Towards Resilient and Prosperous Cities in India Report

Mains: *GS1 – population and associated issues | urbanization, their problems and their remedies.*

GS2 – Governance | Devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

GS3 - Disaster management

Why in News?

Recently, the World Bank has released a report titled Towards Resilient and Prosperous Cities in India estimating Indian cities will require $2.4 trillion by 2050 to build climate-resilient infrastructure and services.

What is key findings of the report?

Report
• **Released by** – **World Bank**, in collaboration with the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. • **Objective** – Assessing urban climate risks and economic opportunities.

- **Increase in population growth** – The country's urban population will nearly double to 951 million by 2050
- **Job creation** – Cities will account for 70 % of all new employment generated 2030.
- **Increase in flood risk** – Climate change and urbanization patterns are the main drivers of stormwater-related or pluvial flooding risks, with a forecasted increase in risk of 3.6 to 7 times by 2070.
    - Annual estimated losses just from pluvial flood related flooding are likely to increase up to $14-30 billion by 2070, exposing up to 46.4 million people.

Flash floods *is highly localized are recurring events in urban spaces occurring in a*

much shorter span of time (3-6 hours), which is often associated with cloudbursts.

3 Types of Urban Flooding – World Bank

- **Pluvial flooding** – This occurs when heavy rainfall exceeds the soil's absorption and drainage capacity, leading to surface runoff.
- **Coastal flooding** – It is caused by storm surges and high winds during high tides.
  - It is exacerbated by rising sea levels and low atmospheric pressure.
- **Fluvial flooding** – This results from intense rainfall or snowmelt causing rivers to overflow.
  - It is characterized by a brief spike in water levels that recedes slower.

- **Higher fatalities** – Heat-related deaths can double to over 3 lakh each year by 2050 due to global warming and the **urban heat island** phenomenon.
  - It found that Among 10 large cities in India, from the period 1983-1990 to 2010-2016, exposure to dangerous extreme heat stress has increased by 71 %.

> ***Urban Heat Island effect*** *is a local and temporary phenomenon experienced when certain pockets within a city experience a higher heat load than surrounding or neighboring areas on the same day.*

What are the recommendations of the report?

- **Enhance autonomy –** Indian cities should be granted greater autonomy to invest in climate resilience, adaptation, and mitigation.
  - Evidence suggests that cities with more decision-making power tend to outperform others in implementing effective climate solutions.
- **Localized approaches –** Climate strategies tailored to local conditions rather than imposed uniformly across all states.
- **National and state-level support –** Coordinated interventions at national and state levels are crucial to support and amplify local efforts in climate adaptation and mitigation.
- **Boosting private sector engagement** – Encouraging greater participation from

private enterprises in city-level climate initiatives.

- **Creating a financing roadmap** – Establishing clear pathways for sustainable funding and investment in climate projects.

- **Building municipal capacities** – Setting standards and providing resources to strengthen the capabilities of urban local bodies.

- **Capital mobilization** – Blending public-private funds accelerates resilient urban infrastructure development.

What are the challenges in enhancing urban autonomy?

- **Weak devolution of powers** – 74th Constitutional Amendment aimed to empower states to delegate responsibilities like urban planning, land use regulation, supply management, and slum improvement to ULBs.

- However, *many states have fallen short in fully realizing this potential*.

- **Inadequate financial resources** – ULBs frequently face significant financial constraints that hinder their ability to implement climate-resilient infrastructure and policies.

> *The Union Budget 2025-26 announced that the government will set up the **Urban Challenge Fund** of Rs 1 lakh crore to implement the proposals for 'Cities as Growth Hubs', 'Creative Redevelopment of Cities', and 'Water and Sanitation.*

- **Weak institutional capacity** – Many ULBs also struggle with insufficient technical skills and administrative capabilities necessary to design and implement effective climate adaptation strategies.

- **Lack of structured governance** – The absence of coordination among various urban authorities obstructs the seamless integration of climate resilience measures across different sectors.

- **Inadequate data** – Lack of access to accurate and current data regarding climate risks and urban infrastructure, which are crucial for making informed decisions.

What lies ahead?

- Measures like shifting working hours to early morning and late afternoon, urban greening, early warning systems, and cool roofs can save over 1.3 lakh lives.

- Building climate resilient infrastructure is needed for both growth and sustenance in future.

Quick facts
• **Historically** – The first municipal body was established in Madras in 1687, followed by Bombay and Calcutta. ***Lord Ripon*** *considered as the father of local self-government in India.* • **Constitutionally** – The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 gave constitutional status to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to strengthen local self-governance. - Part IX-A – Deals with the composition, roles, and responsibilities. - 12th Schedule **–** It specifies 18 functions that are devolved to these ULBs.

Related links – Urban flooding | Urban Heat Island

Reference

The Indian Express| Towards Resilient and Prosperous Cities in India Report

