

The Face of Twenty-First-Century Development

GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND THEIR DYNAMICS

Today, the challenges that the world faces are poverty, illiteracy, lack of safe drinking water, supply of clean and green energy, equitable distribution of resources, quality education with values for all, societal imbalances, diseases, quality health care for all and good living conditions. Various nations are working to find solutions to these challenges, which take on different manifestations based on local dynamics that are interconnected on various issues.

VISUALIZATION FOR PURA

Throughout this book, we have emphasized the need for a new-generation approach towards development. The most pressing problem in the world today is not that of pressure on resources, but the need for applying them for the collective development of mankind. As we find ourselves in a precarious position at this point in history, the key to a bright future appears to be sustainable and inclusive development. Sustainability does not mean hindered development; it is an agenda for growth rather than a roadblock to it. Similarly, inclusive does not mean disbursing charity to the underprivileged but the empowerment of the deprived to unleash their potential. Individual empowerment will lead to happy homes; happy homes will make developed villages and towns; developed villages and towns will lead to prosperous nations; prosperous nations will be generators of enlightenment and, finally, it will be this enlightened society which will not merely coexist but also collaborate in creating a peaceful world with sustainable growth. The road to magnificent global goals begins at the atomic level of the empowered individual, and we believe PURA is an excellent tool to realize it.

We have examined and studied various development initiatives from many different parts of the world, with a special focus on India as a case study. All these initiatives—different in scope and scale—fundamentally carry a few common threads: knowledge-empowered individuals; community ownership; democratic control; market connectivity; and above all, customization according to the needs and the potential of a place and society. We have seen how PURA complexes in India are integrating all these factors into one common effort which can be a model for the entire developing world and even some underdeveloped parts of advanced nations.

These PURA complexes would be transformed into dynamic rural complexes with a focus on employment potential for all the families in a PURA cluster. They will have an umbilical connectivity with the nearest university, research facility or hospital. Let us now present the portrait of a PURA cluster based on the already operational PURAs and other ideas for empowerment discussed in the book:

1. Dwelling units for all the village citizens with sanitation facilities and a supply of clean water available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
2. The village complexes will have 100 per cent literacy, with significant efforts to build on a minimum level of literacy and move towards a knowledge-empowered society.
3. Besides upgrading the existing schools, the complex will have a few colleges, world-class vocational training institutes in various areas such as construction, carpentry, welding, and natural art; computer maintenance and services; IT-enabled services, business process outsourcing (BPO) and a call centre.
4. People in the PURA complex will be brought under a corporate health-care scheme. They will get quality medical care through tele-medicine and mobile clinics via the primary health-care centres.
5. Each PURA village complex will be free of diseases like polio, TB, leprosy, malaria and other waterborne diseases. The infant mortality rate will be lower than ten.
6. The PURA complex will promote horticulture, floriculture and agricultural products in collaboration with nearby agricultural universities and research institutes.
7. It will have agro-processing industries for value addition to these products for the realization of the goals of the farmers.
8. Setting up dairies and fish farms for providing additional non-farm revenue to farmers who can produce various dairy products.
9. Revival of all existing water bodies in the PURA cluster.
10. Provision of employment to all employable people in the village through additional jobs in dairy farming, agro-processing, construction, handicraft and tourism enterprises.
11. There may be many villages with important tourist spots. It would be financially advantageous to impart training in tourism for managers and operators, and to set up facilities for tourists, including accommodation, in a private enterprise partnership.
12. Overall, the per capita income of the PURA cluster should increase by three times and the number of people living below the poverty line should come down to zero in six years from the beginning of the initiative.
13. The PURA complexes are evolved as value-based societies with compassion and absence of internal conflicts.

Of course, to achieve the above goal, it is vital to have a dynamic, empowered PURA management board structure. This has to be set up with the active participation of state governments, district authorities, societal transformers, educational institutes and small-scale industries or enterprises, in association with leadership and governance at the village level. Finally, it will be managed as a viable and sustainable business proposition through local entrepreneurship. Every individual and organization has a role to play in the realization of such a global, sustainable development system. Let us briefly explain some basic roles.

WHAT CAN I DO TO EMPOWER 3 BILLION?

CITIZENS

Each one of you, in your respective organization, can act as a champion of PURA empowerment missions and contribute according to your own expertise and organizational capabilities. Form a small group of interested people and visit a nearby target site, where you can study the local strengths, weaknesses and opportunities which can be the 'game changers' for the place. Find ways of synergizing your strengths with the needed action. Publish your results and findings for action at the organizational level. If, from within your organization, you can support the task of creating or augmenting a PURA nearby, that will be a worthy contribution to the mission of empowering 3 billion.

STUDENTS

You are both architects and stakeholders of the future. Focus on being a job generator rather than merely a job seeker. There is no better opportunity to give wings to your entrepreneurial spirit than in the untapped rural regions of the nation and the world.

Even while pursuing your studies, you can choose to contribute to the mission of empowering the people of your country. Choose five families from rural or suburban areas near your home or institute and instruct them in getting better education for their children and better health care for the family. Tell them about their rights as a citizen and help them explore new options of socio-economic transformation which technology and market access have now opened up. You can support the PURA mission in your own way.

RETIRED AND SENIOR CITIZENS

You represent the key knowledge strength of the nation. With your vast experience in dealing with the public and the private sectors, and your knowledge of the social and geographical dynamics, you can take on the role of mentor in the development initiatives and help structure them for better results.

ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS AND UNIVERSITIES

Knowledge is power. Academic institutions, as the intellectual resource of every nation and as the collection point of thousands of students and youths, can play a vital role in PURA-based empowerment.

Select a group of five to ten villages and deploy a team of faculty and students to work for the development of these villages, by mapping the local competencies and identifying the best technology for value addition to them. You can also scout for grass-roots innovations and help the local population plan improved products and services around them. We have already shown that many universities and academic institutions across the world have pioneered empowerment missions; they can serve as examples for similar missions.

PRIVATE SECTOR: LARGE INDUSTRIES

You can execute one PURA mission in each of the major operating regions. With your improved access to markets around the world, you can provide new export markets where the local products can find space, especially with the help of your distribution channels. The PURAs established by you can be based on the matching of your core business theme with the local competencies.

Contributions can also be made on the consumption side. Mainstream products and services need to reach the PURA-empowered villages. Besides these, advanced knowledge too has to reach the local population. Ask yourselves whether you can provide for such dissemination of Knowledge Connectivity to the rural regions.

SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRIES

Identify local competencies and lead an enterprise-driven movement for development at the rural

level. Train local youths for various industries and thus emerge as a job generator. You can provide the last mile of connectivity of technology to the rural regions and, with localized operations, give grass-roots-level value addition to products and services.

PUBLIC SECTOR UNITS

You can take up one PURA mission for implementation in each of the regions where you operate. Bring in different stakeholders and lead an integrated development mission of PURA.

Public sector banking units can act as financiers of the PURA mission, and developmental impact along socio-economic lines should become a benchmark for assessment.

LARGE HOSPITALS AND SPECIALTY HEALTH-CARE CENTRES

Health care is a major issue in both social uplifting as well as in ensuring economic growth. Health-care centres can act as leaders of the PURA mission in rural regions.

Send your doctors and medical teams to rural regions on health-care missions; it will be a great learning experience for them and also contribute to better health for the nation. If you are located in urban areas then, using technology, your specialist doctors can give some time to treating rural patients, and you can lead in preventive health care through e-health missions.

NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

You can start a PURA mission in specific regions of the country, especially those which are remote and affected by poverty and unrest. You can play a vital role in assessing the impact of empowerment missions. You can work with local governance institutions (like the panchayati raj) and give them knowledge support on how to be a part of the PURA empowerment missions, and how they can plan better with the existing schemes available to them through the government and other agencies.

NON-RESIDENT NATIONALS

Many developing nations, including India, have non-resident nationals living and prospering across the world. In this capacity, you can choose to contribute to the place of your origin, or any other place nearby. The most important resource you can give back is knowledge. Tell the people of your native place about your success, and the reasons behind it. Bring access to international markets and cutting-edge technology to help the home population create and obtain better products and better value. This will, indeed, be a great contribution to the economic growth of the rural regions through PURA.

MEDIA

Be the lighthouse which spreads great ideas and innovations across the length and breadth of your country. Focus on highlighting at least ten previously unheard stories of successful rural enterprises in your particular media format. These success stories will inspire others and create hope and

admiration for the existing empowerment models. Half of the world population lives in rural areas and we need to give their stories a rightful share in the popular media.

GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES AND DEPARTMENTS

An organized and integrated effort by the Central government is needed to transcend the boundaries of departments and ministries, and create an integrated development system with adequate private and community participation for empowering the rural region. The focus should be on creating an outcome that empowers the people rather than merely spending on freebies and unplanned assets which do not converge towards the common, desired goals.

The Government of India has already started the PURA mission on a pilot basis, but, of course, much more needs to be done and on a much larger scale.

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES IN THE STATE ASSEMBLIES AND THE PARLIAMENT

Besides advocating and practising sustainable development as your agenda, you can undertake the task of championing developmental politics by advocating the PURA mission in your constituency. Investments in PURA can be made through the Local Area Development Fund which would ensure unhindered implementation of a sustainable development model.

DISTRICT COLLECTOR AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITIES AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

As local officials, you can help by dovetailing different schemes in the areas towards the integrated purpose of PURA. You can also act as the synchronizing force for bringing the private and the public sectors together, and help them plan a PURA-based development model that could be launched in partnership with the local administration.

PANCHAYAT BOARD OR OTHER VILLAGE-LEVEL ADMINISTRATION

Panchayats can also help by allocating land for the developmental activities through PURA. They can organize community awareness, participate and contribute to the mission. As the ground-level body, they can play a major role in identifying the competency and the needs of a particular place where PURA has to be developed.

The future progress of any nation, society or region will henceforth be based on how innovatively and efficiently they are able to execute such sustainable missions with broad objectives across multiple dimensions. The leaders will be tested on the implementation of such a futuristic vision; the companies will be judged on how well they are able to develop and serve these new markets; and all our health-care and education systems will have to be geared towards inclusive growth for all.

This is the future we see towards which we need to channelize our efforts.

PURA is indeed the model for a sustainable development system that will generate 3 billion smiles, 3 billion empowered citizens, 3 billion healthy family members, 3 billion human beings who

will aggressively contribute to human growth; and thus PURA will be the tool that will lead to the evolution of a happy, peaceful and prosperous world.