



Progress and Challenges of Rurban Clusters under SPMRM in Haryana: A Review

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Abstract

The centrally sponsored Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission has been bridging the rural-urban divide by providing quality essential amenities and improving the lifestyle of residents in the state. A total ten clusters have been identified in the state in three different phases. The aims of this research paper to examine the development progress, challenges faced in mission implementation and impact of the mission in selected clusters under the SPMRM.

Keywords: SPMRM, Rurban, Cluster, Rural Development, Rurbanization, countryside.

I. INTRODUCTION:

Livelihood, exchange of goods, services and migration from villages to towns/cities are blurring rural-urban divide and changing their interrelationship. That is creating challenges for basic needs like food, clothing and shelter, good education and quality health services, employment opportunities etc. in such areas. The process of urbanization has spread all over the world. In 1950, only one-third of the world's population was urban. It is estimated that by 2050 this will be two-thirds. Therefore, the development of Rurban areas will be one of the major trends of the 21st century. According to Aluwalia, "the pace of urbanization in India is slow compared to other three-world countries." The population projection report 2019 has projected the urban population to be 39.6 per cent by 2036 in India, whereas almost half (49.59 per cent) of the total population of Haryana will become urbanized.

In recent years, the concept of integrated rural-urban development has gained significant attention as policymakers seek to bridge the widening gap between urban and rural areas. This paradigm shift is encapsulated in the idea of "Rurban Clusters," which aims to create synergies between rural and urban elements, fostering

sustainable development and improving the quality of life in both settings. Haryana, a state known for its diverse economic activities and demographic composition, has been a focal point for the implementation of the Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (SPMRM). This paper undertakes a comprehensive review of the Rurban Clusters established in Haryana under the ambit of SPMRM, with the objective of evaluating their progress, examining challenges faced, and assessing their impact on rural-urban linkages.

Concept of Rurban:

The etymology of the word "Rurban" is believed to be from the 20th century. The term 'Rurbanization' was coined by C. J. Galpin in 1918. That is defined by Parsons as a geographic area where "Lifestyles and standards of living have changed so much that they resemble urban areas." Rurbanization is a global phenomenon. Those characteristics may differ from one country to another. So this word is understood in a particular area in its own way. Like: **Cambridge dictionary** define Rurban as, "land in the countryside on the edge of a town or city, on which new housing, business etc. are built."

According to **Merriam-Webster** dictionary Rurban is "relating to, or constituting an area which is chiefly residential but where some farming is carried on."

The Law dictionary defines Rurban area as "a new development of land that is between an area of rural activity and the edge of sub-urban area that has already been developed."

The meaning of Rurban according to **Collins English dictionary** is "bringing together the urban and rural."

The above definitions explicate that the word "Rurban" is a combination of rural and urban, which refers to those rural areas that A group of villages located in the plains and coastal areas with a population of about twenty-five to fifty thousand or a group of villages in hilly, desert, tribal areas with a



population of five to fifteen thousand and are geographically close to each other's is called/identified as Rurban cluster. As far as possible, for administrative convenience, only those villages should be included in a cluster which falls under a block or tehsil.

Why Rurban Clusters are needed:

Till now the efforts made for the development of rural areas in the country have not got any significant success. The main reason for this is the lack of real facts in planning and implementation. Due to which they do not know the needs of the area and use the resources in vain. That's why even today most of the rural areas are untouched by development, for which Rurban Mission can be a lifeline. Therefore, the following are the reasons for the need of Rurban Clusters:-

- Increasing pressure of population on cities
- Continuous migration of people from rural areas to cities
- Lack of basic amenities in rural areas
- Right of rural population to lead quality life at par with urban population
- Rurban mission is necessary for all-round development of the country because the country can't develop until the villages are not developed etc.

Keeping these needs in mind, the Government of India (GoI) launched the SPMRM scheme with the objective of sustainable clusters development in rural areas.

Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (SPMRM):

So far umpteen efforts have been made by the government in the field of Rural Development, yet some parts of the rural areas remain untouched which needs to be integrated with the mainstream. The Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission is a centrally sponsored program, focusing on cluster-based integrated development planned under the aegis of the Union Ministry of Rural Development. In this scheme, rural areas are identified, where there is an increase in population density, a high level of non-farm employment, and increasing economic activity, other social scales are showing signs of increasing urbanization, and there is a focus on cluster-based development. Go and develop such clusters where people can get basic facilities like cities. Therefore, this scheme/program is unique from other programs of Rural Development in this respect.

Objectives of the SPMRM Mission:

The main objectives of the Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission are to ensure economic development in terms of the people dwelling in the countryside, enhance the basic services and create advanced Rurban clusters by reducing the gap between villages and cities.

Selection Criteria of Rurban Cluster:

Geographically contiguous villages with a population of about twenty-five thousand to fifty thousand in plain and coastal areas and groups of five thousand to fifteen thousand in the desert, hilly or tribal areas will be identified as a cluster. As far as possible, all the villages included in a cluster shall be from the same block or tehsil for administrative convenience.

Features/Components of SPMRM:

The following features/components have been considered desirable for each cluster to be developed as a "Rurban Cluster":

- Skill development training linked to economic activities
- Fully equipped mobile health unit
- Upgrading school/ higher education facilities and digital literacy
- Sanitation and provision of piped water supply
- Solid and liquid waste management
- Village streets, drains and street lights
- Inter-village road connectivity and public transport
- LPG gas connections
- Citizen Service Centres (CSC).

II. Literature Review:

(Krishna et. al. 2016) explicate in "Rurban Centers: The New Dimension of Urbanism" that agriculture based third-world economies developed gradually and India has also not an exception to this process. But now development of cities and villages has to be ensured in planned manners. (Kulashri and Negi, 2017) found that SPMRM Mission have multi-purpose, playing an unprecedented role in improving rural areas and people's lifestyle as well as preventing migration to urban areas. (Kumar and Khan, 2018) make it clear that PURA scheme seeks to accomplish "all-inclusive and quicker development of compact areas around a potential growth center in a Panchayat (or group of Panchayats) through PPP by providing livelihood opportunities and urban amenities to improve the quality of life in rural areas." The intention is to empower the people living in rural areas so they may generate opportunities and a living for themselves in a sustainable and expanding manner.



(Boda, 2018) briefly explicate that “Rurbanization” consists of developing rural areas, including basic amenities like healthcare services, employment opportunities, etc.; these activities surely contributed in the growth of the country. (Boda, 2018) has endeavoured to clarify that SPMRM is such a central scheme which aims to develop Rurban clusters in rural areas by providing facilities like cities in villages, which was neglected in the earlier policies of Rural Development in his paper “Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission as an Initiative of Indian Government for Rural Areas Development through Rurbanization”. Chandni and Andaleeb, (2018) define Rurban in "Urbanising the Rural: Reflections on India's National Rurban Mission" as a procedure of switching rural socio-economic lifestyle into urban by ameliorations of essential services and infrastructure. While, (Chatterjee, 2014) labels census cities as 'Rurban', arguing that such cities exhibit rapid economic growth without associated infrastructure, service and development. (Bhatt and Shah, 2021) were identified shortcomings and achievements of SPMRM Mission. A lot of work was done in rural and urban areas but no proper work was done in Rurban villages, lack of assessment in rural area has the main shortcomings whereas bridging the rural-urban divide, attracting investment and spreading development in rural areas have the major achievements of the mission. (Sakketa and Gutu, 2022) examines how urbanization influences rural development in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), with a particular emphasis on the mechanisms by which urbanization influences rural economic development. The opinions of the authors on these consequences are very different; some emphasize the positive aspects of urbanization, such as the rise in demand for agricultural products and services, while others draw attention to the negative aspects, such as the loss of livelihoods and urban expansion. (Aggarwal, 2023) briefly highlighted various schemes of rural development, the major ones being DAY-NRLM, SAGY, PMAY-G and SPMRM. Many developmental schemes have been implemented at the national and state levels, but the results have been unsatisfactory. Therefore, there is a need to implement rural development schemes and programs with more honesty and sincerity.

However: a gap in research is identified regarding progress and challenges of Rurban clusters under SPMRM.

Statement of Problem: ‘Progress and Challenges of Rurban Clusters under SPMRM in Haryana: A Review.’

Objectives of the study:

- To assess the progress of Rurban Clusters in Haryana under SPMRM.
- To identify challenges faced during the implementation of SPMRM in the state.
- To analyze the impact of SPMRM on strengthening rural-urban linkages in Rurban clusters of the state.

Research Methodology:

This descriptive and analytical research used secondary data to assess the progress and challenges of the Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (SPMRM) in Haryana. Secondary data was collected from various sources such as newspapers, magazines, books, research papers, magazines, reports and official websites. Simple percentage tool was used to analysis the collected data.

Limitation of the Study:

- Haryana state only
- Measured only Physical and Financial progress
- Used secondary data only

Progress of Rurban Clusters in Haryana under SPMRM:

In the first phase of the scheme, six clusters of Haryana state were identified under the SPMRM program, namely Balla (Karnal), Mullana (Ambala), Samain (Fatehabad), Uchana Khurd (Jind), Kosli (Rewari), Badli (Jhajjar) and in the second phase two clusters were identified, namely Ganeshpur (Panchkula) and Siwah (Panipat), in the third phase also two clusters were identified, namely Tigaon (Faridabad), Singar (Mewat) in the state. Total 10 clusters have been identified in Haryana under this program to bridge the economic and technological gap in Rurban clusters and access to basic amenities. It also helps to alleviate poverty and entice funding in rural areas.

Table-1 Profile of the identified clusters

Sr. No.	Cluster Name	Identified in Phase	Category of Cluster	No. of Villages covered in the cluster	Population covered in the cluster
01	Mulana	I st	Agriculture Cluster	14	32,654



02	Samain	I st	Agriculture Cluster	09	38,349
03	Uchana Khurd	I st	Agriculture Cluster	15	52,294
04	Badli	I st	Agriculture Cluster	19	56,105
05	Balla	I st	Agriculture Cluster	05	44,028
06	Kosli	I st	Agriculture Cluster	17	55,352
07	Ganeshpur	II nd	Tourism Cluster	14	16,781
08	Sewah	II nd	Agriculture Cluster	09	46,363
09	Tigaon	III rd	Service Cluster	09	32,682
10	Singar	III rd	Animal Husbandry & Service Cluster	11	49,284

https://rurban.gov.in/index.php/public_home#gsc.tab=0

The information in Table 1 shows that the mission covers a total of 423,892 residents in 122 villages spread across ten clusters in Haryana, with the Badli cluster having the highest number of villages (19) and the Balla cluster having the lowest (5). In terms of population, Ganeshpur (16,781) was the smallest

cluster in the state, while Badli (56,105) was the largest. 7 clusters were selected as agriculture cluster, while the remaining 3 clusters were identified as tourism, service and animal husbandry & service.

Table-2
Physical Progress of the Identified Clusters in Haryana

Cluster Name	Total No of Works	Approved Works	Completed Works	Ongoing Works	Not Started Works	Geo-tagged Works	Completed works percentage
Mulana	267	267	245	15	07	250	91.76
Samain	239	236	170	03	63	154	72.03
Uchana Khurd	547	448	388	34	26	379	86.61
Badli	112	87	59	16	12	71	67.82
Balla	82	81	74	02	05	74	91.36
Kosli	137	137	112	18	07	124	81.75
Ganeshpur	347	340	273	50	17	317	80.29
Sewah	226	226	198	06	22	181	87.61
Tigaon	79	76	47	27	02	41	61.84
Singar	74	74	45	15	14	52	60.81
Total	2110	1972	1611	186	175	1643	81.69

https://rurban.gov.in/index.php/new_mis/clusterwise_no_of_total_works/3191870746250536482965074123896#gsc.tab=0

The data tabulated in Table 2 indicate that 2110 total number of works was identified to develop the selected ten clusters into Rurban clusters, out of which 1972 works were approved. Almost all works (81.69 per cent) have been completed and geo-tagged. Whereas, only nine per cent works have been ongoing, and nine per cent were such works on which no action has been taken so far in any cluster.

It is noteworthy that the Samain cluster selected in the first phase of the Mission had the highest number of works (27 per cent) on which work had not yet started. Simultaneously, almost all (91.76 and 91.36 per cent respectively) works have been completed in the Mullana and Balla clusters. Most (83 per cent) of the development works undertaken in the state have been geo-tagged. In geo-tagging too, Mullana cluster (94 per cent) topped, while Tigaon cluster (54 per cent) stood last.



Table 3
Financial Progress of the Identified Clusters in Haryana

Sr. No	Cluster Name	Total Approved Investment (Rs. in Cr.)	Total Expenditure (Rs. in Cr.)	Percentage
1	Mulana	170.03	77.13	45
2	Samain	107.22	33.26	31
3	Uchana Khurd	127.44	112.80	89
4	Badli	109.70	57.34	52
5	Balla	103.94	32.18	31
6	Kosli	104.60	50.86	49
7	Ganeshpur	110.65	89.51	81
8	Sewah	138.97	80.17	58
9	Tigaon	110.67	63.49	57
10	Singar	116.54	55.98	48
	Total	1199.76	652.72	54

https://rurban.gov.in/index.php/public_home#gsc.tab=0

The data tabulated in Table 3 shows that more than half (54 per cent) of the sanctioned funds have been utilized to complete the developmental works under Rurban mission in the selected ten clusters of the state. Almost all (89 per cent) of the sanctioned fund has been utilized in the Uchana Khurd cluster, which is highest among the selected clusters. While Balla and Samain clusters spent 31 per cent of the sanctioned amount, respectively. It was quite surprising that most of the clusters utilized less than 60 per cent of their sanctioned amount for the development of the selected clusters.

Challenges in the Implementation of SPMRM:

Under the Rurban Mission, a target has been set for organized economic and infrastructural development of the selected cluster. However, like other schemes of rural development, there were some challenges in front of this mission, which if not resolved in time, and then the result of this mission will be like other schemes. In which the main challenges were as follows:-

- Lack of awareness about Rurban Mission among the nodal agency, state government, gram panchayats and stakeholders.
- Lack of institutional structure and desired staffing for implementation the mission effectively.
- To implement this mission, employees are recruited on contract basis, due to which qualified, well-educated and experienced candidates are not attracted towards it.
- Obscure financing system.
- Lack of adequate participation of Gram Panchayats in the decision making process.
- Convergence of the schemes of the Center and States is the basis of this mission,

which in itself is a cumbersome and challenging task.³⁹

- The role of Panchayats in the implementation of the mission has not been clarified although they are the main stakeholders.⁴⁰

By overcoming the above challenges, substantial goals/objectives of this mission can be achieved.

Major Findings:

- The progress of Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission varies among different clusters of Haryana.
- Mulana Cluster tops in completion of work and economical use of funds.
- The size of clusters plays a significant role in their rapid development of them; development work has completed faster in smaller clusters like Balla and Ganeshpur cluster.
- SPMRM has been playing a significant role in bridging the rural-urban divide.
- The major finding of the study was that there has been no positive relation between the utilization of funds and the accomplishment of tasks.

III. Conclusion:

This analytical research leads to conclude that Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission has the finest effort so far in terms of rural development in the state. Through which not only reducing rural-urban divide, but also positively improving the people's lifestyle. Although, the pace of progress has not been uniform in all the clusters, yet the growth of the Mulana and Balla clusters were commendable. It will prove a role model for other clusters. Additionally, by enhancing collaboration



between officials and Gram Panchayat representatives, more effective results of this mission can be achieved in the state.

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