

Problems of metropolitan Cities

- Despite the improved prospects of acquiring the funds and to level personnel for urban administration and undertaking projects to meet the needs of urban growth the prospects of metropolitan cities are much less sanguine.
- Indeed, in the case of Mumbai and Kolkata, where the urban systems already showed inability to cope with the present populations, it is not at all clear how the pressure created by the projected doubling of the population will be met.
- The answer to the question will relate, finally, to political judgment and the will to provide the needed resources and ensure that institutional and administrative reforms are undertaken and that projects and programs are implemented with speed and efficiency.
- Some of the task that needs special attention in these cities includes housing, food supply, water and electricity, transport, maintenance of peace and security and restriction of immigration.

Housing

- Expansion and improvement of housing will remain the most difficult problem. The present deficiency is so acute and growing so rapidly, and at the costs of expansion of housing is so high in comparison with the incomes of great majority of urban residents, that the best that can be hoped, even with the most intensive efforts, is avoidance of a serious aggravation of the present situation.
- In Delhi, for instance, the current estimate is of a shortage of 3,00,000 dwelling units and a requirement of 1.62 million units over the next two decades.
- Acquisition of land for public housing for the poor is itself a most difficult problem. Reference was made earlier to the fact that acquisition of land available for this purpose was progressively reduced by private interests who obtained political support and used a serious of court injunctions against acquisition.

Food supply

- Ensuring both adequate supplies of Cereal to the cities and their availability at prices fixed by the government, never easy, should not be unmanageable if the growth rate of cereal output achieved in Industry during the last twenty years can be maintained. The spread of the wheat revolution from its core area in Punjab, Haryana, Bihar and West Bengal and the improvement in the last few years in the rate of growth of rice give hope of this prospect.
- Increasing, or even maintaining, the present low levels of consumptions of foods rich in protein, minerals and vitamins or even such essential as oil and fats will be very difficult unless there are major improvements in the technologies of producing, processing, and transporting these staples and their prices get more in line with the income of the great majority of urban residents.

Water and Electricity

- The problem of providing adequate water and electricity could grow even worse unless there are sustained efforts to increase supplies. Large investments in expansions of the systems of supply, transmission and distribution, as well as progressive improvements in their management, will be needed. Expanding the water supply may present a more complex problem than of electricity.

Transport

- Expansion of the transport system to cope with the needs of growth present special problems in all the cities. The worst case again is Kolkata, where the transport system is nightmare.
- In Mumbai, Guwahati too, the transport system is approaching conditions near chaos and the cost of its expansion will be immense. If a large part of the projected growth takes place on the mainland across the bay from the present city, large investment will be required for construction of bridges and other works linking the transport system of the two parts of the city.

Maintenance of peace and security

- This task will require political and administrative management of a very high order. Above all, the cities must insure access to the basic needs for food and water, access to other essential services and housing opportunities for gaining employment. The tensions ever present below the surface in the Indian Cities, tensions which find their outlet in periodic outbreak of violence, can be kept within manageable limits, and the growth of understood activities curtailed, only when these fundamental conditions are met.

Restriction In-migration to the cities

- From time to time there is demand for curbing in-migration to the metropolitan cities, and to have experienced very rapid growth during the last two or three decades.
- The motive for the demand may be political, or they may be administrative.
- The only solution to the problem of in-migration to the giant cities is to increase the attraction of alternatives, including satellite town.
- India's Cities and urban regions face a difficult future. Urban infrastructure and housing are inadequate and cannot absorb the massive number of newcomers. Urban economic and social conditions are deteriorating, which results in higher levels of unemployment and social unrest. In these adverse circumstances India's urban areas must become the focus for next policy initiatives emphasizing population control, rural development, and urban growth containment.