

Conclusions and Recommendations

- 1) Efforts made by Himachal Pradesh to remove the constraints caused by inaccessibility by building a network of roads throughout the State, especially in remote rural areas, have greatly facilitated the developmental activities in all sectors. They have broken the barriers of isolation and remoteness and added attractiveness to rural life, greatly promoting the expansion of rural settlements and the functional growth of towns and service centres with increase in the area of influence of urban centres.

By reducing inaccessibility, the process of agricultural transformation, from traditional cereal crops to commercial cash crops such as off-season vegetables and fruits, especially apples, has been greatly expedited with remarkable improvement in the socioeconomic status of the farmers in the State. It is only in recent years that exploitation of mountain specific natural resources, such as harnessing of hydro-electric potentials, minerals, tourism and small-scale industries, have flourished and are contributing increasing shares to the gross product of the State.

- 2) In agriculture the main emphasis should further shift from "self-sufficiency in foodgrains" to maximization of farm income through cash crops (fruits and vegetables) which are highly remunerative and for which the State has comparative advantages due to climatic and other factors. However, the dependence of fruit and vegetable crops on forests for packing cases, etc. should be kept to the minimum and alternative means of packaging should be found.
- 3) In the livestock sector, the number of unproductive livestock needs to be curtailed and their quality improved to increase income. Programmes such as better breeding, feeding, and disease control should be encouraged. The productivity of common pasture lands should be improved.
- 4) In the industrial sector, small-scale agro-industries are best suited to the utilization of local raw materials and manpower. Small-scale industries can provide employment opportunities at a relatively smaller capital cost and should be promoted. Such industries also help in dispersal of industrial activity and thus the well-balanced development of all parts of the State.
- 5) Since Himachal Pradesh has sufficient rainfall and vast hydro-electric potential, the power sector should not be considered as a mere component of infrastructural facilities, rather it should be counted as a commodity production sector and as a source of income.
- 6) Himachal Pradesh also offers a good example of how to handle the constraint of mountain fragility through a package of sound environmental practices including coverage of 50 per cent of the geographic area under forests, minimum possible diversion of forest areas to

other sectors, raising multiple tree species, creating bio-sphere and game reserves, controlling grazing, developing suitable substitutes for wooden fruit cases, and enacting suitable laws for the control of water and air pollution, etc.

- 7) Himachal Pradesh has done pioneering work in removing inter-regional disparities within the State. This has been achieved by developing a special strategy for the economic development of backward areas, scheduled castes and tribes, as well the tribal people of the State. Under this new strategy, a sub-plan under the general plan for the development of these marginal areas and people was formulated with a major emphasis on the infrastructural sector, social service sector, and production sector through liberal economic assistance and subsidies. As a result of such efforts, these marginal people have joined the mainstream.

- 8) The family planning programme in Himachal Pradesh has not yielded the desired results and human population growth has largely neutralized the fruits of economic growth. Himachal Pradesh, therefore, requires a development approach with the two fold objective of increasing the productivity of natural resources and checking population growth in the region.