

casting urban demands

Indian towns and cities exist largely because there is no system in place to infrastructure needs of these urban centres

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Data bankruptcy

The abject lack of data is a major problem. Most industry magazines and periodicals dwell on the price that a newly developed area commands but very few take pains to study the infrastructure needs of the area and the facilities provided.

The assumption is that land is a finite resource which shall always be in short supply and that it is completely controlled by government policy. This is true all over the world—land is a resource in the government domain and only governments should resolve how it is to be used.

The pace of urbanisation in India is

nothing compared with what many parts of the West have witnessed after World War II. So why have we failed so miserably in regulating how our cities grow?

This can only be answered after a careful study of how our urban centres have grown in the past 50 years. This also underlines the urgent need to create an institutionalised system for urban research and data forecasting.

Lack of regulation

There is also no regulatory mechanism to ensure that properties in developed areas are occupied first and then more land added to the urban pool. So we see large tracts of "developed townships" lying unoccupied. A prime example is Gurgaon, a suburb of Delhi. Though the township was established over two decades ago, its occupancy level is only about 15 per cent. Worse, it is facing a severe infrastructure crisis.

The Constitution of India treats land as a state subject. The role of the Central government is only advisory in nature. There is a need to review this

constitutional provision. State governments usually do whatever suits their narrow political goals and unless the Central Government has a

bigger say in matters relating to urban development, our urban centres are heading for a mess that would be difficult to correct. Land management and regulation cannot be allowed to drift along without a rudder.

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The author, an architect, is a member of a team drafting Delhi's bylaws



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