

Peri - Urban 2016

National Conference on
**Peri-Urban Agriculture
and Ecosystems**

The Multi- Faceted Contribution
to Urban Resilience

22-23 February 2016

Venue :

Seminar Hall :1 & 2
India International Centre,
New Delhi



Organised by :



NIUA
National Institute of Urban Affairs

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Focus and Purpose

Peri-Urban areas are considered zones of transition from rural to urban land uses located between the outer limits of urban and regional centres and the rural environment. They represent a wide range of uses, such as water catchments, forestry, recreation, and productive farming, as well as offering a unique ambience and lifestyle. However, due to lack of clear cut conception and related concrete policy from national to local, they have being the most threatened areas with regards to loss of biodiversity and vegetation, and land use changes (urban expansion, land price increase). On the other hand, peri-urban areas can play a key role in better linking rural to urban areas, a key strategy for the future sustainable Urban Agenda (UN HABITAT).

On these issues, a National Conference titled- **Peri-Urban 2016** is being organised by Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group (GEAG) in collaboration with National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), Government of India and RUA Foundation, The Netherlands, and supported by The Rockefeller Foundation. The Conference will be held on **22-23 February 2016** at the **India International Centre, New Delhi** to bring together local, regional, state and international perspectives on the challenges and opportunities associated in this rural-urban transition zones. It will examine the major issues that are emerging in settlements in the transition zones, like maintaining critical natural resources, socio-economic degradation, policy and institutional issues exacerbating due to the inevitable drift of cities into peri-urban areas as well as the challenges regarding food, water and livelihood security of cities in future.

The conference will focus on issues relating the urban and peri-urban areas - influenced by the growth of urban areas placing this in the context of rural-urban linkages. The purpose of this conference will be to capture local, state and national attention and bring together national, metropolitan and regional perspectives on this increasingly important research, policy and practice agenda and provide concrete practice and policy examples to participants.

Peri-urban areas are necessarily a geographical area near the city or outskirts of city and they are essentially an evolving area from rural to peri-urban and may become urban. Thus the character of such areas constantly keeps changing. The whole concept of peri-urban helps us to look at some grey areas that are not amenable to an easy classification of what is 'rural' or 'urban'. Broadly, the conference will underline these issues related to the peri-urban concept and also pave a way to assess how communities, government and other service providers are responding to challenges and opportunities in these rapidly changing landscapes. We believe, this trans-disciplinary conference will bring to fore these important concerns.

— Session Themes —

The four overarching themes that will guide each session of the conference are as below:

Conceptualization and Methodology of Peri-urban researches

The word 'peri-urban' is indeed a confusing term with many different conceptual connotations. Nevertheless, the word 'peri-urban' is mainly used in three different ways, namely, as a place, a process or a concept (Narain and Nischal, 2007). In this thematic session, we will deliberate the divergent and convergent conceptual issues surrounding the use of the word 'peri-urban' to evolve understanding of differing context-specific views. Further, the session will delve on appropriate approaches and methodologies in peri urban research.



The notion of peri-urban as 'place' is perhaps the most widely understood conceptualization of the term. In this notion, there are two main approaches to defining the peri-urban interface: spatially, as a transitional zone around a city and second, as a zone of intense interactions, flows and linkages between urban and rural areas. When used in this sense, 'peri-urban' refers to rural fringe areas surrounding cities that bear the "spill over" effect of urban expansion. These areas provide the much needed land and water resources for urban expansion and serve as containers of urban wastes.

It is for this reason, perhaps that the word 'peri-urban' should be used not so much in its narrow, geographical sense, but more widely as an analytic construct to study the relationships between urban and rural activities, processes and institutions. Locations should be selected for study on account of the presence of certain characteristics, rather than their distance from the nearest towns or cities.

Peri-Urban Ecosystem

Peri-urban is conceptualized in multiple ways in the literature. In this session the peri-urban interface will be understood as a heterogeneous mosaic of natural ecosystems, productive or agro ecosystems, and urban ecosystems affected by the material and energy flows demanded by both urban and rural systems. Due to lack of clear cut policy and plan, the area faces uncertain land tenures accompanied by inferior infrastructure, low incomes and lack of recognition by formal governments (Prakash, 2012). This leads to specific environmental and natural resource problems beyond the scope of urban or rural governments. It is also predicted that if the business as usual scenario continues then the situation of this unaddressed area would be worsened by the impacts of climate change.

Thus, there is a need to understand the physical, social, economic and institutional aspects of the peri-urban areas through innovative approaches (Prakash, 2012, Narain, 2010) and evolve protective measures to maintain its provisioning, regulatory, supporting and cultural services.



Choices in Peri urban

In Indian administrative context there is a lack of clarity about the notion of the peri-urban but its importance has been recognized in resilience building of urban centre and survival of poor. In this session, the discussion will focus on opportunities/ choices existing in the peri urban interface. As in the earlier session it has been recognized that agriculture is a key part of the socio-ecological system in the peri urban area. So through the promotion of good agricultural practices, the services rendered by the area, i.e provision of food, micro climate mediation, carbon sequestration, nutritional recycling and recreational opportunities from multi-functional urban green spaces can be maintained and survival of livelihood of poor can be sustained. Besides, these good agricultural practices underscore the need to identify the potential human and environmental health risks individually on a case by case or city or by city basis, and to develop and implement evidence-based policies with multiple stakeholders to eliminate these risks or reduce them to acceptable levels.



In different part of the world evidence also exists on how peri-urban agriculture (PUA) has been promoted and adopted to adapt with changing climate (Lwasa et al. 2009; De Zeeuw et al. 2011; Roberts et al. 2011). The climate risks ranging from floods, heat waves, sea level rise and scarcity of water are some of which cities are facing. Maintaining the land use pattern beyond the city edge or protection of open space in city's periphery has proven its use in adapting to flooding through a range of enterprises from productive greening strategies involving fruit trees, herbal shrubs, high-value vegetables; and on hill slopes and in valleys to increase water infiltration and reduce the time lag for flood occurrence.

Increased PUA also has adaptation potential to heat waves by moderating microclimates. During the hot season, temperatures tend to be high, but when neighbourhood and city level productive greening involving trees is practiced, this has a potential for reducing high temperatures and effects of the urban heat island. Although provisioning potential is not as high as regulatory.

Urban food, nutritional and livelihood security

In this thematic session, the contribution of peri-urban areas on food supply, nutritional and livelihood security of the people residing in urban and peri-urban areas will be discussed. For urban planners and policy makers, it is essential that the issues of increasing concentration of people in urban centres should be taken into cognizance for maintaining urban food supply, nutritional and livelihood security of people and so on. Although this magnitude and speed of change may be occurring at different levels, but data covering more than half of the secondary cities of developing world's population indicate that the issue is very alarming and need quick attention.



Though there is some evidence that city administrations have recognized the role of urban and peri-urban agriculture in improving urban food security and enhancing nutritional and livelihoods security, still there remains a lack of widespread recognition in policy and practice, and despite the increasing demand for affordable fresh produce for urban populations, the peri-urban interface is often perceived as a temporary 'belt' on the city fringes, and the decline of agriculture is often seen as inevitable to make way for urban development (Marshall et al., 2009)

Thus, a fundamental change in mindsets is needed, to prevent further land-use changes and unregulated construction activities. Multidisciplinary and integrated administrative land-use planning that recognizes the agricultural ecosystem as a core component of the urban and peri-urban natural resources system is essential for this initiative (Marshall et al., 2009; Pothu kuchi and Kaufman, 1999).

Expected Participants

The National Conference will have participation from various practitioners and policy makers from the Ministries, government departments, academic institutions, research institutions, NGOs, international organisations, CSR foundations, media and peri-urban farmers.

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