

# Urban Agriculture & Sustainable Living Practices - Emerging Trends

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*Abstract- This paper explores the imperative advantages of Urban Farming and its positive impact on urban living. Rapid urbanization is curtailing the life of millions of people with increase in urban poverty, drinking water and food security issues. It is expected that by 2020 urban dwellers will increase by 75%. It is also reported that nearly 45% of the poor will be concentrated in cities by 2020. The urban dwellers are finding it difficult to make a decent living in cities as the air and water pollution level is reaching an alarming point. The transport and communication problems are also getting higher. Most cities in India have great difficulties in coping with this development and are unable to create sufficient formal employment opportunities for the urban middle class and urban poor. There is increasing problems with the disposal of urban waste. Besides waste water management is hitting hard causing health hazards. Urban agriculture plays an important role in enhancing urban food security since the costs of supplying and distributing food to urban areas based on rural production and imports continue to increase, and do not satisfy the demand, especially of the poorer sectors of the population. Besides urban farming contributes to local economic development and generates sustainable revenue. It also supports government schemes towards poverty alleviation. Above all social inclusion of the urban poor and especially urban poor women can be achieved through this. On the environment front, urban farming adds to the greening of the city and the productive reuse of urban wastes. The importance of urban farming is increasingly being recognized by international organizations like UNO and FAO. But contribution of urban farming towards food security and nutrition are being debated at international level conventions.*

*Indexed Terms- Urban Farming, sustainability, food security.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Urban Farming plays an important role in enhancing urban ecology, living conditions and atmosphere.

## II. DEFINITION OF URBAN FARMING

Urban Farming is defined as growing plants within city limits. The most striking feature of urban agriculture which distinguishes it from rural agriculture is that it is integrated into urban economic and ecological system. Urban Farming is embedded in and interacting with the urban eco system. Such linkages include the use of urban residents as laborers use of typical urban resources like organic waste as compost and urban waste water for irrigation direct links with urban consumers direct impacts on urban ecology both positive and negative being part of the urban food system competing for land with other urban functions being influenced by urban policies and plans etc Urban agriculture is not a relic of the past that will fade away.

1. Urban Farming locations - Urban Farming can have different locations such as intra cities or in the semi urban areas. The farming activities may take place on the home terrace or land away from the residence. It can also include private land owned or leased for farming purpose or on public land such as parks, conservation areas along roads, streams, rail tracts etc. It may also include semipublic land such as schools yards grounds of schools and colleges, offices and hospitals.

2. Urban Farming products- Urban Farming products can be leafy vegetables, root vegetables, mushrooms, fruits, root crops and grains.
3. Urban Farming activities - Urban Farming activity will include processing and marketing activities as in agriculture. It also includes taking guidance of urban farming specialists such as NGOs and Urban farm enterprises. It may include micro farming enterprises involved in Urban Farming. Here production and marketing tend to be more closely inter related in terms of time and space compared to rural agriculture thanks to greater geographic proximity and quicker resource flow.
4. Urban Farming market orientation - Urban Farming revolves more around self-consumption. There are very few instances of surpluses being traded very rarely. Importance of market oriented urban agriculture is underestimated, both in terms of economic values it can generate and in terms of volumes, it is to be noted that the Urban Farming demands more consideration. Sometimes products grown through Urban Farming are marketed at the farm gate or by cart in the neighborhoods. They are also sold in the local shops, near housing societies, super markets or local trader. Mainly fresh root vegetables and leafy vegetable are in great demand in local markets.
5. Urban Farming technologies used - Urban Farming uses indigenous technology and no improved technological inputs are involved here. Because Urban Farming is mainly individual or family oriented. There is an increased leaning and orientation towards knowing more about innovative technological applications through social media and internet.

### III. CONTRIBUTIONS TO URBAN FOOD SECURITY

Urban Farming if promoted can play an important role in enhancing urban food security issues. Most cities in developing countries are not able to generate sufficient income opportunities for the rapidly growing population. In urban areas lack of income is directly linked to poor accessibility to food, especially healthy food. The costs of supplying and distributing food from rural areas to the urban areas

or to import food to urban centres are steadily increasing.

Urban Farming plays an important role in enhancing urban food needs. Urban poor children are devoid of any nutritious food hence there is a rise in death of children less than five years and there is also an increase in birth of stunted children. Metro Cities like New Delhi, Bombay have counted for 32% rise in birth of stunted children between 2000-2015. Besides this mal nutrition is also causing problems with the urban middle class. Cities like Shanghai Hanoi Java have come up with greater innovation in urban farming are successfully supplying nearly 40% of eggs, poultry, pork, processed fish, etc.

Urban Farming plays an important role in supplementing rural agriculture as it naturally decreases the burden of growing for urban markets. Rural farmers can have sigh of relief with marketing, exporting and transporting food items to urban centres. This also saves their time and energy which they can devote to organic farming practices.

Urban Farming plays an important role in enhancing urban household sustenance. Growing their own food will naturally impact their expenditure on food. It saves household expenditure besides many of the families can earn decent money through selling organic fresh veggies and leafy vegetables. With very small investment, they can also consume best of vegetables and maintain their health.

Urban Farming plays an important role in functioning as a poverty alleviation and social integration strategy. Metro cities have several NGOs working towards creation of awareness about urban farming importance. Disadvantaged groups such as orphans, destitute, disabled people, women, urban immigrants, jobless poor or elderly people can be benefitted by the initiatives of urban farming through NGOs. These NGOs are already spread across cities in India and are working towards integrating these underprivileged groups into urban network. They are also helping in building the community with constructive work.

## CONCLUSION

Rapid urbanization is affecting life of millions of people as urban poverty, drinking water and food security issues are sky rocketing. Even though focusing about providing a decent living is the prime intention of the policy makers, there are several shortcomings. The awareness about urban farming needs further detailing and supportive design. The importance of urban farming which is increasingly being recognized by international organizations like UNO and FAO needs further consideration as International community can pressurize countries to adopt healthy practices in urban living. Besides International precedents can set a model for countries to think of designing strategies towards increasing contribution of urban farming towards food security.

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