CHAPTER-VII

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Increasing trend of urbanisation and urban poor

Review of literature and other reports of government of India indicate that India is part of global trend on urbanisation which would predominantly continue in the developing countries. Such increasing trend of urbanisation demands for a significant policy formulation and necessary administrative reforms. This has been substantiated with the recent publication of Census of India 2011 that the urban population which was about 17.3% during the year 1951 have crossed 31.2% with a decadal growth of 31.8%. It is relevant to mention here that the urban poverty in India is large and widespread. In the year 2004-05, 80.8 million people out of an estimated urban population of 309.5 million persons were below the poverty line (BPL). As per estimates (Revallion et al, 2007) these numbers constitute a significant proportion of the world’s total urban poor estimated at 291.4 million. Over the past three decades (1973 – 2004), the number of urban poor have increased by 34.4% and the share of the urban poor in the total from 18.7% in 1973 increased to 26.8% in 2004-05. During this period, it has also been identified that in addition about 40 to 50 million persons are on the border of line of poverty. This clearly indicates that the poor simultaneously tend to increase proportionately creating a herculean challenge to the urban functionaries in providing basic services as well as dignified living status on par with other citizens within the urban agglomeration. It need to be realized that the migration trends would continue to draw rural masses to the urban centres for better living standards in terms of eking their livelihoods, better medical facilities and educational facilities with expected prosperity to their future generation. This is also fueled with a fact that the agriculture in rural areas
have become another impediment for their continuation and survival on agriculture itself due to various push and pull factors which may even add fuel to the fire. Therefore if proper reforms are not introduced and implemented in a scientific and systematic manner to cater the needs of the citizens irrespective of the rural and the urban the problem would magnify gigantically. It is not so easy as said and done, but it requires a micro level planning in terms of providing livelihoods to the under privileged communities already living in slums, providing in situ development through some schemes or the other, accelerating in provision of income generation activities within the reach of the poor apart from extending them all the urban basic services through a whole city approach. Since this has been very elaborately covered right from the introduction chapter of this document, it can be safely and corroboratively concluded that both urbanisation trends and urban poverty trends are accelerating simultaneously that demand certain administrative reforms to meet the herculean challenge as a common saying goes ‘that a stitch in time saves nine’.

The primary focus may be bestowed in promoting livelihoods through a strategic approach duly involving the community particularly in implementation of government programmes within the ULBs either through federation or group dynamic model through building the capacities of the urban poor. Another major area that is identified as a huge gap is about skill development and placement.

The data analysis of this study indicates that though enormous amount has been spent for skill promotion among the urban poor, the placement level and their continuity in the trained area appears to be very minimal leading to a conclusion that these courses are being imparted only as mere statistical measure than the realistic idea of developing skills and placement. It has also been identified that the designing of curriculum is being
adapted in isolation than the market demand to be identified through a constant and continuous survey and active partnership of industry and other entrepreneurs who are not only potential employers but also agents of service providers.

The present study identified that the implementation of Swarna Jayanti Shahri Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY) has certain drawbacks; lack of awareness about the scheme, lack of staff to implement the scheme and unfortunately reluctance of bankers to extend loans for micro enterprises which again can be attributed for non coalition and coordination of respective states. The Government of India in its report “Poverty Alleviation 2011” acknowledged that the SJSRY has taught them certain lessons like lack of convergence approach, targeting of beneficiaries without any indicators and availability of real time data apart from identification of courses and trades. It has also been acknowledged that the government could not achieve the expected results as the scheme was limited to only targeted towns with a population above 5 lakhs. They were adapting top-down approach to community structures mostly though some states like Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat have successfully implemented schemes through mission mode approach. It has also been identified that undue focus on employment of unskilled workers was one of the reasons for its failure particularly in implementation of UWEP apart from lack of sustained financial linkage for self employment ventures. It is unfortunate to place it here that the government of India though have acknowledged that it failed to achieve optimum results and acknowledges that they have learnt certain lessons from its previous SJSRY flagship programme, has again been repeating the same in the newly introduced NULM. Thus there is a need for proper structural institutional mechanism.
II. Institutional Framework for Implementation

The Government of India have acknowledged in its annual report 2011 that the non-availability of proper institutional mechanism is the main reason for improper implementation of programmes of UPA particularly like SJSRY. The states like Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Gujarat where there is an institutional mechanism have gained national fame for their successful implementation of poverty alleviation programmes. This encourages all other states also to create proper institutional framework. Thus certain administrative reforms in the implementation of urban poverty alleviation programme, proper back-up in the form of a robust institutional arrangement is crucial. The setting up of a dedicated structure and mechanism reflects the willingness of state to give enhanced focus on urban poverty alleviation and can win the confidence of beneficiaries apart from accelerating the process of community empowerment through a joint partnership.

This has been adequately exemplified in the success of Kudumbasree (Kerala), MEPMA (Andhra Pradesh) and UMMEED (Gujarat) through their models of urban poverty alleviation which have earned national acclaim for themselves and could provide certain specific policy insights in the newly introduced NULM. It does not mean that these systems are fool proof or robust and does not require further administrative reforms for reaching the beneficiaries in toto. There are many administrative reforms at the state level that are not only desirable but imperative, in order to make the institutional setting viable in these states also. In the absence of an adequate administrative reform set, to go with the institutional mechanism, the poverty alleviation initiative will not only be just a short-lived success, but in its reactive form, may also endanger with unintended results.
For the purpose of present study, the mission mode approach of MEPMA has been examined as a case study. MEPMA has a three tier system: State Level, District Level and ULB level. At the ULB level, community organizers are the paid employees of MEPMA along with Town Project Officers/ Poverty Resource Persons to liaise and work in colloquation with urban functionaries particularly to cater the needs of slum dwellers and to work on the state and central government projects that are designed for urban poverty alleviation. It will not be out of place to mention that the efforts of MEPMA are commendable and their efforts are recognized as outstanding at the national level. The recent award by the Prime Minister of India for social mobilization and financial inclusion is an indication of such result. Most of the tenets of MEPMA and its activities are also being added in the National Urban Livelihood Mission. However there is a need for urgent reforms particularly on operational aspects and retention of employees.

This study identified certain inadequacies which may include specifically appointment of Project Directors at the District Level for which there is no specific qualifications coupled with domain expertise prescribed resulting in posting of certain officials from various unrelated state government departments and without minimum knowledge or experience on deputation basis succumbing to push and pull factors. Such appointments are becoming the root cause for non achievement of targets or accomplishment of planned activities on one side and non accountability of resources earmarked and spent.

The other major issue that this study embarked on is about shortage of human resources at the ULB level who are already on a skeleton but are being utilized for other purposes and so called emergency works leaving the main objective of poverty
alleviation. Another important factor that has come as an observation is that there is no impact studies documented district wise or region wise or subject wise except bank linkage and recovery becoming an impediment to the evaluation or researchers for further improvement.

Most of the respondents who were interacted during the study have expressed their dissatisfaction about non availability of HR policy and pay and perks on par with other departments/ agencies working in similar projects / organisation leading to a greater inconvenience and their probability of searching for better opportunities. If such condition is continued, the organisation may have to lose the talented workforce.

Referring to the financial stability, it has been identified that the major funds are allocated through non plan projects like SJSRY which is a centrally sponsored scheme for urban poverty alleviation and this however facilitated MEPMA to tap huge funds in comparison with other states and the matching grant or the state support appears to be minimal. In this aspect, it is pertinent to mention that the allocated budget of 20-25 % as mandated after 74th Constitutional Amendment as a mandatory reform for urban poverty alleviation appears to have been retained within the ULB and not transferred or utilized through MEPMA resulting in either non availability of these funds for urban poverty alleviation or repetition of activities knowingly or unknowingly. This clearly indicates lack of check and balance in regards to accountability of resources.

III. Convergence of social sector developmental programmes – Need for certain reforms

The Government of India in the recent past has been striving hard to bring in convergence particularly in social development sector which is being looked after by various other departments both in the state and central government. These schemes have
been briefly discussed with their purpose and activity in Chapter II. This study found that though both 12\textsuperscript{th} Plan and 13\textsuperscript{th} Finance Commission are elaborately exhorting the states to make their efforts toward inclusive growth in terms of development and accomplish them through convergence of programmes as well as institutions. The Regional Centres under the sponsorship of Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation have also been imparting training and building capacities of urban functionaries towards this endeavour. However, the respondents answered that unless or otherwise there is a specific system established with authenticity and accessibility, convergence of programmes as well as convergence of institutions will limit to planning boards. Under these circumstances, there is a need to introduce certain administrative reforms to bring all such developmental programmes particularly Sarva Siksha Abhiyan which caters the need of primary education, insurance schemes (RSBY, JBY), pension schemes (widow/old age/ PWD), skill development programmes under the centrally sponsored skill development initiatives under Vocational Education Training Schemes, MSME, Urban Health Mission, Women Welfare and Child Development schemes/programmes, etc. under one umbrella and to make availability and accessibility of these schemes from a single window to the eligible beneficiaries. It has also been identified that most of these schemes are unaware among the urban poor and even most of the urban functionaries working in the social development sector has no exception from such ignorance.

IV. Inadequacy in the existing administrative system

The working group appointed by the Planning Commission to examine urban poverty and the delivery system in its report submitted for the 12\textsuperscript{th} Five Year Plan specifically identified that the existing approaches to urban poverty alleviation are unable to deliver the expected results due to various reasons and also have acknowledged the
drawbacks that were existing in the implementation of Swarna Jayanthi Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY). While briefly reviewing the existing urban poverty alleviation programmes have classified the vulnerabilities of urban poor into three categories: occupational vulnerability, social vulnerability and residential vulnerability. It has been suggested that the confluence of all three vulnerabilities will require a judicious combination of various programmes and the approach should aim at providing assistance to the urban poor on the basis of vulnerability and need and implying that depending on the level of vulnerability any urban poor could be covered under multiple sub missions at a given point of time using various programmes that are in vogue. The committee acknowledged that the authorities though have initiated certain reforms could not continue their efforts to really introduce administrative reforms as planned for, and could not inculcate the discipline of mission mode approach to the existing problems particularly promotion of livelihoods and skill development of the urban poor. This study found that the promotion of livelihoods should be given top priority as it is rightly included in the 12th Plan. The strategic approach may be focused on three key issues. First, is the combined focus on microenterprise and skill development of the urban poor on demand driven basis with a focus on what the urban poor themselves would be able to cope up and may start gainful employment through a short term training. Second, is the proactive and mandatory creation/ allocation of spaces within the periphery of city / centres for the lives and work of the urban poor which has been recently introduced as community centric livelihood promotion centres with an integrated approach of providing services right from procurement of raw material, qualitative production, marketing of products, and learning and unlearning the ways and means to overcome domain challenges and to withstand the competitive market. It has also been suggested
by the elite in the field that such creation and promotion of such community centric livelihood centres need to be partnered with the industry and market so as to have a tie up with the urban poor either on partnership or on win – win situation thereby to ensure sustainability. Finally, the working group of Planning Commission in its report recommended for an appropriate corrective legislation to ensure that the public safety and prevention of public nuisance should also be part of livelihood promotion to safeguard the interests of poor through a guaranteed livelihood promotion on one side and the other to the general public who have certain apprehensions that such proposals of community centric activities may intervene with their peace and tranquility. Special attention have to be taken as part of legal instrument that delegates authority to the urban functionaries to look after the welfare of informal sector which is very high amongst the urban poor particularly like street vendors and other sections of unorganized entrepreneurs / workers who are eking their livelihoods under continuous threat and pressure of eviction, inconveniences from other officials for continuation of their petty business activities. Some of these unorganized sectors could be those who are running petty business of repairing works, pottery work, sales of the product, mechanics, and petty automotive repairs. This study have also identified certain measures to protect the interests of the unorganized sector employees like giving them identity, trade license through a single window system may be with marginal costs, linking the urban poor entrepreneurs with the market, promotion of liaison between different stakeholders through an established institutional and infrastructural facilities apart from financial inclusion. It is also identified during this study that the states doesn’t have qualitative and real time data of urban poor or list of BPL families who are the actual target group / beneficiaries of UPA programmes. The present system is almost functioning on crisis
mode than a system mode of completing the targets and repeating same capacity building programmes to a single beneficiary who even after two to three trainings is still remaining as unemployed and unskilled. Thus there is a need for an accountability of identifying the poor as per real time data which can be updated may be annually or bi-annually through a structured survey and designing various programmes for implementation and promotion of livelihoods closer to the realities of urban poverty. It has also been primarily identified that most of the states are solely depending on central government funding for promotion of skill development and livelihoods and the states / ULBs are not earmarking any funds for the urban poor under these heads and even some states those who are showing in their budgets are not releasing such funds and remaining to the planning boards. Thus there is a need for close monitoring of utilization of funds on one side and also to allocate state and ULB funds for these heads as part of mandatory reforms that have been introduced under JnNURM.

As can be seen from the data presented in the tables above, the UPA programmes at the urban local body level hang in the air without proper linking of these with the existing district level and ULB level administrative machinery. There is not only lack of coordination between the UPA functionaries and the government and municipal administrative system but there is also a virtual non cooperation and slight by the ULB against the officers assigned to UPA programmes. As was mentioned by majority of the respondents of this study, all this looking down upon the UPA mission happens because the Municipal Administration Act has not incorporated or included the various programmes and functionaries of UPA by an amendment to the act. The UPA functionaries thus tend to nurture a feeling about their legitimacy and start doubting whether they are part of the municipal government. The very recruitment of UPA
functionaries is defective because the indirect recruitment of any Class I Officer from any department on deputation gives rise to nepotism and accommodating indifferent and unwanted officers in various departments into UPA programmes converting the mission into an asylum. As was opined by the respondents, there is a need for revamping the whole lot of HRM policies of recruitment, training, and placement of UPA functionaries in the government and ULB systems. The mission mode approach of the UPA thus can be realized only when the officers are recruited directly based on their commitment to poverty alleviation.

The mismanagement of funds intended for UPA programmes and resultant corruption, as reported by 90% of the respondents to this study; happens because of adhocism and uncertainty in the administrative system created for them. Thus there is an urgent need for bringing in administrative reforms equal to the massive tasks of UPA mission. The present system of attaching the Project Director, UPA to the District Administration makes him fall between the stools since he is not cared for by the administrative systems of government at District Level or the functionaries of ULB. There are occasions when functionaries of UPA and ULB working at cross purposes throwing the objectives of UPA mission to winds.

Majority of the respondents to this study suggested for elevating the Project Director of UPA at the District Level to Regional Director so that he can ensure cooperation from Municipal Commissioner and other officers of ULB for UPA mission. In the survey, it was found that 60% of UPA functionaries lack knowledge and information about the 60 and odd UPA programmes. Their knowledge at best is confined to only three programmes namely SJSRY, RAY and Rajiv Yuva Kiranalu (RYK). This is a real crisis because the functionaries who are supposed to enlist the cooperation and
participation of the beneficiaries in UPA mission without knowing what they are doing and supposed to be doing. There is a need for robust schedules of training for the functionaries from time to time so that their perception on the objectives of UPA programmes will improve to the extent of making them competent enough to guide the mission. Otherwise, a lofty mission like UPA will be made into a laughing stock because of ineffective administration and indifferent project staff.