Roundtable Report

Urban India @ 100 – Transformative Urbanization

2nd September, 2022

Concept Note

Roundtable on Urban India@100 - Transformative Urbanization 2047

(In Collaboration with SSE-SCUS & NIUA)

The Roundtable on the theme of *Urban India@100 – Transformative Urbanization 2047* will take place on 2nd September 2022 at Symbiosis International University, Pune. This Roundtable will initiate a dialogue among eminent experts in urban economics, transport and mobility, infrastructure, housing, employment, urban finance, environment, and climate change and disaster management to identify challenges and create a blueprint for the road leading to transformative urbanization.

Background

The world is urbanizing rapidly; according to the UN projections, 68% of the global population will live in urban areas by 2050. Natural population growth in urban areas and to some extent, migration from hinterlands is expected to add 2.5 billion people to cities and towns, of which 17% will be in India alone. Among the top 25 megacities in the world by 2035, 5 (New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangalore, and Chennai) will be in India. This is besides the approx. 7900 towns and cities that are experiencing rapid expansion in the last two decades. 35% of our population lives, works, and travels within the 6.95% landmass which comprises our urban areas. The 'Second Wave' of urbanization (after the first in Europe and North America in the 18th century) is inevitable and essential for economic growth. What is done for cities in near future will shape our long-term economic prospects, poverty alleviation, sustainability, and quality of life.

India will be celebrating the 100 years of independence in 2047. As we take a billion strides into this future, we need to create a roadmap to ensure that in our 100th year of independence, basic needs to people are already met and adequate infrastructure for living, working, and travelling is created with the goal of improving life in urban areas. Given the looming threat of climate change and environmental degradation, we have no choice but to make this roadmap more sustainable, innovative, and resilient. We must start the dialogues and deliberations today to effectively address the current and potential challenges and set achievable and realistic goals, targets, and indicators for the urban India of 2047.

Roundtable objectives

The purpose of this roundtable is to bring together researchers, policy makers and practitioners in domain areas linked to urban development to discuss and deliberate upon the rapidly expanding urban landscape in India and the issues and challenges therein. Given their expertise and insights gained through research and practice over the years, the eminent specialists will identify potential challenges and pathways for moving towards transformative urbanization that is sustainable, resilient, and innovative.

We envisage the following objectives for this Roundtable:

♦ To review current challenges and measures to solve myriad of issues facing urban areas

♦ To reflect on how urban areas can be revitalized to meet developmental, social, environmental, and cultural needs of people. This might mean revisiting definitions and theories of the past.

♦ To identify themes for future research agenda

♦ To define the scope of future roadmap for urban India in 2047

Thematic areas for discussion

The following themes are tentatively identified for discussion during the Roundtable:

♦ Urban poverty alleviation and meeting basic needs including health, nutrition, and education

♦ Urban planning and infrastructure: Challenges and aspirations

♦ Mobility and urban-rural connectivity

♦ Green infrastructure and green finance

♦ Urban employment and future opportunities

♦ Smart cities factoring in environmental protection, disaster management and climate resilience

♦ Localizing SDGs

♦ Redefining 'urban' to account for changing context

Workshop Agenda

10:00– 10:30 AM	Registration
10:30 – 11:00 AM	**Inaugural Session** • Welcome address by Prof. Jyoti Chandiramani, Director, Symbiosis School of Economics • Felicitation of Mr. Hitesh Vaidya, Director NIUA and welcoming him as the Distinguished Senior Fellow of SCUS • Opening remarks by Mr. Hitesh Vaidya, Director, NIUA
Session I: Current challenges and potential measures	
11:00– 01:00 PM	• Opening remarks by each participant (5 minutes each) Themes for discussion: $\Rightarrow$ Poverty alleviation and livelihoods $\Rightarrow$ Hard and soft infrastructure $\Rightarrow$ Sources of finance $\Rightarrow$ Transport – availability, adequacy, affordability $\Rightarrow$ Environment and climate change $\Rightarrow$ Localizing SDGs • Discussion and Q & A Moderator: Mr. Naim Keruwala, NIUA
01:00 – 02:00 PM	Lunch Break
02:00 – 4:00 PM	• Remarks by participants Themes for discussion: $\Rightarrow$ Revisiting definition of 'urban'

	$\Rightarrow$ Rural-urban connectivity and seamless expansion $\Rightarrow$ Revitalizing current cities $\Rightarrow$ Smart and intelligent urban designs $\Rightarrow$ Participatory planning • Discussion and Q & A Moderator: Dr. Archana Patankar, SCUS
04:00 – 04:15 PM	• Dr. Archana Patankar – Summary of day-long discussions and way forward
04:15 – 04.45 PM	High tea and networking

Welcome Address- Prof. Jyoti Chandiramani, Dean- Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Director- Symbiosis School of Economics, Symbiosis International (Deemed University)

- One of the most pressing issues in understanding urbanization in India and its **area transformation process** is the urgent need to **redefine urban**. The flaws lay right from the male-centric definition of urban – which talks of the criteria wherein 75% of the male population is engaged in a non-agricultural activity. Besides, there are a number of studies that highlight the agglomeration index – wherein India and its various states are far more urbanized than what the Census 2011 has highlighted. Further,
- **Several indices** have been created like the Ease of Living Index, Municipal Performance Index, Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index, etc The present measurement sends a mixed signal – while it is important to measure what does this measurement state? The present measurement sends a mixed signal – while it is important to measure what does this measurement state? – Governance Tools
- **Urban data** (Governance – lagged effect) is missing, which is of utmost importance to carrying out adequate research in this field.
- The **blurry demarcation of a city** which might cover multiple districts, is another challenge related to urban
- Is Urban Janus looking where we only consider the past and the future? No one talks about the present
- Second, **Urban infrastructure development is like a Palimpsest** - where constant development is happening.

Keynote Address- Mr. Hitesh Vaidya, Director NIUA (National Institute for Urban Affairs)

Mr. Hitesh Vaidya was conferred with the honor of Distinguished Senior Research Fellow at the Symbiosis Centre for Urban Studies, which he accepted wholeheartedly.

In his keynote address, he threw light on the urban issues and challenges and how NIUA would require collaborations with various experts and stakeholders to address each one effectively. The issues include:

- How is **Rural-Urban migration** taking place?
- India's **urbanization is not only messy and hidden** (World Bank, 2015) and added the aspect of **reluctant urbanization**
- **Cities are said to be engines of growth** with India's cities contributing to more than 60% of the GDP. However, there is a lack of evidence to substantiate the same, last such evidence came from the 76th NSS Survey (2018) stating urban contribution at 56.9 percent
- **While Silo-based research is of no use - evidence-based planning** is the need of the hour, with peer learning that can only enrich the outcomes
- **Climate-resilient enabled cities** are the need of the hour, with a plethora of services to manage issues such as **solid waste, harnessing green energy,** nudging changes
- **Academia-industry linkage will provide solution to multiple urban issues**
- **Capacity building** is needed not only in **terms of training and workshops** but in terms of research. **Academic research is not the solution, but project-based research is required**
- While cities are **preparing Master Plan @2041 (NIUA – Delhi**), it is observed that across cities there is a lack of funds with urban local bodies (municipality level); with **evidence-based planning** as a crucial need of the hour – as every city has its own peculiar characteristics and one size fits it all is not the solutions. (Urban Planning)
- With respect to the need to bring in **technological advancements in urban planning and service delivery (Urban Planning and Governance) -** NIUA would act as a mentor for software companies that are working on urban issues. **Standardization and templatization** (Governance and Planning) would help address several challenges

Participants

Dr. Abhay Pethe- Senior Consultant with UNICEF. Retired Professor of Econometrics, University of Mumbai. He has worked on several Urban developmental projects with the Government of Maharashtra and the Government of India

Dr. Amita Bhide- Dean and Professor in the School of Habitat Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. She has been deeply involved in issues related to urban poor communities, community organizations and housing rights movements, and advocacy groups

Mr. Aniruddha Shahapure- Chief Knowledge Officer at Pune Smart City Development Corporation Limited, Smart City Mission (MoHUA), has also been awarded the NITI Aayog-CIDC VISHWAKARMA 2022 Award

Dr. Archana Patankar- Founder Director at Green Globe Private Limited. She is a Climate Change Economist and Consultant with the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and Oxford Policy Management. She works on the vulnerability and impacts of extreme weather events and private adaptation

Dr. Kalyan Shankar- Assistant Professor at Symbiosis School of Economics. In urban studies, he has worked on issues of gender and informal labor markets, marginalized labor forms, urban sanitation and solid waste management

Mr. Mahesh Harhare- He is the Program Head, Urban Development with the Sustainable Cities and Transport team at WRI India. He is currently leading the team in developing comprehensive Climate Action Plans for three cities in Maharashtra (Solapur, Nashik, and Aurangabad), focusing on adaptation and mitigation

Dr. Manoj Parmar- He is the Director at Kamala Raheja Vidyanidhi Institute for Architecture and Environmental Studies. His academic interests include theoretical writing on Architecture and Urbanism. He has been in the private practice of architecture, and urban design since 1992

Dr. Manikprabhu Dhanorkar- He is the Deputy Head at Symbiosis Centre for Waste Resource Management. His core area of research includes solid waste management, waste to energy and products development from the wasted resources

Mr. Naim Keruwala- He is an Urban Management professional with over 14 years of diversified sector experience. He currently leads the CITIIS program as a Program Director at the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), a central autonomous body under the aegis of Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs, Government of India

Mr. Omkar Daitule- Works with the Ministry of Urban Development, Government of Maharashtra

Ms. Pranjali Deshpande- She is an Architect and Urban planner. She works on sustainable mobility projects with various government agencies. She is currently working as an independent professional with the World Bank and French Development Agency

Mr. Ramanath Jha- He is a Distinguished Fellow at Observer Research Foundation, Mumbai. He works on urbanisation — urban sustainability, urban governance, and urban planning. Dr. Jha belongs to the 1977 batch of the Indian Administrative Service

Mr. Ravikant Joshi- He has worked in India and abroad. He is a former chief accounts officer of Vadodra Municipal Corporation with more than 35 years of experience. He has been responsible for the conceptualization, designing and implementation of Municipal Financial, Budgetary and Accounting System reforms and their computerization in Vadodara Municipal Corporation

Mr. Sameer Unhale- He has an experience of 25 years into urban governance, focusing on Urban Infrastructure, Urban Poverty Alleviation, Sanitation, and Smart Cities. He has also worked in the capacity of State Mission Director, Municipal Commissioner and CEO Smart City to Utilise Digital Innovations and Public Policy for the Sustainable Development of inclusive and livable cities

Mr. Sanjay Pathak- He is an Urban Planner with an architecture background and more than 42 years of professional experience. Out of which are 37 in Planned Development of metropolitan cities. Five years in teaching, post retirement. Worked in Delhi Development Authority since 1981 and retired as Commissioner, head of the Planning Wing in May 2017

Ms. Sneha Palnitkar- She is the Member of Technical Committee on Authorization Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB), Govt of Maharashtra., Board Member of Interim Governing Committee, Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), U.K. Advisory Member of Research Advisory Group, Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) U.K.

Dr. Vidya Patkar- She is the Deputy Director at Symbiosis Institute of Geo-informatics. She works on sustainable agriculture using GIS-based tools, analyzing soil-health data and crop mapping in various districts of Maharashtra.

Attendees:

Faculty (Symbiosis Centre for Urban Studies and Symbiosis School of Economics)

    i.   Anagha Mitra- Assistant Professor, Symbiosis School of Economics
    ii. Ananya Nidhi- Research Assistant, Symbiosis Centre for Urban Studies
    iii. Gargi Patil- Assistant Professor, Symbiosis School of Economics
    iv. Shuchi Misra- Adjunct Faculty, Symbiosis School of Economics
    v. Sudipa Majumdar- Professor, Symbiosis School of Economics
    vi. Varun Miglani- Assitant Professor, Symbiosis School of Economics

NIUA Program Fellows-

i) Rahul Saikia

ii) Roshni Gera

iii) Swati Pradhan

iv)Yateen

Key Takeaways from the Roundtable Discussion:

Characteristics of Urban India:

- Number of Urban centers is growing exponentially**. Oxford Economics Global Cities Report has identified that India will have 17 cities, among 20 fastest-growing cities globally by 2030**
- There is **excessive demographic density**, especially in major cities of India. For example, Mumbai's density is 28000 persons/sq.km, Dhaka's density is 30,000 persons/sq.km
- **Local Public Finance is missing** and absent with respect to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) posing questions regarding their financial sustainability
- **Cities are inclusive against their will**

Challenges and Strategies:

1. Redefinition of Urban

ii. One of the most pressing issues in understanding urbanization in India and its **area transformation process** is the urgent need to **redefine urban**
iii. The flaws lay right from the **male-centric definition of urban** – which talks of the criteria wherein 75% of the male population is engaged in a non-agricultural activity
iv. Besides there are a number of studies that highlight the **agglomeration index** – wherein India and its various states are far more urbanized than what the Census 2011 has highlighted

2. Economic and Urban Planning

v. Planning should be **visionary** and **futuristic**, wherein we must plan for decades and not for the immediate future
vi. Land-use planning as a function must be devolved to Urban Local Bodies
vii. Implications of **Land-use planning have a long-term impact on area transformation** affecting millions of lives
viii. Sustainability and inclusive growth must fit into the framework of the Land-use planning process to make urban areas more liveable. Planning should also ensure preparing resilient cities and urban areas
ix. **Climate Change** is one of the most pressing issues which must be taken into consideration in **Land-use planning**
x. Planning cannot be elitist, **greater participation** is needed. We cannot be following a colonial framework where elite-class people plan for all citizens. Thus it should be participatory in nature
xi. Flexibility in planning is needed to ensure tailor-made solutions because one-size-fits is not the right approach. **Structured planning** is what we all should look at in the coming future. Master plans are something that Architects these days do not use anymore as there is no such thing as master plans
xii. Planning should be develoed to Urban Local Body (ULBs)

3. Governance

xiii. As on date, there are 36 districts and 28 Municipal Corporations in Maharashtra. This is a case reference that **all cities do not have a structured governance framework**

xiv. Since the adoption of GST in 2017, ULBs are struggling to pay the monthly salaries of their employees – thus **unable to even cover the basic administrative expenses** of the ULBs.

xv. A **balanced mechanism** needs to be created wherein the financial devolution and accountability aspects of ULBs are simultaneously addressed

xvi. Inclusivity of cities is what is required in order to accommodate all stakeholders as well as cater to each individual's aspirations and ambitions

xvii. Migrants play an important role in cities. They are an integral part of the growth of cities as they seek better economic opportunities – it is, therefore, pertinent that the **migrants are a part of the social inclusion program**. For example, the Government of India launched schemes like Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana and the One Nation One Ration Card Programme to address this issue and this can cut across all other similar schemes

xviii. **Nudge** from the top hierarchy of the federal structure is required – this will provide the much-needed political will for inclusive urban growth

xix. **Capacity Building of all stakeholders**- Government officials, citizens, civil society organizations, and researchers must be at the core of the urban development process

4. Finance

xx. **Fiscal Autonomy for the city is absent**, with 85% of urban infrastructure being funded by State and Central Government

xxi. **Sustainable finance** is crucial for cities specially for the next 25 years. Therefore, if urban finances are not corrected, cities will become unsustainable with poor liveability

xxii. **Inadequate Funds for ULBs**: It was highlighted that from the INR 17 lakh crores spent on urban projects since 2015. If the Metrorail project and Housing for all schemes were kept aside, then the percentage and actual funds available to address other services will be inadequate and adversely impact the livability in the cities

xxiii. Over the last two decades, a **knee-jerk reaction** has been observed with respect to municipal finance, wherein grants/funds are allocated when an issue comes up needing immediate action – implying that urban interventions are reactionary and therefore financial outlays earmarked for prevention are not fully addressed

xxiv. While INR 63,000 Crores spent on the various projects envisaged under the Smart City Mission (SCM)– it has been observed that the funds address only 3% of the entire city and is thereby exclusionary in nature. A more inclusive development model should be envisaged

xxv. It was observed that issues related to urban livelihoods does not feature in the planning, governance or finance, thus an urban livelihood chapter must be included in the Development Plan of each city

5. Infrastructure

xxvi. Cities are living systems; having its own ethos. Apart from physical infrastructure, we must focus on soft infrastructure which builds the cities and make them unique in its own way. Hard and soft infrastructure is normative and should also be sustainable and resilient

xxvii. Monitoring infrastructure is nearly absent in a large number of tier-2 and tier-3 cities which is of serious concern

xxviii. There must be RRTS (Regional Rapid Transit System) in all states, which can facilitate better access and connectivity to commuters across regional nodes ensuring balanced and sustainable urban development Eg., Delhi-Meerut RRTS

xxix. We only talk about **economic infrastructure but social groups** like migrants, sex workers, and marginalized society members also form an integral part of society. Inclusive growth cannot happen if we discount the marginalized sections of the society

6. Environment, Climate Change and Sustainability:

xxx. Urban areas will have to deal with the twin challenges, first environmental pollution/degradation and second and most important, the problem of climate change

xxxi. **Climate change mitigation and adaptation** should be at the top in the planning process and should also be embedded into the policy-making framework. Estimation is needed to check how various developmental programs are contributing to both mitigation and adaptation

xxxii. Cities are witnessing deteriorating changes with respect to pollution and its environmental impact. This can be observed with respect to Delhi city – wherein not much has changed over the last two decades and we can see Pune city facing similar challenges.

xxxiii. There **are inadequate monitoring stations** across cities. The city of Pune has one Indian Metrological Department (IMD) station, which undertakes observations, communications, forecasting and weather services –given the increase in population and spatial expansion of Pune, the city is likely to suffer from multiple disasters simultaneously and would not be adequately prepared to tackle the environmental challenges in the future.

xxxiv. Monitoring infrastructure is nearly absent in a large number of tier-2 and tier-3 cities which is of serious concern

xxxv. For climate change, we do not have a **legal and regulatory framework** till date and this framework needs to be in place

xxxvi. Funds flow into mitigation because it makes economic sense, but at the city level, adaptation is more important

xxxvii. Extreme events and slow onset events will push more people below the poverty line in urban areas

xxxviii. Climate migration is likely to increase, and coastal cities will face a huge threat

xxxix. It is of utmost importance to link Climate change with disaster management and DRR (Disaster Risk Reduction).

Roadmap for the future: Urban India @ 2047

1. **Redefining Urban** is one of the tasks to be undertaken by the Symbiosis Centre for Urban Studies in collaboration with other stakeholders.
2. **Economic plan for a city** with a long-term vision is the need of the hour and should be established with inputs from various stakeholders. Regional and city approaches should be adopted as one size fits all pose a serious challenge.
3. **Urban Planning**:
   - **Realistic Urban planning** needs to be carried out based on the series of prioritized projects to be undertaken in a city.
   - **Human face of cities** must be recognized:
     through the various lenses of *multiple vulnerabilities* of the citizens
   - Gender dimension – adverse sex ratio - higher male migrations. Female Labour Force Participation in Labour is woefully low in urban areas
   - While a **Chapter on gender** should be included in the Development Plan. The example of the Mumbai Development Plan was cited which has incorporating the following:
     - i. *Provisioning of toilets for women in public areas*
     - ii. *Fundamental rethinking of designing the city*
4. Moving towards an alternate inclusive framework
5. While the initial framework for "Smart Cities" were exclusionary but a slow change in this regard is seen in select cities
6. Gradual incremental changes are more important rather than radical changes in frameworks
7. *Persons with varied disabilities must be taken into consideration while designing the cities*
8. **Participatory planning** should also be adopted wherein all the stakeholders collaborate collectively for the effective utilization of resources, avoid duplication of work and work in a manner where outcomes are mapped with output
9. **Urban Finance**
   - There has to be the political will to bring about the change with respect to re-definition- as presently only 1.7% of GDP is spent on urban areas. **Productivity mapping of per rupee spent must be calculated**
   - Appropriate pricing of utilities must be in place so that services become non-exclusionary and inclusive
   - **Land-based fiscal tools, Public-Private-Partnerships, and Municipal bonds** are some of the solutions to be explored in order to solve the issue of lack of municipal finance
   - **Management and monetization of public land** - state and central governments must share the proceeds with the local government
10. **Governance:**
    Questions were raised throughout the deliberations regarding **changes in the governance frameworks**. There is an urgent need to not only redirect and redistribute the resources to ensure urban local bodies are self-sufficient or have a strong framework for the allocation of resources
    - **Participatory governance** is the solution - where citizens become a part of the decision-making process – this will improve the politics, democracy, and accountability in Urban Local Bodies

- For example- Are stakeholder groups oriented to participate in decision-making?
- Capacity building in the form of workshops and regular awareness campaigns regarding the latest legislation must be done
- Smart city paradigm of creating cities that are digitally networked, and at the same time being endowed and equipped with a knowledge-oriented society, have the ability to relook at all paradigms bringing in multiple perspectives

11. Urban Infrastructure
- Seamless Urban infrastructure should be visible with service delivery in place to enhance and improve liveability.

12. **Culture** must be considered the fourth pillar of sustainability
13. **Indian researchers and local research** must be carried out and given utmost importance, as they are more equipped to understand the issues, challenges and the nuances
14. Last but certainly most important, **strategies for mitigation and adaptation to Climate Change** must be present in all regional and local plans