

CHAPTER – III

STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Policies in Retrospect

It is important to note that the rapid growth of large cities during the last decades including that in Kolkata has resulted in problems of crowding, congestion, squalor and deprivation. This has led some to believe that the solution lies in preventing the growth. But while it is possible to visualize a limit to the level of urbanization, a limit to the size of a city is yet a totally unresolved issue. Large metropolitan cities all over the world are still growing. Quite a few of them have already crossed 20 million marks. Tokyo Metropolitan Region is over 30 million and is still growing. The CMA will also continue to grow though at a reduced rate. With a view to managing this growth in KMA, the plan for metropolitan development has been prepared for the projected population of more than 21 million in 2025.

Development efforts during the last three decades have restored this metropolis from conditions of crisis to that of confidence and Kolkata now looks forward to a dynamic and revitalised bright future. But this requires sustained efforts of planning and development in right direction over the future years. There is still a huge backlog of accumulated deficits in the infrastructure facilities and services that will have to be wiped out. A massive programme has to be undertaken to expand the infrastructure facilities and services for supporting the new growth. Millions of people will have to be provided with shelter, civic services, health and education facilities and millions of jobs will have to be generated. This would require continued planning and development efforts of a very large scale and high quality. During the last couple of decades, considerable experience could be gathered from implementation of urban development programmes and based on such feedback; the basic policies, strategies and direction for future development have been identified.

It has become quite apparent that efforts by appropriate agencies need to be initiated to channelise the new growth outside the metropolitan core within KMA and even to centers outside the boundaries of KMA.

KMDA has already prepared plans for the proposed spatial frame of development in KMA, broadly indicating the locations of nodal centers of settlement, conservation and preservation areas, distribution of infrastructure development across the entire metropolis. Within the overall metropolitan structure, a number of centers have been identified for developing the future settlement in a planned and controlled manner as far as possible depending upon allocated population on the basis of gross land holding capacity of KMA. Possible spatial structure for settlement of the spill over population has also been conceptualised as far as possible on the basis of available data and information. Protection, preservation and conservation of prime agricultural land and wetland including large water bodies has been considered from environmental and ecological points of view, while suggesting the settlement pattern for KMA for 2025. Future transport network plan has been prepared integrating the principal modes of transport in KMA, the road network, the

railways and the waterways also to suit appropriately the suggested settlement pattern.

Strategies to achieve to Vision Goals

IT has already been indicated that all efforts shall be made to provide the necessary infrastructure and services to the projected population in KMA in an inclusive manner and also to lend necessary support to the process of economic growth, with the ultimate objective of ensuring a decent living environment to all. Obviously, this would necessitate a good deal of interventions in the different spheres of urban infrastructures and services, as has been elaborated in the section on Feature Development Profile. It is thus imperative to have a set of strategies that would facilitate the journey from where KMA is now in to where KMA would like to graduate to. Accordingly, a set of strategies has been designed and the same are mentioned below.

Decentralised Urban Planning & Development

The State Government realizes the need and importance of decentralized planning and development for not only evolving a spatially balanced urban growth but also achieving more efficient use of available resources. The acute primacy of Kolkata and imbalanced distribution of urban population across the state not only affected the economy and urban structures of West Bengal but has also proved to be detrimental to healthy and orderly development of the metropolis. In the late seventies the Government of West Bengal moved towards a policy of decentralised urban development. For dispersal of metropolitan activity and for institution of a decentralised framework of urban development, a two-pronged action is necessary:

- ❖ To develop small and medium towns and growth centres of the state so that they can play appropriate role in discharging urban functions and thus reducing the unhealthy dependence on the metropolis,
- ❖ The municipal towns within the CMA are to be properly developed so that there may be dispersal of activities from the metropolitan core to other areas within the metropolis,
- ❖ Devolution of power to the local bodies has been attempted in the districts and also in metropolitan areas for the purpose of planning, development and management functions in terms of 73rd and 74th amendments of the Constitution of India.

Action has already been taken at the state level for improving the conditions of small and medium towns. This would be continued and sustained.

The first initiative towards decentralized urban planning and development in KMA was taken up during CUDP-III under the Municipal Development Program in 1983. The constituent Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) have taken active part in this process and have become exposed to and thus better sensitized to urban planning and development issues. The local bodies have been strengthened with financial and human resources to respond effectively to the new tasks. The

overall monitoring, coordination, appraisal and evaluation of the total programme has, however, been done by CMDA. This process will be continued in future.

Targetting the Urban Poor for Redistributive Justice

It has been the constant endeavour of both KMDA and the State Government to pay special attention to the needs of urban poor in planning and developmental interventions, as Kolkata being a major colonial city of the world had witnessed bias in favour of the elite classes in terms of developmental interventions. The metropolis of Kolkata yet exhibits one third of its population living in slum settlement, which are largely inhabited by the poor people. In terms of income poverty, the percentage of people living below poverty cannot be as high as one third, but in terms of lack of access to basic civic and social services, the proportion is yet reckonable. It is not only that urban poor receives priority in urban planning and development, efforts have been taken to enlist their participation in such activities to the extent possible. The integrated slum development programme under Calcutta Slum Improvement Programme (CSIP) has been a successful programme of that kind. The sustained emphasis on Bustee (Slum) Improvement Programme of KMDA reflects the concern of KMDA for the urban poor of Kolkata. It is appreciated that physical infrastructure development in slum like settlements needs to be complemented with social and economic development of slum dwellers if meaningful dents have to be made on the status of urban poor. It is now proposed that instead of confining to physical infrastructure development in slum settlement, structural development of slums be also taken up with active participation of slum dwellers themselves.

It has thus been resolved that all urban development programmes would attempt to reach the urban poor directly so that their accessibility to basic urban services, including primary health, education, employment and community development, can be ensured. This would also help maintaining the productivity of workforce, the bulk of which comes from the economically disadvantaged section of people. For certain urban services like water supply, drainage, sanitation the requirements of the urban poor cannot in all cases be tackled in isolation from the overall city system of such services.

Improved Urban Governance

The State Government is very keen to provide improved urban governance through introduction of IT enabled services. The introduction of e-governance in the ULBs would not only help in better identification of development priorities for improved planning practices, but also facilitate formulation and execution of infrastructure development schemes more efficiently. The introduction of GIS in municipal management would vastly improve governance in not only the ULBs being in a better position to make use of fiscal resources but also detecting the shortfalls in municipal revenue performance. To facilitate introduction of e-governance in the ULBs numerous capacity building initiatives have been taken up for ULBs. The State

Government is committed to extending e-governance across all the ULBs of the State, let alone the KMA-ULBs.

Protection & Conservation of Environment and Heritage

The BDP had emphasised on arresting the further deterioration in the urban environment of CMA. A scan of the CUDPs would reveal that environmental improvement had always been on the top of the agenda. The urban infrastructure development programmes would now hold a special significance in the context of the accelerated industrialisation in the state as a whole, let alone CMA. In order to avoid possible conflicts between development and environment, it is imperative to design plans and programmes in such a way that a proper reconciliation can be ensured. In promoting metropolitan development activity special attention has to be paid to ensure that environmental damage is prevented to the maximum possible extent. It should be appreciated that unless the development projects are environmentally sound, sustainability of the same would be difficult to be achieved.

Given that environmental protection would continue to be an important agenda in the urban development programmes, special attention should be paid to promote development in an eco-friendly manner. Therefore, provision has to be made for:

- ❖ Conservation of nature, the wetland and wildlife to maintain ecological balance.
- ❖ Conservation of greeneries, parks and public open spaces and waterfronts along the river, canals and lakes.
- ❖ Extensive tree plantation and social afforestation, prohibition of indiscriminate abstraction of ground water, development of sanitation, low cost and appropriate facilities for all, and
- ❖ Safe and hygienic disposal of solid wastes in the form of sanitary landfill and garbage farming as well as incineration, energy recovery and composting.
- ❖ Consideration of the system of Environment Sensitive Zone while planning for development and application of control regulations as identified in the course of preparation of this perspective plan.

One of the major concerns should be to ensure environment restoration and conservation. This involves systematic study of environmental impact assessment (EIA) with environmental mapping ascertaining the cases of conflict and thereafter designing the alternative measures for remedy alongwith determination of priorities.

Un-planned urban expansion may destroy built heritage of the city. In future development of CMA, the need and importance of conservation of built heritage has been kept in view. Necessary legislation has been enacted and State Heritage Commission constituted, which has already prepared a list of heritage buildings and sites. The conservation process has been integrally built up into the town planning process and necessary control on land use is being

exercised under the West Bengal Town and Country (Planning & Development) Act, 1979.

Development of Small and Medium Towns

With a view to having a spatially balanced urban growth across the State, efforts to provide urban infrastructure and services in the small and medium towns of the State receive priority. This strategy would continue to receive emphasis.

Urban Rural Continuum

The State Government recognizes the interdependence between rural and urban areas and endeavours to see that appropriate integration of the rural fringes of urban centers is done in the planning and development initiatives. As KMA has more than one-third of its area in terms of rural habitats, the significance of this strategy is immense in KMA.

Sustainability

Sustainability has become the buzzword for any development programme - be it urban or otherwise. Urban development programmes lead to creation of a number of assets, which have got to be properly upkept and maintained so that the anticipated services can be delivered to the target beneficiaries. The real life experiences have shown that it is not only the lack of fiscal resources, but also other factors like lack of well managed human resources or lack of attitudinal responses of beneficiaries that have led to less than sustainability of the developmental assets. Apart from strengthening of fiscal position of the different agencies, particularly the ULBs, there may be necessity of reorganising; training and retraining of the human resources at the disposal of the different agencies; generation of awareness and motivation amongst target beneficiaries for attitudinal reforms etc. Strengthening of fiscal resources should call for not only an improved management of recurrent finances but also improved revenue yields through cost recovery, user charges and the like. The latter may be helpful in establishing quid pro quo, subject to the interest of the urban poor being protected by suitable design of the tariff structure. For reorganisation of the different agencies, situational analysis may have to be carried out before determining the nature of such reorganisation. For a better use of human resources through upgradation of skills, a number of training programmes may have to be designed and implemented. Community participation through Ward Committees/NGOs/CBOs may be an effective instrument of not only generating the requisite awareness towards usage of different services but also in mobilising their efforts in sustaining assets and service deliveries.

The issues related to sustainability will be given due attention in all the urban development programmes from the very outset so that the necessary action could be put to place as and when a programme gets implemented.

Promotion of Economic Growth

It has already been mentioned that the State of West Bengal is poised for a rapid economic growth, particularly in the manufacturing sector. The State industrial policy has been redesigned so as to make it industry and investment friendly. In the backdrop of globalization as well as liberalization of economic policies, private investment would play an important role in economic development of the state, let alone the KMA. Various studies have revealed that provision of infrastructure would play a major catalytic role in attracting investments, particularly for industries.

While not all the needed infrastructures would pertain to the conventional domain of urban development, the urban development programme should not lose sight of the requirement of promoting economic growth, let alone supporting the existing level. For instance, projects for new transportation facility and serviced lands would lend a good deal of support to new economic growth.

Urban Land Use Policy

In KMA, the land use pattern has been greatly influenced by the topographical characteristics. The development has been confined within a narrow strip of land on each side of the river Hooghly. The strategy for using urban land efficiently in a planned manner will include the following:

Land Use and Development Control: Control of use and development of land is being exercised under West Bengal Town & Country (Planning & Development) Act, 1979. In KMA, built-up land under all urban usages covers 47 percent of total land. Vacant land including cultivable land, green and wasteland, water bodies, swamps and marshes, cover about 43 per cent of total land. The objective in this control exercise is to ensure that the vacant land, including cultivable land, wasteland, water bodies, swamps, etc. does never become less than 33 per cent of the total land.

Modernization of CBD and Central Areas: The Central Business Districts (CBDs) of Kolkata and Howrah are suffering from extreme congestion and this has resulted in loss of efficiency. There is sufficient number of heritage buildings in these areas. The CBDs will be revitalized and modernized through conservation surgery basically. The program of modernization/urban renewal includes:

- ❖ Restructuring of land use of the central area by removing certain non-conforming uses;
- ❖ Shifting of institutions that need not be located within CBD;
- ❖ Providing opportunities for economic rejuvenation by promoting compatible economic activities in the CBDs;
- ❖ Improving and strengthening the infrastructure facilities and services in the CBDs.

Establishing New Business Centers: New business centers will be established to reduce the congestion in the existing CBDs and to meet the growing demand of such facilities, particularly in the proposed new metro centres.

Conservation & Urban Renewal: In Kolkata and Howrah cities, there are many instances of prime land suffering from blight and deprivation. In such blighted areas, land utilization is often very poor though crowding and congestion are high. Efforts will be made to improve the quality and efficiency of these areas through planned urban renewal and redevelopment. Heritage Conservation, particularly linked with Tourism could be a great use. Identification, restoration, preservation and protection including necessary legislation including awareness are assuming increasing importance day by day.

Urban Land Use (Ceiling & Regulation) Act, 1976: The benefits from this central Act could not be achieved owing to its operational and other weaknesses. Efforts are being made in CMA to use the vested land under this Act for various purposes like creation of parks, construction of school buildings, housing for low-income group people, etc.

Provision of Land for Urban Poor: It has been the policy of the state government that in all new area development projects, it shall be necessary to ensure that land is available for the economically weaker sections and low-income groups of people for housing purpose.

Strategy for Development of Infrastructure

The main objective of infrastructure development program will be to provide these facilities to majority of the people, the urban poor and low-income groups at affordable costs. The strategy for achieving this objective of development would be to adopt in general low-cost options of appropriate technical designs involving lower operation and maintenance cost and low consumption of energy but without causing environmental degradation. In each sector there should be a comprehensive approach to the total system plan but development actions should be taken up incrementally over space and time. The highlights of strategy for infrastructure development in CMA include the following:

- In the field of water supply, the objective for development is to ensure supply of potable water to all people. To meet this objective, the norms and standards have been reduced from those specified in the earlier Master Plan. To the extent feasible, groundwater sources should give way to surface water sources.
- In the field of sanitation, it is realized that the physical and economic situation in the metropolis would not enable the provision of conventional sewerage system in all the areas. Low-cost sanitation alternatives would be practiced so that the entire population including the urban poor could be covered by sanitation facilities and thereby guaranteeing essential minimum level of

hygienic environment. Low-cost wastewater recycling methods have been given importance.

- Solid waste management has been viewed as part of total sanitation program. In most of the areas the sanitary landfill method of disposal shall be pursued but efforts will be made to take up pilot projects for recycling of waste and for recovery of energy from these wastes.
- In the transport sector, efforts will be made to reduce the use of oil through introduction of electricity operated mass transit system. The rail based mass transit should be expanded in future. Restraint will have to be imposed on the operation of private automobiles, particularly in the central areas through introduction of higher parking fees and other restrictions on movement. Low-cost traffic engineering and operation improvement measures will be introduced to reduce congestion. The water transport along the river Hooghly will be expanded and improved. This could be a major mode of transport in future. The scope for utilizing the canal system for transportation will also be explored. Future transport network and future land use plan have been evolved to favour mass transit movement, reducing the number and length of passenger trips. The metropolitan highway network has to be completed and linked properly with the regional system. This has been given due emphasis in the present plan.
- In the field of shelter, including bustee, area development and housing, the strategy is to address all the major five elements of shelter improvement. These are:
 - Improving the sanitation and living conditions in the existing slums and other low-income settlements.
 - Encouraging private housing activity by removing the constraints in respect of access to housing finance, availability of land, availability of materials etc.
 - Developing land for facilities.
 - Taking up construction of housing units, including redevelopment of bustee structure.
 - Ensuring adequate maintenance and up gradation of the existing housing stock.

Strategy for Resource Mobilization

Given the size and magnitude of urban problems of KMA, the investment need is quite high. Without proper developmental interventions for addressing the growing congestion, crowding and deterioration of infrastructure facilities in KMA, the metropolis will lose its efficiency and efficacy in performing its functions. This will threaten the economy of the entire eastern India, let alone the State. It is, therefore, essential that adequate investment be made to revitalize Kolkata for enabling the metropolis to act efficiently as major cultural and economic centre of the nation. This is proposed to be achieved through the following measures.

Two types of financing, Capital and Revenue, is generally involved in implementation and sustenance of urban development programmes. As for capital financing for infrastructure development, the revenue earning implication of which are limited, plan/budgetary outlay would continue to be a major source

of capital financing. Besides this, loans from financial institutions and international donor agencies have been found to be alternative sources of capital finances. With increasing scarcity of resources at the disposal of public sector as well as the international donor agencies, and also with the difficult financial viability related conditionalities of the financial institutions, private sector participation is increasingly being viewed as a source of infrastructure financing. As the financing sources increasingly take the form of capital loans rather than capital grants, the question of debt service is becoming important. Even private sector participation in infrastructure development would look forward to realizing a fair return on investment. Thus, financial viability or in other words the revenue earning implications of infrastructure investment is becoming all the more relevant and important.

Given that cost recovery from infrastructure services has limited scope, especially in a metropolis with a good deal of urban poor, it is necessary to design cost recovery mechanism in a manner that the very strategy of targeting urban poor for delivery of rudimentary basic services is not adversely affected. Even with cost recovery mechanism in place, nothing much beyond recovery of the operation and maintenance (O&M) cost could be realized, by no means enough to meet debt service obligations. In this difficult scenario of financial viability pertaining to infrastructure investment needs, it is imperative to draw up an investment programme in such a manner that there are projects from which revenue surpluses could be generated to compensate for the viability gap of the basic infrastructure investment. From this point of view, the projects may be categorized under three groups:

- The projects that may permit recovery of cost involving O&M and debt service obligations leading to generation of surplus funds;
- Projects where full cost recovery is not feasible, but the operation and maintenance cost may be met through collection of user charges;
- Projects where collection of user charges and cost recovery will not be feasible.

Nonetheless, it is imperative to gradually get into the regime of cost recovery and design service specific user charges structure, subject to protecting the interest of urban poor, and also enforce such regime without impunity.

Role of ULBs: The ULBs will need to take all efforts to improve their revenue base. Apart from improving collection from property tax, the mainstay of municipal income, and other fees and taxes, special attention towards levy and collection of service specific user charges needs to be provided.

Attention of the Central & State Governments: As already mentioned, the contribution of a metropolis of Calcutta's stature transcends the boundaries of even the State. The Central Government has also recognized Kolkata as a national city. In this perspective, both the Central and the State Governments will have to provide adequate budgetary support for meeting the investment needs of CMA. The State Government will have to allocate more funds out of

the State Plan for meeting the cost of development projects in the CMA. It would also be necessary for the Governments to provide as much grant support as possible as in most cases of infrastructure development, cost recovery is not likely to be enough for debt servicing against loan funds.

Affordable Technology

With the increase in human knowledge and practices, more and more technological options are coming into being. These options differ with respect to capital outlay, annual O&M, social and physical conditions of the different contexts. In a developing country context, which is generally confronted with scarcity of investible resources, the adoption of low cost technology becomes the obvious choice. An ideal technological solution may not be found to be compatible with local social and economic conditions.

In all the urban development programmes, attempt should be made to choose the technology out of the options available in such a manner that the same is affordable by the local community. The affordability should be judged by not only the amount of capital investment but also the recurrent O&M obligations. Thus, the capability of the O&M agencies should be taken into account while selecting a technological option.

Private Sector Participation in Infrastructure Development

As mentioned earlier, private sector resources could be mobilized for development and management of infrastructure and services, as public sector outlays are becoming increasingly scarce. Private sector needs to play a symbiotic role in infrastructure development, as without proper infrastructure development, economic growth would be slowed down, productivity of workforce would be adversely affected and they too have to share the adverse impacts of the same. The State Government is keen to enlist private sector participation in infrastructure development and management through evolving suitable partnerships. The State Government has enacted 'State Government Policy on Infrastructure Development through Private Public Partnership (PPP)' and a Notification to this effect was issued on 27th August 2003. The basic objective of the Policy is to bring about uniformity in practice of PPP by the public sector agencies. The cornerstones of the Policy are competitiveness and transparency. A number of projects in the urban sector have been taken up under PPP.

Role of JNNURM in the Strategies :

Cities and Towns play a vital role in the Socio-Economic transformation and change. The role of Kolkata Metropolitan Area is especially significant In that its contribution transcends the boundaries and it extends the over the eastern India and also the country as a whole. Towns and cities seem to contribute between 50 and 55 percent of country's GDP and the figure would rise further if secondary and tertiary sectoral GDPs are concerned. This is slated to rise further in the coming years. Moreover, in this era of globalisation, cities and towns are the centre-points of

innovations and hub of many activities towards gaining a competitive edge. In this emerging scenario of the cities and towns, the role urban infrastructure and services would be vitally important, as they are already severely stressed.

India currently has population of 285 million, which works out to nearly 28% of total population residing in urban areas. In West Bengal the percentage of urban population living in urban areas is thread of above that of India with 22.5 million urban residents. In line with the phenomenon observed for the country as a whole, where the annual investment requirement for basic infrastructure and services in ULB – areas is estimated to the tune of Rs.17,219 crore for the next 7 year period, ULBs' in West Bengal too would require a massive investment. This has to be seen in the background of West Bengal's recording one of the highest growth rates in SDP amongst the advanced states of India and also experiencing a rapid growth in investments in industrial sector during the recent years. The requirements of providing infrastructural support to the process and also of enhancing productivity are immense. Given that Kolkata Metropolitan Area is yet the largest metropolis in eastern India and houses the bulk of secondary and tertiary sector activities of the state. The imperative of improving and upgrading the basic infrastructure and facilities is a *sine qua non*. The required does of investment in KMA is by no means possible to be secured from internal sources. Being a national city there is enough justification for flow of central assistance towards development of infrastructure facilities in KMA.

NURM is set to provide opportunities for mobilisation of resources for basic infrastructure development that will be necessary for realisation of the Vision and the goals. In terms of the provision of 35% of the project investment shall be available from central government as grant. The state government shall be obliged to provide for another 15% of such project investment. The remaining 50% may be secured from financial institution.

The concept of revolving fund under NURM would help achieve sustainability, one of the prime strategies, in facilitating operation and maintenance of assets to be created under NURM. In this context, the requirement of reform Agenda under NURM would also play a crucial role in achieving the sustainability strategy.

Criteria for Strategy Selection :

The metropolitan city of Kolkata is a vast area extending over more than 1850 sq. km. and located in the Gangetic deltaic plain. The metropolis is bisected by river Hooghly in its downstream, which is getting silted fast. The city receives a good deal of rainfall every year flooding has been one of the regular natural calamities that the city faces and thereby causing immense damages to infrastructural facilities. The soil condition in this deltaic belt also poses problems for stability of infrastructural assets like the roads calling for frequent repairs and upgradation. All these point to the need for separate treatment of the infrastructural needs of KMA, as the latter does not exists for the metropolis alone and serves the entire country. The focus on these natural issues in project design is imperative.

The sustainability of the different interventions in KMA is all the more important because lack of operation and maintenance of assets is likely to deny the beneficial impacts of project investments. Accordingly, the strategy for project development in KMA emphasises on certain reforms like recovery of services specific costs, improved municipal management through organisational financial capacity building, choice of appropriate technology etc. as part of development strategy.

Community participation in planning, development and management, not only helps better reflection of social priorities but also facilitates sustainability of project investment. Accordingly, due emphasis is laid on community participation as a development strategy. This also provides the opportunity for creating awareness amongst beneficiaries about the need for properly operating and maintaining the assets in cost effective manner. This awareness generation reinforces the prospect of cost recovery from services and helps prevent avoidable wastage thereof.

The strategies have been selected in a manner the proposed interventions under NURM and other such development programmes become sustainable. The strategies have been determined through a consultative process involving the different stakeholders including people's elected representatives. The reform agenda under NURM are also dependent on the strategies been properly implementation.

A set of strategies has also been designed for realisation of the sectoral development goals. The strategies have been evolved out of deliberation at the different meetings of Sector Committees of KMPC. The sectoral strategies too try to ensure sustainability of project investment by suitable determining the standard of services and the technology.

Possible Outcomes of Strategies :

Vision 2025 envisages to provide improved infrastructure and services to as many people as possible with the given resources. Accordingly, the plans and programmes adopt a strategy that calls for such technologies and standards of services that are not only affordable but also enables enhanced coverage. For instance, the Sectoral Master Plans for water supply has recommended a level of per capita supply lower than universally accepted standards with a view to covering more people with piped water supply system with the given resources.

The establishment of Kolkata Metropolitan Planning Committee (KMPC) would not only ensure KMA-wide planning framework by which the metropolitan level plan and the ULB level plans would be synchronized and the plans would be implemented in a co-ordinated manner all over KMA. The decentralized planning and development approach would help achieve people's participation more effectively and thus reflect social priorities in a better way in allocation of scarce resources. Participation of local community and people also help in achieving sustainability of development initiatives in terms of infusing a sense of belongingness amongst the beneficiaries towards the municipal assets created.

It has been mentioned already that each ULB in KMA is set to switch over to double entry accrual based accounting system from the present accounting system that is single entry cash based one within a couple of years. This would bring about improved financial management in that a better discernability of municipal finances would be possible; proper distinction between capital and revenue accounts can be made; transparency in budgeting can be ensured and hidden liabilities as well as assets brought to fore.

The strategy of sustainability would facilitate improved recoveries of cost for specific services. Some of the ULBs have already started collecting water charges from domestic consumers and others are likely to follow suit. The concept of cost recovery is gaining ground and becoming acceptable increasingly. The strategy would endeavour to see that the cost of operation and maintenance of the different infrastructure is at least recovered. Moreover, the ULBs are taking up commercially viable projects so as to earn revenue surpluses that would be ploughed back for improved sustenance of municipal level infrastructure and services.

The strategy of introducing e-governance in ULBs of KMA in a time bound manner, especially the initiatives taken under the DFID assisted KUSP project, would go a long way in improving municipal management and bringing about transparency and accountability more effectively, from which the citizens at large would stand to benefit.