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Commissioner-cum-Secretary,
Directorate of Urban Administration
& Development,
Govt. of Madhya Pradesh,
Bhopal
16. Smt. E.P. Nivedita
Director (LSG/UD),
Ministry of Urban Development,
Government of India,
New Delhi
17. Sri Dinesh Chandra
Director,
Local Bodies,
Govt. of Uttar Pradesh
Lucknow
18. Prof. S.N. Singh
Emeritus Professor,
Deptt. of Public Administration,
Lucknow University,
Lucknow



FROM THE DESK OF THE CHIEF EDITOR

Prof. Nishith Rai

Cities as key drivers of economic growth offer both – opportunities and challenges. The key focus today is how to take advantage of the available and future opportunities while addressing the threats to the sustainable development of cities.

The ever increasing population in the cities has to be provided with basic amenities and with improved quality of life keeping in view the vulnerabilities of the cities to the diverse factors. The challenges before our urban policy makers, planners, administrators and managers are magnanimous, overwhelming and highly complicated. Sustainable development requires vision, mission and strategy on the part of our policy makers, planners and executors.

The government has responded by adopting and putting in place the enabling approach and policy framework in order to ensure inclusive growth and development of communities and cities. Attention is being focused for improving / rectifying the existing institutional, organizational, financial, infrastructure and legal deficiencies etc. so that cities become livable for all. Attempts are also being made for imparting / upgrading skills of the huge number of urban poor so that they are able to earn a dignified living for themselves on one hand and also are able to meet the growing demands of rapidly expanding economy.

The Regional Centre through its bi-annual publication of Urban Panorama has attempted to place before the readers some ideas, views and experiences on some of the significant issues of urban management.

June, 2010

Nishith Rai

FROM THE DESK OF EDITOR

The challenges of urbanization are manifesting themselves into the rapidly growing cities, booming population, flagging infrastructure, widening gap between aspirations of the people and fulfillment of requirements for a quality life, existence of macro-economic imbalances, poverty amidst prosperity, ecological threats, gender disparities etc.

Inclusive growth and sustainable development is the national agenda required for achieving the targets of the Eleventh Five – Year Plan. It is the urgent need of the hour and demands setting up of specific goals for sustainable development of cities, gender parities, decentralization, governance, equity and equality, environmental sustainability, inclusion of poor, capacity building etc. All these developmental aspects are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. The present issue of Urban Panorama covers some of these themes.

Climate change is one of the gravest challenges and threats faced by our planet today. Highlighting the global and national scenario relating to GHG emissions, Dr. Urmila Bagga in her article entitled ***Climate Change and Community Contribution Towards its Mitigation*** discusses the diversified impacts of climate change that are visible from one region to other and particularly in the context of development goals and women. Initiatives taken by the government towards cleaner and greener environment have also been presented. The author argues that addressing the climate change issues requires a multi disciplinary approach, sincere commitment and active participation of all stakeholders. All the stake holders including the civil society and community have a vital responsibility of protecting and conserving our resources for the future generations to come.

Talking about the persistent deep levels of structural gender bias and discrimination within families, societies and economies, Dr. R.V.P. Singh in his article on ***Engendering Development in India*** strongly emphasizes that gender equity is central to the realization of development goals, in particular the MDGs. Gender empowerment and development is essential for distributive justice and for inclusive growth of nation and gender as an macro-economic variable needs to be incorporated in the growth and development model of the country. Referring to various dimensions of gender development, Dr. Singh presents the various efforts made by government through the national plans. He categorically points out that besides gender budgeting, priority issues like accountability, capacity building governance, political and administrative will are of paramount importance for gender equity and inclusive growth.

Prof. (Dr.) P.S.N. Rao in his article on ***Public Private partnerships for Municipal Bodies in India*** explains the reasons and factors responsible for shift in thinking and increasing interests towards PPP in the domain of delivery of basic services. The author has cautioned that PPP arrangements in delivery of civil services puts additional responsibility on the concerned state/ local governments to safeguard the interests of poor while planning and implementing the development projects.

Elaborating on the concept and elements of inclusive growth, Ms. Nandita Kaushal in her paper on ***Paradigm Shifts in Inclusive Development in the Context of Millennium Development Goals*** presents the progress status of MDGs (1, 4 & 7) at the global level followed by the achievements at the national level. She concludes by saying that although

the paradigm of inclusive development has been vigorously postulated, but in order to translate it into reality, adequate policies and their implementation with commitment are must. Civil society and governments have to lend their whole hearted mutual support and co-operation in the process of development.

Pointing towards the current perspectives, trends and status pertaining to the health issues of urban women, Dr. P.S. Tripathi and Dr. Mukulika Hitkari in their paper on ***Gender Development and Urban Women's Health Issues : Perspectives, Trends and Initiatives in Social Demography*** assert that pursuance of gender disparities in urban sector poses a key challenge towards gender equity and welfare. Unequivocal and explicit emphasis on population stabilization and improvement in health of women are prerequisites for inclusive growth and sustainable development of cities and also for achieving the MDGs.

Referring to the various forms of existing gender bias and alienation of women from the mainstream development in the country, Dr. Mridul Srivastava in his paper on ***Gender Mainstreaming in Development Institutions*** narrates about the broad themes viz. equity, equality, gender, gender dynamics and parity in education, around which the entire issue of gender development rotates. He also explains the concept, approach, strategy for gender mainstreaming and the benefits that accrue from it in the form of democratic promotion and social equality.

Although steps are being initiated for political empowerment of women in country, Dr. P. Arunachalam through his paper on ***Women Empowerment for Inclusive Growth*** opines that political empowerment alone cannot guarantee parity for women. An equitable share of educational opportunities, health benefits and literacy is also vital. Gender equality needs to be made a national agenda for achieving sustainable development and creating a balanced society. Referring to the various forms of gender disparity manifestations, he advocates that the political parties need to come forward for providing women the constitutional guarantee to adequate political representation at higher levels.

Dr. O.P. Singh Chandel through an empirical study presents the demographic, environmental, ecological and housing conditions of urban slums in the metropolitan city of Lucknow in his paper entitled, ***Ecology of slums and Blighted Areas : A Study of Lucknow Metropolitan City***. Useful suggestions have also been put forth by Dr. Chandel for improving the existing slum localities as well as for preventing their further proliferation into the city landscape.

Evolution and development of urban local -self government in the country from pre-British period till date has been discussed in detail by Dr. Apurva Joshi and Dr. N.K. Singh in their article ***Evolution and Development of Urban Local Self Government in India***. The measures adopted for decentralized governance mainly starting from 74th CAA and current flagship scheme of JNNURM in the urban sector have also been discussed.

It is hoped that esteemed readers would be benefited by the contributions touching upon few of the significant themes of the emerging urban sector.

June, 2010

Urmila Bagga

CONTRIBUTORS

1. Dr. Urmila Bagga, Jt. Director, Regional Centre for Urban & Environmental Studies, Lucknow
2. Dr. R.V.P. Singh, Deputy Advisor, Women & Child Development Division, Planning Commission, Govt. of India
3. Dr. P.S.N. Rao, Professor and Head, Department of Housing, School of Planning and Architecture (SPA), New Delhi
4. Nandita Kaushal, Assistant Development Officer (Co-Operatives), Lucknow.
5. Dr. P.S. Tripathi, Associate Professor, D.B.S. College, Kanpur
6. Dr. Mukulika Hitkari, Associate Professor, D.G.P.G. College, Kanpur
7. Dr. Mridul Srivastava, Assistant Registrar (Academics), Dr. RML National Law University, Lucknow
8. Dr . P. Arunachalam, Faculty Member, Department of Applied Economics, Cochin University of Science and Technology, Kochi
9. Dr. O.P. Singh Chandel, Associate Professor, Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, Chhatrapati Sahuji Maharaj Medical University, Lucknow
10. Dr Apurva Joshi, Research Associate, Pt. G.B. Pant Institute of Studies in Rural Development, Lucknow
11. Dr Neeraj Kumar Singh, Lecturer, Deptt of A.I.H, Vidyant Hindu P.G. College, Lucknow

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