

Sixth Five Year Plan Strategy

The Sixth Plan document of Himachal Pradesh states that "*The formulation of the State Sixth Plan for 1980-85 will, by and large, have the badge of objectives within the framework of the objectives of the National Plan with minor adjustments as may be necessitated by local conditions and needs*"¹⁴. The National Sixth Five Year Plan, 1980-85, visualised accelerated progress towards the elimination of poverty, generation of gainful employment, and technological and economic self-reliance. For this purpose, ten major areas requiring effort have been outlined as¹⁵:

- o a significant increase in the growth rate of the economy, promotion of efficiency in the use of resources, and improved productivity;
- o strengthening the impulses of modernisation for the achievement of economic and technological self-reliance;
- o a progressive reduction in poverty and unemployment;
- o a speedy development of the indigenous sources of energy, with proper emphasis on conservation and efficiency in energy use;
- o improving the living standards of the people, in general, through a basic needs' programme;
- o strengthening the redistributive bias of public policies and services, in favour of the poor, and contributing to reduction in inequalities of income and wealth;
- o a progressive reduction in regional inequalities in the pace of development and in the diffusion of technological benefits;
- o promoting policies for controlling the growth of population through voluntary acceptance of the small family norm;
- o bringing about harmony between the short and long-term goals of development by promoting the protection and improvement of ecological and environmental assets; and
- o promoting the active involvement of all sections of the people in the process of development through appropriate education, communications, and institutional strategies.

The total Plan outlay of the Sixth Plan of Himachal Pradesh was Rs 6556.6 million. Again, in this Plan also, the Water and Power Development Sector was assigned the highest priority and was allocated a 26.2 per cent share of the Plan outlay. The agriculture and allied services' sector received a 25.1 per cent share and the social and community services sector 24.2 per cent. Transport and communications continued to receive due preference and 17.7 per cent of the Plan outlay was allocated to this sector in the Sixth Plan. The industrial and the cooperation sector received 3.2 and 1.1 per cent respectively.

14. Draft Sixth Five Year Plan, 1980-85, and Draft Annual Plan 1981-82, p 31. Himachal Pradesh: Shimla, Planning Department, 1980.

15. Ibid, p.31.

In Himachal Pradesh, small and marginal farmers predominate. Land holdings are not only small but fragmented and slopy; soil erosion is rampant. Adoption of improved packages is hampered due to the hilly terrain and inadequacy of irrigation facilities (only 17% is cropped and irrigated). Nature, although it has imposed problems has also endowed the State with agro-climatic conditions conducive to the production of cash crops such as fruits and off-season vegetables at a comparative advantage. With a very large number of people depending upon agriculture, there is, naturally, an excessive pressure on land and consequently sub-marginal land is also being brought under the plough. Under the present situation, except for some scope in the valley areas, there is limited scope for expanding cultivation, and agricultural production can only be increased by intensive methods and scientific cropping patterns.

In order to improve the economic conditions of small and marginal farmers; projects such as the Small Farmer Development Agency and Marginal Farmers' and Agricultural Labourers' Programmes were in operation. Besides various other programmes under the Tribal Development Projects, *Antyodaya* and Integrated Rural Development Programmes were undertaken to render useful service to the farming community. The State had almost achieved a level of self-sufficiency in foodgrains during the year 1975/76, but it received a set-back as a result of continuous drought later on. In order to increase farm production and income per unit area/per unit time, the Sixth Plan of Himachal Pradesh laid emphasis on the following strategies¹⁶:

- o the increase of foodgrain production per unit area,
- o the cultivation of off-season vegetables,
- o the intensified cultivation of potatoes and ginger,
- o an emphasis on the production of pulses, especially by intercropping these with maize,
- o the encouragement of mixed farming,
- o the adoption of dry farming programmes in drought-prone areas by laying special emphasis on sound water-harvesting techniques,
- o Intensification of extension services for effective and expeditious dissemination of advanced farm technology to the farmers.

Topographically, the cultivated lands in Himachal Pradesh are so varied that cultivation is practised on 2 per cent slopes in the valley areas to 50 per cent slopes in the hills. Therefore, proper layout of the fields with a view to checking erosion and maintaining productivity of the soil is essential. Data on erosion intensity shows that 9 per cent of the total agricultural land is seriously eroded and, on the whole, 29 per cent of the agricultural land is in need of soil conservation treatment¹⁷. Soil conservation measures taken on agricultural land in the Sixth Plan were:

16. Ibid, pp 69-70.

17. Ibid, p 97.

- o bench terracing,
- o levelling of fields for irrigation,
- o plantation of orchards on contour strips,
- o water use and management, and
- o diversion drains for runoff water disposal; these measures were taken on a mini-watershed basis.

The Forest Department of the State, by contributing 50 per cent of the inputs is also implementing centrally-sponsored schemes in tribal areas for protective afforestation, soil conservation, and demonstration. Massive employment is being provided to the scheduled castes, besides indirect benefits through the implementation of conservation schemes by the Forest Department. The main objectives under forest development are:

- o to encourage people to grow trees that meet their requirements,
- o to improve existing pastures,
- o to introduce economically important species, and
- o to carry out surveys on medicinal and aromatic herbs and suggest ways and means to increase their sustained yield.

Under the animal husbandry programme, development work on cattle, sheep and wool, poultry, and feed and fodder continued with added vigour. Broadly, the following programmes were launched during the Sixth Plan¹⁸:

- o encouraging rural youths by providing training and assistance in setting up dairy units in the milkshed areas;
- o consolidating the existing city milk supply schemes by augmenting and strengthening existing infrastructure;
- o extending facilities for the organized collection of milk to all the areas accessible through all weather roads;
- o stressing the sale of milk in fluid form and converting only surplus milk into milk products; and
- o organizing training and extension programmes both for ongoing projects and projects now proposed.

A network of 19 chilling plants was established under milk supply schemes. These plants have a total chilling capacity of 33,500 litres of milk per day. Besides, 61 Primary Milk Producers' Cooperative Societies with a membership of 5,109 persons have been registered.

18. Ibid, p 124.