



Progression in Developmental Planning for the Indian Himalayan Region

(Synthesis of Changing Perspectives through Five
Year Plans and Recommendations of Task Forces/
Workgroups)



G.B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development

(An autonomous Institute of Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Govt. of India)
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Prologue



The Himalayan Mountains have remained life support system for millions of people in uplands and much more in lowland areas of Indian subcontinent. While acting as climate regulator for much of Asia, the ecosystem services

emanating from this massive mountain chain contribute significantly for sustenance of most of the Indian sub-continent. All this, accompanied by the richness and uniqueness of bio-physical and socio-cultural diversity, has earned global recognition to the region.

Notwithstanding these facts, the specificities which this region carries and the immense sensitivity it has shown for perturbations (i.e., natural or anthropogenic) have not been adequately covered and appreciated while devising developmental plans for this region. Given the complexity accompanied by inherent fragility and intense vulnerability, the Himalayan ecosystem requires a different approach for developmental interventions. It has now been well recognized that the development interventions that ignore the imperatives of mountain specificities have invariably resulted in resource misuse and accelerated environmental degradation; at times becoming disastrous for the local populace and downstream inhabitants as well. This scenario calls for evolving new paradigms of sustainable

development, which helps restoring intricate balance between economic interests and ecological imperatives. However, while thinking of a shift in approach, there exists a need to understand pace and direction of progression in developmental thinking for the region.

With the above realization, this document attempts to synthesize the progression of developmental thinking over the years. Evolving nature of specific considerations for the Himalaya, as reflected in the government planning through various Five Year Plans has been captured. This document also extracts key features of various taskforces/ workgroups constituted by Planning Commission of India at different time frames.

I hope this document will act as an easy reference for various stakeholders interested in progression of developmental planning for the Indian Himalayan Region. Also, it will help in developing a comprehensive understanding on planning process, which has gone into development of the region over the period. Finally, it briefly touches upon the imminent need for bringing in mountain perspective in developmental planning for the region.

Dr. P.P. Dhyani
Director





BACKGROUND



The Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) plays vital role in sustaining diversity of life and livelihoods of more than 48 million people living in mountainous areas and nearly 1.2 billion people dependent on its downstream river basins for food and energy production. This region not only holds a key strategic position but also regulates climate of the south-Asian region. The IHR, stretching from Jammu and Kashmir to the Arunachal Pradesh (Box 1), has been facing various problems on account of very difficult terrain, weather conditions and extreme events, dispersed habitations, under-developed infrastructure, etc. Further, within IHR, the north-eastern states suffer from poor connectivity both with the rest of India and within the respective states of the region. Therefore, the cost of delivery of public services in the Himalaya, particularly in north-eastern region, is much higher compared to other parts of the country, largely due to topographical inaccessibility, distances and the remoteness involved.

In terms of generation of resources and their utilization, IHR states are poor in infrastructural development for economic activities and connectivity, hence have limited opportunities for revenue generation and livelihood support for a larger population. Furthermore, the existing norms and procedures for central assistance on

Box 1: Indian Himalayan Region (IHR)

Geographical Coverage –

- States Fully Covered –
Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand
- States Partially Covered –
Assam - Two districts (Karbi Anglong, Dima Hassao)
West Bengal - One district (Darjeeling)

Total Geographical Area

5,33,604 Km²

Total Population (2011)

4,85,98,561 Persons (48.5% Female)

project development and environmental clearances are generally same as in plains of the country, which makes the success of projects difficult. In view of poor resources availability and opportunities for mainstreaming development, various states in the region, often approach central government for special assistance.

Initially, three states in the IHR (Jammu & Kashmir, Nagaland, and Assam) were accorded special category

status and it was agreed that their requirements first be met out of the total pool of central assistance. For the three annual plans, the share of Assam, Jammu & Kashmir, and Nagaland in total plan assistance was 9.26 per cent. For the Fourth Plan (1969-74) an amount was earmarked for these three states, but their share averaged to a little above 11 per cent. For the Fifth Plan, the share of these states was around 15 per cent. For two annual plans (1978-80), the share increased to slightly over 16 per cent. When the Fifth Plan was formulated, this list was extended to include Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Sikkim, and Tripura, thereby bringing eight states of IHR under special category in all. It is only since 1980 that the share of Special Category states was predetermined at 30 per cent. In 1990, the number of special category states was increased to 10 with the inclusion of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram; now Uttarakhand has also become the part of this category of states. The major criteria to accord Special Status are included (Box 2).

Thus, all the states of IHR region fall in the Special Category Status, or state eligible for assistance under Hill Area Development Programme (primarily applicable for two hilly districts of Assam, major portion of hilly district of Darjeeling in West Bengal, and eight hilly districts of U.P.).

The Planning Commission of India provided developmental grants to states as part of an overall assistance package, determined as a composite of loans

Box 2: Major criteria to accord Special Status to a State

- (i) hilly and difficult terrain
- (ii) sizeable share of tribal population and or low population density
- (iii) strategic location along borders with neighboring countries
- (iv) economic and infrastructure backwardness and non-viable nature of state finances

and grants. The relative ratios of loans and grants were different for the special category states as compared to the general category. For the general category states, assistance was 30% grant and 70% loan. For the special category states, 90 per cent of assistance was given as grant and 10 per cent as loan. The share of special category states during the Tenth Plan period was in the range of 35 to 38% of the total plan assistance, averaging about 36.6%. Compared to the Tenth Plan Period (average share 36.6%), the average share of special category states fell marginally in the Eleventh Plan Period to 34.2%.

In the following pages, it is attempted to present the progression of Developmental Planning for Indian Himalayan Region. This progression has been drawn based on the synthesis and analysis of (i) plan documents, and (ii) recommendations of these taskforces/workgroups/committees.







1

**NATIONAL PLANING PERSPECTIVE
FOR INDIAN HIMALAYAN REGION (IHR)
DURING VARIOUS PLAN PERIODS**



Although, the matter of formulating policies for development of states in IHR has been a continuous thinking at the Planning Commission of India and now in NITI Aayog yet the level of development realized is far from satisfaction. The following text summarizes various initiatives and strategies proposed/adopted for the development of IHR region during various Plan Periods in the country.

a. 1st - 4th Plan Period (1951 - 1974)

Planning Commission of India was setup in March, 1950 with its core mandate to make assessment of the material, capital and human resources of the country, and formulate Five Year Plans for (i) utilization of the resources of the country, and (ii) determination of priorities for the allocation of these resources. From the 1st Five Year Plan (April 1951 to March 1956) to the 4th Five Year Plan (1969 to 1974), the planning was described as a vital instrument for realizing the social objectives enshrined in the Constitution of India; however, there was little mention about the development of Himalayan states. The need for development of the special and backward areas was taken into consideration during the 4th Plan and an allocation of Rs. 43.55 crores was made for this purpose. It was in 1965 when the Designated Hill Areas were identified by a Committee of the National Development Council (NDC).

b. 5th Five Year Plan (1974 – 1979) and Rolling Plan

The Planning Commission continued with scheme "Hill Areas", which included hilly regions of Assam (two districts), West Bengal (one district) and parts of Uttar Pradesh (those areas are now included in Uttarakhand state), Tamil Nadu, and the Western Ghats. Programmes of significance were funded partly from the State Plan and partly from the sub-plan allocations. To begin with during the first three years of the plan, the central allocations of the order of Rs. 76 crores were made, while the states were likely to invest around Rs. 68 crores. As per the experience gained with time, the programme was expected to gather momentum.

At this point, one can clearly see the beigning of a dedicated larger programme for the future i.e., Hill Area Development Programme in coming plan periods.

c. 6th Five Year Plan (1980 – 1985)

By now it was recognised that the pathways of development adopted in the past had resulted in an uneven distribution of the benefits of economic growth across the geographical areas and between socio-economic groups. It was in realisation of this phenomenon that certain specific target group oriented programmes were implemented. However, in spite

of specific targeted programmes, need for special consideration to development of certain geographical areas characterized by very special ecological and socio-cultural features, was realized. For example, Hill Areas of the country. It was understood that the development of the hilly areas in the country cannot be undertaken in isolation from the adjoining plains, with which their economy is closely inter-related. The hilly areas, abound in forests, plant and mineral wealth, and hydel-energy resources, influence the climate of the plains, and contain the sources, catchments, and watersheds of several major rivers flowing through the plains.

It was also emphasized that development of the resources of the hill areas is necessary in order to enable the population living in these areas, who by and large are very poor, to have their share of the benefits accruing from modern science and technology. But such developments, however, have to proceed in a way that the ecosystem constituting the hills and the plains, is not irreversibly damaged, but is preserved in a suitable condition for future generations. Therefore, a

paramount need for conceiving an integrated strategy for the development of the hill areas based on sound principles of ecology and economics was recognized. It was in realisation of this need that special "Hill Area Development Programme" was initiated during this Plan Period (i.e., 6th), and the hill areas of the country continued to receive special attention on account of their difficult terrain, agro-climatic conditions, historical lag in economic development, their environmental impact on the plains and their great growth potential. For this purpose hill areas were categorized into two categories, namely, (i) those that are co-extensive with the boundaries of the State or the Union Territory and (ii) those which totally form a part of a State. The classification adopted and approaches taken for the development of the specific areas is given (Box 3).

Main emphasis of Fifth and the Sixth Plans was on the development of the infrastructural facilities and the social and community services. This thrust was necessary to cover the backlog in infrastructural facilities. During this Plan period, the foundation for an appropriate policy for hill area development was laid.

Box 3: Classification and Approaches Adopted for Development

- (a) *Hill States*: The hill areas, existing as self-contained politico-administrative units, are being treated as Special Categories States whose outlays are met substantially out of the Central assistance. These were the States and Union Territories of the North-Eastern Region, Jammu & Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. For these states vast infrastructural gaps were identified in communications, transport, power generation & transmission, development of stable and diversified agriculture replacing the *Jhum*, horticulture, plantation crops (low volume and high value products), and measuring the protecting ecology. In view of this, the bulk of the outlays were provided to them from the Central assistance.
- (b) *North-Eastern Council*: For the integrated development of the Hill States and Union Territories of the North-Eastern region in 1971 North-Eastern Council was constituted by an Act of Parliament. The North-Eastern Council started functioning with the commencement of the Fifth Five Year Plan. Schemes which were of common interest to more than one state of the region were taken up by the Council. Development of inter-regional programmes of power generation and transmission, construction of roads, agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, etc., were treated for the whole region. Other activities included support to research and developmental projects, development of training infrastructure for manpower development in the region.
- (c) *Hill Areas in Composite States of the Himalayan and Sub-Himalayan Region*: The hill areas forming parts of larger composite states occurred in Assam, the then Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. Though the primary responsibility for the development of these hill areas was that of the concerned State Government, yet the need for central assistance was recognized, far earlier even during the 2nd Five year Plan. The arrangements for providing central assistance to the Hill Areas Development Programme were, actually further systematized since the commencement of the 5th Five Year Plan. The Special Central Assistance was allocated amongst the constituent States, giving equal weightage to the area and the population of the hill regions.

d. 7th Five Year Plan (1985 – 1990) and Annual Plans

It was realized by then that the hill areas of the country (i.e., Himalayan and Western Ghats regions) support the basic life-giving natural resources, but have fragile and sensitive ecosystems, and therefore, a need to conserve natural resources and the environment, particularly to prevent damage to the fragile and irreplaceable ecosystems was voiced in the national policies and programmes. The emphasis was on evolving plans which harmonise the three parameters, i.e., socio-economic growth, development of infrastructure, and the promotion of ecology. This implies consideration of ecological aspects at the time of formulation of policies, programmes, and schemes.

Box 4: Inception of Himalayan Institute

Realizing the need, it was envisaged that the Himalayan Institute of Environment and Development will become fully operational during this plan period. A network of regional centres of the Institute, together with their field stations, is proposed along the entire Himalayan belt, to coordinate the implementation of Eco-Development programmes for the region.

As a follow up fully functional, G.B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development came into existence in 1988, as an Autonomous Institute of Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt.

The Hill Area Development Programme (HADP, in operation since the Fifth Five Year Plan) was a major step in this regard. The programme also aimed balanced regional development. By now, HADP had entered in a crucial phase, particularly with reference to complementarity between interests of the hills and plains. The envisaged guiding principles for HADP were the promotion of a secure, basic life-support system, and judicious utilisation of land, mineral, water and biotic resources in a total perspective embracing the complementarity of interests of both the hills and the plains. The whole strategy was centred around the active participation of the people, particularly of women, in the fulfillment of their basic needs.

Special category treatment was given to states of North-Eastern region, Jammu and Kashmir, Sikkim, and Himachal Pradesh; while other hill areas of IHR continued as those designated hill areas which were

earlier covered under the HADP (operative since 1974-75).

Apart from the normal flow of funds to the hill areas from the State Plans, in consideration of the regional imbalance and other special factors, Special Central Assistance (SCA) was being provided for the HADP. An allocation of Rs. 870 crores (inclusive of Rs. 116.50 crores for Western Ghat Development Programme) was made. For category of the designated hill areas under a state the available SCA was allocated among the constituent States, giving equal weightage to the area and the population. In order to ensure integration and linkages of schemes formulated under the SCA with other sources of funding, like the State Plans, a sub-plan approach was adopted.

e. 8th Five Year Plan (1992 – 1997)

HADP, operational since the inception of the Fifth Five Year Plan in the Designated Hill Areas, continued in this plan period with basic objective of socio-economic development of the hills and of the people living there, and it was hoped that they will make progress in harmony with the ecological development of the area. The programmes implemented under the HADP have, therefore, aimed at promoting the basic life support systems with sustainable use of the natural resources of the areas covered by the programme. Evolution of the HADP over the years has been summarized (Box 5).

Box 5: Evolution of HADP (5th-8th Plan)

The approach and the strategy of the HADP evolved with the passage of time. The Programmes implemented during the Fifth Plan period were mainly beneficiary oriented. While the emphasis shifted to eco-development in the Sixth Five Year Plan. However, the general pattern of the HADP remained substantially the same as that of the normal State Plan following the same sectoral approach. The Seventh Plan laid particular emphasis on the development of ecology and environment, as summed up in three phrases, namely, eco-restoration, eco-preservation and eco-development. It aimed that evolving plans and programmes to take care of the socio economic growth, development of infrastructure and the promotion of ecology of the areas covered by the HADP. During eighth plan the attention was focused on productive sectors of hill economies specially in modernizing agricultural practices and small scale industries.

During the Eighth Plan, attention was paid towards modernizing the agricultural practices, and for the promotion of small scale industries at the household, cottage and village levels. To achieve this, the involvement of the people, was seen as paramount importance for the improved management of their land and water resources. The funds in sight for HADP for the Eighth Plan were Rs.1,450 crores. Out of this Rs.4.67 crores per annum as additional grant for Darjeeling were set apart and balance amount was distributed in the ratio of 86.61 : 13.39 between Designated Hill Districts and Designated Talukas of Western Ghats, respectively. In addition, the outlay for the Eighth Plan of NEC was increased to Rs.1,160 crores as compared to agreed outlay in previous plan (Rs. 675 crores).

f. 9th Five Year Plan (1997 – 2002)

During the preceding four Five Year Plans, substantial efforts and resources were channelised for the development of infrastructure. However, the corresponding growth in the productive sectors of most of the hill economies could not keep pace with the extent of efforts and resources invested. The Central Government was supplementing the efforts of the State Governments to deal with the special problems faced by certain areas arising out of their distinct geo-physical structure and concomitant socio-economic development, through Special Central Assistance under the programmes like HADP. As the funds under Special Area Programmes were meant to deal with the specific problems of these areas, Special Plan strategies were formulated and schemes drawn up by the State Governments keeping in view the basic needs of the people and existing environmental considerations.

The major challenge for 9th Plan period was drawn to devise suitable location-specific solutions, so as to reverse the process and ensure sustainable development of the growing population and ecology of the hill areas. Considering the ecological degradation of hill areas and subsequent impact on the economy and ecology of not only the hill areas, but the plains as well, the main objectives of the programme in the Ninth Plan were, therefore, eco-preservation and eco-restoration. Developmental schemes had emphasis on preservation of biodiversity and rejuvenation of the hill ecology. It was visualized that the traditional practices would be dovetailed with appropriate technology to

serve the needs of the people of these areas, and this knowledge would be the starting point for introduction of modern science and technology. Thus, all schemes would be rooted in the existing cultural system so that they are easily acceptable and can help providing maximum benefit to the people. The basic objective of the HADP was socio-economic development of the hills and the people living there in harmony with ecological development. The schemes implemented under HADP were, therefore, aimed at promoting the basic life support systems with sustainable use of the natural resources of the area covered by the programme. Thrust areas in this Plan Period were (i) Eco-restoration and Eco-preservation, (ii) Involvement of the local population, (iii) Gender sensitive planning, (iv) Use of appropriate technology, (v) Redevelopment of traditional agro-ecosystems based on traditional knowledge and technology, (vi) Scientific approach to agriculture, animal husbandry and horticulture in order to raise productivity, (vii) Development of ecologically sustainable industries and tourism. In this Plan Period the strategy for the programme was based on a two-pronged approach:

- (i) *Sub-Plan Approach:* This approach was adopted since the beginning of the Fifth Five Year Plan and also continued in this Plan Period.
- (ii) *Integrated Watershed Approach:* It was realized that since the smallest viable geographical unit is the watershed, it is imperative that the integrated watershed approach to be followed in HADP areas. The watershed is a geo-hydrological natural unit, which has evolved through interaction of rain water with the topography. The large majority of inhabitants of hill areas depend on agriculture and allied activities for their livelihood and the level of production is dependent on the health and vitality of the concerned watershed.

Another mile stone development during this period was pursuant to the announcements made by the Prime Minister in October 1996 at Guwahati, regarding earmarking and spending at least 10 per cent of their annual gross budgetary allocation by all development Ministries/Departments in the Union Government to support for the Plan for specific programmes in the North-Eastern region. Under this initiative, more than Rs. 5,000 crore were expected to be budgeted annually by various ministries for the region. In case of any Ministry

failing to achieve the stipulated target, provisions for pooling the unutilised portion with respect to the 10 per cent norm, in a Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources were provided to be re-utilised to finance infrastructure development projects in the North Eastern Region (NER) including the state of Sikkim. This approach succeeded in increasing the Plan expenditure of the Central Ministries in the North East from 6.25 per cent in 1999-2000 to 7.28 per cent in 2001-02.

The Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR) created in 1997-98 (operationalized in 1998-99) is the accrual of the unspent balance of the mandatory 10% budgetary allocation of the Central Ministries/Departments. The broad objectives of the NLCPR Scheme is to ensure speedy development of infrastructure by way of filling the existing infrastructural gaps (economic and social) in the region by making funds available from the pool.

g. 10th Five Year Plan (2002 – 2007)

This was the first Plan that specified targets for the growth rate for each state, in consultation with the State Governments. The Planning Commission continued with the area approach and aimed to strengthen decentralization of planning. Focused developmental programmes for backward areas were expected to help reduce imbalances and speed up the economic development of these regions. From here onwards the development planning in the NER gained momentum with a separate approach outlined for the NER while for approaches setup for the Tenth Plan for the Special Area Development Programmes for Hill areas, Western Ghats, border areas and the KBK region of Orissa continued to function in similar way. However, consequent upon the formation of Uttarakhand as a separate State, HADP is no longer in operation in the hill districts of erstwhile UP. Presently, the designated Hill Areas covered under HADP include two hill districts of Assam— North Cachar and Dima Hassao, and the major part of Darjeeling district of West Bengal.

However, in spite of the special focus to the economic development of the NER and Sikkim through the Eighth and the Ninth Plan periods, and strategies adopted for removal of infrastructural bottlenecks, provisioning of basic minimum services, and creating an overall environment for private investment, the growth performance of these states was not encouraging.

Except economy of Tripura that grew at a rate higher than the national average (between 1993-94 and 1999-2000), all the other states experienced lower growth rates.

Keeping the commitment to accelerate the pace of socio-economic development of the NER, Government of India in 2001 created a dedicated Department of Development of North Eastern Region (DONER), in order to coordinate and give impetus to the Centre's development efforts (Box 6).

Box 6: Department of Development of NER

The role of this department (i.e., DONER), established in 2001, was to create synergy and ensure convergence of programmes by coordinating the efforts of Central agencies and the State Governments and by meeting the last mile resource needs for completion of projects. DONER was the lead department in the Government of India for coordinating all Central initiatives and programmes in the North East.

Department was upgraded as Ministry in 2004. Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region or DONER, as it is commonly known, is a unique Ministry in the Union Government as its activities are regional and particularly focused towards advocating the special needs of the region to the other Ministries/Departments and the policy makers.

Recognising the special problems of this region, significant levels of Central Assistance to State Plans were a feature of planning in the North-Eastern states. Even amongst the special category states, the per capita levels of Central Assistance were amongst the highest in the country. For example, for the year 2001-02, average per capita Central Assistance for State Plans for all the States in the NER taken together was Rs.1,546/-, compared to Rs. 356/- for the country as a whole. Further, a number of special arrangements and initiatives were taken and followed up in the Tenth Plan, which helped in according priority to the development of the region. North Eastern Council (NEC) which was established under the NEC Act 1971 to act as an advisory body in respect of socio-economic development and balanced development of the seven states of the NER. In 2002, Sikkim was also included by an amendment, and the Council was designated as the

status of Regional Planning Body. The functions of NEC are to discuss matters of common interest in the field of economic and social planning of the region and advise the governments (Central and State) as to the action to be taken on such matters, formulate Regional Plans, and recommend the *modus operandi* for implementation of the Regional Plan. NEC also monitors the progress of project implementation and recommends to the Central Government the quantum of financial assistance to be given to the states. NEC, since its inception, has invested Rs 7,182.61 crore till the end of the Tenth Plan.

In this plan, Special Area Programmes continued where Planning and Development of an area within the State was primarily the responsibility of the concerned State Governments. However, the Central Government supplemented the efforts of the State Governments in this direction through Special Central Assistance for SAP, such as HADP. The main objectives of HADP continued to be eco-preservation and eco-restoration with a focus on sustainable use of biodiversity, recognising the needs and aspirations of local communities. The planning approach aimed to facilitate community participation in the design and implementation of strategies for conservation of biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods. In the hill areas of Assam and West Bengal, the use of Special Central Assistance for payment of salaries/ other expenses of non-plan nature was expected to be phased out slowly and schemes for environmental preservation and restoration may be introduced such that by the year 2003-04, the salary/establishment would be reduced to 20-25 per cent and schemes for preserving the ecology and restoring the fragile ecosystem of these areas would be increased by a similar proportion. As per the Tenth Plan, provisions the State Governments could use up to 15 per cent of the annual allocation for maintenance of assets in HADP areas.

h. 11th Five Year Plan (2007 – 2012)

The Eleventh Plan broadly continued with the Tenth Plan initiatives of working out Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) growth targets for States. Recognizing the special requirements of the NER and mountainous states and the need for significant levels of government investment, these states were categorized as Special Category States and Central Plan assistance to these States is provided on liberal terms. The following states of IHR continued to enjoy as Special Category States

- Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, and Uttarakhand. Assam was an addition being the part of NER. The utilisation of the 10 per cent mandatory earmarked funds by the Central Ministries for NER had gone up from 80.8% till the Tenth Plan to 89.7% in the first four years of the Eleventh Plan.

During the Eleventh Plan connectivity was considered as the key area for the development of NER. The Eleventh Plan had a special thrust on transport infrastructure under the identified programmes and areas identified by the Task Force (set up by the Planning Commission) which would necessitate a concerted and multipronged action, including resource mobilization. Accelerated pace of various road development programmes was expected. High priority was accorded for converting the Meter Gauge (MG) network to Broad Gauge (BG) and to provide rail link to all State capitals of north-eastern region. Construction of three greenfield airports at Pakyong in Sikkim, Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh and Cheithu in Kohima was to be taken up on priority while important airports were proposed to be modernized. In order to harness the potential of inland water and the River Brahmaputra as a mode of transport, fully functional National Waterway to provide trunk route connectivity to the region was emphasized.

On the other hand, HADP continued in the Eleventh Plan with renewed vigour so that the natural resources of these fragile areas can be used in a sustainable manner based on environment friendly technologies. Evaluation studies to assess the efficacy of HADP had shown that while it is not possible to isolate the impact of the programme, the outcome of these programmes are visible in the form of increase in the level of the water table, preservation of forest area, increase in irrigated area, decrease in fallow land, increase in income, and so on. Hence, the HADP continued for the following reasons: first, most of the hill areas lack infrastructure facilities particularly roads, power, education and health facilities. Second, most of the hill areas lack political power and consequently adequate funding. Third, many of the norms of programmes are not suitable to hill areas. For example, wages are often higher in the hill areas than the wages under wage employment programmes, and normally machines are required for earthwork as the rocky terrain is not suitable for manual labour. This also holds true for the norms set for some programmes

as settlements are often small hamlets which do not qualify for coverage or are too expensive to cover. Hence, local solutions have to be found and encouraged. The objectives set for the Plan Period were ecological balance and preservation as well as creation of sustainable livelihood opportunities. It was emphasized that the district planning guidelines should be followed, and District Plans should be prepared based on the vision for the district through a participative process starting from the grass roots level. It was visualized that this would involve articulation of a vision in each Planning unit right down to the village level. This vision would address the three basic aspects of development, namely, human development, infrastructure development and development of the productive sector.

It was also realized that effective implementation and monitoring of various programmes holds the key to any quantum jump in the growth of the IHR. During 11th plan period the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) was launched which has a specific provision for a Mission for Sustaining Himalayan Ecosystem (Box 7).

i. 12th Five Year Plan (2012 – 2017)

In terms of flow of development funds, a positive impact is visible after the policy decision of earmarking 10

per cent of Gross Budgetary Support (GBS) of the Departments for the north-eastern region. At present, more than 50 Non-exempted Central Ministries/ Departments earmark 10% of the GBS for north-eastern region. According to the assessment made by Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (M/o DoNER), the Central Ministries/Departments spent Rs 44,909.36 crore out of total earmarked fund of Rs 53,293.86 crore since 1998–99 till the end of the Tenth Plan (2002–07). During the Eleventh Plan, the expenditure incurred by the Central Ministries in north-eastern region was Rs 59,072.95 crore (March 2010–11). By the end of the Plan, it is likely to be Rs 75,000 crore. This is against total earmarked outlay of Rs 87,502.97 crore for the Plan.

This plan continued with emphasis on the development of physical and social infrastructure so that the region can become strong, confident and capable of engaging with external market. Critical areas identified for interventions in the north-eastern region include Road, Railways, Airways, Power. North Eastern Region Urban Development Programme was launched with the assistance of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to encourage development in the North Eastern Region as well as increase support through multilateral agencies,

Box 7: NAPCC and National Mission on Sustaining Himalayan Ecosystem (NMSHE)

Recognizing the importance of climate change issues, the Prime Minister established a Council on Climate Change under his chairmanship in June 2007 to co-ordinate national action for assessment, adaptation, and mitigation of climate change.

One of the important decisions taken by the Prime Minister's Council was that a National Action Plan will be prepared compiling action taken by India for addressing the challenge of climate change and the action that needs to be taken in the future. Since a substantial adverse change in climate appears unavoidable even with the optimal mitigation response, the process of adaptation to climate change must have priority. The most important adaptation measure is development itself. A stronger economy is more able to adapt both in terms of the cost of adaptation and technological capability. Achieving rapid economic growth as targeted in the Eleventh Plan was therefore a key element in adaptation.

It is envisaged that the Action Plan will deal with key vulnerabilities of India to Climate Change and, in particular, the impact on water resources, forests, coastal areas, agriculture, and health. Amongst 8 National Missions envisaged under NAPCC, National Mission for Sustaining Himalayan Ecosystem is only area specific mission. In February 2014, the Union Cabinet approved the Mission document on the NMSHE. This Mission was launched with a budget outlay of Rs. 550 crore during the Twelfth Five Year Plan period. The primary objective of the Mission is to develop in a time bound manner a sustainable national capacity to continuously assess the health status of the Himalayan Ecosystem and enable policy bodies in their policy-formulation functions as also to assist States in the Indian Himalayan Region with implementation of actions selected for sustainable development.

the programme provides support for priority urban services viz., (i) Water Supply, (ii) Sewerage and Sanitation, and (iii) Solid Waste Management in the capital cities of five North-Eastern States viz., Agartala (Tripura), Aizawl (Mizoram), Gangtok (Sikkim), Kohima (Nagaland) and Shillong (Meghalaya). Under the Twelfth Plan, this programme would be recasted and taken under the overall framework of JNNURM.

The HADP, which has been in operation since the Fifth Five Year Plan in identified hill areas, continues to this plan. The schemes being implemented under HADP are mainly in the sectors of Agriculture and Soil Conservation, Forestry, Social Forestry, Animal Husbandry, Horticulture, Sericulture, Apiculture, Minor Irrigation, Veterinary, Fisheries, Link Roads and Foot Bridges, Livelihood Activities, Small Scale Industries, Watershed Development, Welfare of SCs/ STs, Rural Energy Conservation, Administration and Training.

While considering the financial resources, it has been increased for IHR States, but total share of the IHR is decreasing with respect to country's total resources (Fig. 1).

Among others, specific provisioning of National Mission on Himalayan Studies (NMHS) has been made during this plan period (Box 8).

Box 8: National Mission on Himalayan Studies (NMHS)

The Twelfth Plan priorities include up to 13 monitorable targets towards environment, forests, wildlife, and climate change. The National Mission on Himalayan Studies is expected to support these priorities specifically in the context of Indian Himalayan Region and will help in developing understanding on effectiveness of laws and policies in the IHR. The twelfth plan goals covering Environment, Forests and Livelihood; Wildlife, Ecotourism, and Animal Welfare; and Ecosystem and biodiversity are proposed to be addressed by this Mission. It is expected that this mission will remove data deficit on glaciers, landslides, sustainable methods of building roads and tunnels, weather and other related issues. In Plan Outlay of 2014-2015 provision of Rs 100 crore has been made for "National Mission on Himalayan Studies" aimed at contributing to the sustainable development of Indian Himalayan Region. The broad objectives of the mission are (i) to build a body of scientific and traditional knowledge on the indicative thematic areas, (ii) to build a network of practioners (individual and institutions) engaged in working solutions to problems in the thematic areas, and (iii) to demonstrate workable/implementable/replicable solutions to the problems in the thematic areas.

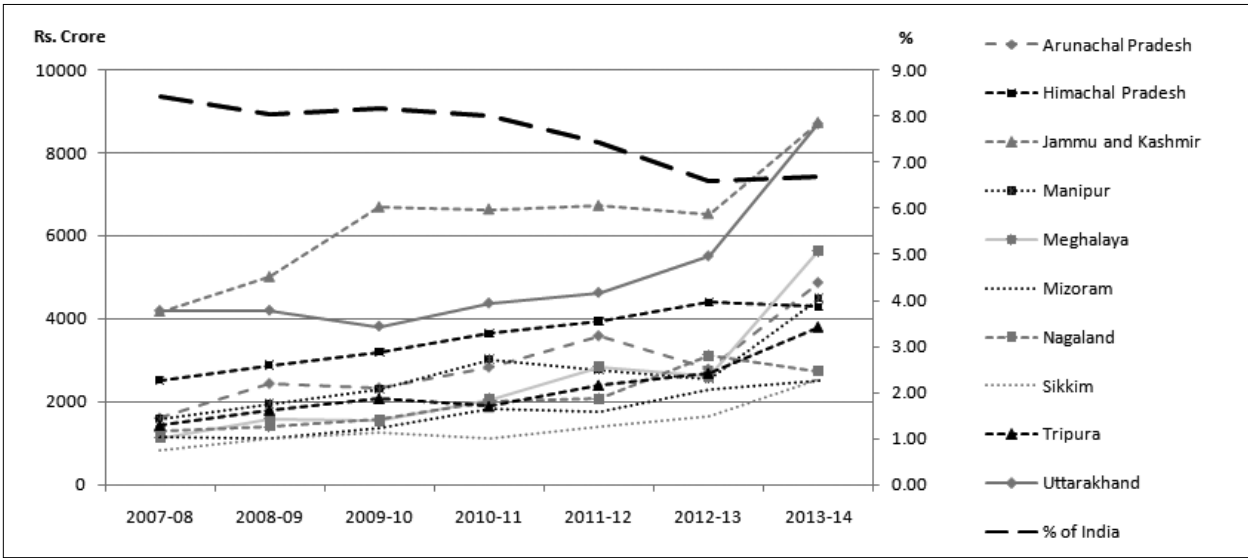


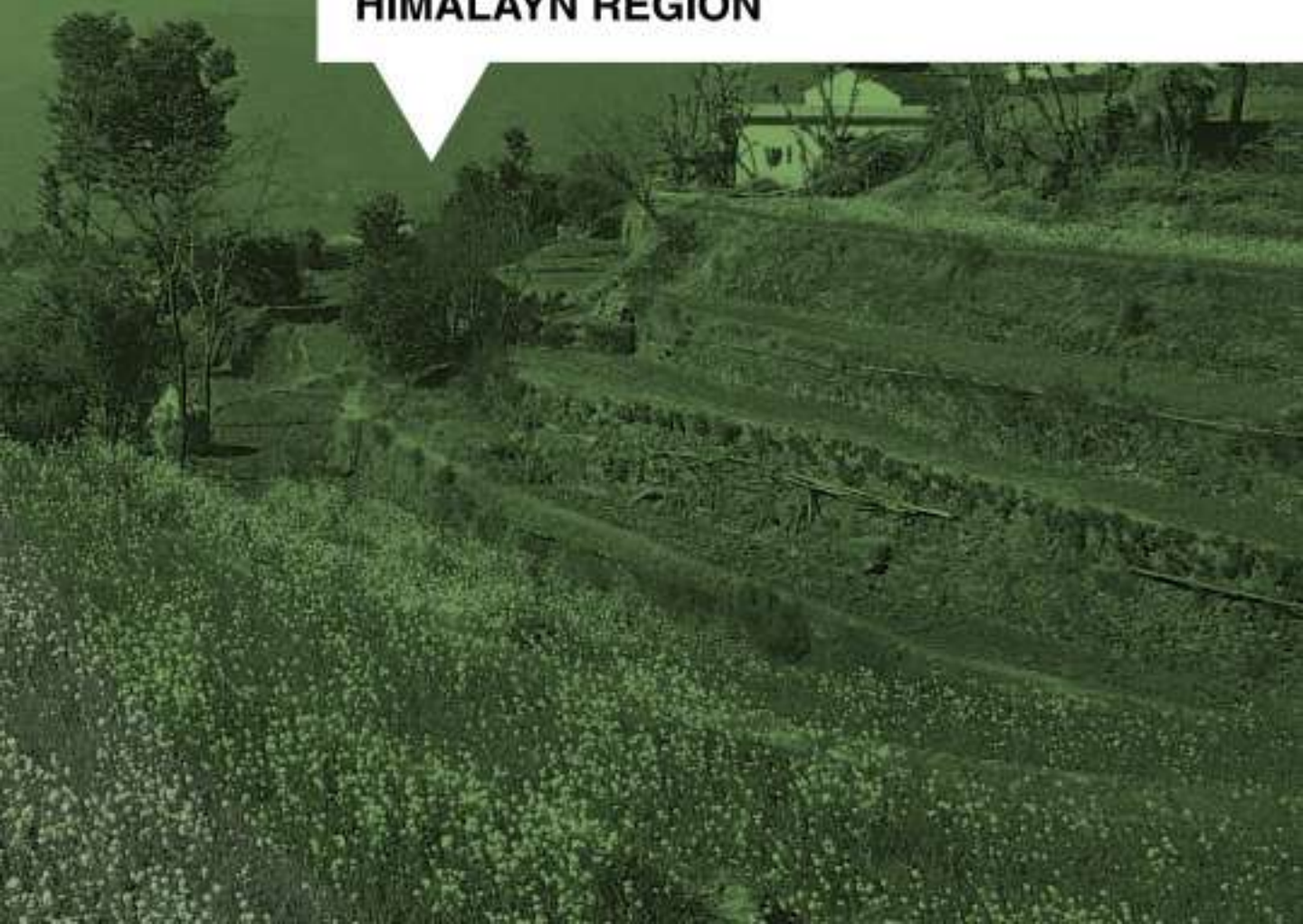
FIGURE 1. Actual Plan Expenditure of IHR States (Year wise)

Sources:
Various Five Year Plan Documents, Planning Commission of India
(<http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/welcome.html>)



2

**SUMMARY OF VARIOUS TASK FORCES
AND WORKING GROUPS ON INDIAN
HIMALAYAN REGION**





During last few decades the problem related to harmonious development of the Himalaya has been attracting the attention of policy planners. Various task forces/ workgroups have been constituted by the Planning Commission for formulating the policies for development of Himalayan region. In this context, some of the important task forces/ workgroups constituted by the Planning Commission are given (Box 9). The objectives, terms of references, and key features of recommendations of above mentioned task forces are given in following section.

1. National Commission on Development of Backward Areas (1981):

Chairman- Shri B. Shivaraman

Realizing the importance of this region, the Planning Commission formally recognized need for the development of hill areas of the country and in 1981 launched first National Commission on Development of Backward Areas chaired by Shri B. Shivaraman. The report of the commission mainly dealt with the broad approach for the development of backward hill areas and the operational steps that need to be taken for its implementation. The problem of backward area development has been a major concern of the planning process in India for many years and a variety of policies and programmes for accelerating the development

Box 9: Various Task Force/Workgroup/ Committee on IHR Issues

- National Commission on Development of Backward Areas (1981)
- Task Force for the Study of Eco-development in the Himalayan Region (1982)
- Working Group on Hill Area Development Programme for VII Five Year Plan (1985)
- Expert Group on National Policy on Integrated Development of Himalaya (1993)
- High Level Commission on Transforming the North-Eastern Region (1997)
- Task Force on the Mountain Ecosystems for the 11th Five Year Plan (2006)
- Task Force to look into problems of hill states and hill areas and to suggest ways to ensure that these states and areas do not suffer in any way because of their peculiarities (2010)
- The Working Group on Improvement and Development of Transport Infrastructure in the North East for the national Transport Development Committee (2012)
- Committee to study development in hill states arising from management of forest lands with special focus on creation of infrastructure, livelihood and human development (2013)

Box 10: Key Features of Recommendations of the National Commission on Development of Backward Areas

- Focus and Approach for Developmental planning
 - (i) complimenting both hills and plains in regional and national frame
 - (ii) integration of ecological, economic and social dimensions
 - (iii) two levels - a region and sub-watersheds within the region
 - (iv) people's participation as central feature
- Development of forests with emphasis on increasing productivity of reserved forests, proper management of community lands, and participatory plantations for wasteland development.
- Agro-forestry and pasture development
- Increasing agricultural productivity through appropriate, economically viable, and consistent technological intervention
- Orientation of education, training, and extension programmes for women
- Provision of infrastructural facilities like roads, water supply, hospital and other services

of these areas have been tried out. The Planning Commission decided to set up the National Committee on the Development of Backward Areas with the following Terms of Reference (TOR):

- (i) To examine the validity of the various concepts of backwardness underlying the definitions in use for present policy purposes and recommend the criteria by which backward areas should be identified
- (ii) To review the working of (a) the existing plans for dealing with the general developmental problems of backward areas like Tribal Sub-Plans, Plans for Hill Areas, etc., and (b) the existing schemes for stimulating industrial development in backward areas such as the schemes for concessional finance, investment subsidy, transport subsidy, sales tax concessions, etc., similar schemes in the agricultural and allied fields like Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP), and general measures for tackling the problems of poverty and unemployment with a view to find out their efficacy in the removal of backwardness
- (iii) To recommend appropriate strategies for effectively tackling the problem of backward areas, classified, if necessary, according to areas, causes of or prescribed remedies

The Commission covered eleven different problems which required separate treatment. Therefore, each of these subject was dealt separately and report on

different sectors including the "Development of Backward Hill Areas" were submitted by the commission. Key features of recommendations of the commission are presented (Box 10).

2. Task Force for the Study of Eco-development in the Himalayan Region (1982):

Chairman- Dr. M.S. Swaminathan

In 1982, a Task Force for the Study of Eco-development in the Himalayan Region was constituted under the chairmanship of Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, Member, Planning Commission realizing the urgent need to balance economic development with the imperatives of environmental conservation and to formulate realistic and manageable programmes for tackling the interlinked issues involved in eco-development of the Himalayan region. The TOR of the task force included:

- i. To consider the proposal for a centre for Himalayan Regional Studies with the participation of universities of the region
- ii. To identify the ecological/environmental problems of the region that requires study on priority basis, recommend the universities and research institutions for undertaking these studies and to draw the guidelines for such studies
- iii. To take note of the major environmental activities going on in the Himalayan region, to assess the extent of their impacts on the Hill ecosystem and suggest suitable modifications

Box 11: Key Features of the Recommendations of the Task Force

- Identification of faulty use of principal resources (i.e., soil, forests and water) as the primary factor for framing core strategy for the socio-economic development of the region through
 - o correct landuse
 - o intensification of Agriculture
 - o recharging the water sources
 - o Afforestation
 - o Adoption of cash crop
 - Need for coordinated research on action oriented basis, post harvest technology and transport planning
- iv. To suggest the national and State level arrangements and interventions necessary in respect of plan formation, funding legislative enforcement and administrative machinery needed to overcome the ecological/environmental problems of the Himalayan region
- v. To identify any inter-State dimensions involved in eco-development and to suggest measures for such issues.

Key features of Task Force recommendations are presented (Box 11). The above Task Force constituted subgroups on Coordinated Research for Action Oriented Basis on Post Harvest Technology, Transport Planning, and Socio-Economic Development for an elaborate exercise involving specialized experiences for issuance of popular guidelines.

3. Working Group on Hill Area Development Programme for VII Five Year Plan (1985):

Chairman-Dr. Bhupinder Singh

The hill areas of the country have received attention right from the inception of plan area after Independence. By mid-60s, the realization for integrated development of the hill areas led to the concept of the Hill Area Development Programme (HADP) which was introduced in the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79). It was then felt that sustainable development would be possible only by formulating ecologically harmonious development programme. Hence the need for eco-development was put forward as a major policy thrust in the Sixth Five Year Plan. Keeping this in view, the Planning Commission set up a Working

Group on the Hill Area Development Programme for the seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90) under the chairmanship of Dr. Bhupinder Singh, Advisor Planning Commission. The TOR of the group included:

- i. To review the impact of the hill areas development programme in operation during the Sixth Plan period and bring out the achievements and failures together with remedial measures necessary
- ii. To recommend policy framework for the development of hill areas during the Seventh Five Year Plan period (1985-90) keeping in view the status of the development, scope for further development, needs and aspirations of the local people, etc.
- iii. To suggest the strategy and measures for long term integrated development of the hill areas on the basis of the watershed development and management keeping in view the report of the Task Force for the study of Eco-development in the Himalayan Region, the recommendations of the National Committee on Development of Backward Areas.
- iv. To suggest the administrative, operational and organizational measures both at the Centre and the States for effective implementation and monitoring of the programme.

Box 12: Key Features of the Recommendations of the Working Group

- A definition of Hill areas based on slope category within an administrative boundary, and re-emphasis on complementarily hill, plain and integrated approach
- Allocation of funds should be in two distinct categories (i) Himalayan hill areas and (ii) sub-continental hill areas
- Active participation of people in fulfillment of basic needs (food, fodder, water, etc.)
- Need for scientific landuse pattern with adoption of appropriate technology
- Problems of shifting cultivation, plantation policy in horticulture, animal husbandry programmes, fuel policy, need to be reviewed
- Utilization and development of natural resources
- The growth of towns in the hill areas should be strictly regulated keeping in view the ecological considerations

- v. While making recommendations for the Seventh Five Year Plan, the Working Group may also indicate the perspective for ten years beyond the Seventh Plan period.

The key features of recommendations of the working group are presented (Box 12).

4. Expert Group on National Policy on Integrated Development of Himalaya (1993):

Chairman- Dr. S. Z. Qasim

In 1993, Planning Commission constituted an Expert Group on National Policy on Integrated Development of Himalaya under chairmanship of Dr. S.Z. Quasim with following TOR:

- i. To make recommendations towards development of a national policy on the Himalaya for an integrated mountain development with a view to ensuring that

the entire region is used to the best advantage of our country

- ii. To make assessment of scientific, environmental and material resources of the Himalayan region
- iii. To identify specific area of activity which fit into the ecology of the Himalayan region, and are consistent with the socio-economic character of the region
- iv. To estimate the carrying capacity of environmentally sensitive areas within the Himalayan region
- v. To suggest suitable organizational mechanism to implement the proposed policy

The report of the Expert Group on National Policy on Integrated Development of Himalaya emphasized the need to provide an insight into the major problems of the IHR as a whole and recognized the need for participatory approaches for sound socio-economic development of the region. The key recommendations of the working group are presented (Box 13).

Box 13: Key Features of the Recommendations of the Expert Group

- Creation of bodies and role
 - o constitution of a Himalayan Development Authority (HDA)
 - o creation of National Himalayan Environment and Development Fund
 - o enlarged role of the Ministry of Environment and Forests
- Linking different scientific institution and disciplines with social sciences
- Preparation of guidelines for development projects in states
- Conservation of biodiversity and genetic resources
- Maintenance of forest cover and sustainable management
- Development of agriculture and allied activities including export of horticultural products to neighboring countries
- Preparedness for coping with natural hazards in earthquake- prone areas
- strengthening road network and other modes of communication
- Promote environment friendly and ethical tourism
- Explore and generate source of funding

5. High Level Commission on Transforming the North-Eastern Region (1997):

Chairman- Shri S.P. Shukla

In pursuance of the Prime Minister's announcement of 'New Initiatives For the North Eastern Region' made at Guwahati on October 27, 1996, a High Level Commission was appointed under the Chairmanship of Shri S.P Shukla, Member, Planning Commission to

Box 14: Key Features of the Recommendations of the Commission

- Creation of North Eastern Development Council
- Additional resource mobilization for the region
- Strengthening of sectors
 - o farm, horticulture, and plantations
 - o animal husbandry, fisheries, and irrigation
 - o environment and forests
 - o transport, inland water transport, and civil aviation
 - o communication and broadcasting
 - o power
 - o industry including cottage and handicrafts
 - o trade and transit
 - o tourism
 - o banking and finance

recommend measures to create good infrastructural facilities and bridge Basic Minimum Service Gap to bring the North-East at par with the rest of the country within the next five to ten years in a process of poverty alleviation and infrastructural upgradation. The TOR of the Commission were to:

- (i) critically examine the backlog in respect of Basic Minimum Services in the seven North-Eastern States
- (ii) critically examine the gaps in important sectors of infrastructure development in the North-Eastern Region, specially in power communication, railways, roads, education, agriculture, etc.
- (iii) suggest policies programmes and requirement of funds to bridge the gaps in infrastructural Sectors and the backlog in Basic Minimum Services in the seven North-Eastern States
- (iv) consider any other issue which the Commission considers relevant for achieving the above objectives

The key features of the report are presented (Box 14).

6. Task Force on the Mountain Ecosystems for the 11th Five Year Plan (2006):

Chairman-Dr. R. S. Tolia

A Task Force on Mountain Ecosystems for Environment and Forests sector for the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2011) was set up by the Planning Commission of India. TOR of the Task Force were to:

- i. Review the current status of knowledge on various environmental aspects of conservation and sustainable use of mountain ecosystems and recommend correctives
- ii. Assess the potential impacts of climate change on mountain ecosystems and recommend required new or remedial measures of dealing with these impacts
- iii. Review the institutional and individual capacities available to address issues related to conservation and sustainable use of mountain ecosystems and recommend how they may be adequately strengthened
- iv. Assess the current issues and systems of integrating concerns relating to fragile mountain ecosystems into other sectors (ministries,

Box 15: Key Features of the Task Force Report

- Broadening the scope for integrated planning of the Himalaya and creation of new institutions
 - o inclusion of remaining three Himalayan states (J&K, HP, and UK) in Ministry for the development of the North-Eastern region
 - o Mountain Farming Research
 - o Centre for Mountain Studies
- Subsidy for fossil fuel to the hill communities and revamping Clean Development Mechanism
- Strengthening the long term research on ecosystem research and functioning, climate, glaciers, biodiversity and bio-prospecting
- Capacity building on EIA procedures, Green Road Engineering, etc.
- Strengthening -
 - o existing local traditional institutions and knowledge system
 - o coordination between Centre and State Agencies

departments) and to recommend required new or remedial measures

- v. Review the current EIA laws, policies, procedures and practices as being applied in the mountain ecosystems context and recommend corrective measure to address significant issues that specifically arise in the context of these fragile ecosystems

The Task Force report presents an analysis of current knowledge and status of sustainable use of mountain ecosystems, and the gaps that have been identified in natural resource management. Key features of the report are given (Box 15).

7. Task Force to look into problems of hill states and hill areas and to suggest ways to ensure that these states and areas do not suffer in any way because of their peculiarities (2010):

Chairman-Shri G.B. Mukherji

Recognizing the various opinions expressed that the pace of development of the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) has been slow when compared to rest of the country, and considering its fragile nature and difficulty

of taking up conventional development initiatives, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India expressed the need for a fresh analysis of the problems of the hill states and hill areas of the country in a manner that suggests that these areas do not suffer in any way on account of their peculiarities. To take note on this, a Task Force was constituted by the Planning Commission of India in April, 2008, with following TOR:

- i. To analyze the problems of hill state and hill areas relating to (a) connectivity (telephone/internet/transport) and (b) social infra structure
- ii. To identify the issues relating to environmental sustainability and use of land and water resources and their impact on the development processes in these states

Box 16: Key Features of Recommendations of the Task Force

- Upgradation of an existing institute or establishment of a new institute for Natural Resource Analysis and Advisory Centre (NRAAC)
- Developmental norms must be on mountain relevant parameters, and Planning must be on Zone based and identification of Activity or Non activity Zones, and eco-sensitive habitat plans
- Reward as well as Compensation Mechanism at national level for Life Supporting Ecosystem Services to the rest of the country, and a non-lapsable IHR Gap fund
- Mountain sensitive landuse policy and stringent laws to minimize erosion, facilitate functional land consolidation, regulate mining, and niche tourism
- Mountain specific skill development, designing of specific courses on mountain ecology, **sensitizing key decision makers**, promotion of distance learning
- Development of reliable and efficient road, rail, air connectivity, and designing of two loop railway lines (Western and North-eastern region)
- Radio transmission and satellite based links for electronic communication at village level
- Promotion of LPG to save wood. Decentralized small scale power generation and distribution including solar and wind

- iii. To identify the norms in the Centrally Sponsored Schemes which needs to be relaxed in order to ensure flow of funds to the Hill states
- iv. To identify the requirements for training in various trades for enhancing the employability of educated unemployed youth
- v. To suggest measures to ensure that economic and human resource development do not suffer because of the peculiar geographical conditions of these hill states and hill areas
- vi. To suggest mechanism (including PPP) and measures for capacity building which can deliver services more effectively as well as enable transparency and accountability

The key features of Task Force Report are presented (Box 16).

8. The Working Group on Improvement and Development of Transport Infrastructure in the North East for the national Transport Development Committee (2012):

Chairman: Shri Vivek Sahai

For the first time while formulating National Transport Policy, a separate attention was paid to the transport needs of the North-Eastern Region and the National Transport Development Policy Committee (NTDPC) constituted a Working Group on Improvement and Development of Transport Infrastructure in the North-East. The Working Group looked at the situation under three categories: (i) Intra-Regional Need, (ii) Inter-Regional Need, and (iii) Trans Border Movement. The Working Group also examined the needs for various possible sectors viz. Road, Rail, Civil Aviation and Inland Water Transport to arrive at a holistic picture. The TOR to the task force included:

- (i) To assess the Transport Infrastructure Deficit in the North East Region
- (ii) To assess the role of each mode of transport for improving the accessibility and mobility of both people and goods
- (iii) To make recommendations for provision of transport infrastructure and facilities keeping in view:
 - a. the role of each mode of transport
 - b. the requirement of traffic demand, particularly,

Box 17: Key Features of the Recommendations of the Working Group

- **Road**
 - o A separate body under the aegis of M/o DONER to monitor the construction activities in the sector
 - o There is a need for changing the technology being used for construction of roads to improve their longevity
- **Railway**
 - o New railway lines are essential to improve transportation in the region – (i) connecting port in Myanmar to Arunachal Pradesh across Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland and (ii) connecting Dhubri to Silchar via Meghalaya.
 - o Tunnel construction may revise their alignments, wherever possible, to take the stations closer to the inhabited areas and also reduce distances by making prudent use of tunnels
- **Civil Aviation**
 - o In keeping with the geography thin spread of population, a hub and spoke model with hubs at Guwahati, Imphal and Agartala should be developed for the region, and a model for bringing in PPP to develop a viable civil aviation network in the region.
 - o development of meteorological forecasting network in the region to make civil aviation predictable and safe
- **Inland Waterways**
 - o Indo-Bangladesh Protocol on Inland Water Transit & Trade to provide access from West Bengal through Assam to their river system
 - o development of multi-modal hubs at two stations (possible to have connectivity from rail, road, inland water transport as well as civil aviation) will facilitate smooth transportation in the region in times of calamity as well as insurgency

that relating to movement of essential commodities

- c. need to ensure balance between the ability of transport to serve economic development of the region and to conserve energy, protect environment, promote safety and sustain good quality of life
 - d. need to adopt and evolve suitable technology for cost effective creation, economical maintenance and efficient utilisation of transport assets
- (iv) To assess transport infrastructure, requirement of providing connectivity with the neighbouring countries with a view to enabling trade between North Eastern Region and neighbouring countries
- (v) To assess the investment requirement of Transport sector and to recommend measures to fund the projected investment

- (vi) To suggest measures to improve the capacity to evolve and implement projects in North East

The key features of the recommendations of the working group are provided (Box 17).

9. Report of the Committee to Study Development in Hill States arising from management of Forest Lands with Special Focus on creation of Infrastructure, Livelihood and Human Development (2013):

Chairman- Shri B.K. Chaturvedi

The Twelfth Five Year Plan, while striving for faster and more inclusive growth, lays significant emphasis on the issue of sustainability. The Plan document recognizes that the development process cannot afford to neglect the environmental consequences of economic activity, or allow unsustainable depletion and deterioration of natural resources. The Twelfth Plan must, therefore, have a strategy of development which effectively reconciles the objective of development with the objective of protecting the environment. Keeping in view various

factors of Himalayan states, a Committee, Chaired by Shri B.K. Chaturvedi, Member, Planning Commission, was constituted by the Planning Commission on 25th November 2011, which aimed to study the development in the Himalayan Hill States arising from management of forest lands with special focus on creation of infrastructure, livelihood and human development. The TOR of the Committee included:

- (i) To review forest cover/area during the last two decades in the Himalayan/Hill States
- (ii) To identify infrastructure projects those have not been taken up for want of Environmental and forest clearances in the last 10 years
- (iii) To assess loss of revenue and other investments to a State in view of projects not being cleared on account of forest clearances
- (iv) To review implementation of Forest & Environmental Policy for these States and suggest speedy clearance mechanism for environment and forest clearances
- (v) To identify state-wise gaps in infrastructure development, particularly, roads, rail, air connectivity and rural electrification
- (vi) To assess requirement of funds for infrastructure, livelihoods and human development in hilly states. Estimate funds flowing to these states for development of Infrastructure and other sectors and make recommendations for augmentation of resources and a framework for utilization of such resources to bridge the infrastructure and other gaps
- (vii) To identify suitable areas/degraded forests in Hill States and an integrated action plan for afforestation and intensification of canopy cover by pooling financial resources from various sources including developmental projects for sustainable development
- (viii) To undertake a holistic review of factors adversely affecting development of infrastructure in the hilly states to harness development potential

- (ix) To suggest mechanisms for strengthening capacities for project formulation, implementation and monitoring in the Hill States

The key features of recommendations of the Committee are summarized (Box 18).

Box 18: Key Features of the Recommendations of the Committee

- Relaxation in norms for environmental and forest clearance of various projects for Himalayan & North Eastern States and fast track the proposals for clearance to impart efficiency and transparency to the entire system. Automatic divergence of forest land upto 10 ha for infrastructure project
- In making the designs of development activities, the by-products of development work should be designed and undertaken in a manner which minimizes any increase in the vulnerability of the area
- Provision for special compensation to the Himalayan & North Eastern States. A substantial sum of fiscal transfer to be earmarked as compensation on account of the special burden that they carry for the rest of the Nation. These transfers must be linked to the development of economic & social infrastructure (Roads, railways, airport & helicopter landing pads; Drinking water, minor irrigation; Horticulture & animal husbandry; Schools, skill training centres, professional colleges; Health care centres & dispensaries & hospitals). 2 per cent of annual Gross Budgetary Support to be earmarked for this purpose each year
- A scheme for developing an institutional mechanism for accessing the most suited technology and knowledge databases for adoption of environmentally safer practices for developmental work



3

**SUMMARY OF DOCUMENTS ON
INDIAN HIMALAYN REGION BY OTHER
IMPORTANT NATIONAL BODIES**





1. Action Plan for Himalaya (1992)

G.B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development, Kosi-Katarmal, Almora prepared a comprehensive document, named "Action Plan for Himalaya" to suggest the mechanism of ecologically sound economic development of the Himalaya. The above action plan suggests mechanisms for ecologically sound economic development in the Himalayan region, and enumerates sector wise priority actions, covering both research based and development activities, in addition to management aspects required for increasing the pace of environmentally sound development in the region. The key objectives of the above mentioned action plan document were:

- (i) To suggest mechanism of planning for different sectors in Himalaya
- (ii) To inventories sector wise priority actions including research, development, and management aspects of the planning
- (iii) To identify the past scenarios, gaps in efforts, constraints, and actions for developmental processes for the region

Box 19 summarizes the key features of the Action Plan document.

2. National Mission on Sustaining Himalayan Ecosystem under National Action Plan on Climate Change (2008)

Under the guidance of the Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change, India's National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) was prepared and released in 2008. The core of NAPCC constitutes of eight National missions. Among these, the Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem (NMSHE), aims to conserve biodiversity, forest cover and other ecological values in the IHR, and to evolve management measures for sustaining and safeguarding the Himalayan glaciers. The Mission was launched to deliver better understanding of the coupling between the Himalayan ecosystem and the climate factors and provide inputs for Himalayan Sustainable Development while addressing also the protection of a fragile ecosystem. The primary objectives of the mission are:

- (i) Develop a sustainable National capacity to continuously assess the health status of the Himalayan Ecosystem and enable policy bodies in their policy-formulation, functions, and assist

Box 19: Key Features of the Action Plan

- The appreciation for the environment value blended with the judicious use of the natural resources should form integral component of Himalayan development
- Governmental efforts should be strengthened to take up task of land consolidation on a priority basis so that legal provisions of private ownership do not restrict the land use
- A long term plan for horticultural development, incorporating a crop diversification programme, should be prepared
- Application of Science and Technology for the restoration of the degraded environment, and economic upliftment of Himalayan using parallel efforts on strengthening the base of Science and Technology

States in the Indian Himalayan Region with their implementation of actions selected for sustainable development

- (ii) A scientific assessment of the vulnerability of the Himalayan ecosystem to short and long term variability in the weather and climate in all its dimensions of physical, biological and socio-cultural aspects
- (iii) Research for framing evidence based policy measures to protect the fragile ecosystem
- (iv) Time bound action programmes at state level in the Indian Himalayan Region in order to sustain the ecological resilience and ensure the continued provision of key ecosystem services

Box 20: Approach & Strategies in NMSHE

The Mission desires to provide an integrating platform for several knowledge institutions engaged in the study of glaciers and of the other ecosystem components. It will strive to provide inputs for evolving policy strategies and recommending action programmes for sustaining the ecosystem based sound S&T datasets. The main strategy of the national mission is based on strengthening of ongoing activities in the knowledge domain by enrolling knowledge institutions in the area and develops new institutional mechanisms needed for a long term coordinated action programme through appropriate steering and monitoring mechanisms. An integrated approach is designed for identifying vulnerabilities of the resource system to climate and socio-economic changes, and for evaluating adaptation options. Study of ecological service potentials emanating from the Himalayan ecosystem will be integrated into the mission through research in both natural and social science areas. For this, enrollment of both natural and social science research groups into the mission will be accomplished. Considering the need for maintaining compatibility, through uniform approaches, with global datasets, the mission will promote/strengthen initiatives to establish State-of-Art observation, monitoring and prediction system. This may include provisions for collaborative ventures at landscape level with neighbouring countries which share Himalayan ecology.

Key features of NMSHE approach and strategies included (Box 20).

3. The North-Eastern Region Development Vision 2020 (2008)

Ministry of Development of North-East Region prepared a vision document for the development of the eight states of North-Eastern Region (NER) of the IHR. The vision document, which was adopted by North East council on 13 May 2008, targets the following:

- (i) To return the NE region to the position of national economic eminence that the region had held few decades ago
- (ii) To create infrastructure for focusing agriculture, industrialization, connectivity and human resource development
- (iii) Earmarking of 10% allocation of a non-lapsable pool of funds received through central assistance for NE Region

Key features of NER Vision 2020 are included (Box 21).

Box 21: Key Features of the NER Vision 2020

- The priority sector must be agriculture for the Region's very high dependence on agriculture and allied activities
- Empowerment of the people by maximizing self-governance and participatory development through grassroots planning to evolve development strategy based on the resources, needs and aspirations of the people
- Rural development with a focus on improving agricultural productivity and the creation of non-farm occupations and employment
- Maximising self-governance, introduction of participatory planning, rural development for significant augmentation of capacity of the people and institutions both in the government and private sectors
- Ensuring adequate flow of resources for public investments in infrastructure, implementing a framework for private participation in augmenting infrastructure and creating an enabling environment for the flow of investments to harness the physical resources of the region for the welfare of the people

Epilogue

The Mountain Ecosystems, providers of critical goods and services, sustain nearly half of the world's population which depends on these ecosystems for fresh water, clean energy, irrigation water, minerals, forest products, recreation, and many more. More importantly the Mountains are important repositories of genetic resources, and half of the recognized Global Biodiversity Hotspots are located in the Mountain areas. Ecological sustainability and economic growth in the lowlands to a large extent depends on resources and services flowing from the mountain ecosystems. In spite of proven values, the Mountains till recent past have largely remained neglected in the global agenda for sustainable development. In particular, countries having mountainous area only as a small portion of their geographical extent did not pay much attention to mountain specificities while drawing national plans and policies; resulting in gross marginalization of these areas. It was only in the aftermath of Rio Summit (1992), the Mountains ecosystems gained momentum in 'Global Sustainable Development' agenda, and the greater need to sustain mountains as optimally functioning ecosystems was realized.

The development in IHR has also suffered due to lack of mountain perspectives in national planning process. However, the progression in mountain thinking, as one can capture from Five Year Plans and the recommendations of various Task Forces/Workgroups constituted for mountain area development, reveals an gradually evolving change in national planning. This is evident in the form of provisions of separate and increased budgetary allocations, creation of new ministry and departments (i.e., DONER). Yet, these initiatives have not delivered to the extent expected. Furthermore, increasing threats (perceived and realized) of climate change and human errors in execution of developmental activities, are being witnessed in the form of tragedies such as happened in Kedarnath (Uttarakhand). All this urgently calls for more specific and holistic planning for IHR that is supported by effective environmental governance, trans-boundary and trans-disciplinary thinking, and wider appreciation for mountain specificities. Devising such plans, among others, would require appropriate incorporation of R&D inputs from various institutions devoted to developmental research in the region. Given the extreme vulnerability and fragility of this ecosystem, need for scientifically planned development is imminent.

Recent announcement by the Central Government for National Mission on Himalayan Studies is a welcome initiative and shows increasing interest and commitments of the government for the Himalaya and its people. This Mission provides great opportunity for developing research based understanding on complexities and sensitivity of Himalayan ecosystem, which ultimately helps in informed policy and decision making. At this point, to accelerate the process and to meet growing expectations and timelines, one would like to follow the premise of strengthening the existing Institution(s) as recommended in Rio+20 report, and Planning Commission's Task Force-2010 (Chaired by G. B. Mukherjee) report. In view of the above, a suitable Institution with pan-Himalayan presence, multidisciplinary skills, proven scientific credibility needs to be identified, strengthened adequately with appropriate resources. This provides scope for increasing the responsibility and role of such Institute in achieving goal of Environmental Conservation and Sustainable Development in the Indian Himalayan Region.





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DISCLAIMER

This document contains synthesized information about changing perspectives of development in the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) through different Five Year Plans and reports of various Task Forces/Workgroups constituted by the Planning Commission, Government of India. The purpose is to produce summary of Progression in Developmental Planning for the IHR. This document, however, only highlights key features of recommendations of various plan documents and reports of Task Forces/Workgroups, etc. Therefore, for detailed information, original documents/reports need to be consulted. The synthesis presented and views expressed in this document are not necessarily endorsed by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India. The provision of this document does not constitute legal advice or opinions of any kind, or any solicitation.