

SHYAMA PRASAD MUKHERJI RURBAN MISSION : DRIVE TO ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

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The efforts of the Governments in the past were toward sectoral schemes/programmes for socio-economic development and infrastructural development. The lack of spatial planning and convergence of various schemes /programmes have unfortunately led to not achieving the desired impact of various initiatives and hence failing short to remedy the maladies like poor standard of living, issue of rural-urban divide and check migration.

Consultations with various stakeholders and the experience of pilot initiatives like Provision of Urban Facilities in Rural Area (PURA) have demonstrated that provision of socio-economic development and infrastructure in an integrated fashion and time-bound manner is a basic premise for holistic development of villages in the countryside.

In view of above, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Rurban Mission (SPMRM) was introduced, which aims at development of 300 rural growth clusters called 'Rurban Clusters'. These clusters have latent potential for growth in all the states and union territories (UTs) which would trigger holistic development in the region where they are located. These clusters would be developed by provisioning economic activities, developing skills and local entrepreneurship and providing infrastructure facilities. Required amenities would

be provided in these clusters through the mode of convergence of various programmes and schemes of the Centre, states and panchayats and deficit would be filled through the mechanism of critical gap funding (CGF) under the Mission for focused development.

Vision

The vision of the SPMRM is to "develop a cluster of villages that preserve and nurture the essence of rural community life with focuses perceived to be essentially urban in nature, thus creating a cluster on equity and inclusiveness without compromising with the facilities perceived to be essentially urban in nature, thus creating a cluster of Rurban Villages". In other words, it would be like a body which has a soul and structure of flesh and bone to cover the soul. Here, soul is village culture /community life and flesh and bones are various infrastructure.

Selection of the Cluster

A Rurban cluster, would be a cluster of geographically contiguous villages with a population of about 25,000 to 50,000 in plain and coastal areas and a population of 5,000 to 15,000 in desert, hilly or tribal areas. As far as practicable, clusters of village would follow administrative convergence units of Gram Panchayats and shall be within a single block/ tehsil for administrative convenience.

Mission Components

Under SPMRM, the state government shall identify existing Centrally-sponsored schemes, Central sector or state government schemes relevant for the development of the cluster and converge their implementation in an integrated and time bound manner. Fourteen components as given under A column of Table-1 have been suggested as



desirable components for inclusion in the holistic development of the cluster. These components are: (i) Skill development training linked to economic activities (ii) Agri-services and process (iii) Digital Literacy (iv) 24x7 Piped water supply (v) Sanitation (vi) Solid and liquid waste management (vii) Access to village streets with drains (viii) Village street lights (ix) Health (x) Upgradation of primary, secondary and higher education (xi) Inter village roads connectivity (xii) Citizen service centres (xiii) Public transport (xiv) LPG Gas Connection. It is at the discretion of the state government to include other components consider appropriate for the development of the cluster. These would be finalised after due consultation with the gram panchayats' and should aim at addressing the unique needs of the 'Rurban Cluster' to leverage its full economic potential.

Cluster Profile:

The existing profile of the cluster would be detailed out at two levels namely general profiling which includes demography, socio-economic and administrative and component profiling of 14 components mentioned above which are envisaged under SPMRM.

Project Funding:

The cost of a cluster, will be based on the requirements identified by the Integrated Cluster Action Plan (ICAP), prepared by the states, for the cluster and approved by the empowered committee of the Ministry of Rural Development. A maximum

of 30 per cent of the project cost will be provided as the CGF to supplement the funds mobilised through convergence of various Centrally-sponsored schemes, Central sector schemes, state sponsored schemes and panchayat schemes. Further, for plain areas, the CGF will be capped at 30 per cent of the project capital expenditure or Rs 30 crores, whichever is less. In desert, hilly and tribal areas the CGF will be capped at 30 per cent of the project capital expenditure or Rs. 15 crores, whichever is less.

Integrated Cluster Action Plan:

Integrated Cluster Action Plan (ICAP) which will be an important document covering base line studies outlining the requirements of the cluster and the main interventions needed to address identified needs and to leverage its potential. It is expected that the state governments shall prepare the ICAPs in close consultation with the district collectors, zilla parishads, Panchayati Raj Institutions and to ensure participation and ownership from all concerned stakeholders. The ICAP would be based on five pronged action plan namely:-

- A strategy for the cluster integrating the vision for each Gram Sabha, identified in the cluster;
- The desired outcomes for the cluster under the Rurban Mission;
- The resources under different Central, State and Panchayat Schemes;
- CGF required for the cluster;
- A detailed spatial plan for the entire cluster;

Table -1 Deficiency Analysis and Identification of Needs for the Cluster

A		B	C	D
	Desirable Component	Existing Situation	Desired Levels	Gaps/Need
1	Skill Development training Linked to Economic Activities	Existing skills in the Village (Handicraft/Handloom/Industrial etc.) No. of skilled members at the HH level.	At-least 70 per cent household with one beneficiary in each household.	Identification of training needs in terms of sector and no. of people to be trained with age profiling.
2	Agri-services Processing	Detail the existing Agri service and processing industries present in the cluster. (Including storage infrastructure)		Identification of support to any agri based service/industry/ storage infrastructure.
3	Digital Literacy	Details the existing levels in terms of core IT infrastructure as well as general digital literacy levels at the HH and Village level.	At least one e-literate person in every household.	Identification of no. people to be digitally literate in the cluster.

A		B	C	D
	Desirable Component	Existing Situation	Desired Levels	Gaps/Need
4	24x7 piped water supply	Existing levels of water supply at the household level.	70 litres per capita per day (lpcd) of safe drinking water for every household throughout the year.	Identification for augmentation needs at the household level and type of augmentation-source/transmission/distribution.
5	Sanitation	Coverage of Individual Toilets in the village at the household level.	100% HH with Individual Household Latrines.	Identification of no of household to be covered with individual latrines.
6	Solid and Liquid waste Management	Existing coverage of village streets and drains.	All village streets to be covered with drains.	Identification of SWM facilities at collection/transportation /treatment.
7	Access to village	Existing coverage of village streets and drains.	All village streets to be covered with drains.	Identification of length of streets yet to be covered with drains.
8	Village street Lights	Covered of village streets with lights.	All village streets to be covered with streets lights as per norms.	Identification of no. of streets lights to be provided.
9.	Health	Access to clinics and health centers at the household and village level.	Access to Health infrastructure as per norms.	Identification of need for mobile Health Units.
10	Upgradation of primary, secondary and higher secondary schools	Existing nos of primary, secondary and higher secondary schools in the cluster and existing conditions.	Ensuring primary and secondary school within a reasonable distance from all households along with facilities of Drinking water provisions, Toilet blocks (separate for boys and girls and adequate class rooms.)	Identification of up gradation needs/new facilities in the primary and secondary schools.
11	Inter village roads connectivity	Connectivity between village within the cluster with roads and public transport	Ensure connectivity between all village	Identification of need for new connectivity between village.
12	Citizen service centres	Existing no. of citizen service centres at the village level.	One ICT enabled front end common service Centre (CSC) per 2 to 3 villages.	Identification of no of CSCs required for the cluster.
13	Public transport	Existing levels of availability w.r.t public Transport facilities both intra and inter village.	Public transport to block from each village.	Need for additional facilities to improve public transport access to each village.
14	LPG Gas Connections	Access to LPG connections at the household level	One LPG retail outlet for a village or per 1800 households.	Need for additional retail outlets in the cluster.

Table-1 which presents the deficiency analysis and identification of needs of the cluster contains four important aspects namely desirable components, existing situation with regard to these components, desirable levels expected to be achieved as the outcome of the implementation of ICAP and gaps or

needs would be worked out on the basis of C minus B column of the table with respect to the identified cluster. Based on this exercise, the convergence of different schemes, consultation with different stakeholders, CGF and finally Detailed Project Report would be prepared, approved and implemented.

Let us throw some light on the column C of the table in order to know about the expectation of the SPMRM after implementation with respect to each component of the Mission. Under skill component, it is expected that at least 70 per cent household with one beneficiary in each household be skilled and lined with economic activity. In case of digital literacy, it is desired that at least one e-literate person in every household would be trained. At least 70 litres per capita per day (lpcd) of safe drinking water for every household throughout the year would be provided. There should be 100 per cent individual household latrines and collection of waste at household as well as cluster levels. It is also expected that all village streets are to be covered with drains, provision of street lights as per norm and ensuring inter-village connectivity. One ICT enabled and Common Service Centre per two to three villages would be provided, provision is to be made for public transport to the Block from each village and provision for one LPG retail outlet per village or per 1,800 households.

Preparation of Detailed Project Report

After the preparation of ICAP and identification of components of the cluster, Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) shall be prepared for the project components identified for the implementation under the Rurban cluster. The DPRs, which would be 'good for execution' documents, shall contain the detailed design and costing of the project components with the norms and requirements of relevant schemes guidelines for the components chosen for the cluster in the ICAP.

Empowered Committee:

Under the Rurban Mission, empowered committees have been constituted at central, state, district levels. At the central level, the committee is chaired by the Secretary, Rural Development. This Committee will approve the ICAP submitted by the state governments and approve the CGF for the cluster and take other necessary decisions and steps to ensure cooperation with other Central Ministries and state governments.

State level empowered committee is chaired by the Chief Secretary, which would recommend

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)

A home for every Indian

- 2 crore houses to be constructed for urban poor by 2022
- 95% of the beneficiaries would be from Economically Weaker Sections
- Construction of over 6.8 lakhs house commissioned in a short time

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna (Rural)

- 1 crore houses to be constructed for rural poor by 2019 at a unit cost of Rs. 1.20 lakh
- House size increased from 20 sq. mtr to 25 sq. mtr while unit assistance increased from Rs. 70, 000 to Rs. 1, 20, 000
- Every such house would have a toilet
- Selection of beneficiaries using the SECC data

the ICAP and DPRs will also be responsible for other key decisions for effective coordination and implementation of the schemes. At district level Committee would be constituted with Officers of the concerned Line Departments and President of the concerned gram panchayats' of the cluster.

Challenges Ahead

It may be seen from above discussion that Rurbanization Mission would be able to create organically inter-linked economic and infrastructural drivers which would trigger fast, viable and inclusive development of a cluster of villages. In fact, SPMRM has been designed to create a new socio-economic system for sustainable development in a spatial planning mode which would result in a viable and pulsating growth centres across India. It is expected that the cluster of contiguous villages would access good quality of physical, social, economic, technical, knowledge, financial and social capital connectivities which would enable the cluster to optimise its growth potential.

However, there are some challenges before the SPMRM which should be addressed immediately to materialise the intended benefits of the programme lest it may not prove the third version of the PURA. Although, there has been

some of improvement in the SPMRM as compared to PURA.

The desired institutional set up at state, district and cluster levels should be constituted immediately as without the support of this set up, it would be difficult to get support of different stakeholders in conceiving desired projects, preparation of DPRs and implementation in time bound manner. The programme is innovative in nature and it has to be implemented by dedicated team in mission mode. Depending of line department officials who are already short to their regular work requirement is like putting the cart before the horse.

The awareness and capacity building of the officials and elected representatives of Panchayats about the Mission must be organised by the competent institutions so that Mission should not be treated as an additional cog in the wheel and their focus might be on *khadanza* and *padanza* (lying vertical and horizontal bricks in the streets or roads). The mindset of different stakeholders have to be changed so that they should become catalysts and facilitators of the Mission.

The terra firma of the programme is convergence. No doubt, convergence of programmes, planning, processes and outcomes may add to the efficiency in the implementation and end results from it. It is suggested that a framework of convergence, implementation mechanism and areas of convergence at macro and micro levels has to be worked out. The successful model of convergence should be shared with others. Suggestions offered by the Report of the First Common Review Mission on convergence may be implemented in letter and spirit for better outcomes.

Gram Panchayats are the main players in the implementation of the SPMRM. Hence, these institutions have to be empowered functionally, financially and administratively so that they function as local government in defacto sense. But here, the situation is pathetic which is evident from the fact that as per the Devolution Report 2015-16 of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj as many as in 28 states/UTs out of 32 States/UTs aggregate policy Index is less than 0.50. In nine states, the

district planning committee is not functional. Problem is so serious that across the tiers of the panchayats, 14 per cent of gram panchayats (GPs), 10 per cent of Panchayat Samit is and 5 per cent of district panchayats do not have buildings to run their offices. As many as 31 per cent of GPs do not have telephones and 58 per cent of GPs do not have internet facilities. In such as predicament of the GPs one may imagine what type of role they can play in materialising the vision and objectives of the Mission. In such a situation, the Panchayati Raj is either in the personal safe of the Panchayat President or bag of Panchayat Secretary. Hence, these institutions have to be made competent at their levels.

Rurban Cluster area has to be notify as planning area under the Town and Country Planning Act or other similar legal provision at the State level. As Mission is an important initiative towards putting in practice the spatial planning in these clusters, relevant changes/amendments may be carried out either in the existing state panchayat Acts or Town and Country Planning Acts so that the spatial planning will become integral part of decentralised planning, which would not only bring about proper spacing of the assets/facilities but also bring out inclusive growth and facilitate rural urban continuum. The suggestion of Professor N Sridharan in his recent article on 'How Rurban Mission will change face of India' published in BW Smart Cities World in its May-June, 2016 Issue is worth considering where he had suggested a separate Spatial Planning and Spatial data Management Ministry that can come out with rural as well as urban development policy and strategy presently lacking in India.

To conclude, SPMRM is aimed to inclusive development with active participation of every stakeholder through local institutions like Gram Sabhas and Panchayats. The challenges listed out may be addressed urgently so that soul of village and amenities of urban areas may be realised under the Mission.

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