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Which Indian city tops the income charts?

Synopsis

Bengaluru, Chandigarh, and Delhi boast the highest average incomes, while Chandigarh, Thiruvananthapuram, and Vadodara lead in household spending. India's top six cities dominate consumption, with Delhi NCR alone representing a massive economic hub. The report highlights a significant expansion of the middle-income bracket and a projected decline in low-income households within major urban centers.



India's richest cities revealed: Bengaluru leads (Representative image)

Bengaluru, Chandigarh and Delhi have emerged as the country's highest average income earners, while Chandigarh, Thiruvananthapuram and Vadodara lead in average household spending, according to a report by data analytics firm PRICE and Tata Sons, accessed exclusively by The Times of India.

The report, titled 'Many Urban Indias', found that the country's top six cities, Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Chennai and Hyderabad, together account for 46 per cent of total consumption and nearly two-thirds of urban consumption.

Delhi NCR emerged as the single largest consumption base in the country at \$126 billion, matching the combined consumption of Mumbai and Bengaluru at \$134 billion. The report attributed this to population size, with NCR housing 7.5 million households compared with 4.6 million in Mumbai.

NCR households alone spend over \$33 billion annually on transportation, a figure larger than the entire consumption markets of Pune or Ahmedabad, the report noted.

The report, authored by PRICE's Rajesh Shukla along with Tata Sons' Rupa Purushothaman and Vishal Vaibhaw, estimated data for 2025-26 based on household-level microdata from PRICE's ICE 360-degree surveys conducted between 2014 and 2023, supplemented with government survey data.

According to the findings, India's top 100 cities are home to less than a fifth of the population but generate over a third of the country's income and account for 31 per cent of total consumption.

Cities were classified into four categories: Big Six (population over 10 million, average annual income of Rs 23 lakh), Boomtowns such as Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Surat and Pune (population of 2.5-10 million, average income of Rs 17 lakh), Breakout Cities (population of 1.5-2.5 million, average income of Rs 14 lakh) and Frontier Cities (population of 0.5-1.5 million, average income of Rs 12 lakh).

The report also found that the share of middle-income households, earning between Rs 6 lakh and Rs 36 lakh annually, has nearly doubled from 29 per cent to 53 per cent over the past decade. This proportion is projected to rise to 60 per cent in the top 100 cities by 2030, with Hyderabad currently recording the highest share.

The share of high-income households, earning over Rs 36 lakh annually, has grown from 3 per cent to 12 per cent in the last ten years and is expected to approach 20 per cent by 2030. While Delhi, Mumbai and Pune currently lead this segment, cities such as Raipur, Thoothukudi and Kannur are among the fastest-growing, both in high-income and middle-income categories.

The report further projected that low-income households, those earning less than Rs 1.5 lakh annually, will nearly disappear in the top 100 cities by 2030, with their share falling to just 0.3 per cent.