Reading Material on Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies

(Selected Press Clippings)

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REINVENTING THE DELIVERY OF ESSENTIAL SOCIAL SERVICES AT GRASSROOTS LEVEL THROUGH PANCHAYATI RAJ

[By Nupur Tiwari[1] published in Kurukshetra-April 2009]

Abstract:

With the GDP growth rate rising to 7-8 per cent, rural-urban divide, regional divide and rich-poor divide became glaring, which brought 'inclusive growth' high on the policy agenda. Such unequal opportunity structure weakens the positive role of growth in reducing poverty and making growth inclusive. Large amounts of public funds are spent to address these issues but their implementation and the quality of services delivered leave much to be desired. The existing mechanism for the delivery of services is not effective, efficient or economical .The decentralized local government institutions are eminently suited for service delivery as they can ensure equity and / or equitability in the provision of services (in view of their nearness to the people), inclusiveness (in view of the assured representation available to all sections of the society in the Panchayati Raj Institutions), accessibility, transparency, local participation, accountability and sustainability of services. What is therefore required is that Panchayati Raj be brought centre-stage as the principal governance reform to reinforce economic reform and for delivery of essential social services at grassroots level. Improvement of service delivery by local self governments would vitally depend upon the quality of planning undertaken by these bodies. A key instrument available to Government of India is thus to provide fiscal incentives to state governments that can encourage them to strengthen local governance, in pursuance of the national strategy. Moving from a model of central provision to that of decentralization to local governments introduces a new relationship between national and local policy makers, while altering several existing relationships such as that between the citizens, elected politicians and the local bureaucracy. However , the problem of implementing decentralization is as important as the design of the system in influencing service delivery outcomes. When grass-roots planning processes strikes deep roots, economic empowerment is both strong and sustainable.

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(The views in the paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Organization.)

Two of the significant shifts in India, during the 21st century, have been the increased attention to the delivery of public services on the one hand and greater decentralization of responsibilities for these services on the other. The decentralized local government institutions are eminently suited for service delivery as they can ensure equity and / or equitability in the provision of services (in view of their nearness to the people), inclusiveness (in view of the assured representation available to all sections of the society in the Panchayati Raj Institutions), accessibility, transparency, local participation, accountability and sustainability of services.

The stark fact is that while, in the last four years India has, witnessed a GDP growth rate of7-8 per cent per annum but this has not translated into any substantial reduction in poverty. The rich-poor divide has increased and poverty reduction figures of India are now lower than those of Bangladesh. More than 300 million people in India still live in deep poverty at less than a dollar a day, while another 350 million live on less than two dollars a day. There are disparities among regions, states, sectors, and communities. Among the states, the North-Eastern and the Central regions, which have large tribal populations, are lagging behind. Among sectors, agriculture has fallen behind industry and the service sector. Although some of the poorest states are rich in natural and forest resources, the predominantly tribal population is unable to take advantage of this. Religious minorities, large sections of Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribal (ST) groups, and women still do not have access to many job opportunities and human development. The informal sector has emerged as the largest job creator, characterized by low wages and income insecurity while wage growth is concentrated only at the top end.Such unequal opportunity structure weakens the positive role of growth in reducing poverty and making growth inclusive.

Large amounts of public funds are spent to address these issues but their implementation and the quality of services delivered leave much to be desired. It is well recognized that the programmes to solve these problems are not performing well. They are too centralized, fragmented in concept as in implementation, insufficiently responsive to varying local needs or accountable to ensure efficient service delivery. The existing mechanism for the delivery of services is not effective, efficient or economical

Over the past four years, there has been an upsurge in central government expenditure on rural and urban development. Yet, these initiatives have suffered from teething troubles, because inadequate attention is given to equip Local self Governments the authority and capacities to perform effectively. Too small a proportion of these investments are actually planned and implemented by Local self Governments. The existing delivery system for government promoted growth consists of the 'district administration', a small group of official

and political personalities to whom the State turns to for information, advice and action. Hybridizing the official system with Local government administration only provides scope for patronage and non accountable behaviour. In the absence of proper recording of works undertaken under different programmes, and independent audit of their real content and performance, achievements claimed by official reports are hardly credible. Local self-government provides the essential means of reconciling accelerated growth with inclusive growth, through inclusive governance as the means of empowering the disadvantaged and enabling them to overcome their poverty. These institutions are the Panchayats, Municipalities, Autonomous District and Regional Councils and other similar arrangements.

The Eleventh Five year Plan asserts that 'it is absolutely critical for the inclusiveness of our growth process that these large numbers of elected representatives in our Panchayati Raj Institutions are fully involved in planning, implementing and supervising the delivery of essential public services.' (para 1.147).The Eleventh Plan also notes "The delivery of essential social services at the grassroots level is also poor and this is a major causative factor in unequal development. Much higher levels of human development can be achieved within the given structure of the economy, if only service delivery is improved." (para 1.6) The Plan document asserts that States can no longer delay or sidestep the devolution of functions, funds and functionaries to Panchayats and has identified activity mapping, the creation of a Panchayat sector window in both State and Central budgets and effective utilization of their taxation powers by Panchayats as key steps in this regard. (Paras 10.20 to 10.29)

What is therefore required is that Panchayati Raj be brought centre-stage **as the principal governance reform** to reinforce economic reform and for delivery of essential social services at grassroots level. However, several initiatives are required to be taken to make the local governments really effective in service delivery. These include:

- ensuring participatory local level planning by the Panchayati Raj Institutions to identify needs, levels of delivery and the enhancements desired by the people in each sector;
- assigning clearly demarcated roles to the PRIs through activity mapping;
- confining centrally sponsored and State schemes to a small number of important programmes to achieve declared national and State goals and also providing adequate space for the PRIs to participate in these schemes;
- undertaking a well structured process of administrative and fiscal devolution that matches the resource availability at each level of the Panchayats with functions assigned to it;

- providing capacity to the Panchayati Raj Institutions in the widest sense of the term to perform their responsibilities efficiently; and
- putting in place systems of accountability by duly empowering the Gramsabha, so that citizens, the ultimate recipients of services, are enabled to hold the PRIs accountable for any inadequacies in service delivery.

Moving forward with a well-designed inclusive governance would require aligning the "three Fs": funds, functions, and functionaries in ways that make it possible to have technically effective services with both "accounting" (the capability to provide reliable budget control and reporting) and "accountability" (the ability of citizens and communities from the bottom up to hold elected officials and providers responsible for outputs and outcomes). This "activity mapping" of the three Fs cannot be done by slogans or ideology, as a functional activity mapping will vary from sector to sector, vary within sectors (e.g. hospitals versus *aanganwadi),* and even vary by function (e.g. asset creation versus operation), but can be informed by general principles.

However, the inclusive governance will create an opportunity to *unbundle* responsibilities across tiers of government in order to create checks and balances in the interests of the tiers of government—so that one tier reports on the performance of another—in order to assist citizens in getting the information they need to create accountability for performance. Second, this, in creating new lines of responsibility will also create opportunities to strengthen the "demand side"—the mobilization of communities from the bottom up to demand better performance with better information and greater scope for voice and choice.

V. Ramachandran Expert Groups on Grassroots level planning(March 2006) has suggested a series of sequential steps for building the district plan from the village level upwards. In order to ensure that the benefits of participatory planning accrue to all through an inclusive growth strategy, the Expert Group outlined the following six preconditions that ought to inform the design of decentralization and the grassroots the planning process. These are:

- A clear and unambiguous activity mapping for different levels of Panchayats based on the principle of subsidiarity;
- Engagement of all stakeholders in participatory planning as well as in implementation, particularly of historically discriminated and marginalized segments of the population, including women;
- Devolution of adequate funds, untied to this or that activity;

- Streamlining and consolidation of plans to ensure flexibility and a measure of autonomy;
- Augmenting the existing revenue raising powers, and building capacity of local governments to raise revenues from the sources assigned to them; and
- Maintenance of MIS and a statistical base, to assist local governments to efficiently design and implement plans, raise resources and evaluate programmes.

Slowly but surely, Panchayats appear to be accepted in the implementation of schemes of line ministries. The most important of these is of course, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme, where the Panchayats at the district, intermediate and village levels have been given major implementation and planning responsibilities. These have been designated as principal authorities for planning and implementation. Under the NREGA, at least 50 percent in terms of value of the works taken up shall be by the Village Panchayats. Progress reports from States reveal that 72 percent of NREGA works are being taken up at the Village Panchayat level.In addition, there are several important flagship programmes of the Centre, which are aimed at provisional essential services through the Panchayat level. These are the National Rural Health Mission, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan for primary education, the Midday Meals Programme, and the Integrated Child Development Scheme.

New programmes that are likely to turn round this year, such as the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, the National Food Security Mission, the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana and the Agricultural Development Programme are all based on the concept of grassroots level planning through Panchayats, culminating in the coming together of the agricultural plan into the district plan developed by the District Planning Committee

Since implementation of Panchayati Raj is dependent on policies that cut across several sectors of economic development and social justice, the Government of India will now need to look at how its fiscal relationships with States through Centrally Sponsored Schemes and regulatory interventions pertaining to these sectors can be used to encourage a progress on strengthening Panchayats, across the range of differing state contexts.

A key instrument available to Government of India is thus to provide fiscal incentives to state governments that can encourage them to strengthen local governance, in pursuance of the national strategy. The Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme has been proposed as such an instrument. The outputs of the proposed Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme are to provide a well-designed system of incentives ,which

is hoped would provide an effective mechanism for the Government of India to undertake the following measures:

- Make a signal and fundamental systemic contribution to the overarching Plan objective of 'Inclusive Growth'.
- Incentivise and support States to effectively devolve more functions, functionaries and finances to the Panchayats, apart from constituting effectively empowered District Planning Committees to fulfill their Constitutional functions.
- Encourage and facilitate States to restructure the system of self-government at the Panchayat level to achieve the Constitutional objective of making them 'institutions of self-government'.
- Incentivise Panchayats to be transparent in their transactions and accountable to their respective Gram Sabhas and then to motivate and assist Panchayats to use their newly enlarged responsibilities in an efficient, honest, focused and productive manner so that a much larger share than at present of the vast resources being made available for rural development and welfare reaches the targeted beneficiaries and attains the targeted objectives, including, particularly the Bharat Nirman targets and the National Millennium Development Goals.
- Ensure that Panchayats achieve standards that meet norms set out for public accountability including public financial accountability, both upward as well as downward to the people. This would particularly cover responsibilities and obligations under various legislations such as those relating to Right to Information, Social Audit, and Fiscal Responsibility.
- The Outcomes of the Scheme would be the greater effective devolution of, functionaries and finances by the States to the Panchayati Raj Institutions and making the DPCs and PRIs the fulcrum for the planning and implementation of economic development and social justice. Moreover, the Scheme aims at empowering Gram Sabhas to effectively monitor and exercise vigilance over the work of their elected representatives to secure both effectively gains in service delivery by the Panchayats and promote transparent, responsive and accountable grassroots development through grassroots democracy.

Active participation of people in grassroots planning will bring about the desired transformation of the region by establishing peace and setting in motion the wheels of progress towards prosperity. Moving from a model of central provision to that of decentralization to local governments introduces a new relationship between national and local policy makers, while

altering several existing relationships such as that between the citizens, elected politicians and the local bureaucracy. As a World Bank study rightly concludes the problem of implementing decentralization is as important as the design of the system in influencing service delivery outcomes. When grass-roots planning processes strikes deep roots, economic empowerment is both strong and sustainable.

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NEW RURAL DEVELOPMENT & PANCHAYATI RAJ MINISTER, DR. C.P. JOSHI TAKES CHARGE
SAYS EFFORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO INCORPORATE WHISTLEBLOWERS IN SOCIAL AUDIT OF NREGA

[Press Information Bureau Releases – May 29, 2009]

The new Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister, Dr. C.P.Joshi assumed his office at Krishi Bhawan today. Addressing newspersons after taking charge of the Ministry, Dr. Joshi said that it would be his endeavour to implement the policies and programmes reaching out to the people in rural areas in earnest manner. The Minister said that he would strive hard plug the loopholes in the scheme and ensure that NREGA performance is up to the expectations of the people in rural areas. He condemned the attacks on whistleblowers told that efforts should be made to incorporate the whistleblowers in Social Audit. Dr. Joshi underlined the importance of social change.

The new Rural Development Minister, Dr. C. P. Joshi is a first time Member of 15th Lok Sabha. The 58 year old leader has been elected from Bhilwara, Rajasthan. A Ph.D. holder in Psychology and M.Sc. Physics from Mohan Lal Sukhadia University, Udaypur Rajasthan, he also has a Bachelors' Degree in Law to his credit.

Dr. Joshi began his political career as a student leader in the 70's and was first elected as MLA from Nathdwara, Rajasthan in 1980. He has been MLA in the Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha for four terms and has served as a State Cabinet Minister in the previous Government between 1998 to 2003. He has held various portfolios in social sector including education, panchayati raj, rural development, public health engineering and planning. One of his major achievements is "Bagheri Naka Pariyojna" which has been instrumental in increasing the availability of drinking water in rural areas. Besides he has pioneered the introduction of computer education in Rajasthan. Before getting inducted into the Union Cabinet of Ministers, Dr. Joshi was working as the President of Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee (RPCC).

A native of village Kunwaria in Rajsamand district of Rajasthan, Dr. Joshi was born on July 29, 1950 as the son of Mrs. Susheela Joshi and Shri Bhudev Prasad Joshi. Dr. Hem Lata Joshi is his spouse and is professor in Geography. They have a son, Shri Himanshu Joshi .

Dr. Joshi has been known to his colleagues as an erudite, articulate and honest in his action as "A man who always asserts for the need of practicality to achieve the goals rather than to rely upon just public meetings and speeches".

Under his dynamic leadership the Rural Development Ministry is poised to scale new heights with the policies and programs reaching out to the rural masses.

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DR. C. P. JOSHI SANCTIONS RS. 10 CRORE FOR DRINKING WATER SUPPLY TO CYCLONE 'AILA' AFFECTED WEST BENGAL

[Press Information Bureau Releases – June 1, 2009]

Union Rural Development Minister Dr. C. P. Joshi has sanctioned an amount of Rs. 10 crore as grant-in-aid to the Government of West Bengal in his very first official action for providing safe drinking water to the people in cyclone affected areas. He has also assured that all possible help would be made available to mitigate the suffering of the affected people in the cyclone hit areas

The grant-in-aid follows a review by the Department of Drinking Water Supply, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India after taking note of the cyclone and the damage to water supply systems on the basis of a report sought from the State Government . With water receding in the cyclone affected areas, meeting safe drinking water and sanitation needs of the affected people is the top most priority during the relief operation.

In order to help the State Government to tackle drinking water and sanitation problems, Department of Drinking Water Supply is also assisting the state Government by providing a number of suggestions on how to provide safe drinking water and sanitary facilities to the people in cyclone affected areas.

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STATES PLACE ORDERS FOR PURCHASE OF 7815 BUSES UNDER JNNURM

[Press Information Bureau Releases – June 2, 2009]

Orders for buying 7,815 buses have been placed by various States under the one time economic measure of funding of buses by the Ministry of Urban Development to boost their urban transport under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). Government has so far sanctioned purchase of 14,695 buses for the various mission cities under JNNURM.

Andhra Pradesh has placed orders for 1500 buses, the highest number of fleet among the States followed by Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka with orders for purchase of 1310, 1,250 and 1,100 buses respectively. The lot would consist of AC low-floor, non-AC low-floor, semi low-floor buses and mini buses. West Bengal has finalised the purchase of 710 buses. Delhi has ordered for 625 and Kerala for 320 buses so far under the scheme.

Under the second stimulus package announced by the Government on 2nd January 2009, it had been decided that States would be provided assistance under the JNNURM for the purchase of buses before 30th June 2009, in the form of grant. The financing is meant exclusively for city bus service and Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) for all Mission cities. The funding of buses under JNNURM will give a boost to automobile industry. The funding is shared by the Centre, States and the Municipal Bodies. The size of the Central allocation depends on the population density of the recipient Mission cities.

JNNURM bus project is an initiative by the Central Government to promote public transport and to reduce traffic congestion and pollution.

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THE NEW TEAM AT WORK IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AGATHA SANGMA TAKES CHARGE AS MINISTER OF STATE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

[Press Information Bureau Releases – June 2, 2009]

The new full team at Rural Development ministry has taken charge . Ms. Agatha Sangma today took over as the Minister of State for Rural Development today. Talking to media persons she expressed her desire to work for the betterment of rural masses across the country specially in the hilly and tribal areas .

27 Years old Agatha Sangma is one of the youngest MP's elected for the 15th lok Sabha. She represents the Tura parliamentary constituency from Meghalaya for the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).

Earlier Mr. Pradeep Jain (MP) Lok Sabha from Jhansi(UP-Congress) and Mr. Shishir Kumar Adhikari (MP) Lok Sabha from Kanthi (West Bengal-TMC) also assumed the office of Minister of State for Rural Development.

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PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER CALLS UPON MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

[Press Information Bureau Releases – June 2, 2009]

The Chief Minister of Punjab Mr. Prakash Singh Badal called on the Union Rural Development Minister Dr. C.P. Joshi today and felicitated him. The two leaders shared the status of implementation of rural development programmes and schemes in the State. Punjab Chief Minister underlined the need for liberal polices under NREGA. Dr. Joshi stressed the need to pool in resources for better implementation of the policies and programmes in the State. In response to the problem of contaminated ground drinking water in the State , Dr. Joshi assured all possible help to the state .

The meeting was attended by the Union Ministers of State for Rural Development, Shri Shishir Chaudhary, Shri Pradeep Jain and Ms. Agatha Sangma

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KARNATAKA RURAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTER CALLS UPON DR C.P. JOSHI

[Press Information Bureau Releases – June 2, 2009]

The Karnataka Rural development and Public relations Minister, Ms Shobha Karandlje called upon Union Rural Development Minister Dr. C.P. Joshi today and felicitated him. During the deliberations, the Karnataka minister detailed the progress of NREGA implementation in the State and sought timely central assistance to implement the Centrally sponsored Rural Development Schemes. Dr. Joshi assured that the center would provide all possible help in this regard.

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MADHYA PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER CALLS ON MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT SHARES THE EXPERIENCE OF NREGA AND OTHER FLAGSHIP PROGRAMMES IN THE STATE

[Press Information Bureau Releases – June 2, 2009]

Union Rural Development Minister, Dr. C.P. Joshi has assured support to Madhya Pradesh for the implementation of flagship programmes of the Government under the Ministry of Rural Development in the State. The State Chief Minister, Shri Shivraj Singh Chauhan today called on the Minister and felicitated him. The two leaders discussed the progress of Centrally sponsored Rural Development Schemes in the state specially the NREGA, Rural drinking water Supply and Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana.Mr. Chouhan Referred to the problem faced by the tribal NREGA workers in getting their wage payments. Dr. Joshi assured him of full

cooperation from centre in respect of timely aid by the Ministry and said that the efforts should be made to strengthen the implementation of NREGA and other schemes for the benefit of rural population.

The Minister of State for Rural Development, Shri Pradeep Jain too expressed concern over the migration of labour in Bundelkhand region. The meeting was also attended by the Union Ministers of State for Rural Development, Shri Shishir Chaudhary and Ms. Agatha Sangma.

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RELIEF FOR DROUGHT AFFECTED RURAL AREAS IN BUNDELKHAND RS.214 CRORE FOR DEVELOPMENT WORKS

[Press Information Bureau Releases – June 3, 2009]

National Agricultural Bank for Rural Development (NABARD) has sanctioned Rs.246 crore for the implementation of development works to be carried out in seven districts of Bundelkhand region and eastern Uttar Pradesh.

The Minister of State for Rural Development, Shri Pradeep Jain, has said that the move will accelerate the pace of development in rural areas of drought affected Bundelkhand region benefiting the people. Nearly Rs.214 crore would be spent on the irrigation schemes being implemented in Lalitpur, Mahoba and Jhansi districts. In addition, Rs.32 crore has been earmarked for rural road construction works in Jyotiba Phule Nagar, Mau, Ghazipur and Gonda districts in Uttar Pradesh.

THREE UNION TERRITORIES AND ONE STATE GET GRANT FOR NATIONAL LAND RECORD MODERNIZATION PROGRAM

[Press Information Bureau Releases – June 3, 2009]

The Ministry of Rural Development has sanctioned Rs. 26631073.29 for the implementation of National Land Record Modernization Program (NLRMP) to the Union Territories Administrations of Andaman & Nikobar Islands , Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Puducherry and the State Government of Himachal Pradesh during the current financial year (2009-10).

Of the sanctioned amount Andaman & Nikobar Islands administration is to receive Rs. 28.39 lakh as balance amount of 1st installment to take up the implementation NLRMP in the South Andaman districts during the current financial year.

The Dadra and Nagar Haveli administration has been granted Rs. 44.90 lakh for implementation NLRMP during the current financial year. As a 1st installment Rs. 36.68 lakh will be given to the UT for this purpose.

Similarly the Puducherry Union Territory will get Rs. 36.93 lakh as balance amount of 1st installment during 2009-10.

The State Government of Himachal Pradesh has been granted Rs.2.2938 crore for the implementation of NLRMP in three Districts of the state viz. Hamirpur, Mandi and Sirmour during the current financial year.

The release of grant is subject to the terms and condition laid down in the guidelines of NLRMP. Item wise expenditure and the physical progress along with the utilization certificate in respect of funds will also have to be submitted to the Ministry of Rural Development accordingly.

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MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT TO LAUNCH NORTH EASTERN URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

[Press Information Bureau Releases – June 5, 2009]

A meeting to review implementation of projects under 10% lumpsum provision for Infrastructure Development in towns in North East was held under the Chairmanship of Dr. M. Ramachandran, Secretary (UD) here today. Speaking at the meeting the Secretary informed that the Ministry will Launch North Eastern Urban Development Programme assisted by Asian Development Bank in Aizawl, Shillong, Gangtok, Kohima, and Agartala in the first phase very shortly. He said that the programme at a total cost of Rs. 1371.4 crore will help improve basic municipal services in the identified cities. He also stated that every effort shall be made to expedite launching of Phase - II of the Programme to cover cities in remaining three States in the North East.

The Scheme of 10% lumpsum provision for Infrastructure Development in towns in North East launched in the year 2001-02 and 213 projects at an estimated cost of Rs. 1,700 crore have been sanctioned under the scheme out of which 1080 crore have been released as Central Assistance. Over 40% projects have been completed under the scheme so far. During the course of discussion, Dr. M. Ramachandran highlighted the need for early completion of ongoing projects and requested the States to adhere to the timelines committed by them for completion of projects. He also highlighted the fact that during two consecutive years, Ministry has been providing more than 10% for the development of urban areas in North East. He emphasized the need for early completion of projects.

SECRETARY URBAN DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS JNNURM PROJECTS

[Press Information Bureau Releases – June 5, 2009]

A meeting to review the progress of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) was called by ministry of Urban Development, here today, Presiding over the meeting Dr. M. Ramachandran , Secretary, Urban Development stated that Centre will push the states in all possible manner to implement and complete the projects already sanctioned under JNNURM. He also urged the states for speedy implementation of project work so that next installment of Additional Central Assistance (ACA) is released to the states in time. Ministry of Urban Development has so far sanctioned 463 projects and total value of projects approved is Rs. 49743.46 crore. ACA worth Rs. 8253 crore has been released.

He expressed displeasure over the non completion of urban sector reforms as per committed guidelines specially as most of the reforms pertain to devolution of power under the 74th constitutional amendment act to the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), Governance issues in terms of administrative and structural reforms within the ULBs and provision of citizen Centric Services. The secretary also mentioned that reforms under JNNURM goes hand in hand with project implementation. Any lacking in implementation might affect release of funds. He further stated that Centre is committed to fast track approach towards reforms and projects under JNNURM and States should also accelerate the pace of projects and Reforms.

Representatives from the State Governments of Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Punjab, Rajasthan, West Bengal, MP and Maharashtra participated in the discussion. The State also assured speedy implementation of the projects which got delayed due to General Elections.

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