



POLICY BRIEF

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Authors

Raina Singh, Fellow, TERI

Adishree Panda, Research Associate, TERI

Palak Thakur, Research Associate, TERI

Reviewers

Shri Prakash, Distinguished Fellow, TERI

Kamilla Kristensen Rai, Counsellor (UD), Royal Embassy of Denmark in India

Panagiotis Karamanos, Team Leader, International Urban Cooperation/India

Pier Roberto Remitti, Program Director, International Urban Cooperation/India

The Energy and Resources Institute
 Darbari Seth Block, IHC Complex
 Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110 003
 Tel. 2468 2100 or 4150 4900
 Fax. 2468 2144 or 2468 2145
 India +91 Delhi (0) 11

www.teriin.org

Making Liveable Cities: Challenges and Way Forward for India

Abstract

More than 40% of India's population is expected to reside in its urban centres by 2050 (UNDESA, 2014). While these rapidly expanding urban centres in India are seen as the engines of economic growth, they also face tremendous pressures on their civic infrastructure systems and issues of environmental degradation, air pollution, and increasing frequency of climate-induced events and disasters. It is, thus, now critical to relook at the ways in which we manage these challenges for enhancing the liveability of cities. To this end, a series of Policy Dialogues on 'Making Liveable Cities: Challenges and Way Forward for India' was organized by TERI with support from the Royal Embassy of Denmark and International Urban Cooperation (IUC) programme of the European Union, for identifying ways and means to shape a 'people-centric' sustainable urbanization process in India. It is in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and India's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), in the 4000+ Mission cities and beyond.

Through a review of the urban policy and institutional frameworks in different states and focused group discussions and activities, the Policy Dialogues invited inputs from various stakeholders working in the 'urban' domain, including Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and Smart City Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs). With more than 150 policymakers, planners, practitioners, and academicians participating and contributing, the Dialogues identified key challenges and enablers for enhancing liveability of Indian cities.

This policy brief is an outcome of the Policy Dialogues and documents key recommendations on urban planning frameworks, strengthening local urban governance, financing and implementation mechanisms, urban innovation, and strengthening partnerships; with a view to contribute to the National Urbanization Policy being drafted presently by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India.

Background

More than 40% of India's population is expected to reside in its urban centres by 2050 (UNDESA, 2014). As of Census 2011, there are 7935 towns, 475 urban agglomerations (UAs), and 981 outgrowths in the country. There are 468 Class-I UAs/Towns that have a population of more than 100,000 residents and 53 UAs/Towns housing a population of one million or above. Amongst the million plus UAs/Cities, there are three 'Mega Cities' with population of more than 10 million (Census, 2011). While these rapidly expanding urban centres in India are seen as the engines of economic growth, they also face tremendous pressures on their civic infrastructure systems, such as water supply, sewerage and drainage, solid waste management, mobility, etc. (FICCI, 2011). Besides infrastructure deficit, Indian cities are also facing issues of environmental degradation, air pollution, and increasing frequency of climate-induced events and disasters. There is, therefore, an urgent need to relook the ways in which we design our infrastructure, run our cities, and manage current pressures emanating from urbanization (TERI 2014, 2016).

In order to meet these challenges of growing urbanization in the country, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India, launched several new urban schemes in 2014—Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U), National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM), Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U), and the Smart Cities Mission. The basic aim of these schemes is to recast the urban landscape of the country to make urban areas liveable, sustainable, smart, and inclusive while driving the economic growth of the country. The Ministry also launched the Ease of Living Index in 2018 with an objective to shift towards an 'outcome-based' approach to urban planning (MoHUA, 2018b).

In many ways, AMRUT, Smart Cities, and the other Missions have similar objectives as that of the UN Sustainable Development Goals¹, the New

Urban Agenda², and the Paris Climate Agreement³, however, they are mostly physical infrastructure driven. "Making the city more 'liveable' for every resident has to be as much about investing in social infrastructure. It is about secure housing; clean air and water; safe public and private spaces; and realizing the highest attainable standard of health. It is about inclusion. It has to be about every resident having equal opportunities and being able to live with peace and security" (HLRN, 2018).

To this end, TERI organized a series of Policy Dialogues on 'Making Liveable Cities: Challenges and Way Forward' during February–October, 2018, for identifying ways and means to shape a 'people-centric' sustainable urbanization process in India, in line with the SDGs and India's INDCs, in the 4000+ mission cities and beyond. Supported by the Royal Embassy of Denmark in India and the International Urban Cooperation (IUC) programme of the European Union, the Policy Dialogues invited inputs from Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), Smart City Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs), State Urban Development and Line departments, urban institutions and agencies, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, academia, and urban planners, practitioners and experts, funding agencies and multilateral/bilateral organizations.

Four Policy Dialogues were conducted—one at the national level to set the context and identify the key themes to be addressed and three Regional Dialogues in Vijayawada (for southern region), Panaji (for western region), and Gangtok (for eastern & north-eastern region) to address the themes of 'Urban Planning & Governance', 'Infrastructure Development', and 'Environmental Sustainability & Climate Action' respectively. The Regional Dialogues were co-hosted with the state governments of Andhra Pradesh, Goa, and Sikkim, respectively. A fourth Regional Policy Dialogue will be held in January

¹ In 2015, UN adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with 17 Goals (SDGs). SDG 11 is dedicated to 'Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable'.

² The UN Conference - Habitat III in Quito, 2016, successfully concluded with the adoption of the New Urban Agenda to achieve sustainable urban development that promotes equity, welfare and shared prosperity.

³ The 2015 Paris Agreement builds upon the UNFCCC and brings together nations for combatting climate change and adapt to its effects, with enhanced support to assist developing countries, especially at the city level





Discussions during the group exercise activity at Southern Region Policy Dialogue in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

2019 in Rajasthan for the northern region and will focus on ‘Partnerships for Enhancing Liveability’.

This Policy Brief presents the key outcomes of these national and regional Policy Dialogues with an aim to mainstream ‘liveability’ in the urban planning and policy frameworks at the national and sub-national levels. The Policy Brief also aims to contribute to the National Urbanization Policy being drafted presently by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India.

KEY QUESTIONS ADDRESSED BY POLICY DIALOGUES ON ‘MAKING LIVEABLE CITIES: CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD’

- What are the challenges and enablers for enhancing the liveability of Indian cities? To what extent do the existing missions of the Government of India—Smart Cities and AMRUT—enable cities to increase their liveability levels?
- How can Indian cities aim to achieve the targets of SDG 11, the New Urban Agenda, Paris Climate Agreement, and monitor and report progress on the same?
- What could be the potential partnership and implementation mechanisms in the context of liveability of Indian cities? What are the key takeaways from the public–private partnership (PPP) projects being implemented under the Smart Cities Mission?
- Going beyond the Smart Cities for ‘people-centric’ sustainable urbanization – knowledge transfer/sharing; capacity building - How do we extend the learning from the national programmes to other cities and share the knowledge?
- How can ULBs be strengthened for enhancing liveability of cities— policy mandate; institutional and financial support; and legal provisions?



Panel discussion at the Western Region Policy Dialogue in Panaji, Goa

What are ‘liveable’ cities?

Though the concept has been doing the rounds in the urban planning and design field since the late 1980s, ‘liveability’ as it is used at present gained momentum in 1999 with the Gore/Clinton Liveability Agenda, a framework for “new tools and resources to preserve green space, ease traffic congestion, and pursue regional “smart growth” strategies” (Herrman and Lewis, 2017). Since then, there have been multiple definitions of liveability in the context of cities. While Mercer’s Quality of Living Survey has been used to rank cities based on an evaluation of 39 factors, including political, economic, environmental, personal safety, health, education, transportation, and other public service factors (Mercer, 2011); the Economist Intelligence Unit’s (EIU) Global Liveability Report ranked cities according to aspects of widespread availability of goods and services, low personal risk, and effective infrastructure (EIU, 2011). The Centre for Liveable Cities, Singapore, emphasises on a high quality of life—with a focus on social and cultural aspects, significance of a sustainable environment, presence

LIVEABILITY

Though there is no established theoretical framework laying out a uniform definition of liveable cities, all definitions encompass affordable and appropriate housing, supportive community features and services, and adequate mobility options, which together facilitate personal independence and the engagement of residents in civic and social life (AARP Public Policy Institute, 2005)



of a competitive economy for achieving economic security, and effective and participatory governance.

In India, the MoHUA launched the 'Ease of Living Index' in January 2018, to help cities systematically assess themselves against global and national benchmarks and encourage them to shift towards an 'outcome-based' approach to urban planning and management.

The Ease of Living Index assesses the quality of life in cities across 4 pillars and 15 categories using 78 indicators, of which 56 are core indicators and 22 are supporting indicators (Figure 1). The core indicators measure those aspects of ease of living which are considered 'essential' urban services. The supporting indicators are used to measure adoption of innovative practices which are considered desirable for enhancing ease of living (MoHUA, 2018b). Based on these indicators, the 2018 Ease of Living Index assessed 111 cities in India. These included smart cities, all State/UT capital cities and population hubs (having 1 million plus population). Greenfield cities, such as Naya Raipur and Amaravati, were excluded in this round (MoHUA, 2018b).

While social, economic, and institutional indicators have been included in the Ease of Living Index for measuring liveability on parameters 'beyond

infrastructure', the 2018 Index does not comment on 'what next?' in terms of improving on these indicators.

Urban Planning and Development in India

Policy framework

For the first four decades after independence, India's approach to development mostly focused on its rural areas. Since India lived in its villages, it was only prudent to invest in rural areas, and in agriculture and related sectors. Though the Model Town and Country Planning Act, 1960, was formulated by Government of India and adopted by the states; only few Tier I cities, such as Delhi, Mumbai, Kanpur, etc., were formulating and implementing Master Plans. With the urban population increasing 2.5 times during 1951–1981, the first national-level initiative towards a holistic policy for urbanization was introduced with the National Commission on Urbanisation in the late 1980s. Since then, a number of schemes and programmes have been implemented for urban planning and infrastructure development by the national and state governments. However, the national approach to addressing urbanization has been mostly through piecemeal efforts at the city level or through



FIGURE 1 India's Ease of Living Index

Source: Ease of Living Index 2018 Report, MoHUA, 2018b



TABLE 1 Case examples of Liveable City Initiatives

City/ Urban Local Body (ULB)	Liveable City Initiative/Policy
<p>City of Smiles: Aarhus, Denmark</p> 	<p>The City of Aarhus has taken action in order to reduce the future cost of living and production in the city. It has assembled local, regional, and national stakeholders and facilitates coordination of city investments with the physical planning of the city.</p> <p>Their vision is “Aarhus is and continues to be a good city for everyone. A city on the move. A city that works together”. The most striking feature of Aarhus is that it is an open, inclusive city where there is room for everyone.</p>
<p>Resilient Rotterdam: Rotterdam, The Netherlands</p> 	<p>Rotterdam is striving for a sustainable, safe, inclusive, and healthy future. The city is working in close cooperation with the citizens to embed resilience in their actions.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure ready to face the 21st century • Resilience to climate change taken to a new level • Attain city with a balanced community • A global port city running on clean and reliable energy
<p>Livable City Initiative (LCI): New Haven, Connecticut</p> 	<p>LCI is a neighbourhood-focussed agency with a mission to enhance the experience of the individuals who live and work in the City of New Haven.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement of the city’s housing code and public space requirements • Design and implementation of housing programmes to support high quality, affordable, and energy efficient housing opportunities • Educating and increasing awareness on solutions for neighbourhood concerns • Design and implementation of public improvements and programmes to facilitate safer, healthier, and more attractive communities

centrally-sponsored urban development schemes that aim to provide ad hoc infrastructure solutions (HPEC, MOUD, 2011). To summarize, urban planning and development activities in India have been typically governed by three approaches.

- **Master Plans and Town Planning Schemes**—Prepared under the purview of the state/city level development acts, providing a city level development agenda and land use plans. However, master planning has been mostly limited to Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities and towns till now.
- **Centrally-sponsored National Urban Development Schemes**—This includes infrastructure development schemes, such as Integrated Development of Small & Medium Towns (IDSMT), BSUP (Basic Services for Urban Poor), IAY (Indira Awas Yojana), JNNURM (Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission), and slum development schemes, such as VAMBAY (Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana) and RAY (Rajiv Awas Yojana), amongst others. The current national urban missions, namely, AMRUT, Smart Cities Mission, PMAY-U, SBM-U, National

Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM), and Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) also fall in this category.

- **International Partnerships and Funding**—These primarily include infrastructure development programmes for water, sanitation, and urban transport by funding (grants and loans) from international agencies such as the World Bank, ADB, and JICA,⁴ amongst others. City-level initiatives on emerging issues, such as climate change, environmental sustainability, and green growth, have also been implemented by international networks and organizations. These include initiatives by the European Union, Rockefeller Foundation, and various international development agencies, such as AFD, GIZ, DfID, USAID, DANIDA,⁵ to name a few.

⁴ ADB: Asian Development Bank; JICA: Japan International Cooperation Agency

⁵ AFD: Agence Française de Développement; GIZ: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit; USAID: United States Agency for International Development; DANIDA: Danish International Development Agency



The current urban missions aim for a three-level strategy to take advantage of the opportunities presented by our cities. At the first level, poverty alleviation, affordable housing, and cleanliness are the three biggest issues and so NULM, PMAY-U, and SBM-U are being implemented in 4041 ULBs in the country. At the second level, water supply and sewerage need focus. These require economies of scale and are being implemented in 500 AMRUT cities (all Indian cities with more than 1 lakh population). Finally, at the third level, in 100 Smart Cities, Ease of Living is being addressed by an increased use of digital technology to improve the urban infrastructure and services (MoHUA, 2018a). However, realizing the need for an integrated urban policy and planning approach for the country, MoHUA is also in the process of drafting a National Urbanisation Policy at present. Any efforts towards mainstreaming 'liveability' at the national level will have to be included in this policy document to be able to implement the same across the country.

Institutional framework

The function of urban planning falls in the State List of the Constitution of India, making the state governments accountable for all matters pertaining to urban development. However, the MoHUA formulates national-level policies, centrally sponsored schemes and missions for urban infrastructure development and coordinates the activities of various nodal agencies related to urban development in the country. The Town and Country Planning Organization (TCPO) and the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), amongst others, function as autonomous bodies under the MoHUA and provide technical support for urban planning and related activities. At the state level, urban development departments, sectoral line department, state urban development agencies, and state infrastructure development boards/corporations have been set up for planning and implementation of urban and infrastructure development activities. The state urban development agencies or state mission directorates under the state urban development departments are typically looking after implementation of centrally sponsored schemes.

The Model Town and Country Planning Act, 1960, and the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA)

1992, recognizes the urban local governments as the third tier of the government in the country and advises the state governments to devolve 18 functions, including urban planning, to the urban local bodies. However, several key provisions of the 74th CAA are still to be fully implemented in most cases. As a result, municipal corporations are responsible for governing, developing, and managing the city, including the granting of building permissions and provision and maintenance of urban infrastructure and services, in the municipal limits only. For peri-urban/urban agglomeration areas, that do not fall under jurisdiction of municipalities, Development Authorities or Metropolitan Authorities are typically the nodal agency for Master Planning, planning and provision of services (water supply, sewerage/drainage facilities) and infrastructure (roads, street lighting), and housing. With the launch of the various missions in 2014, city-level technical cells have been created for implementation of various missions and SPVs have been constituted for implementation of the Smart Cities Mission specifically.

Given the multiple agencies responsible for various activities pertaining to urban planning, financing, implementation, and management at various levels of governance in the country, overlapping jurisdictions and fragmented roles and responsibilities has been a major factor in the poor delivery of urban services (HPEC, MOUD, 2011). Gaps in data, inter-departmental coordination, and institutional capacities have also been highlighted as major challenges (TERI's Regional Policy Dialogues, 2018). Therefore, any effort towards enhancing liveability of cities will require a robust mechanism for institutional coordination, convergence of agendas, clear mandates/roles, and capacity building.

Status of Current National Urban Missions

As a result of the 6 National Urban Missions launched by MoHUA in 2014, an overall investment of INR 6,85,758 crores (Euro 80.7 million approx.) has been proposed for urban infrastructure development in 4041 ULBs across the country. Out of this, INR 2,33,122 cr (Euro 27.5 million approx.) is the total central assistance approved by MoHUA during 2014–18 (MoHUA, 2018a). These include projects on affordable housing, urban transport, solid waste management and sanitation, water supply and



sewerage, development of open/green spaces, heritage conservation, redevelopment and renewal of core areas, and smart governance amongst others (Figure 2). Besides, incentive-based urban reforms are also being implemented at the state level under AMRUT. A report by the Human Land Rights Network (HLRN) suggests that the large number of PPP projects and high dependence on foreign investments is resulting in slower implementation and utilization of the funds (HLRN, 2018). However, the authors feel that with the large number and scale of projects to be implemented, it is too early to comment on the outcomes of the missions.

Key Challenges and Enablers

The Policy Dialogues focused on identifying key challenges and enablers for enhancing liveability of Indian cities, both by way of mainstreaming in existing policies, as well as new policy initiatives that

need to be undertaken. These were documented through an individual activity (questionnaire) and focused group discussions, with a total of more than 150 policymakers, planners, practitioners, and academicians participating in the four Policy Dialogues organized across India. The participants were also asked to prioritize the key challenges and enablers and their perceived impacts—in terms of high, medium, and low—towards enhancing liveability of cities in India. The responses were collated and categorized under the broad themes of urban policy and planning, local urban governance, partnerships, financing and implementation, and urban innovation and the outcomes have been presented in Figure 3.

Approximately 70% of the respondents across all the Policy Dialogues felt that when it comes to addressing ‘liveability’ in Indian cities, there are gaps in the current urban planning and policy frameworks, the local urban governance frameworks and institutional

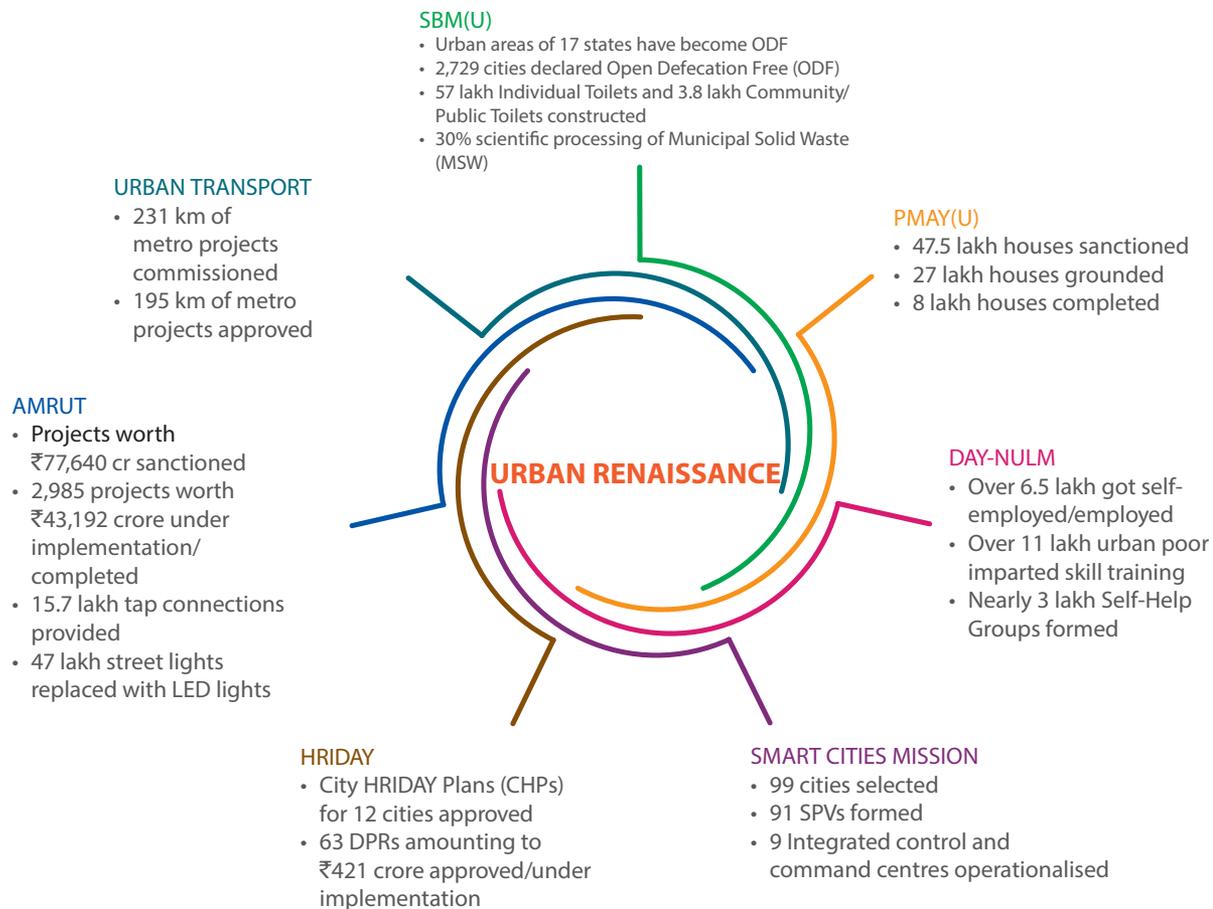


FIGURE 2 Milestones achieved by National Urban Missions, 2014–18

Source: Urban Transformation 2014–18 Report, MoHUA, 2018a



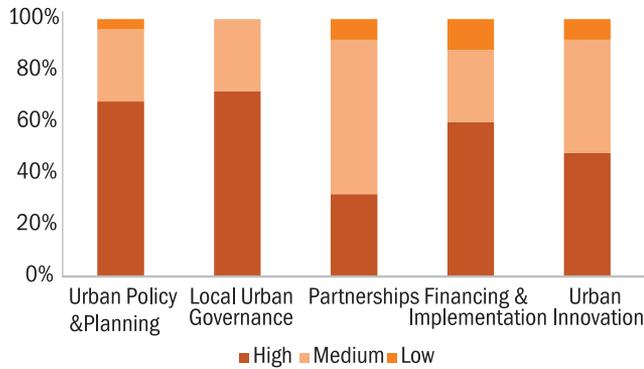


FIGURE 3 Challenges and Enablers for Making Liveable Cities

Source: Policy Dialogues on Making Liveable Cities, TERI, 2018

capacities, and financing and implementation mechanisms (Figure 3). Lack of strong partnerships and technical innovation was also identified as a medium-impact issue. A detailed discussion on key challenges and enablers, as highlighted by the participants in the Policy Dialogues, is enumerated as follows (Figure 4):

Urban Policy and Planning

- **Need to mainstream ‘liveability’**—Majority of the participants felt that the various urban missions provide clear guidelines for implementation of their respective mandates. However, the current policy framework and approach to urban planning does not adequately address the concept of liveability. For instance, the ‘Ease of Living Index’ identifies physical, social, economic, and institutional indicators to measure various aspects of urban development. However, it does not provide guidance on how to improve on those parameters, which is crucial as a way forward towards enhancing the ‘ease of living’. To this end, there is a need to mainstream the concept

of ‘liveability’ in the urban policy and planning frameworks.

- **Lack of locally contextualized approach**—It was felt that the current policies follow a ‘one size fits all’ approach to urban planning and design, providing limited flexibility for adapting to the socio-economic and cultural contexts of cities, which forms the core of ‘liveability’. For instance, hilly states in the north-east region find it challenging to adopt the guidelines and model building codes provided centrally as they are not suitable for their local geographical, economic, social, and cultural conditions. It was suggested that the policies also need to be dynamic to be able to address emerging concerns, such as environmental sustainability and climate change.
- **Need for a ‘people-centric approach’ to planning**—Another key gap highlighted was the piecemeal, project-based, sectoral/infrastructure-driven approach as opposed to a holistic and ‘people-centric’ approach required for enhancing liveability. For instance, considerations of age, gender, and social aspects, including the informal sector, addressing the rapidly increasing suburbs, and changing socio-cultural norms and lifestyles; with a view to providing quality of living, sustainable environment, and competitive economic opportunities in cities..

Local Urban Governance

- **Multiplicity of agencies and weak inter-departmental coordination**—About 75% of the participants felt that governance issues including multiplicity of agencies with overlapping mandates and weak inter-departmental coordination, further

Urban Policy and Planning for Liveability	Strengthening Local Urban Governance Institutions	Strengthening Partnerships	Financing and Implementation	Urban Innovation
Need for a paradigm shift in urban policy and planning approach at strategic and local levels to promote liveability in Indian cities. Exploring suitable urban planning and design concepts/models which will focus on holistic and vibrant urban growth in India.	Technical and financial capacity building of urban local bodies for implementing and delivering urban schemes and projects. Clear mandates and empowerment of ULBs for effective governance and service delivery.	City-to-city collaboration is an effective way to improve the capacities of the partner cities. Involvement of the private sector and citizen awareness and stakeholder participation is highly relevant.	Addressing challenges of existing financing and implementation mechanisms to meet demands of infrastructure and identifying the way forward for ULBs.	Promoting urban innovation through private sector participation; research and academia to go hand-in-hand with improvement in institutional capacities. This will provide opportunities for both government and private sector to share knowledge.

FIGURE 4 Key intervention areas for enhancing liveability of Indian cities

Source: Policy Dialogues on Making Liveable Cities, TERI, 2018



exacerbated by data and capacity gaps, are some of the key challenges towards enhancing liveability of cities (Figure 4). It was felt that these are also some of the key reasons why policy frameworks and guidelines formulated at the national level do not adequately trickle down and get effectively implemented. It was felt that these issues, if not adequately addressed, may affect the intended fast track implementation of development projects proposed under various national urban missions.

- **Institutional capacity gaps**—Lack of technical expertise and institutional capacities of ULBs was one of the key constraints highlighted by the participants. It was felt that though an Integrated Capacity Building Programme is being implemented for various national missions, it is important to identify relevant target groups and appropriate duration of programmes, use local language and conduct the programmes on a regular basis for effective results. For instance, while training on GIS and planning tools may be useful for technical staff and planners in a ULB, it will be effective only if it is conducted for a longer duration and on a regular basis.
- **Need for data management and performance monitoring of cities**—The Command & Control Centres, Data Observatories, and other smart governance initiatives being implemented under the Smart Cities Mission and the Ease of Living Index are seen as positive developments to this end. However, it was observed that these need to be aligned effectively to the current business processes of the ULBs, along with dedicated personnel for their operation and management for ‘informed decision making’. It was also highlighted that though national and international objectives and targets, for instance SDGs, have been communicated to the cities; with their current mandates, ULBs do not have the capacity to monitor and achieve them.
- **Need for continued participation and inclusion of citizens in decision making processes**—The intensive citizen participation process, both online and offline, undertaken during the preparation of Smart City Proposals, was seen as a positive step towards citizen awareness and participation. However, it was felt that the key to enhancing

liveability of cities will be to establish governance structures for continued citizen awareness and equitable participation in the decision-making processes.

Financing and Implementation

- **Lack of continuity and adequacy of funds**—It was observed that while the current funding model of heavy dependence on private sector, international funding, and finance mobilization at the city level may be suitable to progressive and large municipal corporations in Tier I/ Metropolitan cities, it is affecting the pace of project implementation in other cities. This is especially being experienced in implementation of the Smart City projects presently; primarily due to their limited institutional capacities to mobilize the private sector/international funds, low credit rating, and low capacity to collect taxes.
- **Heavy dependence on PMCs and private sector for implementation**—The dependence on project management consultant (PMCs) firms and the private sector for implementation was also raised as a concern. It was observed that this model may only work if there is intrinsic capacity building of the ULBs to be able to plan and successfully deliver such projects.

Urban Innovation

- **Need for Urban Innovation** — The participants highlighted lack of innovation as another gap towards liveable cities in India. This could be innovation in the following forms:
 - Planning and designing people-centric spaces;
 - In implementation mechanisms, for instance land management;
 - Promotion of social entrepreneurship and partnerships with the non-government sector;
 - In use of technology for urban planning and management, for instance, crowdsourcing of data, etc.

The need for promoting urban innovation by private sector, research and academia to go hand-in-hand with improvement in institutional capacities was highlighted.



Partnerships

▪ **Need for Strengthening Partnerships—**

The need for strengthening city-to-city partnerships both at national and international levels; involvement of corporate sector as part of corporate social responsibility initiatives; stakeholder engagement; and continued citizen awareness and participation for decision making were highlighted. The international city-to-city pairing programmes being implemented with Smart Cities provide opportunities for such shared learning. This would, however, require robust mechanisms of engagement with clear definition of roles, responsibilities, and equitable ownership and accountability of all concerned stakeholders for effective outcomes.

Way Forward: Key Takeaways for the National Urbanization Policy

The gaps and challenges with respect to making liveable cities in India are multiple and need to be addressed at various scales and levels of planning and governance. At the outset, a national level framework that not only measures but also provides for an integrated, long-term approach to urban policy

and planning is required. This framework should be part of the National Urbanization Policy and set the guidelines for cities to take concrete action, going beyond an ‘infrastructure-driven approach’ to a ‘people-centric’ approach. This would also require empowered ULBs and strong governance structures and institutional capacities at national and sub-national levels. To this end, provision of a clear mandate to ULBs with complementing capacity building for data management, inter-departmental coordination, and effective services delivery and governance is recommended. It is also recommended to promote private sector innovation and social entrepreneurship, along with improvement in institutional capacities of ULBs. Strengthening partnerships—between cities, with local stakeholders, research and academia, private sector, and international networks—could be an effective way to improve the capacities of ULBs. Such partnerships would provide opportunities for both the government and the private sector for shared learning. Strategic planned efforts and a clear roadmap at the national level will go a long way in enhancing liveability of Indian cities.

The key recommendations from the Policy Dialogues for the National Urbanization Policy have been documented in Table 2.

TABLE 2 Key Recommendations and Way Forward from Policy Dialogues

Themes/ Aspects	Key Recommendations
Urban Policy and Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for a holistic and integrated approach to enhance ‘liveability’ as opposed to the current piecemeal, sector-based approach to urban development • Urban policy reforms to mainstream ‘liveability’ – going ‘beyond physical infrastructure’ to a ‘people-centric’ approach • Mainstreaming urban planning and infrastructure development bye-laws, codes, and regulations to include socio-cultural aspects, environmental sustainability, and climate action • Promoting locally contextualized solutions in cognizance of geographical, social, economic, and cultural aspects
Strengthening Local Urban Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear roles and mandates to various institutions/agencies for effective services delivery, inter-departmental coordination, and urban governance • SPV-like institutional reforms to strengthen and empower the ULBs • Regular training programmes with relevant content, participation, and language • Showcasing good track record of effective implementation and robust engagement mechanisms to encourage stakeholder participation and ownership of initiatives • Creating citizen awareness through social media, mobile apps, etc.; Localized and contextualized communication
Financing and Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextualized funding pattern for smaller and financially-weaker ULBs • Funding incentives for implementation of policy framework on liveable cities, similar to the incentive-based reforms being undertaken in AMRUT • Regular review and monitoring framework based on ease of Living Index, with identification of concrete action points as the way forward • Developing intrinsic capacities of ULBs for effective formulation and implementation of PPPs
Urban Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT-driven processes in ULBs for smart urban governance • Integrating technology, data repositories, inventories, and use of social media for facilitating urban planning and management effort • Promoting social entrepreneurship, private sector innovation, research collaborations and engagement with research institutions to promote innovation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People-centric urban planning and design - Land management, revenue generation, property tax, and bills collection - Operation and maintenance of infrastructure assets



Themes/ Aspects	Key Recommendations
Strengthening Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of international city-to-city partnerships • Promoting city-to-city mentorship programmes within state/ country • Exploring role of private entities and corporate sector through corporate social responsibility (CSR) funding • Including local communities/clans/tribes in decision-making processes for effective implementation and ownership of projects—Regular interactions with local communities and project beneficiaries • Developing robust mechanisms of engagement with clear definition of roles, responsibilities, and equitable ownership and accountability

Acknowledgements

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For more information, contact:

Raina Singh

Fellow, Center for Urban Planning and Governance, TERI

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) *Tel:* +91-11-46444500, 24339606-08

A-260, Defence Colony, *Fax:* 24682144 or 24682145

Bhishma Pitamah Marg *Web:* www.teriin.org

New Delhi 110 024, India *E-mail:* raina.singh@teri.res.in