

AIR Spotlight - 20 Years of Good Governance: Urbanization as an Opportunity

AIR Spotlight is an insightful program 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 urbanisation as an opportunity.

Context:

The article will analyze the achievements in the area of urban development during the governance of PM Narendra Modi.

Background:

- The primary objective of an independent country and democracy is to ensure a healthy and safe environment for every citizen of the country whether living in rural or urban areas because both rural and urban areas are equally important for the overall development of the country.
- The goal of the welfare state is to provide a decent standard of living and freedom to earn livelihood with dignity to its citizens.
- The government strives to provide each individual with the opportunity to enhance their skills and work for the betterment of their lives.

Key Initiatives in the direction of Urbanization:

The following measures have been taken:

PM-AWAS (U):

- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Urban (PMAY-U), a flagship mission of the Government of India being implemented by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), was launched on 25th June 2015.
- The Mission addresses urban housing shortage among the EWS/LIG and MIG categories including the slum dwellers by ensuring a pucca house to all eligible urban households by the year 2022 when the nation completes 75 years of independence.
- The Mission covers the entire urban area consisting of Statutory Towns, Notified Planning Areas, Development Authorities, Special Area Development Authorities, Industrial Development Authorities, or any such authority under State legislation that is entrusted with the functions of urban planning & regulations.
- All houses under PMAY(U) have basic amenities like a toilet, water supply, electricity, and kitchen.
- The Mission promotes women empowerment by providing the ownership of houses in the name of the female members or in joint name. Preference is also given to differently-abled persons, senior citizens, SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities, single women, transgender, and other weaker & vulnerable sections of society.
- A PMAY(U) house ensures dignified living along with a sense of security and pride of ownership to the beneficiaries.

Read more on the [Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana](#) in the link.

AMRUT Yojana:

- The Government of India has launched the **Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)** to provide basic civic amenities like water supply, sewerage, urban transport, parks to improve the quality of life for all especially the poor and the disadvantaged.
- The focus of the Mission is on infrastructure creation that has a direct link to the provision of better services to the citizens.
- The purpose of “AMRUT” mission is to:
 - ensure that every household has access to a tap with an assured supply of water and a sewerage connection,
 - increase the amenity value of cities by developing greenery and well maintained open spaces e.g. parks, and
 - reduce pollution by switching to public transport or constructing facilities for non-motorized transport e.g. walking and cycling.
- The major project components are water supply system, sewerage, septage, storm water drainage, urban transport, green space and parks, reforms management and support, capacity building, etc. in that order of priority.
- The Mission covers covering 500 cities that includes all cities and towns with a population of over one lakh with notified municipalities.

PM-Svanidhi:

- Street vendors represent a very important constituent of the urban informal economy and play a significant role in ensuring the availability of goods and services at affordable rates at the doorstep of city dwellers.
- They are known as vendors, hawkers, thelewala, rehriwala, etc. in different areas/contexts.
- The COVID-19 pandemic and consequent lockdowns have adversely impacted the livelihoods of street vendors. They usually work with a small capital base and might have consumed the same during the lockdown.
- Therefore, there is an urgent need to provide credit for working capital to street vendors to resume their business.
- To support the street vendors, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched a scheme PM Street Vendor’s Atmanirbhar Nidhi (**PM SVANidhi**) to empower Street Vendors by not only extending loans to them but also for their holistic development and economic upliftment.
- The scheme is a Central Sector Scheme i.e. fully funded by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs with the following objectives:
 - To facilitate working capital loan up to Rs10,000;
 - To incentivize regular repayment; and
 - To reward digital transactions.

- The scheme will help formalize the street vendors with the above objectives and will open up new opportunities to this sector to move up the economic ladder.

DAY-NULM:

- Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) is implemented to reduce poverty and vulnerability of urban poor households. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (HUPA) launched this scheme.
- This scheme enables the urban poor to access gainful self-employment and skilled wage employment opportunities.
- DAY-NULM believes that the poor have an innate desire to come out of poverty. They have an entrepreneurial spirit. The challenge is to unleash the capabilities of the poor to generate meaningful and sustainable livelihoods.
- [DAY-NULM](#) aims to motivate the urban poor to form their institutions which will be provided with sufficient capacity to manage the external environment, expand their skills, access finance, assets, and enterprises.

HRIDAY Yojana:

- The **National Heritage Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY)** that seeks to preserve and rejuvenate the rich cultural heritage of the country was launched by the then Minister of Urban Development and current Vice President Shri M.Venkaiah Naidu.
- The main objective of [HRIDAY](#) is to preserve the character of the soul of heritage cities and facilitate inclusive heritage-linked urban development by exploring various avenues including involving the private sector. Specific objectives are:
 - Planning, development, and implementation of heritage-sensitive infrastructure,
 - Service delivery and infrastructure provisioning in historic city core areas,
 - Preserve and revitalize heritage wherein tourists can connect directly with the city's unique character,
 - Develop and document a heritage asset inventory of cities – natural, cultural, living, and built heritage as a basis for urban planning, growth, and service provision & delivery,
 - Implementation and enhancement of basic services delivery with a focus on sanitation services like public conveniences, toilets, water taps, street lights with the use of the latest technologies in improving tourist facilities/amenities,
 - Local capacity enhancement for inclusive heritage-based industry,
 - Create effective linkages between tourism and cultural facilities and also the conservation of natural and built heritage, and
 - Urban heritage adaptive rehabilitation and maintenance, including appropriate technologies for historic buildings retrofitting.

Smart Cities Mission:

- The [Smart Cities Mission](#) was launched by the Hon Prime Minister on 25 June 2015.

- The main objective of the Mission 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'.
- The Mission aims to drive economic growth and improve quality of life through comprehensive work on social, economic, physical, and institutional pillars of the city.
- The focus is on sustainable and inclusive development by the creation of replicable models which act as lighthouses to other aspiring cities.
- The purpose of the Smart Cities Mission is to drive economic growth and improve the quality of life of people by enabling local area development and harnessing technology, especially technology that leads to Smart outcomes.
- The Mission is operated as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.

PMKVY:

- **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)** is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) implemented by the National Skill Development Corporation.
- The objective of this Skill Certification Scheme is to enable a large number of Indian youth to take up industry-relevant skill training that will help them in securing a better livelihood.

More on the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana [here](#).

Metro Expansion:

- Urban transport is an integral part of urban development.
- India is set to increase its metro network from an existing operational 697.43 km to a planned 1,985 km (increase by 1,315 km at an estimated investment of Rs 5,354 bn).
- India currently has an operational metro network in various cities – namely, Kolkata Metro in West Bengal (oldest metro in India), Delhi Metro (longest metro in India) and Noida Metro NCR, Hyderabad Metro in Telangana, Bangalore/Namma Metro in Karnataka, Chennai Metro in Tamil Nadu, Kochi Metro in Kerala, Mumbai Metro and Nagpur Metro in Maharashtra, Ahmedabad Metro in Gujarat, Jaipur Metro in Rajasthan and Lucknow Metro in Uttar Pradesh.
- Similar metros have been planned and/or are under construction in new cities totalling 363 km (an outlay of Rs 1,331 bn) – namely, Pune Metro, Navi Mumbai Metro and Thane Metro in Maharashtra, Surat Metro in Gujarat, Kanpur Metro, and Agra Metro In Uttar Pradesh, Indore and Bhopal Metro in Madhya Pradesh, Patna Metro in Bihar and Dehradun-Haridwar-Rishikesh metro in Uttarakhand.

North Eastern Region Urban Development Program:

- The North Eastern Region Urban Development Programme (NERUDP) Phase-I is being implemented by the Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD) with financial assistance from [Asian Development Bank \(ADB\)](#).
- It covers the capital cities of 5 North Eastern States viz. Agartala (Tripura), Aizawl (Mizoram), Gangtok (Sikkim), and Kohima (Nagaland).
- The project covers priority urban services:

- Water Supply,
 - Sewerage and Sanitation, and
 - Solid Waste Management.
- In addition, Project Management and Capacity Development of the ULBs through institutional and financial reforms have also been included so that the ULBs become capable of planning and implementing infrastructure projects.

Sabarmati Project:

- The Sabarmati Riverfront Development has been envisaged as a comprehensive development of approximately 11 kilometres of length on both the banks of the Sabarmati River encompassing all its potentials as primary goals.
- The project approach is to bring about an overall environmental improvement, social upliftment, and sustainable development along the riverfront.
- The project aims to provide Ahmedabad with a meaningful waterfront environment along the banks of the Sabarmati River and to redefine the identity of Ahmedabad around the river.
- The project looks to reconnect the city with the river and positively transform the neglected aspects of the riverfront.
- The objectives of this multidimensional project can be categorized under three topics:
 - **Environmental protection:** Reduction in erosion and flood to safeguard the city sewage diversion to clean the river water retention and recharge.
 - **Social Upliftment:** Rehabilitation and resettlement of riverbed dwellers and activities, creation of parks and public spaces; provision of socio-cultural amenities for the city.
 - **Sustainable development:** Generation of resources, revitalization of neighbourhoods.
- The concept plan and design development for phase II have emphasized greener development having stepped green multi-layered promenades, excellent road network, active green parks, children's play area, food plaza, amphitheatres, etc.

Conclusion:

The government has launched various initiatives to uplift the standard of living of every citizen and is continuously working towards providing benefits to each section of society.

Read more Gist of AIR Spotlight [here](#).