



ISSUES OF URBANISATION IN INDIA - GS I, II AND III MAINS

Q. Examine the issues associated with Indian cities growing at an unprecedented pace and suggest measures that need to be taken for sustainable urbanization in India. (15 marks, 250 words)

News: *India's urban population will stand at 675 million in 2035, behind China's 1 billion: U.N.*

What's in the news?

- India's urban population is estimated to stand at 675 million in 2035, the second highest behind China's one billion, the U.N. has said in a report, noting that after the COVID-19 pandemic, the global urban population is back on track to grow by another 2.2 billion by 2050.
- The United Nations-Habitat's World Cities Report 2022, said that rapid urbanization was only temporarily delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key takeaways:

- India's urban population is projected to be 67,54,56,000 in 2035, growing from 48,30,99,000 in 2020 to 54,27,43,000 in 2025 and 60,73,42,000 in 2030, the report said.
- By 2035, the percentage of population in India at mid-year residing in urban areas will be 43.2%.
- China's urban population in 2035 is projected at 1.05 billion while the urban population in Asia will be 2.99 billion in 2035 and that in South Asia 98,75,92,000.

Urbanization:

- Urbanization refers to the process by which a growing proportion of a population comes to live in cities and other urban areas and the ways in which this affects society and the environment.
- It is a global phenomenon that has been driven by a variety of factors, including economic development, technological change, and population growth.
- According to the 2011 Census, the urban population in India was about 31.2% of the total population. This is projected to grow around 40% of the total population by 2030.

Urbanization Trends in India:

1. Rapid Rate of Urbanization:

- India is projected to become the world's most populous country by 2023, and as a result, its cities are growing at an unprecedented pace.

2. Informal Settlements:

- A significant portion of India's urban population lives in informal settlements or slums, which often lack basic infrastructure and services.
- These settlements are often marginalized and excluded from formal systems.



3. Co-existence of Ancient and Modern Cities:

- Cities like Varanasi, Jaipur, and Haridwar have rich cultural heritage and history, which coexist with the fast-paced development of modern cities like Mumbai, Bangalore, and Gurgaon.

4. Tertiary Sector:

- Indian cities have primarily developed due to growth in the tertiary sector, such as communication, transport, services, and construction, rather than the secondary sector, which is ironic.

5. Geographical Difference:

- Southern India is more urbanized than Northern and Eastern India due to the presence of historical, socio-cultural, and educational resources.

Issues of Rapid Urbanization:

1. Environmental Degradation:

- Urbanization can lead to increased pollution, deforestation, and soil erosion.
- For example, the rapid expansion of cities in India has led to an increase in air pollution and a decrease in green spaces.

2. Overcrowding and Strain on Infrastructure:

- For instance, cities like Mumbai and Delhi face a shortage of affordable housing and inadequate public transport infrastructure.

3. Loss of Agricultural Land:

- For instance, the conversion of fertile agricultural land into real estate in the outskirts of cities like Bengaluru and Hyderabad has led to a reduction in agricultural production.

4. Displacement of Rural Residents:

- Urbanization can also lead to the displacement of rural residents who are forced to leave their homes and communities to make way for urban development.

5. Inequalities in Access to Resources and Services:

- Urbanization can exacerbate existing inequalities in access to resources and services.
- For example, slum dwellers in cities like Mumbai and Kolkata often lack access to basic services.

6. Traffic Congestion and Poor Air Quality:

- As the number of vehicles increases, the traffic congestion and poor air quality in urban areas also increases.
- For example, cities like Delhi and Bengaluru are facing a severe air pollution problem.



Government Initiatives:

1. Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM):

- Launched in 2013, this program aims to reduce poverty and vulnerability of urban poor households by providing them with opportunities for skill development and self-employment.

2. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan:

- Launched in 2014, this campaign aims to improve sanitation and cleanliness in urban areas, including the construction of toilets and solid waste management.

3. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY):

- Launched in 2015, aims to provide affordable housing to urban residents, particularly for low-income groups and economically weaker sections.

4. Smart Cities Mission:

- Launched in 2015, this mission aims to promote the development of 100 smart cities in India, focusing on sustainable and inclusive urban development.

Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT):

- Launched in 2015, aims to improve basic services and infrastructure in urban areas, including water supply and sewerage systems.

Way Forward:

1. Futuristic Planning:

- Manage the spatial growth of cities and allow them to build more planned road networks for future horizontal expansion and revoke faulty policies that constrain the use of floor space to build vertically.

2. Housing for All:

- Focus on providing public housing for the poor; India can learn from successful models in Singapore or Hong Kong and understand the strategic challenges of other international examples such as Mexico. India can also work to enable efficient rental markets

3. Holistic Transport:

- Integrate formal and informal modes of transportation into holistic transportation strategies to ensure seamless mobility, as well as first and last mile connectivity.

4. Increasing Funds to Cities:

- Decentralize fiscal powers to the local level and train city authorities so that they can make more strategic decisions in health expenditures or public health infrastructure, as well as gain the capacity to raise their own resources.



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5. More Attention to Vulnerable:

- Develop more systematic identification mechanisms of the urban poor to ameliorate the delivery of public services and social protection.

