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# **Urban Open Green Spaces: Planning, Benefits, and Challenges in Indian Cities**

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#### Abstract

Urban open green spaces play a critical role in the livability and ecological balance of cities. With rapid urbanization, Indian cities face immense pressure on land, often at the cost of natural green cover. This paper explores the planning, classification, benefits, and contemporary challenges of green open spaces in Indian urban contexts. Through a literature review and case-based analysis, the paper proposes strategies for integrating sustainable green infrastructure into city planning.

Keywords: Urban green space, open space planning, sustainable cities, ecological urbanism, green infrastructure

#### 1. Introduction

Urban green spaces are vital elements of a healthy and sustainable urban environment. They include parks, gardens, playgrounds, green belts, and urban forests that offer ecological, social, and economic benefits. In India, unplanned growth and real estate pressure have led to the shrinking of such spaces. This paper analyzes their significance and the need for resilient planning mechanisms.

# 2. Literature Review

- URDPFI Guidelines (MoHUA, 2015) recommend 10–12 sq.m. of green space per capita.
- World Health Organization (WHO) suggests 9 sq.m. per capita minimum.
- Studies show access to green spaces reduces urban stress and promotes health (Swanwick et al., 2003).

#### **3.** Types of Urban Open Green Spaces

- Public Parks and Gardens
- Community Green Spaces
- Green Corridors and Riverfronts
- Urban Forests and Biodiversity Parks

# 4. Benefits of Urban Green Spaces

#### 4.1 Environmental

- Improved air quality
- Mitigation of urban heat island effect
- Biodiversity conservation



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#### 4.2 Social

- Recreational and mental well-being
- Social interaction and inclusivity

# 4.3 Economic

- Enhances property value
- Attracts tourism and investment

# 5. Challenges in Indian Context

- Encroachment and land conversion
- Poor maintenance and lack of funding
- Inequitable distribution across income groups
- Inadequate policy enforcement

# 6. Case Study: Lodhi Garden, Delhi

Lodhi Garden serves as a successful example of heritage integrated with green infrastructure. It showcases a multifunctional urban open space with ecological, cultural, and recreational value.

#### 7. Strategies for Sustainable Green Space Planning

- Mandate green buffers and vertical landscaping
- Integrate green spaces in master plans and smart city frameworks
- Promote community participation in maintenance
- Use GIS mapping for equitable green space distribution

# 8. Conclusion

Urban green spaces are not just recreational amenities but essential urban infrastructure. Their integration into city planning must be prioritized to ensure climate resilience, well-being, and sustainability.

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