

CONCEPTUALIZING PURA

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ABSTRACT

The concept of PURA (Provision of Urban Amenities to Rural Areas) was given by our former president Dr. A.P. J. Abdul Kalam. This is an innovative approach to provide amenities and infrastructure to rural areas through the partnership of entrepreneurs, local people and government. To generate livelihood opportunities and lessen the rural to urban migration are the main objectives of this scheme. However, though the concept and model of PURA was given by Dr. Kalam and Prime Minister of India also announced to implement the scheme through the pilot projects but after the evaluation made by National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), the scheme was redesigned. As per recommendations of NIRD, Government restructured PURA on the operational pilot projects. In this paper the main focus has been given to the restructured PURA scheme –its mission, aims and objectives along with its basic features.

KEY WORDS: Physical connectivity, Electronic connectivity, Knowledge connectivity, Economic connectivity, MGNREA, IAY, MoRD

INTRODUCTION

According to 2011 census, about 69% people of India lives in the rural areas of our country. But it is a well known fact that the people of rural area are lagging behind in every sphere of life e.g. income, education, employment, infrastructure etc. in comparison to the people of urban area. As a result, they migrate to the urban areas for accessing employment, better living standard and so on which in turn create secondary problems like urban congestion, increasing slums, growing unemployment in the urban areas etc. So, livelihood is the basic reason for rural to urban migration. However, Ministry of Rural Development of India had been launching various schemes for poverty eradication, rural employment, improving rural infrastructure e.g. MGNREGA, SGSY, PMGSY, IAY etc. One of the innovative schemes for rural development was given by former President Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam in 2003 i.e. PURA (Provision of Urban Amenities to Rural Areas). Kalam (2003) suggested for the creation of physical, electronic, knowledge connectivity leading to economic connectivity for the prosperity of the villages of India. PURA is a unique scheme for lessening rural urban divide by providing urban amenities and livelihood opportunities through Public Private Partnership and the scheme will be developed concentrating a potential growth centre in a Gram Panchayat or geographically contiguous Gram Panchayats. Though the idea was given by Dr. A. P.J. Abdul Kalam but the Government has restructured the scheme of PURA on the already operational pilot projects.

VISION OF A.P. J. ABDUL KALAM ON PURA

According to Kalam, (2006) “Providing connectivities to village complexes is an urgent need to bridge the rural urban divide, generate employment and enhance rural prosperity. The integrated methods which will bring prosperity to rural India is through PURA (Providing Urban Amenities to Rural Area)”. The four connectivities which have been mentioned by Kalam are physical connectivity that means developing roads, rail network and public infrastructure. The cluster of villages will be surrounded by a ring road and low cost buses will

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be driven throughout the day and renewable sources of energy will be used to energize the related equipments and knowledge connectivity means development of information technology in the villages for helping the farmers and other peoples of villages like tele-education for farmers and villagers, tele magazine, e-medicine, e-governance and so on and buses. Electronic connectivity denotes developing network, hardware, software and other economic connectivity emphasizes the employment potential among the villagers. The main thrust areas of PURA according to Kalam are:

- Creation of employment opportunities for all the employable people particularly the youth.
- Capacity building of education- schools, value added employable skills and knowledge.
- Provision of quality health and timely health care, safe drinking water, quality reliable electric power, energy and water efficient pucca houses.
- Typical examples of PURA connectivities- physical, electronic, knowledge and economic.
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PILOT PHASE OF PURA

As referred to Kalam's model, PURA was implemented as Hon'ble Prime Minister announced implementation of PURA on Independence Day, 2003. PURA was implemented as a pilot scheme during the 10th Five Year Plan in Basmath (Maharashtra), Bharthana (Uttar Pradesh), Gohpur (Assam), Kujanga (Orissa), Motipur (Bihar), Rayadurg (Andhra Pradesh) and Shahpura (Rajasthan). National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) evaluated those projects and find out some lacking. On the basis of their evaluation the scheme had no specific guidelines, in-built business plan and factoring lead economic activities and the site selection was not based on growth potential Due to no convergence with other departments or other schemes of rural development it had very limited impact on holistic development. As a result the PURA scheme was restructured.

RESTRUCTURED PURA

On the basis of evaluation of NIRD, PURA was totally restructured. Planning Commission approved a budget of Rs. 248 core in the XIth Plan for PURA scheme. Cabinet approved restructured PURA scheme in January 2010 and scheme was launched in April 2010.

MISSION

The mission is to make holistic and accelerated development which is based around potential growth centre in Panchayat or group of Panchayats by providing livelihood opportunities and urban amenities through Public Private Partnership (PPP).

OBJECTIVES

Provision of livelihood opportunities and urban amenities in rural areas thereby bridge the rural urban gap.

SALIENT FEATURES OF PURA

Some of the basic features of PURA have been discussed in the following paragraphs:

- There is a convergence between central government and state government schemes in the restructured PURA.
- PURA as a self-sustainable and viable model of service delivery in rural areas to be managed through an implementation framework between local people, public authorities and the private sector (Dwevedi, 2012).i.e. the implementation of the scheme is to be through private public partnership (PPP) between gram panchayat and private sector partner.

- It aims to generate employment for the educated, thereby, halt and even reverse rural-urban migration (Dwevedi & Jha, 2011).
- From the Central Sector scheme of PURA, core funding of the project will come and additional funding will come from the convergence of Central and State Government schemes. However, add-on projects will be done completely with private funding.
- The private sector would implement and manage the scheme but it should maintain the objectives of rural development.
- The scheme would be implemented through pilot projects so that the different steps and features can be tested.
- VII. The land in the PURA project would be chosen by the private partner and gram panchayat or state government will made available the land free of cost for public amenities and for add on facilities, if the private partners buy the land from the open market then the cost will not be included in the in the project costing and if the State Government or Gram panchayat provide the land then through a mutual agreement Gram Panchayat and Private partner will share the revenue and at the end of the concession period, the add-on facilities shall be revert back to Gram Panchayat or State Government.
- The private partner will identify the gram panchayat or a cluster of geographically identified gram panchayats for a population about 25,000-40,000.
- The Concession Agreement shall be done between the Gram Panchayat(s), the Concessionaire and the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA).The total concession period will be 13 years. 3 years is constructional period and 10 years for operational period.
- The project committees of PURA include Project Screening and Monitoring Committee (PSMC), inter-Ministerial Empowered Committee (EC) and State-level Coordination Committee (SLCC).

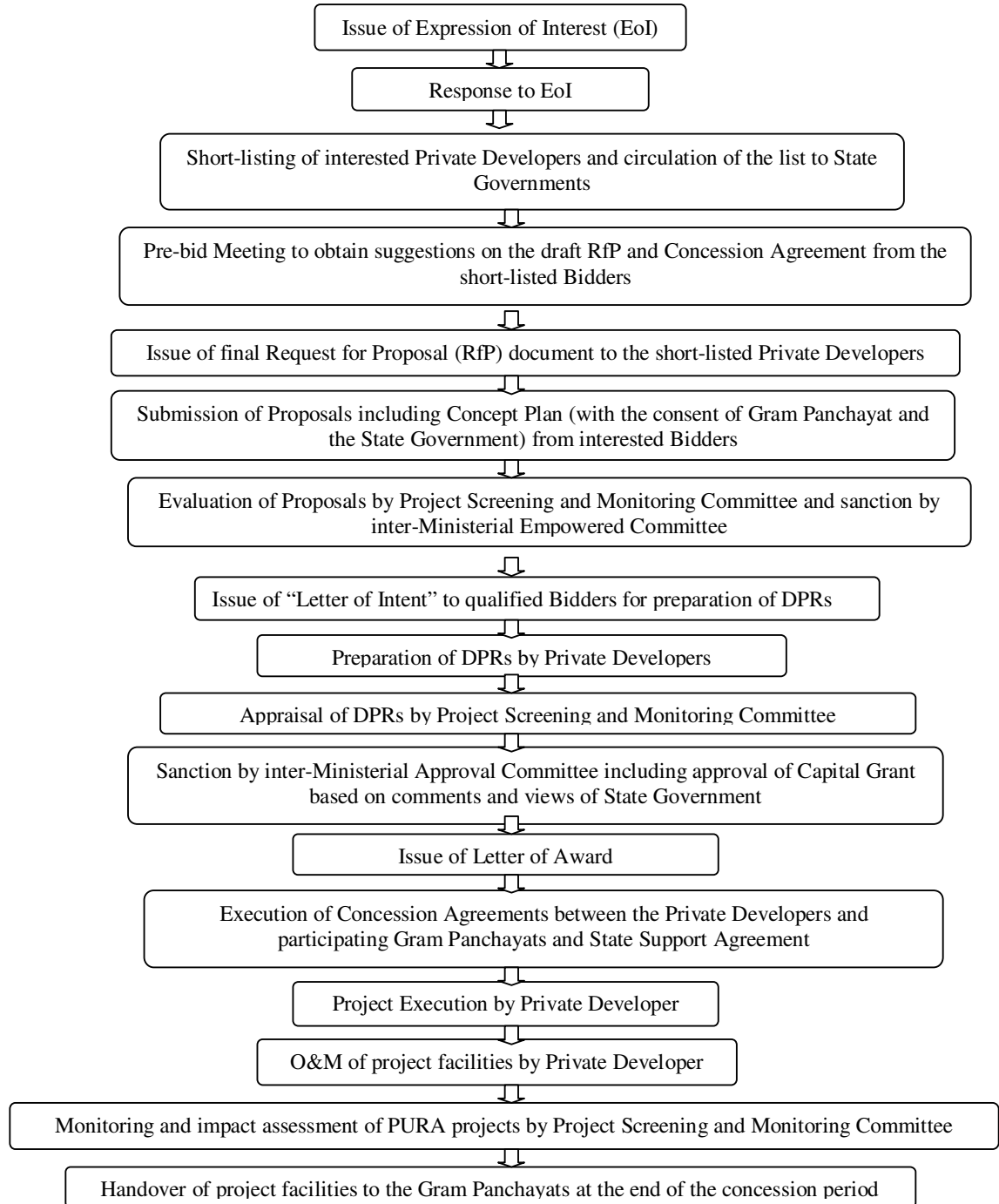
AMENITIES TO BE PROVIDED UNDER PURA SCHEME

The private partner will be responsible for providing the amenities to the rural area. The following are the list of amenities and infrastructure provided under PURA scheme.

Amenities/ Activities to be provided under schemes of MoRD and Ministry of Drinking water and Sanitation (MDWS) (Mandatory) (a)	Amenities to be provided under schemes of other Ministries (non-MoRD and State Government Schemes)- illustrative list (b)	Add-on Projects(Revenu earning, people centric projects)-illustrative list (c)
1. Water and Sewerage 2. Construction and maintenance of village streets 3. Drainage 4. Solid Waste Management 5. Skill Development 6. Development of Economic Activities	7. Village Street Lighting 8. Telecom 9. Electricity generation etc.	10. Village based tourism 11. Integrated Rural Hub, Rural Market. 12. Agri-Common Services Centre and Warehousing 13. Any other rural-economy based project

Source: Modified PURA Scheme Guidelines, MoRD, GOI, p. 4

Flow chart of PURA Project Cycle: The whole PURA project has been represented by the following flow chart:



Source: Modified PURA Scheme Guidelines, MoRD, GOI, pp. 13-14

CONCLUSION

Lastly it can be said that, despite of launching the various schemes for poverty eradication, generating employment, removing illiteracy; poverty, unemployment, illiteracy are some of the basic problems which are still persistent in rural areas of our country. The basic problem is that the lacking of livelihood opportunities in those areas. It is not a problem of today but from the very past people due to lacking of proper livelihood, education, infrastructure, had been migrating from the rural to the urban areas. In the era of globalization-privatization also, the rural areas are also lagging behind than the urban areas. Instead of development, they are deprived more than before e.g. decreasing share of agriculture in GDP, not getting proper rate of agricultural products, lagging behind in the globalized market, closing down of small and cottage industries etc. In this respect, the concept of PURA is an innovative idea for the development of the rural areas. It is the first scheme where the urban amenities and infrastructure is to be provided under public private partnership (PPP). It is expected that though the scheme is very complex but the implementation of this can bring the social and economic prosperity in the villages. In this way, the light of development can reach to the remotest part of the villages of our country and the complete development can be possible.

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