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Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies
All India Institute of Local Self-Government, Mumbai



Regional Centre for Urban & Environmental Studies (RCUES), Mumbai

(Supported by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India)

Established in 1926, the All India Institute of Local Self Government (AIILSG), India is a premier autonomous research and training institution in India. The Institute was recognized as an Educational Institution by Government of Maharashtra in the year 1971. The Institute offers several regular training courses in urban development management and municipal administration, which are recognized by the Government of India and several State Governments in India.

In the year 1968, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), earlier Ministry of Urban Development), Government of India (GoI) established the Regional Centre for Urban & Environmental Studies (RCUES) at AIILSG, Mumbai to undertake urban policy research, technical advisory services, and building work capabilities of municipal officials and elected members from the States of Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and UTs of Diu, Daman, Dadra & Nagar Haveli. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India added States of Assam and Tripura from February, 2012 and Lakshadweep from August 2017 to the domain of RCUES of AIILSG, Mumbai. The RCUES is supported by the MoHUA, Government of India. The MoHUA, Government of India has formed National Review and Monitoring Committee for RCUES under the chairmanship of the Secretary, MoHUA, Government of India. The Principal Secretary, Urban Development Department, Government of Maharashtra is the ex-officio Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the RCUES, Mumbai, which is constituted by MoHUA, Government of India.

The RCUES was recognized by the Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India as a National Training Institute (NTI) to undertake capacity building of project functionary, municipal officials, and municipal elected members under the earlier urban poverty alleviation programme-UBSP. The RCUES was also recognized as a Nodal Resource Centre on SJSRY (NRCS) and Nodal Resource Centre (NRC) for RAY by Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India.

The AIILSG, Mumbai houses the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Cell backed by the Government of Maharashtra for capacity building of municipal bodies and provide technical advisory services to ULBs in the State. The Water Supply & Sanitation Department (WSSD), Government of Maharashtra (GoM) established Change Management Unit (CMU) in AIILSG, Mumbai from 13th January, 2010 to 30th June, 2014 and also selected AIILSG, Mumbai as a Nodal Agency in preparation of City Sanitation Plans for 19 Municipal Corporations and 15 A Class Municipal Councils in Maharashtra State, under the assistance of Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India. The WSSD, GoM also established Waste Management & Research Centre in AIILSG, Mumbai, supported by Government of Maharashtra and MMRDA.

In August, 2013 Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India empanelled the AIILSG, Mumbai as Agency for providing technical support to the Cities / Towns of States / Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in the field of Water Supply and Sanitation, Sewerage and Drainage systems.

In July 2015, Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India empanelled the RCUES & AIILSG, Mumbai an Agency for technical support in Municipal Solid Waste Management under Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) programmes.

In February, 2016, Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India empanelled the RCUES of AIILSG, Mumbai for conducting training and capacity building programme for experts of SMMU, CMMUs, COs, Key Officials and other stakeholders of the State and Urban Local Bodies (ULB) level under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY – NULM).

In December, 2017, AIILSG has been empanelled as a training entity regarding implementation of new Integrated Capacity Building Programmes (ICBP) under Urban Missions, viz. Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), Smart Cities Mission (SCM), National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM), Housing for All (HFA), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) and Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) for Elected Representatives and Municipal Functionaries.

At present, RCUES and AIILSG, Mumbai is involved in providing capacity building, research and technical support to number of State Governments and ULBs for implementing various urban development missions and programmes launched by the GoI.

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(UNDP / MOH & UPA, GOI / MCGM).
17. Resource Material on Urban Poverty Alleviation.
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20. Implementation of 74th CAA, 1992 in Urban Local Bodies and Impact Assessment of Training of Women Elected Members.

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Editorial

This year's World Economic Forum (WEF) highlighted 3 major urban problems faced by the Indian cities that the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) need to focus on in the post-COVID recovery period. The pandemic showed us how the informal sector workers, who constitute 92% of the workforce are the backbone of the urban economy. In the industrially developed major cities of India, 45% to 60% workforce is constituted by the migrant workers of which nearly 1/3 of the workforce is of the women workers and employees. Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy's data reported the overall unemployment rate in India as 7.83% of the total labour force in April 2022. Continuing declining work participation of women in the Indian economy has raised a mind-boggling question, When there is massive increase of women graduates and post graduates of Indian Universities, why does not their education utilised to build a 5 trillion dollar economy?

Currently formalization of informal workers through registration of workers and potential workers *e-shram* portal is going on so that human resource planning can be done by the massive urban employment programme.

The 2nd major challenge for the urban India, that was debated in WEF was the urban housing for the migrant workers. The pandemic made us realise the contribution of low-income migrants, 65% of work in the informal sector in manufacturing, food processing, restaurant, vegetable and fruit vending, waste recycling occupations, sanitation work, e commerce and service sector. During the pandemic, majority of them continued working as "essential workers", such as front line health workers, food delivery people and vegetable-sellers. The Union Budget 2022-23 has allocated Rs. 76549 as the total expenditure on the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs for 2022-23. Now, the ball is in the ULB's court to initiate massive state-owned housing projects for the low income groups so that the majority of the urban poor can access low rent accommodation in the urban and peri-urban areas.

Third major concern discussed in WEF has been lack of data due to persistent lockdown. India could not conduct Census 2021, so currently most of the policy planning and programme implementation have to rely on sample surveys - National Family Health survey (NFHS 5) conducted during 2019-20 and 2020-21. During 2022-21, the policy makers has to do with proxies such as railway data to gauge the movement of people. The schemes to provide social security and social protection to need to be backed by robust statistics and indicators. The Ministry of labour has commissioned major researches to generate data on rural-urban and urban-urban migration, in and out migration and circular migration.

In the post pandemic period, the urban India is also trying to address digital divide that has forced nearly 3 crore children out of school and colleges. The ULBs are trying to bring these students back to the educational institutions by supportive programmes and schemes.

The Urban World invites scholars, policy makers, practitioners, urban planners and researchers to send their original research-based articles and book reviews with special focus on developmental concerns of the Urban India.

Affordable Urban Housing and Budget 2022-23: A Reality Check

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has foregrounded the crucial link between adequate housing, human settlements and peoples' ability to lead a healthy life. The lockdown induced work from home scenario has also highlighted differential kinds of housing demand and usage. Of late, the emerging densification of Indian cities underscores the need for planned human settlements and sustainable housing in the future, as also highlighted in the recent economic survey through geo-spatial maps.

Following the pandemic outbreak and lessons learnt, while the housing industry as a whole showcases sight of recovery and the housing pricing going north, the issue of affordable housing for the poor and supply of social housing for the vulnerable requires special attention.

In India, about 63.8 percent of the urban households had their own dwelling units, around 96 percent were living in pucca houses and average floor area of the dwelling unit was about 46 square meters (Sq.m.) during 2018 (NSSO, 2019). The Technical Group on Urban Housing Shortage for the 12th Plan (TG-12), Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), estimated the urban housing shortage during 2012-2017 at 187.8 lakh, mostly (around 150 lakh) on account of congestion (Kumar, 2015).

The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Urban (PMAY-U) - a flagship Mission of Government of India was launched in June 2015 to provide affordable housing for all by 2022. PMAY-U seeks to address the housing requirements of all sections of urban poor including homeless population, slum dwellers through four programme verticals.

Under the In-Situ Slum Rehabilitation (ISSR) component, slums are redeveloped involving the private developers and slum community. The Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP) component has the provision for reserving 35 percent of the houses within the project for the poor. The central government provides subsidies (Rs 1 lakh for ISSR and Rs. 1.5 lakh for AHP) coupled with other benefits like Floor Area Ratio (FAR) to incentivize the private developers. Poor households having legal land entitlement are eligible to receive a central government subsidy of Rs.1.5 lakh under the Beneficiary-Led Individual House Construction / Enhancement (BLC) component.

The Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS), a central sector scheme, categorizes the beneficiaries on the basis of income and housing units' size. However, the States/UTs have the flexibility to redefine the annual income and house size criteria as per local needs. The CLSS-I includes

Economically Weaker Section (EWS) household with income up to Rs.3 lakh and housing unit size of 30 Sq. m. and Lower Income Groups (LIG) household with income from Rs.3-6 lakh and housing unit size of 60 Sq. m., Middle Income Groups (MIG) with MIG-I & MIG-II being categorized as having annual household income slabs of Rs.6-12 lakh and Rs.12-18 lakh respectively are covered under the CLSS-II vertical.

The central assistance involved in the mission verticals per house are - highest for CLSS (up to Rs.2.67 lakh), followed by BLC (Rs.1.5 Lakh), AHP (Rs.1.5 Lakh), and lowest for ISSR (Rs.1 lakh). The average cost of per house sanctioned under the mission is around Rs.5.4 lakh, and it comes out to be Rs.3.6, 7.4, 6.24 and 10.7 lakh for BLC, AHP, ISSR and CLSS, respectively (Kundu & Kumar, 2017 & Kundu & Kumar, 2020).

Moreover, the Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHCs) scheme has been introduced, as a sub-scheme under the PMAY-U, to arrange rental housing for the urban migrants/ poor.

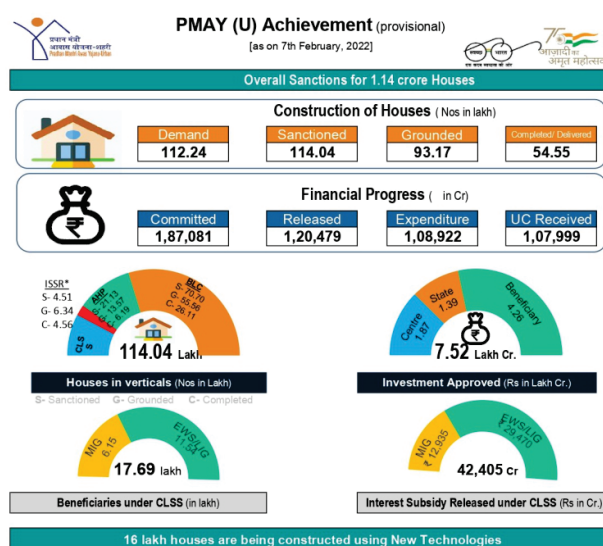
Apart from the financial benefits, several other structural and technological measures have been devised to facilitate the scheme implementation. A

technology sub-mission aims to promote cost effective and modern building materials and construction technologies. Urban land mapping is also being promoted in line with PM Swamitva yojana. The Global Housing Technology Challenge - India (GHTC-India)¹ aims to identify and mainstream a basket of innovative housing construction technologies that are sustainable, eco-friendly and disaster-resilient.

MoHUA has also launched the CLSS Awas Portal (CLAP) to monitor and integrate all stakeholders in real time environment. The PMAY-U also integrates Swachh Bharat Mission, Jal Jeevan Mission, etc. Importantly, the PMAY-U promotes the beneficiaries to be women member of the households. Moreover, with the home ownership, formal credit availability based on the same eases the financial burden of housing constructions and future credit availability.

PMAY Progress and Issues

The houses sanctioned during 2015-2022 has demonstrated exponential growth and the progress towards achieving the revised target has been phenomenal, especially in the recent years. As per official reports, 4302 cities have been included in the PMAY-U, with a total of 469 Class-I cities^{2,3}.



As on February 7, 2022, around 114.04 lakh houses have been sanctioned, of which - 93.17 lakh houses has been grounded for construction and 54.55 lakh houses are completed (June 2015 onwards). Around 16 lakh houses are being constructed using new technologies. The total investments in projects stands at around Rs.7.52 lakh crores, and the central assistance sanctioned is around Rs.1.87 lakh crore.

Out of the total 114.04 lakh houses sanctioned, among the PMAY-U programme verticals, the

composition of sanctioned houses was 4.51, 70.70, 21.13, and 17.69 lakhs for ISSR, BLC, AHP, and CLSS respectively. In CLSS, the houses sanctioned under CLSS I (EWS/LIG) and CLSS II (MIG) was 11.54 and 6.15 lakh, respectively. The total interest subsidy released under CLSS was Rs.42,405 crores, out of which Rs.29,470 crore was for EWS/LIG and Rs.12,935 crores for MIG. It demonstrates significant acceleration in sanctions of houses, especially on the account of BLC and AHP verticals.



Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) - Housing for All (HFA)

State wise Progress (since 2014)



[as on 7th February, 2022]

Sr. No.	Name of the State/ UT	Project Proposal Considered	Physical Progress of Houses (Nos)			Financial Progress (₹ in Crore)		
			Sanctioned	Grounded*	Completed/Delivered*	Investment	Central Assistance	
							Sanctioned^	Released^
1	Andhra Pradesh	1,118	20,41,424	16,90,401	4,85,266	87,720.86	31,015.43	10,986.53
2	Bihar	512	3,64,244	2,70,664	1,01,077	20,140.27	5,694.27	2,473.00
3	Chhattisgarh	1,775	2,99,839	2,37,454	1,48,207	12,841.83	4,640.14	2,742.36
4	Goa	10	4,171	4,138	4,113	855.27	95.10	94.56
5	Gujarat	1,684	8,65,218	8,05,169	6,39,224	86,026.79	16,505.47	12,823.53
6	Haryana	457	1,56,465	83,555	48,092	14,436.44	2,738.41	1,233.06
7	Himachal Pradesh	268	12,699	13,000	6,888	811.21	226.17	136.41
8	Jharkhand	445	2,34,837	1,98,082	1,10,297	14,645.07	3,596.53	2,463.23
9	Karnataka	2,798	6,94,150	5,65,883	2,66,205	50,209.24	11,318.05	5,261.38
10	Kerala	616	1,40,081	1,27,253	1,04,193	7,507.15	2,301.87	1,692.59
11	Madhya Pradesh	1,662	8,68,461	7,92,952	4,84,056	48,318.16	14,053.90	10,320.21
12	Maharashtra	1,280	13,60,394	8,23,951	5,53,241	1,58,309.75	22,946.89	11,616.12
13	Odisha	946	2,06,068	1,41,925	1,03,214	9,395.48	3,228.71	1,675.36
14	Punjab	885	1,11,797	99,125	49,678	7,173.16	1,887.69	1,138.06
15	Rajasthan	404	2,22,408	1,73,458	1,42,299	17,731.27	4,061.73	2,530.09
16	Tamil Nadu	3,905	7,21,357	6,28,633	4,62,475	47,131.63	11,521.82	7,973.94
17	Telangana	303	2,34,470	2,41,738	2,10,135	28,386.11	4,091.77	2,862.04
18	Uttar Pradesh	4,539	17,36,201	14,80,059	10,15,522	82,439.68	27,090.02	18,199.23
19	Uttarakhand	243	62,360	33,018	23,521	4,929.09	1,116.70	586.87
20	West Bengal	552	5,57,292	4,64,986	2,87,686	30,782.40	8,851.30	5,298.08
Sub-total (States) :-		24,402	1,08,93,936	88,75,444	52,45,389	7,29,790.86	1,76,981.97	1,02,106.66

as on 31st February, 2022									
Sr. No.		Name of the State/ UT	Project Proposal Considered	Physical Progress of Houses (Nos)			Financial Progress (₹ in Crore)		
				Sanctioned	Grounded*	Completed/ Delivered*	Investment	Central Assistance	
								Sanctioned^	Released^
21	North East States	Arunachal Pradesh	61	9,135	7,593	3,905	530.85	192.64	149.06
22		Assam	426	1,68,289	1,16,810	43,159	5,281.08	2,545.57	1,088.63
23		Manipur	45	56,094	39,371	5,910	1,448.78	841.92	338.18
24		Meghalaya	36	5,333	4,394	1,839	288.89	85.43	37.57
25		Mizoram	52	39,874	28,153	4,834	857.29	608.31	189.94
26		Nagaland	75	32,331	32,996	7,850	1,049.54	510.94	306.91
27		Sikkim	11	653	669	360	26.33	10.19	5.33
28		Tripura	107	91,781	72,106	56,083	2,845.55	1,471.99	1,029.62
Sub- total (N.E. States) :-			813	4,03,490	3,02,092	1,23,940	12,328.31	6,267.00	3,145.23
29	Union Territories	A&N Island (UT)	2	602	602	43	155.90	9.21	1.93
30		Chandigarh (UT)	-	1,607	6,567	6,567	313.52	35.98	35.98
31		UT of DNH & DD	9	8,213	7,821	5,617	701.04	165.51	143.56
32		Delhi (NCR)	-	26,292	66,872	50,272	5,106.78	596.74	596.74
33		J&K (UT)	403	48,752	37,234	13,097	2,705.90	747.38	326.30
34		Ladakh (UT)	8	1,335	1,043	515	66.63	30.37	21.47
35		Lakshadweep (UT)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
36		Puducherry (UT)	45	16,474	16,216	7,096	991.06	261.07	173.60
Sub- total (UT) :-			467	1,03,275	1,36,355	83,207	10,040.82	1,846.25	1,299.58
Grand Total^ :-			25,682	114.04 Lakh	93.17 Lakh	54.55 Lakh	7.52 Lakh Cr.	1.87 Lakh Cr.	1.20 Lakh Cr.

^ Includes ₹ 1985.62 cr. Central subsidy released to CNAs and releases made on non-project components. Includes subsidy released recently to 2856 houses for beneficiaries under CLSS

* Included incomplete houses of earlier NURM.



In terms of number of houses sanctioned, the PMAY-U scheme has performed better compared to the previous centrally sponsored housing schemes. However, the non-completion of those units has seriously hamstrung the scheme's potential to achieve the goal of slum free cities and housing for all within the stipulated time.

Issues in Urban Housing

Firstly, with only about 4.6 lakh houses sanctioned so far, the ISSR vertical has clearly not kicked off at a pace that was expected. This has been attributed to the problems related to legislative and administrative difficulties in providing land title to slum dwellers, private sector participation, civil society involvement, the absence of agencies

coordination dealing with land and such projects at city and state levels, etc.

Secondly, affordability still remains a major concern for those actually suffering from housing inadequacies as the interest rate subvention on housing loan borrowed by the EWS is grossly insufficient to match the housing costs and prices, especially in the bigger Indian cities.

Thirdly, majority of projects for the EWS are inconveniently located and lack access to basic urban services which, in turn, have serious implications for both livability and livelihoods aspects. There is evidence of emergence of 'new urban slums' or 'vertical slums' in the relocated newer sites and redeveloped premises.

Fourthly, limited access to suitable land has also hamstrung the project implementation. Near absence of proper urban planning coupled with outdated land development regulation has contributed to the inadequate supply of land and high land prices. Convoluted and cost intensive processes of land purchase/land conversion (e.g., acquiring multiple 'No Objection Certificate', payment of disparate fees including stamp duty, registration fees, real estate agents' fees etc.) have only increased the prices of affordable housing.

Fifthly, the private players have not shown enough interests in the PMAY-U verticals. Even the incentives like increasing Floor Space Index (FSI) are hardly useful as FSIs in Indian cities, as compared to other major world cities, remain low and invariant to the increasing housing demand. Also, the private players' intrinsic purport of equating access to affordable housing to people's ability to pay practically has excluded majority of the urban poor.

Sixthly, lack of local capacity and technical expertise has led to underutilization of funds under the PMAY-U scheme. Little attempts have been made to adopt modern low-cost technologies for housing construction and to respond to the specific housing needs of the urban poor. Addressing these deep-rooted problems is key to unlock the full potential of the PMAY-U.

Seventhly, in general, the EWS and LIG households remain excluded from the housing market due to lack of access to credit and affordability as they are mainly engaged in the informal sector employment or are self-employed. In this aspect, there has not been much movement from the newly announced ARHC scheme. However, for migrant workers, there was a major push under National Urban Livelihood Mission – Shelter for Urban Homeless (NULM-SUH) for homeless persons, especially during the pandemic.

Eighthly, selection of beneficiaries, legal documentations and allotment of housing units as well as post-project completion, delivery and post-occupancy issues have remained opaque under

political manipulations, resulting in exclusion of persons suffering from genuine housing inadequacies.

Affordable Urban Housing and Budget 2022-23

The union budget 2022-23 has given thrust to the cities and the budgetary estimate for Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA), previously known as Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation (MoHUPA), Government of India (GoI) over the last year has seen a jump of around 40 percent (Chattopadhyay & Kumar, 2022). The flagship PMAY-U mission has received record high allotment of Rs 28,000 crore in Budget Estimate (BE) for Financial Year (FY) 2022-23. This has been following the incredible success in the affordable housing push and budgetary realization in previous two FYs, also financed from Central Road and Infrastructure Fund (CRIF).

The Actual Expenditure (AE) under PMAY-U for FY 2020-21 was 20,990 Crore (BE was Rs 8,000 crores). During the FY 2021-22, the BE was Rs 8,000 crores which has been revised to whopping Revised Estimates (RE) of Rs 27,000 crores. In terms of number, urban housing for poor has come out to be the biggest thrust and achievement in recent budgets.

For FY 2020-21, the AE for CLSS I and II was Rs.3, 750 and 3,000 crores respectively. The BE for CLSS for FY 2021-22 had allocations only for CLSS I, which was Rs.1, 000 crore, however, the RE stood at Rs.12,000 crore. Subsequently, there has been discontinuation of the CLSS in FY 2022-23 and no provision has been made under the same.

For other three verticals of PMAY-U, which are centrally sponsored schemes, the RE for FY 2021-22 is Rs.15,000 and the BE for FY 2022-23 has been estimated at Rs.28,000. This is indicative of renewed government focus on housing for the poor targets to be met by 2022.

Apart from financial provisions, this year's budget entails some key structural reforms which, if

implemented properly, would address some of the deep-rooted problems in the housing sector. Acknowledging the importance of efficient uses of land resources, provisions for Unique Land Parcel Identification Number for facilitating IT-based management of records; facility for transliteration of land records across any of the Schedule VIII languages; adoption or linkage with National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS) with the 'One-Nation One-Registration Software' for standardizing registration process of deeds & documents from anywhere; and intergovernmental coordination for reduction of time required for all land and construction related approvals are expected to infuse the much needed transparency in the land record management.

This, in turn, would smoothen up the supply of affordable land at suitable locations. Moreover, the provisions for modernization of building byelaws, town-planning schemes and transit-oriented development (TOD), energy efficiency in buildings and infrastructure could incentivize the private sector to provide affordable housing that are responsive to the needs and priorities of the urban poor.

The proposal of PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, push for AatmaNirbhar Bharat, and the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP), and initiatives for shortening the distance between peoples' living and workplaces are likely to better integrate the people with their cities. Encouragement for leveraging of central government assistance under mass transit schemes and Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) scheme is a welcome step to improve urban mobility. Similarly, integration of other schemes for provisioning of urban basic services with the PMAY-U can address the service deficiency problems in affordable housing projects.

Importantly, the announcements of a high-level committee of reputed urban experts and designating five institutions as centres of

excellence with an allocation of Rs.250 crore each for "India-specific urban knowledge" are expected to address the problem of low capacity and capability and to help the cities in formulating actionable policies.

Although the ARHC scheme was announced in 2020 amidst the migrant crisis during lockdown, this scheme did not see much push in the last two year's budget. Given the importance of rental housing in the affordable housing framework, such budgetary indifference is a cause for concern. Recently, the Model Tenancy Act, 2021 has been passed to strengthen the rental housing market through provisions for greater transparency in rental arrangements, minimizing the incidence of litigations and disputes and speedy conflict resolution.

Similarly, the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 (RERA) came into effect on May, 2017 to ensure and encourage greater transparency, citizen centricity, accountability and financial discipline in the real estate sector. Streamlining the proper implementation of these Acts as well as instituting grievance redressal mechanism is urgently needed to create an effective housing marketplace including the rental options for augmenting adequate supply of affordable and quality housing.

Further, this year's budget has emphasized on collaborating with the financial sector regulators to ease the process of access to capital along with reduction in cost of intermediation for the PMAY-U scheme beneficiaries and to infuse affordable housing supply.

The Way Forward

In essence, moving beyond the housing numbers and yearly budgetary allocations, it is imperative to understand actual needs of the urban housing beneficiaries and to address the ground level bottlenecks. The government has showcased seriousness in achieving overall targets for housing

shortage owing to human, social, economic and political considerations and the contribution of urbanization towards overall development. The total benefit accruing to the country attributable to PMAY-U would, however, depend not just on the total number of units constructed but on the nature of the verticals as well as the institutional structures through which this is achieved and have impact on the lives of urban citizens.

The central and state level authorities must take immediate steps to overcome the legislative hindrances and bureaucratic delays and to upscale the interventions with regard to slums redevelopment and informal settlements and affordable housing.

There is an urgent need for renewed thrust and upward revision of the subsidy amount provided, which is abysmally low under the ISSR vertical. Greater thrust is also required in the area of planned supply of affordable ownership housing by private

sector and providing affordable and adequate planned non-ownership (rental) housing, workers housing, hostels, dormitories and so on, especially for migrant and marginalized families and citizens in cities.

Overall, the complex and challenging issues, pertaining to redevelopment of slums and unplanned settlement (e.g. land, community mobilization, private sector participation, identification of beneficiaries) and planned supply of affordable housing requires thrust from all the stakeholders. For this, the active role of state government and urban local bodies as well as communities is of paramount importance, learning from the best practices and bad experiences.

Understandably, the pace and performance of the PMAY-U Mission and its overall success sets the stage for the achieving the goal of \$ 5 trillion economy and providing ease of living to each citizen in Indian cities in the future.

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Role of Mindfulness in Wellbeing of Urban Women

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Introduction

Urbanization brings with it a unique set of advantages and disadvantages. This demographic transition is accompanied by economic growth and industrialization, and by profound changes in social organization and in the pattern of family life. (Srivastava, 2003). Urbanisation have both positive and negative impact on individual and society. Many researches comparing the populations of urban and rural areas have found that mental illness is more prevalent in metropolitan settings. The impact of urbanization is linked with an increase in mental disturbances. The major impact of urbanisation is on women. (Kar, 2015)

It is inevitable for a woman to do multitasking. Even in modern India, women are frequently pressured by household as well as professional commitments & responsibilities. As a result, many women succumb to mental health concerns and only realise it when it is too late. A mental disease or mental illness, according to the Indian Journal of Psychiatry, is an involuntary psychological or behavioural pattern that develops in an individual and causes distress and incapacity, and is not a normal development or culture. As a result, it is critical to recognise that mental health disorders must be identified early on and should not be overlooked. Especially for women, who are already dealing with biological changes as well as the additional responsibilities of household and workplace (Savita Malhotra, 2015). (Team, 2017)

Social Impact on Women

In our society, gender inequality is a global problem. Women are expected to fulfil several roles in their personal lives, such as mother, wife, and so on, which is in addition to the professional roles. The urbanisation process has an impact on each role. Women also need to contribute to the household's income in order to sustain in the rapidly increasing inflation. Hence, women's responsibilities in society have been expanding. Change (towards an urban society) have both positive and negative consequences. The positive impact can be described as follows: improved self-reliance, expanded opportunities in public work. Urbanisation, particularly in developing nations, has a substantial impact on the social support system of low-income women, making them more sensitive to anxiety and depression. (Kar, 2015) Headaches, restless nights, persistent tension, alienation, fear, irritability, self-blame, loss of appetite, and loss of interest in any activity are all symptoms of depression in women.

Biochemical and psychological stressors are two forms of stressors that might contribute to mental problems. Hormonal variations are biochemical stressors. Estrogens influence brain chemicals such as serotonin, which is involved in headaches. External social contexts, such as women's inferior social standing, lack of power, economic

difficulties, disasters, and so on, are sources of psychosocial stressors. (Patel, 2018)

The Constitution of the World Health Organization, which came into force on April 7, 1948, defined health “as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.”

We are focusing on mental health of women in urban areas in this paper.

Mental Health

Mental health refers to a state of cognitive or emotional well-being, as well as the absence of a mental disorder. Mental health may involve an individual's ability to enjoy life and establish a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience, according to positive psychology or holism perspectives. A mental disorder or mental illness on the other hand, is reflexive psychological or behavioural pattern that arises in an individual and is regarded to produce distress or disorder not expected as a part of normal growth or culture.

The terms "mental health" refer to the cognitive, behavioural, and emotional well-being of people. It all comes down to how people think, feel, and act. The word "mental health" is occasionally used to refer to the absence of a mental disease. Mental illness can have an impact on daily life, relationships, and physical health. (Felman, 2020)

Why Women's Mental Health?

Women and men differ not just in their physical characteristics, but also in their psychological composition. There are actual differences in the structure and "wiring" of men's and women's brains, as well as how they process information and react to events and stimuli. (Malhotra & Shah, 2015). Women and men communicate, deal with relationships, express their thoughts, and react to stress in different ways. From prehistoric cultures to more civilised nations, gender roles have been

culturally dictated. Women gathered plant foods, small animal foods, fish, and learnt to use dairy products in hunter-gatherer societies, while men hunted meat from large animals. Women's gender roles have shifted dramatically throughout recent history. (Malhotra & Shah, 2015)

Middle-class women are traditionally involved in domestic activities, with a focus on child care. Economic necessity forces poorer women to look for work outside the home. Although a greater number of women from all socioeconomic strata work outside the home, this does not relieve them of their domestic responsibilities or change their social status appreciably. (Malhotra & Shah, 2015)

This results lot of mental stress in women. In India, as in the rest of the globe, research has found that common mental diseases like depression and anxiety are significantly linked to female gender, in addition to poverty. Women's heightened predisposition to depression may be due to hormonal variables associated to the reproductive cycle. (Malhotra & Shah, 2015)

Motivation behind the Study

As a yoga practitioner & teacher and mindfulness therapist, I work with a lot of women to help them manage their challenges. It is often observed that people with physical issues have its root cause in mental stress or sadness, suppression of thoughts and desires and lack of expression of feelings. Yoga and mindfulness, in my experience, are quite beneficial for such women. These women range in age from adolescent to far beyond their sixties. Nobody has gotten away from the problem.

Woman is the backbone of the family in Indian system, her health should be taken care of. She herself needs to spend time on self-care in order to support others in the family. A woman who is at adolescence age also need to take care as she is a future mother.

Your mental health has a significant impact on your overall well-being. Being mentally healthy might help you stay healthy and avoid significant health problems. ¹Positive psychological well-being was found to lower the incidence of heart attacks and strokes in a study. Poor mental health, on the other side, can lead to poor physical health or dangerous habits. (Brennan, 2021)

(<https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/how-does-mental-health-affect-physical-health>) (on May 3, 2022)

As reported in “The Indian Express”, Pune, Dated 10 September, 2021, according to the Indian Women's Health Report 2021, which surveyed 1,000 working women aged 25 to 55 in seven cities, nearly half of them are uncomfortable discussing one or more health conditions due to societal taboos and stigmas connected with them. Emcure Pharmaceuticals² undertook the study in collaboration with Ipsos Research Private Limited (Ipsos India) in order to acquire insight into the social, cultural, and medical perspectives of working women and, ultimately, to find solutions engaging multiple stakeholders. (Express news service, 2021)

Women with white-collar jobs gave specifics of health stigmas they face, as well as how this leads to social pressures and professional challenges, in this poll. 90 percent of working women experience a conflict of interest while balancing familial, personal, and professional duties, according to the study's findings. 86 percent of working women have seen co-workers, family, or acquaintances leave the workforce, with 59 percent citing health difficulties as the primary cause. (Express news service, 2021)

It is reported that while launching the programme - YouTube talk show, which was virtual on women's health, getting women to the show and make them talk about their health issues is a big challenge. This was the cause to undertake the study and build up

initiative around awareness and diagnosis. (Express news service, 2021)

Despite the progress made in the corporate sector to include women in the workforce, women's health issues are still associated with unreasonable taboos. Findings show that misconceptions and irrational societal taboos about women's health issues continue, hurting even India's white-collar women across sectors. (Express news service, 2021)

These social taboos about health make woman more stressed and forced her to suppress her emotions. As stated above they have difficulties in balancing their family life, personal life and social life. Sometimes they are forced to leave their jobs causing many mental issues.

These are some of the issues that women confront around the world. As a yoga teacher and mindfulness therapist, I am compelled to consider potential answers to this situation.

The government may take some steps, and some institutions may assist women in need, but other steps can also be performed by an individual. In this scenario, she must take her own actions that may help her to cope with the emotional stress; the situation around her may or may not alter. She will have to confront the problems; she will not be able to flee the circumstances, but she may psychologically prepare herself by making herself mentally strong.

Yoga and mindfulness are Indian cultural heritage.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a state of consciousness achieved through paying attention in a specific and persistent manner: on purpose, in the present moment, and without judgement. If you think of meditation as one of the way of (1) systematically regulating our attention and energy (2) thereby influencing and possibly transforming the quality of our experience

¹ Founder of Positive Psychology is Martin Seligman who says use signature strength and virtues in service of happiness.

² It is fast-growing Indian pharmaceutical company engaged in developing, manufacturing, and marketing a broad range of biopharmaceutical products globally.

(3) in the service of realising the full range of our humanity and of (4) our relationships to others and the world, mindfulness is one of the many forms of meditation. (Zinn, 2012)

Mindfulness has its origin in ancient spiritual traditions, but it is most stated and stressed in Buddhism, a spiritual tradition that dates back at least 2550 years. As mindfulness as a concept and a practice has been more widely accepted in Western Psychology and Medicine. (Keng, J. Smoski, & Robins, 2011) Right mindfulness, according to Buddhist teachings, is recollection, awareness, and attentiveness. Mindfulness, according to Gunaratana is not recollection in the traditional sense of pictures and thoughts from the past, but rather a distinct and clear, wordless knowledge of what is and what is not, of what we are doing and how we should go about it. Mindfulness involves being aware of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surroundings in the present moment. (Gunaratana, 2011)

Dr. John Kabat-Zinn, a retired professor of medicine from the University of Massachusetts Medical School, USA established the Centre for Mindfulness in 1979. Mindfulness is defined as - "paying attention in a certain way, on purpose in the present moment, and non-judgmentally."

Stress can be managed by being aware of what is going on around you. Then reactions will come to a halt, and replies will begin. (Kabat-Zinn 1990 p. 263) (Zinn, 1990)

In simple terms, mindfulness is the practice of paying attention on every moment in a specific way and for a specific reason. It's a strategy for looking deeply into oneself in the spirit of self-understanding and inquiry. The practice of mindfulness aids in the discovery of deep relaxation, tranquillity, and understanding within oneself. It is a method of gazing deeply within oneself in the spirit of inquiry and self-awareness. Mindfulness practice can help to experience a deep

relaxation, peace, and understanding inside oneself. Mindfulness is a powerful tool for reflection and healing. (pp 2,12). (BEARANCE, 2014)

A psychological attribute, a practise of fostering mindfulness (e.g., mindfulness meditation), a mode or state of awareness, or a psychological process can all be described by the term mindfulness. (Hayes, 2011)

Psychological Health Benefits of Practicing Mindfulness

Theoretically and empirically, mindfulness has been linked to psychological well-being. Mindfulness's features, such as awareness and non-judgmental acceptance of one's present experience, are seen to be potentially effective antidotes to typical types of psychological discomfort, such as rumination, anxiety, worry, fear, and rage. (Zinn, 1990)

Higher levels of life satisfaction, agreeableness conscientiousness vitality self-esteem, sense of autonomy, competence optimism, and pleasant affect have all been linked to trait mindfulness. Mindfulness and depression have also been shown to have strong negative associations in studies. Absent-mindedness, dissociation rumination, cognitive reactivity, social anxiety; emotional regulation issues, experiential avoidance, the degree of delusional experience in psychosis, and general psychiatric symptoms are the factors considered as negatively associated with mindfulness. There has also been some research into the link between mindfulness and cognitive processes, which could have significant implications for psychological health. (Keng, J. Smoski, & Robins, 2011)

Mindfulness is also linked to variations in brain activity as measured by functional neuroimaging - revealed that trait mindfulness was linked to lower bilateral amygdala activation. (Keng, J. Smoski, & Robins, 2011) Amygdala is known as an emotional

brain. The amygdala is a structure in brain with an almond type shape. It is important in the activation of fear and rage emotions. It enables us to react rapidly in the face of danger. (Ambre, Raut, & Kumar, 2018)

Meditation: Meditation is focusing on one point. As defined by Collins dictionary, it is act of remaining silent and calm state for a period of time. Mindfulness is a type of meditation that helps practitioner to remain aware of the present moment.

(<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/320392>)

When meditators and non-meditators were compared, meditators reported notably higher levels of mindfulness, self-compassion, and overall sense of wellness, as well as significantly lower levels of psychological symptoms, thought suppression, fear of emotion, and difficulty with emotion regulation, and these changes were linearly related to the extent of meditation practices. Furthermore, the findings supported a paradigm in which trait mindfulness mediates the association between the extent of meditation practise and a number of outcome variables, including emotional dread, rumination, and behavioural self-regulation. (Keng, J. Smoski, & Robins, 2011)

The therapeutic effects of mindfulness meditation and its clinical applications have piqued people's curiosity. Several studies have found that supporting emotional mental health in both clinical and healthy populations might be beneficial. This form of mental training appears to have an influence on the plasticity of brain structure and function, according to neurobiological studies. Attention control, emotion management, and self-awareness are some of the key neurocognitive mechanisms implicated in mindfulness meditation. [Guendelman, Medeiros, & Rampes, 2017(Online)]

The researchers discovered notable structural changes in the brain, suggesting "body or interceptive awareness" as a plausible mechanism for mindfulness's beneficial effects. An 8-week mindfulness training has demonstrated restoration of neuroplasticity changes in critical areas for emotional reactivity (amygdala, insula), bodily awareness or interoception /exteroception, self-consciousness, mood and arousal management, perspective taking, and memory systems.

It is interesting to know the fact that even a brief mindfulness induction can cause distinct bottom-up brain activation in people who are unfamiliar with meditation.

After the intervention, the mindfulness group changed the activation pattern in key diverse emotion regulation regions. [Guendelman, Medeiros, & Rampes, 2017(Online)]

Mindfulness Practice

Mindfulness is a technique for paying attention to the present moment that includes breathing, meditation, and yoga. It helps us become more conscious of our thoughts and feelings so that we can better regulate them rather than being overwhelmed by them. (Zinn, 1990)

Most women suffering from depression and anxiety if they can learn Mindfulness techniques and practice them, they can be benefited for her psychological health.

Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese monk, who is called as father of mindfulness a quotes,

"In mindfulness one is not only restful and happy but alert and awake."

"The present moment is filled with joy and happiness. If you are attentive you will see it."

"Feelings come and go like clouds in a windy sky. Conscious breathing is my anchor"

(Hanh, 1975)

Some steps for mindfulness: Breathing is the most primary step of mindfulness practice.

Breathing

If one follows one's own breath, is aware of one's presence, is aware of one's thoughts, and is aware of one's deeds, one can be entirely with oneself. Every instant, one should endeavour to be aware of each breath. It is necessary to be mindful of how to breathe. When your mind is fragmented, take a deep breath to help you regain control. Take a deep breath and a deep exhale, and be conscious of it. (Hanh, 1975)

Mindful Walking

When she is walking she should be conscious of walking. One should be aware of the road the surroundings, such as path leads to village, it's a beautiful path etc. Experience the path she is walking. (Hanh, 1975)

Mindful Eating

While eating one should be mindful means, be aware of the shape of it, touch of it, and know the exact taste of the food. If she is eating food with future plan then would not be aware of taste and the quantity eaten etc. (Hanh, 1975)

Monk Thich Nhat Hanh recommends that all actions done mindfully will help to remain calm and get the benefits of mindfulness.

Conclusion

How mindfulness helps?

Mindfulness can be used to manage mental and physical health. Mental health is sometimes referred to as "emotional health" or "wellbeing" by certain people. There are times when one feels unhappy, stressed, or afraid; most of the time, those feelings pass, but they can sometimes turn into more serious problems, and these can happen to anyone.

While research on the benefits of mindfulness to health and wellbeing is still in its early stages, evidence suggests that it has positive effects on various facets of overall health of a person, including the mind, brain, body, and behaviour, as well as a person's relationships with others. . Mindfulness helps in conditions like stress, anxiety, depression, and physical health problems like hyper tension. It is useful for anyone and everyone who wants to maintain mental health. (Greenon, 2009). Mindfulness can be practised in person, either through a group course or a one-to-one with a trained mindfulness coach.

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Digital Education Divide in Urban India: From an Intersectional Perspective

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Introduction

Urbanization is the process by which people migrate from rural areas to towns and cities. It affects and shapes the socio-economic-cultural and political climate of urban centers. It is likely to result in spatial inequality as a result of skewed access to resources and opportunities. Urbanization, however, can be made sustainable and beneficial by investing in the quality education of its people and facilitating holistic and transformative development.

With globalization, technological advances, and population growth, urbanization has become a new reality with urban centers mushrooming everywhere. Hence, it is imperative to understand the origins of these urban centers and to work towards making them sustainable. For urbanization to be a participatory and people-centered process, education plays an increasingly significant role. The accessibility, availability, and affordability of quality education to all sections of society becomes of paramount importance.

The world is witnessing the rise of digital education in the new age of learning. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when the entire world was brought to a halt, millions of children's education was adversely affected (UNESCO, 2017).

During these times, digital education was viewed as an innovative way to prevent further damage. This

strategy was designed to continue to provide quality education to children worldwide. However, research shows that technologically-driven education imposes many pedagogical constraints for students from diverse backgrounds, thereby impacting their learning curves (Batra et al., 2021).

This paper aims to understand urban Indian digital education through the lens of intersectionality and to examine the connections between quality education and sustainable urbanization. In addition, it seeks to uncover the digital education gap through primary research and explore its impact on sustainable urbanization. The researcher also discusses the findings from an exploratory study she conducted to unearth the digital education divide across various sections of society. A study of the sustainability of urbanization is then correlated with the growing digital education gap. Finally, the paper concludes with student-centric reforms for digital education to flourish and complement urbanization.

Thematic Discussions

Understanding the Process of Urbanization

Urbanization is the phenomenon of a rapid increase of the urban population compared to the rate of increase of the rural population. Urbanization has become a very significant and irreversible force in

India in recent years. According to the 2011 census, India's urban population was 37.7 crores; this number is expected to increase to 60 crores by 2030. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), India will have the highest 'absolute growth' in urban population. As a result, India is destined to see the largest urban transformation of the twenty-first century.

Urbanization is a result of the ongoing globalization phenomena, which is producing a "pull factor" whereby people migrate from rural areas to urban looking for better services (Dociu & Dunarintu, 2012). Furthermore, the outlying rural areas have become a part of the urban centers because of natural population growth and city boundary extension.

Given this context, it is evident that urban centers will continue playing a major role in global economic growth. Cities, or urban centers, are becoming meccas of consumption and production, as well as offering settlements and diverse livelihood opportunities. They have evolved into centers of power, politics, culture, and traditions, embodying India's new aspirations (Ejaz et al., 2021).

Cities and urban centers are primarily designed by males for men's use, lending it an overarching patriarchal approach (Ejaz et al., 2021). It is critical to address the multiple needs, wants, and aspirations of individuals from various castes, classes, genders, ages, disabilities, and demographics in order for equitable development to take place. This will ensure that not only will everyone benefit from urbanization, but that cities, or new age development hubs, will be designed to meet the different needs of their inhabitants.

While urbanization has its own rewards in terms of increased opportunity, enlarged capabilities set, and enhanced quality of life, it can also result in

lopsided development, chronic poverty, poor health systems, and deteriorating education systems if it is not designed inclusively. This necessitates issuing a clarion call to global leaders to work together to achieve sustainable urbanization by incorporating an intersectional gender lens.

Quality Education: Compliment of Urbanization

Sustainable planning strategies should steer urbanization, ensuring that current and future generations' needs and desires are met. This will necessitate a holistic and people-centered development approach that considers human development, economic growth, proper health and education system planning, and climate resilience planning (Urban USAID, 2017). The foundation of holistic urbanization is a "quality education system," in which modern economic growth is measured by the value-added via learning rather than the number of years spent learning.

We may utilize evidence-based learning to discover how different countries' investment patterns have resulted in varied outcomes as a result of increasing urbanization. Following South Korea's lead, countries would benefit from investing in both skills and urban infrastructure that allows those skills to be thoroughly explored. If not done diligently, it is possible for countries to experience problems, such as Brazil, if they fail to offer adequate universal education and the essential amenities - water, transportation, and security - required for sustainable urban expansion (Romer, 2013).

In the first decade of this century, Delhi attempted to replicate cities such as London, Paris, and New York in order to attain the stature of 'world-class.' Scholars have pointed to increased spatial polarisation and a deepening of social inequities as outcomes of converting Delhi into a world-class metropolis (Ghertner, 2015). Spatial justice, according to Edward William Soja, is the

"equitable allocation of socially valued resources in space and the chance to use them" (Soja, Edward E. 2009). When viewed in the context of India, it is clear that this spatial injustice has resulted in children's lack of access to quality and affordable education (Nambissan, 2021).

In the economics worldview, education and urbanisation are complementary concepts. Investment in human capital through quality education can assist in breaking free from chronic poor growth performance. Education appears to be a necessary intermediate for cities to leverage their physical, intellectual, and social wealth (Joshi, 2017).

Digital Education in an Unequal World

Digital education is a technology-assisted learning strategy. It is regarded as a groundbreaking educational strategy since it facilitates access to high-quality learning from anywhere in the world. COVID-19 is accelerating innovation and developments, particularly in the digital domain, in addition to transforming our society (Lee and Han, 2021). This necessitated a huge digital revolution in the education sector, and during the pandemic, we witnessed students engaged in virtual learning.

The following factors have a significant impact on the efficiency of digital education:

Learning Resources Availability: Only 23.8 percent of Indian homes have internet access, according to the 2017-18 National Sample Survey. Males are the most common users among them (Ronwtree, 2019). Wifi connectivity is a requirement for accessing e-learning resources, and such a skewed distribution of resources is sure to have a negative influence on students' learning curves.

Access to Learning Resources: During COVID-19, a report on schools was released, stating that children in government schools were particularly

hard hit, with more than 80% of students in government schools in Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Uttar Pradesh lacking adequate access to digital devices and e-learning resources (Oxfam India, 2020). (Malik, 2020).

Affordability of Learning Resources: India's economy has been hit twice by demand shocks and supply-side disruptions, with about 122 million people losing their employment in April 2020 alone. Small traders and laborers made up 91.3 million of them. Furthermore, 17.8 million paid workers and 18.2 million self-employed people were laid off (UN India, 2020).

According to UNESCO, once the COVID-19 pandemic disrupts schooling, 11 million girls may be unable to return to school (UNESCO, 2021). In India, the pandemic might force over 10 million secondary school females to abandon out (Nikore, 2020). Learning deficits have a multifaceted economic impact. The pandemic's first effect is long-term financial losses for students whose education has been disrupted. Furthermore, national economies with a lesser-skilled workforce will have weaker economic growth, which would have a negative influence on society's overall welfare (Hanushek and Woessmann, 2020).

Role of an Intersectional Lens in Achieving Sustainable Urbanization

The concept of intersectionality was coined by Kimberly Crenshaw, an American Feminist and Civil Rights Activist. It refers to the manner in which oppressive institutions like as sexism, ableism, ageism, racism, casteism, and homophobia, among others, are interwoven and not mutually exclusive. Crenshaw went on to say that while these systemic disparities exist on their own, they interact to create other forms of inequalities (Crenshaw, 1991). A Dalit woman with a visual impairment, for example, is trebly marginalized due to her caste, gender, and disability.

As we have understood from the preceding theory, urbanization can be re-looked as a process whereby the 'poor and marginalized individuals or families migrate from the suburban and rural areas to neighboring urban centers, contributing to their growth and making them 'livable.' While they are consigned to the outskirts of cities or displaced and relocated several times, they end up in unapproved, illegal colonies or the government's reallocation sites, which are highly stigmatized locations known as '*jhuggi jhopri*' and lacking basic facilities.

Jhuggi Jhopri clusters mainly belonged to social groups such as Dalits (Scheduled Castes), Adivasis (Scheduled Tribes), and minorities (Muslims). Despite being accrued to special benefits as provided for in the Constitution, they are labeled as 'slum dwellers', encroachers, and thrust upon the identities of illegal residents and non-citizens. This robs them of their right to a dignified life and availing basic services of clean water, sanitation, electricity, housing, and education (Wacquant, 2015).

The educational system in unauthorized settlements differs substantially from that in planned colonies and neoliberal cities, raising serious concerns regarding students' uneven access to excellent education and opportunities to shape their own lives. According to studies, the demolition of bastis in the wake of urbanization has disrupted children's education. The majority of the students at the relocation site did not have access to a school, which contributed to higher dropout rates (Menon-Sen & Bhan, 2008). Due to the lack of security in the new colonies, parents' anxieties of sexual harassment of their daughters resulted in a greater rate of dropouts and non-enrolments among girls (Menon-Sen, 2006).

The importance of education in urban transformation must be recognized. Curitiba, Brazil, began a revolutionary urban transformation

in the 1960s, making it one of the world's most sustainable cities (Zingoni de Baro, 2022). Curitiba's city planner, Jamie Leaner, had a vision of urban sustainability based on people-centered practices (Joshi, 2017).

Analysis and Discussions

The researcher undertook this study in order to gain a better understanding of India's Digital Education Divide from an intersectional perspective, as well as how it has impacted the lives of students from various socioeconomic backgrounds. Furthermore, the goal was to determine the influence of the digital education divide on lopsided urbanization.

The research project was split into two parts: a pilot study and the main research project. The pilot study involved 50 students from two Indian states: Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, who were enrolled in higher education institutes. Higher education plays an important role in upskilling individuals and our economy needs well-trained and highly educated people to drive it forward (Sheikh, 2017).

Undergraduate enrollment has 51% males and 49% females. Diplomas are skewed with 66.8% males and 33.2% females. The Ph.D. level has 56.18 % males and 43.82 % females. Integrated levels have 57.50% males and 42.50% females. Enrolment in the PG Diploma program is 54.09% for male students and 45.91% for female students. Students enrolled in higher education tend to be male than female. This is also seen at all levels in most states (AISHE, 2019). When this data is disaggregated by caste, it is clear that underprivileged castes and women are underrepresented in many of the country's top academic institutions, and that certain industries are ghettoized, with segregation of certain people in specific sectors (Rukmini, 2019).

To maintain the students' agency and guarantee that their lived realities are at the center of the study, attempts were taken to turn it into a student-led

initiative by seeking comments on the methodology, data collection instrument, and collectively designing the recommendation section.

To keep the agency of the students intact and ensure that their lived realities are at the core, efforts were made to make this study into a student-led project by getting their feedback on the methodology, tool of data collection, and collaboratively designing the recommendation section.

The main project was upscaled 10 times whereby 557 students enrolled in higher educational institutes were reached out from across 130 cities and 22 states in India. Given the time of the pandemic, data collection was challenging yet through the consistent efforts of students, professors, and other stakeholders, the target was achieved.

The process of data collection was spread over 1.5 months. It was a self-learning process in which attempts were made at various points to make the 'tool' accessible to students and to ensure that it met their needs. The researcher realized that assessing intersectionality necessitates the development of intersectional methodologies, which, although time and resource-intensive, are worthwhile in terms of the nuances captured.

Conclusion

Sustainable urban development will be fully realized once urbanisation is transformed into a democratic process: of, for, and by the people. This necessitates collaborative decision-making, with city residents having a key role in establishing targets, accountability frameworks, and ensuring that various communities participate in the neoliberal development from the beginning.

Education is viewed as a powerful instrument with the ability to transform lives and foster holistic

development. When made available, accessible, and affordable to a limited segment of the population, however, it can exacerbate socioeconomic inequities and create fissures in the development paradigm that are difficult to bridge.

Article 21a of the Indian Constitution mandates that all children aged 6 to 14 get free and compulsory education. This right is guaranteed to children regardless of geographic location, socioeconomic status, cultural preferences, or political affiliation. Yet, low-income families and families from marginalised areas, are unable to fulfill their basic desire to provide quality education to their children. This calls for an analysis of whose development is taking place and the cost of whom?

The World Bank Review states that there is about a 9% private rate of return, i.e. increase in individual's earnings, with just one extra year of quality education and 10% social returns. Interestingly, these figures are much higher for women and hence governments must strive towards ensuring greater female enrolment and retention in education systems (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos 2018). McKinsey's Gender Parity Report, 2018 states that the participation of girls in education and the workforce could boost the GDP of India by \$770 billion by 2025 (McKinsey & Company, 2018).

COVID-19 Pandemic has deepened structural inequities. It is the need of the hour for the policymakers and development practitioners to analyze India's digital divide from an intersectional lens to assess its impact on different communities. This must be followed by designing evidence-based intervention strategies keeping the interest and demands of the students at the core. Additionally, this calls for a clarion call to the world leaders to integrate targets of providing quality education in their mandate of urban development to ensure holistic development.

This research study was a step toward ensuring that students' lived experiences in this pandemic-stricken world are brought from the margins to the centre, and in the process, a set of demands from the students' community highlighted the need for the following to make digital education effective:

- Holistic Infrastructural Support
- Reimagining Assessments
- Innovative Teaching Pedagogies
- Sustained Mental Health Support

Education, according to Rabindranath Tagore, is a process of enlightenment. If virtual learning is to thrive, it must be transformed into a medium that incorporates students' physical, social, emotional, and mental well-being. To facilitate human development, online education infrastructure must be accessible, affordable, and readily available. In other words, if the digital education divide is not addressed, urbanization will become unsustainable and development will be lopsided.

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Gendered Inequalities in Paid and Unpaid Work of Women in India¹

Book Review

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Gendered Inequalities in Paid and Unpaid Work of Women in India, an edited book by Vibhuti Patel and Nandita Mondal comes at a crucial juncture in the Indian polity, when the gendered impact of COVID -19 pandemic is being deliberated and assayed. It is a guide for students, teachers as well as researchers who work on the subject of work from a gender perspective. The novelty of the book lies in its eclectic coverage of diverse range of fields including sericulture, tea plantation, livestock raising, surrogacy, street vending, professional driving, weaving, rehabilitation of Devadasis, formal work sphere etc. The book stands out with its careful and appropriate attention paid to a pan-India coverage along with its extensive amalgamation of voices from the grassroots.

To situate the book, it is divided into three parts. Part I of the book 'Macroeconomy and Women's Work' presents three chapters covering women's work within macroenvironment including globalisation, informalisation of work, paid and unpaid work, migration of women and labour geography. Part II of the book 'Women in the Urban Economy and Regional Diversity' encompasses eight chapters and focuses on workforce in the urban economy while offering the platform to the regional diversity of women's lived experiences in the urban and peri-urban milieu of India. Part III of the book 'Women in Agriculture and Allied Occupation' incorporates five chapters that depict

the recent narrations of women workforce in the traditional agricultural and allied sectors.

The coherent introduction by the editors Vibhuti Patel and Nandita Mondal lays out a clear theoretical orientation while tracing the trajectory of women and work thereby narrating insightful gendered implications of globalisation on paid and unpaid work. Contributing a powerfully nuanced array of knowledge, they also blend-in the current discourses in the aftermath of the pandemic on women. As an intelligible endeavour, the editors set the foundation for the book that is enormously useful for even those who are new to the scholarship and literature on the subject.

Vibhuti Patel in the second chapter of the book skilfully delineates the impact of Neo-liberal economic globalisation in terms of enhanced human, financial, economic and technological transactions and communications across the globe. Citing statistical evidence from 1901 onward, she explicates how globalisation has accentuated inequality and poverty with its massive influence on the urban, rural and Dalit/tribal poor women as paid, underpaid and unpaid workers of the economy. Her arguments map the detrimental impact of neo liberal economic policies especially in the last four decades leading to accentuation of inequality and economic disparity, often at the expense of decent work, loss of livelihood of the large majority of women and men. These, she

argues lead to further exacerbation of already existing socio-cultural disparities which is also evident in the data of out of school children, especially girls, owing to privatisation of education thereby increasing the digital divide, and; lesser wages for women workers as compared to their male counterparts. Interestingly she also uses the term 'wage theft' thereby expounding the practice of denial of wages and violation of minimum-wage laws which become starker in case of women. In addition to citing significant reports from various statutory committees; Patel beautifully captures the grassroots success stories of organisations including SEWA, Working Women's Forum, Mandeshi Mahila Cooperative Society and community-based women's organisations such as Parisar Bhagini, Stree Mukti Sangathana, Sakti MASUM, Rural Women's Liberation Organisation, DASTAKAR that add a lot of optimism and hope. The role of various pan India organisations that work from the rights based perspective, in providing employment generation activities in the subsistence sector, micro-credit facilities and support system to combat day-to-day harassment from petty officials and the local bullies brings altruism and a sense of courage in terms to combating harassment thereby bringing greater equality at the backdrop of Sustainable Development Goals.

Nandita Mondal in the third chapter of the book unravels the binaries of paid and unpaid work thereby bringing dignity and agency of women into the forefront of discourses. Quoting the misrepresentation of women's work in national statistics that solely bank on engagement of the individual with any 'economically gainful activity', she describes the advantages of Time Use Survey that has been conducted as a pilot in India's six selected states. Enumerating the core problematic areas in defining the term 'informal sector' in its true essence, Mondal establishes the most crucial connection between workers' agency and labour

power. She strongly advocates for the treatment of women as human beings, worthy of having their dignity that ought to be respected by the state, market and society at large.

Ananya Chakraborty in the fourth chapter unveils the impact of migration on women. Analysing the family-based and marriage migration in India and its economic and social implications for women, she integrates the impact of socio cultural practices into the realm of women's work. Citing research evidence from her Doctoral research, Chakraborty clearly establishes that women migrants, irrespective of the cause of migration, barring for education purposes, continue to engage in some or other form of unpaid work within the household as they move with their families or as dependents and associational migrants. As women continue to indulge in gender based responsibilities at home, they also continue to indulge in both paid as well as unpaid work. By illustrating examples of varieties of home based works undertaken by women including weaving fishnets, making brooms, or rolling bidis, hand embroidery, cutting loose threads from garments produced in mills or sewing buttons on factory made readymade garments, helping the husband in running the shop; she establishes the nebulousness of locating women's position of paid and piece rate-based work that has led to their increasing invisibilities from the sector of work. She also elucidates regarding the failure of public policies to recognize the length and breadth of women's contribution to the global value chains thereby omitting the substantial role of women in generating global value.

Part II of the book begins with the chapter from Kaniska Singh and Asfia Jamal, who through their interpretivist qualitative study with a social enterprise, explore the extent to which women's paid work translates into a process of empowerment at the individual, household and organizational levels. Contextualising the notion of

empowerment and parameters of paid work, they describe the pronounced invisibility of women in the market economy. Citing qualitative data from the research conducted in Rajasthan, and Mirzapur centre in Uttar Pradesh with eighteen women artisans, the authors emphasize the centrality of context in understanding empowerment, the success and failure of empowerment interventions and the challenges of such interventions.

Balancing work and personal front are considered as the current buzzwords and as indispensable prerequisites in order to have a fruitful life. Deepmala Baghel in the sixth chapter explores the crucial relationship between social context and role stress among professional women. Quoting data from international and national organisations with respect to women in formal workforce, she ushers in newer and novel possibilities in the post pandemic work framework, that is, the 'Work From Home' culture. To build her argument, Baghel studies the impact of social context on the role stress among working women. Conceptualising the foundations of stress, role and role stress, she explicates the social context of women employment in the Indian context. Drawing from studies on nursing, police, medicine, teaching, information technology and management profession, she explores their respective unique stressors as well as gender based variables. She also discusses the impact of professional roles on the physiological, emotional and behavioural impacts on women in addition to the dilemma among female employees with respect to balancing their gender roles along with their professional responsibilities. She also necessitates the importance of understanding social context of unique professions from a gender perspective in order to provide appropriate support in buffering the impact of stress on professional women. Her research calls for the integration of work settings with their specific social context to create mechanisms for mitigating the stressors followed

by appropriate interventions to enable women professionals to effectively contribute to the success of the economy and have a good quality of life.

The booming subject of Commercial Surrogacy amidst its ambiguous legal landscape and rapidly growing culture is beautifully taken up by Aishwarya Chandran in the seventh chapter that features the contemporary deliberations on the theme. Interrogating the rise in medical tourism in India with heightened evidence of commercial surrogacy (mostly in the form of gestational surrogacy), she reveals how the legal ambiguity is driving shadow economies thriving in the underbelly of the hospital/biomedical industry. Chandran critically links the Social reproduction theory thereby bringing together the linkages between capitalism, patriarchy and the way women's labour is positioned within this system. Situating the debate of surrogacy within discourses of paid and unpaid reproductive labour, she examines surrogacy as 'work' in her analysis of reproductive labour, that is produced at the intersections of moralising discourses about motherhood and the structural inequalities that constrain women's decisions about their reproductive abilities. Based on her Mumbai based research with women engaged as commercial surrogates, doctors engaged in clinical practice of ART and the agents who work as Brokers; Chandran locates surrogacy as labour amidst contesting negotiations of power and explains how these negotiations allows one to think regarding how women's work is valued by the state, the family and the market. Legitimising the 'womb renting' by women on the grounds of financial hardships, she brings-in the voices of surrogate women who exalts the labour as a form of 'service'. She also analyses the paradoxes of caste-based reproductive labour as articulated in Dalit and Black feminist scholarship with equal alacrity.

Lalremruati Rodi and Rama Ramswamy in chapter eight highlight the socio-economic milieu of street entrepreneurs based on their study with 196 entrepreneurs operating their street enterprises in Thakthing Zing Bazar at Aizawl, Mizoram. Transcending the demarcated boundary of 'formal' and 'informal', the authors explore the challenges faced by the female street entrepreneurs in conducting their business on the streets of Aizawl with respect to infrastructure, marketing and finance.

Gayatri Sharma locates women's safety from the rights based perspective with Right to Livelihood. She traces the trajectory of judicial pronouncements on the rights of street vendors noting that there has been a gradual withdrawal of the judiciary from fulfilling its positive obligations with regard to the right to livelihood. She strongly advocates for the integration of street vendors meaningfully into urban planning with the active role of the State. Pushing for inclusive urban spaces, Sharma promotes for making engagements with the diverse state actors including municipal bodies, lower courts, police, the higher judiciary and various committees, as well as non-state pressure groups—journalists or NGOs.

Pournima Arvel critically reviews the gendered implications of beggary, homelessness, and traditional and caste-based occupations by engaging with the experiences of the Nagpanthi *Dori Goshave* community that travels with cows. Sharing the lived experiences of the women from this community, which is an indigenous community that has been administratively classified as a Nomadic and De-notified Tribe (NT-DNT). Contextualising beggary laws in the Indian context, Arvel unveils the gendered context of the community whose members are often labelled as 'beggars', 'homeless', 'criminals' or as 'migrants' and 'nomadic'. Citing evidence from her qualitative research, she asserts how women of the Nagpanthi

Dori Goshave community are occupationally vulnerable and how caste-based occupations produce stigmatised and even criminalised identities.

Chapter eleven by Saptam Patel is particularly rich in its intersections across the realms of gender and art. The author brings into foray the gender gap in the art world as most art investors, art curators, auction houses and galleries are run by male artists. Her chapter presents the gendered analysis with respect to women actively pursuing a career in arts in addition to the strong preference for male artists in the world of art. Through illustrations in the form of works of group of feminist artists like Guerilla Girls, Katharina Grosse, Hannah Hoch, Amrita Sher-Gill, Anjolie Ela Menon, Amina Ka etc; Patel avows the marginalisation of women artists who are often lost in the patriarchal regime of the society. She also builds on 'Art feminism' that brings out the tiny representation of women in the history of art and narrates the misrepresentation, marginalisation and objectification of women in art.

Expounding the Non Traditional Livelihoods (NTL), Radhika Uppal and Amrita Gupta in chapter twelve explore the narratives of women professional drivers, and their negotiation to enter a 'male-dominated' domain of work (professional driving), moving out of the confines of the 'private' to 'public' spaces facing challenges posed by gendered social roles and restrictions within the family, community and public spaces. They highlight the role that state policies, gender-sensitive infrastructure can play to facilitate women's entry and sustenance in non-traditional livelihoods. Contextualising the declining female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in India, the authors relate their data with the socio cultural norms such as women's conditional access to resources and opportunities and deep-seated gender inequalities like restrictions on mobility,

early marriage and high incidence of violence at home and in public spaces that severely impact women's participation in productive roles. Uppal and Gupta explicate their findings from the research with women professional drivers around their transformational journey of working in a male-dominated workspace and also of the changes in their personal lives. They bring out detailed narratives of the respondents across challenges faced viz a viz their own self, family, community, workspace and public spaces; while claiming their space on the road as professional drivers amidst the competitive 'male'- dominated workspace, infrastructural barriers impeding their full integration in the economy and threat of violence in public spaces. The authors also link their findings with policy level implications in addition to NTL addressing the global policies including Sustainable Development Goals.

Part III of the book begins with R. Vijayamba analysing the rural women's participation in livestock raising from 1993–94 to 2011–12 using Employment and Unemployment Surveys (EUS) of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). She depicts through data regarding livestock raising as an essential source of employment for rural women after crop production since 85% of women are engaged in crop production and 11% in livestock raising. She also further disaggregates their participation to raising of bovines, bovines and poultry and shows that 90% of women in livestock raising are involved in raising bovines. She also explores the ownership of animals, participation of women in domestic duties and activities of economic importance to households as factors that influence women's participation in livestock raising thereby explaining the declining trend of women's participation in raising animals.

The gendered voices from Sericulture are narrated by Kanchan Thomasina Ekka who confers it as a farm and rural industry with the ubiquitous

engagement of women in reeling and spinning activity at Raigarh district of Chhattisgarh. She deliberates regarding the emergence of women collectives as a strong agency for individual household and community development by involving them in post cocoon activity. Following the approach of phenomenology, Ekka brings about the efforts by the women collectives in integrating women in productive work as considered by the society which can bring about gendered equality by providing space for women to participate in the productive activity.

Reshmi's chapter focuses on the working condition of women weavers in Sualkuchi, the silk village of Assam as she identifies the workplace and household challenges faced by the women weavers thereby highlighting their struggle for livelihood with the help of a qualitative approach. Basing her work on Marxist feminist framework and Social constructivist theories of feminism, she finds glaring gendered gaps in the physical working environment that lacks basic amenities, vulnerability of female workers to occupational diseases due to low ventilation and illumination leading to musculoskeletal disorders, acute financial crisis and low wages.

Lavanya Shanbhogue Arvind interrogates the role of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in the rehabilitation of former Devadasis in the Belgaum district of Karnataka. Based on the qualitative study with the former Devadasis in the Belgaum district of Karnataka, the author interrogates the role of the creation of SHGs in the empowerment of women who have spent most of their adolescent and adult life within the oppressive Devadasi system. Arvind locates 'Mahila Abhivruddhi Mattu Samrakshana Samsthe' as the outcome of the formal organisation and collectivisation of close to 3600 former Devadasis who were initially tutored by MYRADA officials and later also received funding from organisations such as OXFAM and NOVIB. The

author asserts how with the formation of SHGs and through dedicated assistance provided by the organisation MASS, the former Devadasis were able to reformulate their lives and engage in income-generating activities through self-employment.

Ashmita Sharma concludes the book by presenting her empirical evidence from the tea plantations in West Bengal thereby revealing the discourse of economic crisis plaguing the tea industry and highlighting the challenges faced by women plantation workers and the survival strategies adopted by them to cope with the crisis. Citing from her qualitative data, she reveals how migration has emerged as one of the most tangible impacts of the crises in the tea industry and how there has been a greater casualisation of the workforce, particularly the female labour force, in addition to the challenges faced by women migrants in the tea plantations.

In 17 chapters, this book explores Indian women's economic contribution through paid and unpaid work in different sectors of the economy and society in extremely diverse life situations and geographical locations. It highlights gender implications of interlinkages between local, national, regional, and global dimensions of women's paid and unpaid work in India. It encompasses a vast canvas of life worlds of working women in the metropolitan, urban, peri-

urban, rural, tribal areas in manufacturing, agricultural, fisheries, sericulture, plantation, and service sectors of the Indian economy. It provides nuanced insights into intersectional marginalities of caste, class, ethnicity, religion, and gender. The chapters are based on primary data collection and triangulation of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. It presents the multiple marginalities of Indian women in the globalized political economy of the 21st century. It not only focuses on emerging issues but also suggests evidence-based policy imperatives. This book is an essential read for researchers, scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and students of women/gender studies as it provides valuable insights into the present and future challenges to women's work, along with evidence-based policy imperatives, explores issues such as surrogacy, migrant women and women's labour through the gender lens and based on primary data collection to reflect on multiple marginalities of Indian women.

To conclude, the book by Patel and Mondel is treasure of knowledge for anyone who wishes to learn and comprehend 'women and work', whether in totality or with respect to any specific segment/domain. It is an eclectic assemblage inclusive of theoretical underpinnings and voices from the rural as well as urban grassroots. A must read for academicians, researchers, students, practitioners from wide disciplines to expand their knowledge and attain holistic understanding on the subject!



ROUND & ABOUT

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Smart Cities - Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs)

The Smart City Mission started since 2015 is operated as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme. Central Government sanctioned an outlay of financial support to the extent of Rs. 48,000 crore over a period of 5 years i.e. on an average Rs.100 crore per city per year. An equal amount on a matching basis is to be provided by the State/ULB.

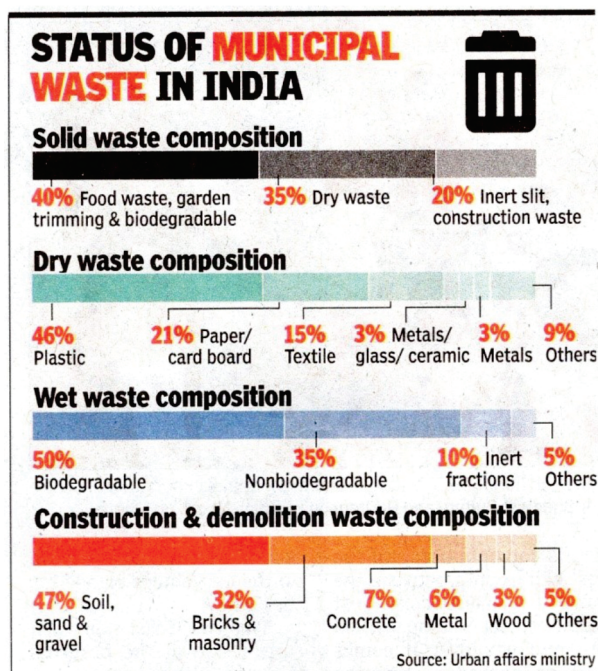
Progress of the Mission: According to data released by the Ministry, out of the total outlay of Rs.2,05,018 crore, projects worth Rs.93,552 were proposed. Almost 100% of the projects- worth Rs.92,300 crore have been work-ordered. Total expenditure has been of the order of Rs.45,000 crore. As announced by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India, on 19 April, 2022, the proposed investment under the Mission will be as under:

Rs.43,040 crore on Mobility	Rs.41,481 crore on area development
Rs.25,435 crore on energy and environment	Rs.29,465 crore on water and water management
Rs.43,441 crore on social economic development	

Recent development relating to the Mission include setting up of 80 **Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs)** under the Mission. The remaining 20 such centers are expected to be set up by August, 2022. The ICCCs are designed to enable authorities to monitor the status of various amenities in real time aimed at controlling and monitoring water and power supply, sanitation, traffic movement, integrated building management, city connectivity, etc. They have now been also linked to the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) of the Ministry of Home Affairs. The ICCC is the nodal point of availability of all online data and information relating to smart services in a smart city, such as LED street lighting, CCTV surveillance cameras, air quality sensors, smart parking system, WiFi, electricity and water supply and billing, GIS-e-hospitals, property tax management, e-statement management, asset management

References: (1) Website of MoHUA, GoI; (2) The Indian Express, Mumbai, 21 April, 2022.

Study Report on Circular Economy in Municipal Solid and Liquid Waste by MoHUA, GoI.



Waste- solid or liquid- is not a topic to be mentioned in social and cultural circles, but when it comes to public health, sanitation, environment protection and urban management, this is a topic keenly pursued, studied and discussed. There have been a number of studies and a PIL litigation in the Supreme Court which ultimately resulted in a set of statutory rules on various forms of wastes. The latest report on **Circular Economy in Municipal Solid and Liquid Waste** by the MoHUA, GoI, whose findings have been widely reported in the media on 17 May, 2022. The report re-iterates earlier findings that a large share of untreated and unprocessed municipal wastes reach dump yards or get into water bodies which poses a major crisis amid a spurt in urbanization with little planning to tackle such challenges.

The report has estimated that proper treatment of municipal solid, wet and construction wastes **can generate nearly Rs. 30,000 crore revenue per annum and create employment opportunities for more than one crore people by 2025**. Currently, India generates approximately 1.4 lakh tonnes of solid waste daily and 35% of this is dry waste. A major share of the dry wastes is plastic. The report says that approximately 26,000 tonnes of plastic waste is generated daily and out of this only 15,600 tonnes is recycled. Around 9,400 tonnes is left uncollected and these go to the landfills or water bodies.

The report has estimated that material recycling facilities can help improve recovery from the current Rs. 5,187 crore per annum from dry municipal waste to Rs. 17,023 crore by 2025.

References: (1) Circular Economy in Municipal Solid and Liquid Waste - <https://mohua.gov.in/upload/whatsnew/627b821d1e1d4Circular-Economy-in%20waste-management-FINAL.pdf>; (2) <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/recyclable-garbage-may-help-generate-rs-30000-crore-a-year-government/articleshow/91606284.cms>; (3) The Times of India, Mumbai, 17 May, 2022.

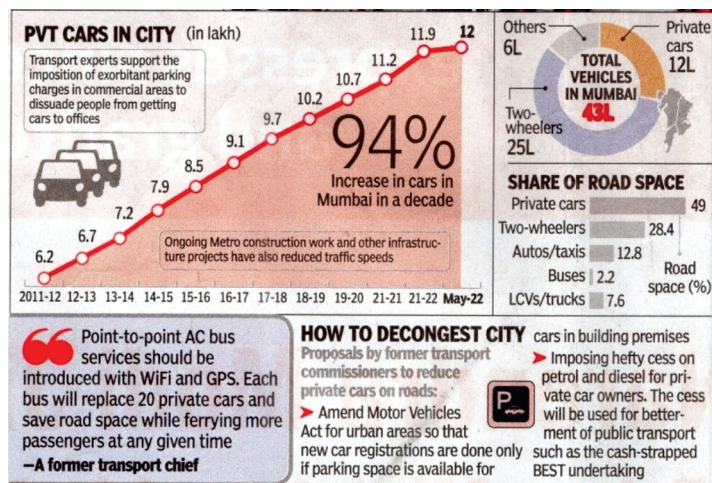
World Environment Day (June 5): 50-year Anniversary of the 1972 Stockholm Conference

The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (also known as the Stockholm Conference) held in Stockholm (1972) under United Nations auspices was the UN's first major conference on international environmental issues, and marked a turning point in the development of international environmental politics and passing of environment protection legislations in most of the countries. The UN had declared 5 June, every year to be observed as the World Environment Day. Over the years, this day became a global platform for people from all walks of life to participate in various campaigns to spread awareness about environmental protection and has created a platform to raise awareness about environmental problem such as air pollution, plastic pollution, global warming, environment protection, etc. Some of the important themes from the recent years and the host countries were: Beat Plastic Pollution (2018, India), Air Pollution (2019, China), Celebrate Biodiversity (2020, Columbia and Germany) and Ecosystem Restoration (2021, Pakistan).

The year 2022 marks the 50-year anniversary of the 1972 Stockholm Conference. And this year's host country is **Sweden**, the place from where it all started. **#Only One Earth** is all about living sustainably, the most important every citizen on this earth must pledge to.

Reference: (1) Media reports – e-paper, The Times of India, Mumbai, 5 June, 2022.

Indian Metro Cities under Catch 22 Situation vis-à-vis Number of Vehicles and Rising Air Pollution – Case of Mumbai



Catch 22 is a phrase meaning a dilemma or difficult circumstance from which there is no escape because of mutually conflicting or dependent conditions. This phrase aptly applies to the Indian Metro cities as the rising number of vehicles and rising air pollution is a common feature in them. Cities are regarded as engines of growth, great contributor to the GDP, bubbling with range of commercial activities, businesses, services, financial sector, centers of entertainment, hospitality industry, entertainment industry, filled with social and cultural facilities, etc. But they have one

dubious distinction – that of rising air pollution. The cause is well known- the rising number of vehicles, but there appears to be no short term solution. Take the case of Mumbai. It has in all 43 lakh vehicles -12 lakh private cars, 25 lakh two-wheelers and 6 lakh other vehicles. In this situation one

cannot expect the city to have good quality air. The air has a range of pollutant present in them, equal or above the prescribed norms. The city has total road length of just 2000 kms which is shared as under:

Share of Road Space: Private cars- 49%, Two-wheelers- 28.4 %, Autos, Taxes- 12.8%, Buses- 2.2 % and LCVs/trucks- 7.6% of road space.

One of the **medium term solutions** and a major one comprises Twelve Metro lines under various stages of implementation which are expected to make commuting in Mumbai easier and time saving and pollution saving. When completed (planned to be so by 2026) they will provide 276 km track providing north-south and east- west linkages. The daily ridership of all these Metro lines on coming into operation is estimated to be 50 lakhs.

Reference: (1) The Times of India, Mumbai, 25 May, 2022.

26 Wetlands proposed for inclusion under Ramsar Convention

The Ramsar Convention is the intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The Convention was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 and came into force in 1975. Since then, almost 90% of UN member states have become “Contracting Parties” and committed to the Convention’s three pillars:

1. Work towards the wise use of all their wetlands
2. Designate suitable wetlands for the list of Wetlands International Importance and ensure their effective management
3. Cooperate internationally on transboundary wetlands, shared wetland systems and shared species. Shri Bhupender Yadav, Minister for Environment of Government of India met Martha Rojas Urrego, the Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands on 2 June, 2022 and followed up inclusion of 26 new wetlands from India proposed by the Ministry of Environment, under the Convention. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. It is also known as the Convention on Wetlands. It is named after the city of Ramsar in Iran, where the convention was signed in 1971.

Member countries under the Convention identify sites that can be of significant value for their eco-services and rich biodiversity. The wetlands - land areas covered by water, either seasonally or permanently- play a key role in flood control and sources of water, food, fibre. They also support mangroves, which protect coastlines and provide sustenance to water birds. So far, 49 wetlands from India are designated as sites of global importance under the Convention. The proposed new sites include Thane Creek from Maharashtra, Nanda Lake from Goa, 12 wetlands from Tamil Nadu, four

from Odisha and three from Madhya Pradesh. ISRO has mapped the country's wetlands covering 15.98 million hectares, which is around 4.86 percent of the total geographic area of the country.

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change notified the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 on 26 September, 2017 by superseding the 2010 rules. The detailed recitals of the rules inter alia epitomize the crucial significance of the wetlands. The recitals are reproduced below:

“Whereas the wetlands vital parts of the hydrological cycle, are highly productive ecosystems which support rich biodiversity and provide a wide range of ecosystem services such as water storage, water purification, flood mitigation, erosion control, aquifer recharge, microclimate regulation, aesthetic enhancement of landscapes while simultaneously supporting many significant recreational, social and cultural activities, being part of our rich cultural heritage;

And whereas many wetlands are threatened by reclamation and degradation through drainage and landfill, pollution (discharge of domestic and industrial effluents, disposal of solid wastes), hydrological alteration (water withdrawal and changes in inflow and outflow), over-exploitation of their natural resources resulting in loss of biodiversity and disruption in ecosystem services provided by wetlands;”

These rules decentralize the wetlands management by giving powers to States to identify and notify wetlands within their jurisdiction and to protect the wetlands from prohibited activities.

References: (1) Wetlands International - Ramsar Convention (<https://www.wetlands.org/wetlands/ramsar-convention/>); (2) The Times of India, Mumbai, 8 June, 2022.

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The **Regional Centre for Urban & Environmental Studies** is pleased to invite contributions for **Urban World** in the form of articles and research papers from researchers, authors, publishers, academicians, administrative and executive officers, readers on : **Urban Governance, Planning and Development**.

Articles could be between 2000 to 4000 words. They may contain compatible tables, charts, graphs, etc. We reserve the right to edit for sense, style and space. Contributions may be e-mailed in digital form as a Word file to the Director, RCUES, Mumbai.

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