

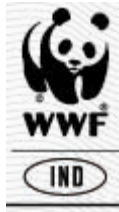


## ***COURSE 5: URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION MECHANISMS***

### **Block 2 : Community Development**

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# UNIT 4

## DECENTRALISATION: EMPOWERMENT OF LOCAL PEOPLE

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### 1. Introduction

Urban development (urban, city and town planning refers to a technical and political process concerned with the control of the use of land and design of the urban environment, including transportation networks, to guide and ensure the orderly development of settlements and communities. It is concerned with research and analysis, strategic thinking, urban design, public consultation, policy recommendations, implementation and management.<sup>1</sup> One of the main requirements of having urban planning is rapid growth of urbanisation. Urban planning can be seen in earliest civilisations also such as the Indus valley civilisations. It has undergone manifold changes since. These changes have been discussed in detail in this article. It is suggested that both the center and regional governments shall work in unison to bring about proper development in any city. But at the same time it is also important that the Urban Local Bodies (ULB) are sufficiently empowered so that they could take certain decisions requisite for development of cities by themselves without any subsequent delay and to ensure the citizens transparency, certainty and accountability. For this purpose decentralisation of powers of central has been focussed on. This article in other words discusses the need of decentralising and empowering the local bodies along with the present practices.

### 2. Concept of Urban Development

A plan dealing with urban development can take a variety of forms including: strategic plans, comprehensive plans, neighbourhood plans, regulatory and incentive strategies, or historic preservation plans. The modern origins of urban planning lie in the movement for urban reform that arose as a reaction against the disorder of the industrial city in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Urban planning can also include urban renewal, by adapting urban planning

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<sup>1</sup> Taylor, Nigel, Urban Planning Theory since 1945, London, Sage,2007.

methods to existing cities suffering from decline. In the late-20<sup>th</sup> century the term sustainable development represented an ideal outcome in the sum of all planning goals.

One of the main requirements of having urban planning is rapid growth of urbanisation. That is requirement of settlement of population that migrates from rural to urban areas thereby leading to uncontrolled growth of the city. For instance state of Himachal Pradesh which is predominantly a hilly region, due to the development of network of various infrastructures, the Urban areas in the State are now fast growing. As per 2001 census, the population of Himachal Pradesh is 60.77 lacs out of which 90.22% are living in villages and remaining 9.78% are living in urban areas. During the last decade (1991-2000) the urban population increased by 17.54% and this upward trend is likely to continue in future which would further lead to more and more areas coming under the definition of towns. This in turn brings out new challenges in the administration of Local Self Government. In order to meet out these challenges of urbanisation, the Directorate of Urban Development is a step forward towards efficient urban administration in a phased and coordinated manner.<sup>2</sup>

This directorate was formulated keeping in mind objectives of the Planning Commission that further dealt with development plans and their integration with the state plans for preparation of a city which would not be fulfilled unless a small cell is created in each state taking up these problems and for guiding the local bodies in the preparation of their schemes and plans. It was resolved that while the state Government should meet the full cost of setting-up of the Directorate of Urban Local Bodies the expenditure connected with the setting-up of a city development Plan cell in these Directorates should be met from a 100% grant from the center. Such a grant was attributed to be conditional on the setting-up of a Directorate of Urban Local Bodies.

### 3. Need of Urban Development

The concept of planning of cities can be traced back to the earliest civilisations. The distinct features of urban planning can be deciphered from remains of the cities of Harappa, Lothal and Mohenjo-daro in the Indus Valley Civilisation (in modern day north western India and Pakistan). They have been considered by the archaeologists as the earliest examples of deliberately planned and managed cities. The streets of many of these early cities were paved and laid out at right angles in a grid pattern, with a hierarchy of streets from major boulevards to residential alleys. Archaeological evidences suggest that many Harappan houses were laid out to protect from noise and enhance residential privacy. It was also noted that many houses had their own water wells, probably for both sanitary and ritual purposes. These ancient cities were unique in that they often had drainage systems, seemingly tied to a well-developed ideal of urban sanitation.<sup>3</sup> Another similar observation can be made by referring to Greek Hippodamus (c. 407 BC) who in one sense has been dubbed as the “Father of City Planning” for his design of Miletus. He was commissioned by Alexander to lay out a new city of Alexandria, which can

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<sup>2</sup> Directorate of urban development, cited from <[http:// hpurbandedevelopment.nic.in](http://hpurbandedevelopment.nic.in)>

<sup>3</sup> Davreu, Robert (1978), *Cities of Mystery: The Lost Empire of the Indus Valley, The World's Last Mysteries*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, Sydney pp. 121-129.

be designated as the grandest example of idealised urban planning of the ancient Mediterranean world, where the city's regularity was facilitated by its level site near a mouth of the Nile. The Hippodamian, or grid plan, was the basis for subsequent Greek and Roman cities.<sup>4</sup>

These setups underwent a lot of change over the centuries owing to growing population and the subsequent needs of people. It was then observed that the cities then started spreading randomly without any set pattern thus leading to congestion, disorder and mismanagement. To curtail this problem, modern methods came into being in 1920's. In the 1920s, the ideas of modernism began to surface in urban planning. Based on the ideas of Le Corbusier and using new skyscraper-building techniques, the modernist city stood for the elimination of disorder, congestion and the small scale, replacing them with preplanned and widely spaced freeways and tower blocks set within gardens. There were plans for large-scale rebuilding of cities in this era, for instances the Plan Voisin (based on Le Corbusier's Ville Contemporaine), which proposed clearing and rebuilding most of central Paris. But no such substantial measures could be taken owing to the world wars that took place subsequently.<sup>5</sup>

But this modernist approach underwent another change in 1960s and 1970s wherein it was felt that modernism's clean lines and lack of human scale sapped vitality from the community, blaming them for high crime rates and social problems. Modernist planning fell into decline in the 1970s when the construction of cheap, uniform tower blocks ended in most countries, such as Britain and France. Since then many have been demolished and replaced by other housing types. In the post-modernist era rather than attempting to eliminate all disorder, planning basically concentrated on individualism and diversity in society and the economy. Also there are emphases these days to have sustainable development in relation to urban development, i.e. planning residential and other facilities along with minimal destruction of environment.<sup>6</sup>

**The necessity of planning came up due to certain factors such as:**

- ♣ **Safety and Security:** Safety and security has been the major concern of all places at all times. Structures were so constructed so that they could provide maximum security. This can be explained as that in old world era settlements were located on higher ground (for defense) and close to fresh water sources. But owing to rapid population growth cities have often grown onto coastal and flood plains at risk of floods and storm surges. For example, when Kosi floods took place it was believed that the loss to life and property would have been less if people would have spread around that area. Although the river hadn't come that way for many years but such areas are always susceptible to floods. It is suggested that urban planners must consider these threats. If the dangers can be localised then the affected regions can be made into parkland or green belt, often with the added benefit of open space provision.

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<sup>4</sup> Jackson, Kenneth (1985). *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, Oxford University Press, pp. 73-76.

<sup>5</sup> Hall, Peter et al., *Sociable Cities; the legacy of Ebenezer Howard*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> Smith Morris et al. *British Town Planning and Urban Design*, Longman, Singapore, 1997.

Extreme weather, flood, or other emergencies can often be greatly mitigated with secure emergency evacuation routes and emergency operations centers. Many cities will also have planned, built safety features, such as levees, retaining walls, and shelters. It is also to be noted that in recent years, practitioners have also been expected to maximize the accessibility of an area to people with different abilities, practicing the notion of “inclusive design”, to anticipate criminal behaviour and consequently to “design-out crime” and to consider “traffic calming” or “pedestrianisation” as ways of making urban life more pleasant.

- ♣ *Slums:* The rapid urbanisation of the last century caused more slums in the major cities of the world, particularly in developing countries. The main cause of slums is rural to urban migration. It is also to be seen that living conditions in slums are deplorable owing to bad sanitation and hygiene facilities. Planning resources and strategies are needed to address the problems of slum development. Many planners are calling for slum improvement.
- ♣ *Decay:* Urban decay is a process by which a city, or a part of a city, falls into a state of disrepair and neglect. It is characterised by depopulation, economic restructuring, property abandonment, high unemployment, fragmented families, political disenfranchisement, crime and desolate urban landscapes.

During the 1970s and 1980s, urban decay was often associated with central areas of cities in North America and Europe. During this time, changes in global economies, demographics, transportation and policies fostered urban decay.

- ♣ *Reconstruction and removal:* Areas devastated by war or invasion challenge urban planners. Resources are scarce. The existing population has needs. Buildings, roads, services and basic infrastructure like power, water and sewerage are often damaged, but with salvageable parts. Historic, religious or social centers also need to be preserved and re-integrated into the new city plan. A prime example of this is the capital city of Kabul, Afghanistan, which, after decades of civil war and occupation, has regions of rubble and desolation. Despite this, the indigenous population continues to live in the area, constructing makeshift homes and shops out of salvaged materials. Any reconstruction plan, such as Hisham Ashkouri’s City of Light Development, needs to be sensitive to the needs of this community and its existing culture and businesses. Urban Reconstruction Development plans must also work with government agencies as well as private interests to develop workable designs.
- ♣ *Suburbanisation:* In some countries, declining satisfaction with the urban environment is held to blame for continuing migration to smaller towns and rural areas (so-called urban exodus). Successful urban planning supported by regional planning can bring benefits to a much larger hinterland or city region and help to reduce both congestion along transport routes and the wastage of energy implied by excessive commuting.

Although these are certain factors but they are not exhaustive. In our country owing to the fact that it is a welfare state, it is imperative on part of the state that basic needs of the people are addressed to. Urbanisation is a phenomenon concept that has affected many areas in India far and wide. In order that people in urban areas have inimitable lifestyle it is important that planning shall be done. Random planning strategies are warehouse of many conventional and unconventional problems discussed above.

## 4. Strategies to Deal with Urban Planning

One of the strategies in the procedure of urban planning is decentralisation i.e. the local bodies are empowered to deal in the developmental process. The main aim of this process is to solve the problem of delay that generally occurs in case the policies are centralised. Not only that the bodies that are active at regional level are more aware of the needs and requirements of the people of that particular area.

## 5. Concept of Empowerment of Local People

Local empowerment can be defined as an outcome of effective community engagement. It's about "...shifting power, influence and responsibility away from existing centers of power and into the hands of communities and individual citizens." In other words it would imply shifting of powers from the center to state and further to the local governments. This concept requires involvement of local communities in policy building and further in developments that occur at local level. This concept comes into being owing to the federal structure of the country concerned. In literal sense empowerment refers to: investing with power, especially legal power or official authority or to equip or supply with ability; enable. In this sense it implies that certain functions that are beneficial for society at large are supposed to be done by the authorities that are in immediate connection with them. For instance policy makers at the center may not be well versed with the conditions of local population and their needs.<sup>7</sup>

The main purpose of empowering local government is that it is considered to be the best form of government largely because of its closet interface with the local citizenry. By having a forum at local level enables the local communities to deliberate on the nature of local problems and devise appropriate solutions that are in conformity with the obtaining local situations. Its close location with the local communities makes it highly communitarian; local government is in fact a government by the local communities, for the local communities and of the local communities. Being located nearest to the local communities also makes the local government units subject to intense gaze of the civil society. This goes a long way in enhancing government accountability.<sup>8</sup> This concept of empowering the local bodies certain functions that are required for development of the area in question is called decentralisation.

## 6. Concept of Decentralisation

In literal sense decentralisation, is the policy of delegating decision-making authority down to the lower levels in an organisation, relatively away from and lower in a central authority. A decentralised organisation shows fewer tiers in the organisational structure, wider span of control, and a bottom-to-top flow of decision-making and flow of ideas.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Chamberlin, Judi, A Working Definition of Empowerment, cited from <[http://www.power2uh.org/articles/empower/workin\\_def.html](http://www.power2uh.org/articles/empower/workin_def.html)>

<sup>8</sup> Jha Gangadhar and Nimish Jha, Urban Local Government in India: Imperatives in Good Municipal Governance, cited from <<http://www.ipegloab.com/reports/good%20governance.pdf>>

<sup>9</sup> Decentralisation, cited from <<http://www.yourdictionary.com>>.

In a centralised organisation, the decisions are made by top executives or on the basis of pre-set policies. These decisions or policies are then enforced through several tiers of the organisation.<sup>10</sup>

It is conceived that with reference to level of decentralisation in an organisation, the top executives delegate much of their decision-making authority to lower tiers of the organisational structure. As a consequence of this co-relation, the organisation is likely to run on less rigid policies and wider spans of control among each officer of the organisation. Under the concept of political decentralisation, decentralisation can be referred to both as process and state. Wherein reference is made to tiers of the government it would be termed as structural decentralisation. The more the tiers are more would be the decentralisation. For instance, Singapore, in which no local government exists separate from the national government, is maximally centralised in this conception. China, which has four tiers of government below the national government—provinces; prefectures; counties and county-level cities; townships, villages, and city districts—is far more decentralised. Under the second concept of decentralisation wherein the subordinate governments can decide autonomously that is, without fear of being overruled by higher tier of governments, it would be termed as decision decentralisation. A country whose constitution reserves a large subset of policymaking areas to the sub national governments is more decentralised than one in which final decisions on all matters are the central government's preserve. The third concept of decentralisation refers to devolution of government resources (revenues, manpower) between central and sub national tiers. This is termed as resource decentralisation. Electoral decentralisation refers to the method by which sub national officials are selected. If sub national officials are chosen locally (by election or appointment by local communities), the system is more decentralised in this sense than if all local officials are appointed by the central authorities. Finally institutional decentralisation is a kind of decentralisation that is concerned with the degree to which sub national communities or their representatives would have formal rights within the procedures of central decision making. For instance in a system in which state legislatures must ratify constitutional amendments is more decentralised in this sense than one in which the constitution can be changed by just a national referendum. Countries in which states have significant veto powers over central legislation via their representatives are also more “institutionally decentralised”.<sup>11</sup>

In an era of globalisation, decentralisation is the principal countervailing trend which can ensure that the growth process is pro-poor, pro-women, pro-nature and pro-jobs. Considering the modern times, as market integration and technological innovation rendered the national frontiers more permeable, it has now become crucial to put in place and strengthen systems of negotiation, regulation and decentralised governance. These in turn ensure that the voices and concerns of the poorest of the poor are heard.<sup>12</sup>

In the Indian context, economic reforms and Panchayati Raj have been the two major policy imperatives since the early 1990s. Direct local democracy has been mandated

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<sup>10</sup> Treisman, Daniel, Decentralization and Quality of Government, cited from <[http:// www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/seminar/2000/fiscal/treisman.pdf](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/seminar/2000/fiscal/treisman.pdf)>

<sup>11</sup> id

<sup>12</sup> Decentralisation in India: Challenges and Opportunities, cited from <[http:// www. data.undp.org.in/hdrc/dis-srs/Challenges/DecentralisationCO.pdf](http://www.data.undp.org.in/hdrc/dis-srs/Challenges/DecentralisationCO.pdf)>.

constitutionally through the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendments. The principle of ‘Cooperative Federalism’ i.e. decentralised implementation based upon harmonious understanding between the three tiers of governance – Center, State and local – is the basic premise of India’s Ninth Five Year Plan. One such example of government’s decentralised policies can be deciphered from the Eleventh Finance Commission’s recommendations on strengthening panchayat and municipal finances by including local bodies under the ambit of tax-base widening initiatives through better exploitation of land based taxes, better administration of property taxes and other taxes, in the direction to catalyse greater fiscal devolution. It was envisaged that this transfer needs to be governed by the vision of empowering people and reflected in complementary measures, which build poor people’s partnerships in the decisions taken by panchayats and municipal bodies, so that fiscal clout contributes to people’s power.<sup>13</sup>

The municipal bodies were actually formulated to ease out the governance of the central government and to bring out more certainty, transparency and accountability in the government sector. This system of active local governance was prominent during the British era but suffered downfall after India achieved independence mainly due to (i) undefined role; (ii) erosion in municipal functional domain; (iii) inadequate resource base; (iv) weak executive system; and (v) pervasive state control. These led to considerable weakening of the urban local government institutions.<sup>14</sup> But the change took place with the 74<sup>th</sup> amendment which brought in the idea of decentralisation and empowerment of local bodies.

## 7. Relationship between Decentralisation and Empowerment

In 2001, about 286 million persons were living in urban areas of India and it was the second largest urban population in the world. The 74<sup>th</sup> Constitution Amendment Act (CAA) came into force in June, 1993 which sought to improve strengthen urban governance and management of services. The urban population is expected to rise to around 38 per cent by 2026. India has to improve its urban areas to achieve objectives of economic development. Huge investment is required in India’s urban sector. Since public funds for these services are inadequate, Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) have to look for innovative approaches for financing and management of urban services. However, most critical factors for introducing these innovations are a healthy municipal revenue base and good urban governance. The problem with Indian decentralisation can be observed at implementation stage. For instance, Provisions relating to creation and composition of the Wards Committees, putting in place a planning process driven by political process under the aegis of District Planning Committees (DPCs) and Metropolitan Planning Committees (MPCs), and devolving of functions mentioned in the XII Schedule have not yet effectuated. It needs to be mentioned that barring the provisions relating to XII Schedule, other provisions in the CAA are mandatory provisions. Yet even after sixteen years of enactment of the CAA, even the mandatory functions of the Indian Constitution are not yet implemented. Though DPCs and MPCs have been created in some of the states, the planning process conceived in the Constitution has not yet actualised.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> id

<sup>14</sup> *Supra* note at 2.

<sup>15</sup> id

In response to urban problems, the Government of India launched a reform-linked urban infrastructure investment project, Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). The Bill provides for creation of additional tiers of local government besides the Town Hall and the Wards Committees. The additional tiers suggested are (i) Ward Committee to be created in each electoral Ward, and (ii) Area Sabhas to be created at the level of Polling Stations within each local government jurisdiction. Along with this certain other policy measures have also been taken by the government such as The Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY) that was launched on 01.12.1997 after subsuming the earlier three schemes for urban poverty alleviation, namely Nehru Rozgar Yojana (NRY), Urban Basic Services for the Poor (UBSP), and Prime Minister's Integrated Urban Poverty Eradication Programme (PMIUPEP). The key objective of the Scheme was to provide gainful employment to the urban unemployed or underemployed through the setting up of self-employment ventures or provision of wage employment. It was observed that there were certain difficulties faced by the States/UTs in the implementation of the scheme and also the scheme was said to have some drawbacks, owing to which, the Guidelines of the Scheme have been revised. It is presumed that the revised guidelines will assist in the effective implementation of SJSRY and make a dent on the urban poverty scenario in the country. The Revised Guidelines came into effect from 1.4.2009.<sup>16</sup> The main purpose of decentralisation in India is to bring about transparency in the administrative system. For this purpose empowerment of local authorities is emphasised upon.<sup>17</sup>

One such instance can be deciphered from city of Nanded in Maharashtra. The Municipal Corporation of this city has helped in development of this city in an important center of trade and commerce. The main focus is that by empowering the local urban body as one of the decentralisation measures a city transformed into one of the strategic center of trade relates activities.<sup>18</sup>

Historically Nanded was known for its presence in the Textiles manufacturing sector due to the presence of Osmaan Shahi Textile Mills (Now known as Nanded Textile Mills Corporation), Cotton Research Center and Textile Corporation of Nanded. During the 1980s Nanded Textile Mills used to provide employment to around 10,000 people. However, the closure of these entities affected the growth industrial activities in the city / region.

The municipal corporation of this area played a significant role in development of this city. Some of the achievements so done can be traced as:

Narrow roads ( From 4 m to 18 m) with improper carriage way, footpath and unlined drainage has been improved to roads widen to full ROW as per DP width (Min. ROW 12 m, Max. 30 m), separate lanes and wide footpath (Min.1.8 m) have been constructed. Proper drains and street lights have been made. Traffic signals at all major junctions, beautiful road junctions and islands, bus bays for city buses on bus route roads, proper and energy efficient street lights and tree plantation place on both sides of the road are a significant feature of the roads so constructed in Nanded.

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<sup>16</sup> Swarna Jayanti Rozgar Yojna, cited from <<http://www.nagarnigamdehradun.com/acts/final/SJSRY-pdf>>

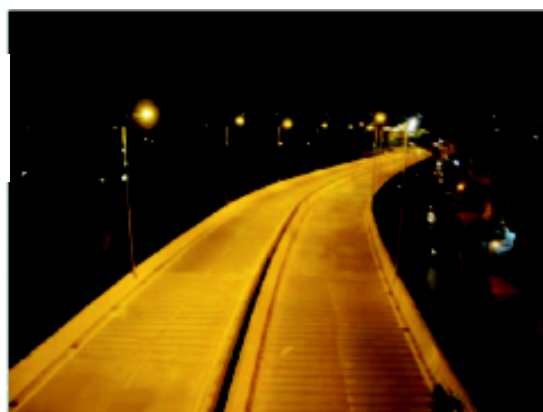
<sup>17</sup> Vadiya, Chetan, cited from <[http://finmin.nic.in/WorkingPaper/Urbanissues\\_reforms.pdf](http://finmin.nic.in/WorkingPaper/Urbanissues_reforms.pdf)>

<sup>18</sup> Nanded Waghla City Municipal Corporation, cited from <[http:// http://nwmcnanded.org/CityAssessment.htm](http://http://nwmcnanded.org/CityAssessment.htm)>



There was a problem of water logging in rainy seasons resulting in total traffic block. Due to height restriction, restriction of movement of various types of vehicle was there. Due to limited crossing growth was limited to north Nanded. This scenario changed with four lane roads as well as well construction of four Lane Bridge which made movement easier.

**Hingoli Gate Railway Over Bridge**



Similar achievement was seen in handling sewage and water supply.



This is one of the examples wherein the local body took initiative to develop a city. The strategy of decentralisation was an imperative else there would have been large number of delays in case the decision making was limited to the central authorities.

## 8. Some Observations

It is observed that Indian Governance is growing strong on paths of decentralisation but the 74<sup>th</sup> amendment so done for empowerment of local bodies so done requires proper implementation of the policies so brought forth by this amendment act. But at the same time certain flaws have to be looked into such as the composition of the ward committees. Although the number of members to be nominated or elected are specified but the requisite qualifications that shall be required by these members is not mentioned. It is thus suggested that people aware of the regional configurations of a particular place along with the professionals such as engineers, lawyers etc. with full coordination of social groups should be included in the membership of the ward committees. Another flaw in the CAA relates to municipal executive system (political decentralisation) and the tax authority of ULBs (fiscal decentralisation). This could be achieved by forcing the State Finance Commission's to do their desired roles of in rationalising the transfer system for the local government. It is also required that the state finance commissions and the Central Finance Commission work in unison when the question of developmental fund allocation is there in question.

## 9. Conclusion

The institutions of urban local self-government need to be strengthened and empowered. Their institutional capacity needs to be strengthened especially due to their strong economic role in enhancing the national economic growth and for improving the quality of life in urban settlements. Cities have to be developed as they are the engines of economic growth which has further accentuated due to globalisation due to which financial flow has crossed the international boundaries. They also have maximum share in total GDP of the nation. Direct investment both foreign and domestic is contingent upon quality urban infrastructure and urban services in the cities and towns. ULBs have to play a pivotal role in this regard by replacing good governance, which in relation to a city implies exercise of power to manage a city's economic and social development. In order for the process of governance to be called good governance, it must be informed by a set of criteria. It has to be (i) participatory, (ii) consensus oriented, (iii) accountable, (iv) transparent, (v) responsive, (vi) effective and efficient, (vii) equitable (viii) inclusive, and should follow the (ix) rule of law. Good governance assures that corruption is minimised, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of impoverished sections of society are heard.

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# UNIT 5

## CHALLENGES AND INITIATIVES IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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### 1. Introduction

Community development combines the idea of “community” with “development”. “Development” is a process that increases choices. Putting the two terms together, community development - means that a community itself engages in a process aimed at improving the social, economic and environmental situation of the community. The community is both the means and the end of community development. The community itself takes action and participates together. Community development can be both an occupation (such as a community development worker in a local authority) and a way of working with communities. Community development practitioners work alongside people in communities to help build relationships with key people and organisations and to identify common concerns. The process of community development not involves challenges but initiatives to deal with such challenges also. In this paper both the challenges and the initiatives have been addressed with special reference to Indian concept. It is emphasized that the resources of the voluntary non-governmental organisation should be fully utilised in community development programmes at the local, national and international level. In India the thought of community development was developed as early as 1952 with the First Five Year Plan itself, from there on efforts have been made to further develop community participation. This can be deciphered from the 73<sup>rd</sup> and the 74<sup>th</sup> amendment acts. This paper also talks about community participation law which can be addressed as most positive initiative in this regard. To understand the collaboration between various government agencies and other non-governmental and private agencies certain case studies have also been referred to.

### 2. Community Development

Community development combines the idea of “community” with “development”. The concept of community basically entails - a group of people with a shared identity. Hence, community development relies on interaction between people and joint action, rather than individual activity - what some sociologists call “collective agency”.

“Development” is a process that increases choices. It means new options, diversification, thinking about apparent issues differently and anticipating change. Development involves change, improvement and vitality - a directed attempt to improve participation, flexibility, equity, attitudes, the function of institutions and the quality of life. It is the creation of wealth - wealth meaning the things people value, not just money.

Putting the two terms together, community development - means that a community itself engages in a process aimed at improving the social, economic and environmental situation of the community. The community is both the means and the end of community development. The community itself takes action and participates together. It is through this action that the community becomes more vital, not just economically but as a strong functioning community in itself.

Community development improves the ability of communities to collectively make better decisions about the use of resources such as infrastructure, labour and knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

*“Community Development is a long-term value based process which aims to address imbalances in power and bring about change founded on social justice, equality and inclusion.”<sup>2</sup>*

Community development can be both an occupation (such as a community development worker in a local authority) and a way of working with communities. Its key purpose is to build communities based on justice, equality and mutual respect.

Community development involves changing the relationships between ordinary people and people in positions of power, so that everyone can take part in the issues that affect their lives. It starts from the principle that within any community there is a wealth of knowledge and experience which, if used in creative ways, can be channeled into collective action to achieve the communities’ desired goals.

Community development practitioners work alongside people in communities to help build relationships with key people and organisations and to identify common concerns. They create opportunities for the community to learn new skills and, by enabling people to act together, community development practitioners help to foster social inclusion and equality.<sup>3</sup>

### 3. Community Development Challenges

The Community Development Challenge assesses strengths and weaknesses in the current position of the community development occupation and proposes a range of actions to ensure that it plays a more powerful role in meeting the needs of present-day society. The issues addressed by it include:

- ♣ The approach so followed via means of community development that cannot be achieved by any other occupation.

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<sup>1</sup> Cavaye, Jim, Understanding Community development, Paper of University of Queensland, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Defining community development, cited from <<http://www.cdx.org.uk/community-development/defining-community-development>>

<sup>3</sup> What is community development?, cited from <<http://www.cdx.org.uk/community-development/what-community-development>>

- ♣ The benefits of this approach and its reasons of being less known to the general public.
- ♣ The obstacles that constrain it from being effective.
- ♣ Activities that shall be done to enable the community development occupation to play a more powerful role in achieving the participative society as envisaged.<sup>4</sup>

#### 4. Community Development Initiatives

A successful approach of community development is said to entail following elements such as:

- ♣ Activities undertaken must correspond to the basic needs of the community. The first projects should be initiated in response to the expressed needs of people.
- ♣ There should be concerted action and the establishment of multi-purpose programme.
- ♣ Change in the attitudes of the people is as important as the material achievement through Community Development during the initial stages of development.
- ♣ Community Development aims at increased and better participation of the people in community affairs, revitalisation of existing forms of local government and transition towards effective local administration where it is not yet functioning.
- ♣ The identification, encouragement and training of local leadership should be a basic objective in any programme.
- ♣ Greater reliance on the participation of women and youth in community projects invigorates development programmes, establishes them on a wide bases and success long-range expansion.
- ♣ To be fully effective, community self help projects require both internal and external assistance from the government.
- ♣ Implementation of a Community Development Programme on a national scale require adoption of consistent policies, specific administrative arrangement, recruitment and training of personnel, mobilisation of local and national resources and organisation of research, experimentation and evaluation.
- ♣ The resources of the voluntary non-governmental organisation should be fully utilised in community development programmes at the local, national and international level.
- ♣ Economic and social progress at the local level necessitates parallel development on a wider national level.<sup>5</sup>

Keeping in mind these elements measures have been taken by Indian Government in response to community development. It is to be noted that these development measures have been carried out both in urban as well as the rural areas also. These substantial

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<sup>4</sup> The Community Development Challenge, cited from <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/communitydevelopment>

<sup>5</sup> Yadav, Kiran, Community Development Programme, Agropedia, June 2010.

initiatives can be deciphered from as the provisions so mentioned in 73<sup>rd</sup> as well as 74<sup>th</sup> amendments that actually empower the Panchayati Raj Institutions at rural level and Municipal Corporations at urban levels respectively.<sup>6</sup> It has also been observed that over the years these institutions have arrayed a significant role in development of the cities or villages which are authorised to them. For instance the Municipal Corporation of Surat in Gujarat is attributed to development of that area which in shambles after the earthquake.

The initiatives taken by the Government in this regard can be termed as the community development initiatives. These can be deciphered as community development initiatives as these institutions work at local level or it can be said at ground level thereby addressing the needs of the people of the areas concerned.

In India the thought of community development was developed as early as 1952 with the First Five Year Plan itself. The ultimate goal as enunciated was to initiate people's programme with people's participation.

Efforts at outlining decentralised planning of development commenced with the First Five Year Plan (1951-56), which recognised the need to break up the planning exercise into National, State, District and Local Community levels, but did not spell out how this was to be operationalised. Two new elements for the planning process were introduced in the Second Five Year Plan, namely, the establishment of the District Development Council and the drawing up of village plans and peoples' participation in planning through democratic decentralisation. However, the attempt at decentralisation of planning did not succeed as a proper enabling framework was not devised, both for planning and for integration of development activities at the micro level.<sup>7</sup>

Certain recommendations were made by the Administrative Reforms Commission, in its Report of 1967 that highlighted that district planning needed to be focused in those areas where local variations in the pattern and process of development were likely to yield quick results in terms of growth. It was emphasized that district authorities should be given a clear indication of the resources that would be made available so as to enable them to prepare purposeful plans at their level.

In 1969, the Planning Commission communicated guidelines to the States for formulating district plans detailing the concept and methodology of drawing up such plans within the framework of annual, medium term and perspective plans.

The guidelines on district planning led to several States formulating district plans during the Fifth Five Year Plan. In order to assist the states in promulgating these guidelines, in other words strengthening them at state level, a Central Scheme was operated. This was followed till ninth five year plan and eventually this assistance extended to district level also.

But as mentioned by Working Group on Block level Planning headed by Prof. M.L. Dantwala (1978) identified the remoteness of planning agencies at the district level from the actual scene of action as the cause for mismatch of financial allocations with location specific

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<sup>6</sup> Bakshi,P.M, Constitution of India, 7<sup>th</sup> ed, Universal Law Publishing Co., 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Planning At the Grassroots level, An Action Programme for the Eleventh Five Year Plan, March 2006, New Delhi.

needs. They suggested block level as the sub-state planning level for appreciation which was further accentuated by the Planning Commission.

Initiatives in strengthening Panchayati Raj closely paralleled those for district planning. Though Panchayati Raj Institutions got off to a good start in the early sixties, but their significance was short lived. Studies connected with the Planning Commission's report on district planning (by the Working Group on District Planning headed by C.H. Hanumantha Rao May 1984), brought out the fact that planning from below was undermined by different streams of funding the district plan. As States had to prepare their annual plans within the framework prescribed by the government of India, they, in turn, prescribed rigid guidelines, which left little scope for flexibility to District Development Councils in preparation of their annual plans. Substantial funds were also retained at the State level and schemes were formulated by sectoral departments without much consultation with the District Development Council.

The G.V.K. Rao Committee (1985) to review the administrative arrangements for rural development recommended that the District Panchayat should be the principal agency to manage all development programmes at the district level. The Sarkaria Commission on Center-State relations highlighted the need for participation of people's representatives in the planning and administrative machinery at the local level. A notable recommendation was the creation of a body akin to the Finance Commission at the State level for devolution or transfer of resources to the districts on an operational and objective basis.<sup>8</sup>

Thus it can be observed that over a period of four decades since the beginning of planned development, there were several suggestions and attempts at decentralised planning. The conditions required were also outlined and repeated. However, the increase in the number of ministries, departments and parastatals at the Center and in the States and the vertical planning, preparation of programmes and methods of funding stood in the way of decentralised planning becoming a reality. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the Constitution gave constitutional status to local self-governments and provided a new, more politically underpinned, universalised platform for decentralised planning from below.<sup>9</sup> However it seen that despite all these recommendations and initiatives there are still major drawbacks in local self governance that seem to be addressed by the recent initiatives so undertaken by the Government.

## 5. Recent Initiatives

In order to bring out more improvisation at local levels certain initiatives have been advised by the Planning commission in regard of the states. These initiatives imply that:

- ♣ The District Planning Committees (DPC) should be constituted in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution by the time the Annual Plan Proposals are presented.
- ♣ The composition of the District Planning Committees is to be decided by the law made in this connection by the Legislature of the State. Taking into account the imperative need to increase the professional competence of the DPCs, whose main responsibility

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<sup>8</sup> Planning At the Grassroots level, An Action Programme for the Eleventh Five Year Plan, March 2006, New Delhi.

<sup>9</sup> Local Governance-Second Administrative Reforms, cited from <[http:// arc.gov.in/6-1.pdf](http://arc.gov.in/6-1.pdf)>

and function is to consider the gram Panchayat and block Panchayat development plans, as also the municipalities of districts, and to consolidate and prepare a draft development plan for the district as a whole, the DPC should be required to consult institutions and professionals, as may be specified for this purpose by the Governor under Article 243 ZD (3)(b).

- ♣ It is recommended that in regard of certain items as mentioned below that deal with minimum needs as listed below, due consideration must be made by the Panchayats. These are:
  - i) Literacy (adult literacy) and elementary education
  - ii) Primary health and sanitation
  - iii) Rural Water Supply
  - iv) Rural roads
  - v) Housing for the poor (rural and urban)
  - vi) Nutrition, children and women and crèches
  - vii) Livelihood and employment guarantee
  - viii) Rural electrification
- ♣ It is suggested that the local governments while undertaking certain activities must make proposal about the grants that they receive for execution of these activities from various sources such as from (i) recommendations of the Twelfth Finance Commission, (ii) Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF), (iii) Centrally Sponsored Schemes, (iv) Different Development institutions at the Center and in the States like Scheduled Castes Commission, Women's Commission, etc., (v) Financial Institutions, (vi) Externally assisted schemes, and (vii) their own resources, if any.

The Plan Proposals so made shall also indicate the detailed deployment of funds received from the above different sources for a specific subject in each of the districts of the State. It is also recommended that the Proposals should indicate the criteria followed by the State Government for allocating the resources for the above items, district-wise. The State Government may also indicate how the district allocation will be distributed between the district, block and gram Panchayat levels taking into account the conditions in the State.

The detailed exercise in respect of items of minimum needs are suggested as a first step and they do not exclude the need for a similar exercise in respect of the entire set of items to be implemented through/by PRIs as part of the Plan.

These all have been the recommendations to make local governance a reality by end of the eleventh Plan.

## 6. Community Participation Law

Another initiative at community level is the community participation law that was thought to be formulated to bring forth more government-citizen proximity. There is required to be a system where everybody in the society are represented as well as have an equal

active participation. Citizen participation is two-way process which requires that citizens be aware of their need to participate as well must actively participate. This was initiated along with JNNURM scheme which talked about constitution of Area Sabhas below the ward committees to bridge the gap between the government and the citizens. The community participation law or in other words Nagar Raj Bill, elucidate the structure and functions of area sabhas and ward committees thereby making area sabhas as lowest unit in hierarchy. Nagar Raj Bill recognises any person on the electoral rolls of any area or municipality as member of an area sabha.<sup>10</sup>

This was done in order to recognise provisions of 74<sup>th</sup> amendment in full spirit.

In context of community participation it is to be noted that a lot many initiatives have been taken by the government in collaboration with NGO's and other private entities in the regime of urban development. In today's time prime focus has always been sustainable development of cities and for this work has been done in various spheres. In order to understand the efforts that were initiated by the government agencies and their collaborated work with various agencies, certain case studies can be referred to.

## 7. A Few Case Studies

### Problem- Urban Poverty Eradication

Initiative- One such initiative in this regard was the Urban Basic Services for Poor (UBSP) which was a major component as well as the pivot of Urban Poverty Eradication Programme of the Ministry of Urban Affairs and Employment, operational in 25 states and 6 Union Territories covering 296 cities and further 169 through state universalisation efforts reaching an estimated 10 million urban poor. One unique feature of UBSP was its participatory process of planning and action with women from poor neighbourhoods to improve health; education; environment; access to credit and improved incomes and other basic rights for their children themselves and their families. At present over 130,000 poor women serve voluntarily, working in partnership with city, state, national Government, NGOs and UNICEF.

Strategy- UBSP is a partnership financed 60:40 between GOI and States, with city or community contributions, underway in atleast 50% of cities. Over 100 NGOs are involved, providing technical and mobilisation support. Partnerships with sectoral programmes and other agencies such as water or electricity boards, banks, etc. are increasing based on community specific needs and plans. The Department of Health and Family Welfare has established working relationships with UBSP and the programme is an accepted strategy in the National Plan of Action for Nutrition. In one State, a financial formula for targeted sector allocations at the state and city level for the urban poor through city level urban poverty alleviation cells has recently been implemented, now serving as a national model.

UNICEF continues as a partner, providing support towards training, management, research, communications, demonstration activities and NGO collaboration. The philosophy of UBSP is seen in programmes of other donors such as ODA-UK; Integrated Population Projects (World Bank) among others. A National Urban Poverty Eradication Fund (1995) seeks to tap resources in the private sector as well.<sup>11</sup> The unique features of this programme are; its

<sup>10</sup>TERI 2010, Enhancing Public Participation through effective functioning of Area Sabhas (Final Report), Project Report Number 2009Udo4.

<sup>11</sup>Poverty Alleviation through Community Development-UBSP, cited from <[http:// unesco.org/most/asia12.htm](http://unesco.org/most/asia12.htm)>

institutional frameworks which involve RCV's (Resident Community Volunteers) and Neighbourhood groups. It is a centrally sponsored scheme and is women centric providing for urban poor.

Observation- In this project government has worked in collaboration with various non-governmental agencies for urban poverty alleviation. The success of this programme is based on the fact that the community was involved.

#### **Problem- Solid Waste Management**

Initiative- In this case study prominence has been given to the work done by NGO's in collaboration with the citizens. This case study is about Exnora in Chennai.

Strategy- Exnora in Chennai is successful NGO experiment to manage solid waste disposal. This started in 1989 when citizens, concerned about deteriorating environmental conditions, drew up an action plan to collect garbage. New containers were placed in the street and an awareness-raising campaign was organised. The rag-pickers, renamed city-beautifiers were given loans by Exnora to purchase tricycles for door-to-door garbage collection and street cleaning. They received monthly salaries from the residents, from which they repaid the loans. Today, the city has 1,500 Exnora units, each servicing 75,000 families or 450,000 people. Many Exnoras have now branched into other environmental activities, such as monitoring waterways, de-silting canals, planting trees, and harvesting rainwater (Chennai suffers from severe water shortages). They also run environmental education programmes in schools and public information campaigns on the environmental impacts of industrial development, upgrading slums and converting degradable waste into compost. Exnora projects are thus multi sectoral and address a wide range of issues. Following this initiatives were taken by other cities.<sup>12</sup>

Observation- This case study is perfect example of community participation wherein the citizens themselves took initiative to solve their problem without any government assistance.

#### **Problem- Slum development**

Initiative- Another initiative that can be discussed here is of a trust by the name of 'SAATH' that is established in Ahmadabad which seeks to rehabilitate people who dwell in slums due to earthquake or riots that had displaced them. The interesting thing to be noted here is that this help in rehabilitation is done by one vulnerable community for another vulnerable community.

Strategy- A three pronged strategy is being followed by it in this regard. They actually work in three fields:

- ♣ Initiation of rehabilitation of shelter and livelihoods
- ♣ They work towards other development parameters (health, education, livelihoods and infrastructure)
- ♣ Conflict resolution and peace building

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<sup>12</sup>Mahadevia, Darshini, Sustainable Urban Development in India: An inclusive perspective, from Unsustainable to inclusive cities, UNRISD publication, 1st October 2002, Geneva.

The intervention strategy shall be participatory. Saath sees the interventions in new slums to be facilitated by the existing CDO (Community development organisations) members. The idea is that members of one vulnerable community help the other vulnerable community in their rehabilitation and overall development. Saath has enabled the formation of three CDOs uptill now. These CDOs have had a predominantly Hindu population. Through the present intervention strategy members of one religious community shall be helping members of another religious community in rebuilding their lives as well as sustain development. Through riot rehabilitation as well as integrated development, it is envisaged that there will be one to one and community interaction between residents of different communities. This will lead to fostering of mutual trust, reduction in prejudices as well as awareness regarding the futility of communal violence.<sup>13</sup>

Observation- This initiative serves two purposes. One is to have removal of slums while the other is promotion of communal harmony, which is an imperative for urban development and solidarity.

## 8. Conclusion

Community is in the center of all the activities, it is imperative that it should be prime most importance while giving any policy decisions. Yet it is ignored by the decision makers and made in most cases people become mere spectators of what they actually need to get and what exactly they get. This creates a void between the administrators and those administered and an atmosphere of apathy is created which distances people from government initiatives. Public awareness, effective community participation, transparent and clean administration, introduction of citizen charters and accountability at all levels can only bridge this gap. As can be observed from the case studies, instances where governments and communities have work in unison fruitful results have been observed. Thus it can be concluded that for the growth of the society community development should be focal area and the development should be bottom-up that is from community to the nation.

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<sup>13</sup>Proposal for riot rehabilitation and integrated development, cited from <[http:// cac.ektaonline.org/resources/appeals/SaathProposal.pdf](http://cac.ektaonline.org/resources/appeals/SaathProposal.pdf)>

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