

Exploring the Environmental and Psychological Co-Benefits of Urban Farming in Delhi

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Abstract: The world today is witnessing an unprecedented rate of urban population growth. The world urban population crossed the 50% mark in 2007 and became 54% by 2014 [1]. Rising population of individual cities leads to a subsequent increase in the ecological footprint of respective cities. This is especially concerning since no urban area is standalone and every city depends for its sustenance on a globally diffuse productive hinterland several times its size [2]. Consequently, urban areas today have become hotspots that are driving global environmental change [3] and therefore require special attention.

One of the several factors through which urban areas depend on non-urban areas is food. Cities usually import food materials like wheat, rice, pulses, vegetables etc. from rural areas, the latter of which may or may not be located in their vicinity. In doing so, cities often end up having large ecological footprints and sometimes also threaten regional sustainability. This is especially concerning since almost all quantitative assessments are indicating that climate change will adversely affect food security in the near future [4].

The present research contribution explores the possibility of adopting ‘urban farming’ as a sustainability best practice for existing and emerging cities. This work provides a feasibility analysis of urban farming along with bringing forward some of its environmental and psycho-social co-benefits through literature review and case studies. The study aims to show how small-scale urban farming may already be taking place in Delhi though it needs considerable augmentation for it to contribute towards urban sustainability.

Keywords: urban farming, sustainable development, human health, Delhi.

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Presented during International Conference on Environmental Impact on Biodiversity, Sustainability and Quality of Life on 16-18 February 2017 at University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, India.