



AN INITIATIVE BY
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1. BUILDING URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGH AMRUT

Urban India: Key Stats

- India is witnessing a rapid increase in the urban population. As per UN World Urbanization Prospects Report, around 34% of India's population lives in cities and by 2051, more than half of the nation's population will be living in cities.
- At present, cities contribute nearly 65% of the country's GDP which is likely to go up to 70% by 2030.

Key Challenges:

- While 70% of urban households had access to water supply, only 49% had access to water supply within premises.
- More than 65% of the wastewater was being discharged untreated in the open drains resulting in environmental damage and pollution of water bodies.
- Water and Sanitation Program of the World Bank (2011) estimated that 6.4% of India's GDP lost due to inadequate sanitation.

Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT):

- It is the flagship Missions of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs was launched on 2015 in 500 cities across the country.
- It is a centrally sponsored scheme.

AMRUT: Aligned with the needs of Urbanising India:

- Cooperative federalism – keeping in line with cooperative federalism, State Governments have been empowered to appraise, approve and sanction projects for their AMRUT cities.
 - AMRUT supports State and ULBs in creating basic urban infrastructure (Mission in project based)
 - Central Government assistance :

1/2 of project cost to cities having population < 10 lacs	1/3 of project cost to cities having population > 10 lacs
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 - Schemes Covered –

➤ Water Supply	➤ Storm Water Drainage
➤ Sewerage Network	➤ Urban Transport
➤ Septage Management	➤ Green Spaces & Parks
- Framework for institutional reforms – it lays emphasis to improve governance and institutional capacities of ULBs. Reforms are targeted for better service delivery and enhanced accountability and transparency.
- Principles of 'incrementalism' and prioritisation – in the pursuit of ensuring universal coverage 'incrementalism' has been introduced, which is a gradual process of achieving the benchmarks.

- Incentivising over penalising – during the erstwhile JnNURM, 10% of central assistance for projects was retained for non-completion of reforms.
- This led to starved of funds and incomplete projects. Under AMRUT, 10% of the budgetary allocation is earmarked for reform incentive. Monitoring of the Mission – programme monitoring is being done at various levels to understand progress and gaps in implementation.

Other Urban Reforms:

1. Online Building Permission System (OBPS):

- With a view to facilitate Ease of Doing Business in construction permits, an OBPS with common application form and seamless integration of all clearance is introduced.
- As a result, India's rank in EoDB in construction permits has reached 158 spots from 185.

2. Replacement of street lights with LED lights

3. Credit Rating:

- 465 cities are credit rated out of 458 cities. Cities with lower rating are taken measures to improve their performance so that they become credit worthy and raise funds for their projects.

4. Municipal Bonds:

- Rising of bonds leads to improved governance, accounting systems, finance, transparency, accountability and delivery of services in the ULBs.

5. Jal Shakti Abhiyan – Urban

- In order to address the national issue of water scarcity, Jal shakti Abhiyan was introduced in 2019, driving a campaign on water conservation, restoration, recharge and reuse of wastewater.
- The Key thrust areas of Jal Shakti Abhiyan are:
 - ✓ Rainwater Harvesting
 - ✓ Reuse of treated wastewater
 - ✓ Rejuvenation of water bodies
 - ✓ Plantation

Way Forward:

- More than 3500 smaller cities/towns out of 4378 at present are not covered under any central scheme for water supply and Faecal Sludge and Septage Management infrastructure.
- Keeping in view SDG Goal 6 for ensuring sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, it is imperative to take forward the achievements of this mission to smaller cities as well.

2. MOBILITY-RESPONSIVE URBAN PLANNING

- Mobility is increasingly circular, semi or non-permanent, and though a bulk of it is regional, many stream of migration are also long-distance and interstate.
- This dynamic situation of mobility is at variance with public policies in cities, big and small, that are being transformed by the presence and contribution of these migrants.
- While the census data estimates the number of migrants at 3.3million; several studies including Economic Survey 2017 suggests that this is a significant underestimation. The scale of underestimation of migration is a concern in itself because it leads to potential neglect of policy.
- Changing Scale and Forms of Mobility in India:
 - The census defines a migrant as a person whose residence has shifted from the place of residence enumerated in the previous census or one who has shifted from her birthplace.
 - The Economic Survey of India 2017 places the estimation of interstate migration at 60 million and inter-district migration at 80 million. It is important to recognise that mobility in India is increasing and that forms of mobility are varied.
 - Two forms particularly significant are a.) Commuting b.) Circular migration. Both these forms of mobility have implications for the way in which cities are shaped.

How Mobility Transforms Places?

- Conventional data measuring more permanent movement would estimate such implications in terms of burdens on infrastructure and housing.
- However, the more transient forms of migration compel us to pay attention to the specific kind and form of infrastructure or housing as well as the terms at which the same is created.
- Temporary forms of migrants are people who contribute to the city economy while they are there but their effort is directed at places which they come from, i.e., the source areas.
- While work and economic reasons may be the largest drivers for such migration, education and health resource seeking may also be supplementary reasons for the same. These create specific demands on city infrastructures and services.
- For example, hospitals attract many patients requiring long-term treatment and hence may emerge as nodes for such migrants. Similar nodes are also seen around colleges and areas where migrant-heavy economic activities such as construction, recycling etc. happen.
- Demands on services may range from requirements of transport infrastructure and making it amenable to large-scale and long-distance commuting. School level education in languages familiar to the migrants and a local administration and services that also use these languages in their communication is needed as well.

- Need for Vision for Supporting Migrants in Urban Policy: Short-term Housing
- Short-term housing is perhaps one of the most critical and unmet needs of migrants to Indian cities. This is often seen as the need for rental housing; but needs for temporary housing go way beyond rental housing that extends to several months.
- In older days, cities had dharamshalas. Contemporary Indian cities lack such options. This led to unfortunate situations.
- A moving example of this is how cancer patients and their caregivers are compelled to seek shelter on the streets outside the hospital for a few months while the treatment is on.
- The other significant barrier to short-term housing solutions lies in the current imagination of housing. Contemporary housing policies rest upon two principles – first is ownership based housing and other is use of land as a resource.
- The first principle creates citizenship; the second helps to monetise land and contribute to state revenues in a dynamic manner.
- The negative impacts of both these policies are limit the possibilities of short-term housing and undermine the needs for space for shelter in cities.
- Unless a concerted attempt is made by governments, the tendency would be to overwhelm the entire city space by investment-oriented housing blocks will help to bring the short-term needs of housing.

Way Forward:

- There are some examples of civil society response to such issues. However, these are far too few and limited in proportion to the needs.
- Further, the prevailing land and housing market dynamics also act as a constraint to undertaking such initiatives. There is a definite need for government action in this sphere.
- Local governments with an on-ground knowledge of realities will be able to respond to these as opposed to State Governments who have a more top-down and homogenising view of housing and other issues.
- It is therefore essential to move away from the current state government based policy onus and equip local governments in terms of capacity to cognize such issues, collect data, and to possess the powers and resources to respond to dynamic phenomena such as migration.

3. MISSION INDRADHANUSH 2.0: REITERATING INDIA'S COMMITMENT TO VACCINES FOR ALL

- The government is dedicated to achieving the highest standards of health and well-being for the nation. Immunisation programme is a critical component of its commitment towards Universal Health Coverage.
- It is integral to India's efforts of reducing the burden of vaccine preventable diseases and achieving universal care for children.
- According to National Family Health Survey -4, the full immunisation coverage is around 62%. The factors limiting Vaccination Include:
 - ✓ Rapid urbanisation
 - ✓ Presence of large migrating and isolated populations that are difficult to reach
 - ✓ Low demand from under informed and unaware populations.

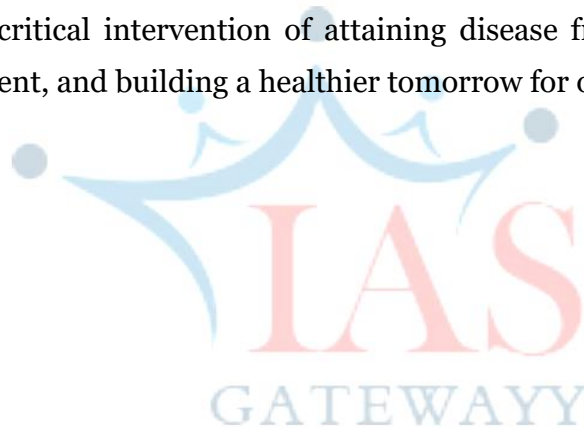
Universal Immunisation Programme:

- Government of India had launched 'Expanded Program for Immunisation' in 1978, which was later termed as 'Universal Immunisation Program' in 1985 aiming to reduce mortality and morbidity among children from vaccine preventable diseases.
- India has achieved ground-breaking success in eradicating/eliminating life-threatening vaccine preventable diseases by systemically implementing vaccination programmes. These include small pox, polio and maternal and neonatal tetanus.
- Despite this, persisting challenges such as vast population, poor sanitation and hygiene, and a difficult geographical terrain that make containing outbreak of disease and increasing access to vaccines difficult.
- Owing to low childhood vaccination coverage, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched Mission Indradhanush in 2014 to target under-served, vulnerable, resistant and inaccessible populations.
- These included pregnant women and children who had previously been left out, or had dropped out, of immunisation programmes.
- The Universal Immunization Programme provides life-saving vaccines to all children across the country free of cost to protect them against Tuberculosis, Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Polio, Hepatitis B, Pneumonia and Meningitis due to Haemophilus Influenzae type b (Hib), Measles, Rubella, Japanese Encephalitis (JE) and Rotavirus diarrhoea. (Rubella, JE and Rotavirus vaccine in select states and districts).

- In 2017, to accelerate the progress of immunisation Intensified Mission Indradhanush was launched. It aimed to achieve 90% Full Immunisation Coverage with focus towards districts and urban areas with persistently low levels.
- Now the government is poised to launch Intensified Mission Indradhanush 2.0 between Dec 2019-March 2020 to deliver a programme that is informed by the lessons learnt from the previous phases and seeks to escalate efforts to achieve the goal of attaining a 90% national immunisation coverage across India.
- In order to mobilise the identified beneficiaries, there is intensive collaboration with other ministries, civil society, NGOs, youths, etc.

Conclusion:

- With the launch of Intensified Mission Indradhanush 2.0, India has the opportunity to achieve further reductions in deaths among children under five years of age, and achieve the Sustainable Development Goal of ending preventable child deaths by 2030.
- Vaccines are a truly critical intervention of attaining disease free India and are the key to safeguarding our present, and building a healthier tomorrow for our future generations.



4. ADDRESSING STUBBLE BURNING WITH COOPERATIVE MODEL

- Pollution by stubble burning has become an annual phenomenon in large parts of northern India. The reason behind to burn the stubble that can yield income and fertility to the soil is the small gap of time between harvesting of paddy and sowing of wheat, the other main crop.
- Also, the farmers have limited access to dispose the straw, clean the land and prepare the seed bed for wheat well in time.
- Punjab had been contributing about 60% of the share in the food stocks of paddy even with only 1.5% if the area. Disposing the paddy straw is not a problem that has no solution; rather, it is simple and remunerative and must be adopted at the earliest.
- Reduction of the sizeable area under paddy would not be a feasible alternative in order to ensure enough food stock.
- Therefore, the issue of straw burning has to be settled through other measures like manufacturing of paper and cardboard, production of mushroom where paddy straw can be used as raw material, etc.
- There is a scepticism that an individual farmer may not install such a unit irrespective of the size of the farm he is holding. Also, a single unit even of the largest size cannot be economical because the straw is spread throughout the area and transportation to a single point would be a big constraint.

Cooperative Model to solve the problem:

- The cooperative model already experienced in the dairy is the most viable and prudent option in addressing this problem. There is at least two cardboard and paper manufacturing units in every block.
- A cooperative society in the area with the membership of local farmers and farm labourers can be formed and such units must be affiliated to the apex body of the state federation of cooperative for rice straw management.
- Production of bio-gas needs technical help and extension services. The cooperative umbrella of the same pattern can however help the farmers and farm labourers throughout the state in this venture.
- Basmati is a variety of rice that is grown on the river banks, India and Pakistan being its major producers. It is much demanded in the Middle East, European and America.
- The supply cannot fulfil the demand of foreign orders. Punjab cannot discard this single much paying export crop, albeit it involves the problem of stubble burning.
- Stubble burning has to be stopped. But looking into the real problem at micro as well as macro level concerned with food security and concerns of the farm community at large, it should be

dealt sympathetically with the alternative measures, and cooperative model stands out to be the most appropriate approach to address this problem, which is more viable and sustainable.

- Small scale farmers would be satisfied with the less but assured income than to drift towards commercial crops irrespective of their profit that have any risk of fluctuating price and yield.



5. DEVELOPING NATURAL FOREST COVER: A CASE STUDY FROM YADADRI, TELANGANA

- A systematic approach of forest management to sustain the ecological balance and stability of the forest is gaining momentum in India. Innovative reforestation approaches are explored to increase the forest cover and climate amelioration.
- Under ‘Telanganaku Haritha haram’, a flagship programme to create an entire forest instead of mere plantation. It also taught that forests that have been cleared in diversion cases can be compensated by creating forests instead of plantation.
- This led to exploration of the principle of Akira Miyawaki, an expert in restoration of natural vegetation on degraded land. He invented the Miyawaki restoration technique to protect the lowland areas against natural calamities like tsunami.

Miyawaki Principles of Natural Forest:

- ✓ No defined spacing between plants
- ✓ Soil enrichment must be done before taking up plantation
- ✓ High density planting of herbs, shrubs and tree species up to 10000 plants per hectare.
- ✓ Watering should be done at least up to next rainy season after planting
- ✓ Mulching should be done after planting to suppress weed and prevent evaporation
- ✓ No existing tree in the area should be removed while doing soil enrichment
- ✓ Watering is to be done with tankers and pipe sprinkling instead of flood irrigation
- ✓ Periodical weeding is to be done till the end of next rainy season after planting
- ✓ Seedling or saplings of all sizes can be planted to give the plantation a 3-tier look of a natural forest
- ✓ Analysis of soil properties done in advance so as to choose the best soil enrichment practices
- ✓ Except weeds no other naturally grown species shall be removed from the plots.
- Miyawaki Principles are applied in Yadadri Natural Forest Establishment Model for the accomplishment of the goal of creating a man-made forest.
- The successful YNF model can be a revolutionary intervention towards increasing the greenery, climate amelioration and wasteland development.

Outcome of the successful YNF model:

- Higher biodiversity compared to plantation in a unit area
- It can be home for wildlife like butterflies, squirrels, birds, reptiles, etc within one year
- Natural forest look with multilayered evergreen trees
- More carbon fixing per unit area
- Self-sustainable forests

6. CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT, 2019: A NEW MILESTONE IN EMPOWERING CONSUMERS

- The Indian consumer market has gone through a drastic change over the last two decades with the advent of digital technologies internet,, rapid penetration of e-commerce, smart phones, and cloud technologies.
- The Consumer Protection Act, 1986 being the foremost legislature for protecting the rights of the consumers had become archaic and does not cover rapid changes in the consumer marketplaces, especially those dealing with online shopping, teleshopping, product recall, unsafe contracts, and misleading advertisements.

Consumer Protection Act, 1986:

- It provided a legislative framework for better protection of the interests of the consumer by creating a formal but three-tier quasi-judicial dispute resolution mechanism at National, State and District levels exclusively for consumers.
- The consumer courts were established with the twin objective for speedy redressal of consumer complaints and establish quasi-judicial authorities unlike civil courts to provide compensation to the consumers.

Shortcomings in the CPA, 1986:

- The CPA, 1986 has become outdated and does not consider rapid changes in consumer marketplaces.
- Due to heavy pendency of cases and frequent adjournments delay in getting justice takes place.
- The consumer commissions have been overburdened with pending cases and the buyer-seller contract is tilted in favour of the seller.
- The posts of President and members in various consumer forums which are lying are vacant.
- Consumer commissions are functioning with staff deputed from other departments who do not have any experience in judicial practices.
- There has been lack of proper coordination among the President and members of the consumer commissions for timely adjudication of cases and quite often around ten or fifteen adjournments are allowed.
- The president of the National/State Commissions is not empowered to take up suo moto action in consideration of the damages affecting a sizable number of populations, e.g. misleading advertisements.

Highlights of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019:

- The definition of ‘consumer’ would include both offline and online consumers.
- Establishment of the Central Consumer Protection Authority to promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers, to investigate and intervene. Thus CCPA can act on:
 - ✓ Complaints of unfair trade practices
 - ✓ Issue safety guidelines
 - ✓ Order product recall or discontinuation of services
 - ✓ Refer complaints to other regulators
 - ✓ Has punitive powers such as imposing penalties
 - ✓ Can file actions before consumer commissions
 - ✓ Intervene in proceeding in matters of consumer rights or unfair trade practices
- The pecuniary jurisdiction of adjudicatory bodies increased in case of District Commission to Rs.1 Crore, in case of State Commission between 1 crore to 10 crore and for National Commission above Rs. 10 crore.
- The act also lists punitive actions against those who are found to be manufacturing, storing, distributing, selling or importing products that are spurious or contain adulterants.
- Provisions for ‘product liability’ action for or on account of harm caused by or resulting from any product by way of fixing the liability of a manufacturer to a claimant.
- Provision for ‘mediation’ as an Alternate Dispute Resolution mechanism which aims at giving legislative basis to resolution of consumer disputes through mediation, thus making the process less cumbersome, simple and quicker.
- E-commerce guidelines would be mandatory under protection law which would include 14 day deadline to effect refund request.
- It also mentions that the State Government would establish a consumer mediation cell which would be attached to the consumer courts and each of the regional benches.
 - ✓ Thus the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, with its innovative changes, would help in empowering consumers and provide justice to the needy in time.