



Urbanisation

For Prelims: [Asian Development Bank](#), [Census 2011](#), [Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs \(MoHUA\)](#), [74th Constitutional Amendment Act 1992](#), [Smart Cities Mission](#), [AMRUT Mission](#), [Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban](#), [Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban](#), [Aspirational District Programme](#), [Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihood Mission \(DAY-NULM\)](#), [Air pollution](#)

For Mains: India's Initiatives Related to Urban Governance, [Challenges related to urbanisation](#)

Source: DTE

Why in News?

Recently, Indian urban centres have been **grappling with significant challenges** such as water shortages, urban heating, and infrastructural strains **amidst rapid urbanisation**.

What is Urbanisation?

▪ About:

- **Urbanisation** is the process of people moving from **rural areas** (the countryside) to urban areas (towns and cities). This trend has been happening for centuries, but it has accelerated in recent decades.
- **Urbanisation** is identified by the [United Nations](#) as one of the **four demographic mega-trends** alongside **population growth**, **ageing**, and **international migration**.

▪ Types:

- **Planned Settlements:** Planned urban settlements in India are **developed by government agencies or housing societies** according to officially approved plans.
 - These plans consider various factors, including physical, social, and economic considerations, to ensure orderly development.
 - The objective is to create **sustainable and livable environments** with adequate infrastructure and services.
- **Unplanned Settlements:** **Unplanned settlements arise without legal approval, either on government land or private property, in a disorderly manner.**
 - These areas consist of **permanent, semi-permanent, and temporary structures**, frequently found near city drains, railway tracks, low-lying areas prone to flooding, or on agricultural land and green belts surrounding cities.

▪ Trends in Urbanisation:

- According to the [Asian Development Bank's 2019 report](#), the global urban population has surged from **751 million in 1950 (30% of the world's population)** to **4.2 billion in 2018 (55% of the world's population)**.

- Projections indicate that **this figure will rise to 5.2 billion by 2030** (60% of the global population) and **6.7 billion by 2050** (68% of the global population).
- India's urban population has grown steadily. According to the [2011 Census](#), urbanisation increased from 27.7% in 2001 to 31.1% in 2011, representing a total of 377.1 million people and an annual growth rate of 2.76%.
- This trend has shifted focus from **large Tier 1 cities (1,00,000 and above) to medium-sized towns**, influenced by various **push and pull factors** such as [employment](#), education, and security.
- According to **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** in terms of the absolute number of persons living in urban areas, **Maharashtra** continues to **lead with 50.8 million persons** which comprises 13.5% of the total urban population of the country.
 - Uttar Pradesh accounts for about 44.4 million, followed by Tamil Nadu at 34.9 million.

▪ **Reasons for Urbanisation:**

- **Trade And Industry:** Trade and industry drive urbanisation by attracting labor, stimulating infrastructure development, and providing access to markets and innovation hubs.
- **Economic Opportunities:** Cities offer **more job opportunities** than rural areas. This is because they are home to businesses, factories, and other institutions.
- **Education:** Cities have **better schools and universities** than rural areas. This can attract people who want to improve their education and job prospects.
- **Better Lifestyle:** Cities provide more services like hospitals and libraries, and offer a livelier lifestyle with more social and cultural opportunities compared to rural areas.
- **Migration:** [Migration](#) significantly contributes to urbanisation in India, leading to the growth of informal settlements. Migrants often settle in unplanned colonies due to the **high cost of living** in more formal urban areas.
 - This has resulted in a significant number of informal settlements, such as [slums](#) and unauthorised colonies, which lack basic amenities like clean water and sanitation.

India's Initiatives Related to Urban Governance

▪ **Institutions:**

- **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA):** Formulates national policies and oversees central government schemes related to urban development.
- **State Departments of Urban Development:** Implement central government policies and enact state-specific urban development regulations.
- **[Municipal Corporations/Municipalities](#):** They are responsible for local-level planning, development control, and service delivery within their jurisdictions.
- **Urban Development Authorities (UDAs):** Special agencies established for the development of specific urban areas or projects.

▪ **Constitutional and Legal Frameworks:**

- **(Articles 243Q, 243W):** Empowers local governments (Municipalities) for urban planning and development within their jurisdictions.
- **[74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992](#):** Provided constitutional status to urban local bodies and added Part IX-A to the Constitution.
- **[12th Schedule](#):** It contains the powers, authority and responsibilities of Municipalities.

▪ **Government Initiatives:**

- [Smart Cities](#)
- [AMRUT Mission Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban](#)
- [Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban](#)
- [Aspirational District Programme](#)
- [Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihood Mission \(DAY-NULM\)](#)
- **India's Global Commitments Regarding Urban Development:**
 - The [SDGs Goal 11](#) promotes urban planning as one of the recommended methods for achieving sustainable development.
 - The **UN-Habitat's New Urban Agenda** was adopted at Habitat III in 2016.
 - It puts forth principles for the planning, construction, development, management, and improvement of urban areas.
 - The [UN-Habitat \(2020\)](#) suggests that the spatial conditions of a city can enhance its power to generate social, economic and environmental value and well-being.
 - **UNFCCC Goal:** India, at the 26th session of the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) (COP 26) in November, 2021, announced its target to achieve **net zero by 2070**.
 - India has ratified the Headquarters Agreement (HQA) between the Government of India and the [Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure \(CDRI\)](#).

What are the Challenges Related to Urbanisation?

- **Environment Related Challenges:**
 - **Air Pollution and Environmental Degradation:** Urban areas in India are grappling with [severe air pollution](#) levels, primarily due to vehicular emissions, industrial activities, and construction projects.
 - **Example:** According to the [World Air Quality Report 2023](#), 9 of the top 10 most polluted cities are in India.
 - **Urban Flooding and Drainage Infrastructure:** Inadequate stormwater drainage systems and encroachment on natural water bodies lead to frequent [urban flooding](#) during monsoons.
 - India has experienced major floods in recent years, notably in Hyderabad (2020 and 2021), Chennai (November 2021), Bengaluru and Ahmedabad (2022), parts of Delhi (July 2023), and Nagpur (September 2023), forcing many residents to evacuate.
 - **Urban Heat Island Effect and Lack of Green Spaces:** Rapid urbanisation and loss of green spaces have led to the [urban heat island effect](#), increasing temperatures and energy demand.
 - **Example:** The extreme [heatwave](#) in Delhi has driven the city's power demand to a record high of over 8,000 megawatts in May 2024.
 - **Water Scarcity and Inadequate Water Management:** Many cities face [acute water shortages](#) due to rapid urbanisation, population growth, and depleting groundwater levels.
 - **Example:** Chennai faced a severe water crisis in 2019, with residents relying on water tankers and desalination plants. Also, the [recent water crisis in Bengaluru](#) highlights the depth of the issue.
- **Inadequate Housing and Slum Proliferation:** According to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, the urban housing shortage in India was around 18.78 million units between 2012-27, with over 65 million people living in **slums or informal settlements**.
 - It results in straining infrastructure, exacerbating poverty, hindering planned development, and reducing overall livability and social cohesion within urban areas.
- **Traffic Congestion and Mobility Challenges:** Rapid urbanisation and the influx of private vehicles have led to severe [traffic congestion](#), increasing commute times and hampering productivity.

- **Example:** In Bengaluru, the average traffic speed during peak hours is estimated to be around 18 km/h, resulting in significant economic losses due to lost productivity and fuel wastage.
- **Inadequate Solid Waste Management:** Indian cities struggle with the management of **solid waste**, leading to piling garbage and health hazards.
 - **Example:** According to the **Central Pollution Control Board**, Indian cities generate approximately 62 million tons of municipal solid waste annually, with only around 20% of it being processed or treated properly.
- **Issue of Cybersecurity and Resilient Digital Infrastructure:** With the increasing digitalization in major urban spaces, **digital threats** are on the rise and building resilient digital infrastructure is a critical issue.
 - The **ransomware attack** on AIIMS Delhi in 2022, highlights the vulnerability of urban digital systems.

What are the Steps Needed to Address Urban Challenges?

- **Environment Related Initiatives:**
 - **Sponge City Concept and Permeable Urban Landscapes:** Implementing the "Sponge City" concept, which involves the integration of permeable pavements, green roofs, rainwater gardens, and other water-absorbing features into urban landscapes.
 - **Distributed Waste-to-Energy and Decentralised Waste Management Systems:** Incentivizing community-based waste management initiatives and promoting **public-private partnerships** for waste collection, sorting, and processing.
 - **Smart Water Management and Recycling Infrastructure:** Deploying **smart water metering** and monitoring systems to detect leaks, optimize water distribution, and promote **efficient water usage**.
- **Urban Digital Twins and Predictive Modeling:** Developing **digital twins of urban areas**, which are virtual replicas of cities, to simulate and analyse various scenarios, infrastructure projects, and environmental impacts.
 - Integrating digital twins with urban governance platforms to enable **data-driven decision-making**, citizen engagement, and participatory urban planning processes.
- **Smart City Infrastructure:** Democratizing smart city technologies, such as **intelligent traffic management systems**, smart grids, and Securing **Internet of Things (IoT)**-enabled public services, to improve efficiency, reduce carbon emissions, and enhance the quality of life for citizens.
- **Cybersecurity and Digital Infrastructure Resilience:** Investing in robust cybersecurity measures, including advanced encryption, access controls, and real-time threat monitoring, to protect critical urban digital infrastructure from cyber threats.
- **Accessibility and Awareness:** The government's efforts to address urbanisation through various initiatives often face significant challenges in terms of accessibility. Therefore **better dissemination of information** and participative governance can be a tool of **inclusivity**.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. Urbanisation in India has led to a dichotomy between planned and unplanned settlements, creating significant socio-economic and infrastructural challenges. Comment.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q. With reference to the Indian economy after the 1991 economic liberalization, consider the following statements: (2020)

1. Worker productivity (Rs. per worker at 2004-05 prices) increased in urban areas while it decreased in rural areas.
2. The percentage share of rural areas in the workforce steadily increased.

3. In rural areas, the growth in non-farm economy increased.
4. The growth rate in rural employment decreased.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 and 4 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 4 only

Ans: (b)

Mains:

Q. The frequency of urban floods due to high intensity rainfall is increasing over the years. Discussing the reasons for urban floods, highlight the mechanisms for preparedness to reduce the risk during such events. **(2016)**

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/urbanisation-6>

