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Rurban Development Approach for Wayanad: Meenangadi-Ambalavayal as Case

'Rurban Development' is a novel concept for India, which was discussed after the launch of 'Shyamaprasad Mukherjee Rurban Mission' (SPMRM), formerly known as National Rurban Mission (NRuM), in 2015. NRuM envisages the vision of developing a cluster of villages by providing urban amenities at the same time preserving its rural identity (Ministry of Rural Development, 2015). It has a detailed framework of the process to be followed by the central, state and local level administrative bodies in India. The first step towards the rurban development is the identification of areas having rurban development potential using certain criteria recommended by the mission. The mission has also given powers to the state to add more criteria for the selection of clusters as each state has its own unique features. The state of Kerala has such a unique settlement pattern, generally termed as Urban-Rural Continuum. With diverse characteristics of rural areas, the given criteria are not sufficient for appropriate selection of rurban clusters in Kerala. Development of rurban areas is very important as it can contribute to strengthening the urban-rural linkage by acting as a bridge. Being the most ruralized district of Kerala, the potential of rurban development in Wayanad was the main concern of the study. Identification of rurban areas in the district was done using certain parameters evolved by the author and thus Meenangadi and Ambalavayal panchayaths selected as the study area due to the specific location and strong connectivity with neighbouring LSGs, districts, and States. Detailed settlement and sectoral analysis of the study area helped to identify sectors that can strengthen the urban-rural linkage. Recommendations in the form of development plan can further contribute to the third phase (2020-21) activities under NRuM in the district.

Keywords: Rurban Area, NRuM, Rurban settlement, Rurban Development, Urban –Rural Linkage