

CHAPTER VI

Summary

The Kolkata Metropolitan Area (KMA) stretching over 1851 sq.km. and enveloping as many as 41 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) including three Municipal Corporations and 24 Panchayat Samities is the largest metropolis in Eastern India with a disproportionate demographic and economic predominance. The contribution of KMA transcends the boundaries of the metropolis and extends over the entire country. The analyses of the existing city profile of KMA point to enormous potentiality of growth of the city, especially in the context rising economic parameters for the State as a whole. The manufacturing and service sector industries are projected to grow at relatively high rates in KMA. Alongside, the population of KMA is also set to grow, even with nominal migration and reduced CBR. The population projected for 2025 is 21.07 million, projected to rise from about 15 million at present. The infrastructural profile does indicate severe deficits in basic infrastructure provision as well as spatial inequality thereof within the boundaries of KMA. It is indisputable that if the projected population has to be provided with a decent urban living and the supportive economic activities, the need for augmentation of infrastructural facilities is a sine qua none. Kolkata being one of the oldest cities in the country does exhibit blighted areas within the old city areas. That call for renewal and redevelopment so as to provide a better environment and organized facilities for future growth.

Notwithstanding the problems and constraints, Kolkata envisions to become a world class city and attend competitive age in this era of globalization. Accordingly, the City Development Plan (CDP) outlines the future metropolitan structure comprising the different hierarchy of towns, identifies new settlement areas and also new industrial growth centers. Obviously, this would call for substantial improvement in the basic infrastructural facilities such that domestic and international investors are encouraged to come and invest in the city and stay to realize the economic growth potential. The CDP lists the strategies that should be followed in each urban infrastructure sector to make the process of development sustainable over the long run. Interestingly, the Vision as well as the long term Master/Development Plans for the infrastructure sectors have been reviewed and approved by Kolkata Metropolitan Planning Committee (KMPC) as a part of decentralized urban planning and development paradigm. It is, however, appreciated that specific interventions can only be designed in the medium term based on the strategies recommended. This would also provide opportunities for testing the strategies and modifying the same if deemed necessary in the light of the experiences gained in the medium term. Accordingly, the CVDP has appended a short term Action/Investment Plan for a period of 5 years covering the sectors of basic infrastructure. The project proposal included in this Plan have been evolved through a prioritization exercise at the instance of KMPC. Moreover, efforts have been made to design the projects in a manner that the same could be implemented within the stipulated time frame.

The Vision can be realized through a sustained process of planning and development involving participation of local people. The adoption of decentralized

planning framework via enactment of the WB DPC Act, WB MPC Act, WB Municipal Act has been a step to that end. The developmental interventions as envisaged in the Vision shall be carried out in an inclusive manner so as not to leave any section of population, especially the urban poor, from the purview of developmental benefits. Community participation enlisted through the Ward Committees constituted under the WB Municipal Act and also the Community Development Societies (CDSs) formed under SJSRY project would help achieve this. The CDP emphasizes on the need for protecting and conserving the natural environment and heritage to the extent possible and use of regulatory measures via the statutory LUDCPs would address this part of the vision. Urban renewal and redevelopment of old city areas and thus bringing in new genre of economic activities, especially those related to services sector, is likely to facilitate economic growth. Initiatives for improved urban governance including enlistment of people's participation, introduction of e-governance and better financial management coupled with adoption of selective cost recovery measures are set to attain sustainability of project investments to a great extent at the ULB-level. The sectoral approach to development of basic infrastructure facilities emphasizes on adoption of affordable technology and also affordable norms and standards of services such that maximum number of beneficiaries can be reached with a given dose of investment. The regulatory measures via the LUDCPs would help preempt certain avoidable costs that usually plague the old cities. The CDP also lays stress on implementation on basic infrastructure projects involving Public Private Partnership (PPP) formats. This would help achieve cost effectiveness and operational efficiency in development and management of infrastructure projects. PPP is also expected to play a vital role in urban renewal/ redevelopment of old city areas, which is given priority under CDP.

The CDP appends a short-term action plan that lists out the priority projects that need to be implemented in the next 5 years, within the overall development framework recommended for each infrastructure sector. The total investment has worked out to Rs.6939 crore. While certain amount of the proposed outlays is likely to come from JN-NURM, other sources like own resources of ULBs/parastatal like KMDA, mobilizing resources from capital market, offshore financing and private sector resources have been considered for financing of CDP. A rough estimate of the same has also been worked out, but this does not appear to be enough for the projects proposed for the next 5 years. However, some of the projects taken up during the next 5 years shall spill beyond the 5th year and additional quantum/new sources of financing could be worked out later. It is expected that with a number of reforms being taken up at the ULB-level would improve the municipal financial help and enable the ULBs to carve out own resources and also access the capital markets for meeting the projected capital needs. The keenness of the State Government to enlist private sector participation in infrastructure development would facilitate flow of private investment in infrastructure development and some of the proposed projects could be taken up under PPP.

The process of initiating urban reforms in the State and particularly in KMA started long ago as a general strategy of making developmental interventions sustainable. The process of reform is a continual one and new reforms shall be evolved as time moves on. Identification of needed reforms may be an easy task, but implementation of the same is usually a harder task. As many of the reforms pertain

to ULBs, capacity building of ULBs is an important area for intervention. Fortunately for KMA-ULBs, this aspect is addressed to some extent under the DFID assisted Kolkata Urban Services for Poor (KUSP) project. Nevertheless, there may be further need for capacity building initiatives for not only the ULBs, but also the para-statal and other concerned agencies for the success of JN-NURM.