CHAPTER - 1

THE CONCEPT OF URBANISATION
Urbanisation is the inevitable consequence of the socio-economic changes taking place in the country. The accelerating rural-urban migration in search of better living conditions, education of children, employment in the unorganized sector, medical aid etc have led to enormous urbanization, particularly during the last two decades. While urban population stood at 30.5 per cent of the total population of the country as per the 2001 census, it is expected to touch 50 per cent in another two decades (2030). At present approximately 307 million people live in 3700 towns and cities spread over the country. An important feature of urbanisation in India is that urbanisation in class I towns is growing, that is, the process of urbanisation in the country has been large city oriented as indicated by the massive increase in the percentage share of urban population in class I cities from 26.0 in 1901 to 68.7 in 2001. But at the same time the number of class I cities has also increased over the decades—there were only 24 class I cities in 1901 whereas the number increased to 393 in 2001. It is thus clear that the future of India is going to be inescapably urban. The towns and cities in India are growing at unprecedented rates
setting new trends, both positive and negative, social, political, cultural and environmental in the country. Historically cities have been the driving forces in economic and social development. A positive aspect of rapid urbanization is its increased contribution to national income while its negative aspect is the growth of urban slums and urban slum population necessitating several measures to effectively tackle the infrastructure problems they create. Thus sustainable urbanisation is the most pressing challenge facing the nation in our times. Therefore, there has to be an unavoidable shift of governments' focus from rural to urban. The recently introduced centrally sponsored urban development schemes like Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium towns, Integrated Housing and Slum Development etc are some of the appropriate steps in this direction which will enable the needed urban development to keep pace with the increasing demands of the fast growing urban areas and urban population.

Population of India is becoming predominantly urban. The next decade is expected to see an unprecedented scale of urban growth. Since the exponential increase of urban population cannot be controlled, the social and environmental challenges of urbanisation have to be addressed properly to cope with fast urbanisation.\(^1\) Industrialisation and urbanisation lead to large influx of rural migrants to towns and cities creating problems of social maladjustments.\(^2\)

There are several positive aspects of urbanisation. India's National Commission on Urbanisation Report (1988) stressed the role of cities as engines of economic growth, reservoirs of capital and skill, centres of knowledge and innovation, sources of formal and informal sector employment, generators of public financial resources for development, and hopes of millions of rural
migrants. The Rural-urban relationship Committee in its Report describes the role of ULGs thus:

(a) to function as local units of self-government;
(b) to provide local public services and convenience for healthy living, work and play;
(c) to ensure planned and regulated development of urban areas;
(d) to mobilise local resources and utilise them to the maximum good of the community; and
(e) to promote social, economic and cultural development in an integrated manner.

It should be the endeavour of the governments-central and state-to strengthen the ULGs by all means to achieve the above goals.

As per the 2001 census 30.50 per cent of India's population live in urban areas.

Table: 1.1 **Urban Population of India: 1901 – 2001**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Urban population (million)</th>
<th>Percentage of Urban to total population</th>
<th>Decadal growth rate (percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>41.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>109.1</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>159.5</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>46.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>217.6</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>306.9</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Urban Affairs, New Delhi, 2003

Over the years there has been a continuous concentration of population in class I towns. ‘The big cities attained inordinately..."
large population size leading to virtual collapse in the urban scenario and followed by basic problems in the field of housing, slum, water, infrastructure, quality of life etc."

Table: 1.2 **Distribution of Urban Population by Size Class of Towns**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Population Range</th>
<th>No. of Towns</th>
<th>Share of urban Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1, 00,000 &amp; above</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>65.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>50,000 to 99,999</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>10.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>20,000 to 49,999</td>
<td>947</td>
<td>13.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>10,000 to 19,999</td>
<td>1,167</td>
<td>7.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>5,000 to 9,999</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>2.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Less than 5,000</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>All Classes</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,696</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Ministry of Urban Affairs, New Delhi, 2003.*

**Basic Features and Pattern of India’s Urbanisation**

The basic features of urbanisation in India can be highlighted as the following:

- Lopsided urbanisation has induced the growth of class I cities.
- Urbanisation has occurred without industrialisation and a strong economic base.
- Urbanisation has been mainly a product of demographic explosion and poverty induced rural-urban migration.
- Rapid urbanisation has led to a massive growth of slums followed by misery, poverty, unemployment, exploitation, inequalities, degradation in the quality of urban life.
Urbanisation has occurred not due to urban pull but due to rural push.

The pattern of urbanisation in India is characterised by continuous concentration of population and activities in large cities. Urbanisation is associated with higher incomes, improved health, higher literacy, improved quality of life and other benefits. Yet, along with the benefits of urbanisation have come environmental and social ills. Urbanisation affects the environment in three major ways: implication due to urban poverty which is a result of migration, stressed infrastructure and management systems and finally increasing consumerism. Urbanisation in India is followed by some persistent basic problems: inadequate housing, mushroom growth of slums, poor transport, water supply and sanitation, water pollution and air pollution, inadequate provision for social infrastructure (school, hospital etc.). Class I cities such as Kolkata, Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai etc have reached the saturation level of employment generating capacity. Since these cities are suffering from urban poverty, urban unemployment, housing shortage, and crisis in urban infrastructural services, they cannot absorb any more distressed rural migrants. Mega cities grow in urban population but not in urban prosperity and culture. Hence it is urbanisation without functional characteristics. Urbanisation causes degeneration in social and economic equalities leading to social conflicts, crimes and anti-social activities. Lopsided and uncontrolled urbanisation leads to environmental deterioration, air, sound and water pollution. All these together lead to degradation in the quality of urban life. Hence the accelerating rural-urban migration makes the urban crisis more acute. Urban managers have, therefore, to address these issues and tackle the problems created by urbanisation effectively.
The inevitability of urbanisation is due to the fact that cities and towns are engines of growth and under favourable conditions provide many opportunities for social advancement and economic development. But urban areas today represent high levels of social and economic inequalities and significant concentration of poverty. Thus, the current global trends in urbanization imply nothing less than the urbanization of poverty and social exclusion. Now, the responsibilities of both Central and State Governments is “a rights-based and need-based approach to development” which is important for both distributing development gains and ensuring equal participation of all stakeholders in the development process. The efforts made so far to arrest urban poverty have not yielded satisfactory and expected results, and as a consequence the widening gulf between the rich and poor continues as before. If anything, it has only widened further. The governments have fallen behind their commitment in arresting urban poverty. It has to be now the endeavour of each government to take up a need-based as well as rights-based approach of urban development in order to make urban areas better dwelling places. Such an approach means continuously endeavouring to provide safe drinking water and sanitation for all citizens, facilities for education and healthcare, land and housing and, above all these create income generating opportunities. In short life must be made liveable.

Incorporating these rights in national policies and state legislation is critical in bringing about a fundamental change in our approach to sustainable development. A rights-based approach enables the generation of the political will and creation of culture of resource allocation that places the interest of the downtrodden on par with that of the upper strata of society. Different Governments have proposed different initiatives to achieve this objective. The role of urban local governments in implementing these initiatives is
more important than that of the State Governments and Central Governments whose business is only to initiate and propose schemes for urban development encompassing urban poverty alleviation.

Need Based vs. Right-based Approach to Urban Development

All Urban Local Governments in India do take up urban developmental works as per the felt needs of the urban areas. But their approaches to meet the ‘needs’ are wanting in the correct perspective. There is a dire need to shift from the need-based approach to rights-based approach in the prevailing circumstances. The States and Nation have recognized the rights affirmed in the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” and have tried to put them into effect. Several socio-economic, political and territorial changes have taken place during the past six decades, but the promotion and protection of human rights-civil, cultural, economic, political and social-continue to be the challenges to face. The rights included in the Universal Declaration are expected to be more elaborate. This includes the right to development, the right to safe drinking water, the right to a clean environment, and the “Right to the City”. The “Right to the City” concept encompasses direct participation of city dwellers in the decision making process of Urban Local Governments, the right of city dwellers to enjoy urban life fully with all the services and advantages that the ULGs provide. This right directly relates to social inclusiveness in human settlements and their sustainable development. Certain current initiatives implemented by the Government of India through the ULGs have contributed to some extent to reducing exclusion and increasing social cohesion as well as inclusiveness in urban areas. Examples include Urban Self-Employment Programme (USEP), Development of Women and Children Urban Areas (DWCUA) and Thrift & Credit Societies components of the Swarna Jayanti
Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY) scheme and other Urban Poverty Alleviation schemes. The innovative urban policies and programmes and the efforts to promote legal reforms towards increasing democratic urban governance and expanding citizens' rights fulfil the objective of “The Right to the City” to some extent.

“The Right to the City” is a new concept to India since Urban Development in India has been so far through need-based approach rather than rights-based approach. An urban area in the modern sense is one in which the solidarity of citizens is established and which provides a multi-cultural atmosphere, enables humanization of urban environment and makes urban dwellers aware of their rights. The urban areas have to formulate and implement new urban policies taking into account the felt needs as well as the recognized rights of the citizens.

There are substantial national and international initiatives for a consolidated approach to inclusive urban legislation and improved urban governance. These approaches are yet to be conceptualised. As a first step in this direction the Indian Parliament enacted the 74th Constitution Amendment Act, 1992, giving Urban Local Bodies a constitutional status to function as full-fledged local self government units. Administrators and experts from different regions and various fields of competence who include academicians, researchers, city professionals from local governments, civil servants from urban local bodies and the State and Central Governments have spent sufficient energies on innovating new urban policies to be implemented to bring about efficacy of urban development commensurate with the demands of the current age. The major issues identified by experts at various international fora include respect for human dignity, equality, tolerance and justice, Law and Urban Planning, Urban
Governance and Democracy, Civil Cosmopolitanism, Urban Law promoting Institutions, Social Cohesion and Competitiveness, Rights and Responsibilities of both Municipalities and Urban Dwellers, and Solidarity among Urban Dwellers.

Though the above ideals are valuable, they have mostly remained on paper as far as Urban India is concerned. Research institutes on urban policies and citizenship could only analyse with the existing normative tools and initiatives, provide training and conduct workshops for city managers and provide a platform for transfer of knowledge and exchange of information for researchers and decision-makers on urban policies and citizenship, but have not provided any practicable solutions to urban problems and challenges. The stake holders of urban development are quite unaware of their duties and responsibilities but are over conscious of their rights and privileges. Power and authority at the municipal level provide the required ground for bettering one's political career to politicians, but have not served as a training ground for them in urban policies and urban governance.

During the recent years several new issues have been added to the urban agenda. Local community concerns are to be given their due place in the national urban agenda and the critical importance of inclusiveness is to be highlighted. These ideals include active participation from the public, private and civil society sectors. Increased participation of the private sector and civil society in addressing the urban challenges is necessary to enable the civil society to develop a sense of belonging in providing and improving urban infrastructure. An innovative approach is required to address the urban challenges and to find practical solutions to urban problems. The private sector shares the insights and experiences of urban planners on what would improve
the quality of life in the country's growing cities. Some of the ideas expressed by the stakeholders of urban development in this direction are:

- There is the need for all stakeholders of urban development—citizens, local governments, State and Central Governments, the private sector and civil society organizations—to prepare a common urban agenda and play their part effectively without transferring their responsibility to others.
- Risk-taking and pursuit of innovation must characterise municipal leadership if urban areas are to achieve sustainable development.
- Appropriate engagements, partnerships and relationships need to be built up in an inclusive manner to better understand the urban challenges and develop practical solutions to urban problems.
- The importance of transparency and accountably should be recognised. Citizens should be made aware of the urban challenges and the steps that are being taken by Central, State and Local Governments to address them. Transparency and accountability expedite the process of enhancing actions that work and curtailing those that do not work.

The Emerging Urban Issues

- Urban issues have become a major challenge of our time. The urban local governments in our country should address the new urban challenges created by fast urbanisation efficiently and effectively to make urban life meaningful and comfortable. It requires the planning, financing and servicing of the equivalent of a
new urban area of equal population to the existing town/city over a period of a decade. The investment required to plan for and provide basic services including shelter in urban areas should be viewed as a major impetus for socio-economic development.

- All stakeholders of urban development should show a willingness to build effective coalitions to address the needs of the urban poor. There should be firm decisions and commitment of Central, State and local authorities to improve the quality of life in urban areas. The stakeholders of urban development should be actively engaged with civil society organizations and their representatives in supporting their initiatives that improve their housing and access to basic services. They should realise the need to engage with and support community initiatives to improve the living conditions of the poorest of the poor and the most vulnerable groups and to improve the urban environment.

- The Central and the State governments should meet the challenges of slum upgradation and sustainable infrastructure development. They should take all steps to attain the slum up grading targets. The urban challenge is a shift from relying on international development finance to tapping local capital markets. There is the need for the national and state (provincial) governments to play a catalytic role in building the capacity and improving the credit-worthiness of cities and towns. A separate fund must be created to provide financial assistance for investments in pro-poor housing and urban infrastructure.
• Sustainable urban development and environmental management are possible through meticulous planning and careful execution of urban development schemes like housing for urban slum dwellers, infrastructure in urban slums etc. Urban development planning is not simply the role of government officials and urban planners but of the civil society which is the ultimate beneficiary of urban development. Urban planning should be inclusive, transparent and ethical encompassing the divergent points of views of the urban planners as well as stakeholders of urban planning in order that it is sustainable. Sustainability is the backbone of new forms of planning.

Some of the observations of urban planners at certain international fora may be summed up as follows:

➢ The commitments made by certain national and provincial governments for urban development and their poverty reduction strategies have not yielded the expected results in improving the living conditions of the urban poor. In several states there is a wide gap between the objectives set and the actual achievements. The discrepancy needs to be addressed if sustainable urban development is to be achieved.

➢ Sustainability and poverty are unavoidably linked. Sustainability is a major challenge facing all urban areas in the country, though towns and cities in different states may face challenges particular to them that can be addressed by a more systematic exchange of best practices and good urban polices among all
stakeholders of urban development at the national, state and local levels.

- The youth represent a considerable proportion of people living in cities and their active participation in urban planning and urban development would go a long way in setting up the right goals. Youth, women and the vulnerable groups in urban areas could play a decisive-role in the decision-making process and therefore they should be involved in decisions that affect their lives since they can adopt strategies, bearing their specific needs in mind. The ongoing poverty-reduction schemes meant for urban poor women would considerably contribute to the sustainability of cities and communities.

- As urban areas are largely the product of private investment, the strong presence of the private sector in urban development is underscored by towns and cites. Private sector participation in urban development is necessitated to improve the quality of services and reduce their cost.

- Recognition of local needs (which differ from town to town) and decentralized planning, empowerment of local authorities, active participation of civic society, the private sector and other stakeholders go a long way in transforming towns and cities to become better places of living.

- Different departments of the governments need to prioritize the urban agenda in their respective plans and policies.

The items of urban development may be classified into six categories.
Cities and town have now become the home for one third of the nation. Urban areas are the hubs of much national production and consumption-economic and social process that generate wealth and opportunity. But the fast growth of urban areas also brings with it several problems like disease, crime, pollution, poverty and social unrest. Another serious problem of urban areas is that more than 50 per cent of the population live in slums that have little or no access to basic amenities like shelter, safe drinking water, sanitation, education and health services. “One of the most crucial challenges facing developing countries over the decade will be meeting the growing demand for basic social services, infrastructure and public facilities in cities.”

Another serious challenge before the urban managers is environmental deterioration as a result of multiplication of population and generation of waste and non-ecological use of resources fuelled by commerce and industry. Besides, the thoughtless and even callous discharge of industrial and household effluents into water bodies has emerged as another major hazard. The growth of informal settlements with heavy human concentration and scant urban infrastructure has added to the dangers of disease and epidemics, particularly in vulnerable areas. The unbridled rise of automobiles rendering the air unfit for inhaling leading to respiratory diseases has added to the already present health hazard. The increasing use of non-degradable material by the majority of population has resulted in solid waste management becoming pathetic, even desperate day by day in
many cities. The lack of adequate sanitary dumping and recycling facilities has further aggravated the problem. Thus, urban environmental care has become another important challenge the ULGs have to face.

The country, in fact even the world, has witnessed unprecedented growth of urbanization during the last two decades, necessitating special attention of governments to urban development. While at the global level 30 per cent of all urban dwellers live in slums creating several infrastructure problems, the magnitude of the problems has increased substantially during the last decade and a half: 283 million more slum dwellers have joined the global urban population. At the national level 55% of urban population live in slums. While the annual growth rate of urban population is 3 per cent, the growth rate of slum population is 2 per cent (as per 2001 estimates). Besides, the slums are overcrowded and have become poverty-stricken corners of a geopolitical chess board fraught with problems with thousands of poor joining them every day, adding to the already existing problems like inadequate shelter, sanitation, electricity and other services which are essential for an acceptable standard of living. The biggest problem arguably, confronting humanity during the 21st Century is 'how to manage the situation?' The responsibility of urban planners and stakeholders of urban development is not only to plan for urban development to keep pace with the increasing demands of rapidly increasing urban population, but also to contrive measures for rural development to minimise the accelerating rural push and urban pull. The national, provincial as well as local governments have, therefore, to muster and energise all their strength as never before in the quest for sustainable urbanisation. The role of governments, the ULGs and the Civil
Society partners therefore, in making a difference for the better is clearly underlined.

In response to the fast urbanization and shelter crisis the governments and urban local bodies should take up a full-fledged programme taking into consideration the dynamics of urban problems, guided by experts, academics, urban planners, stakeholders of urban development and finally those who are in need of basic services policy-makers and local communities must come to grips with the urban problems and find workable and lasting solutions. The ultimate objective of all urban development programmes is “Cities without Slums.” A four-point strategy is suggested for attaining this goal: advocacy of global norms, analysis of information, filed-testing of solution and financing. These core functions consist of monitoring and research, policy development, capacity building and financing for housing and urban development.

The United Nations millennium declaration recognises the dire circumstances of the urban poor and articulates the commitment of the member-states to improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by the year 2020 (Millennium Development Goal No.7). This is, however, only 10 per cent of the world slums population, which, if left unchecked, is expected to multiply threefold to 3 billion by 2050. India has, therefore, to contribute its best to tackle this appalling issue within its boundaries. This should be commenced with reduction by half of the number without sustainable access to safe drinking water. This would be possible through the collective efforts of government, regional and local authorities, civil society and the private sector. Good governance is characterised by the interdependent principles
of sustainability, subsidy, equity, efficiency, transparency and accountability, security, civic engagement and citizenship.

**Campaign for Housing and Secure Tenure**

Urban slum dwellers beyond count are homeless and women and children among them are the first victims of violence, crime, overcrowding, and all the health hazards associated with inhuman and dangerous living conditions in our rapidly growing towns and cities. It is among the slum dwellers that epidemics take the heaviest toll. It is, therefore, necessary to take up a campaign for secure tenure that promotes adequate shelter for all by providing sustainable housing and land policy, particularly for women. This programme enables slum upgradation and the prevention of evictions. The successful programmes in one city can glean the best practices from another city. The two main components of secure tenure campaign are: (1) Implementation of land, housing and property rights and secure tenure for women; and (2) Housing Policy and Development Section, which component focuses on building standards and technologies and work to ensure a rights-based approach to housing policies.

Urban development programmes should concentrate particularly on women and child development. Women are the most affected in forced evictions, resettlement schemes, slum clearance, domestic violence, civil conflict, discriminatory inheritance laws and practices, development projects and globalization polices. A well-planned land management and tenure system, well-defined policies and legislation help achieve adequate shelter, security of tenure and equal access to economic resources for all with a specific focus on gender equality.
The poorest people in overcrowded cities, especially women and children, often have no rights to safeguard their legitimate interests in the face of evictions or harassment by authorities. Governments—national, provincial and local—should, therefore, launch a Housing Rights programme as a joint initiative with the primary objective of helping stakeholders of urban development in the successful implementation of the urban housing programme and to ensure the full realization of the right to adequate housing to all houseless urban dwellers. While providing housing women must be given special attention since they and children are more prone to the problems of insecurity. Employment opportunities in the unorganised or informal sector run the risk of disruption and uprooting. The city planners have to go beyond spatial concepts and look at the social-economic realities in the entire planned process. As part of the anticipated expansion of urban population especially that come from immigration, there is need to protect the Constitutional rights of these migrants against exclusion from older city dwellers. Supporting Cosmopolitan development that promotes multi-cultural and multi-ethnic neighbourhood, therefore, is vital for peace, law and order and safety in cities.

Water, Sanitation and Infrastructure

There has been acute scarcity of water in most of the towns and cities in the country. The rapid and reckless growth of urban areas during the last three decades has led to fast depleting of previously bountiful fresh water sources. The urban water challenge is taking an ominous dimension in a large number of towns and cities of India. In order to ensure that water is not wasted or contaminated an integrated approach to urban water management is essential for the social, economic and environmental sustainability of urban areas. Water scarcity in urban areas is the most potential source of social conflicts and
political rivalries. It is not fanciful to surmise that water wars may, in the near future, substitute political wars and economic wars.

Water, sanitation and infrastructure have now been the areas of concentration for most of the urban local governments. The urgent need of the hour is to build capacity for effective and efficient provision and delivery of adequate safe drinking water, proper maintenance of sanitation and provision of infrastructure commensurate with the increasing needs and demands of the fast growing towns and cities. In order to meet these challenges governments should take up a well coordinated fast track approach working with urban local governments enabling them to reach out to the poorest of the poor. This approach includes water demand management; values-based water education, improved sanitation for the urban poor, urban catchment management, and advocacy, awareness-raising and information exchange. Any urban development programme should focus on urban poverty alleviation through community-based urban water services, urban environmental sanitation and improving urban water governance.

The other contributory factors for the deterioration of living conditions in urban areas are rapid motorisation, imperfect urban transport planning and deficient traffic management which have been the cause of a number of road accidents, needless deaths and injuries every year, that ultimately result, among other things, in lost economic productivity and environmental pollution. It is, therefore, imperative to find ways to promote urban productivity and improved living and working conditions for urban population by appropriately meeting transport needs in a manner economically efficient and socially sustainable. This would be possible through a service of strategic programmes that would
make life in cities and towns safer. This includes sustainable cities and good governance.

Every urban local government should develop/evolve indicators of good urban governance duly prioritising local needs. These indicators differ from one ULB to another. The aim of developing indicators of good urban governance is to help cities identify urban governance priorities and assess their progress towards the quality of city-life.
References


2) Amareswar Mishra, Urban Government and Administration in India, Anu Books, Meerut, India, 1986, p.4


6) Pranati Datta, p.12.