

Fifth Five Year Plan Strategy

Like the Fourth Plan (1969-74), the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79) of Himachal Pradesh did not spell out its underlying objectives and precise goals of planning altogether. However, in the Plan documents, the planners have admitted that Himachal Pradesh requires a different kind of approach towards its economic and social development and thus it cannot be wholly in common with the rest of the country. The Himachal Pradesh Government, in fact, followed the National Plan Policies without modifying them to meet the local needs. The Draft Fifth Plan (1974-79) of India was launched from April 1, 1974. The two major objectives of the Draft Fifth Plan were: '*removal of poverty and attainment of self-reliance*'. The final Fifth Plan was approved by NDC on 25-9-1976. The major elements of the strategy for the realisation of the objectives were outlined as follows:

- o a 5.5 per cent overall growth rate in the gross domestic product;
- o expansion of productive employment opportunities;
- o a national programme for minimum needs, covering elementary education, drinking water, and medical care in rural areas; nutrition and home sites for landless labourers; and rural roads, rural electrification, and slum improvement;
- o extended programmes of social welfare;
- o emphasis on agriculture, key and basic industries, and industries producing goods for mass consumption;
- o an adequate public procurement and distribution system for assured supply of essential consumption goods, at least to poor sections, at reasonably stable prices;
- o vigorous export promotion and import substitution;
- o vigorous restraint on non-essential consumption;
- o an equitable prices-wages-incomes' balance; and
- o institutional, fiscal, and other measures for the reduction of social, economic, and regional inequalities.

The total Plan outlay for the Fifth Plan of Himachal Pradesh was Rs 1614.8 million. In its financial resource allocation, the water and power development sector got first priority (26.7% share in the Plan outlay), closely followed by the agriculture and allied services' sector (26.2%) and the Transport and Communications' sector (with 24.1%). The Community and Social Services' sector was fifth in rank, it received 16.3% of the Plan outlay.

Keeping in mind the objectives of self-reliance in the Fifth Plan, the main task under this Plan was to make the State self-sufficient in foodgrains and at the same time bring more and more areas under cash crops. To achieve this goal, some salient features of the Plan in the agricultural sector were:¹²

12. The Fifth Plan, Mid-term Appraisal Himachal Pradesh, p 15. Shimla: Himachal Pradesh Government, Plan Evaluation and Appraisal Cell, Planning Department, 1977.

- o to make the State self-sufficient in foodgrains through intensive use of optimum doses of improved inputs, multiple cropping and by providing assured irrigation;
- o development of cash crops such as potatoes, ginger, and vegetable seeds and production of seeds of high yielding varieties of foodgrains, thereby changing the traditional cropping pattern to raise the returns for each unit area;
- o efficient use of existing soil and water resources, adoption of soil conservation measures; and
- o development of less developed tribal and backward areas by providing special facilities to the farmers.

Horticulture occupies an important place in the economy of Himachal Pradesh, and, perhaps, it is through horticulture that the optimum and sustainable use of the available land, utilization of areas otherwise non-arable, and restriction of soil erosion will become possible. The objectives of the Fifth Plan regarding horticulture were to consolidate the gains already made through planned programmes and to strive for balanced development, efficient production management, development of marketing infrastructure, and strong research programmes.

Since marketing is a necessary adjunct to production, it received special attention. The marketing responsibility for fruits and vegetables was shared by the State Horticultural Department, in collaboration with the World Bank, the Himachal Pradesh Agro-Industries' Corporation, and the Himachal Pradesh Public Works' Department. These agencies, inter alia, assisted in establishing cold storages, packing houses, fruit processing and canning units, and transport infrastructure such as ropeways and roads. Himachal Pradesh Horticultural Produce Marketing Corporation (HPMC) was also formed to support fruit and vegetable marketing in the State.

Soil and water conservation in Himachal Pradesh has its own importance both from the point of view of the State and the country. The onus of implementing the soil and water conservation policies in the Fifth Plan was laid on the Departments of Forest and Agriculture. The main schemes executed by the Forest Department were protective afforestation, rehabilitation of degraded forests, and soil conservation in river valley projects. The activities of soil conservation on agricultural lands were the main concern of the Agricultural Department. The strategy during the Fifth Five Year Plan of Himachal Pradesh was to discourage erroneous land use; to prepare a proper inventory of land resources together with their treatment needs; and to intensify afforestation and grass planting through the introduction of three dimensional forest farming (i.e. for fuel, fodder, and timber)¹³.

13. Ibid., p 30.

As regards forests, the efforts during the Fifth Plan were to achieve progressively higher yields until the optimum productive potential in terms of quality and quantity was realised. Pasture development was given more attention and experiments on the introduction of high-yielding nutritious grasses were conducted in view of their importance in the agro-pastoral economy of the State. Protection of forests was given due attention. Besides, emphasis was laid on scientific management of forests to secure improved protection/conservation, demarcation, and settlement of wooded areas.

Apart from cattle, Himachal Pradesh is ideally suited for goat and sheep rearing. Efforts were made to convert 'below subsistence' animal husbandry into an economic proposition. More stress was laid on the cross-breeding programme to cover the entire indigenous livestock population so that, in the long run, it would result in adequate milk, meat, and wool production. Thus, most of the animal husbandry schemes during the Fifth Five Year Plan were production-oriented to help raise the economic conditions of the rural population, particularly in the tribal and backward areas of Himachal Pradesh.

As an economy develops, its demand for energy tends to increase and its consumption pattern in terms of energy forms and energy sources also tends to change. Various hydel-projects were executed in Himachal Pradesh to improve power generation. Power generation showed a sudden increase in the Fourth and Fifth Plan periods, and this was primarily due to an addition in the installed capacity. Consequently, the consumption of power in the domestic sector has been on the increase. By the end of the Fifth Plan, 49 per cent of the villages were provided with electricity in the State. Since Himachal Pradesh, through its network of five major river basins (Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Chenab, and Yamuna), has vast hydel-potential a detailed survey and investigations and techno-economic studies were undertaken during the Plan.

Road development is a prerequisite for the economic development of any land-bound area like Himachal Pradesh. During the Fifth Plan, road development was given high priority and the development strategy was:

- o completion of the works started in the Fourth Plan;
- o improvement and widening of State Highways, improvement of existing bridges, provision of by-passes etc.;
- o construction of bridges; and
- o completion of missing links on State Highways.

With the massive road construction works taking place in Himachal Pradesh, the density of motorable roads per 100 km² grew from 11.13 km in 1969 to 20.92 km in 1979 (i.e. by the end of the Fifth Plan). All this was possible after heavy investments in terms of money and manpower.