

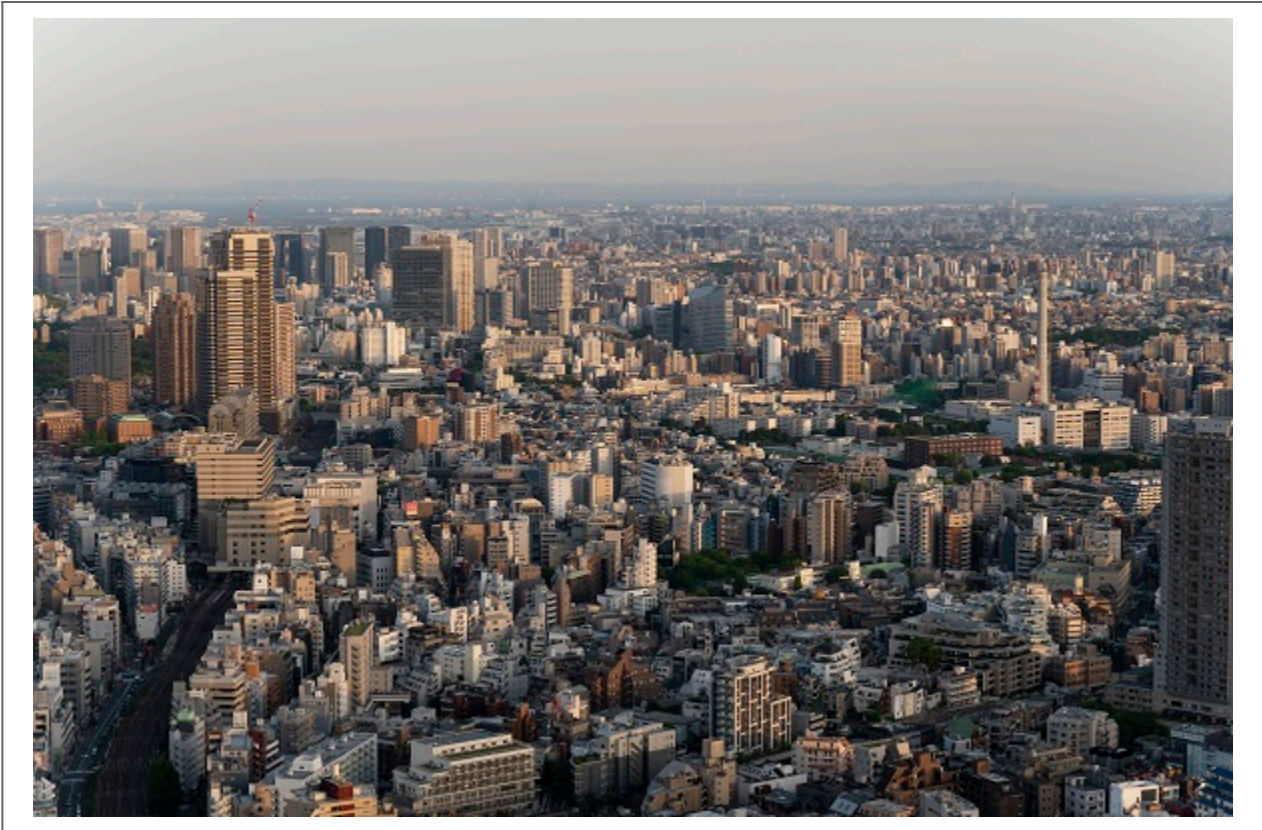
Urban-Rural Balance: Learning from Global Models to Decongest Cities

Category: Business

written by International Khabar | March 12, 2025



Urbanisation has resulted in overpopulated cities, stretched infrastructure, and lower living standards in most countries, including India. Cities continue to be centers of economic activity, but the demand for housing, transport, and basic services keeps mounting. The only way to achieve this is to improve urban infrastructure and revive and develop rural regions, encouraging balanced development in areas.



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Case Study: Spains Rural Renewal Investment

Spain is an excellent case study in rural regeneration. Over the last few years, the government in Spain has invested heavily in infrastructure, digital connectivity, and economic incentives to persuade people to return to rural locations. Examples are:

- Grant and tax relief for businesses to relocate to the countryside.
- Installation of high-speed internet and digital connectivity to bring remote working possibility.
- The revival of agriculture and craft sectors with the maintenance of traditional ways and the development of sustainable employment.

Thus, Spain has experienced a reverse migration trend, as individuals and families moved to rural regions from populated

urban areas to achieve an improved standard of living. This shift relieved the pressure on the towns and strengthened the languid rural economies.

Relevance to India: The Way to Equitable Development

India can replicate this strategy to reduce city congestion, given its extensive rural terrain and ever-growing urban population. Here, I feel could be possible measures, which include:

- **Economic Incentives:** Attract industries, entrepreneurship, and qualified professionals to the countryside with tax incentives and advantages.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Creating roads, digital connectivity, and stable utilities to make rural life appealing and viable.
- **Job Facilitation:** Facilitating agro-based industries, rural tourism, and small-scale industries to provide employment opportunities beyond urban areas.
- **Smart Villages:** Developing well-planned townships with education, health, and recreation complexes for overall development.

Rethinking Rural Growth

- **Strong communities** aren't just built in cities—strong communities are all about opportunities, everywhere. Empowering the countryside is the secret ingredient of a balanced future, and here's the recipe:
- **Self-sufficient communities** – Planned townships that combine housing, schools, and business centers to trigger local development.
- **Advanced infrastructure:** Roads, piped water, and clean

energy choices that bring basic services to underserved areas.

- **Smart housing solutions** – Affordable, sustainable housing that makes rural living possible and desirable.

A Smarter Future

Conquering city congestion is not just about smarter cities; its about reimagining where and how development happens. Investment in the countryside can create a future where cities flourish without overflowing and villages are thriving economic hubs.

A stronger, more balanced tomorrow begins with building where it matters.

The author of this article is [Mr Sujit Mule](#), Managing Director of Rachana Construction Ltd.

