WEEKLY FOCUS
#53 WEEK 1, Nov 2021

VISIONIAS
INSPIRING INNOVATION

URBAN PLANNING IN INDIA:

Building future cities of India

Introduction

India has been undergoing rapid urbanisation as millions of people continue to migrate to the nearest city in search of better opportunities. Barring a few notable exceptions such as Chandigarh, Bhubaneswar, Gandhinagar, Gurgaon and Naya Raipur, India's rapid urban growth has turned out to be unplanned and somewhat chaotic. Even these cities face some glaring structural issues which can be traced back to laggard and short-sighted planning processes in the Indian Urban ecosystem.

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In this document we will understand how planning in Urban areas is usually conducted and trace the historical roots of urban planning in India. We will discuss why planning plays a central role in development of urban spaces of the future and what are the bottlenecks and systemic issues across the value chain of urban-planning capacity in India. Moving forward, we will examine how can India overcome these challenges to build cities of the future.

What constitutes Urban Planning?

Traditionally, the term 'urban planning' was associated with only spatial planning. At present Urban Planning as an approach takes into account all aspects of a city – economic development, population diversity and social interaction – in order to develop a central and coherent view of the urban space.

Over time, urban and regional planning have evolved across multiple sectors for different scales of interventions as elaborated below:

	Sector of intervention	Scale of intervention
City Level	▣ **Land use planning** through development plans, master plan, town planning schemes, building construction permits, development control regulations, inter-agency coordination local area plans for redevelopment of inner-city areas, heritage conservation, environmental improvement etc. ▣ **Mobility planning** through comprehensive mobility plans (including parking strategies, adoption of intelligent transportation systems), planning of bus/rail rapid transit systems, etc. ▣ **Environmental infrastructure planning** such as city sanitation plans, water supply infrastructure plans, solid waste management plans etc. ▣ **Implementation of various government schemes and programmes.** ▣ **Public outreach** including participatory planning and grievance redressals.	**Local area level planning, building level interventions** This scale of intervention predominantly needs urban design, architecture and engineering. Depending on the nature of the area being planned, such as a transit-oriented zone planning, may also need specialist interventions such as Transportation planning, environmental planning and so on. **Master plans** The city master plans or development plans are statutory in nature. They define land uses and a set of norms to which all the constructions in the city must comply with.
Regional level	▣ **Land use planning** through district/metropolitan development plans, industrial area plans, tourism management plans etc. ▣ **Regional infrastructure** planning of highways, metropolitan transportation planning, planning of multi-modal logistic parks, etc.	**Regional plans** Regional plans address the multi sectoral aspects and give direction and priorities for investments and development. Preparation, implementation, and review of regional plans is a cyclic process.

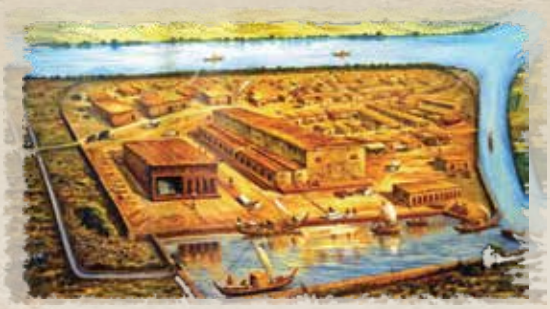
National/ State level	It includes Policy framework, Designing of programmes/missions and Strategic/Project planning.	**National/State level plans** At the National or State level, planning are pertinent to vision preparation and its long term implementation.

How has urban planning evolved in India?

The origins of urban planning in India can be traced back to the **Ancient and medieval settlements.**

Bronze Age: Indus Valley Civilization, also known as the Harappan Civilization-

- It principally covered some parts of Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Pakistan.
- It is known for its advanced town planning, especially the cities of **Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro.**
- **Notable features:** Efficient water supply systems, rainwater harvesting and sewerage systems, and grid -iron patterns of the streets.



Ancient India-

- Mansara's Shilpashastra and Kautilya's Arthshastra, among others, mention principles on town planning.
- During this period, the **planning of settlements was influenced by religion, region, and security.**
- **Ayodhya, Varanasi, Madurai and Kanchipuram** are a few examples of planned towns during this time.
- The Mauryan Dynasty established a number of strong administrative centres, with a **well-planned and fortified capital at Pataliputra.**

Mughal Era-

- During this time period, **town planning placed significant importance on the 'place of worship'** and the **location of bazaars.**
- The cities of this period were also known for their gardens and intricately designed monuments.
- Notable Mughal cities were **Fatehpur Sikri, Shahjahanabad,** etc.

Colonial Period-

- During this period, **mainly port cities flourished**, such as Calcutta (now Kolkata), Madras (now Chennai) and Bombay (now Mumbai).
  - These port towns comprised a fort area surrounded by civil lines, a cantonment area for the armed forces, and a larger area for the natives around the core.

- **Other settlements included-**
  - **Residency areas** that the British earmarked in the princely States for the local administration and garrison next to existing native cities.
  - **'Hill station'** for holidays.
- It was during early 20th century that town-planning legislations were enacted in India.
  - **The Bombay Town Planning Act of 1915** was the first town-planning legislations enacted in India. It gave the Bombay Municipal Corporation powers to prepare town-planning schemes for urban development or redevelopment.
- **Eminent planners during the time-**
  - **Sir Patrick Geddes** prepared the improvement schemes of Tanjore, Madurai, Balrampur, Lucknow, and others in 1915 based on the principle of 'place-work-folk', which was divergent from the then prevailing engineering-based interventions of town planning.
  - **British architect Sir Edwin Landseer Lutyens** made an Imperial New Delhi Plan in 1912, which was implemented in 1932. It was based on the principles of garden cities.

Post-Independence

- **Chandigarh was planned post-Independence.**
- The **1960s saw the rise of a number of public sector townships.**
- **Rourkela, Durgapur, Bhilai, Jamshedpur, Bokaro,** etc. were planned as industrial townships.
- The Five-Year Plans prepared by the erstwhile Planning Commission included policy guidelines, planning priorities and patterns of investment for urban development.
- In **1996, the first Urban Development Plan Formulation and Implementation (UDPFI) Guidelines were prepared and circulated** to all the States and UTs by the Ministry of Urban Development (now MoHUA).

Present Framework of Urban Planning

Role of Governments

- As per the Seventh Schedule, the Constitution of India has bestowed **power upon the States to frame policies, enact legislations** for matters related to land, housing, urban development, and provision of civic infrastructure.
- The **Central Government plays an 'advisory' role** for promoting orderly urbanisation and providing financial as well as technical support to the State and Local Governments in multiple ways.

Legislative framework for planning and implementation

At State level
State Town and Country Planning Acts, Municipal Corporation Acts, Municipalities Acts, and Urban Areas Development Acts.

At regional/local levels
For example, the National Capital Region Planning Board Act 1985, Delhi Development Act 1957, and Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority Act 2008.

Acts related to land housing, infrastructure, environment, etc.
For example, the Registration Act 1908, Environment (Protection) Act 1986, Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013, Real Estate (Regulation and Development Act) 2016.

Institutional set-up

Institutions created via the Constitution (Seventy-Fourth) Amendment Act, 1992

- **Urban Local Bodies (ULBs):** Three types - nagar panchayats for a 'transitional area', municipal councils for a 'smaller urban area' and municipal corporations for a 'larger urban area'.
- **Metropolitan/District Planning Committees.**

Other Institutions

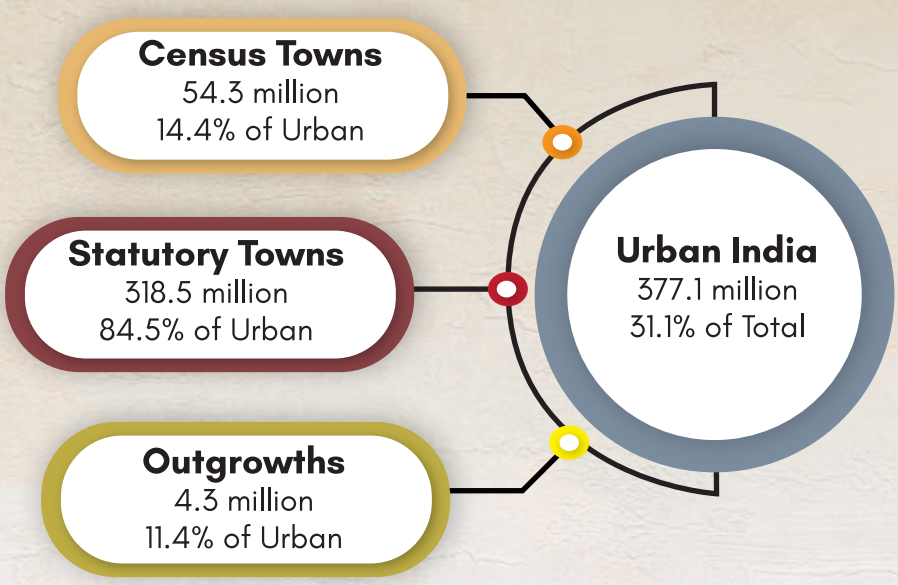
State Town and Country Planning Departments: They perform **technical functions** such as preparation of master plans, approvals and clearances etc. along with advising and assisting the State Government departments on matters related to planning, development and use of rural and urban lands in the State.

Parastatal agencies/bodies, like development authorities, water supply and sewerage boards, slum housing and development boards, PWD, etc.

Improvement trusts: Their main task was to acquire land under the Land Acquisition Act 1894, sub-divide the land into plots for different uses and sell them for private ownership and development in accordance to the rules prescribed.

Classification of Urban agglomerations

- **Statutory Towns:** Settlements that are notified under law by the concerned State/UT government and with local bodies such as municipal corporations, municipalities, municipal committees, etc.
- **Census Towns:** Settlements that are classified as urban in the census after they have met a set of criteria like at least 75% of the male 'main workers' engaged in non-agricultural pursuits etc. These are governed as villages and do not necessarily have urban local bodies.
- **Outgrowths:** These are viable units, such as a village, clearly identifiable in terms of their boundaries and locations. Outgrowths possess urban features in terms of infrastructure and amenities, such as pucca roads, electricity, etc., and are physically contiguous with the core town of the urban agglomeration.



Why urban planning holds a central role in development of urban spaces of the future?

- **Accelerated growth in Urban population:** During 2011-36, urban growth will be responsible for 73% of the rise in total population (MoHFW, 2019). This will bring immense stress on the infrastructure of many Indian cities and towns which along with unregulatable development may be detrimental to the society, economy, and environment.

- **Multidimensional issues emanating from unplanned development:** Issues like slums, traffic congestion, pressure on basic infrastructure, sub-optimal utilisation of urban land, extreme air pollution, urban flooding, water scarcity and droughts indicate a deep and substantial lack of adequate urban planning and governance frameworks.
  - Also, COVID-19 revealed the dire need for planning and management of our cities, with an emphasis on the health of citizens.
- **Interstate disparities:** The distribution of urban centres and the pace of urbanisation is not uniform across the country. While certain States such as Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, and Gujarat have attained over 40% urbanisation, other States such as Bihar, Odisha, Assam, and Uttar Pradesh continue to be at a lower level of urbanisation than the national average of 31.1%.

In Conversation!

'A visit to Singapore'

Vinay: Hey Vini! I'm going to visit my uncle in Singapore this winter.

Vini: Great Vinay! I heard it's a gleaming city with world-class infrastructure, innovative architecture and one of the world's fastest-growing economies.

Vinay: Yes it is! But did you know that it was considered an under developed country in the 1960s with hardly any infrastructural devleopment when my uncle's family moved there.

Vini: Really! This is so hard to imagine. How did it transform into this futuristic city within such a short time?

Vinay: Well! My uncle says that Singapore owes its rapid economic development and high quality of public life to an efficient city planning strategy.

Vini: How so?

Vinay: Their Government opted for long-term Urban planning Model with a focus on creating quality affordable housing and citizen centric infrastructure. This created a sense of identity among Singaporeans and encouraged them to work and build families and links to the community and accumulate wealth. Did you know that over 90 percent of Singaporeans and permanent residents own their homes?

Vini: Wow! So this must mean that planning is integral not only to Urban transformation but also for economic development. Enjoy your trip

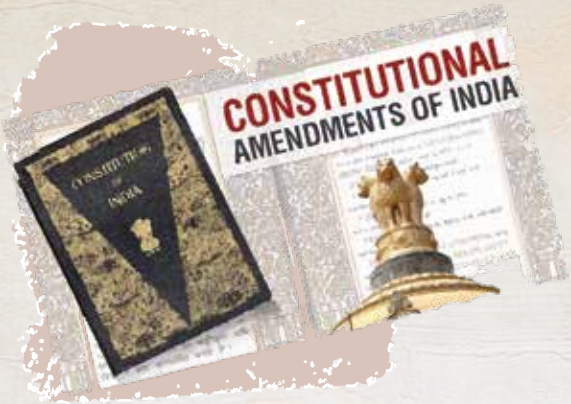
Vinay: Thanks!

- **High disaster vulnerability:** In India, about 76 per cent of the population is exposed to high-to-medium multi-hazard risks, of which nearly 30 per cent live in the million-plus cities and many small and medium-sized towns. This risks emanates from the following factors-
  - **Concentration of infrastructure and human population density.**
  - **Physical vulnerability** due to location of major cities in seismic zones, cyclone paths, flood prone areas etc. and high potential for anthropogenic disasters like industrial accidents, urban fires, etc.
  - **Socio-economic vulnerability** due to low income and lack of basic services.
  - **Presence of critical infrastructure** such as Power, railways, Communication etc.
- **Significance of Urbanisation for India's economy:** Effective interventions incorporating urban and spatial planning, urban land markets, and governance will be needed to achieve national growth targets-
  - **Economic growth targets:** USD 5 trillion economy by 2024 as urbanisation contributes nearly 60% to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
  - **Infrastructure targets:** Creation of 11 large industrial corridors as part of the National Industrial Corridor Programme, several multi-modal logistic parks, etc. Also, urban sector has a significant share of 17% in the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) for FY 2020-25.
  - **Employment target:** Total workforce estimated to be 0.64 billion by 2030, of which 0.26 billion to be employed in urban areas.
- **Transition to low carbon economy:** A large share of our future carbon emissions will be in cities. Energy-efficient buildings, sustainable building materials, clean energy, water harvesting, segregation of waste, electric mobility, public transport, walking and cycling are sustainable practices that need to be mainstreamed into urban planning.

- **Ensuring Multi-sectoral Convergence:** Stronger urban planning ecosystem in the country is needed to converge unlinked sectoral schemes that are executed by different government departments.
  - For instance, Smart Cities Mission of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and National Mission on Electric Mobility of Ministry of Heavy Industries can gain significantly from coordination.
- **Fulfilling India's global commitments:** Cities play a decisive role in achieving India's commitments to the global agendas, such as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 (particularly SDG 11); United Nation Habitat's New Urban Agenda; and the Paris Climate Agreement.

Steps taken in India to facilitate urban planning

- **Constitution (Seventy-Fourth Amendment) Act 1992:** It gave a thrust to decentralization and mandated the setting up of Urban local bodies (ULBs) in urban areas.
  - It also provided for setting up of **Metropolitan Planning Committees (MPCs) and District Planning Committees (DPCs)** with responsibility of preparing 'draft development plan' on matters of common interest between the panchayats and the municipalities.
- **Union Cabinet approved the Model Tenancy Act in June 2021** for circulation to all States/Union Territories for adaptation by way of enacting fresh legislation or amending existing rental laws suitably.



- **Schemes:**
  - **Smart Cities Mission (SCM):** Its aim is to promote cities that provide core infrastructure, clean and sustainable environment and give a decent quality of life to their citizens through the application of 'smart solutions'.
  - **Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)** for planned and integrated urban management.
    - Recently launched **AMRUT2.0** aims to make around 4,700 towns / cities 'water secure'.
  - **Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban:** It aimed at eradication of open defecation in all statutory towns; 100% scientific management of municipal solid waste in all statutory towns; and effecting behaviour change through Jan Andolan.
  - **Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (PMAY)** was launched in June 2015 by the as a flagship mission with objective of addressing housing shortage among EWS/LIG and MIG category by the year 2022.

- **Policy framework:** It includes national policies such as **National Urban Transport Policy, National Housing and Habitat Policy,** etc.
- **The Ease of Living Index (EoLI)** published by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) promotes competitive spirit among the states to ensure sustainable urbanisation.
- **The 15th Finance Commission has recommended a performance-based challenge fund of ₹ 8,000 crore to States for incubation of new cities.** The amount available for each proposed new city is ₹ 1,000 crore and a State can have only one new city under the proposed scheme.

Greenfield cities: A fresh new start or potential ghost towns?

While the XV Finance Commission has encouaged incubation of new cities, but the question that remains unanswered is whether these — and other new cities — should be satellites of existing urban centres or greenfield projects, perhaps sited in barren areas of India's countryside.

Greenfield cities can **absorb relatively more people, larger manufacturing systems, smarter initiatives and better planned infrastructure** compared to the satellite cities.

But developing greenfield cities is a challenge due to **fiscal constraints, limited private investment and the issue of large scale land acquisition and resettlement.** If not meticulously planned and built, Greenfield cities can easily turn into 'ghost towns'- cities that lie unoccupied despite infrastructure development.

The most recent ghost city to consider here is Amaravati, the capital of the newly carved Andhra Pradesh which remains incomplete and unoccupied even though substantial investments have already been made.
To successfully establish a Greenfield city **long term and consistent Urban Planning** is needed along with creation of a detailed infrastructure and development plan. It is essential to ensure that the project will generate appropriate interest from private companies and workers alike.

What are the bottlenecks and systemic issues that remain across the value chain of urban-planning capacity in India?

Institutional issues

- **Lack of institutional clarity:** Multiplicity of authorities dealing with planning of land and sectors like water, sewerage, solid waste etc. at the city as well as State level often creates ambiguity, overlaps and even discord over division of functions and responsibilities.
- **Absence of effective decentralisation:** This can be highlighted by issues such as-
  - Most of the ULBs have not been allocated the 'urban planning' function.
  - MPCs and DPCs are not functional in most of the States and in a few States, they are not even constituted yet.
- **Issues in municipal governance bodies:**
  - In most Indian cities, the mayor is endowed with limited executive responsibilities.
  - Many States have a skeletal machinery of planning which are not necessarily headed by qualified urban planners.

Issues in the planning process

- **Absence of participative decision making:** States have created parastatals like metropolitan development authorities, urban development authorities, etc., to serve the functions which should have been accorded to ULBs. These bodies are not directly answerable to the citizens.
- **Lack of Master Plans of Cities and Regions:** Presently, about 52% of the statutory towns and 76% of the census towns do not have any Master Plans to guide their spatial growth and infrastructural investments.
- **Low participation of private sector:** This is primarily because statutory planning has been the role of the public sector—i.e., the state town planning departments, development authorities, ULBs.
  - Private sector failed to flourish due to several impediments like lack of fair contracting practices, heavy-performance-bearing guarantees, lack of appropriate risk allocation and so on.
- **Disconnect between Urban Planning and Urban Land Records:** Accurate and usable maps, with clarity of land titles, ownership, and tenures etc., of many of the major cities in India do not exist with their functionaries or in the public domain.

Issues related to Urban land use

- **Non-Recognition of 'Urban' Areas:** Around 8000 towns are counted as urban for population estimation under the Census of India (2011); however, half of them, known as census towns, are still administratively 'rural'. Also, parameters that define 'urban' in context of India are outdated.
- **Sub-Optimal Utilisation of Urban Land:** In a typical Indian city, multiple public sector organizations/ agencies—ports, railways, ULBs, etc.— own land under their jurisdictions. For a city to develop holistically, planning for each land parcel needs to fall into one comprehensive spatial strategy.
- **Unintended impacts of Development regulations:** Due to by-laws and other building regulations, larger proportion of land gets consumed in the fragmented and poorly utilised private open spaces than in the public realm – which in turn creates scarcity of land for provision of infrastructure like roads, water supply, playgrounds and so on.
  - Moreover, they create distortions in the land market that pushes development to the peri-urban areas, reduces availability of serviced land, particularly for low income groups in the cities, increases commuting distances and their environmental costs.

Issues related to Disaster Resilience

- **Development location decisions are not directed by hazard exposure** but are based on political economy and/or ease of engineering.
- **Prioritization of emergency response and rehabilitation over mitigation.**
- **Lackadaisical approach towards natural drainage systems, wetlands, floodplains, surface waterbodies and ground water** while planning of cities and regions.
- **Building bye-laws are still limited to a few hazard risks** such as earthquakes, but not to others such as cyclones, drought and floods, which in many cities form a bulk of the hazard risk.
- **Perception of potential risk by the authorities is widely underestimated** primarily because of severe data gaps and inadequate technical and institutional capacities in development authorities.
- There is **a severe lack of expertise on critical infrastructure and its protection.**

Issues with Human resource engaged in urban planning

- **Shortage of adequate and technically qualified planners:** Currently, not even one planner is available per city or town in the States' town and country planning departments.
- **Lack of Specialised Professionals** in the specific areas like rural area planning, coastal area planning, industrial area planning and hill area planning.
- **Limited Awareness about Urban Planning** and its associated socio-economic benefits among administrators or elected officials.
- **Substandard capacity building ecosystem:**
  - Absence of dedicated capacity-building cell in planning departments and regular training of town planning officials.
  - Limited or no budgetary support for capacity-building programmes at the state level.
  - Few opportunities available for town planning officials to get exposure to the 'good' practices and learnings in the national and international contexts.

International Measures for Planned Urban Development

Goal 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals: Aims to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, also emphasize on planned urban development.

UN-HABITAT: released the international Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning.

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction released a report, **Words into Action guidelines: Implementation guide for land use and urban planning,** which emphasize on planned development to mitigate disaster risk.

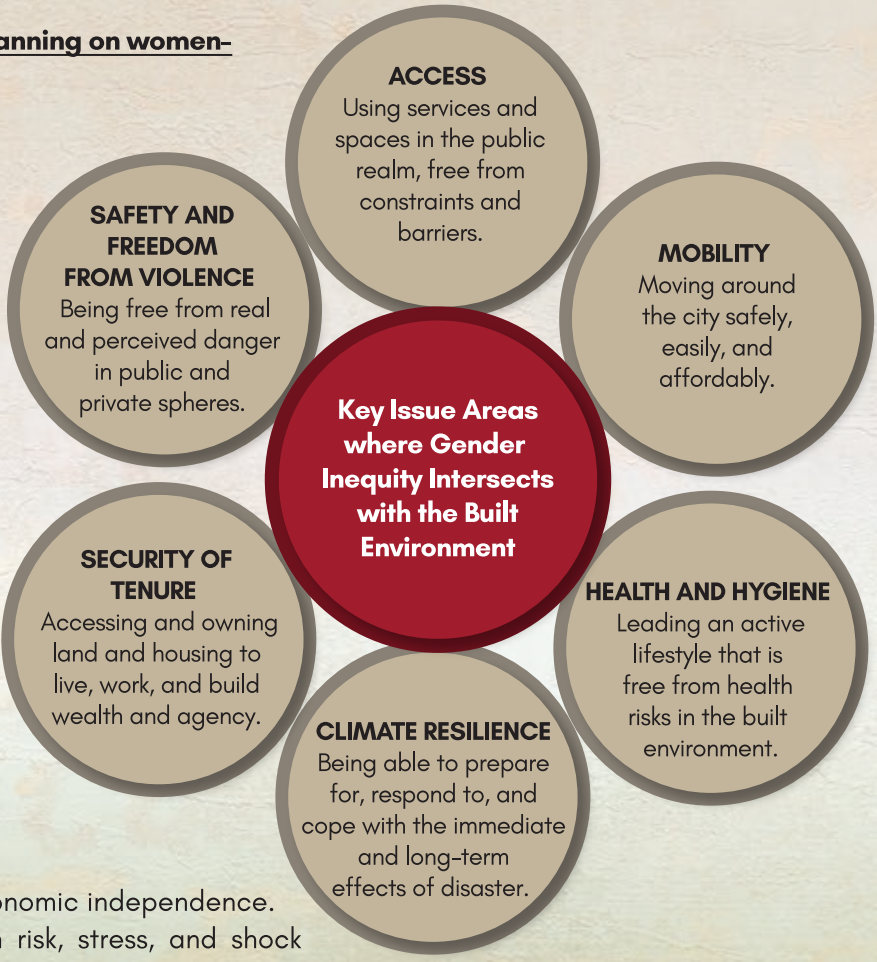
Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030: also emphasizes on planned urban development to reduce disaster risks.

Women and urban planning: Are we building safe urban spaces for women?

Urban planning in India has not sufficiently factored in gender perspectives. The 2019 Safe City Index, prepared by the Economist Intelligence Unit, ranked Mumbai and Delhi as one of the worst cities where women's safety is concerned.

Impact of Gender biases in the urban planning on women-

- **Crimes against women:** Existence of 'dark spots' (low visibility spots or poor lighting) in urban areas makes women vulnerable to crime.
  - This **co-relation between inadequate street lights and gender violence** became prominent when many cities in the United States witnessed a spike in the rate of gender-related violence and harassment because they reduced street lighting as a cost-saving measure during the 2008 economic recession.
- **Contribute directly/indirectly to gendered social and economic inequities:** Due to hindered access to urban spaces, women struggle to-
  - access gainful employment, education and other basic human endowments.
  - accumulate wealth and achieve economic independence.
  - build social networks to cope with risk, stress, and shock leading to fewer social freedoms.
  - exercise agency in public decision-making, including decisions that shape the built environment.



Gender inclusive and gender responsive urban planning can help build 'equitable' cities through-

- **Reforms in build environment-**
  - **Physical Infrastructure:** Well-lit streets, footpaths, free public toilets that are open 24/7, parks, benches.
  - **Social Infrastructure:** Community housing, shelter homes, public child-care facilities, skill development centres.
  - **Mobility Infrastructure:** Free or low-cost and well-maintained public transport ensuring adequate frequency and last mile connectivity.
  - **Institutional Infrastructure:** Public hospitals and reproductive health facilities, mental health facilities, legal aid centres, one-stop crisis centres.

- **Reforms in institutional structures-**
  - **Public representation in urban planning:** Existing municipal laws need to be amended to integrate participatory planning and design processes that treats women and girls as empowered partners, with shared decision-making power.
  - **Data driven planning process-**
    - Collecting accurate gender disaggregated data or gender sensitive data.
    - Facilitating focus group discussions to identify women's priorities.
    - Conducting safety audits of neighbourhoods.

How can India overcome these challenges to build cities of the future?

Crystallizing the planning approach	
Planning for the future	Urban planning should **engage in long term planning** that incorporates principles of sustainability, builds disaster risk resilience and is in line with demographic and technological trends to build healthy cities for citizens.
Interventions and advancements in existing approaches of master plan preparation	Preparation of an **interoperable base map of the city** on GIS platform. **Mapping of all the relevant sub-sectors of a city—blue-green-grey infrastructure** (including rivers, waterbodies, forests, parks, sanitation, water supply, solid waste management, etc.), mobility (including detailed road cross-sections, digital connectivity, EV infrastructure, motorised and non-motorised transit facilities), industrial infrastructure, heritage, etc. **Development and inclusion of specific proposals with clear responsibilities** of the agencies concerned and a financial implementation plan in the master plan report.
Strengthening Human Resources	
Institutional Capacity Building	Undertake regular capacity building by establishing a **dedicated cell in the State town and country planning departments.** National Urban Learning Platform, operationalised by MoHUA, can be leveraged for this purpose. **Performance of every participant needs to be objectively evaluated,** so that the results can be used as a criterion for their career progression.
Overcoming shortage of Urban planners	Constitution of a **'National Council of Town and Country Planners'** as a statutory body of the Government of India and a 'National Digital Platform of Town and Country Planners' to enable self-registration of all planners.

	☐ To combat the shortage of qualified urban planners in the public sector, states/UTs may need to- ● expedite the **filling up of vacant positions of town planners.** ● sanction additional **town planners' posts as lateral entry positions** to meet the gaps. ● **undertake requisite amendments in their recruitment rules** to ensure the entry of qualified candidates into town-planning positions.
	Executive and Legislative Reforms
Re-engineering of urban governance	☐ **Clear division of the roles and responsibilities** of various authorities, appropriate revision of rules and regulations, etc. ☐ **Creation of a more dynamic organizational structure,** standardisation of the job descriptions of town planners and other experts. ☐ **Extensive adoption of technology** for enabling public participation and inter-agency coordination.
Reforms in Development regulations and acts	☐ **City governments should develop or adapt the planning regulations and building bye laws as per their context and economic growth drivers;** and shift from blanket regulations to the area-specific regulations to ensure the optimum use of urban land. ☐ **Assessment of the prevailing development control regulations** and building bye-laws and their impact on the health and safety of the citizens, local economy, urban land efficiency, built and unbuilt environment, etc. ☐ **Development of virtual 3D models to depict various scenarios** of urban form, skyline, densities, and streetscapes when the floor area ratios, setbacks, building height, ground coverage, etc. ☐ **Undertaking a regular review of planning legislations** (including town and country planning or urban and regional development acts or other relevant acts).
Hazard Risk and Vulnerability Assessments (HRVA)	☐ There is a need to undertake **HRVA,** with city-specific focus on high hazard risk and exposure and vulnerable sectors\areas and incorporate them into Urban Land use and Development plans.
	Expanding Participation
Demystifying Planning and Involving Citizens	☐ **Conducting 'Citizen Outreach Campaign'** with strategies like- ● Publishing Master plans/regional plans on the National Urban Innovation Stack of MoHUA and on the websites of respective city governments. Advertising Opportunities for participation by citizens.
Building Local Urban Leadership	☐ Design and organisation of **'Short-Term Training Programme for City-Level Elected Officials on Economic and Social Benefits of Urban Planning'.**
Enhancing the Role of Private Sector	☐ Adoption of **fair processes for procuring technical consultancy services.** ☐ Strengthening project structuring and management skills in the public sector. ☐ Empanelment of **private sector consultancies.**
Strengthening Urban Planning Education System	☐ Establish a **'Department of Planning' in Each Central University.** ☐ Encourage Programmes on '**Rural Area Planning'.** ☐ Inclusion of **'Planning' as a Discipline in National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF)** etc.

Conclusion

India is at the threshold of a massive transition from being predominantly rural to partly urban in the next few decades. Urban India will be powering the growth of the Indian economy. Urban challenges, including town planning, have not received adequate policy attention in our country so far. At this juncture, it would be vital to get equipped for ensuring planned urban growth across different topographies of India. Improving the urban planning capacities of the country will act as an essential bridge towards ensuring value for money for infrastructural investments, accountability towards reforms, and citizen-centric growth.

TOPIC AT A GLANCE

Urban Planning

Urban Planning as an approach takes into account all aspects of a city – economic development, population diversity and social interaction – in order to develop a central and coherent view of the urban space.

Level	Components
City Level (City Master plans, Local area level planning and building level interventions etc.)	Land use planning, Mobility planning, Environmental infrastructure planning, Implementation of various government schemes and programmes, Public outreach.
Regional level (District/metropolitan development plans, industrial area plans etc.)	Land use planning and planning of Regional infrastructure like highways etc.
National/State level (Long term plans developed by Union and State Governments)	Policy framework, Designing of programmes/missions and Strategic/Project planning.

Evolution of Urban Planning in India

Bronze Age: Harappan Civilization

- **Features:** Efficient water supply systems, rainwater harvesting and sewerage systems, and grid –iron patterns of the streets.
- **Notable cities:** Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro, Dholavira and Lothal.

Ancient India: Mansara's Shilpashastra and Kautilya's Arthshastra mention principles on town planning.

- **Features:** Planning of settlements was influenced by religion, region, and security.
- **Notable cities:** Pataliputra, Ayodhya, Varanasi, Madurai and Kanchipuram.

Mughal era

- **Features:** Town planning placed significant importance on the 'place of worship' and the location of bazaars.
- **Notable cities:** Fatehpur Sikri, Shahjahanabad.

Colonial period

- **Features:** Settlements included Port towns, Residency areas in the princely States, 'Hill station' for holidays etc.
  - The Bombay Town Planning Act of 1915 was the first town-planning legislations were enacted in India.
- **Notable cities:** Calcutta, Madras and Bombay.
- **Eminent planners:** Sir Patrick Geddes planned cities like Tanjore, Madurai etc. and British architect Sir Edwin Landseer Lutyens planned New Delhi.

Post-Independence

- First city planned- **Chandigarh**
- **Rise of planned Industrial. townships in 1960s-** Rourkela, Durgapur, Bhilai, Jamshedpur, Bokaro, etc.
- **Urban Planning based on Five-Year Plans** prepared by the erstwhile Planning Commission.
- **1996- the first Urban Development Plan Formulation and Implementation (UDPFI) Guidelines** were prepared.

Present framework of Urban Planning

- **Role of Governments:** 7th Schedule bestows power of Urban Planning upon the States while Central Government plays an 'advisory' role and provides financial and technical support.
- **Legislative framework:**
  - **At State level:** State Town and Country Planning Acts, Municipal Corporation Acts etc.
  - **At regional/local levels:** e.g. Delhi Development Act 1957.
  - **Acts related to land housing, infrastructure, environment, etc.**: e.g., the Registration Act 1908, Environment (Protection) Act 1986, etc.
- **Institutional framework:**
  - **Institutions created via the Constitution (Seventy-Fourth) Amendment Act, 1992:** Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and Metropolitan/District Planning Committees.
  - **Other Institutions:** State Town and Country Planning Departments, Parastatal agencies/bodies, Improvement trusts.

Role of urban planning in development of urban spaces of the future

- **Accommodating accelerated growth in Urban population** and Dealing with issues emanating from unplanned growth like slums, traffic congestion, etc.
- **Overcoming Interstate disparities** in terms of distribution of urban centres and the pace of urbanisation.
- **Building disaster resilient cities.**
- Efficient Urban Planning is significant for **achieving India's Economic growth,** Infrastructure and Employment targets.
- **Transitioning to low carbon economy** by controlling emissions in cities.
- **Fulfilling India's global commitments-** SDG 11; United Nation Habitat's New Urban Agenda; and the Paris Climate Agreement.

Issues in India's urban-planning capacity

- **Institutional issues:** Multiplicity of authorities; Absence of effective decentralisation; Governance issues in municipal bodies.
- **Issues in the planning process:** Absence of participative decision making; Lack of Master Plans of Cities and Regions; Low participation of private sector; Disconnect between Urban Planning and Urban Land Records.
- **Issues related to Urban land use:** Non-Recognition of 'Urban' Areas; Sub-Optimal Utilisation of Urban Land; Unintended impacts of Development regulations.
- **Issues related to Disaster Resilience:** Development location decisions are not directed by hazard exposure; Lackadaisical approach towards natural drainage systems and waterbodies; Building bye-laws are still limited to a few hazard risks etc.
- **Issues in Human resource engaged in urban planning:** Shortage of adequate and technically qualified planners; Lack of Specialised Professionals; Limited Awareness about Urban Planning among administrators or elected officials; Substandard capacity building ecosystem.

Way Forward: Building cities of the future

- **Interventions in existing master plan preparation:** Engaging in long term planning; Preparing interoperable base map of the city; Mapping of all the relevant sub-sectors of a city; Development and inclusion of specific proposals with clear responsibilities.
- **Human resource management:** Undertake regular capacity building; Overcoming shortage of Urban planners by expediting the filling up of vacant positions of town planners, standardisation of the job descriptions of town planners etc.
- **Executive and Legislative Reforms:** Clear division of the roles and responsibilities of various authorities; Standardisation of the job descriptions of town planners and other experts; Adapting the planning regulations and building bye laws as per economic growth drivers of cities; etc.
- **Conducting Hazard Risk and Vulnerability Assessments (HRVA)** of cities to build resilience.
- **Expanding Participation:** Conducting 'Citizen Outreach Campaign'; Enhancing the Role of Private Sector; Strengthening Urban Planning Education System.