16.1 BACKGROUND

As per Census 2011, the total rural population of NCR is 172.6 Lakhs, which accounts for 37.5% of the total NCR population. The proportion of rural population has gone down by 6.1% during the last decade 2001-2011. There were 7528 rural settlements in NCR in 2001 (Figure 16.1).

Rural settlements, located in the fast growing Central National Capital Region, are undergoing physical and socio-economic changes, particularly in the settlements along the major transport corridors.

The Regional Plan-2021 proposed strategy for rural development which envisages provision of facilities and services in appropriate hierarchy to stimulate production and increase the income of rural masses, diversify the economy, make villages attractive to live and work.

The Plan proposed six-tier hierarchy of settlements out of which three are for rural settlement system. They are Service Centres, Central Villages and Basic Villages. The Service Centres shall be the small town or a large village having linkages with immediate rural hinterlands. These centres would cater to the rural hinterland as agro-service centre in the collection and distribution of agricultural goods and services with processing, marketing, warehousing and storage facilities. Central Village is the higher order village having central location and potential for development within its service area, with relatively better services and facilities in terms of education, health, communication, accessibility and has the capacity to serve a group of Basic Villages. This centre is proposed to provide basic social facilities for population engaged in agriculture and other primary activities. All other Census villages with a population of less than 5,000 have been classified as Basic Villages and would be provided with basic facilities like link roads, water supply and electricity, paved streets and low-cost common sanitary facilities as well as the minimum required social infrastructure as per planning norms.

It was proposed that these settlements would be identified in the Sub-regional Plans and District Development Plans as per provision of the Constitution (74th Amendment) Act, 1992 by the respective State Governments based on their growth potential, size, connectivity and ability of performing required functions. They will prepare detailed rural development programmes and incorporate the same in the District Development Plans keeping in view the policies and proposals of the Regional Plan-2021 and develop strategies for these settlements.

16.2 ISSUES

16.2.1 District Development Plans need to be prepared and aligned with the provisions of the Constitution (74th Amendment) Act, 1992.
16.2.2 Government of India and NCR participating States are having various schemes related to rural development which need to be dovetailed with the policies and proposals of the Regional Plan/Sub-regional Plans for their implementation in the rural areas. District Administration will have to take lead to incorporate various proposals while preparing plan of action for development of respective districts in various sub-regions.

16.2.3 The rural settlements, which are very close to the National Capital and other Metropolitan cities, are undergoing rapid physical and socio-economic changes, causing haphazard development and shortages of basic services like water supply, power, sanitation, drainage, etc.


16.3 POLICIES AND PROPOSALS

16.3.1 Most poverty alleviation schemes of the Central/ state government have asset creation and infrastructure creation components. Rural development programmes of Central government cover employment through the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) (Box-16.1) and the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), housing through the Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) and other State schemes and bank support, sanitation through the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC), provision of drinking water through the National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NDRD), social security through the National Social Assistance Programme, watershed development through the Integrated Watershed Management Programme, road connectivity through the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) and electrification through the Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY).

The overall objectives of these policies are to provide financial assistance to the people below poverty line (BPL). Assistance and programmes to BPL families in construction of dwelling units, creation of additional and supplementary wage employment for rural masses, development of agriculture lands, horticulture, grassland, forest land, solid and water conservation measures, improving the sanitation levels of rural areas etc. These policies are addressed to improve the lives of people in rural areas and to create gainful employment so as to check the migration.

There is a need for convergence and integration of resources by various Government agencies and other institutions for rural development from various schemes sponsored by Government of India and NCR participating States in order to provide for the basic modern fabric and infrastructure for ‘Sustainable Development’.
Development’ and ‘Self reliance’ of rural areas, so that the dichotomy and disharmony between urban and rural areas is minimized. NCR participating States will have to lay down a road map for effective implementation of these policies in their respective Sub-Regional Plans.

16.3.2 Service Centres and Central Villages will be identified in the Sub-regional/District Plans by the respective State Governments based on their growth potential, size and capability of performing central functions for the Basic Villages.

16.3.3 Respective State Governments will prepare the detailed rural development programmes and incorporate the same in the Sub-regional Plans as well as in the District Plans. These programmes should be prepared keeping in view the objective that migration from the villages to the neighboring towns and industrial areas should be minimized to the extent possible.

16.3.4 State Governments may identify 2 or 3 service centres/central villages for development in their respective sub-region and also prepare development plans and formulate projects on pilot basis. NCRPB’s financial assistance may be provided for preparation of development plans and project implementation.

16.3.5 In addition, other strategies for rural development may be included:

i. Training programmes in micro-entrepreneurship, processing of local produce, vocational skill upgradation etc., allied agro-economic activities such as poultry, dairy, pottery, handlooms, handicrafts and rural tourism may be fulfilled in a time bound mission mode approach.

ii. Financial incentives and loan schemes for starting micro-enterprises may be worked out and delivered in a package through district planning.

iii. Providing urban amenities/facilities in rural areas such as housing, better sanitation, water supply, communication system, social infrastructure etc, to improve the quality of life in the rural/semi urban (Mofussil areas) and also provide better connectivity among various types of settlements in the rural areas. The road map for effective implementation needs to be spelt out in the sub-regional plans.

iv. Increasing demand for organic agriculture produce in the Metropolitan cities of NCR should be met through cultivating non-conventional crops such as mushrooms, broccoli, baby corn, bamboo shoot, etc. as well as floriculture under RKVY. The State Governments have to provide necessary infrastructure in terms of technical know-how, finance and marketing support facilities etc. to the farmers to promote the non-conventional high value commercial farming in NCR.

v. Promotion of strategic partnership between government agencies, private sector, NGOs and Cooperatives in the areas of marketing, research and development and growth of rural infrastructure.

vi. Dissemination of relevant information on regular basis on on-going programmes, sources of micro-credit, market potentials, etc.