



Urban Farming

Prelims: Urban Farming, Healthy Food, Environmental Sustainability, Economic Development, Biotechnology, Scientific Innovations & Discoveries.

Mains: Urban Farming, related Challenges and its Potential.

Why in News?

Recently, a Non-Profit Research Organisation has prepared a “**Draft Citizen’s Policy for Urban Agriculture in Delhi**”, recommending a holistic framework for [Urban Farming](#).

- The Draft recommends **building on existing practices**, promoting residential and community farming through rooftop and kitchen gardens, allocating vacant land for agricultural use, creating a market, developing policies for animal rearing and spreading awareness.

What is Urban Farming?

▪ About:

- Urban farming refers to the **practice of growing crops**, raising livestock, or producing other forms of food **within urban areas**.
- Despite its potential benefits, such as increased access to fresh and healthy food, [environmental sustainability](#), and economic development, **urban farming faces several challenges that limit its widespread adoption and impact**.

▪ Challenges:

- **Limited Land Availability:**
 - One of the biggest challenges facing urban farming is the **limited availability of suitable land within urban areas**.
 - Urban land is **often expensive and highly coveted for other uses**, making it difficult for farmers to secure the space they need to grow food.
- **Soil Contamination:**
 - Urban soils are **often contaminated with heavy metals**, pollutants, and other toxic substances, making it difficult to grow crops in a safe and sustainable manner.
- **Water Availability:**
 - In many urban areas, **water is a scarce resource, and farmers often struggle to access enough water** to meet the needs of their crops and livestock.
- **Lack of Infrastructure:**
 - Urban farming **often requires specialized infrastructure**, such as greenhouses, [irrigation](#) systems, and cooling and storage facilities, which can be expensive and difficult to access in urban areas.

How can the Related Challenges be Addressed?

▪ Developing Partnerships:

- Urban farming can benefit **from partnerships with local governments and other**

organizations that can provide support and resources to help overcome some of the challenges.

▪ **Investment:**

- Further research into urban agriculture **can help to address some of the key challenges** and provide **new insights into the best practices** for growing food in urban areas.

▪ **Encouraging Community Engagement:**

- Community engagement is critical for the success of urban farming, as it **can help to build support, bring together resources,** and promote **sustainability.**

▪ **Urban Agriculture Policies:**

- Governments and other organizations **can play a role in promoting urban agriculture by enacting policies** that support the growth and development of urban farming initiatives.

What are Some Related Initiatives in India?

- In 2008, Pune's civic administration launched a **city farming project to train and encourage people** to take up farming on allocated land.
- In 2012 Teh Kerala government launched a **vegetable development programme** to encourage gardening in houses, schools, government and private institutions.
 - It also offered subsidies and support for eco-friendly inputs, irrigation, compost and biogas plants.
- In 2014, the Tamil Nadu government introduced a **"do-it-yourself" kit for city dwellers** to grow vegetables on rooftops, houses and apartment buildings under its **Urban Horticulture Development Scheme.**
- Since 2021, Bihar has encouraged **terrace gardening in five smart cities** through subsidy for input cost.

Way Forward

- To promote urban farming, governments must **recognise informal practices and link them with agricultural schemes.**
- There is a need to make **urban agriculture viable.** Farming in cramped urban spaces marred by water scarcity and pollution is not easy.
 - A 2016 paper titled Future of Urban Agriculture in India by the Hyderabad-based Institute for Resource Analysis and Policy mentions that in Delhi, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Chennai, **wastewater is directly or indirectly used for urban farming.**
- Studies show that excessive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in urban farms can lower produce and soil quality. However, urban farmers **believe such hurdles can be overcome with innovative techniques.**
- Urban farming has the potential to play a major role in addressing some of the biggest challenges facing cities today, including food insecurity, environmental sustainability, and economic development. However, **to truly realize its potential, it is essential to overcome the challenges and create an environment that supports and nurtures urban farming initiatives.**

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. How far is Integrated Farming System (IFS) helpful in sustaining agricultural production? **(2019)**

Q. What is Integrated Farming System? How is it helpful to small and marginal farmers in India? **(2022)**

[Source: DTE](#)

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