

Quotes Primus Partners Report

Published in BW Online Bureau

11 Feb 2025

Indus Valley Urban Planning Can Fix India's Growing Urban Sprawl: Report

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Article Content:

A new report by consulting firm Primus Partners suggests that integrating urban planning principles from the Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC) could help address modern urban challenges in India. The study, titled 'Reviving Ancient Wisdom: Lessons from the Indus Valley Civilisation for Modern Urban Planning in India', highlights that adopting these methods could potentially reduce urban sprawl by 25 per cent. With India's urban population projected to reach 600 million by 2036 and cities contributing 75 per cent to the national GDP, the report underscores the need for structured planning to manage this growth effectively.

India's urbanisation rate has increased from 31 per cent in 2011 to an estimated 40 per cent by 2036. This rapid expansion has placed significant strain on existing infrastructure, leading to housing shortages, inadequate sanitation and increased environmental challenges. The report

identifies urban sprawl as a growing concern and suggests that historical urban planning techniques from the IVC could provide structured solutions to these issues.

The IVC cities of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa were organised into grid-based layouts, with well-defined residential and public zones. They featured advanced water management systems, including common wells for clusters of houses and an underground drainage network, which channelled wastewater efficiently. According to the report, modern urban infrastructure could benefit from similar approaches, particularly in meeting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6, which focuses on universal access to clean water and sanitation.

The study also highlights the role of standardisation in development. It notes that cities with clear regulatory frameworks have demonstrated a 30 per cent improvement in compliance with urban planning standards. This could contribute to better governance and infrastructure management. Furthermore, with India ranked seventh on the Global Climate Risk Index, the report stresses the importance of climate-resilient planning. The IVC's use of climate-appropriate construction materials and sustainable urban layouts is presented as a model for reducing environmental risks in modern Indian cities.

Despite urban expansion, Indian cities continue to lag in global rankings for liveability. No Indian city features in the top 100 of the Global Liveability Index, and Bengaluru, which ranks highest in the country, scores only 66.7 on the Ease of Living Index developed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. The report attributes this to unplanned growth and insufficient infrastructure. The study offers several recommendations, including adopting structured urban layouts to improve traffic flow, upgrading sewage and drainage systems to enhance sanitation, increasing public green spaces to improve quality of life and implementing climate-conscious building practices to reduce energy consumption. These measures, it argues, could help Indian cities become more efficient and better equipped for future challenges.

Aarti Harbhajanka, co-author of the report, stated that understanding historical urban planning techniques could contribute to more sustainable city development. Sandeep Reddy, another co-author, pointed out that the structured planning of ancient cities offers relevant insights for modern urban challenges.

The European Union and other international bodies have previously recommended structured urban planning to improve liveability and sustainability in growing cities. With India's urban population continuing to expand, the need for a strategic approach to development remains critical.