Geography · GS - I

With a brief background of quality of urban life in India, introduce the objectives and strategy of the 'Smart City Programme."

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Urbanisation; infrastructure deficits; quality of life; Smart Cities Mission; area-based development; pan-city solutions; sustainability; citizen participation

Model Answer

Introduction

Rapid urbanisation has made cities important centres of economic growth, but congestion, inadequate housing, pollution, unreliable services and unequal access to infrastructure often reduce the quality of urban life in India.

Background of Urban Life

Indian cities face pressure on transport, water supply, sanitation, drainage and waste management. Informal settlements, urban poverty and climate-related risks further affect liveability. These challenges require integrated, technology-enabled and inclusive urban planning.

Objectives of the Smart Cities Programme

Launched in 2015, the Smart Cities Mission aimed to promote sustainable and inclusive cities by improving infrastructure, public services and quality of life.

Its key objectives included:

- Providing adequate water supply, reliable electricity, sanitation and efficient waste management.

- Improving urban mobility and public transport.
- Promoting affordable housing and better public spaces.
- Strengthening digital connectivity, e-governance and citizen participation.
- Improving environmental sustainability, safety and disaster resilience.

Strategy

1. Area-Based Development

- **Retrofitting:** Improving existing urban areas through upgraded infrastructure.
- **Redevelopment:** Reconstructing selected areas with improved planning and facilities.
- **Greenfield development:** Developing new urban areas with planned infrastructure.

2. Pan-City Solutions

Applying technology-based solutions across cities, such as intelligent traffic management, smart metering, surveillance systems and integrated command-and-control centres.

3. Institutional and Financial Measures

Special Purpose Vehicles were established to implement projects, supported by central and state funding, convergence with other schemes and public-private partnerships.

Challenges

Uneven implementation, limited municipal capacity, financing constraints, digital exclusion and insufficient integration with citywide planning can limit outcomes.

Conclusion

The Smart Cities Mission can improve urban liveability, but technology must complement affordable services, participatory governance and environmentally sustainable planning.