

## AIR Spotlight - Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs

AIR Spotlight is an insightful programme featured daily on the All India Radio Newsonair. In this program, many eminent panellists discuss issues of importance which can be quite helpful in [IAS exam](#) preparation. In this article, the topic of discussion is the achievements and future plans of the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA).

### Participants:

1. Shree Hardeep Singh Puri, Union Minister of State, MoHUA
2. Ashutosh Shukla, AIR correspondent

### Context:

In 2021, three urban missions, the Smart Cities Mission (SCM), AMRUT, and the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) will be completed, six years after their launch. These three schemes were part of a visionary agenda for urban rejuvenation.

### How is urbanization an important factor for Indian policymaking to achieve development goals?

More than one-third of the Indian population is living in urban areas. According to the 2011 census, 360 million people were living in urban areas, and it is predicted that at the end of the year 2030, approximately 600 million Indians will be living in urban areas. This rapid pace of urbanization makes it inevitable to pay heed to sustainable urban development in national policymaking to achieve goals of sustainable and inclusive economic development of the country.

### How do urban areas help in development?

Cities provide economic opportunities and employment, services to citizens (education, medical), infrastructure, and support to nearby rural areas.

### Major issues with urbanization in India:

Unplanned urbanization and migration pose serious development challenges in terms of delivery of services, lack of affordable housing, living conditions, creation of slums, issues related to sustainability of cities, pollution, waste management, and human mobility.

### Urbanization and UN Sustainable Development Goals:

The United Nations recognized urbanization as a crucial factor for sustainable development and included 'Making of Cities and Human Settlements Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable' in its [Sustainable Development Goals](#), 2030 as Goal-11.

### **Measures taken by the Government of India for sustainable urbanization and achievements:**

The government of India is accordingly giving a high priority to building sustainable and smart cities that are resilient to meet the challenges posed by rapid urbanization.

For this, the government of India has taken the following measures:

1. Smart Cities Mission
  2. Atal Mission for Rejuvenation & Urban Transformation (AMRUT)
  3. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban
  4. Swachh Bharat Mission
  5. Establishment of Real Estate Regulatory Authority
- The focus on the urban sector during the last 6 years can be gauged by the infusion of overall investments to the tune of Rs. 12 lakh crore, as compared to Rs. 1.5 lakh crore in the period between 2004-2014.
  - The above three Missions have not only developed urban infrastructure, whether it be water supply, sanitation facilities, housing for all but also have started the use of data, technology, and innovation in the planning and management of our cities. These Missions helped during the Covid-19 pandemic bringing relief to the lives of people faced with the vagaries of the pandemic.

### **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U)**

In line with the vision of Prime Minister- '[Housing for All](#)' by 2022, PMAY-U has registered outstanding success. Approximately 1.12 crore houses have been sanctioned for beneficiaries, out of that more than 83 lakh houses are grounded and more than 50 lakh completed. Over ₹ 100,000 crores of Central Assistance has already been released. The infusion of such a large amount of funding has propelled the economy.

### **Smart Cities Mission**

Smart Cities Mission is a transformational mission aimed to bring about a paradigm shift in the practice of urban development in India. The mission is operated as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme. The Central Government will give financial support to the extent of Rs. 48,000 crores over 5 years i.e. on an average, Rs.100 crore per city per year. There is no standard definition or template of a smart city. In the context of India, the following are the six fundamental principles on which the concept of Smart Cities is based:

1. The community at the core of planning and implementation
  2. Ability to generate greater outcomes with the use of lesser resources
  3. Cooperative and competitive federalism
  4. Innovation methods, integrated and sustainable solutions
  5. Use of technology, sectorial and financial convergence.
- Projects developed under the Smart Cities Mission are multi-sectoral in nature and depict the desires of the local population. As of date, 69 Smart Cities have developed and operationalized Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs) in the country.
  - The operational ICCCs worked as war-rooms for COVID pandemic management, and along with other smart infrastructure developed under the mission, helped cities in fighting the pandemic through information dissemination, improving communication, predictive analysis, and supporting effective management.
  - 310 Smart Road projects have been completed and 459 Smart Road projects are at the tender/implementation stage. Similarly, the Smart Solar, Smart Water, and Vibrant Public Spaces projects are heading towards progressive paths in the mission.

Read more on the [Smart Cities Mission](#) in the link.

### AMRUT mission

Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) was started in 500 cities covering 60% of the urban population to resolve the issues of Water Supply, Sewerage and septage management, Storm Water Drainage to reduce flooding, Non-motorized Urban Transport, and creating green spaces/parks in cities having more than 1 lakh population. All cities having a population above 1 lakh are covered under the mission The achievements of the mission are highlighted below:

- **Total tap connections:** 105 lakh plus water tap connections provided against the target of 139 lakh.
- **Sewerage and Septage connections:** 78 plus lakhs connections provided against a target of 145 lakh.
- **Treatment capacity developed:** 1240 MLD (Millions of Litre Per Day) capacity of Sewage Treatment Plants (STP) has been developed and 4960 (Millions of Litre Per Day) capacity of STPs is under progress.
- 1,840 water logging points have been eliminated.
- **Green spaces and parks:** 1850 parks and 3770 acres of green spaces developed.
- **Streetlights:** 88 lakhs street lights have been replaced with LED lights resulting in 192 crore units of energy-saving per year and reductions of carbon emissions by 15 lakh tons.

### Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban

The Swachh Bharat Mission - Urban (SBM-U), launched on 2nd October 2014, aims at making urban India free from open defecation and achieving 100% scientific management of municipal solid waste in 4,041 statutory towns in the nation.

99 per cent of India's urban local bodies have achieved open defecation-free status and are certified by third parties. This kind of certification will motivate urban local bodies to maintain their open defecation-free status in the future.

### **Urban mobility:**

Urban mobility with last-mile connectivity is a very important factor to ensure the quality of life in urban areas. In this regard, India has achieved 718 kilometres of operational metro rail tracks and another 1076 kilometres of metro rail tracks are under construction.

### **Urbanization in India - The Way Forward**

Cities and metropolitans are engines of economic growth, and contribute about a large part of India's GDP. Rapid urbanization is causing a growing number of slum dwellers, inadequate and overburdened infrastructure and services, air pollution, etc. Hence to achieve sustainable, inclusive, and resilient urbanization, India needs to pay attention to affordable and green housing, eco-friendly transportation such as metro, electric vehicles, new technology-based waste management, and water treatment plants, and circular economy-based methods.

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