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Sustainable Urban Planning in India

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A human settlement is a living organism. It has an origin, growth, decay and regrowth. It is a dynamic entity. The settlement is subject to various type of factors as like, physical, social, economic and political which influence its structure and form. It is essential to channelize these forces in a planned manner to create the total environment, which is healthy, efficient and satisfying for safe living, working and recreation. The development plan is the important instrument to achieve this objective.

The land use plan is intended as an important means of reaching physical, economic and social community goals. The plan through its effects on public and private decisions and investments can be a powerful influence on the growth rate, character, quality, and pattern of the cities physical environment.

The plan sets forth policies intended to encourage the upgrading and preservation of the existing city and to provide for an orderly, efficient, and logical extension of urban development in the predominantly undeveloped area surrounding the city. A central issue in deciding the future pattern of development is the manner in which future growth is to be accommodated. Already developed areas can be used more intensively (Higher average densities) or undeveloped land can be brought in to use. A range of choices exist between these two extremes.

Until recently, many cities have emphasized expansion into new areas rather than the recycling and more intense use of existing areas. However, experience and analysis over the year have brought about the general acceptance of the fact that such an approach towards growth can raise the cost of city services and add to the severity of a number of environmental, social, and economic problems.

Modern Urban Planning in India

Before independence the urban planning system in India was similar to Great Britain because of being ruled by them. After independence, rapid industrialisation and urbanisation compelled to regulate the growth in urban areas. Master Plans were prepared for cities. The Bombay Town Planning Act 1915 and Madras Town Planning Act 1920 are the earliest comprehensive legislations at state level in India. Simultaneously many city improvement trust acts were also enacted for improvement of cities. With the declaration independence on 15th August 1947, the country was divided into two countries as India and Pakistan. During this period of transition many people died and many migrated to the country of their choice.

The top priority at that time was to provide shelter to the refugees. Mass housing schemes were carried out in the border states of Delhi, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and West Bengal. Number of new towns such as capital towns, refugee towns, industrial towns, port towns and satellite towns were constructed. The first new town to be built was Chandigarh as capital of Punjab state. It stimulated the urban planning process in India. Nearly 120 new towns were built so far. India adopted a definite planning