

Q50

In order to improve ease of living in Indian cities, urban local bodies need to have wider access to financial resources.

According to a survey by UN, in 2030 40.76% of country's population is expected to reside in urban areas, and for improving ease of living emphasis is on urban planning through proactive role of urban local bodies.

Challenges with Urban Local Bodies :-

1. Finance crunch - Chief source of revenue ~~for~~ ULBs are taxes levied by them, but maximum no. of taxes are levied by centre and states. Revenue of ULBs are insufficient to cover the expenses of the services provided.
2. Lack of leadership - ULBs fail to represent the proactive leader. Several loopholes and public negligence of the election process make the institution less representative.
3. Greater state control - Most of the ULBs face the problem of excessive state control in the name of regulation, making them dependent on the state.
4. Corruption - The underpaid staff of ULBs indulge into corrupt practices making the system inefficient.
5. Lack of trained personnel - Representatives in the ULBs usually lack the vision for urban planning. Most of the plans are politically motivated.

Key urban development missions :-

1. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban
2. Swachh Bharat Mission
3. National Urban Livelihood Mission
4. Atal Mission for Rejuvenation & Urban Transformation (AMRUT)

Roles of ULB's and way forward :-

1. Regional planning like that of sewer lines, landfills, water pipe lines, roads, street lights affect the common well being of the people. Area specific demand of facilities can only be done through pro active urban planning.
2. Greater autonomy on financial front and lesser state control could provide urban settlements by considering local voices.
3. Pune and Chandigarh set up an example for well ease of living cities in India through a well established & proactive ULBs which take care of local concerns like sanitation, health, etc. and provides a front for addressing ~~the~~ & raising voice for local problems like unemployment and poor health infrastructure

74th Amendment Act provides for empowered Urban Local Bodies to function as an self-governing institution. True potential of ULBs and the very objective of broadening of population coverage in government schemes & benefits could only be done through autonomous & independent ULB with greater financial autonomy.