

Assessment of Project Identification Process in AMRUT Mission in India

Dr. Jyotirmoy Sarma
Urban Infrastructure Expert

Abstract - AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) Mission funded by Govt. of India and State Governments, covering 500 numbers of towns and cities in different states of India, was intended to develop urban infrastructure such as water supply, sewerage, septage management, storm water drainage, urban transport, green spaces and parks in the selected towns. For identifying urban infrastructure works to be constructed in the selected towns, service level improvement plans (SLIP) prepared by respective Urban Local Bodies were taken as basis. It has been found that identification of new projects based on suggestions given in SLIPs was not enough. For identification of new projects, sectoral master plans for each of the sectors such as water supply, sewerage, storm water drainage and urban transport, should have been prepared and used.

keywords - AMRUT, SLIP, Sectoral Master Plan, Water Supply, Sewerage, Septage Management, Storm Water Drainage

I. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

In India, from year 2015, Govt. of India has taken up a large urban infrastructure development mission titled AMRUT covering 500 towns and cities. Water supply, sewerage, storm water drainage, green spaces and park development works are mostly constructed in the selected towns and cities. The works included in the mission are selected based on Service Level Improvement Plans (SLIPs) prepared by respective urban local bodies. It has been observed that the prepared SLIP documents in the mission mostly included basic data on urban infrastructure, identification of present service level deficiencies and proposed works to meet present deficiencies. The contents of the documents are nowhere equivalent to long term sectoral plans required for planning of new urban infrastructure in any city or town. As a result, most of the works taken up under AMRUT mission are incremental in nature and not exact parts of overall infrastructure system of the city.

II. THE CASE STUDY:

In Andhra Pradesh, the State Government had selected 31 towns and cities for inclusion in AMRUT mission to improve basic urban infrastructure. These towns and cities were divided under Region 1 & 2 and the project components mostly included water supply, sewerage, septage management, storm water drainage and green space and parks development. To identify works for the project components as mentioned above, Service Level Improvement Plans were prepared by each ULB for water supply, sewerage and storm water drainage sector. The steps followed in preparing the SLIPs were:

- i) **Assess the Service Level Gap:** This involves assessment of the existing situation and finding out service level gaps for water supply, sewerage and drainage infrastructure in the town.
- ii) **Bridge the Gap:** Once the gaps between the existing and desired service Levels are known, objectives are to be developed to bridge the gaps to achieve the desired service levels.
- iii) **Examine Alternatives and Estimate the Cost:** The objectives will lead to explore and examine viable alternative options of works to be taken up to address the existing and desired service gaps. Cost estimates are prepared for the proposed works.
- IV) **Citizen Engagement:** ULBs will organize and conduct city level citizen consultations and receive feedback on the suggested alternatives and innovations. Each alternative will be discussed with citizens and works to be taken up will be prioritized to meet the service level gaps.
- V) **Prioritize Projects:** Based on the citizen engagement, ULB will prioritize the proposed works and their scaling up based on the available resources to meet the respective objectives.
- VI) **Identify Conditionalities:** These are to be identified for the proposed works, which includes availability of land, environmental obligation and clearances, required NOC, financial commitment, approval and permissions needed to implement the project.
- VII) **Inclusion of Resilience factors:** These are to be built in to ensure that the proposed works are environmentally sustainable.
- viii) **Preparation of Financial Plan:** SLIP need to include investment details both in terms of capital cost and O&M cost and different sources of finance for the complete life cycle of the prioritized development.

In Andhra Pradesh, SLIP documents prepared by the ULBs were modified by Project Development and Management Consultants after detailed field studies. Subsequently, a workshop was conducted, where all key decision makers and

stakeholders attended the workshop. In the workshop, projects suggested in the SLIPs were discussed and finalised. Based on the SLIPs, State Annual Action Plan (SAAP) was prepared for the entire state.

The SLIP documents prepared for selected towns and cities of India had the following general deficiencies:

- i) SLIPs did not include any design horizon year of proposed infrastructure, population projection in design year and derivation of infrastructure demand in design horizon year. As per CPHEEO manual of Govt. of India, the design horizon year for water supply, sewerage and storm water drainage works needs to be 30 years from present year.
- ii) Most of the prepared SLIPs did not include detailed study of existing infrastructure and their present deficiencies.
- iii) Most of the prepared SLIPs did not include detailed options study for selecting proposed infrastructure.
- iv) SLIPs included details of present year service level deficiencies and works to address present deficiencies. It did not include long term plans for developing proposed infrastructure.
- v) SLIPs did not include identification of all proposed works in an overall system of proposed infrastructure works required in the design year.

The appropriate documents required to be prepared and used for identifications of urban infrastructure development works are sectoral master plans for each of the sectors such as water supply, sewerage and drainage. The sectoral master plans are higher level documents than SLIPs prepared under AMRUT mission. Sectoral master plans gives comprehensive views on existing situation of the sector, existing deficiencies and projected deficiencies in design horizon years, proposed works required to be constructed to meet the deficiencies in design year, cost estimate of proposed works, prioritisation of proposed works and an investment and implementation plan. As no long term sectoral plans were available for most of AMRUT mission cities, the selected and implemented works in AMRUT mission were incremental in nature.

III. MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The following are the major findings and conclusions:

- i) In any large infrastructure development program initiated by Government, identification of works to be included in the program is to be done after detailed studies. Use of SLIP documents for different sectors such as water supply, sewerage and drainage as used in AMRUT mission were not sufficient to identify new urban infrastructure works in the towns. Detailed sectoral master plans should have been prepared and used for identifications of new works.
- ii) In India, for most of cities and towns, long term infrastructure master plans for different sectors such as water supply, sewerage, storm water drainage and solid waste management are generally not available. As a result, in all large Government infrastructure program, works are selected at the initial stage of the program without considering any supporting master plan or studies. At the same time, allotted or available fund in a program is limited for each city or town. Because of these, infrastructure developed in any program neither removes the infrastructure deficiencies completely nor become a part of a long term sectoral master plan.
- iii) It has been suggested that long term sectoral master plans are prepared by Government before identifying and selecting proposed works in any large infrastructure development programs. For preparing the sectoral master plans, professional consulting groups should be hired by Government.

Disclaimer: The findings and conclusions presented in the paper are solely based on personal opinion of the author.