



# Planning Times

PEOPLE, PLACES AND POLICIES

Issue 02 • July 2022





# MEET THE STARS

RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING THE MAGIC HAPPEN!

# TEAM



**Shubham Aggarwal**  
*Founder*



**Karthik Girish**  
*Chief Editor*



**Nancy Grover**  
*Writer*



**Aakriti**  
*Writer*



**Tsomo Wangchuk**  
*Writer*



**Vishesh Bharadwaj**  
*Writer*



**Saksham Sharma**  
*Cover Design*



**Srishti Mahajan**  
*Illustrator*

## Other contributors



**Ankush Nimbria**  
*Water Security Hub*



**Anish Grover**  
*Swyft Solutions*



**Ishita Saraswat**  
*LAMP Fellow (2022-23)*



**Ram Khandelwal**  
*Urban Innovation Lab (UIL)*



# Planning Times

PEOPLE, PLACES AND POLICIES







Issue 02 • July 2022

Corporate Office: G-82, 101, 1st Floor, Vijay  
Chowk, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi -110091  
Ph. No. (WhatsApp)  
+91-9971253773

**PLANNING TIMES** is a magazine for students, professionals and researchers to open up unique and extensive knowledge and information on urban and rural areas. Your **feedback** is extremely valuable to us. Please take some time to give us your honest comments about the magazine in the **QR code** given below. Thank you, and we hope you have a wonderful reading experience!

*Disclaimer: All product names, logos, and brands are the property of their respective owners. All company, product and service names used are for identification purposes only. Use of these names, logos, and brands does not imply endorsement.*



 [www.planningtimes.com](http://www.planningtimes.com)  
 [hello@planningtimes.com](mailto:hello@planningtimes.com)  
 [planningtimes](https://www.facebook.com/planningtimes)  
 [planningtimes](https://twitter.com/planningtimes)  
 [planningtimesdotcom](https://www.instagram.com/planningtimesdotcom)  
 [company/planningtimes](https://www.linkedin.com/company/planningtimes)

*From the Editor*

## *What does it take to be a planner in 2022?*

**W**hen I graduated from college, I was confident that I could make a difference in the world of urban planning! I felt like a **superhero** who could fly above cities, spot people and spaces in distress, and beat up bad villains like **poverty**, **pollution** and **private transport**! I was sure I had the skills and knowledge needed to help cities reach their full potential, and see the lights of greatness.

**But I was wrong...**

I came to the realization that simply knowing certain buzzwords, understanding concepts well, or even working on a few projects will not completely prepare you for the REAL world. There are many lessons yet to be learnt, and many situations yet to be experienced.

One of the key lessons I learned is that planners have to be **'attention grabbers'**. As cities are constantly changed by people and events, it can be difficult to draw people's attention to the right problem at the right time. As planners, we have the ability to prioritize city-level issues, and it is our responsibility to make sure people are discussing the most urgent issues, rather than wasting time on less important ones. To do this, we need to learn how to grab people's attention in the right way. With the fast-paced lifestyle of today, people are only able to give 15 - 30 seconds of their life. How we attract them in these crucial seconds, is what distinguishes a good planner and a great one!

We hope you enjoy the July edition of the Planning Times magazine! The Planning Times Team has included all the most relevant issues and stories happening in and around our cities, so you won't be left behind in this ever-changing atmosphere. We're also trying out a new look with this issue and we think you'll love it! Thanks for reading and we hope you have an inspirational moment or two.



*Here's to the creativity you'll craft from our magazine!*

Karthik Girish  
Chief Editor



# CONTENTS

## TABLE OF



**The Poisoned Chalice** 06  
*Are drones a boon or a bane to India?*

**Changing Cities Through Your Fingertips** 10  
*How web-based networking platforms are shaping our understanding of New Age public participation*

**Photo Story** 22  
*Untreated groundwater threatens the health of villagers in rural India*

**Can We Live In Our Cities?** 28  
*What is a 'liveable' city?*

**Feature Interview** 40  
*The Golden Rules for being a Better Planner*

**Planning Overseas** 44  
*Your guide to masters programmes outside India*

**Work With Money** 52  
*Here's why finance is a very important aspect for planners*

TECHNOLOGY

# The Poisoned Chalice

**Are drones a boon or a bane to India?**

*BY TSOMO WANGCHUK*

**DRONES IN INDIA** were originally developed for the military and aerospace industries. Till the past few years, the country was plagued by a lack of drone technology and witnessed several restrictions on its usage. In 2014, India witnessed a ban on flying drones by the Director-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), until 2018, when the DGCA first released the policy on the regulation of drones for India. The use of drones now ranges from crop assessments to land survey and even extends to the safety surveillance system for railways. This article will delve into the historical timeline of drones' regulations, Central Government schemes that has incorporated drone technology, and its regulatory impediments.

**IN INDIA**, the use of drones or unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) is regulated by the DGCA. The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) liberalized its drone policy and notified the National Drone Rules in August 2021. The rules include regulations for the classifications of drones, certifications, registration, operation, licenses, training, research, traffic management, insurance, and promotion.





◀ *India used indigenously developed drones to deliver COVID-19 vaccines to access compromised areas and strengthen the vaccine delivery system.*

**BESIDES** catering to various sectors of the economy such as agriculture, mining, infrastructure, surveillance, transportation, geo-spatial mapping, defense, etc., the new drone rules also tapped the commercial and recreational space, which witnessed an inclusion of rules for civilian drones. The regulations were designed considering the safety and security of the airspace as well as those on the ground. The rules of 2021 were further amended and notified in February 2022 as Drone (Amendment) Rules, 2022.

## CLASSIFICATION OF DRONES BASED ON DRONES RULES, 2021

S.No	Type	Weight	Drone Certification	ID Number	Pilot License	Flying Restrictions
1	Nano UAS	Up to 250 g	Not required	Not required	Not required	Not to fly above 50ft (15m) from the ground level
2	Micro UAS	Between 250 g to 2 kg	Required	Required	Not required for non-commercial purposes	Not to fly above 200ft (60m) from the ground level
3	Small UAS	Between 2 to 25 kg	Required	Required	Required	Not to fly above 400ft (120m) from the ground level
4	Medium UAS	Between 25 to 150 kgs	Required	Required	Required	Not to fly above 400ft (120m) from the ground level
5	Large UAS	More than 150 kgs	Required	Required	Required	Not to fly above 400ft (120m) from the ground level

Source: Compiled by author, 2022

The rules have classified the applications of drones and their restrictions on the basis of their weight and payload. The classifications of drones are given in the table above.

As can be seen from the table, the operators must obtain Unique Identification number (except for nano drones) to register for the drones and seek permit and license for the remote pilot. However, drones owned by government organizations do not require a permit.

Though drones were initially designed for military and aerospace applications, they are now being explored for various purposes due to their increased safety and efficiency.

In India, the adoption of drone technology has increased across sectors. This is also reflected in several Government schemes that are incorporating the use of drones.

**SVAMITVA (SURVEY OF VILLAGES AND MAPPING WITH IMPROVISED TECHNOLOGY IN VILLAGE AREAS)** scheme, launched by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj in April 2021, seeks to map out land parcels using drone technology and provide Records-of-Rights to the village resident owners. In a span of one year, drone survey under SWAMITVA has been completed



The SWAMITVA scheme uses drones to survey the villages and create a digital map of the abadi areas.

Source: Sajag Post





in 1,31,725 villages out of 1,99,653 notified villages (65.98 per cent) (Accessed from SWAMITVA website on 25 April, 2022).

In September 2021, the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for the drone industry was also launched by the Union Cabinet. As per the PLI scheme, incentives of up to 20 per cent over their value addition are provided to the manufacturers of drones and drone components.

**THE UNION GOVERNMENT** took a paradigm shift to the drone industry with the announcement of Drone Shakti and Kisan drones in Budget 2022-23. The finance minister emphasized the promotion of drones as a service to facilitate Drone Shakti through various uses cases and applications. Kisan drones are promoted to help the farmers by assessing crops, digitizing land records, and spraying insecticides

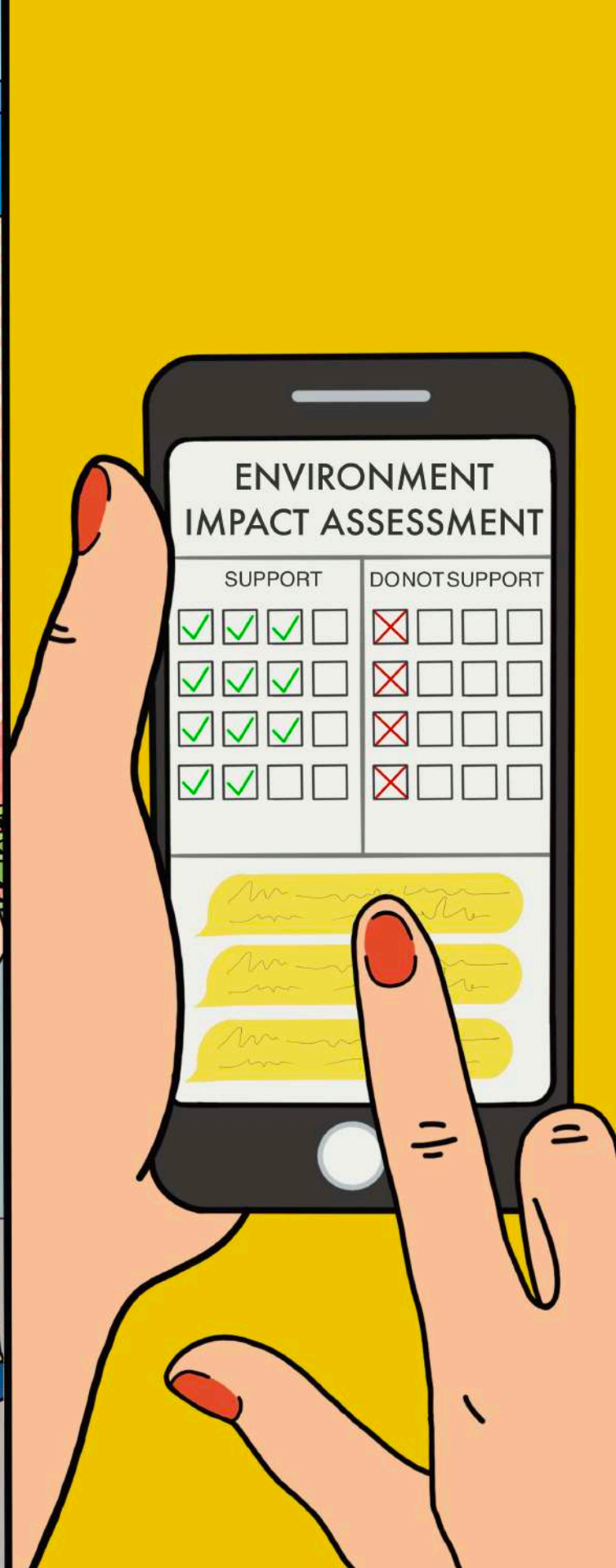
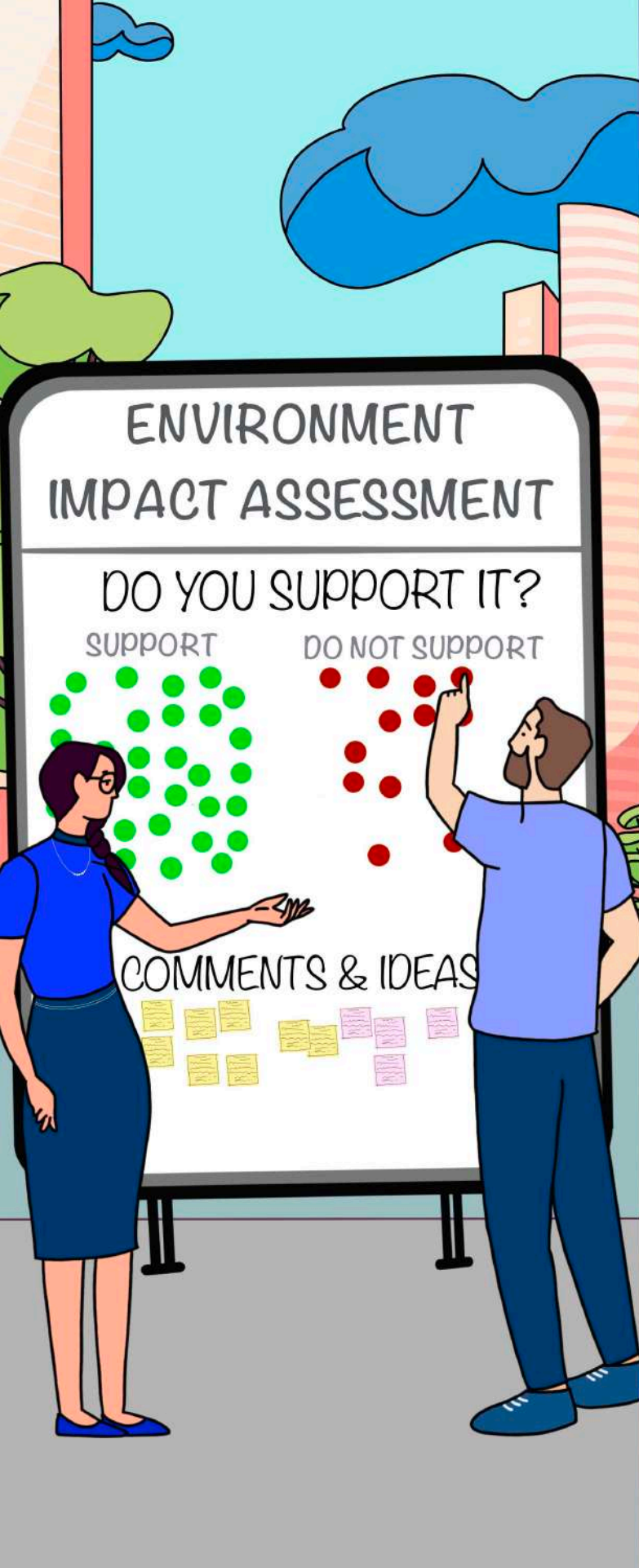
and nutrients. In February 2022, 100 Kisan drones were launched by the Prime Minister across the country. The government has also envisioned high-capacity drones to deliver vegetables, fruits, etc. to the market directly by the farmers, thus reducing time, cost, and damage to the products.

**THE NEW RULES** for the drones are said to be more liberalized than the previous policies, as these have been framed to ease the ownership of drones and their usage for civilian drones' operators in the country. The Government is also leveraging India's strengths in innovation and technology to make India a drone hub. This can be seen from the several initiatives of Government's schemes and more recently the Union Budget 2022-23 that have emphasized and promoted the use of drone technology to a new level. The Union Civil Aviation Ministry has

also estimated India's drone sector's turnover to reach from Rs 8,000 lakh in 2021 to over Rs 12,000 crore by 2026.

However, with the growing demand for drones, there are several *lacunae*\* in the drone policy that needs to be addressed. While some have questioned the safety hazards for people and other aircraft, some have questioned the limit of the number of drones that can be flown at a given time. Further, the policy lacks privacy concerns as it does not explain the conditions for the collection, storage, and use of data, and this can be one of the reasons why drone surveys (under SWAMITVA Yojana) are being opposed in some parts of the country. These need to be integrated into the policy to strengthen the effective use of drones for a more comprehensive as well as safe usage of the technology.

\* *lacunae*: an unfilled space; a gap





# *Changing Cities Through Your Fingertips*

**How web-based networking platforms are shaping our understanding of New Age Public Participation.**

BY ISHITA SARASWAT

**WEB-BASED** networking platforms or as we vaguely refer to social media platforms exercise an unprecedented influence on us. These platforms have given us cheaper, faster, and easier methods to connect and communicate with whoever we want to. What many of us wouldn't have believed a decade ago is that these platforms would not just be limited to social networking. They would become an extended path for people to connect with decision-making bodies. These applications provide a platform to disseminate information in the simplest ways possible to the public in the form of videos, images, texts, and discussion forums. Every person with internet access and an account of these applications is free to express her concerns, ideas, objections, and suggestions surpassing all geographical and administrative barriers. At the same time, the increasing presence of planning agencies and other decision-making bodies in the digital space compels us to think about the emerging citizen connect in the digital space.

Although the definition of Public Participation may vary, its necessity in planning is widely accepted in practice and academia. All planning activities affect their stakeholders directly and indirectly with irreversible results and hence understanding their thoughts, suggestions, and concerns becomes crucial for any planning project, scheme, or policy. The idea of holding public objections/suggestions meetings for land use modifications, consultation, and review meetings for spatial plans, etc.- all value this underlying principle. The involvement of stakeholders in decision-making increases the likelihood of support for the plan and policy.

With the growing indulgence of people to express themselves 'online' over offline modes, digital space has started gathering importance over physical space. There are various reasons identified for it- the most important ones are visibility and accountability.





People feel that their opinions are more visible and accounted for through an online portal or social media app rather than in-person written requests and complaints. Their ideas gain visibility and are picked up by others too. It saves their time, and resources, and offers a promising response from the agencies.

Particularly from a planning and governance perspective, the idea of Digital Public Participation presents a skewed idea of participation as we understand it. Currently, the digital reach and spread of web-based networking platforms are not very well established (at least in India). Although with the pandemic, the internet-reach increased manifold and spread not only in the urban areas but in rural too. One might argue that the current statistics do not allow us to use such platforms for justifiable public participation practices. But at the same time, a physical public participation exercise like a public gathering has its challenges with no method being able to achieve the desired aspects. The will to participate among its stakeholder is another concern. This also leads us to another question- What are the standards that would qualify digital platforms as a mode of public participation?

**THERE** is already an unacknowledged influence of digital media platforms on planning

activities. Digital media platforms have many users who express their opinion on the platforms including various planning issues. A recent example of this idea is the EIA Amendment of 2020. The draft was released for objection/suggestions around the nationwide lockdown period where practically nothing was being done in physical mode. Environmentalist and academia shared their concerns and appealed for extensions on similar grounds of insufficient public involvement. What was noteworthy was that this movement gained momentum online on social media apps - particularly Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. This gathered support for the amendment modifications, leading to the ministry receiving thousands of suggestions and objections which wouldn't have been the case if there was no involvement of digital platforms. It was commendable to see the general public getting involved and not just the usual stakeholders like environmentalists, NGOs, and academia. Another question to think about is how would we measure this participation that happened in a digital space- A like? A share? A retweet? A comment? Quantification of this impact would become important with the technology being more and more involved in our cities and urban planning.

This also hints to us about the

new technical skills and resources required to assess this digital participation and be prepared for the increasing shift from offline to online public engagement. Currently, the agencies outsource the maintenance of their social media handles to marketing and PR agencies. The understanding of participation for such agencies is limited to engagement and content - completely undermining the true potential of such initiatives. Planners in the organizations and academia also need to come up with the innovative idea of involving digital opinion in their decision-making.

**RESEARCH** on digital public participation in India is indicative and qualitative. The role and nature of public participation on such platforms, the dynamics of data sharing between the people, the agency, and these third-party platforms, and assessment methods of participation are some of the immediate areas of research in present times. Going forward, we as planners and policymakers must rethink how we perceive public participation and involvement of people in the decision-making through this new digital space. It becomes important for us to define the standards of digital public participation in planning and carry them forward.



Imagine if 1 button can illuminate your entire planning career...

# Well, we have 2!



Look out for these buttons in our website  
[www.planningtank.com](http://www.planningtank.com)

## Planner's Corner

### For Planners

Planner's Corner primarily focuses on the academic part, future prospects, higher details with respect to jobs, challenges faced and educational resources.


## Planning as a career


### For everybody else

Planning as a career is primarily focused on anyone who is exploring various career options and wish to explore about the Urban Planning profession.

# Planning Tank

Feel free to contact us

 +91 99712 53773

 [hello@planningtank.com](mailto:hello@planningtank.com)

NEED OF THE HOUR

# TIME TO GET SMART

WITH NATIONAL URBAN DIGITAL MISSION (NUDM) laying strong emphasis on fast urbanization and emerging technologies, it is imperative to say that a long-term and integrated approach towards development is the need of the time. However, asymmetry in urbanization, weak municipal finances, infrastructure deficit, and lack of institutional capacities pose a problem in efficient governance and delivery of services.

The intricacies to go about various processes within the urban domain remain largely unknown. Urban civic officials are not adequately aware of their roles, responsibilities, and functions. More so, what works in one urban setting necessarily does not work in another one. Learning needs, furthermore, are very unique to each urban setting. Therefore, among various ideals of NUDM, the primary notion of basic capacity building cannot be undermined. Hence, urban learning is an essential aspect of digital governance that must be addressed as the utmost priority—given the fact that there are many plausible roadblocks in mere implementation of digital governance, let alone strengthening urban learning framework in a country like India.

## Creating the path for building urban capacity in India

BY AAKRITI

THE TOOLKIT FOR COMPREHENSIVE CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME UNDER JNNURM was flagship initiative in terms of bringing institutional capacity building to the central stage. It translated capacity building of Urban Local Bodies into two categories—capacity building within systems and capacity building within programs. It reinforced the idea of greater capacity of people and organizations to deal with urban management and service delivery with enhanced transparency and accountability. It paved way for digital advent to take over the learning medium.

STUDY WEBS OF ACTIVE-LEARNING FOR YOUNG ASPIRING MINDS (SWAYAM), launched in 2017 by Government of India under Digital India, is yet another initiative that took learning to a different stage in India. It aims to digitally address access, equity, and quality in education - which are the three cardinal principles of Education Policy of India. Though it is not central to the urban domain, SWAYAM gives a rationale of how learning can be made accessible and comprehensive. It seeks to bridge the digital divide for learners who remain side-lined by the learning framework, hence are not able to join the knowledge mainstream of the country.



◀ Many training and capacity building programs have been introduced and conducted to enhance both the urban and rural population



For Learners...

# Acquire skills that meet your needs

EXPLORE COURSES



SWAYAM Courses in Regional languages

Let COVID-19 not Stop your Learning. Continue with SWAYAM

Result (CBT mode and 63 Pen &amp; Paper) - SWAYAM Examination held on 28th &amp; 29th August 2021

\* Result - SWAYAM Exams held on 21st &amp; 22nd Feb 2022 \*

## NATIONAL COORDINATORS



AICTE



CEC



IGNOU



IIMB



NCERT



NIOS



NITTTR



NPTEL



UGC



NULP is a collaborative initiative of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), National Urban Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), EY, PWC, and Societal platform.

Source: AIILSG

SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) Scheme is an Indian Massive Open Online Course (MOOC). The GoI has designed this scheme which aims to make learning available to all.

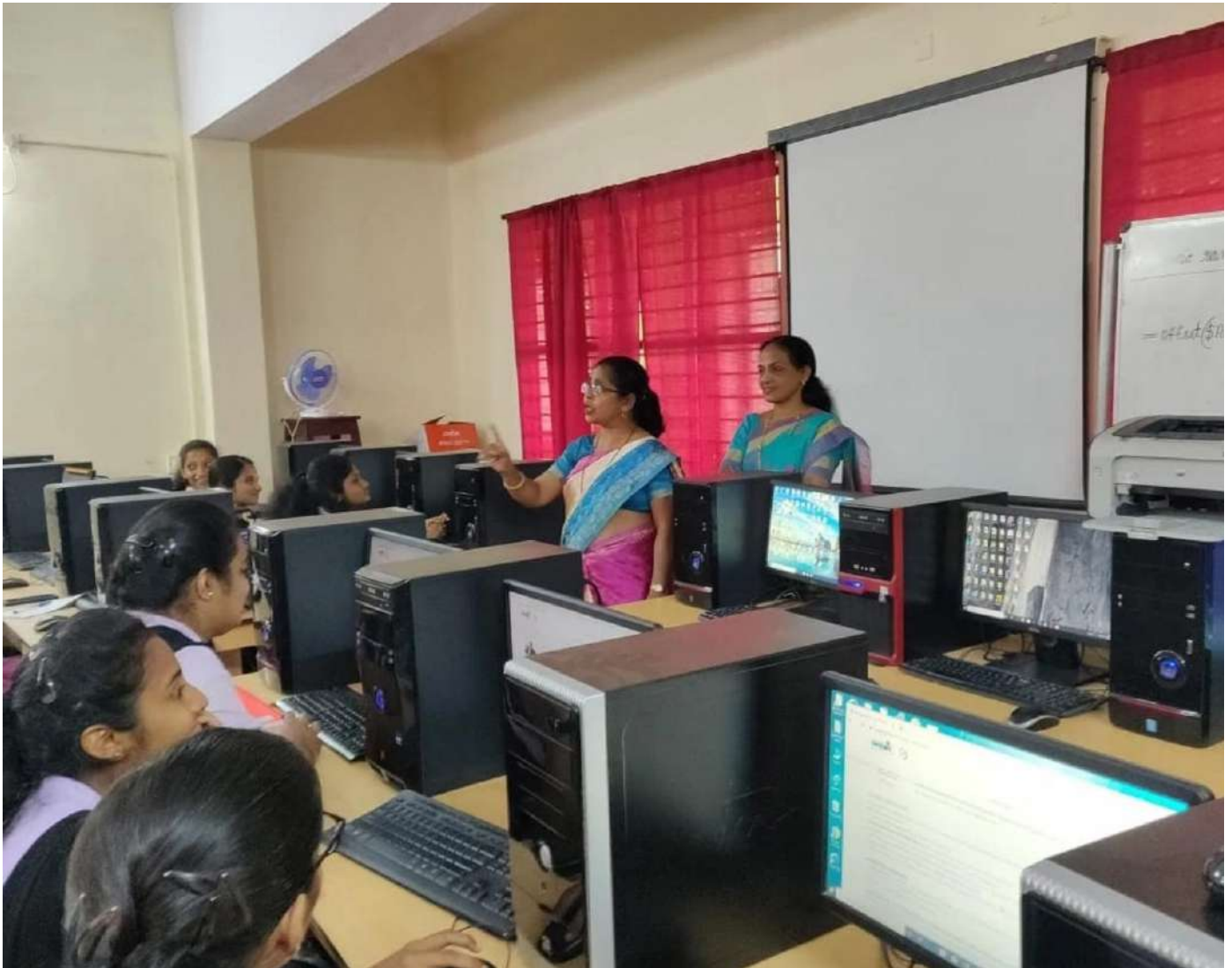
Source: SWAYAM

“Training of trainers” is a key highlight of the platform. It is a more comprehensive platform that ranges across the domains of architecture and planning, technology and engineering, art and humanities, law, management, mathematics and sciences, etc.

**NATIONAL URBAN LEARNING PLATFORM (NULP)** is a dedicated national platform for training and capacity building in the urban domain with shared digital infrastructure, that can be seen as a public good. It is thought to be a step towards creating an Ecosystem Approach to Capacity Building in Indian cities. It is driven with a vision “to create a learning environment through modern techniques of knowledge and skills transfer to ensure that the upskilling expectations of member states and key stakeholders are met”.

It is conceptualized to enable learning pathways through competency framework through formal, social, and experiential learning. The platform currently hosts self-paced courses across various urban domains like data governance, mobility, town planning, river management, sanitation,





*Swayam & MOOC Courses training held at St. Agnes College, Mangaluru*  
Source: [stagnescollege.edu.in](http://stagnescollege.edu.in)

general administration, etc. It currently targets city civic officials, with a growing vision to cater to various urban actors as well in the future.

We need to understand the competitiveness among Indian cities - and that the urban learning needs are unique to each urban setting. “One size fits all” cannot work in this arena, and hence the conceptual framework must be flexible enough to cater to the unique learning needs. Not to mention the need of diverse range of topics that it needs to impart.

A dedicated national platform for training and capacity building in the urban domain, with shared digital infrastructure, that can be seen as a public good. It can be a step towards creating an ecosystem approach to capacity building in Indian cities.

As we move forward, we need to define the parameters which will form the foundation stones of the conceptual framework of urban capacity building in India. Technical implications of deploying such a platform for learning in urban domain also need to be highlighted. Subsequently, scope of

partnerships on content generation and deployment in general is to be looked upon. Content development guidelines that can be deployed in the country will contribute as to how much content is appreciated and assimilated in the country. And lastly, scope of licenses and IPR on content development is something without which the digital platform cannot be functional. Hence, “training and capacity building” remains in the vision of conceptualizing a digital platform, but these aspects of the back-end will ultimately make the whole idea functional.

# Making City Partnerships Work

BY RAM KHANDELWAL  
(Reposted from eletsonline.com)

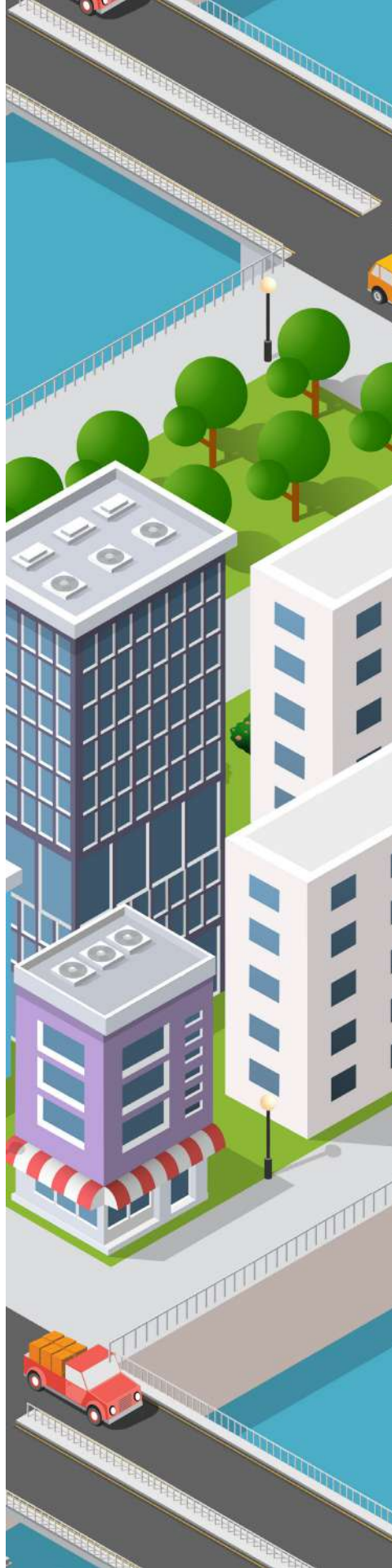




City partnerships is known by various terms in various geographies — city twinning, city pairing, town twinning, sister cities, friendship cities, international collaboration, municipal twinning, city-to-city partnerships, municipal international cooperation, local government international alliances, etc, amongst others. While the initial partnerships focused on post-war reconciliation and donor-beneficiary relationships, new age partnerships evolved as a tool for cities to strengthen the cultural and economic relationship with cities in other countries.

**New Government Mission in Urban Sector in India created markets and broadened scope for international collaborations.** With urbanisation taking place throughout the world, India is no different. Thanks to the major push by schemes such as Smart City Mission, Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Housing for All (HFA), etc, the Narendra Modi government is trying tooth and nail to transform the way Indian cities are growing. In fact, it is the ambitious Smart City Mission of the Union government, which has created a wider scope for global cities in partnering with Indian smart in the latter's quest to develop state-of-the-art urban infrastructure and services at par with global standards for its citizens. As a result of the immense economic opportunities that the Smart City Mission has opened for the world, delegations from various cities and countries frequently visit India to explore collaborations for economic growth, development of city infrastructure, enhancement of city governance, etc.

In fact, many countries like the United Kingdom, France, Germany, etc, have already extended their support to Indian Smart Cities through technology



and knowledge transfer as well as technical assistance. While the UK is supporting the smart cities of Indore, Pune, and Amravati, USA has collaborated with Allahabad, Ajmer, and Vishakhapatnam. Similarly, Japan collaborated with the smart cities of Chennai, Ahmedabad, and Varanasi; France with Chandigarh, Puducherry, and Nagpur; Germany with Kochi, Bhubaneswar, and Coimbatore; and Singapore with Amravati.

**City partnerships in India started in 1960s and since then, there is no looking back.**

International collaboration has been a long-standing concept in India. Post-independence several bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation arrangements have been established to foster harmony with nations and growth across sectors. During the initial period, the primary focus was on industrialisation and modernisation of agriculture, health and education sector, in line with priorities enshrined under the five-year plans. In fact, initial city partnership arrangements in India dates back to 1966, when Chennai entered into a collaboration with Volgograd in Russia. As urbanisation started gaining momentum, collaborations in the urban sector were made and state governments played an important role (urban development being a state subject). The urban agenda was further bolstered by international programmes in pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals, the Habitat Agenda, etc. Such collaborations were driven by institutes of national importance and supported by central ministries and state departments.

**Government of India intends to foster city partnerships in a focused manner.** Since several twinning arrangements between Indian cities and their global counterparts did not generate the desired outcome in the absence



of a set framework and objectives for collaboration, the Indian Government has issued a guideline for city-twinning categorically stating that twinning arrangements should be developed around specific objectives. Some of the objectives set by the Indian government includes strengthening friendly-ties, cultural and economic exchanges, as well as knowledge sharing in the field of urban development, services, healthcare, land use, and transportation. There are also reasonable restrictions on the maximum number of cities with which Indian cities can enter into a collaboration and it ranges from 4 for megacities to 1 for cities with less than 1 lakh population.

**The challenge is to induce tangible benefits through city partnerships.** City partnerships need both time and care as well as a proper set of objectives for it to become successful and provide tangible benefits to both the collaborating partners. However, there are several factors that affect the maturity of a twinning relationship. One of the most important factors is the lack of a framework and identified mutual objectives. Also, there is a crucial need to set up a dedicated committee/working group which shall steer the progress of the twinning relationships. Unlike in the past, a donor-beneficiary relationship is not going to work and twinning arrangements have to be centered around economic benefits for both the partnering cities.

As far as Indian cities are concerned, the complex administrative set-ups and the division of powers between the state and union governments often act as a bottleneck in forging successful twinning relationships. Also, due to legacy issues around the inappropriate use

of public funds for foreign trips under twinning, it is perceived as unnecessary if it does not respond to local community needs.

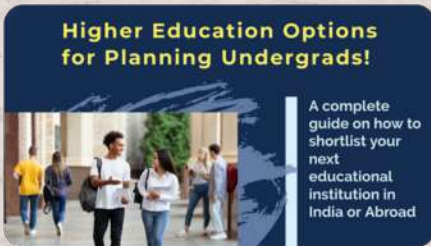
**Developing a partnership ecosystem with global players is the way forward.**

With the union government pushing for rapid and planned urbanisation of cities through schemes such as Smart City Mission and AMRUT, Indian cities have turned into a major market for companies across the globe. In this context, there are a number of collaborations that have already happened and still, there is immense scope for global cities to forge a successful twinning relationship with Indian smart cities which are looking for better technology, knowledge, and expertise in the urban and transportation sector. These arrangements structured around clearly identifiable economic benefits can prove to be a win-win situation for all the stakeholders involved. City partnerships of this century needs to be structured around the players which defines the character and economy of the city. For e.g., business and trade associations, academia, sports communities, local art and cultural groups and many others. Municipal authorities need to act as facilitators and help these stakeholders forge relationships with their counter-parts in pairing cities. Since, new age city-partnerships are driven by economic agendas, it is important to create a sizeable market for efficient operations. Therefore, city networks could be instrumental in providing platforms for solution providers to reach out to a range of prospective clients seeking solutions on specific themes. Establishing city networks can foster cities and allied stakeholders achieve both development and economic agenda through economies of scale.





Here are  
**three FREE**  
**online courses**  
for you to get  
acquainted with  
**planning**



Higher Education in  
Planning



Software and Tools for  
Planners



Planning Education in  
India

Head on to [academy.planningtank.com](https://academy.planningtank.com) and start learning today!



Do you want to host your own course for  
planning students?

**Contact us to start teaching over thousands  
of students on planning subjects.**

**Planning Tank**

Feel free to contact us

📞 +91 99712 53773

✉ [collab@planningtank.com](mailto:collab@planningtank.com)

# Untreated groundwater threatens the health of villagers in rural India

BY ANKUSH NIMBRIA AND ANISH GROVER  
(Reposted from Water Science Policy)

**AN AREA** mostly unknown to the National Capital Territory of Delhi, the village of Khader lies on the banks of the Yamuna River. With over a thousand farming households relying on agriculture and horticulture for their livelihood, the river brings them everything—including heaps of plastic, household and industrial waste, and human remains. As local authorities fail to provide a solution, rapid, unplanned urbanization has forced residents to move from the western to the eastern bank of the Yamuna, without the most basic right: access to clean water.

**RESIDENTS** have found a solution just ten feet below ground. Clean-looking, yet contaminated, groundwater is the only available option to support themselves and their farming ventures. However, even this source is contaminated, causing them frequent stomach infections, kidney stones, jaundice, and skin infections. As prior research suggests, similar effects are also experienced across the city due to the distribution of the farmed edible goods produced here, irrigated with the contaminated water.

The ever-increasing health risks have inspired a few residents to adopt an alternative solution to fetching water. Khader residents retrieve treated



water from a hole in the pipelines carrying treated water from the Ganga River to Delhi from nearly a hundred miles away.

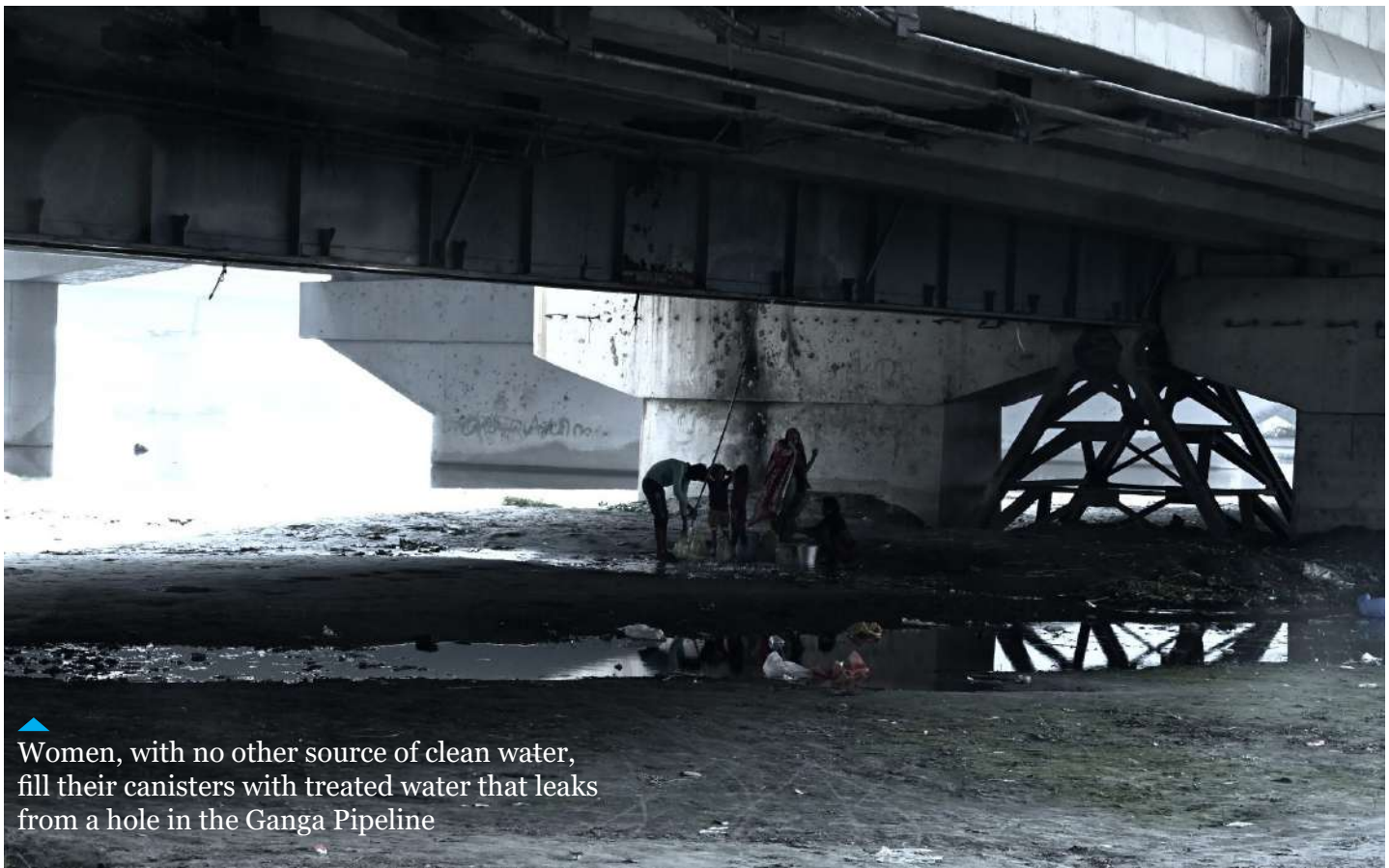
**MANY YOUNG WOMEN** make 5-6 daily trips to reach the area of the pipe leaks, located a mile away, trading the time they would spend in school to collect the water that supports their households' domestic needs. The hardship to find water over the last few decades has exacerbated the lack of formal education in the community.





Village residents draw water from the ground with the help of a hand pump.





Women, with no other source of clean water, fill their canisters with treated water that leaks from a hole in the Ganga Pipeline



Women fill their canisters with treated water leaking from a hole in the Ganga Pipeline





Girls carry water to their home; a journey of over a mile—made 5-6 times a day.



Students drink groundwater in the open school year, despite being near a public water distribution unit.









**DESPITE** being located next to a local water distribution unit, primary school students have to use untreated groundwater from the Ganga Canal, a diverted channel from the holy Ganga river, to serve their daily water needs.

**TOXIC WASTE** has flooded the area, posing a major threat for children who are clueless about its dangers. Often, during the monsoons, the village is inundated with waste carried by the rising river. Hazardous materials penetrate the ground quickly, contaminating the water further. As immunity in the community continues to weaken due to prolonged use of contaminated groundwater, worried residents have started to raise concerns, but are not being heard.

◀ Worried residents tell their story about the prolonged issues of groundwater contamination.

# CAN WE LIVE IN OUR CITIES?

## What is a 'liveable' city?

BY NANCY GROVER

**IN THE PROCESS** of providing social and economic wellbeing to its inhabitants as an integral part of urbanization, cities have become centres of consumption of energy and material resources, greenhouse gas production, generation of waste and pollutants. The ecological footprints of cities have extended far beyond their own physical boundaries due to the emissions, consumptions and human activities resulting in negative impacts on the surrounding rural, regional and global ecosystem.

**THE CITIES** are now associated with uncontrolled and unplanned development, traffic congestion, crime, waste generation, and so on. This draws our attention towards the urgent need of rethinking our approaches to design, construct and operate the cities in order to make them 'liveable' to its inhabitants.

Due to the novelty of the concept of **liveability**, exact definition of the concept is still challenging to derive because **liveability** is used in number of contexts including in the field of planning, community development, transportation and resilience.

Across the globe, many governments, institutions, designers, corporations, planners and researchers are searching for ways to make cities better using less energy and resources, fostering innovation and stronger communities and providing people with liveable environments.

**LIVEABILITY** is a broad term with no precise or agreed upon definition. It is subjective to the habitats within the entity as it is perceived differently by everybody. The concept embraces other associated notions such as sustainability, quality of life, character of place, and the health of communities. Liveable cities bring people together, enhancing interaction and promoting productivity in a sustainable way.

Like the Brundtland Commission's definition of sustainability, the idea of **liveability** includes the ability of a community to meet "the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

**Liveability** comprises broad human needs ranging from food and basic security, to cultural expression, and a sense of belongingness to a place or community. In 1960s, "Quality of life" emerged as a concept within the Social Indicators

Movement and questioned basic assumptions about the relationship between economic and social well-being. Quality of life indicates the citizen's satisfaction with residential environments, crime rate, traffic scenario, employment opportunities etc. The concept of **liveability** refers to the extent to which the attributes of a particular place can, as they interact with activities in other places, satisfy residents by meeting their social, economic and cultural needs, promoting their health and well-being, and protecting natural resources and ecosystem functions.

**HERE ARE SOME** of the many examples of design, planning and governance which point the way to better cities and which are an inspiration for all those who are working on making the cities liveable.

### URBAN PLANNING AND DESIGN: REGIONAL COHERENCE IN THE LOWLANDS OF NETHERLANDS

Cities in the lowlands are considering a new practice for urban planning and design, which will contribute in creating lively attractive urban centres and holding a strong position of the city in the regional context. The cities of Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Antwerp discovered their vacant port areas and turned them into new attractive urban waterfronts. The presence of large water landscape

**'Liveability is also the ability to meet present needs without compromising future needs.'**

- WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT, 1987.





structures not only give chance for a new cityscape but also for the need of improved water management due to climate change.

These transformations have emerged as important opportunities to create new coherences on a regional scale. Big cities like these play an important role in regional coherence because they are the institutions with enough power to take lead.

This kind of development is made possible when the cities promote their skill in planning and design.

#### **STRATEGIC PROCESS: LONG TERM STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS IN CURITIBA**

The 1965 master plan played an important role in building contemporary Curitiba. The plan completely changed the direction of urban growth and provided a more flexible and wider support system

*Estação-Tubo, meaning “tube stations” are bus stops for Curitiba’s Integrated Rapid Transportation Network in Brazil*

*Source: ICLEI*

---

# The concept of liveability includes a number of elements such as environment, economy, culture, healthcare, stability and built environment.

to the development of the city. The approaches that were followed were – adoption of a linear growth model with structural corridors to protect the centre of the city; an integrated planning structure confining the road system, mass transport and land use to privilege mass transport over cars; concern for the quality of life of the city and urban environment by returning the city to pedestrians; and creation of a permanent urban planning process through establishment of an institute charged with the developing guidelines and adjusting with the changes required with the time.

## **URBAN INTERVENTION: SEOUL URBAN RENEWAL**

Seoul restored a stream that runs through the centre of Seoul, dividing the city into North and South and was buried under a city highway for thirty years. As part of the Seoul urban renewal project, the highway was demolished and the stream was turned into a beautiful 4 miles long urban park in 2003. The Cheonggyecheon stream restoration project took complete two years and cost around 300 million dollars. It has led to creation of a gorgeous and lively green public space in the middle of the city where fish, birds

and insects have returned back to this urban river. Nearly three quarters of the demolition material from the old highway was reused for rehabilitation of the stream and construction of the park. It has been observed that the area around the park is cooler than other parts of the city. Seoul has also made big steps in transportation planning, rerouting traffic through other corridors and adding more public transportation which has led to fewer vehicles entering the city and expansion in bus and subway ridership. Seoul has demonstrated the progress towards sustainability and [liveability](#) of cities in Asia.

## **CREATIVE URBAN INITIATIVE: PROJECTS FOR NEW YORK'S WATERFRONT**

The Museum of Modern Art in Queens has been successful in creating an atmosphere in which innovation and creativity can thrive. Five teams worked for a period of eight weeks to make this project a success. The teams designed their own proposals for allocated areas in New York's Upper Bay and then interacted and presented to community groups. These led to the formation of 2010 Rising Current exhibition at MOMA. Though the process is new for New York, it

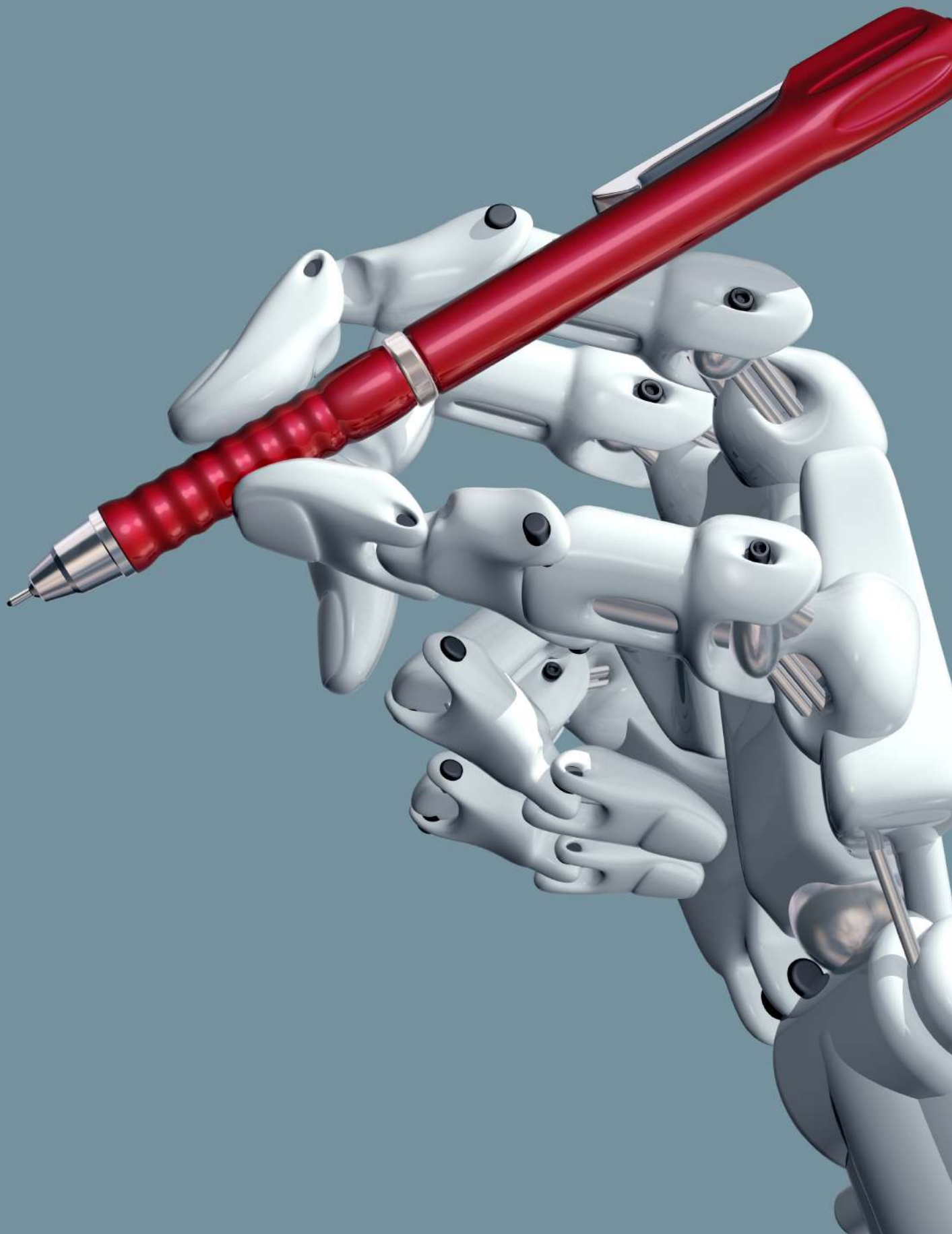
has allowed innovative ideas to be shared with a wide audience. The content of the exhibition showcases how the city of New York can deal with rising sea levels while achieving new, vibrant neighbourhoods with water cleaning oyster beds, gardens and other investments that help to create liveable neighbourhoods and attractive city environments. This exhibition has been set as an example and has helped to change the perspective of the wider audience that making the city safe and better can be achieved together.

[LIVEABILITY](#) can be defined as balanced and favourable living condition within a geographical area. The concept of liveable cities includes a number of elements such as environment, economy, culture, healthcare, stability and built environment which can be measured across various scales. While, there is no precise definition, the notions such as quality of life, safety and stability, amenities, infrastructure, public transport, etc. remain constant throughout. Some of these indicators are tangible such as infrastructure and amenities while quality of life, safety and alike are intangible. But we must also understand that [liveability](#) depends on the point of view of the individuals.













# >Era of Assisted Research\_

**Here's an insight into the applications and upcoming challenges of AI assisted writing for Students & Institutions**


*BY SHUBHAM AGGARWAL*

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE & MACHINE LEARNING** have been gaining attention for some time now. The endless possibilities and diverse application of technology has a lot to offer. Until recently, any large-scale use of such technology was restricted to a few tech giants or for research purposes. However, as more and more applications were explored and pushed for consumer use, the cost reduced and quality improved. Another reason for making such technology available for a larger use is the data collection and reducing the learning curve for AI.

Fast Forward, there is AI almost everywhere with or without us realizing. Your Smartphone, Smart TV, Car, Civic Infrastructure or just anything which has an internet connection directly or indirectly makes use of AI & ML technology. While the world was hit by the pandemic and is still feeling the after effects, there were breakthrough changes which took place.

Generative Pre-Trained Transformer 3 (GPT-3), a product of AI, was introduced in May 2020. This module, created by San Francisco-based company OpenAI, and has been listed as one of the praiseworthy achievements of AI till date. Tech giants such as Google, Amazon, Tesla, Microsoft and various governmental and non governmental agencies are working on such technologies with different agendas. However, in this article, we will focus on the "Text Generation", a relatively lesser-known but highly debatable application.

The wide scale use of GPT 3 and other similar models and datasets quickly gained everyone's attention. People all over the world have started working on its applications for generating content. While GPT 3 is pre-trained, it can be trained and tweaked further, for enhanced output. Companies, depending on the user's need, provide them with options to train it. This training is both from the backend by the team associated with the tool, and also based on inputs given by users. Any AI application follows the popular concept of GIGO – Garbage In, Garbage Out. A rubbish or nonsense input will result in a nonsense output. So what input is given has to be kept in mind for AI to work at its best.



**YOU MIGHT BE TEMPTED** to complete your next assignment or project using AI, by asking it to write a report on Carbon neutral cities or a policy review, however, it doesn't work like that. The default structure or interface provided by these tech companies are nearly useless since they are meant to give a glimpse to developers. The real application is experienced by opting for a service or tool which has an easy-to-use interface with prebuilt applications or templates.

Applications like paraphrasing, grammar check, text spinning etc. were available for a long time, but the output required heavy editing and proofreading. Other advanced applications, such as generating an article outline or even writing an article directly from scratch, are opening up new possibilities. With a good quality tool (which is often paid), you can write a 500-1000 word article from scratch in under a minute.

The output quality and usability will depend on the input given by you and the complexity of the topic. Providing good quality relevant input is a skill which you will gain over time by hit and trial methods to see what kind of inputs works for you to get a desired output. In a normal case, be ready to provide a title, brief context, 3-5 subheadings for AI to understand the topic you wish to write about and what details to cover.

Exact application of such tools differs from person to person depending on their use case and work profile, however, as a student or researcher, you can save time on writing. These tools might not eliminate the need to type, but they aid and improve the structuring and writing process. You might be able to extract stats from various websites with just one click without the need to visit individual websites. These can also be used to summarize your research, write an abstract or write a short essay on a given topic. Writing a piece of fiction is possible as well. You will also be able to write about topics which you are not aware of, since the dataset on which these softwares work have information on nearly all topics in the world. The output is mostly unique in each generation and, if you are not satisfied with the output, you can try giving the input multiple times to get more relevant output or get in touch with your support team to have them look into it and tweak the software for you.



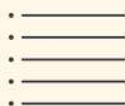
### PARAPHRASING

Paraphrasing involves changing the wording while preserving the original meaning of a sentence.



### SUMMARIZER

A summarizer can condense articles, papers, or documents down to the key points instantly.



### OUTLINE GENERATOR

An outline generator creates an outline for an article that works as the chronological framework.



### AI DRAFTING

AI drafting automates one or more phases in the process of generating content for marketing purposes.



### GRAMMAR CHECK

A grammar checker is a software or program feature used to find grammatical errors.



### CITATION GENERATOR

A citation generator easily makes citations for essays, presentations, and documents.



### ARTICLE SPINNING

It is used to create a seemingly new article based on what already exists, mostly for SEO purposes.



### STATS EXTRACTOR

A software that helps to extract data from plots, figures, images and maps.

## POPULAR TOOLS FOR AI-BASED WRITING

*These are some of the most popular and ready-to-use applications for writing*

**The more you use the software, the more you are able to create relevant content using AI-based tools.**





## AI-based writing is beneficial, but has its challenges.

**THE ABILITY** to write about anything and everything within minutes has its own set of challenges. The enormous amount of data fed to train this model clubbed with the other parameters which make it nearly human is already challenging experts. People are found using it to get unsolicited information or advice, exploit it to create websites, blogs, books within days which are filled with unverified and false information, claiming the AI generated outputs to be their own real creations for direct and indirect benefits, increasing workload for fact checkers and creating challenges for search engines to process and verify the information available on websites. Though there were a few checks and balances in

place before making it available to the public in terms of what kind of content and topics it would write upon and how many words are generated with a click, followed by a cooling period to avoid misuse and mass generation. However, humans found their way out to bypass those measures and successfully exploited the technology at various levels.

**EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS** and research centers are one of the most affected stakeholders who are lobbying for increased restrictions over such technology. They are concerned not just because of the new unverified information being generated and circulated, but also because it will lead to a lack of original ideas and raise questions over the authenticity of research

being conducted. Additional issues include plagiarism, difficulty with lack of a standard referencing system, and lack of quality research from students and researchers. Such tools, in the near future, will make it difficult for people to differentiate the AI generated text from human written text. This will be a major challenge for educational institutions which require students to undertake research for completion of a degree. For such reasons, many institutions are taking punitive\* actions against those who are found to be using such software or tools. A similar strategy has been adopted by search engines against bloggers found to be publishing false or unverified information to discourage such use of AI writing tools.

\*punitive: inflicted or intended as punishment

There are multiple companies working on the wider application of such tools. These might have a unique approach to how they wish to achieve it and thus make use of various available technology. While GPT 3 is one of the most promising, it is not the only contender. There are Macaw by AI2, Gopher by DeepMind, GLaM and BERT as a part of Google research, SEER by Meta. This is a very lucrative billion-dollar industry in which no one wants to be left behind.

If you are looking for a no-brainer and quick way to get around, you might be left unconvinced with the current options. Each company is working on understanding and refining the dataset as per their target audience. Thus, **there is a no one size fits all option**. You will be required to spend considerable time understanding your needs, exploring various options available, spending time giving inputs, probably training them and then sticking with the tool which is right for you. There is a steep learning curve involved, but once you are done with experimentation, results are very rewarding. **Cost** is another important factor as the companies involved in improvement over the default datasets available and providing an easy-to-use interface, tend to focus on paying customers. Your **output quality** heavily relies on the input, but even then, in some cases, you cannot expect these tools to match the research conducted by humans. The level of details, structure and context which a human is able to put into content is far more exceptional and thus very much needed for professional research. AI tools are more suited towards general use, revolving around general informative and unbiased content and fiction. This is perhaps the biggest drawback. **You cannot rely on AI to understand the facts and numbers**. It will often provide you with arbitrary and imaginary numbers when it comes to significant dates and data. Additionally, it can only write upon on what is known to it. Writing a piece of fiction about the future is possible, but one cannot write about something which has not been fed into the dataset or about an event which did not take place when the dataset was last updated. Such instances or topics remain unknown to AI.

It is difficult to suggest a single tool which will meet your research or writing requirements. Some of the tools which have been in the market for quite some time and worth exploring are **QUILLBOT, FRASE, PEPPER TYPE, MARKET MUSE, GRAMMARLY, NICHESSS, WORDAI, ARTICLE FORGE ETC**. Most of them provide additional functionality as a standard feature which are needed by power users and agencies such as keyword research, content optimization, SERPs & backlink trackers. The use of AI has its own set of challenges, but what seemed impossible a few years ago has been made possible. The number of applications is increasing and thus data collection to make those improvements has also increased. Generating images from text description, improving a photograph in real time on mobile phones, improving image quality, turning black and white photos into colour photos, predicting and generating small video clips from a series, chatbots, live commentary & reporting, conducting surveys and even coming up with the most efficient designs. These are just a few wider applications of AI which you might wish to explore.

## AI Based Softwares for Writing



### Quillbot

QuillBot's tools help to rewrite and enhance any sentence, paragraph, or article using state-of-the-art AI. It includes paraphrasing, summarizing, etc.



### Fraser

Fraser AI helps improve your writing by allowing you to research, write, and edit high-quality SEO content in significantly less time than your current workflow.



### Peppertype

Peppertype.ai is an AI assistive tool that uses deep learning. It helps businesses and creators generate content ideas instantly and also creates short-form content copies.



### MarketMuse

This is a marketing oriented, AI-powered, content research, intelligence, and writing platform. The platform aims at creating SEO-friendly content.



### Grammarly

Grammarly is a "writing assistant" that job seekers, writers, and other professionals can use to proofread and edit their documents.



### WordAI

WordAI uses AI to understand text and automatically rewrite your article like a human writer.



### Article Forge

Article Forge is an artificial intelligence-powered content writer that generates complete high-quality, unique, SEO-friendly articles in less than 60 seconds.





# I SHOT MY **LAPTOP** BECAUSE THE **DOMAIN NAME** WAS STUPID!



**Don't make a fuss, Get a better domain name with us!**

[allaboutplanning.in](http://allaboutplanning.in)

[planningai.in](http://planningai.in)

[townplanner.in](http://townplanner.in)

[bplanning.in](http://bplanning.in)

[planningjobs.in](http://planningjobs.in)

[urbanplanner.in](http://urbanplanner.in)

[gisexperts.in](http://gisexperts.in)

[planovation.in](http://planovation.in)

[planningmedia.in](http://planningmedia.in)

**and MANY MORE...**

## Planning Tank

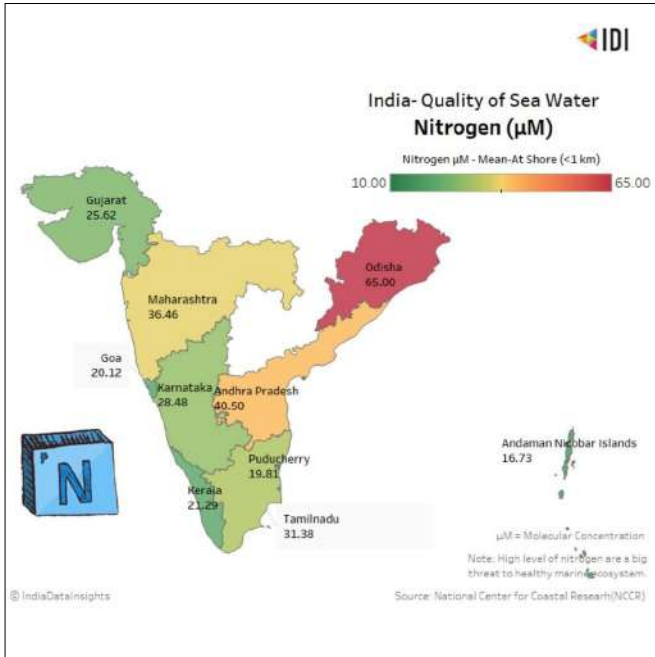
Feel free to contact us

 +91 99712 53773

 [collab@planningtank.com](mailto:collab@planningtank.com)



# #ItsTimeToPlan



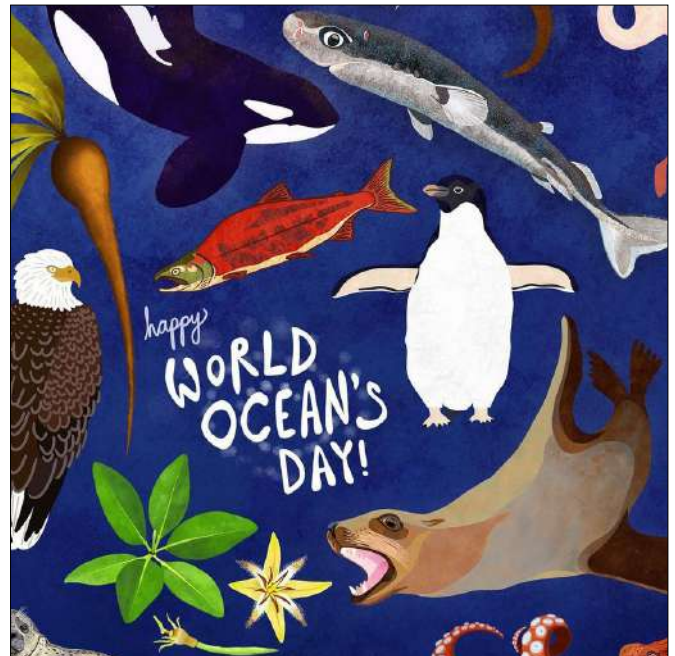
*@indiadatainsights* shows us how too much nitrogen in the sea water can harm aquatic environments.



*@worldurbanplanning* gives us a stunning aerial of Stuyvesant Town after the installation of solar panels.



*@worldeconomicforum* asks to reflect on how we can protect the ocean, its inhabitants, and those who rely on it.

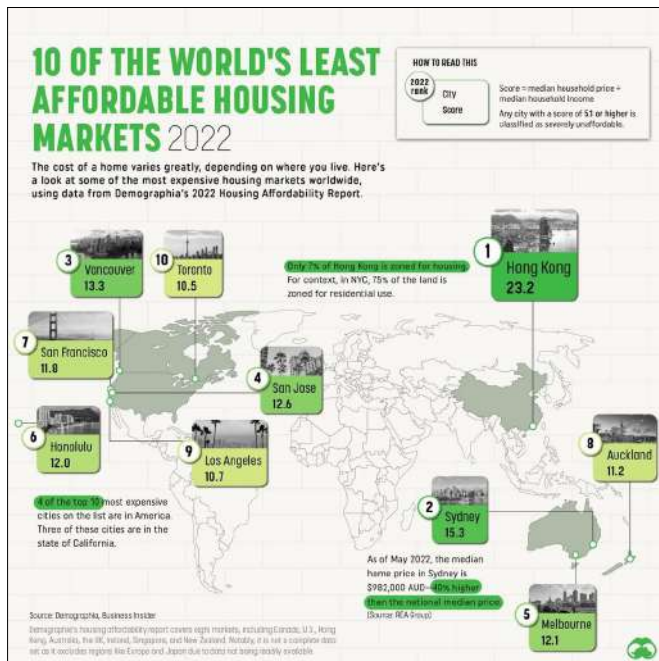


*@owlandbearstudio* wishes a Happy Ocean's Day and emphasises to care of our wonderful oceans of the world.



Want to get featured here?

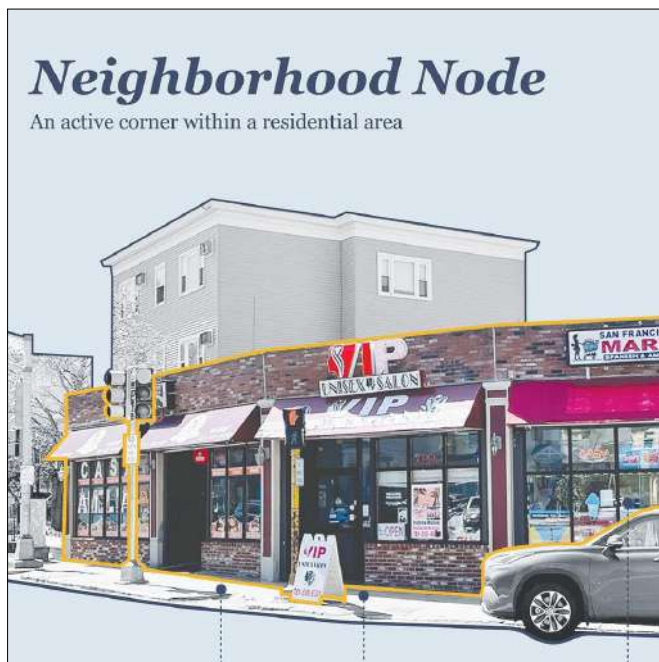
Share your pictures, tag us @planningtimesdotcom, and get noticed here!



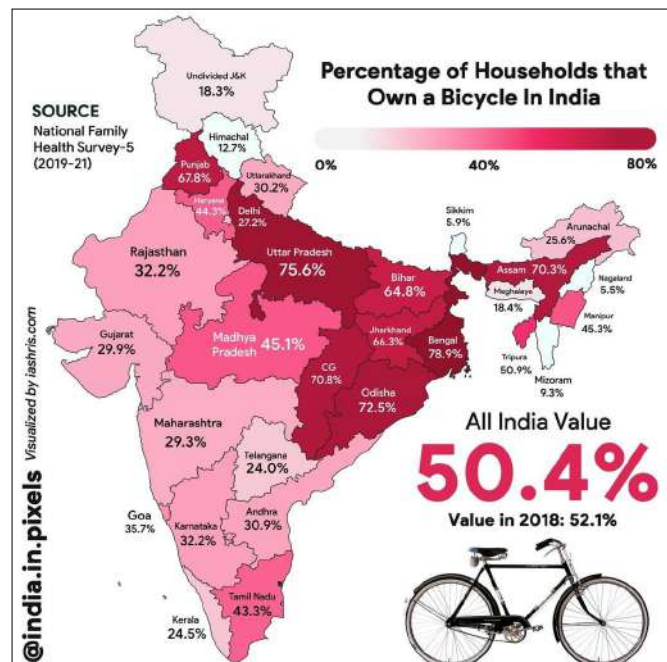
@visualcap highlights some of the least affordable housing markets across the globe, relative to median household income.



@urbanpie.in tells us 6 ways in which how we humans can help on World Ocean Day.



@visionlynn identifies the concept of Neighborhood nodes, which are highly active spots or corners within a residential community.



@india.in.pixels visualizes the percentage of households that own a bicycle in India.

FEATURE INTERVIEW

# THE GOLDEN RULES FOR BEING A BETTER PLANNER

An interview session with Prof. Jamal Ansari. We are grateful to him for his precious time and for sharing with us some insights into his life and how he became involved with the planning profession.

BY PLANNING TANK TEAM

**Professor Jamal Ansari** has had a distinguished career in planning spanning over 50 years. Earlier, for nearly 7 years, he chaired the Department of Physical Planning in School of Planning and Architecture (SPA) New Delhi, the Department he built-up with motivated colleagues from scratch to pioneer undergraduate planning education in India. He is presently engaged in professional activities at both national and international levels. He holds M.Sc. degree in Urban & Regional Planning from University of Toronto; P.G. Diploma in Town & Country Planning (Hons.) from SPA, and B.Sc. (Civil) from Aligarh Muslim University (AMU).

## How was your childhood and your education like?

I don't know my real date of birth, but officially I'm born on 10th July, 1942 in the eastern Uttar Pradesh City of Gorakhpur in a very conservative Muslim family.

My grandfather was a big zameendar (landlord). My uncles were into farming and politics. And my father looked after some brick kilns owned by my grandfather. My father was the only one who got married to a woman, though within Ansaris, but not a relative and belonging to a culturally suave and literate family of Lucknow.

My mother later convinced my father to move out of the joint family home and start our own separate household. My maternal grandfather had a government job, so he got my

father a job in the same department and with that we moved out.

My initial primary education was at home by a family tutor, who told my father one day that he had imparted me necessary Math, English, Urdu and Science skills to get into the 5th Standard. He got me admitted in a school at Gorakhpur. But after 5 months, I got down with typhoid and was bedridden for 9 months. After I got well, my mother took me with her out of our ancestral home in Gorakhpur and got me admitted in a rural school at a place in Eastern Uttar Pradesh where my father was posted then.

Later my father got transferred to Kanpur where my secondary schooling was done. There a teacher who recognized my interest in mathematics and he made efforts





to teach me personally, with which I got a distinction in mathematics. The main goal of my parents being their children's education, my father got himself transferred to Aligarh. With that I got admitted in Civil Engineering Degree Course at Aligarh Muslim University - the first disciplined and systematic education institute of my life.

**As a civil engineer, how did you get to know about planning?**

I tried to pursue structural engineering for Master's Degree, but was unable to at that point. During that time, a vacancy caught my eye in Aligarh Muslim University, as a junior faculty. I was told to teach a subject called "architecture and town planning" to the fourth years. Having no idea about either architecture or town planning, I started reading about the course outline and teaching the subject diligently.

**Did you have any mentors to help you, or did you learn planning by yourself?**

At that time, the Chief Town Planner in the Delhi Town and Country Planning Office was Syed Saeed-ush Shafi. Shafi sir had graduated in Urban Planning from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and he came back to India around the time when the practice of master planning was just evolving as a sapling from seed. He used to come to Aligarh University for delivering special lectures. I used to sit in his classes like a student, gaining all knowledge. When he started to visit regularly, I started bonding with him a little. He used to bring me literature to learn from, and that helped me teach.

**Did you continue learning more about planning from Aligarh itself?**

Seeing my interest in the subject of planning, Shafi sir asked me to come and study at SPA Delhi. Being eager to move to a larger city, I considered this as a welcome opportunity and decided to shift to Delhi. When I joined SPA, I found that my ability to read, write or speak English was very much limited. My project reports were torn and thrown out of the window by my professor and the HOD then. My ideas were always appreciated but my reports made no

**I always believed that there are 3 qualities that make you a good planner: the ability to read, the ability to speak and the ability to write.**

sense due to my poor English. Shafi sir was the one who pulled me towards better academic performance which included the ability to write better English. My professors understood my abilities and started motivating me to reading more and more. I started with general literature like Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*, *Asian Drama* by Gulnar Myrdal, *Quite Crisis in India* by John P Lewis,

*Agony and Ecstasy* – a biographical chronicle of Michelangelo and much of the popular literature of the time. With that I improved my ability to read and understand tough planning literature (including highly esoteric type) and thus gradually improved my writing and speaking abilities.

The day all 3 of my abilities started to improve, I started performing better and eventually stood second in my batch, with the Second-Best Thesis and an Honors Degree. It was

“

**My jury sheets were torn and thrown out of the window. My ideas were always appreciated but my reports made no sense due to my poor English.**



really difficult to cope up, but I was finally holding a post graduate diploma in town planning.

**How would you compare the education you got from an Indian institution, to that of an international one?**

When I went to Canada to pursue my second masters, I was the only one with a planning background in my class. My classmates were from completely different disciplines. So, interacting with a variety of disciplines made me understand the versatility of planning as a profession. The teaching style was quite different too.

The first discussion in the class was ‘**what is the role of a planner?**’, and me being a smart planner from the field thought to myself, “*why are we even discussing this? A planner’s role is simple - to design master plans.*” But the discussions that began in class were different. They talked about planners as advocates, bureaucrats, etc. No one spoke about maps and master plans. Before leaving to Canada, my only knowledge of planning was physical planning. Limited to colours and decoration. After Canada, my understanding was about the multi-dimensional approach to planning. That was my approach to making the Development Plan for Noida. After coming back, I motivated my students to try and go abroad for at least a year. It’ll help you to think outside the box.

**Tell us a bit about the origin story of the Bachelor of Planning Department at SPA Delhi.**

In 1989, the B. Planning department was started at SPA Delhi, with me being the Head along with Prof. Kavas Kapadia. It was initiated with the thought that people would develop as pure planners who cannot go back to being an engineer or an architect. It had to be a course that would give multiple options to the students to get into a particular stream of planning. We wanted these students to get an opportunity to pursue their choices.

The department had its challenges, like students not understanding the course, being disinterested or looking for an architectural degree, etc. Eventually, the department evolved with the course structure, that helped establish the degree known as Bachelor’s in Planning.

“

**...go abroad for at least a year. It’ll help you think outside the box.**







The students from the first few batches did so well for themselves that some of them have even brought projects for the faculties in the department and eventually helped the department grow.

**Do you feel the current teaching methods in all planning colleges are failing to imbibe effective leadership within planners?**

Every student in their batch has the same feeling. They see their previous senior batches as effective leaders of their times and find the entire vibe missing in their own. However, I'd say this is not true. The current system, education curriculum and facilities available for the students are different and one should focus and evolve with what they have at hand and not compare themselves to the seniors, or what they were able to achieve.

**What is your message to the current generation of planners in India?**

I believe the biggest quality a planner can inculcate is **creativity**. The art of storytelling in limited words with smartly depicting the entire picture. And these qualities cannot be developed in a planner until and unless they read and have the ability to write, speak & present with conviction.

As a planner, you tend to sympathize with people, but a planner should not give anyone the benefits because they have something less than usual. As a planner, one should be socially responsible, but not over-empathize with people who want to succeed based on how sorry their situation is. A planner is supposed to look for sincere and discipline groups of society who want to come out of their sad situation willingly.

**With that, he concluded by saying that the three most important things in the life of any person are - education, education & education! It is the only thing that can take you places and make you lucky.**

*The interview was given in Hindi and translated and summarised in English by the Planning Tank Team.*

POST GRADUATE EDUCATION

# PLANNING OVERSEAS

Your guide to Masters programmes outside India

*Planning Overseas is focused on generating awareness of Masters courses offered by countries outside India for urban planning and allied fields. The information that you see here has been collected from official university websites, and the calculations are based on approximations and rounding-off of values sourced from the respective college/university websites. We hope this brings clarity to your choice of opting for planning and allied courses outside India.*



## University of California

**Location:** Los Angeles, California

**Course:** Masters in Urban and Regional Planning (MURP)

**Duration:** 2 years

**Total expense\*:** ₹ 1.05 crores

For 50 years, UCLA's Department of Urban Planning has been a leading center of innovation and action. Consistently ranked among the nation's top planning programs, we study urgent and topical issues at multiple scales and using interdisciplinary approaches.

\*Tuition and application fees + Average living expense + Average travel cost







## UNSW Sydney

**Location:** Sydney, Australia

**Course:** Master of City Planning (MCP)

**Duration:** 2 years

**Total expense\*:** ₹ 47 lakhs

The Master of City Planning at UNSW is a two-year, professionally accredited postgraduate degree that allows you to bring experience from previous study to launch a career in urban and regional planning.



43



8



## University College London

**Location:** London, England

**Course:** Master in City Planning (M.Plan)

**Duration:** 2 years

**Total expense\*:** ₹ 75 lakhs

This two-year long full time Master's programme encourages students to think independently and critically about city and regional planning problems both domestically and internationally. It specifically emphasizes the importance of both a spatial and comparative perspective to planning.



## University of Glasgow

**Location:** Glasgow, Scotland

**Course:** Master of Science in City Planning (MSc.)

**Duration:** 1 year

**Total expense\*:** ₹ 32 lakhs

The Master's in City Planning at the University of Glasgow will help you develop your critical understanding of cities and the positive impact that evidence-based and innovative decision-making can have on human settlements.



73



\*Tuition and application fees + Average living expense + Average travel cost



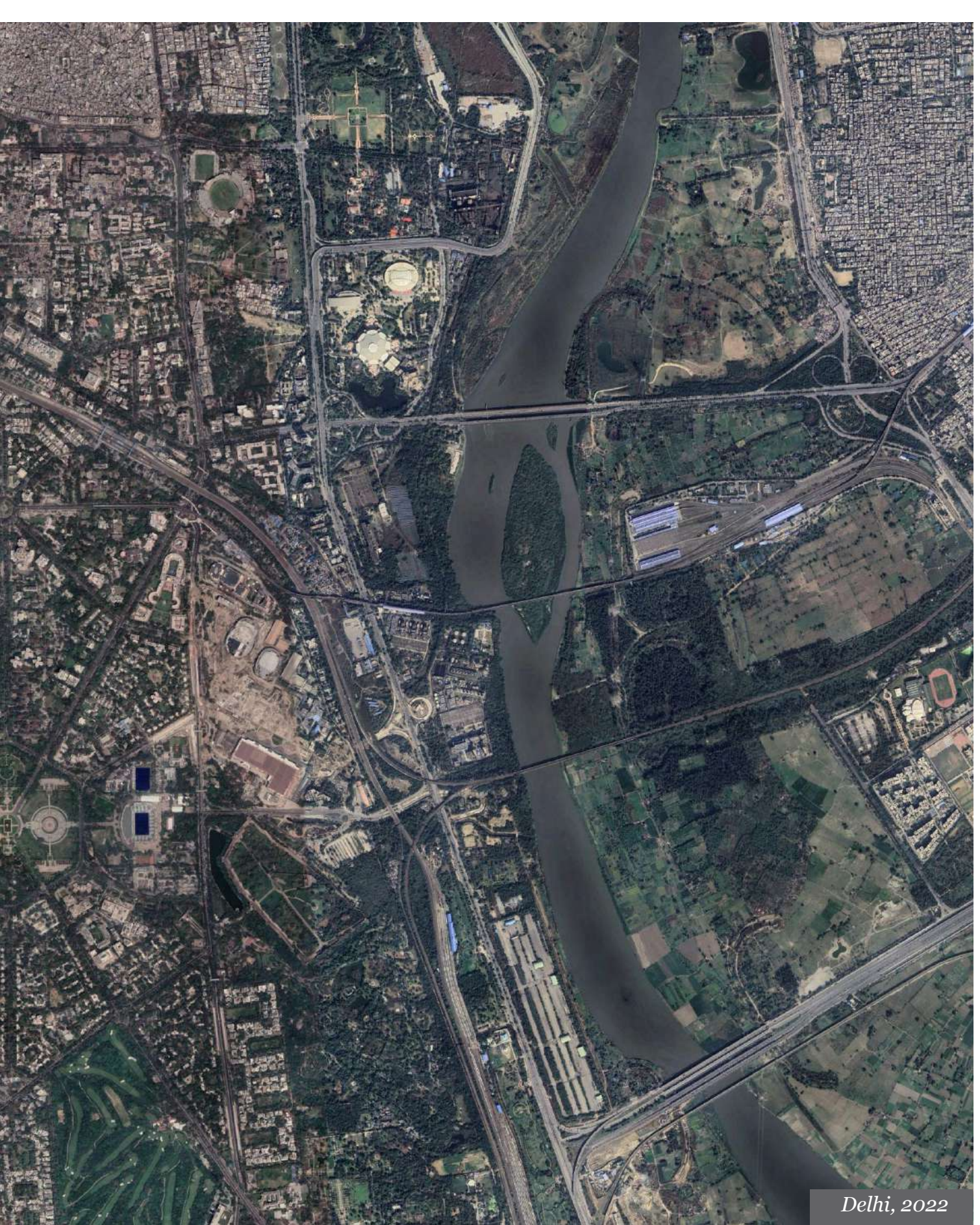
A high-resolution satellite image of a city, likely Washington D.C., showing a dense urban grid. A prominent circular park, the National Mall, is visible in the center-right, surrounded by a circular road and radiating streets. The image shows a mix of urban development, green spaces, and infrastructure like highways and bridges.

IMAGERY

# Satellite Watch

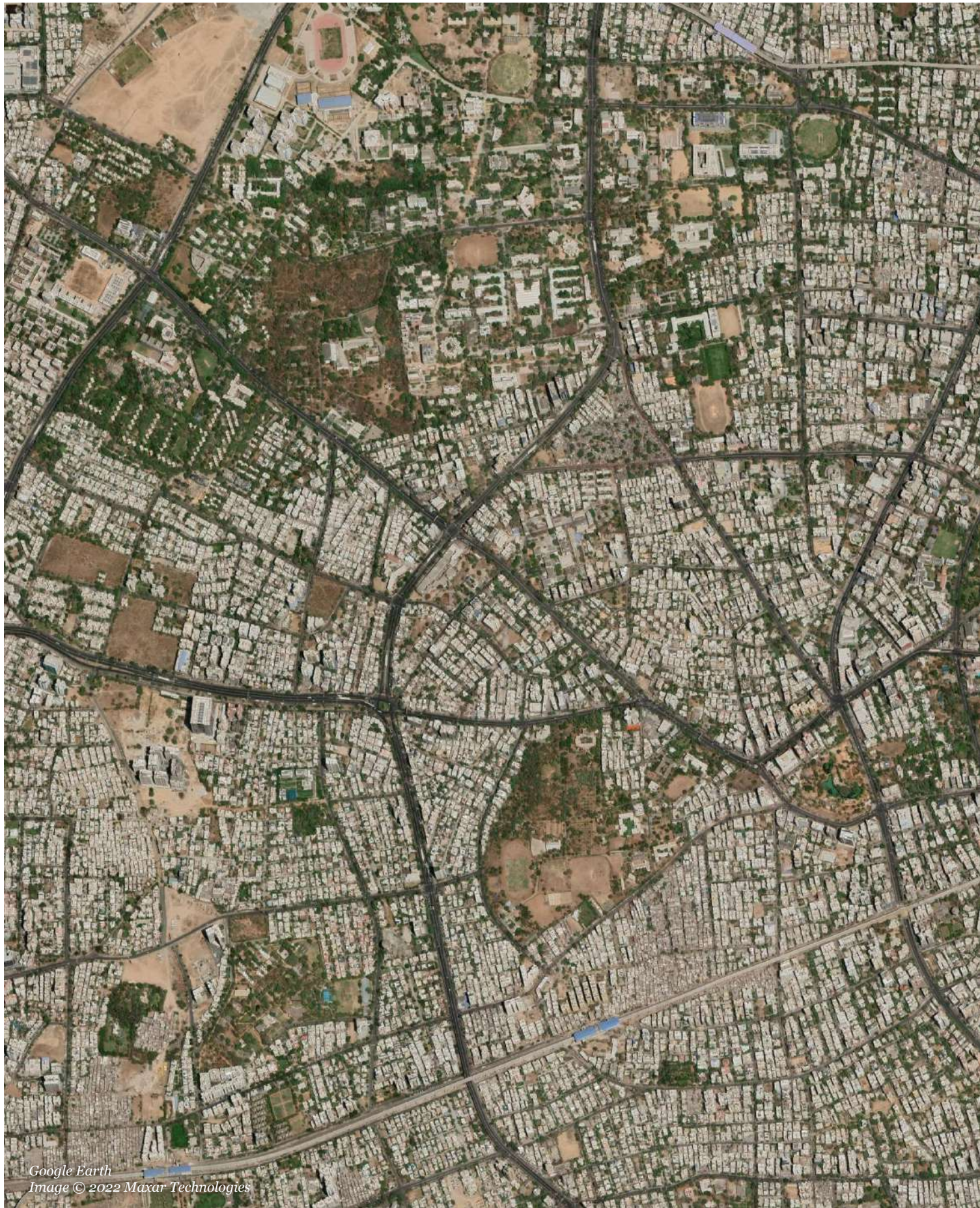
It is interesting to see how basic elements like buildings, public spaces, streets, and natural features interact to give different urban forms. Let's appreciate our beautiful cities for what they are through the lens of a satellite.





Delhi, 2022







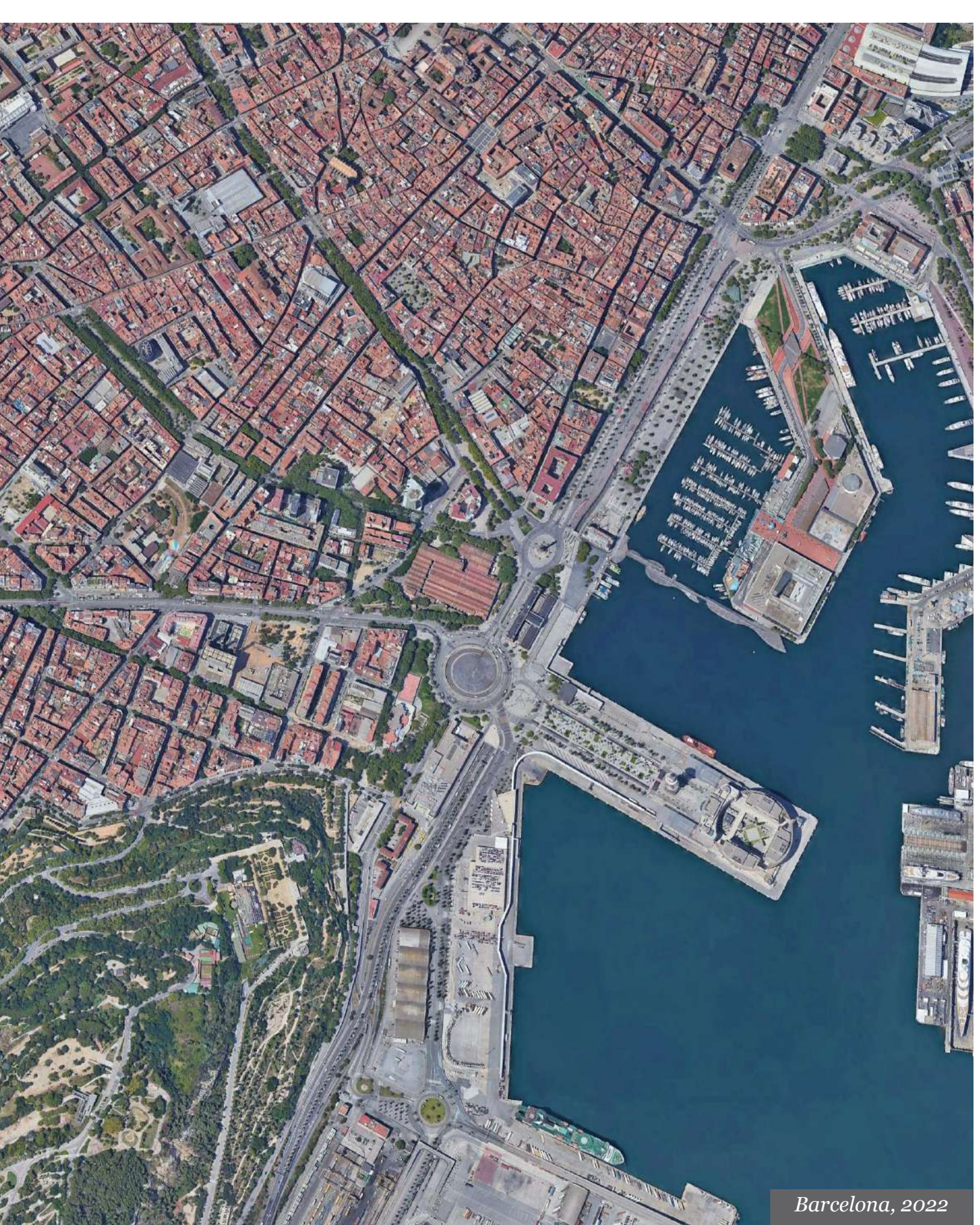


Ahmedabad, 2022









*Barcelona, 2022*



# Work for ~~for~~ WITH Money



Here's why finance is a very important aspect for planners

BY VISHESH BHARADWAJ



**IN A BROADLY** rigid education system for urban planners in India, planning education at its core is still perceived a policy centric or research-based profession by most people. The NITI Aayog report on Reforms in Urban Planning Capacity in India, points out three major components or roles for Urban Planners. They are educational and research roles, public sector roles (such as Gazetted Planning officers) and private sector roles, primarily in consultancy.

All the three sectors expect urban planners to have a thorough knowledge of finance. This is contrary to the general perception of our profession. Government sector planners need to deal with allocation of funds for public development schemes. Educational and research institutes conduct specific research on urban financing challenges and ways to finance urban development in an efficient way. The private sector or as we would more specifically refer to it as private consultancy involves thorough knowledge of financial viability of projects, preparing financial proposals, preparing detailed financial models for DPRs and many other projects





which involves detailed knowledge of finance. Given that planners are deployed in diverse fields, all of which require a certain understanding about finance, it is indeed an essential skill to master. Given the falling GDP and depreciating cost of the Indian Rupee, financing urban development is going to come under distress.

**MOST** of the urban development projects are undertaken by the third tier of governance i.e., the urban local bodies (ULBs). Own revenues, consisting of tax (of which the property tax is a major source) and non-tax revenues, declined from 63% of the total revenues of municipalities in India in 2002-03 to 53% in 2007-08 (Twelfth Five Year Plan).

The rest is accounted for by grants, assignment and devolution by state governments, grants from the central government and finance commissions. Only a few ULBs like New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) and Bruhat Bengaluru

Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and few other who have opted for double-entry digital accounting system have been able to generate 99% of revenue on their own. This depicts a significant gap in handling urban finance, especially in the urban administration domain and the planners deployed in this system. The obvious question that may arise is what is the importance of finance for an urban planner in order to effectively make urban development sustainable? This article will also discuss about state economics since finance and economics are interrelated disciplines. In addition, the tangible actions that readers, especially urban planners could act upon will also be discussed.

**THE** basic and most fundamental learning of finance would be that an individual should be making more

money than the person is spending. The same is the case with any company, organization, ULB, state or even a nation. While, the nations or any public body's goal will not be generating profit but to have sufficient money or assets to cover any financial distress, emergency or any other natural calamity. A top-down approach is a good way to understand how the money rotates in a democratic country. For the purpose of urban planners, it is essential to understand the routes of financing urban development projects. As the first step, learning about the priorities of the nation and the state becomes the most



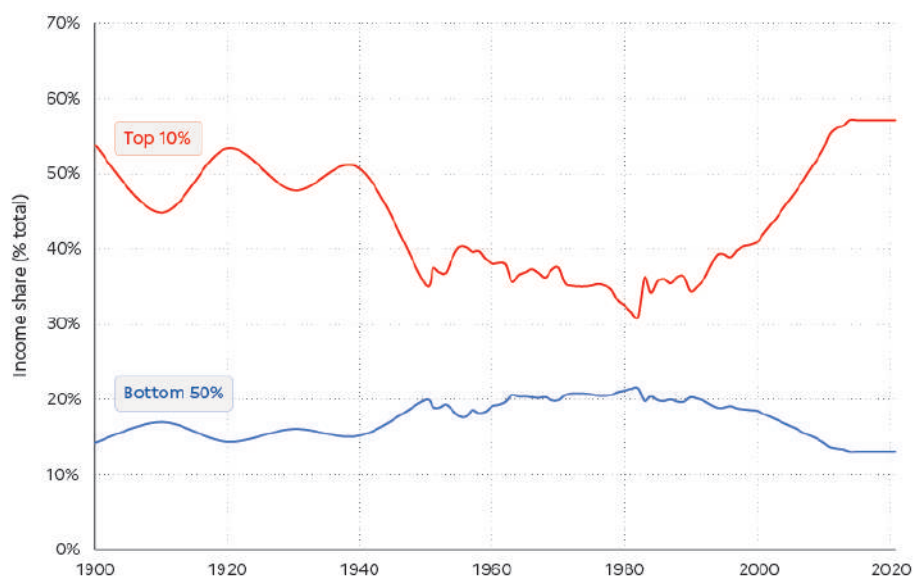
important aspect of managing finance. The theoretical aspects which most young planners will consider as “boring” will not be discussed. Rather, we shall directly see what is happening in reality. Understanding the union and state budget to know the nations and states priority in the development sector could be the first step in becoming aware of the direction of development which the legislature wants to take.

For example, post-COVID the Indian budget has put a lot of focus on health. A simple revenue and expenditure table along with various heads would be a great consolidated analysis to understand the development priorities of the centre and state. This would drive the fund allocation in the municipalities and the policies and the actions of planners could be aligned by keeping in mind the nations and states priorities and the same could be used to fund those projects. While a public sector planner could use this to pitch and ideate the projects, the private sector planners could use this knowledge to focus its expertise where the state is ready to spend most of its money on.

The Nobel laureate economists Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo said that India was “among the most unequal countries” in the world. As per the World Inequality Report by World Inequality Lab, the top 10% of Indian population owned 57% of the country’s national income in 2021, whereas the top 1% owned 38% of all additional wealth accumulated since the mid-1990s with an acceleration since 2020.

This should be looked as an opportunity to gauge this wealth towards national and urban development by incorporating corporate social responsibility (CSR) into development projects and finding more efficient alternatives

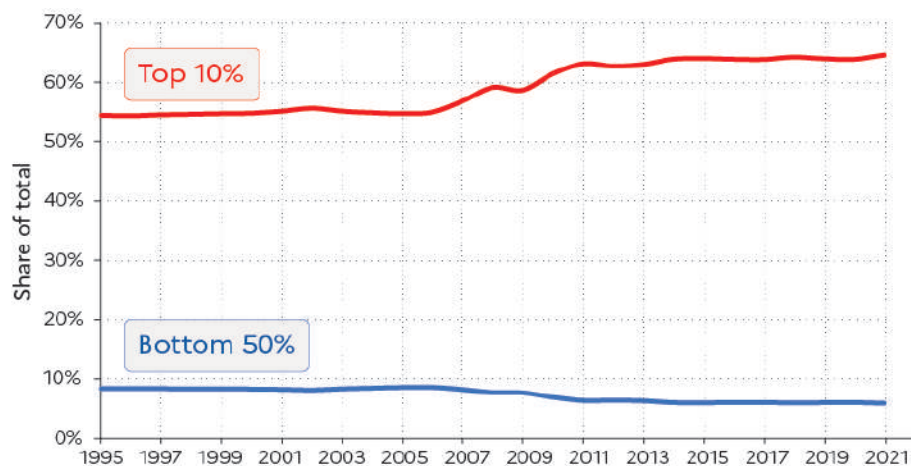
### TOP 10% AND BOTTOM 50% INCOME SHARES IN INDIA, 1900 - 2021



The top 10% income share is equal to 57% in 2021. Income is measured after the operation of pensions and unemployment insurance systems and before income tax.

Source: World Inequality Report 2022  
wir2022.wid.world/methodology

### WEALTH DISTRIBUTION IN INDIA, 1995 - 2021



In 2021, the wealthiest 10% of the population own 65% of total household wealth. Household wealth is the sum of all financial assets (e.g. stock, bonds) and non-financial assets (e.g. housing), net of debts.

Source: World Inequality Report 2022  
wir2022.wid.world/methodology





to the generic public private partnership (PPP) model. Since CSR has been made compulsory by law in the Companies Act, almost 20,000 crores have been spent on CSR activities in FY 2020-21. Having a collaboration with the city's, states or nations development projects for these CSR activities have proved to be very effective and needs to be understood by planners.

The next level comes down to understanding how the citizen's household finance works in a given scenario. This would give an insight on how and where people are spending most of their money. Through this insight the planners

would be better equipped to plan projects which would help save citizen money on public amenities, so that they could contribute to improving their quality of life through the surplus which they save. The most evident example could be having an efficient public transport system, which not only saves people's time but is also pocket friendly.

Private vehicles could be discouraged by levying multiple charges and increasing parking tariffs. However, the public transport should be effective enough to drive this change. One can notice that money is a big driver to bring

behavioural changes, which are often required in an urban settlement to make sustainable changes. The ways and fundamentals described above are only the tip of the iceberg in the vast world of urban finance.

A planner needs to understand the economic and financial factors leading to the quality of life of a citizen. These are usually the most important factors. A planner needs to have a sensitive eye for these disciplines to be able to understand what changes or what citizens require which could eventually improve their living standards, which will eventually drive a nation's overall development.





## DATA PRIVACY

# City Leaders are selling us to Tech Giants. And that's Disturbing!

BY SHUBHAM AGGARWAL

**CITIES!** Most of us probably never get out of them. We start our day and end in the very city we live in. Some try to escape them but just for a small time which is usually for “leisure” but once this is over we are back to our home city. There exists another set of people who travel for “work” but these too remain confined to cities. No matter how small of an area they occupy in terms of surface area these are the places which holds enormous wealth. Cities are the places where the rich live who are the real policy and change makers, unless, someone takes charge in their own hand and does something meaningful while thinking about the whole society.

Less obvious, but no less dangerous, are the other companies that are focused on providing the technology layer to willing cities that want to become ‘smart cities’. They are ‘dangerous’ because these companies will have access to information that the residents of these cities made available to the city willingly but have not given the cities permission to give to corporate entities to use for their commercial purposes.

**COMING** back to “cities”, home to over 50% of the world population. Most of the cities are now becoming unmanageable and rely on “tech” to perform their daily function effectively & efficiently. (This article

will not make a mention of any particular city since the condition remains the same and the left out cities will soon follow the leading cities which are leading to chaos!) Moving on, “smart cities”, as the name suggests are the modern hi-tech cities which are using the best technology known to mankind! As we talk about the best in tech there are a few reputed names which come to our mind which includes Google, Microsoft, Amazon, IBM, Apple, CISCO, UBER etc., in short, almost all the companies which exist in Fortune 500. All these companies contribute in some or the other manner and shape the way we live our lives.

Cities today are data driven, because data holds the key to a city’s growth. Data is the real gold in present time and has many hidden secrets. Some of these are a bit disturbing when you pause for a moment and think how much they rule over our lives. Some might even feel that actually they are the guiding hand (a quite dominating one!). Probably they know more about us as compared to what our



family & friends know about us. This is an essential but undeniable **TRUTH**. So, what the question is not how they are changing our lives but how much power do they have over our lives & who takes the responsibility. A gamble, isn't it?

All the information gathered by the companies are a result of our actions and consent since we use their services. All the interaction and usage of service is a result of our choice and action, and we remain the final decision makers. But here is something disturbing, a lot more disturbing, in fact **FRIGHTENING** when given a thought.

**YOUR** existing tech trapped life is led by data. Your Facebook feed, Google search results, and the ads being displayed to you on any screen are the result of data. The banks where you keep all your hard-earned money is stored in form of data. Where you live and the rent you pay is also derived from data. Your properties is just “data” for someone else. As you slowly realize we are living in a world where most of the things and even experiences are just data. The way you commute, your transport network, public transport and the Uber you book is again generating and using data. Now this

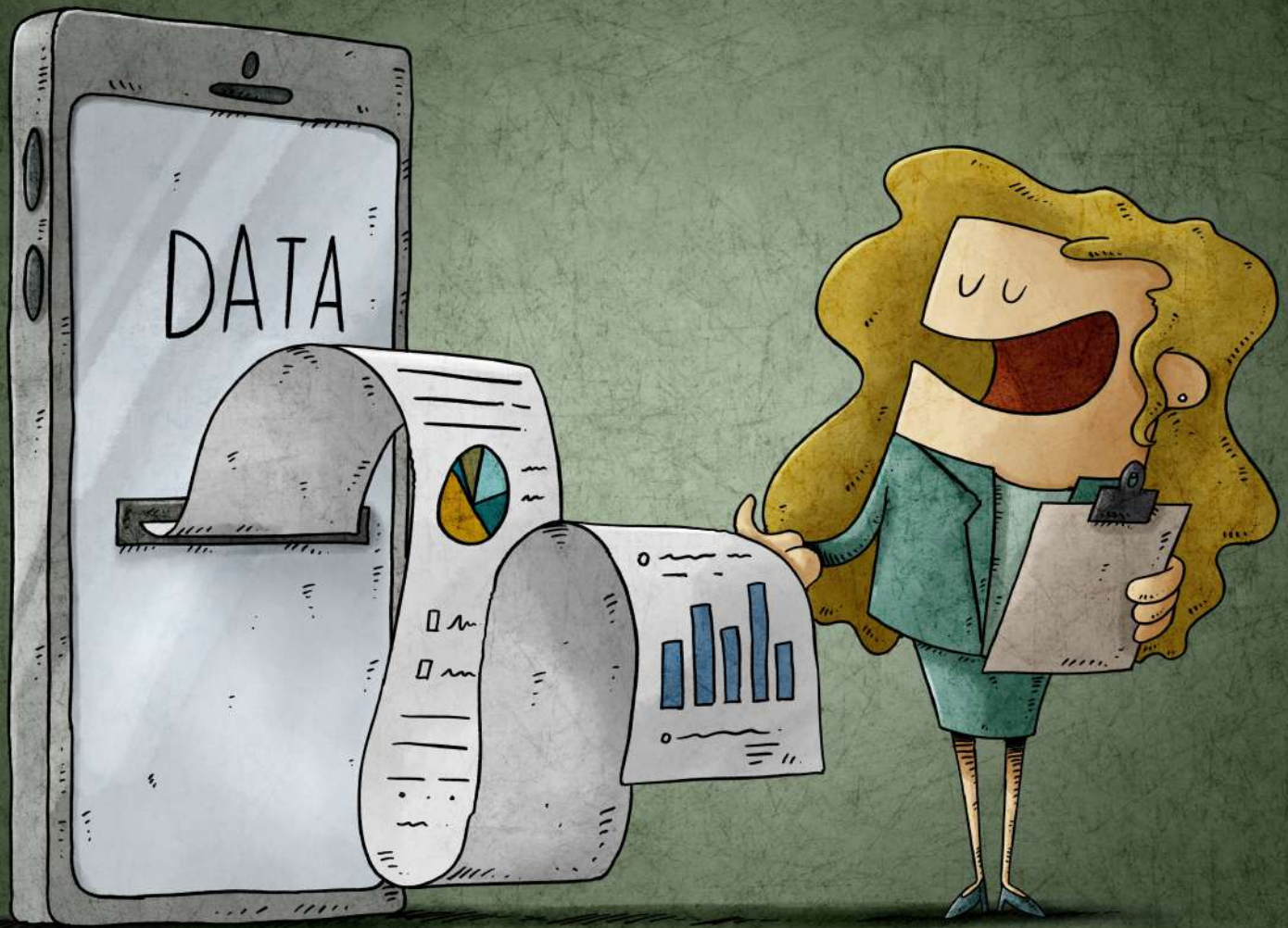
is definitely required so as to provide uninterrupted service and optimizing the resources which is no less than a gamble for a better tech-driven future. But it becomes uncomfortable when your own life is just seen as data. You decided to use Google, create an account on Facebook, and book an Uber. But the thing changes when someone else takes the decision for you and your life gets reduced to “mere datasets” in an unknown company!

## Your existing tech-trapped life is led by data

We are neither criticizing nor applauding the very system in which we exist and which now as a result of evolution, works on data. But the very fact concerning us is the control which we have over our lives and the way our lives are seen by the policy makers. City leaders all over the world are now counting on these “data rich” companies who managed to accumulate terabytes of data which enables them to help them in better decision-making. Using that data is surely a win-win situation for all but what happens







when “help” turns to “reliance & dependability”. No matter how good a company is in terms of its services and what it has to offer to society, the fact remains the same that it is a “business entity”. The frequent and massive fight and struggle over privacy concerns are automatically lost when our leaders decide to give the business entities the power to shape and transform the way we live.

**THE NATURE** and type of impact which these companies have needs to be taken care of and that can be done by the ultimate power, by those whom we choose to rule us, by those whom we believe will work for uplifting our society and provide us a system which eases our life. But what will happen when these leaders

turn into the “business entities” to do this job? Companies no matter how value driven they are, are “profit-making bodies”. They need to pay back their investors, partners and employees. They do not operate to make our lives easier, but to make profit! This is what is slowly being erased from our life.

When city leaders choose to use their expertise, they are knowingly or deliberately giving them more control over people’s lives. This is the direct result of our votes which is used indirectly to give control to private firms. We will get our right to vote back in a few years but the data acquired by companies will remain with them even after the next election. It will form a cycle since the

newly elected representatives will now be having even fewer choices since the selected companies now holds the latest data and will surely outperform others. This gives them an unprecedented advantage which will continue, unless, someone realizes this and takes over. Takes over not to stop and shatter this, but to put things back on track! Moving back from “dependency” to “aiding”, and applying their own thought while making such decisions. Giving back the control where it originally should have been, not in the hands of few tech-giants! The struggle and fight remain over “who controls what” and will continue till the very existence of mankind but what we can do is to be little more aware about



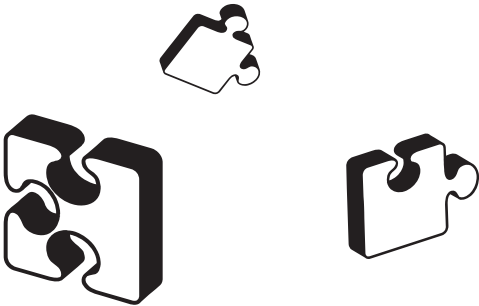
who and how our lives are ruled and governed. We need to tell the leaders and city makers that our lives are not just mere datasets which can be fed to the software and algorithms but needs human intervention. It's high time that the concerned people do their "job" and prevent this crazy evolution led by few dominating companies! Some of you might have forgotten the cities at the beginning of the article. Well, cities are where money is. Businesses operate and work where money is. Rural areas and towns follow the developed cities and look up to them and follow their path (exceptions do exist and some chose to apply brains to get out of this madness). As a result of this, smaller and relatively less developed areas are giving in to the hand of data rich companies. These areas "grow" and wealth is accumulated over time and proudly makes to the list of cities where money is! And this madness continues which is no doubt dangerous and pure gamble.



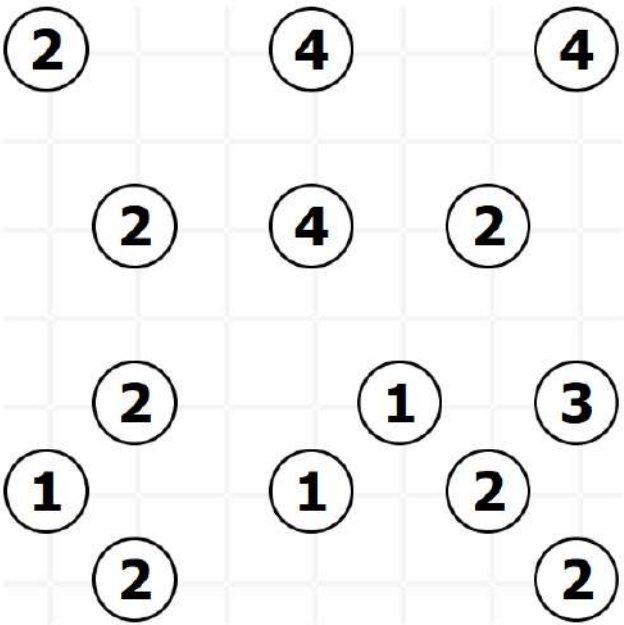
**The struggle and fight remain over “who controls what” and will continue till the very existence of mankind but what we can do is to be little more aware about who and how our lives are ruled and governed.**



# PUZZLE



Difficulty ●●●○○



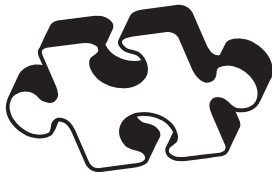
## Metro Hashi

**Create one single metro line through all stations.**

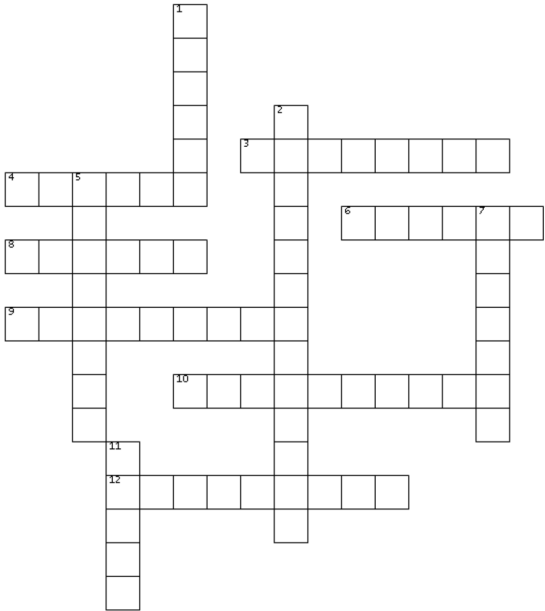
The goal is to connect all of the metro stations into a single connected group by drawing a series of lines between the stations.

**The lines must follow certain criteria:**

- They must begin and end at distinct stations, travelling a straight line in between.
- They must not cross any other lines or stations.
- They may only run orthogonally.
- At most two lines can connect a pair of stations.
- The number of lines connected to each station must match the number on that station.



Difficulty ●●●○○



## Crossword

Use the clues to fill in the words above.

**ACROSS**

3. The liquid that drains from solid waste landfills (8)
4. The transverse slope on road for surface water drainage (6)
6. “\_” area, also called built-up area pertaining to the area occupied by the building including internal and external walls (6)
8. A person who occupies land or property rented from a landlord (6)
9. Technique of MSW decomposition at elevated temperatures in an inert environment (9)
10. Road intersection typology which works on the principle of ‘yield/give way’ (10)
12. The intermediate floor is generally observed in non-residential establishments (9)

**DOWN**

1. The 1971 convention on wetlands (6)
2. Technique of data collection using emitted/reflected radiation from distance (6,7)
5. Single beam-based mass transit system (8)
7. The schedule in the constitution of India which resulted from the 74th CAA (7)
11. The transition phase of traffic signal from green to red (5)

**Crossword by: Mayank Dubey**  
(mayankdubey1990@gmail.com)

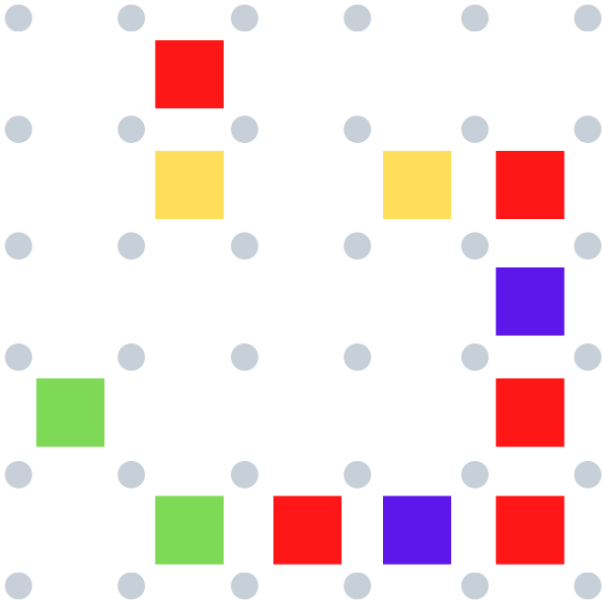


Think again!

TIME



Difficulty ●●○○○



**Stuck in a puzzle?**  
Scan this QR code to find solutions to all the puzzles below

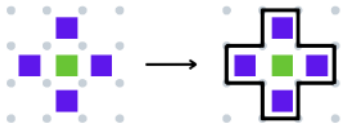
Difficulty ●●○○○

Y	H	L	J	C	I	U	L	A	Z	N	H	S	Y	E
T	S	I	V	O	G	M	A	Q	X	P	V	S	A	L
I	O	V	I	Z	W	U	T	X	N	X	E	Y	D	B
C	C	E	S	H	F	T	I	D	G	N	U	H	S	A
T	I	A	S	Z	L	E	G	G	O	A	U	N	N	N
R	A	B	K	V	U	E	I	R	S	G	Z	E	A	I
A	L	I	A	O	R	X	D	O	H	Q	T	K	E	A
M	M	L	Y	R	E	Z	L	M	J	K	X	N	C	T
S	E	I	T	I	C	A	P	A	C	I	T	Y	O	S
I	D	T	L	O	R	E	G	E	I	Y	I	N	X	U
V	I	Y	S	S	H	B	L	A	N	D	U	S	E	S
V	A	M	V	Y	B	Q	R	O	G	I	B	F	R	T
C	P	S	P	I	H	S	R	E	N	T	R	A	P	F
S	A	T	E	L	L	I	T	E	G	A	S	K	L	L
T	N	E	M	N	O	R	I	V	N	E	J	K	L	J

# Loop the Landuse

**Make a single loop around the landuse colours.**

Make one single loop around all the landuse colours. There are no crossings or loose ends. There is only one line which is continuous.



Each landuse colour indicates exactly how many lines should be drawn around it. Cells which do not have any colour inside can be surrounded by any number of lines.

**Here's a key for the landuse colours**  
Industrial - surrounded by 3  
Commercial - surrounded by 2  
Residential - surrounded by 1  
Recreational - surrounded by 0

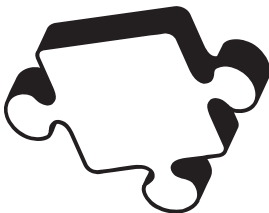


# Word Search

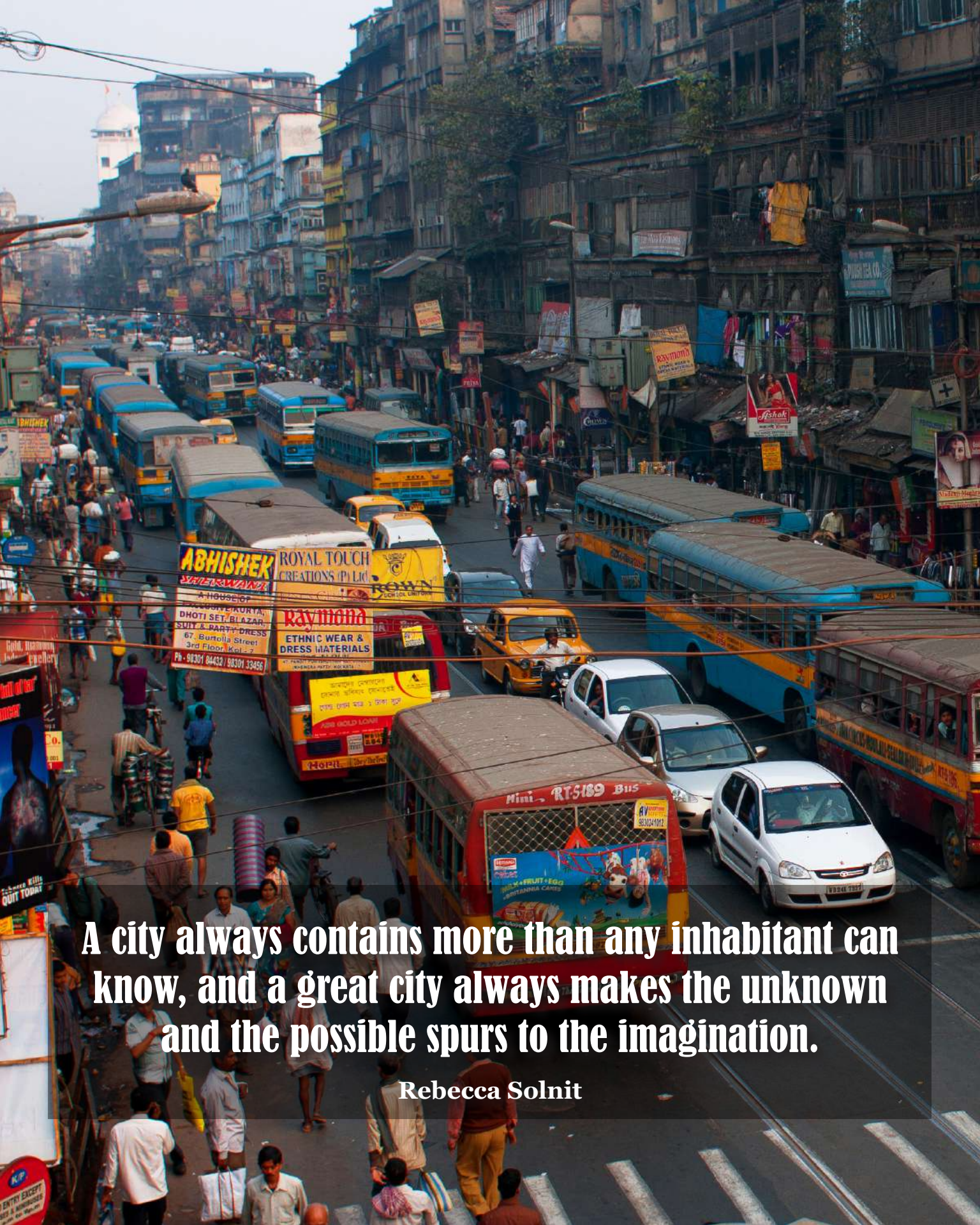
**Find the words in the puzzle.**

Words can go in any direction.  
Words can share letters as they cross over each other.

Barcelona	Capacity	Cities
Delhi	Digital	Drones
Environment	Landuse	Liveability
Oceans Day	Partnerships	Satellite
Smart City	Social Media	Solar
Sustainable		







**A city always contains more than any inhabitant can know, and a great city always makes the unknown and the possible spurs to the imagination.**

**Rebecca Solnit**



Tired of your thesis guides?  
Not getting any internships or jobs?  
Nobody to listen to your worries?

---



## Planning Tank Discussion Forum

*Because every planner needs a safe space :)*

[forum.planningtank.com](https://forum.planningtank.com)

**Planning Tank**

Feel free to contact us

📞 +91 99712 53773

✉ [collab@planningtank.com](mailto:collab@planningtank.com)



# Planning Tank

Feel free to contact us



+91 99712 53773



hello@planningtank.com

**Do you  
showcase**

**want to  
your planning**

# TALENT?

The **Planning Times Magazine** is always accepting articles, illustrations, puzzles, photographs, and anything else that **YOU** would want to showcase to our beloved readers! If you want to contribute to the magazine, email us at **[content@planningtimes.com](mailto:content@planningtimes.com)**.

