
Urban development in Gujarat State - Overview

Preamble

Gujarat is accelerating towards the process of urbanisation and modernisation due the fast growing economy of the State. Recently the State Government has merged 17 newly formed nagarpalikas with municipal corporations of Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara and Jamnagar. The aim of this merger is to bring uniformity and rationalisation in urban development of these four cities, which ultimately generates the potentials of development of various urban infrastructure like water supply, sewerage, roads, metro rails and other social amenities within the city.

It is estimated that Gujarat needs an investment of over US \$ 40 billion in the next five years to develop urban infrastructures like roads, ports, power, etc. Gujarat with economic growth rate of 9.8% is higher than India's 8.4%. This indicates that in spite of all sorts of natural calamities like earthquake, floods, etc. Gujarat has the potential to revive its economic growth fast and thus provide better infrastructure to the people.

Urbanisation leads to widening gap between demand and supply of essential services and infrastructure. Hence, there is a need to balance the process of urbanisation with the proper development of urban infrastructure in an integrated manner.

The various investment opportunities in Urban Development are discussed in the subsequent sections.

Transportation – Roads, Metro Rails, and Canal based transit corridor

The State business capital, Ahmedabad is going to be a Metro city in coming years. With the present growth of urbanisation in the city, traffic congestion has assumed to be a critical dimension. Considering this fact, the Government has planned two mega urban projects for the city - "**Ahmedabad Bus Rapid Transit System**" is planned to cater to the local transportation needs; and "**Metro Rail Ahmedabad**" is being planned to meet the transportation requirements of Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar. Both these projects are to be implemented in a phased manner in order to make them financially feasible. These projects would ease traffic congestion.

For the diamond city of Surat, the Government has a dream project in order to provide better public transport facilities for the people. "**Canal based transit corridor**", which is proposed to be developed on canal of about 30 kms in length, which connects the city from one end to another end. This will provide a thorough and uninterrupted traffic corridor to the commuters. It consists of development of road and rail corridor over the canal with the integrated development of surrounding areas also.

Municipal Solid Waste Management

Due to increasing urbanisation in the State, the Government has taken initiatives to formalise a proper **solid waste management** programme for all the 167 urban local bodies. The project is based on the approach of Regional Clusters, i.e. developing 1 sanitary land fill site for a cluster of 5 ULBs. Institutional strengthening, asset management and operation & maintenance are the other major components of the project.

Water supply and sewerage systems

Considering the present scenario water supply and sewerage facilities in a few cities / town, State Government with the help of GIDB has initiated to develop adequate facilities for **water supply and sewerage** system in towns of Anand, Amreli, Bharuch and Mehsana.

Water desalination project

The coastal belt of Saurashtra Kutch faces shortage of water. The industrial development also faces set back due to water problems. One of the solutions to overcome perennial water problem is setting up of a large scale **Water Desalination Plant** in Kutchh.

Land Bank in Gujarat

Town Planning schemes have been formulated by the State Government in order to enable the development of the cities of the State. One of the salient features of the Town Planning schemes in the creation of land banks (land reserved with a pre defined purpose) for the development of infrastructure. Most of the Urban Local Bodies and Urban Development Authorities have such land banks, which has substantial potential for development. The State Government / Authority plans to put these lands for its intended purpose by way of sale.

Slum Relocation at Surat

Surat city, has witnessed a rapid population growth, mainly due to the growth of textiles and diamond industry. This has resulted in the presence of slum blocks in the city. One of the solutions is to provide infrastructure to urban poor, mainly, houses, street lights, road, water supply and sewerage.

JNNURM projects

As Gujarat is the second most urbanized State, it is imperative to improve the infrastructure in the cities of Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Surat and Vadodara. The Government of India has proposed substantial assistance through Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). The urban local bodies of Gujarat have identified a few projects to improve urban infrastructure in these cities. The sanctioned projects under JNNURM are being show cased.

Conclusions

These projects would lead to better infrastructure facilities for the people of Gujarat. Such projects have more socio – economic benefits rather than only financial gains. Due to the proposed infrastructure there would be overall development of the respective areas, which will facilitate and attract investment also from other sectors.