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Prof. Nishith Rai  
Director

## FROM THE DESK OF CHIEF EDITOR



Urban governance with the implementation of 74<sup>th</sup> CAA has acquired overwhelming attention during the last decade. Urban India with about 28% of total population of country residing in its 5161 cities/towns as per latest statistics constitutes the second largest urban system in the world. As per projections, around 48% of country's population will live in cities in next 45 years. The state of Uttar Pradesh with around 21% level of urbanisation has second largest network of 628 urban local bodies in the country. U.P. also enjoys the distinction among other states with maximum number of cities(7) selected under JNNURM.

Although cities have been termed as engines of growth, these have suffered from years of neglect. In order to meet the challenges of growing urbanisation and deficiencies in urban infrastructure, the Government of India through its latest launch-JNNURM has encouraged city wide reforms and restructuring so as to improve governance, enhance accountability and transparency in urban administration in an integrated framework with focus on economic and social infrastructure thereby improving the quality of life in urban areas especially the poor.

Implementation of reforms, however, depends on the unambiguous and committed vision of governance and stability of political and administrative leadership. Sustainability of reforms also needs to be ensured through wide dissemination of benefits of reforms and also to guard against the vested interests. Media needs to play pro-active role in generating demand and pressure for improving the performance of service providing agencies and also galvanizing the support of community in favour of reforms. Cities in other developed countries are well managed and clean not only because of modern technologies but also due to its sensitive and responsible citizenry.

It is beyond any doubt that in order to achieve the objectives of Mission unremitting sincere and co-ordinated efforts are required on the part of all stakeholders if we wish to get our country counted in the league of developed nations.

With best wishes

June 16, 2006

NISHITH RAI

## FROM THE DESK OF EDITOR

The challenges with which our cities are grappling today can be summed up in three *Is-Imbalances, Inefficiencies and Inequalities* which manifest themselves in corruption, growing inter-regional rivalries and the environmental costs of a runaway growth. Mumbai once considered a jewel among Indian cities, today is sliding down the scale of economic, social and political indicators. Unprecedented floods at Mumbai, Hyderabad and other cities reinforce that our cities are in great distress. With unmanageable population, rising prices, traffic chaos and congestions, encroachments galore, crime, violence, crisis of water, electricity etc. all cities are the same, and it is the common man, poor urban dwellers who are at the receiving end of it.

But still, not all hopes are lost. A number of initiatives have been taken in the last decade at various levels and others are in the process. What all of us have to sincerely realize is that we need to take care of our cities. We need to own and respect our cities. Care, need and ownership need to replace apathy that is exhibited towards our cities today. Unless and until such attitudes and mindsets are inculcated, no matter how much we progress, the common man will not be able to duly partake of the fruits of development and open economy.

Regional Centre brings out its bi-annual journal **URBAN PANORAMA** dealing with multifarious challenges faced by our Urban India and the initiatives taken to address them.

**Sri T.N.Dhar, IAS(Retd.)** in his article on '*Sustainable Urban Development in Environmental Contexts*' presents an analytical narration of several challenges faced by Urban India especially highlighting the various issues relating to air and water pollution, quality of urban water supply, ground water, solid waste, slums etc. as obtained in cities of Uttar Pradesh. Uneven and unbalanced distribution of population not only strains the physical environment but human as well as biological environments also experience severe stress. Expressing grave concern over the increasing water pollution in the state and cities, Sri Dhar mentions that although this is an area of high priority both in terms of need and action but this issue has not been properly appreciated or adequately addressed. He emphatically mentions that sustainable urban management involves not only environmental matters but also suggests an indicative list of other equally important issues and options that need to be addressed by appropriate planning and adopting suitable strategies, tactics and projectisation as per the requirements.

**Prof. Nishith Rai and Dr. A.K.Singh** in their article on '*Disaster Response in India: With Special Reference to Tsunami Disaster*' have reviewed the status of disaster management in India. They have maintained that urbanisation, industrialization, globalization and liberalization of economy have influenced human life. People tend to live in disaster prone areas due to severe stress on land, rising prices of land, construction material, poverty etc. Although, in recent times, the vulnerability to natural disasters has increased in India, we, however, lack co-ordinated and integrated approach for disaster preparedness and mitigation. The recent Tsunami disaster in Asia including southern states of India and Africa affected millions of people and devastated high amount of property, infrastructure, physical resources and livelihoods. The authors have emphatically suggested that urban planning requires fundamental change for evolving strategies in a holistic manner for managing the disasters and there is also an urgent need to formulate a comprehensive national risk policy for strengthening urban local bodies and community based organizations for disaster management.

**Sri K.T.Gurumukhi**, Chief Planner, Government of India in his article on '*Infrastructure Development in India in the Context of Global Competitiveness and Governments Initiatives*' while discussing at length the current scenario with respect to important infrastructure in country, mentions that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the focus of economic growth has shifted from developed countries to developing countries which have high growth potentials in terms of skilled man power, technology, resources, infrastructure and economic environment. Now India stands apart with a distinct cutting edge in global competitiveness after economic liberalization. Global trade, removal of trade barriers and competition, adoption of new business models has resulted in conducive economic environment. He strongly feels that in order to sustain growth rate of GDP, it is essential for India to upgrade infrastructure to reach at global standards, the Indian corporates to compete globally and attract foreign direct investment in the country and also the Indian multinational companies to dominate the world in future.

Elaborating on the multiple dimensions of solid waste management, **Prof. Sneha Palnitkar**, Director, Regional Centre For Urban & Environmental Studies, Mumbai in her article on '*Social Aspects of Solid Waste Management*' emphasizes that growing concern of both governments and municipal bodies with the clean city programme witnessed during the last decade has firmly placed the SWM on urban agenda. The proper and timely management of solid waste is not only absolutely necessary for the presentation and improvement of public health but it also has an immense potential for resource recovery in urban areas. Talking about the important role played by the urban poor engaged in waste recycling sector, she emphatically argues that the prevailing social reluctance in accepting the waste picking as a legitimate work activity can be largely overcome by prudent and supportive policies that are also warranted by economics and the realities of the urban situation. Explaining the social, economic and environmental dimensions of urban informal waste recycling sector, she dwells at length on the various issues that are involved in waste recycling.

Dr. Palnitkar also examines the selective innovative approaches involving the intersection of Solid Waste Management and urban poverty that have been adopted by Stree Mukti Sanghatana, Mumbai, Forum of Recyclers Communities and Environment, Mumbai & Kagad Katch Patra Kashtakari Panchayat, Pune and comes to conclusion that SWM must evolve a positive integrated approach to regard informal waste recovery, reuse and recycling activities as an integrated component of SWM & Urban Poverty Alleviation.

Although share of municipalities in the total public revenue pool raised by all tiers of governments has increased from less than 3.0% in 1997-98 to slightly more than 3.0% in 2001-02, still the revenues generated by the municipalities all over country are grossly inadequate for maintaining and operating the services at minimum levels. **Dr. Urmila Bagga** in her article entitled '*Urban Services and e-Governance*' deals with critical issues in delivery of urban services and also mentions the chronic problems associated with various governmental interventions carried out in past decades for improving the quality of life of citizens. JNNURM is the latest intervention in the urban sector. E-Governance is one of the systematic and scientific tools to achieve the goals of good governance. Although some cities in India have adopted and implemented e-governance in delivery of municipal services, primarily due to individual initiatives rather than institutional thrusts, Dr.Bagga strongly emphasizes that the urgent need of the hour is to draw the long term strategy for e-governance with clearly defined objectives and goals and expected outcome on a sustainable basis.

**Prof. H.M.Misra and Dr. A.K.Singh** from RCVP Naronha Academy, Bhopal in their

article on '*Cities for Sustainable Rural Development*' argued that although cities have large and vital role in the development of rural areas but planners and policy makers still perceive development of urban and rural areas as discreet and mutually exclusive and competing development sphere, ignoring the fact that urban poverty has close links with rural destitution which adversely impacts the quality of life in urban areas. The authors strongly emphasise for execution of the concept of PURA [Provisions of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas] that has been advocated by Hon'ble President of India. They suggest that all policy makers and development planners need to appreciate and functionally internalize the rural-urban inter-dependence by adopting a more holistic and regional approach for development of strong urban-rural linkages which would ultimately lead to increased living standards through increased employment, higher productivity and higher income in rural areas.

While dreaming for a beautiful, neat, clean city with a river having crystal clear water **Smt. Prabha Chaturvedi** in her article on '*Yes, We Can Have City of Our Dreams!*' argues that with strong administrative and political will, dedicated machinery, collective, concerted and sustainable efforts of all stakeholders, it is very much possible to turn this dream into a reality. She describes the efforts made by small group of Exonora members for sensitizing and motivating the people of Lucknow on various issues affecting the quality of life such as solid waste management, water conservation, rain water harvesting, plastic waste etc.. She strongly feels that doing something for society and country is the most satisfying and pleasant experience and each of us must understand and also perform our duties and responsibilities towards city and society.

**Ms. Shalini Grover** from PRIA in her article on '*Participatory Urban Planning in Rajnandgaon and Janjgir in Chattisgarh*' strongly asserts that the success of popular participation rests on the principle that local issues and solutions are best known and addressed by the residents of the town themselves. The professional planners help in facilitating and providing mechanisms to the stakeholders to articulate the answers to the town issues. Her article is based on the practical experience of PRIA in participatory developmental planning in two towns of Chhatisgarh – Rajnandgaon and Janjgir and it suggests guiding principles for the application of participatory town planning and advocates the application of approach in various other town/cities of the country. .

Lack of communication and participation of community in the management of urban affairs is the missing link in urban management. It is emphatically pin pointed by **Smt. Pratibha Mittal** in her article on '*Community Participation : The Missing Link in Urban Management*'. Emphasizing on the urgency of establishing effective linkages between citizens and city administration, she advocates for the initiation of small initiatives as the small is possible and also shows up immediate results. Small successful initiatives when taken collectively can sustain public interest on one hand and can also provide direction for the future course of action.

The paper on '*Current Methods in Training*' by **Dr. Padma Iyer** focuses on the prevalent techniques used in training like ice-breaking, lecture method, case study method, exercises, business games, sensitivity training and role play. It also states strengths and weaknesses of each method and also suggests what can be done to make them more effective.

Expressing grave concern over the deteriorating environmental and insane exploitation of natural resources in the developmental process all over the world, **Sri R.K.Hajela**, in his article on '*Environmental Protection through Environmental Impact Assessment*' mentions



that EIA is one of the proven management tools for incorporating environmental concerns in development process. He describes in detail the objectives, extent, framework, methodology and problems associated with EIA and also examines the role and impact of EIA in river valley, mining, thermal power, industrial projects etc. Although EIA has its own limitations, the author warns that we should avoid as far as possible the mistakes committed by the developed countries in pursuing the course of economic development.

**Dr. V.P.Sharma, Sri N.Tiwari and Sri K.Shukla** in their article on '*Urbanisation, Environment and Human Health*' mention that during the last few decades, the urban population has grown faster than the rural population in almost all countries of world. The urbanisation has provided tremendous opportunities and generated employment potentials in different sectors. The critical concern with respect to urban development is due to its unregulated growth and offshoot problems. They maintain that an effective and cost efficient multidisciplinary management strategy is needed to resolve the policy decisions, particularly relating to the resources to be allocated wherever required, their time and with complete methodology in order to have optimum and desired level of ambient quality environment that would be expressed in terms of a set of measurable indicators.

**Prof. A.Malla Reddy** in his paper on '*Implementation of SJSRY : Problems and Prospects – Pondicherry Experience*' describes the problems faced by five municipalities of Union Territory of Pondicherry in implementation of SJSRY. He also provides some suggestions to tackle these problems.

**Dr. K.K. Singh** in his article on '*Bharat Mein Nagrikaran : Ubharti Pravartiyam Evam Pratiman*' discusses the trends of urbanisation in India, factors responsible for rapid urbanisation and the consequent multifarious problems faced by cities. He also suggests some solutions to encounter the challenges of urban areas.

I hope the esteemed readers would find the present issue interesting and informative. Suggestions for improvement are always welcome.

**Urmila Bagga**

**June 16, 2006**



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Nishith Rai

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