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**Urban Sociology**

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**Lecture No: 8**

**Major Policies of Urban India**

Welcome back to the course on urban sociology. Today, we will continue with module 2 only, where we will cover some of the Major Policies of Urban India. Each policy targets a distinct aspect of the city with the goal of providing better governance, livelihood opportunities, improving infrastructure and boosting economic growth to ultimately provide a sustainable and livable environment for the people of our country.

For today's lecture, we will start with the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, which was a massive city modernization scheme developed by the Ministry of Urban Development of the Government of India. Then we will talk about some of the more contemporary urban missions in our country, namely, the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation, commonly known as the AMRUT. The Smart Cities Mission, the Swacch Bharat Mission in the urban sector, the Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana, commonly known as the HRIDAY and the Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana or the DAY.

After this, we will move on to the National Water Policy and the Street Vendors Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending Act 2014. Finally, we will end with a few comments on how we can rethink these policy approaches so that we can create a city that is truly inclusive in spirit.

The Jawaharlal Nehru national urban renewal mission, the JNNURM, launched on third December 2005, was the largest national urban initiative to encourage reforms and fast track plant development of 63 identified cities. The main focus was on efficiency in urban infrastructure and service delivery mechanisms, community participation and accountability of ULBs [Urban Local Bodies] or Parastatal agencies towards citizens. It consists of two sub-missions, Urban Infrastructure and Governance and Basic Services to the urban poor.

The primary objective of the JNNURM is to create economically productive, efficient, equitable and responsive cities. The mission does also focus on integrated development of infrastructure services, securing linkage between asset creation and maintenance for long run project, sustainability, accelerating the flow of investment into urban infrastructure services, planned development of cities including the peri urban areas, outgrowth and urban corridors, renewal and redevelopment of inner city areas and universalization of urban services so as to ensure their availability to the city poor.

The JNNURM is designed to support water supply, sewerage, sanitation, solid waste management, road networks, urban transport, construction and the development of bus and truck terminals, development of housing and infrastructure in slum settlements, street lighting, et cetera.

Let us now look at some other major urban missions that came after the JNNURM like the AMRUT that was launched in 2015, almost 10 years after the JNNURM. The main aim of AMRUT is to provide basic services to the city, example water supply, sewerage urban transport to households and to build amenities in cities which will improve the quality of life for all specially the poor and the disadvantaged, which is a national priority right now. The purpose of AMRUT is to ensure that every household has access to a tap with assured supply of water and a sewerage connection, increase the amenity value of cities by developing greenery and well-maintained open spaces, reduce pollution by switching to public transport or constructing facilities for non-motorized transports, example walking and cycling. All these outcomes are valued by citizens particularly women and indicators and standards have been prescribed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs in the form of service level benchmarks. Thus, the mission would focus on the following thrust areas, water supply, sewerage and septage management, storm water drainage to reduce flooding, non-motorized urban transport, green space or parks.

As we can see, water supply is the missions first and foremost priority followed by sewerage. However, the search of better outcomes on the other hand, will not end with the provision of taps and sewerage connections to everyone, following the achievement of the universal coverage standard. Other benchmarks will be sought in a step by step process. The term instrumentalism refers to a method of reaching goals in a progressive manner. This does not imply that other SLBs [service level benchmarks] are less significant, rather SLBs are realized incrementally in accordance with the national priorities.

In the case of urban transportation, the goal will be to minimize pollution in cities, while the installation and maintenance of storm water drains will be to reduce and eventually eliminate flooding making the cities more resilient.

Let us now look at the Smart Cities Mission. Cities accommodate nearly 31 percent of India's current population and contribute 63 percent of the GDP. Urban areas are expected to house 40 percent of India's population and contribute 75 percent of GDP by 2030. This is a projection. This requires comprehensive development of physical, institutional, social and economic infrastructure. All are important in improving the quality of life and attracting people and investment, setting in motion of what your cycle of growth and development. Development of smart cities is a step in this direction.

The Smart Cities Mission is an innovation and new initiative by the government of India to drive economic growth and improve the quality of life of people by enabling local development and harnessing technology as a means to create smart outcomes for citizens. So, what is a smart city? Smart cities concentrate on their most pressing needs and opportunities to improve people's lives. To make a difference they use a variety of strategies, including digital and information technologies, best practices in urban planning, public private partnerships and policy change. They constantly prioritize people over everything else.

The goal of the Smart Cities Mission is to promote cities that provide basic infrastructure and provide a decent quality of life for their residents, as well as a clean and sustainable environment and the use of smart solutions. The emphasis is on sustainable and equitable development with the goal of creating a replicable model that will serve as a beacon for other aspiring cities. The Smart Cities Mission is meant to set examples that can be replicated both within and outside the smart city, catalyzing the creation of similar smart cities in various regions and parts of the country.

Areas will be developed through a step by step process by ways of retrofitting, redevelopment and greenfield development. The core infrastructure elements in a smart city would include adequate water supply, assured electricity, supply sanitation, including solid waste management, efficient urban mobility and public transport, affordable housing specially for the poor, robust IT connectivity and digitization, good governance, specially e-Governance and citizen participation, sustainable environment, safety and security of citizens especially for women, children, and the elderly, health and education.

Another major urban mission is the Swacch Bharat Mission. The Swacch Bharat Mission emanates from the vision of the government articulated in the address by the President of India to the joint session of parliament on 9th June 2014, which is – 'We must not tolerate the indignity of homes without toilet and public spaces littered with garbage. For ensuring hygiene, waste management and sanitation across the nation, a Swacch Bharat Mission will be launched. This will be our tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his one fifth birth anniversary to be celebrated in the year 2019.'

The mission objectives for the Swacch Bharat are elimination of open defecation, eradication of manual scavenging, modern and scientific municipal solid waste management. To effect behavioral change regarding healthy sanitation practices, generate awareness about sanitation and its linkage with public health, capacity augmentation for urban local bodies to create enabling environment for private sector participation. Providing public toilets and community toilets is a very important component in this mission. By public toilets it is implied that these are to be provided for the floating population or general public in places such as markets, train stations, tourist places, near office complexes or other public areas where there are considerable number of people passing by.

Priority shall be accorded proactively to cover households with vulnerable sections, such as the pensioners, girl children, pregnant and lactating mothers. By community toilet, it is implied that a shared facility provided by and for a group of residents or an entitled settlement.

Let us now explore another very important urban mission, which is the HRIDAY scheme or the Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana. In India, there are many rich and diverse natural, historic and cultural resources. Past efforts of conserving historic and cultural resources in Indian cities and towns have often been carried out in isolation from the needs and aspirations of the local communities as well as the main urban development issues such as local economy, urban planning, livelihoods, service delivery, and infrastructure provision in the areas.

The heritage development of city is not about development and conservation of few monuments but development of the entire city, its planning its basic services, quality of life to its communities, its economy and livelihoods, cleanliness, security, reinvigoration of its soul and explicit manifestation of its character. The proposed HRIDAY Scheme would offer great opportunities towards an integrated and sustainable development of heritage cities in India. It tries to bring together heritage conservation, urban planning, and economic growth all together. The scheme statement is as follows:

Preserve and revitalize soul of the heritage city to reflect the city's unique character by encouraging aesthetically appealing, accessible, informatable and secured environment. To undertake strategic and planned development of heritage cities, aiming at improvement in overall quality of life, with specific focus on sanitation, security, tourism, and livelihoods retaining the city's cultural identity. The main objective here is thus to focus on the preservation of the character of the heritage city and also to facilitate inclusive heritage linked urban development by exploring various avenues including the private sector.

Some specific objectives are planning, development and implementation of heritage sensitive infrastructure, service delivery and infrastructure provisioning in historic city core areas,

preserve and revitalize heritage where tourists can connect directly with the city's unique character, develop and document a heritage asset inventory of cities, natural, cultural, living and built heritage as a basis for urban planning, growth and service provision and delivery, implementation and enhancement of basic services delivery with focus on sanitation services like public conveniences, toilets, water taps, streetlights with use of latest technologies in improving tourist facilities or amenities.

Local capacity enhancement for inclusive heritage based industry. Create effective linkages between tourism and cultural facilities and also the conservation of natural and built heritage. Currently, the focus is on 12 cities of which some are Puri, Varanasi, Ajmer, Amritsar, but there is scope for additional cities to be added to this list after consultation.

The Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana - let us now look at a policy which aims to uplift the poor by enhancing sustainable livelihood opportunities through skill development. Keeping in view the objective of Make in India, skill development is essential for social economic betterment. Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana was launched under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation. Government of India has provisioned 500 crore Indian rupees for the scheme. This scheme is an integration of the National Urban livelihoods mission and national rural livelihoods mission.

The goal of the scheme is to reduce poverty levels and vulnerability of the urban poor households by enabling them to access gainful self-care, employment and skilled wage employment opportunities, resulting in a significant improvement in their livelihoods in the long term basis. The mission would also aim to provide the shelter, which would be equipped with basic services to the city's homeless. The initiative also addresses the urban street vendors' concerns about their livelihoods by providing sufficient space, institutional finance, social security and skills to enable them to access rising market opportunities.

The scheme actually has two components, one applicable for the rural and the other for the urban, which has been named the Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana which will be executed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation. Let us look at the main highlights of the scheme. Employment through skill training and placement and expenditure of 15,000 Indian rupees per person is allowed on training of urban poor which is 18,000 in northeast and Jammu and Kashmir. Moreover, urban poor will be trained to meet the enormous demand from urban citizens by imparting market-oriented skills through city livelihood centres.

Social mobilization and institutional development, it will be done through formulation of self help groups for training members and handholding by providing an initial support of 10,000 Indian rupees for each group, assistance of 50,000 Indian rupees would also be provided to registered area level Federations, subsidy to urban poor with an interest of 5 percent to 7 percent for setting up individual micro enterprises with a loan of up to 2 lakh Indian rupees.

For group enterprises, the loan limit would be up to 10 lakh Indian rupees. Shelter for urban homeless, cost of construction of shelters for the urban homeless is fully funded under the scheme, other means like development of vendor markets and also the promotion of skills for the vendors through setting up infrastructure and special projects for the ragpickers and differently abled et cetera.

Let us now look at another very important policy which has many implications on the lives of people living in the urban areas. The first Indian National Water Policy was adopted in 1987. At that time, it was not very common for there to be a national water policy. In fact, India and Mexico were the two first developing countries to adopt a national water policy in the world. Since then, the National Water Policy has been revised twice, once in 2002 and again in 2012. The policy laid down an allocation prioritization principle, and the highest priority was given to drinking water, then irrigation and hydropower and navigation and industrial users followed.

In 2002, during the first revision, the National Water Policy emphasized for the first time that water is a part of the larger ecological system and it highlighted the importance and scarcity of fresh water that it has to be treated as an essential environmental resource for sustaining all life forms. But the National Water Policy of 2012 has done away with the water allocation prioritization principle and it has looked at water as an economic good over and above the need of pre-emptive water safe drinking water. According to the Ministry, the primary focus of the National Water Policy 2012 should be to approach water as an economic good with the goal of promoting its conservation and efficient use.

This policy, which aims to privatize water distribution services has been condemned by a number of groups. We have to remember that many urban areas get water only for a few hours a day and piped water supply system is largely tilted in the favour of the rich. The policy also eliminates the water allocation priority listed in 1987 and 2002 versions of the program.

Let us now look at the Street Vendors Act of 2014. The street vendors bill was passed by the Lok Sabha on 6 September 2013 and by the Rajya Sabha on 19 February 2014. It was thought to be a progressive policy in response to the unemployment and economic displacement of the poor. Through this bill, they were now accepted as contributors to the national economy and as providers of goods and services. According to Mathur, there was always a strongly felt need for a centralized legislation like this.

The bill proposed to set up a town vending committee in each local authority and 40 percent of the members would comprise of street vendors. This committee would be in charge of maintaining records of registered street vendors and would have the responsibility of conducting surveys of all street vendors once in every five years. The survey would help to

issue certificates of vending and identity cards to all street vendors with reference to certain minority groups. All the details like category of vending, vending zone, timing, and days allotted to them would be specified in the certificate.

If the holding capacity of a vending zone is exceeded, then there would be a draw of lots for issue of certificates. But the problem here lies in the imposition of formal rules to the informal as we have discussed before in our extended lectures and informality. Street vendors as an occupational category are a very diverse group of people, both in terms of their occupation as well as their very composition. It is does a challenging task to formulate a country wide monolithic law for such a population. Zoning out certain areas as vending areas only curtails their freedom and can hamper their sales.

For example, during the COVID 19 pandemic, street hawking is becoming a dying profession due to the lockdowns. But it must be remembered that when the whole world became a mobile when everyone was staying indoors, these mobile population brought our everyday necessities to our doorstep. Mobile vending is currently the norm during this health crisis that is trying to formalize informality has proved to be quite ineffective. This bill does decriminalize them and acknowledges street vending as a livelihood, but does not legalize the status of the Hawker on the footpath, which is the special aspects of their very trade.

Now, let us try to critically think about these policies. One of the biggest problems of policies that aim to provide housing for the poor only aimed at the upgradation of the physical environment, which Ananya Roy calls the aestheticization of poverty. There is no change in terms of livelihoods, in terms of wages and usually also in terms of political empowerment. It is simply their homes that are made to look more appealing. Another element that is often forgotten is that in the age of globalization, policy making is often articulated at the local level.

For example, informality is often seen as a local issue to be resolved at the local level but this is certainly not so. We have already spoken at length on how informality can be a manifestation of global inequality, where people in the third world are providing cheap labour for companies whose headquarters lay elsewhere. The global and local or does not mutually exclusive categories, policy makers have to also make sure that urban development and restructuring or upgradation of urban infrastructure does not ultimately lead to the displacement of disadvantaged communities or further their marginalization in any way.

Here, let us look onto another case, as we all know that India has been witnessing rapid urbanization in the last decade. And due to this, more and more people are settling down in cities and towns. Thus when reading about policies, we have to critically think about cities in terms of how they are geared towards growth and inclusion. Hamid Ansari, the Vice President of India says and I quote, ‘Our urban spaces and governance mechanisms have

become the theaters for political conflicts and economic struggles. Exclusionary urbanization is benefiting certain social groups to the detriment of others and directing resources to large metropolitan depriving small and medium towns of funds needed for infrastructure and essential services.’

According to Sahoo, the city has always been seen to be a leveler, which offered ideal conditions for the breakdown of rigid social structures that would tend to discriminate against the marginalized. This is very true in the case of India, where you have social stratification on the basis of caste, class, gender, religion, et cetera. Thus although the city has great potential for social integration and economic opportunity. We are now seeing extreme forms of segregation and exclusion in the urban spaces. According to Mahadevia, the process of urban exclusion, earlier segmented on the basis of class is now happening on the basis of religion.

Moreover, these social religious disadvantaged population like the Dalits, Adivasis, and Muslims are still heavily concentrated in certain areas in the city, mostly overpopulating slums and poorest neighbourhoods. We have to understand that with higher population density and segregated population comes various negative consequences. In fact, the very location of the slum colonies has a direct impact on the access to municipal services. Thus, access to resources has to be seen as being political fault from being a melting pot, the city has started to resemble its rural counterparts according to Niranjana Sahoo’s study. The critical element in bridging these gaps of problems of access, rests on urban governance institutions and they have to be more responsible and efficient in the fair distribution of resources and proper implementation of these urban policies.

The identity of the neighborhood exerts an influence in the context of access and cities with long histories of communal conflicts suffered the most. As things stand right now, India is ongoing urbanization process offers little opportunity for inclusion of the urban marginal population, particularly the scheduled castes, the schedule tribes, religious minorities and the new migrants.

To conclude, let us sum up the points that we covered in today’s class. All the major policies have different trust areas for improving quality of life in urban India. Physical upgradation is not enough, livelihood opportunities and social factors have also to be kept in mind when formulating policies. The category of the global and the local have to be kept in mind when formulating these policies, understanding that access to resources may have socio political implications. And also, I believe that understanding the grass root experiences is important for policies to be effective.

These are the references that has been used in this particular lecture. Thank you for joining this class and we will meet again for the next class, which will be about gentrification, migration, inequality and urban social stratification in India.