

PURA : A VISION & ITS IMPLEMENTATION (PHASE I)

Ritesh Dwivedi* & Pratibha Jha

ABSTRACT

Agriculture is the principal occupation of the rural people of our country and about majority of rural population earns their livelihood on the basis of agriculture and agriculture related activities. Agriculture sector is facing very tough condition and farmers, the backbone of our economy are crumbling under cost escalation & inflationary pressures. It is now overcrowded and the problem of disguised unemployment has become very acute in this sector. Climate condition are also not very consistent and conducive for agriculture sector that is why policymakers has shifted their focus towards other mead of livelihood rather that agriculture which requires better connectivity & infrastructure facilities in rural areas. Some rural areas with industrial development or high agricultural production offer better prospects for jobs or self-employment.

This new doctrine has been conceptualised as “Providing Urban facilities in Rural Areas” (PURA) consisting of four connectivities; physical, electronic, knowledge and there by leading to economic connectivity to enhance the prosperity of clusters of villages in the rural areas. The economic connectivity will generate a market and the production establishments for servicing the market. The PURA has all the dimensions to become a business enterprise, which has global dimensions but operating in every nook and corner of our country. The PURA entrepreneur has to have the skills for evolving a business plan with banks and also create infrastructural support such as educational institutions, health centres and small scale industries, transportation services, tele-education, tele-medicine, e-governance services in the region integrating with the governmental rural development schemes such as road, communication and transport and also with national and global markets to sell the products and services.

INTRODUCTION

“PURA is a central sector scheme re-launched by Ministry of Rural Development during the remaining period of the XIth plan with support from Department of Economic Affairs and the technical assistance of Asian Development Bank. The Ministry of Rural Development is implementing the PURA scheme under a Public Private Partnership (PPP) framework between Gram Panchayats and private sector partners with active support of the state government.”¹

PURA differs from the conventional ideas of economic development of rural areas in many ways—a comprehensive and composite rural development, government investment at urban levels in rural programmes, reverse

rural-urban migration, the prerequisite quality infrastructure, supportive modern industry and investment in social and commercial service and private enterprise initiative.

It was Mahatma Gandhi who underlined the exploitation of rural society by its urban counterpart. Gandhiji wrote in Village² Singh, Kartar.(1999), Rural Development Principles, Policies and Management Swaraj:

“The British have exploited India through its cities. The latter have exploited the villages. The blood of the villages is the cement with which the edifice of the cities is built. I want the blood that is today inflating the arteries of the cities to run once again in the blood vessels of villages.” There is no doubt that the planning process did try to

* Ph.D, MSW, Lecturer, Amity School of Rural Management, Sec-125, Noida

** MBA (Rural Management), Noida

develop the villages through community development projects. Irrigation facilities were enlarged and Green Revolution did provide an opportunity to the rural people to increase their share in national and per capita income, but still

the rural-urban divide continues and there is a migration of population from the rural to urban areas. Lack of rural employment, fragmentation of land holdings and declining public investment in agriculture create a crisis for rural Indians.

Again in this era of globalization, agriculture itself is not proving a reliable source of income. High cost of cultivation, scarcity of irrigation water, stagnation of productivity in this sector and fluctuations in prices of agricultural products are the main factors responsible for converting agriculture into non-profitable sector of employment. In such "distress" conditions, rural laborers and farmers are compelled to move from villages to urban areas and cities in search of employment and better livelihood.

PURA is a strip of habitation about 500 meters wide on either side of a ring road linking a loop of villages. Hence, every point in PURA will be within walking distance from open farms and a modern road transport system on the other. Places of work will normally be within walking distance. It will have broad uncrowned streets; gracious pathways. PURA will restore the joy of walking. Slums in cities and huts in villages will disappear. Thus, the dream of PURA is-

- From slums or huts to garden house.
- From congested streets to gracious paths.
- From manual labor to knowledge occupation.

PURA aims at meeting the gap in social and physical infrastructure in the identified rural clusters consisting of 10 to 15 villages within a radius of 4 to 5 kilometers around selected towns to enhance their growth potential with focus on the following areas.

- i. Provision of reliable power supply to the household level
- ii. Provision of water supply
- iii. Provision of road facilities
- iv. Provision of reliable telecom, Internet and I.T Services
- v. Upgrading existing schools to the next higher level.
- vi. Up-gradation of health facilities.
- vii. Marketing facilities for agricultural produce.

PURA proposes that urban infrastructure and services be provided in rural hubs to create economic opportunities outside of cities. Physical connectivity by providing roads electronic connectivity by providing communication network and knowledge connectivity by establishing professional and Technical institutions will have to be done in an integrated way so that economic connectivity will emanate.

The scope of the scheme³ is to select private partners to develop livelihood opportunities, urban amenities and infrastructure facilities to prescribe service levels and to be responsible for maintenance of the same for a period of ten years in select Panchayats/cluster of Panchayats. Private sector entities having experience in development and management of community-oriented infrastructure projects shall be selected through an open competitive bidding process based on rigorous qualifications and evaluation criteria.

The leveraging of public funds with private capital and management expertise for creation and maintenance of rural infrastructure is the essence of the PURA scheme, which is envisioned to act as the catalyst not only for convergence between different infrastructure development schemes but also for the new model for the management of urbanisation of rural areas.

Lack of livelihood opportunities, modern amenities and services for decent living in rural

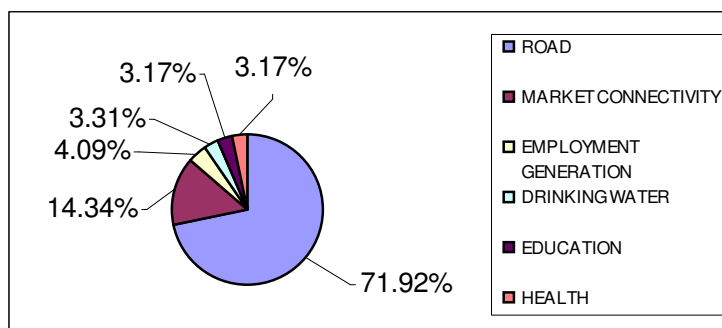
areas lead to migration of people towards urban areas. There are wide gaps in the availability of physical and social infrastructure between rural and urban areas. To address these issues, the President of India Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam highlighted a vision of transformation of rural India through launching a mega mission for Provision of Urban amenities in Rural Areas (PURA). During his address to the nation on eve of Republic Day 2003, Dr. Kalam visualized providing four connectivities:

- Physical connectivity,
- Electronic connectivity,
- Knowledge connectivity leading to

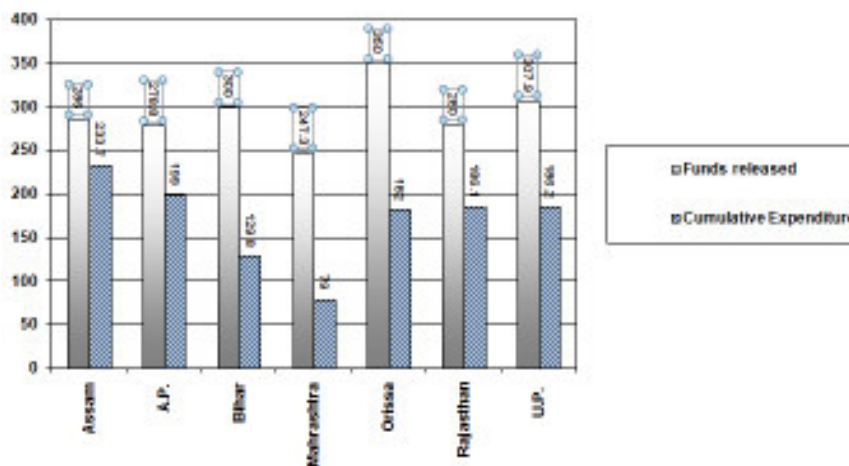
Economic connectivity of rural areas

Government has also focused on these connectivities and in fig-1 it is very clear that government has released majority of fund to improve road connectivity also some important share towards Market connectivity. Rest of the fund has been allocated towards other provisions for development of rural areas. But the only allocation or releasing the fund is not the remedy of the problem; the funds should be utilized as per the mandate of the programme. According to the data available (see fig-2) states are lagging behind in consumption of funds; it is prima facie cause of poor development of rural areas. Assam and Andhra Pradesh are the only two states who have performed to the extent.

Funds released under various connectivities (Fig:-1)



State-wise Financial Progress (2004 -05 to 2006 -07) Fig:-2



Sources : Ministry of Rural Development (Status relating to Utilization Certificate / Audit Report / Physical Progress / Financial Progress - PURA)

OBJECTIVES OF PURA

The primary objectives of the scheme are the provision of livelihood opportunities and urban amenities in rural areas to bridge the rural - urban divide. The objectives of PURA are proposed to be achieved under the framework of Public Private Partnership between Gram Panchayats and private sector and all partners with active state government support. Core funding shall be sourced from the Central Sector scheme of PURA and complemented by additional support through convergence of different Central Government schemes. The private sector shall also bring into the project its share of investment besides operational expertise. The scheme would be implemented and managed by the private sector on considerations of economic viability but designed in a manner whereby it is fully aligned with the overall objective of rural development.

Core Fundamentals of PURA

PURA has been envisaged as a self-sustainable and viable model of service delivery to be managed through an implementation framework between local people, public authorities and the private sector. There is some core fundamentals which will drive the whole programme: –

1. Implementation of the scheme through Public Private Partnership (PPP).
2. PPP between Gram Panchayat (GP) and Private Sector Partner.
3. Core funding from PURA scheme of MoRD.
4. Additional support through convergence of Central Government Scheme
5. Private Partner to bring in investment and operational expertise.
6. Project based risk sharing among stakeholders.

The Private Partner selected to undertake PURA projects shall identify a Gram

Panchayat/ a cluster of geographically contiguous Gram Panchayats for a population of about 25,000-40,000. Whereas the cluster would be the project area, there may be sub-projects to cover each of the Panchayats within the cluster. Alternatively, a large single Panchayat could individually provide critical mass to make the project viable. In the pilot phase, the Private Partner is given the flexibility to identify and select the Gram Panchayat(s) for undertaking PURA projects based on their familiarity with the area or past experience of working at the grassroots level.

Land for the PURA project ⁴

1. For the public amenities, Gram Panchayat/ State Government to provide land free of cost.
2. For the Add-on activities
 - i. Revenue sharing between GP and private partners if land provided by GP/State Govt.
 - ii. Such add-on facilities to revert back to GP/ State Govt. at the end of concession period.
 - iii. In case the private developer has to purchase the land from open market, cost of land not to be included for the estimation of capital grant.

Criteria for PURA Clusters

An exercise has been carried out by the Planning Commission to identify 504 towns (one town per selected District) around which clusters have been selected on the following objective methodology.

- The town around which clusters of villages within a radius of 4-5 KMs have been identified for strengthening infrastructure facilities to generate growth impulse in the rural areas.
- All the Districts with the towns that have a population of 5 lakh and above have not been considered for selection under PURA.
- The towns up to a population of 1 lakh have only been identified.

- Only the infrastructure gaps of the selected clusters will be bridged under PURA.
- Collectors will be the nodal officers for implementation of PURA.

Depending upon the region and the state of present development PURA can be classified in three different categories, namely Type A, Type B, Type C - PURA Clusters. The characteristics features of these types are given below:

For example,⁵ Type A Cluster is situated closer to an urban area and having minimal

road connectivity, limited infrastructure, limited support - school, primary health centre. Type B Cluster is situated closer to urban area but has sparsely spread infrastructure and no connectivity, Type C Cluster located far interior with no infrastructure, no connectivity and no basic amenities.

Amenities Provided Under PURA⁶

An illustrative list of amenities and economic activities proposed to be provided under PURA are given in following table:-

Table -1

Amenities to be provided under MoRD scheme	Amenities to be provided under non MoRD scheme	Add-on Projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Water and Sewerage ● Construction and maintenance of Village Streets ● Drainage ● Solid Waste Management ● Skill Development ● Development of Economic Activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Village Street Lighting ● Telecom Electricity, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Village linked tourism ● Integrated Rural Hub, Rural Market. ● Agri-Common Services Centre, Warehousing, etc ● Any other rural-economy based project

Source :PURA Guidelines, <http://rural.nic.in/PURA/PURA%20Scheme%20Guidelines.pdf>

PURA is a unique business plan...

It is a business proposition of Rs. 100 crores with Public and Private Partnership over project period of five years. Government through different departments / institutions, Banks / Agencies like NABARD, ADB, WB, UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO; venture capitalists can fund PURA components. However, initially Rural Development Ministry will fund up to Rs. 5 crore or more for each PURA cluster for the initial infrastructure development and thereby providing services. This may attract the public - private partnership for providing value-added services in the three sectors of the economy and run as sustainable business propositions.

PURA has some distinct features

- It aims at a comprehensive development of rural areas to generate urban- level incomes, and not mere "Poverty alleviation".
- It plans for an investment at urban levels and not the much lower amounts that prevails at present.
- It aims to generate employment for the educated, thereby, halt and even reverse rural-urban migration.
- It treats quality infrastructure as the prerequisite and not the consequence of development.

- It seeks modern industry, investment in social and commercial service instead of rural handicrafts and agri-based small industry.
- It relies on private initiative. It is a for-profit enterprise not dependent on subsidy from the government.

Implementation Of PURA Pilot Phase

In different parts of the country some PURA projects have been launched and implemented successfully. These PURA enterprises are involved in management of schools, health care units, vocational training centres, marketing facilities, local industrial / ICT parks, tourism services, and banking system etc.

Here some operational PURAs have been discussed ...

In the first phase, the Ministry of Rural Development implemented seven⁷ pilot projects from 2004-05 to 2006-07, with a total outlay of Rs 3 billion in the states of Assam (Gohpur), Andhra Pradesh (Rayadurg), Bihar (Motipur), Maharashtra (Basmath), Rajasthan (ShahPURA), Orissa (Kujanga) and Uttar Pradesh (Bharthana). It is possible to get an insight of PURA by studying few of the operational PURAs which are functioning in different parts of the country. They are:

Periyar PURA (Tamil Nadu)

Periyar PURA complex pioneered by Periyar Maniannai College of Technology for women, Vallam, Tanjore is functioning near Vallam having a cluster of over 65 villages in Tamilnadu which involves a population of 1 Lakh. This PURA complex has all the three connectivities - Physical, electric, and knowledge - leading to economic connectivity. The center of activity emanates from the women engineering college that provides the electronic and knowledge connectivity.

Periyar PURA scheme⁸ encompasses 57 villages of Thanjavur district and 8 villages of

Pudukkottai district. These villages encircle the institution at the radial distance of 22 KM. This is a rain-fed and drought prone area consisting of abundant land, which is unutilized. As this is predominantly an agrarian region, large-scale industrialization has not taken place and the manpower remains idle. Socioeconomic status of the people remains in an extreme poor condition. Women folk of this region are totally ignored by all means. The PURA area is roughly a circular area of approximately 1500 square km. Most households in the area use wood for cooking, at a rate of about 5 kg per day.

Out of 65 Periyar PURA villages 7 have been selected as economic cluster. Periyar PURA has health care centers, primary to post graduate level education and vocational training centers. This has resulted in large-scale employment generation and creation of number of entrepreneurs with the active support of 850 self-help groups. Two hundred acres of waste land has been developed into a cultivable land with innovative water management schemes such as contour ponds and water sheds for storing and irrigating the fields. All the villagers are busy in cultivation, planting *Jatropha*, herbal and medicinal plants, power generation using bio-mass, food processing and above all running marketing centre. Recently, 5 of Periyar PURA villages are connected through Wi-MAX Wireless and having minimum 4 mbps connectivity with the Periyar PURA nodal centre.

Dr. APJ. Abdul Kalam, Former President of India has inaugurated Periyar PURA BPO on 02.10.2008 at Periyar Maniammai University. It provides a sustainable economic development in that region. Periyar Organization providing a training facility for Women Empowerment and Renaissance Bakery Training.

Outcome of Periyar PURA

- Created 850 self help groups in 65 villages.
- Provided vocational and skill development training on

- * Dairy farming and biomass
- * Vermi-composting and dry land cultivation
- * Entrepreneurial skills to create SSI units.
- * Bio- Mass and solar power management
- Six percolation dams and five check dams to harness the rain water.
- More than 5000 farmers are benefitted.
- It has brought a number of employment generation schemes.

Loni Model ⁹(Maharashtra)

Loni PURA is situated in Maharashtra where a participative model of integrated rural development has come up among 44 villages with the population of 80,000. The Loni PURA model has been pioneered by Pravara Medical trust.

The concept is people centric development for social transformation. The thrust area of development has been on comprehensive Medicare particularly for women and children, need based health education and e-connectivity to the farmers. The complex has created 27 educational and vocational institutions consisting of schools, colleges, polytechnic and ITI including medical and engineering colleges. They have created sugar factory, biogas plants, chemical plants and power projects. They have large number of self-help groups for providing low interest loan for the weaker sections in the society.

Outcome of Loni PURA

- Road connectivities to 44 villages(12000 sq.km)
- 80,000 people benefitted.
- Increase in literacy rate from 63% to 83%.
- Reduction in crude birth rate from 2.3% to 2%.
- Reduction in mortality rate and medical complex.
- 15-20 % better standard of living than overall Ahmednagar district.

- Industries established are - Sugar factory(4000MT), Biogas Plant(42000MT), Compost Manure Plant(25000MT), Chemical Plant, Power project(35MW)
- Rural education - 27 institutions running, education to drop-outs also.
- Agricultural development through vocational Training, Krishi Vigyan Kendra
- Economic connectivity - Loan to weaker section through Sahkari Bank
- E-connectivity - Internet, tele-medicine, online query about market trends, weather reports.

Chitrakoot PURA¹⁰ (Madhya Pradesh)

DRI is a unique institution developing and implementing a village development model, which is most suited for India. DRI understands that people's power is more potent, stable and enduring than political power. By becoming one with the oppressed and depressed, one gains the acumen of administration and governance. Social advancement and prosperity are possible only by injecting the spirit of self-reliance and excellence in the younger generation. Using this principle, DRI has plans to develop one hundred clusters of villages having approximately five villages each around Chitrakoot. They have already developed 80 villages in 16 clusters consisting of about 50,000 people.

One of the villages called Patni where the institute has promoted sustainable development based on indigenous and traditional technology, knowledge systems and local talents. The research work by the institute through field studies facilitates the development of replicable and tangible model for achieving self-reliance in villages. The programme aims at income generation through value addition, innovative agricultural practices, inculcating scientific temper among the villagers, improvement of health and hygiene, striving towards 100% literacy. As a

part of integrated rural development, the villagers are doing water harvesting; effectively use it for cultivation of food grains, medicinal and aromatic and horticulture cultivation.

Outcome of Chitrakoot PURA

- Promoted traditional techniques and skills, knowledge system and trends.
- Income generation through value addition,
- Innovative agricultural practices,
- Improvement of health and hygiene.
- Striving towards 100% literacy.
- Apart from all development activities it develops a cohesive conflict free society.
- Eighty villages around chitrakoot are litigation free.

Byrraju PURA

Byrraju PURA¹¹ was set up by Byrraju Foundation which is established by a software industry. Byrraju Foundation of Satyam near Bhimavaram has undertaken the mission of establishing 32 Ashwini centers benefiting 116 villages with the population of around 500,000 people. It has provided the electronic connectivity through wireless (512 kbps to 2 mbps), knowledge connectivity in cooperation with National Academy of Construction, Hyderabad and other domain experts, thereby creating economic connectivity in these villages. It has skill enabled and knowledge enabled in multiple areas and created 3000 jobs with the minimum earning of Rs. 3,000 per month, this is 3 times that of their earlier earning potential. They have created a Gram IT BPO which has brought 10% reverse migration from Hyderabad to Bhimavaram (city to village).

Outcome of Byrraju PURA

- Developing Entrepreneurial Skills
- Employment to 3000 people
- Project Ashwini provides Electronic connectivity to 116 villages.



CONCLUSION

PURA is a scheme for the wealth creation. It was envisaged by former President Dr. A.P.J. Kalam 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. This scheme envisages twinning of rural infrastructure development and management with economic re-generation activities and is the first attempt at delivering a basket of infrastructure and amenities through PPP in the rural areas. It is an effort to provide a different framework for the implementation of rural infrastructure development schemes and harness private sector efficiencies in the management of assets and delivery of services. This would perhaps be the first such attempt at PPP in integrated rural infrastructure development and management in the world.

The rural to urban migration is a constant cause of worry and rural people have been living without proper amenities (slums) and facing a lot of problems. In the developing regions as India, migration is from rural agricultural sectors to urban informal sectors. This is a typical manifestation of under-development and poverty which arose due to lack of infrastructural support at village level. It is heartening that private partners have been included in the PURA framework so that it can be a self sustained unit in a long run.

The selected private partner would be required to provide amenities like water supply and sewerage, roads, drainage, solid waste management, street lighting and power distribution and undertake some economic and skill development activity as part of the PURA project. The private partner must provide 'add-on' revenue-earning facilities such as village linked tourism, integrated rural hub, rural market, agri-common services centre and warehousing etc. in addition to the abovementioned amenities. It is very much important that every Panchayat should be having its own sub-projects to cater

its very own resources, skill set of villagers / artisans. In this way, every PURA project will have several Panchayats in a cluster, having their own development designs and targets.

Government has done an experiment at grassroots level with the PURA Phase I implementation, although there has been some problems but overall it has been an eye-opener initiative which has paved way for mainstreaming of rural areas in economic activities. Based upon positive feedback and advices from experts, industrialists and other development practitioners, Government is going to launch its second phase of PURA (through Commercial bidding) with more elaborate framework including roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders towards ensuring the long term profitability of each PURA cluster as well as improving livelihoods of lacks of villagers.

REFERENCES

1. PPT on "PURA - A Template in PPP for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth of Rural India", available at www.rural.nic.in/PURA/PPT_MORD.pps
2. Singh, Kartar. (1999), *Rural Development Principles, Policies and Management*, Sage Publishers, New Delhi
3. About PURA.
4. PPT on "PURA - A Template in PPP for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth of Rural India".
5. PURA Guidelines, Ministry of Rural Development, GOI.
6. PURA Guidelines, Ministry of Rural Development, GOI.
7. Mayaram Aroind, *Urbanisation of Rural Areas, PURA Scheme as the Game Changer*.
8. *Pura Villages A Brief Background Of The Periyar*.

9. Kalam, A P J., *Typical Working PURAs*,
10. Kalam, A P J., *Pura in Action in Chitrakoot*.
11. Kalam, A P J., *PURA Mission to Reality*.

FOOTNOTES

1. PPT on "PURA A Template in PPP for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth of Rural India", www.rural.nic.in/PURA/PPT_MORD.pps
2. Singh, Kartar. (1999), *Rural Development Principles, Policies and Management*
3. About PURA, <http://pura.net.in/content/about-pura>
4. PPT on PURA A Template in PPP for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth of Rural India, www.rural.nic.in/PURA/PPT_MORD.pps
5. PURA Guidelines, Ministry of Rural Development, <http://rural.nic.in/PURA/PURA%20Scheme%20Guidelines.pdf>
6. PURA Guidelines, Ministry of Rural Development, <http://rural.nic.in/PURA/PURA%20Scheme%20Guidelines.pdf>
7. Mayaram Aroind, *Urbanisation of Rural Areas, PURA Scheme as the Game Changer*, http://www.inclusion.in/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=470&Itemid=77
8. *Pura Villages A Brief Background Of The Periyar*, <http://www.periyarpura.org/about.html>
9. Kalam, A P J., *Typical Working PURAs*, http://www.abdulkalam.com/kalam/jsp/display_content.jsp?menuid=23&menuname=Vision%202020%20Missions&linkid=100&linkname=PURA&content=410&columnno=1&starts=0&menu_image=-&myheader=Typical%20Working%20PURAs%20&titlename=null
10. *Pura in Action in Chitrakoot*, http://www.chitrakoot.org/download/President_in_Chitrakoot.pdf
11. Kalam, A P J., *PURA Mission to Reality*, http://aslicharity.org/docs/PURA%20MISSION_AVp_v3Nov_14_2007_11_48_15_AM1.pdf