EDITORIAL

The origin of recent narratives on capacity building in public administration can be rooted back to contemporary reforms of decentralization, local self governments and the watershed legislations like 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) in 1992. The need to develop capacities of these relatively newer local bodies and the departments, agencies, authorities dealing with them on regular basis has been further underscored with the experiences gained during the flagship urban sector programme – the Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). The scheme, essentially focusing on urban infrastructure and reforms, along with a number of committees, commissions, working groups have highlighted on weak institutional capacity of local agencies and pressed for strengthening and enabling them to effectively, efficiently and responsively administer functions mandated to them.

In this context, it is highly pertinent to conceptually and empirically understand the meanings and implications of capacity building. The normative definition of capacity building has been consequential and goal oriented, speaking of conditional obligations. Horton et al 2003, OECD 2006 and Morgan 2006, among others belong to this genre (for more on this, refer Dr Gangadhar Jha's paper in this issue). According to them,

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Selected definitions of Capacity Building

Capacity is (the) potential to perform (Horton et al, 2003).

Capacity is the ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully (OECD, 2006).

Capacity is that emergent contribution of attributes that enables a human system to create development value (Morgan, 2006).

capacity development sums up as the ability or potential to function, perform effectively/ successfully or create additional value.   But there are deontological theories as well that rather place emphasis upon not just performance, but to the process of achieving it. In this regard, United Nations definition stands apart, in the sense that it not just recognizes the need of performance and problem solving, but also about identifying problems and development needs. Most importantly, it acknowledges that capacity building is not a stationery concept, but instead a process oriented endeavour. The Government of India's understanding follows suit.   Report of the Working Group on Capacity Building for the formulation of the Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012 – 2017) notes that, "it needs to be appreciated that capacity building is a long term and ongoing effort which needs to be institutionalised in the planning and implementation process starting from the ULB to state to the central level programs.…there is a need to calibrate and benchmark continuously against measurable indicators over a period of time in order to make course corrections to achieve the desired results". *This issue of Urban India is dedicated to this very call by having a special issue with reportages and empirical findings on the nationwide status of capacity building and associated urban reforms, to meaningfully inform the current policy discourse.*

We are pleased to open this issue with a guest article from Ms Nisha Singh, who has served as Joint Secretary, Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India and has one of the most genuine and practical knowledge of the state of the affairs in capacity building and urban reforms in India. In her article titled, "Capacity Building in Urban Local Bodies in India", she vividly pens the reality, underscoring that with urban landscapes in India being unplanned, chaotic and lack in infrastructure and services, there is a dire need to build up the capacities of urban local bodies (ULBs) in India. She identifies core issues like the need of having trained staff looking into different aspects of urban governance, strengthening of institutions and connecting with technological institutions, among others.

In the research paper, "A comprehensive Framework for Training Needs Assessment of ULBs in India", Potharjau Hanumantha Rao postulates that training is an important component of capacity building. Systematic Training Needs Assessment (TNA) helps improving effectiveness of training programmes. Various studies and reports of TNA of ULBs in India are reviewed in this paper and a comprehensive framework is

UNDP and Planning Commission of India's understanding of Capacity Building

The process by which individuals, groups, organisations, institutions and societies increase their abilities to: 1) perform core functions, solve problems, and define and achieve objectives; and 2) understand and deal with their development needs in a broad context and in a sustainable manner
(UNDP, 1997).

Capacity Building for better cities is the effort to strengthen and improve the abilities of personnel and organizations to be able to perform their tasks in a more effective, efficient and sustainable manner. It needs to be appreciated that capacity building is a long term and ongoing effort which needs to be institutionalised in the planning and implementation process starting from the ULB to state to the central level programs.
(Planning Commission, 2011).

Capacity Building needs to be a continuous and ongoing initiative whose aim is to improve and facilitate the skill sets and processes involving human and other perceivable inputs. There is a need to calibrate and benchmark continuously against measurable indicators over a period of time in order to make course corrections to achieve the desired results.
(Planning Commission, 2011).

proposed. The study concludes that job/functional analysis and competency gap analysis are important steps in TNA, resulting into an effective training strategy plan. While this article lays the theoretical foundation of TNA, the next contribution actually applies it in identifying capacities at the local level. The case in point is the study by Ramakrishna Nallathiga, "Capacity Building for Urban Governance: Capacity Enhancement Needs Assessment (CENA) Approach of Andhra Pradesh". The author argues that the development and maintenance of urban infrastructure would require large amount of resources – material, manpower and money. With devolution of more functions through 74th CAA, the resource requirements have further increased in ULBs. In this context, the author shares the experiment of Government of Andhra Pradesh through CENA framework as a useful reference to local governments in other States.

But capacity building is much more than training of personnel. As the Second Administrative Reforms Commission notes that it is an erroneous notion that capacity building relates only to training and imparting new skills to employees and improving their existing skills. In this context, Gangadhar Jha, elevates the present narrative to a higher plane in his paper, "Conceptualising Capacity Building of Urban Local Self-Government: Looking Beyond Training". He propounds that while renewed emphasis on capacity building of urban local bodies is well placed, the modality for this, by and large, has been traditionally confined to training only. Training is seen as a panacea for capacity building. This paper, therefore, discusses the conceptual groundings of a capacity development framework to demystify capacity building as a concept and strategy. It reasons how capacity building is much more comprehensive a concept than mere training, exploring the contemporary fascination for training as a means for capacity building, its limitations, and the gaps in existing training programmes. Subsequently, it identifies the elements of a framework that could help in adopting a strategy for a capacity building initiative.

A. Narender, brings to the fore the financial incapacities looming over urban India, particularly to meet the challenge of providing urban infrastructure. In his research titled, "Financing Urban Infrastructure in India: Trends, Requirements, Challenges and Strategies", he observes the need to adopt a normative approach to finance urban infrastructure at the national, state and city level, as articulated by several studies to avoid under spending and ensure higher level of services. The paper suggests that each state and city should undertake the exercise of

assessment of infrastructure requirements on the lines of the High Powered Expert Committee on Urban Infrastructure, estimates at the national level and a state level plan for streamlined allocation of finances as per the State Finance Commission Reports; as well as city level action plans for revenue improvement should be prepared. The paper recommends for revenue improvement benchmarks, speedy and effective implementation of various recommendations made by expert committees towards enhancing municipal finances by the national, state and local governments.

Progress in urban sector needs to be seen particularly in light of recent policies and programmes, like JNNURM that were launched with the goal of pushing reforms in local governance. The fact is that no amount of investment, new infrastructure or additional finance could bring a marvel – ultimately the institutions charged with responsibilities have to be able to execute those responsibilities, draw on the resources available, and make sound decisions. In this regard, Jaswinder Kaur dwells into "Institutional Capacity Building under JNNURM" with the case study of Punjab. The author reviews the institutional arrangements that have been established under JNNURM to realize the objectives for urban development and assess their efficacy to sustain the programme. Her results point towards shortcomings in provision of staff, technology, monitoring, stakeholder engagement and having enabling institutions in place for smooth governance. It is worth mentioning here that Peer Experience and Reflective Learning" (PEARL), an initiative under JNNURM was instrumental in creating soft-linkages between various urban local bodies (for more details see the box alongside).

Beyond accounting only state level progress, we have contributions further investigating into some of the cities through case study approach. Dr. Shaveta Begra examines, "The Role of Urban Local Bodies in Urban Planning and Administration" with a case study of Municipal Council, SAS Nagar. It reasons that the city council has been reduced to a subordinate agency of development authorities. Over the period, development authorities have encroached upon the council's constitutional functions as well as its financial resources, thereby relegating the role of ULB in administration of urban planning. It also highlights the non-functional District Planning Committees has adversely affected the incorporation of participatory approach in urban planning and management and propose, amongst others, building up the capacity of ULBs by means of increased devolution of functions, upgrading their

Highlights of PEARL

"Peer Experience and Reflective Learning" (PEARL) was an initiative under JNNURM to support cities to actively pursue activities in implementation of projects and reforms.

The National Institute of Urban Affairs was nominated by the Ministry of Urban Development to function as National Network Coordinator, to coordinate PEARL activities among the JNNURM cities.

PEARL was envisaged to form groups/ networks amongst JNNURM cities having similar socio-economic profile, complexities of urban problems, size and urban growth patterns, along with natural affinity to peer pair..

The programme was launched on January 31, 2007 in Hyderabad, AP. A network convener & potential knowledge managers were identified.

The cities were divided into six groups, (a) Mega Cities; (b) Industrial Cities; (c) Mixed Economy; (d) Cultural Cities; (e) North-East Cities and (f) Cities of Environmental Importance.

Major outputs were to create manageable networks between JNNURM cities for cross learning and sharing knowledge on urban reforms & governance

Documentation of best practices, Trainings/ handholding workshops, dissemination of knowledge through website and newsletters formed major mediums and output.

financial base, constitution of district planning committees, etc.

The second research in this series is on "Urban Governance and Reforms in Jammu and Kashmir in the context of JNNURM" that discusses the issues and alternatives with Srinagar as the case. It highlights issues in institutional, functional and fiscal domain of the urban governance and gives an overview of reforms implementation under JNNURM in the state in general and Srinagar in particular. Results reveal that both physical progress of development work and reforms implementation is falling significantly short of targets.

Finally, we have a piece on raging socio-economic issues of one of the most valuable but disadvantaged groups in the urban milieu- the street vendors. The paper, "The Vulnerabilities of Stationary and Mobile Urban Street Vendors in India" is based on survey findings conducted by Seepana Prakasam in Chandigarh. The survey is based on the sample of 500 migrant stationary & mobile street vendors. Findings of this study are useful to take administrative and welfare measures to eradicate vulnerabilities of street vendors. It illuminates a series of findings pertaining to their working, living and socio-economic status, and throws open a series of policy measures crucial to their integration into the mainstream.

In book review section, we have titles that attempt to objectively revisit the norms. The first in line is on the topic of healthy cities, followed by land acquisition process in urban planning. The book, "Healthy Cities : Public Health through Urban Planning" by Chinmoy Sarkar, Chris Webstar and John Gallacher is reviewed by Subhakanta Mohapatra who explains how this book finds renewed interest in the present discourse on public health and urban planning. The other book is by A.K. Jain, titled "Revisiting Land Acquisition and Urban Process". By recommending plural, hybrid land policy integrated with an innovative and futuristic urban planning, this work offers a roadmap for sustainable and inclusive planned development. The volume culminates with a regular update on projects, workshops, seminars, etc. in latter half of 2014. We hope this issue of Urban India crafts an informative and enriching experience for our readers.

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