

A Working Conference on PURA was organized at the Indian Institute of Management Indore, on 10th Jun 2010. The event began with an introductory lecture by Prof. S S Sundaram, highlighting the significance of Public Private Partnership (PPP) Model in PURA. PPP could be well understood in the way how we define the terms public, private and partnership. PPP utilizes the advantages of both public and private sector avoiding the drawbacks of both the systems. Besides this he also highlighted that PPP is not always the best way of implementing welfare projects, it too comes with some drawbacks.

Former President of India, Hon. Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam inaugurated the conference by lighting of the lamp. Prof. N Ravichandran, Director, IIM Indore, delivered the welcome speech.

“Leader should be the captain of the problem” were the beginning lines of Dr. Kalam. He defined PURA as a key to sustainable development, exemplifying the remarkable works done under Chitrakoot, Warna, Periyar and Loni PURA. He described Economic connectivity as a path towards the achievement of mission PURA. Electronic, knowledge and physical connectivity, together would lead to economic connectivity for the rural sector in India. In his concluding lines Dr. Kalam described the essential elements of a working PURA as, mapping core competency and technical repository. Mr. Srijan Pal Singh, who highlighted the strategies adopted in implementation of PURA, concluded the session. This was followed by a Q &A session where Dr. Kalam responded to questions from the audience.

The second session of the conference was on “Reflections on PURA “by Mr. Arvind Mayaram, MoRD, GoI and Prasanna Srinivasan, SVCS, ILFS. Mr. Mayaram provided a view of the operational issues involved in implementation of PURA. The speaker further emphasized that PURA strategies could much effectively implemented using BOOT (Built Own Operate and

Transfer) System. He emphasized on making these projects a kind of business opportunities. This will attract more big players to join the PURA project. After that Mr. Prasanna explained the financial aspects of these projects and present contribution in various projects by the government and the need for funding from private parties. Both of them emphasized the importance of PPP (Public Private Partnership) in PURA. Their inputs were appreciated by Dr. Kalam and further queried regarding role of gram panchayats in the same.

The third session of the conference was on “Experiences of knowledge and internet bases PURA in Periyar” by Prof N Ramachandran, VC, Periyar Maniammai University. In this the speaker deliberated session experiences related to designing and executing various initiatives by the university pertaining to Periyar PURA. Prof N Ramachandran explained in a detailed and lucid manner the various connectivity- Physical, Electronic, Knowledge and Economic community building related initiatives undertaken by the university.

The university has been utilizing its various departments to facilitate the initiatives. For example it uses its Civil Engineering department for sanitation and drinking water related projects, NSS volunteers for various awareness programs and logistical helps, Electrical Engineering department for running and maintaining community radio services. The talk highlighted the roles played by the university in providing vocational training, e tuitions, English tutorials, virtual classrooms and agro and industry related skills. The university also undertakes various initiatives related to improving efficiency of agriculture and energy produce and utilization. The university garners funds from Rural Development and Panchayati Raj departments, PWD, Education department, Rural Agricultural and Marketing Departments.

The talk ended up with a firming up of commitment by university to contribute more towards Periyar PURA and other possible avenues of related collaborations.

The days fourth session was on “Experiences of livelihoods based PURA in Chitrakoot” by Ms. Nandita Pathak, Udyamita Vidyapeeth, Chitrakoot. The talk started by remembering of late shri Nanaji Deshmukh, a visionary and founder of Deendayal Research Institute (DRI). DRI was established to validate the philosophy of Integral Humanism as propounded by Pandit Deendayal. The institute has nearly achieved its ambitious target of 500 self-reliant villages in 50 km radius by 2010. The institute follows a model of Act- Plan- Do- Check for project selection, planning and execution. DRI uses the concept of Samaj Shilpi Dampatti, a graduate couple living and working in village for a token honorarium as a catalyst of change. The institute focuses on Entry points, Need identification and Integrated approach for development works.

The portfolio of institute’s activities revolve around four connectivity- Physical, Electronic, Knowledge and Economic and include conservation and propagation of cattle breeds, organic farming and Agro food processing, running production cum training centers, micro financing, running higher secondary schools, operating mobile scientific lab and cultivating, conserving and promoting medicinal and rare herbs for Ayurvedic treatment.

The talk ended up with a thanks to IIM Indore for taking this initiative and calling younger generation to visit and work with such challenging avenues as PURA.

Post lunch Session

The presentations in the Post lunch session were scheduled for the postgraduate participants of the institute, who presented their reports of their Rural Immersion program undertaken in January 2010. They have highlighted the present scenario in the regions visited at the same time undertaken the SWOT analysis of region under the employment, development, education and connectivity subjects.

Burhanpur: A vision for development

The team has proposed a model on the basis of aggregation concept in terms of Self Help Groups (SHG), Tourism, Knowledge centre and infrastructure. The SHG could be used for the production of the lateral products of food processing and active negotiation of prices in the trade of the goods. The knowledge centre could support in the areas of vocational training and infrastructure like ware houses etc would support activities of the SHGs. Tourism could be encourage increasing the alternative sources of income of the local economy. The model with the integration of the Self Help Groups (SHG), Tourism, and Knowledge centre and infrastructure areas would lead to the development of the overall economy of the region.

Hoshangabad: Opportunities and Challenges

The group has undertaken the SWOT analysis with respect to the government policies and NGO activities. The government policies like NREGS etc have provided a benefit to the society however there has been lag in the demand and supply of the scheme provisions. NGO's have played an active role in the development of the animal husbandry, mushroom farming, Horticulture, sericulture, and pickle production etc.

Processed form of agro based products and aggregate and cluster farming are two major areas identified by the group, which could be undertaken in future for the intensifying the local economy. The group has two models: Distributed model mean providing an opportunity to cropping of many local micro organizations involved in the production of processed agro products and consolidated development model in which a large organization is involved in the development of the whole area at a one take. Both the models have got pro's and con's and can be finalised on the further investigation of the local culture and economy acceptance.

Neemuch:

The group has dealt with the various government policies provided in the region. The presentation says that these policies provides both the advantages like provision of income to the below poverty line people and development of the region however fails in the making the people realize the responsibility of the individual in development of the individual and society economic growth. It also identifies the errors in the forecasting of the demand and supply of the labour in the region by the government instates which is impacts in negative benefits of the all the policies.

On a whole the session concluded on a positive note how the smaller regions could be developed in the form of identifying the local resources and develop them into the economy stimulator rather than depending on the external world.

The second session was knowledge provision arena by the noted researchers and the practitioner from the rural development field.

Dr. Ashok K Gupta has presented on “Venturing through PURA in a cluster of villages surrounding Nagda town of the Ujjain district, Madhya Pradesh”. The speaker provided a

statistical analysis of the region its literacy pattern and occupation. The major areas of improvement are road and power infrastructure of the region. The absence of the medical infrastructure also cripples the social development of the region.

The note ended with the positive tone in strengthening the region with the help of the introduction of the processed farm based products, promotion of dairy, and fisheries. At the same time the increment in the utility services and value addition services would lead to better economy of the region.

The next speaker in line was Mr. Apoorva Oza, from the AKRSPS a practitioner in the field of the rural development. The presentation titled “PURA: Lessons from field” has been presented. The speaker brings the varied 15 years of rural development experience to the benefit of the audience. The presentation consists of the lessons from projects based on the development of the skills of the rural society and the micro water shed programs undertaken by the NGO. Mr. Oza highlighted that the development of the region is undertaken in two ways in a rural place: Agriculture where the latest technology is introduced in the rural region in order to increase the production levels and also the negotiation of the right prices in the delivering the product to the market. In the second alternative it is to organize the local system and undertakes the development activities.

The speaker is also concerned with the knowledge lag between the rural and urban region as it is dynamic development in the field and hence the rural regions are always lagging resulting in the disadvantaged position all through the time. However the AKRSP has undertaken the channel of e channel in distribution of knowledge that resulted in lower lag coefficients. The speaker also focuses on the watershed that could work wonders when the decentralized format that results in

the well spread development across the region. At the same time the underground tanks etc would increase benefits in the rural regions. On the final note it is the local culture and behavior which decides the optimum utilization of the resources.

The next speaker was Dr. Datta, he presented on “Providing the urban facilities to rural areas”. The speaker uses the latest operational models in determining the optimum allocation of the resources to a region. Speaker provides the definition of the sustainable in the terms of the economy, social, institutional, demographic etc. The speaker signifies the importance of the inclusive and holistic approach in the development of the region. The presentation talks about the corruption, bureaucracy and the long gestation periods involved in the implementation of the projects.

The presentation talks about the importance of implementation of the Global Information System (GIS) in the management of the Micro watershed programs. At the same time the involvement of the social connectivity the new dimension which needs to be looked in as to inclusive growth of the region.

The speaker also uses the operation research analysis for the identification and forecasting of the demands in terms of roads, hospitals and other institutional requirement of the region. It also provides the effective distribution channels for the development of the region both in terms of the social and economic terms.

Mr. Sandeep Khanwalkar, MPRLP, the speaker provides the importance of the flow of the projects through the Gram sabha. As the Gram Sabha is the permanent body which is going to exist and hence the flow is never disturbed due to change of the economic situations which is not

the case with the other formal institutes. He further highlighted the concept of PURA in MPRLP context, its outcomes, impact and the challenges faced in implementation of the same.

The next speaker in line was Mr. Sanjay Dubey, IAS, Secretary Rural Development and CEO, PMGSY & Rural housing, GoMP. He described the various models of PURA development like the government model, PPP model, visionary model and the multi-party development model. Mr. Dubey further highlighted the remarkable achievements of MP state in terms of rural connectivity through roads, which is a delineating step under PURA's physical connectivity. He also highlighted some issues concerning continuity of schemes and viable gap funding.

The last speaker for the conference was Mr. T N Tiwari, CPAO, ACC Ltd., who explained the rural aspiration matrix and described, "PURA is the first fundamental step to address the rural participation in economic development". The speaker emphasized on the emergence of a sustainable model for rural education system.

Prof. N Ravichandran, concluded the day's event by taking feedback from the participants, as to how value addition could be done in the process of implementing PURA.