

URBANISATION AND CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH IT IN INDIA

Urbanisation in India is increasing at a rapid rate. In 2011, the urban population was more than 30% and by 2030, it is expected to reach 41%. The speed of urbanisation poses an unprecedented managerial and policy challenges, yet India has not engaged in a national discussion about how to handle the seismic shift in the make up of the nation. Urban India today is 'distributed' in shape with a diverse range of large and small cities spread widely around the nation. As the urban population and income increase, demand for every key service such as water, transportation, sewage treatment, low income housing will increase five-to-sevenfold in cities of every size and type.

Recent reports suggest that India spends \$ 17 per capita per year in urban infrastructure, whereas the most benchmarks suggest that a requirement of \$ 100.

The investment required for building urban infrastructure in India, over the next 20 yrs, is estimated at approx US \$1 trillion.

⇒ Salient Features of Urbanisation:

Rapid urbanisation in India is a recent phenomenon.

Some of the salient features of Indian Urbanisation :-

- Urbanisation in India is as old as the Indus Valley Civilisation
- The Indian urbanisation is of subsistence type whereby rural unskilled and semi-skilled labourers in-migrate in search of jobs and employment
- The big cities of India (Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi and Chennai) have shown stupendous growth of population
- The Southern and western parts of the country are more urbanised than the north-eastern parts of the country.

⇒ Issues associated with urbanisation in India:-

- Urban Sprawl or real expansion of the cities; both in terms of population and geographical area, which has encroached upon the agricultural

- and forest lands
- Overcrowding and haphazard development of urban areas which has led to annually recurring instances of floods, diseases and fire in many cities
 - Rising demands for basic services such as clean water, public transportation, sewage treatment and housing.
 - Unemployment, the rate of urban unemployment which is more than 3% annually is increasing progressively. According to one estimate, about 25% of the workers in urban centres are unemployed. Due to Covid 19, the unemployment rate rises to 27% in 2020, which increases inequalities and poverty.
 - The proliferation of slums due to policy, planning and regulatory deficiencies
 - Environmental concerns such as urban areas becoming heat islands, rising air pollution, ground-water pollution and persistent water crisis
 - Urban crimes such as human trafficking, child labour, sexual assault etc

⇒ WAY FORWARD:-

- ① Inclusive cities:- The poor and lower income groups must be brought into mainstream in cities. The planning should be such that it includes the needs of marginalized sections including their residence, health, water, transportation and other amenities at affordable prices.
- ① Integration:- Integrate various urban development and related programmes at local, state and national levels to develop sustainable city or metropolitan region.
- ① Planning:- India needs to make urban planning a central, respected function, investing in skilled people. This can be done through a 'cascaded' planning structure in which large cities have 40 year and 20 yrs plans at the metropolitan level that are binding on municipal development plans.
- ① Affordable housing:- It is a critical concern for low income groups in the absence of a viable model that caters to their needs. India can meet the challenge through a set of policies and incentives that will bridge the gap between price and affordability.

① Delivery of Services:- Management of water supply and sewerage system should be the primary function of ULBs. Municipal corporation may be given responsibility for the entire water supply programme from development to distribution.

Govt has taken up many initiatives in recent times aimed at urban planning and management JNNURM (Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission), Smart City, AMRUT, Digital India, Rajiv Awas Yojna, Swachh Bharat and HRIDAY.

These programmes need a sound backing of efficient planning and management for their success. Ministry of Urban development depends a lot upon the development of urban areas. Hence, effective urban planning and management becomes the keyword in the sustainable and inclusive growth and development.