

# Exploring Urban Renewal in India

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**Abstract**— The term ‘Urban Renewal’ refers to renewing a city or a part of it by regenerating them. The cities which face old infrastructure and that cannot cope up with rapid changes cause degeneration and weak systems. Thus Urban renewal gives life to the cities that are dying. Today the world is facing rapid changes in urbanization. New technologies, concepts and design change the shape of the city and its living. Increasing urban population requires greater needs of shelter, communication and infrastructure. Thus some old cities are not able to provide enough and become a failure. Such cities need to be identified and analysed in terms of urbanization. The Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) was launched by the Central Government in 2005. Its initiative was to redevelop the towns by various means. It is necessary to analyse how this mission worked and overview the present situation in Indian cities. The research study focuses on studying the concept and importance as well as identifying the cities that require urban renewal.

**Keywords**— Cities, development, infrastructure, urbanization

## I. INTRODUCTION

Urban Transformation and change is affected by every growing city. Urban decline happens due to undesirable changes in the urban context. The old development that contains narrow roads, old construction, unplanned layouts start facing massive population and heavy traffic which makes the place congested; this leads to urban decline. To cater to this issue, local policies and strategies are required to deal with urban decay and transformation, which is known as urban renewal. Urban renewal is not only infrastructure development, but also physical, social, economic and environmental improvements. The paper aims in understanding urban renewal and its importance in India.

**Aim:** To explore Urban renewal importance and initiatives and identify the gaps of urban renewal in India.

### Objectives:

- Background study and importance of Urban Renewal
- Analysis of Urban Renewal Initiatives by the government bodies
- Literature review and case study
- Analysis and recommendations towards urban renewal and urban growth.

**Research gap:** How did the Urban renewal initiatives in India bring change in Urbanization, was it successful or not? What are the gaps in the Urban Renewal policies now?

## II. METHODOLOGY

The paper is mainly based on secondary data and literature review of various articles, journals, books, news articles, etc. To explore the city in this aspect, one needs to understand the present situation of the cities. Journal papers referred to are published in refereed journals and their findings are analyzed for necessary outcomes. Case study of a city is taken to analyse the gaps in urban planning and targets that are required for urban renewal. Government initiatives are reviewed and studied based on their targets, completed projects and main focus addressing urban renewal. The author reviews and highlights the gaps in policies and need of redevelopment

## III. URBAN RENEWAL

Urban renewal is an abroad term which is associated with developing each of the aspects as shown in Figure 1. Culture is one of the most significant aspects in Indian cities. Culture shapes the activities of the city. With the growing population, cultural activities need to be planned accordingly during urban renewal initiatives. The characteristics of cities in India are limited space with concentric dense population and non-agricultural occupation of residents. Thus improvement in urban fabric, enhancement of culture and traditions, improved community and housing, employment and revenue, minimizing ecological impact and improving urban environment are the most important goals of urban renewal.



Figure 1: Concept of Urban Renewal is related to development of these parameters

#### IV. GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

##### A. Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM):

Launched by the government of India under the Ministry of Urban development in 2015, this mission was initially a seven year plan which was extended for two years until 2014. This mission focused on efficient urban infrastructure, fast track planned development, infrastructure services and civic amenities. The sub-missions of this initiative were Provision of Basic Services to Urban Poor (BSUP), Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small & Medium Towns (UIDSSMT), the schemes of Integrated Development of Small and Medium Towns (IDSMT) and Accelerated Urban Water Supply Programme (AUWSP), Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP) by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MHUPA). The objectives of the mission mainly focus only on infrastructural services, adequate funding and investment, planned development, redevelopment, civic amenities and basic services. So far 10 projects were completed by this mission. As per the literature and studying the government initiatives, during 2005 there was urbanization and infrastructure as compared to present. There was more possibility of better planning and renewal of the old core of major cities in India.

##### B. Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)

After 2015, JNNURM was renamed as AMRUT by Prime Minister Narendra Modi focusing on establishing infrastructure by ensuring adequate sewage networks and water supply for urban transformation by implementing urban revival projects. The targets of the mission are to provide water supply and sewerage connection to every household, increase in green amenities along with digital facilities at public spaces and encourage public transport to reduce pollution. AMRUT has successfully completed more than ten thousand projects on public transportation, water supply and sewerage connection. It has ensured basic facilities to each and every household and working towards positive direction.

##### C. Smart Cities Mission

The smart cities mission under the Ministry of Housing and urban Affairs targets 100 cities focusing on economic growth and local area development; technology that leads to smart outcomes and enables better quality of life for people. Redevelopment initiative has been stated in the smart cities mission that engages in road widening projects, pedestrian and bike development, public spaces at waterfront, high intensity mixed landuse development nearby public transit stations and Greenfield development. Innovative technologies are encouraged in city planning and improving efficiency of the streets and urban level. Greenfield development deals with extended development and rising population demands.

#### V. LITERATURE REVIEW

A paper by Preeti Onkar, Dr. Krishna Kumar Dhote and Dr. Ashutosh Sharma titled 'Exploring the Concept of Urban Renewal in the Indian Context' published in ITPI journal demonstrates definitions of urban renewal stated by many authors, planners and researchers along with elaboration in the concept of urban renewal in different perspectives. Urban renewal becomes necessary when unauthorised development and urban sprawl increases disturbing the proper planning of a city. The traditional approaches of urban renewal aim in achieving an improved physical environment. The concepts of renewal are differentiated by the author with the United Kingdom, United States and India. In the analysis, India lacks Revitalization, Redevelopment and Reconstruction. India aims only for historic preservation and urban renewal of physical infrastructure. The evolution of Urban renewal policies have been provided in detail by the author that sets a good background for analysis.

A paper by Sarbeswar Praharaj titled 'Area-Based Urban Renewal Approach for Smart Cities Development in India: Challenges of Inclusion and Sustainability' studies urban transformation in smart cities based on their inclusion and sustainability. The author states about digital urban renewal in smart cities by reviewing global literature. In this paper, 100 cities were selected and studied which appear under the smart city mission, which were approved for funding. The research study presents statistical data analysis of the city area, population, investments and status of project completion under smart cities mission focusing on the top twenty cities. The author indicates crucial recommendations for urban planning for ICT and digital renewal along with sustainability. According to the Smart City Mission guidelines, a redevelopment project shall cover 50 acres of land emphasizing higher FSI, ground coverage and green spaces. However the three strategies of smart city mission are retrofitting, redevelopment and Greenfield development. This indicates that urban renewal policies are implemented in the Smart city mission of the government of India. However, due to land limits stated to be higher such as 500 acres for retrofitting, it needs to be designed in smaller scales as the old core of the city occupies a huge number of landowners.

#### VI. CASE STUDY

##### A. Mumbai Megacity:

Mumbai is a Mega Metropolitan City of India which consists of seven islands. Its urban growth is rapidly increasing and facing lack of land, congested buildings, increasing population and infrastructure demand. The old core of Mumbai comprises of development since the British rule. Thus policies of neighbourhood level renewal should be planned as Mumbai consists of chawls, old bazaars, middle income group housing, etc. As per Inner City Urban Renewal: A Study of 4 Precincts in Mumbai, 2007, four neighbourhoods require detail planning of Urban renewal that have potential for development. Null Bazaar, Bora Bazaar, Dadar Parsee Colony and Girgaon are the four neighbourhoods. As per news articles, Bhendi bazaar area, a

125-year-old market district undergoes redevelopment project. The buildings are weak, the neighbourhood has degraded, and such areas require individual planning of the street and infrastructure by identifying the old buildings. The most dilapidated buildings are present in areas; Byculla, Girgaum, Sewri, Parel, Mumbai Central, Nagpada, Bhendi Bazaar, Mohammed Ali Road and Crawford Market.

It is estimated that around 16000 buildings are in worst condition and they need to be vacated and reconstructed. (Times of India, 2017) Only 25% of the buildings have been developed or reconstructed by MHADA and owners. Such buildings are occupied at the old areas, which are not just an individual building, but it affects the whole area. These buildings are usually found nearby or in the same area. However the government initiatives successfully provide basic water supply and sewerage in most of the areas and Mumbai is the best example of Public transportation. Thus policies need to be targeted further based on individual city as the character of each urban city is different. Urban renewal also focuses in renewing the decayed development of the city. Basic services is an important need of the urban, but it is high time to focus on smaller old parts of the city that contain, dilapidated buildings, congested streets, decaying infrastructure is the need of the hour.

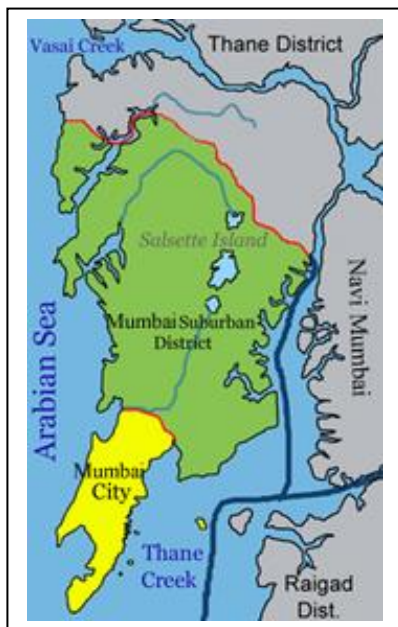


Figure 2: Map of Mumbai showing City and Suburb

## VII. FINDINGS

The paper explores and analyses the main concept of Urban Renewal, along with understanding the Government initiatives objectives and focus. The case study of Mumbai City is an example to understand the neighborhood urban issues faced which are not mentioned or highlighted in research literature. Ground reports of news articles and projects are referred to highlight how crucial is urban renewal and planning and the need of better policies is required for future sustainable growth. The city is analyzed in terms of old infrastructure, present state and outcomes of the initiatives. There are many aspects that have improved and need to be

improved in the parts of the city. The old cores of the city are a challenge as they cannot serve the rising population. Decaying infrastructure needs to be target to renew the neighborhood considering the economy, improved cultural activities, social interaction, and environmental perseverance. Summarizing the main focuses of new policies

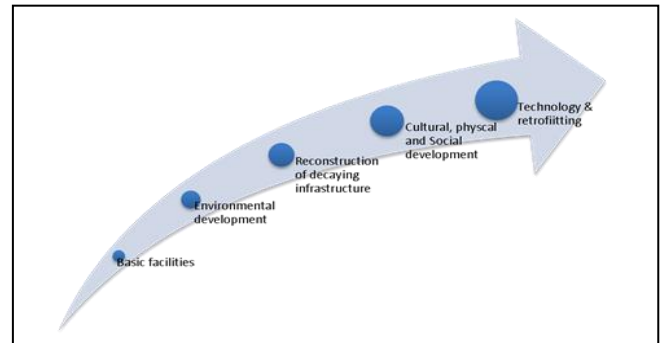


Figure 3: Recommended targets for neighbourhood renewal policies

## VIII. CONCLUSION

Targets of policies should always be in growing direction. The national policies launched by the central government and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs are towards progressive direction but not addressing the true motive of Urban renewal. Sub targets or neighborhood level policies need to be developed to address the issues of decaying infrastructure, social development, economic improvement, perseverance and development of environment and ecology, cultural and physical improvement along with technology and innovation in retrofitting buildings. As per the study of literature, case study and review of government initiatives, it is suggested to develop small scale policies focusing on old core areas of the mega cities of India and slowly moving towards the urban cities. Rising population and urbanization neglects the old core which starts to decline and is not capable of withstanding the crowd, technology, planning strategies and road traffic, which becomes a challenge for the planning authorities as well as residents of the area. Urban renewal should be focused primarily on such decaying infrastructure areas that require renewal in all aspects.

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