



General Studies-1; Topic: Urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

Sustainable Urban Future

Introduction

- The theme of World Cities Day (October 31) this year was "Financing Sustainable Urban Future for All."
- Finances must be channelled in the right direction to make cities liveable and safe.

Air Pollution

- A report shows that out of the 50 most polluted cities in the world, 39 are in India.
- An average Indian loses 5.3 years of his life expectancy due to pollution; for the residents of Delhi, it is 11.9 years.
- Bad air is not limited to the Indo-Gangetic plains anymore where the inversion of temperature and slowing down of wind speeds was a factor.
- The situation is getting bad even in India's coastal cities.
- This highlights the **need for policy shifts to ensure better and liveable futures.**

Expansion of 'grey' infrastructure

- The need now is to turn to **sustainable and "ecological urbanization"**.

- The trajectory of urban development, with the focus on real estate development, widening of roads, allowing large fuel guzzling vehicles on them are the major reasons for increased pollution in Indian cities.
- Motorised transport alone is the cause for 60% of urban pollution.
- The green lungs of the cities, water bodies, urban forests, and green cover on urban commons, and urban agriculture have all reported shrinkage.

Pollution in the National Capital Region

- During winter in North India, the burning of paddy straw is the cause for smog.
- But this is only a small and seasonal part of the problem.
- India's automobile market has risen in value.
- This must serve as an impetus to the new design of and direction to urban development.
- Traffic snarls are increasing each day, thus leading to more pollution levels.
- Construction activities contribute to roughly 10% of air pollution in the National Capital Region.

Public Transport

- There needs to be good public transport, with investment in buses for towns and cities.
- Nearly 10 lakh buses would need to be added to the existing bus fleet in cities to meet the demand.
- Public transport must be made accessible and affordable to people.
- To control private motorised vehicular movement in the cities, congestion tax on private car owners driving during peak hours can be thought of.
- Some cities have a no car day on certain days — an example that should be put into practice.

Strengthening Governance

- People's empowerment through the city's governance architecture is a firm step forward.
- Pollution guides and standard operating procedures for various line departments and agencies should be made readily available to the people.
- The Graded Response Action Plan must be adopted in other Indian cities as well.
- Zero acceptance of industrial pollution and real-time monitoring must become a reality.