

## **Urban Planning in India: A Review of Contemporary Issues and Challenges**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*India's contribution in the domain of unsustainability is quite low in comparison to other prominent contributing nations. However, the challenges are quite persistent towards the rapid growth and urbanisation in the country. The major share of the global populace might threaten the sustainability on a global level. Thus, there's a strong need for ingraining sustainability in the country. Several studies have been done for assessing the need for sustainable urban growth and development in the country. Urbanisation in the country hassled towards the unsustainable circumstances. It offers the well proven benefits of economic growth, development. But it even brings social as well as environmental challenges. Different challenges related to sustainability, governance, spatial planning, execution and deficiencies have been studied. As the challenges lie within the capability of coping, these studies also confer the sustainable development in India. It's also been studied under antecedent of the legal provisions, different programs and policies, technological solutions, institutional arrangements, measurement and framework systems for better future prospects.*

**Keywords:** Urban planning, urban development, urban development in India, issues and challenges of urban development

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The significance of urban centres and cities have been growing in the economic growth and development of India during the phase of post liberalisation. For instance, the contribution of the urban areas to the GDP of India has raised from 29% from the period 1950- 1951 to 47% in the period 1980-81 to 62% to 63% by 2007. It's expected to grow to 75% by the year 2021. It's also being highlighted that 9-10% of growth and development in GDP mainly depends fundamentally towards making the Indian cities inclusive and liveable. An important feature of urbanisation which influences policies and politics lies in the fact that it mainly undermines the old form of political mobilisation on the basis of religious identity and caste and it also favours the local challenges for being resolved through the rights based approaches towards growth and development. Thus, the latest form of empowering individuals with particular entitlement which was ensured to them with the help of legislation. The new changes in policy and strategies for governance are importantly urban. The rising divide between urban annual areas is not able to sustain the primordial identities since the rural population is also equally concerned for the social and the economic resources and they also consider the government responsible for the future (Desai, 2018).

The urban centres of India play an important role in nurturing the cultural environment since the ancient times. Currently, the urban population mainly accounts for about 27.78% of total population. It might go up by 50% by the year 2051. In comparison to global scenario, the figures might not be alarming related to the total number it's the 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest urban system. There's been quite a consistent raise in total number of urban centres as well as

urban population. In past few decades, urban population has gone up by 4 times. There's also been a massive rise in class 1 cities as well as their contribution of the urban population. It's estimated that urban sectors contribution toward the GDP has also gone up from 29% in the year 1951 to 65% in the year 2001. Also, 90% of revenue is generated from urban sector. Cities are most important and are also considered to be influential in the economic growth and also the job provider, assurance and services for good quality life. It's also promoted influx of the population from rural areas and small towns to the big cities. This leads to proliferation of the slums and squatters, growth of the informal sector as well as an acute pressure on the basic amenities in the urban areas. This also culminates in poor governance of cities and urbanisation of poverty. Thus, there's a strong need to manage the issue of urbanisation in a professional manner by introducing different sectors and actors at the common platform. It identifies the issues in a much wider perspective. It also tries and address the issues by creating synergies. Considering this, the pattern of urban population at the macro level, the changes in pattern of the urban growth, effect of urbanisation on the urban environment as well as role of the geographer towards urban growth and development.

One of the most striking features of urbanisation in India is the long history of approximately 5000 years. The urban centres in India play an important part for nurturing the cultural scenario (Buckley, Kallergis, and Wainer, 2016).

While considering the causative components which underlie the process of urbanisation, it has been seen that during pre-historic era, urbanisation was considered to be synonymous with rise and decrease of civilisation from ancient to British era. It was mainly related to rise and decrease of dynasties as well as kingdoms and in post-independence era, it's been related to economic growth and development and industrialisation. The rural areas have been converted into the urban bodies through competent authorities on a regular basis. Thus, urbanisation is the function of different factors operative about space at some point of time.

In spite of the long history, urbanisation in India is still less urbanised with just 27.7% of the total population residing in urban areas in comparison to entire world as well as other developing and developed nations (Desai and Sanghvi, 2017).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW:**

For any Indian cities to achieve sustainable form of urban development, 5 pillars for sustainability are there. These include physical, political, social, ecological and economic. The social, ecological as well as economic are the pillars from common definitions sustainability. However, different people give different meanings as well as focus on Indian context. The political and the physical pillars are thus characteristic for urban development of India. The physical pillars are added in Indian context as focus and planning of short term dominate the construction industry. The need for maintaining arises because of larger than supply. This results in need for focus on physical built surroundings. The political pillars are applied due to concerns of quality and value of the governance action. It also affects the 4 pillars as the government needs to offer guidance with instructions and executions. This is not apparent always (Desai, Mahadevia and Parmar, 2017).

The government of India has introduced a number of strategies for achieving sustainability in the Indian cities. The rating tools of sustainability like Griha and Leed, along with planning the spatial cities, like compact cities form as well as mixed use of land which are primary procedures. The benefits regarding low rate of interest on loans and quick clearance are also delivered to the developers who wish to build in a sustainable manner.

Although a number of strategies and theories may seem to be ambitious, they aren't so effective when they are translated in practice. It's partly due to a lack of proper follow up and partly because the client's focus is on quick profits. Therefore, India faces a number of challenges for reaching the stages of sustainable growth and urban development. Along with a growth and urbanisation in population, corruption is also considered to be a primary challenge as a lot of others also follow. These include a lack of awareness in terms of sustainability, planning for a short term and focussing on profits and safety of public as well as poverty. In case India is seriously planning to develop its cities in a sustainable manner, it's important for the Government of India to take up an inspirational role for using as well as promoting sustainability (Desai, Sanghvi, and Nagarajan, 2018).

The present urban planning system in India has been rooted in towns and countries planning Act, UK, 1947. It mainly focusses on the detailed use of land zoning. The practice is followed by a number of developed and developing nations. However, for certain years now, it's been moving away from the rigid master plan in different countries including UK. The cities throughout the world are exploring flexible ways of accommodating the changes in use of land as well as pattern of density over time. The previous approaches which treat the urban transportation as a consequence of use of land are given in favour of the simultaneous determination of policies. It has recognised a 2 way relationship between the uses of land planning as well as transportation. Such changes

are especially significant for India in the present phase of the structural transformation (Mahadevia, Bhatia and Bhonsle, 2016).

The master plan of India typically covers time horizon of approximately 20 years. It has presented the road route from current state of the cities to the ideal end state along with the spatial details in terminal years. In cities like Mumbai and Delhi, it took more than 10 years to finish preparation of a master plan. The whole process began with projection of Indian population in the urban areas and the estimate for an average sized household. This together along with the level of income of households, state the need for residential area (Anguluri, 2017).

The requirement of the office, retail space and industry are based mainly on the projections of economic prospects for cities. The pattern of transport follow from pattern of land use as well as the requirement of space for transport is typically residual. The space needed for conservation of protection and natural resources of the built in heritage are determined residually, unmindful of the considerations of contextual nuances and sustainability.

The primary law of master planning strategy in India is that it hasn't allowed play for the market forces in stating the location and the scale of economic activities and build in the elements with the help of flexibility in approach to the urban planning (Randhawa and Kumar, 2017). The master plan has incorporated the financial planning specifically, since the instruments to unlock value of land may be used as the primary source to finance the development of the urban infrastructure.

The plan has also been criticised maybe because it hasn't been conceived well to start with and haven't consciously and explicitly incorporated inclusion of the economically weak section of the society for planning for the space. Or they might have been finalised in the top-down manner with no or little consultation with the stakeholders. Or they might not have been finalised. They are applied very strictly while changing circumstances demand flexibility. The control and command approach for implementing the master plan was combined with the compulsory acquisition to enforce the use of intended land (Chu, 2016).

India has witnessed a wonderful transformation post-independence and speed of development has also increased in the past 2 decades. There's been a shift from traditional rural communities to modern day urban communities resulting in urban drift. The rising urbanisation has come with a number of benefits for the economic growth and development. Urbanisation is related very closely to industrialisation, rationalisation and modernisation. The urban centres are places of knowledge banks, opportunities, creativities, innovation and their commercialisation. They pull out the human resource as well as talent for economic sustenance. Beyond the economic growth and development, urbanisation could even give rise to the social equity mainly by eroding the distinction between castes and creed. It's present strongly in the rural societies. The sectorial reforms of 1990 across different sectors including agriculture, industries, trade, investment, finance, banking and infrastructure. Opened India's market to global competition. It expanded domestic capital market, eliminated the barriers to trade resulting in a growth of 5.7% growth rate during the period of 1991-2000 and about 7.2% during the period of 2001-2010 (Datta, 2015). However rapid growth and urbanisation is not sustainable as it mainly brings environmental and social challenges. The urban areas exploit resources at the high par. The unplanned growth of the urban areas cases growth of slum, strained infrastructure, environmental degradation, and higher cost of living and traffic problems. The huge population of India, diverse and vast land mass and the poverty induced migration of rural and urban areas has put burden on administrative leaders, planners and policy makers. This causes insufficient governance.

For overcoming the challenges, path to sustainable and intelligent urban development would drive economic growth that is socially inclusive as well as eco-friendly. India has stepped in the evolution of the framework for the purpose of sustainable development. Even the legal provisions, different types of programs and policies, technological solutions, institutional arrangements and the measurement system for the betterment of the country have been studied (Harris, 2015).

The latest approaches to the issues of environmental development highlight few paradoxes of growth and development in the largest and one of the most dynamic cities of Vietnam.

These are the compounding effort of government for relocating big number of households from heavily polluted riverside and canal slums to the newly constructed government homes or housing acquired independently by families affected.

Experts cite 3 main policies which drive the economic and the demographic growth which have had major effect on the urban environment of the city. First is the intensification of agro-industry in late 1970 and assuring migration or rural urban areas. Other is adoption of the structural reforms of 1986. Lastly, progressively by 1990, channelling bulk of the domestic investment in the 2 biggest cities of the country (Phurailatpam, 2018).

Since the year 1992, the economic growth of about 8% per annum fuelled a sharp increase in the consumption of the manufactured goods and services, enhanced housing and different types of services by the growing mediocre class. The whole proportion of the poor in city has gone down very well. Similarly, the structural reforms like

dismantling the whole structure of free of cost health-care, public services and education and rising in formalisation of the economic activities have caused rapid expansion in the inequality of income and worsening living condition for the ones remaining below poverty line (Chakraborty, 2017).

The highlighted deterioration of the conditions of urban environment during this while has exacerbated further the condition of poor, many of these people live along canals of the city as well as natural watercourse. Since government hasn't expanded or sufficiently maintaining the current technical infrastructure for water, sanitation and disposal of waste, the sufficiently ample fresh water supply has now become polluted perilously. Consequently, over exploitation of the sub-surfaces source has also started. This in turn has caused salinization as well as degradation of phreatic layers from the intrusion of the sustainable city plan system. It needs to aim at reaching the environmental and social equity while enhancing the quality of life of people. For this to happen the sustainable city and the proper management and provisions of services need to happen. Therefore, for the urban area and the city for being sustainable, it should produce as well as manage the basic services such as waste, water, transportation and energy. In simple words, city needs to produce as well as distribute services in an environment friendly, economic and an equitable way.

In the urban areas in India, about 70% of households have safe and clean drinking water. 61% households had washroom facilities within the houses. Also, just 35% of households were using closed drainage. About 88% of urban households had power and just 2% were using solar power in the year 2001 (Sarkar, 2018).

The effect of urbanisation on environment, space as well as life's quality has been grave. A huge chunk of the urban population don't even have an access to the basic amenities such as sanitation, safe water for drinking, education and basic healthcare services. The effect of urbanisation might be considered in context of the supply of urban water, solid management waste, sanitation, extent of poverty in the urban areas, level of pollution and crime.

Sanitation covers the arrangements of effluents and rainwater drainage, collection as well as disposal of waste, etc. Proper system of sanitation is important to improve the general health and for the betterment of quality of lives. But, previously, water supply received a lot of attention in comparison to the aspect of sanitation/. Approximately, 3/4<sup>th</sup> of the entire population that resides in the cities does not have any access to collection of human waste as well as disposal system. The sanitation system exists just in 60 cities of India. Not even half of total sewage gets collected and just 30-40% of waste collected is properly treated.

Just 15% of urban population gets access to toilets in private areas. The national programme for low-cost sanitation aimed to eliminate manual scavenging has been brought up (Gaetano, 2018).

## CONCLUSION:

With 74<sup>th</sup> CAA, urban local bodies have attained a constitutional status. Also the people's representatives of such bodies are mainly entrusted with an onus of managing urban affairs. Their training as well as capacity building can be quite a daunting think for the policy makers.

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