since 1960. There is a lot of concern regarding air pollution in Tokyo. Furthermore, Tokyo Reproduce Conservation Organization (TRCO), an independent corporation, shows that the number of people who have moved to Tokyo and gotten bronchial asthma or chronic bronchitis has reached 633. The number is significant, especially when compared to the number in other provinces. Diseases related to respiratory organs are hard to cure unless the air quality improves.

Tokyo is just an example. Urbanization looks attractive at first, but the more we learn about it, the less appealing it becomes. These are indications that cities are getting more and more polluted, and there are massive issues that need to be resolved because of this. The city is not always a comfortable place to live in. It is a contradiction that a place like Tokyo that attracts people because of their particular benefits has become more and more impossible to live in.