



Urbanisation, and Sustainable Development

Urbanisation drives economic transformation, industrialisation, and job creation. In India, cities fuel GDP growth, innovation, and infrastructure development. However, urban expansion also brings challenges like informal employment, poverty, and inequality. Rapid migration leads to overcrowding, strained public services, and widening socio-economic disparities, shaping a complex urban-employment dynamic. The urban labour market is highly segmented, with a growing gap between high-skilled jobs and low-wage informal work. The rise of the gig economy, platform work, and automation is reshaping employment, raising concerns over job security and workers' rights. Migrants boost economic activity but face exploitation, wage discrimination, and limited social welfare access.

Urbanisation and migration are rapidly transforming India's economy, society, and environment. Cities drive growth and innovation but also face rising inequalities, informal employment, and governance challenges. Migrants, vital to urban economies, often endure precarious jobs, poor housing, and limited access to essential services. Urbanisation has deepened socio-economic divides, marginalising migrants, slum dwellers, and informal workers. Rapid city expansion has fueled informal settlements with limited access to housing, healthcare, and education. Urban exclusion, shaped by caste, class, gender, and migration status, reinforces inequalities.

With climate change driving migration, urban planning must integrate climate-induced displacement strategies for sustainable growth. Strengthening legal protections, labor rights, and social infrastructure is key to inclusive development.

Migration has long driven urbanisation in India, shaping cities' demographics and economies. While voluntary migration boosts growth, distress migration due to agrarian crises, climate change, and economic shocks raises policy concerns. Migrants fuel urban economies but often face exclusion from housing, healthcare, and labour rights. Migrant workers in cities face discrimination, job insecurity, and restricted access to welfare. Women, children, and the elderly are especially vulnerable, struggling with healthcare, education, and safety. Urban crime and violence further marginalise these communities, reinforcing poverty and exclusion.

Tackling urban inequalities demands social protection, housing rights, and inclusive governance. Strengthening slum redevelopment, social safety nets, and livelihood programs is key to building equitable cities. Upholding the right to the city for all fosters inclusive urbanisation.

The COVID-19 crisis exposed their precarity, highlighting the need for inclusive urban policies. Seasonal and circular migration complicates governance, demanding coordinated rural-urban responses. Post-pandemic recovery underscores cities' economic resilience, yet employment remains uneven, with persistent gender gaps and urgent skilling needs. Inclusive policies are essential for equitable urban growth and job security.

Rapid urbanisation in India strains infrastructure, worsening housing, transport, water, and sanitation

challenges. Poor planning leads to congestion, pollution, and inefficient services, disproportionately impacting low-income and migrant communities. Affordable housing remains a major challenge, with urban land markets often excluding the poor. Inadequate public transport forces reliance on informal transit, worsening congestion and pollution, while poor waste management and sanitation pose serious health risks.

Sustainable urbanisation demands investment in smart infrastructure, efficient transport, and resilient urban services. Climate-conscious planning, green buildings, and inclusive governance are essential for livability and sustainability. Governance shapes urban outcomes, but inefficiencies, weak decentralization, and limited institutional capacity hinder progress. National policies like Smart Cities Mission and PMAY address urban issues but face financial and political hurdles. Strengthening municipal governance, fiscal autonomy, and participatory planning is key to building resilient cities. Future urban planning must anticipate digitalization, automation, and climate adaptation to keep cities competitive and inclusive. Exploring innovative governance and financing models can drive sustainable development.

A holistic approach integrating governance, economic equity, and sustainable infrastructure is crucial. This conference aims to foster discussions that shape policy solutions for just and sustainable urban futures.

Key issues for consideration under this theme include:

- ⦿ The role of urbanisation in industrial development and economic transformation
- ⦿ Informal labour markets and their impact on economic inequality
- ⦿ Migration and its effects on urban labour supply and wage structures
- ⦿ The rise of gig and platform-based employment in urban India
- ⦿ The gendered dimensions of urban employment and workforce participation
- ⦿ Housing affordability and policies for slum redevelopment
- ⦿ Social protection and welfare policies for urban poor and migrants
- ⦿ Crime, safety, and policing in marginalised urban neighbourhoods
- ⦿ Policy challenges in integrating migrant workers into urban economies
- ⦿ Climate change and displacement: implications for urban planning
- ⦿ The role of remittances in urban and rural development
- ⦿ The effectiveness of national urban policies in addressing urban challenges
- ⦿ Financial mechanisms for sustainable urban development
- ⦿ Public-private partnerships in urban infrastructure and service delivery
- ⦿ The role of digital technology and smart cities in urban governance
- ⦿ Disaster preparedness and urban resilience strategies