CHAPTER-V
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5.1 Summary of Major Findings

5.1.1 Infrastructure development plays a critical role in accelerating the process of economic development. Though the foundations of modern infrastructure were laid during the British period, the development of these facilities remained highly inadequate. In addition, the development of infrastructure facilities was lopsided and was not governed by the need of country's balanced development but by the colonial interests. The availability of infrastructural facilities on the eve of plan era had also been grossly inadequate. Since independence, the Indian planners have emphasized the role of infrastructure in promoting economic development and accorded high priority to infrastructural development from the very beginning of the plan era. As a result, there has been a substantial improvement in infrastructure facilities over the planning period. However, infrastructure planning in the country is marked by excessive adhocism which leads to various inadequacies and deficiencies.

5.1.2 The progress of infrastructure facilities during the past plan period reveals that there has been considerable quantitative expansion of infrastructure facilities in the country, but continued to be inadequate compared to the requirement. Moreover, the availability of infrastructure facilities in the country is much less compared many other countries of the world.

5.1.3 The low rate of capacity utilization of the infrastructural facilities, especially in the power and irrigation sector also hampers the economic development of the country. For the development of social infrastructural facilities, specially education and health facilities, allocations in the plans should be enhanced for striking a balance between economic and social infrastructural facilities.
Apart from inter-state and intrastate disparities, there are also rural-urban disparities in the availability of the basic infrastructural facilities in India. Keeping in mind the multi-dimensional impact of the shortage of infrastructural facilities on the production sector of the economy, the perspective planning is necessary for the development of the infrastructural facilities.

5.1.4 Infrastructural facilities in Assam has also expanded considerably during the past plan period, but the development has been grossly inadequate. As a result, the state lags far behind the national average in respect of most of the items of infrastructural facilities. For the development of infrastructural facilities in the state, plan allocations should be substantially increased and its proper utilization ensured.

Apart from inter-district and intra-district disparities in the development of infrastructural facilities, considerable rural-urban disparities also exists in the state. Suitable remedial measures should be adopted for reducing the gap between rural and urban areas. Apart from the quantitative expansion, efforts should also be made for bringing the qualitative improvement of the infrastructural facilities.

5.1.5 The development of infrastructural facilities reveals marked inter-state disparities in the country. While some states like Maharastra and Tamil Nadu attained considerable progress, some others like Haryana, Bihar and Assam have lagged far behind. In Assam, the development of infrastructure facilities made a modest beginning in real sense only after the implementation of various governments programme, especially the Minimum Needs Programme.

The inter-state pattern of development has remained more or less unchanged. The states which were developed earlier continues to remain at higher level of development, while the less developed states like Assam continue to remain at a lower level of development.

5.1.6 A marked inter-district disparities in the level of infrastructural facilities also exists in Assam. While some districts like Nagaon and Kamrup are considerably
veloped, some others like Karimganj, Morigaon, Dhemaji, Bongaigaon and Hailakhandi; g for behind. The lagging districts shall have to be provided with proportionately larger source by the state government in order to remove the disparities.

Inter-district disparities in individual fields like health, transport, banking and power so exists in the state. Since different districts require strengthening of different items of infrastructure in different degree the strategy of infrastructure development to be adopted ust take note of the special circumstances of each district. The district plans should pay greater attention to this aspect of infrastructure planning. Proportionately larger resources ave to be provided to the lagging districts by the state government to remove the efficiencies.

5.1.7 A convergent trend in inter-district disparities in the level of infrastructural facilities has become noticeable in the state though at a slower rate. It appears that all the districts of the state except Nagaon and Kamrup are poorly served by most of the indicator of infrastructure facilities. Unless immediate measures are undertaken by the government to reduce inter-district disparities in infrastructure facilities in respect of industrial as well as agricultural sector, overall economic disparity is bound to continue in the state.

Though a close association between indicators of infrastructure facilities and economic development has been found in Assam, the association, in many cases, is not statistically significant. Irrigation pumpsets in the case of agriculture and banking in the case of industry emerges as the most important factors hampering the level of economic development. Most of the facilities in the backward districts were created only in the recent past whose impact is yet to felt. The attitude of the government towards the development of infrastructure facilities appears to be indifferent so far as plan allocations and their utilization are concerned.

5.1.8 Better infrastructural facilities in large urban areas generally attracts people to migrate to the urban areas. The imbalance between rural-urban areas in respect of
Recommendations

5.2.1 The inadequacy and adhocism in respect of infrastructure development have to be placed by adopting a scientific and comprehensive policy. It would be appropriate to take a more comprehensive view of infrastructure which covers the economic, social as well as institutional infrastructure. Due emphasis should be given to social infrastructure for developing the human resources.

The quality of project formulation should be improved. Before allocations of large fund, every aspect of a project should be duly considered. Using modern technique, the manpower and other requirements of the project should be planned so that bottlenecks should not arise at the implementation stage.

5.2.2 An integrated approach has to be taken in planning infrastructure development so as to assure necessary linkages. To attract investment, a package approach has to be adopted so that various complementary services are made available simultaneously. Integration should not be only among various services, but also among different stages to ensure timely development of supporting facilities. So that created capacities are not left under-utilized.

5.2.3 The urban bias in infrastructure facilities should be checked in order to reduce the rural-urban disparity in the availability of infrastructure facilities. As the development of rural economy is vital for the overall economic development in the country, attention have to be given to fulfil the requirements of rural economy in planning the growth of infrastructure.

Infrastructure development plays a vital role in achieving the objective of balanced regional development. The lack of infrastructure is one of the cause of inter-state and inter-regional economic disparities. Adequate infrastructure have to be provided to initiate the process of economic development in the backward regions of the country.
5.2.4 In the initial stages of development, there may not be enough resources to meet the requirements of all the regions fully. Thus, a policy of concentrated decentralization have be adopted for the purpose. A certain minimum level of infrastructural facilities has to be made available in all parts of the country by implementing various governments programmes, especially Minimum Needs Programme.

In each successive plan, efforts have to be made to prepare a list of the areas which are lagging behind the level of minimum accepted norms with respect to different services. Since then, concentrated effort should be made to bring them up to the level of accepted norms. The priorities for developing infrastructure facilities should be devised keeping in mind the specific situation prevailing in different areas.

5.2.5 In order to develop backward regions and to reduce regional disparities in respect of infrastructural facilities, plan should be formulated on the basis of regional resources and problems. In the plan, the backward regions should be given priority in the process of implementation of development plan. At the same time, the comparatively developed regions should not be neglected with no development plan. Regional development corporations which have been create in some states like U.P. should also be created in all the states of the country.

5.2.6 Failure of governments Five Years Plans has been the most prominent factor for increasing regional disparities in the level of infrastructure facilities. The government has to take into account the measures such as, genuine regional planning, decentralization of projects, efficient utilization of local resource potentiality, etc. to increase the rate of economic growth to develop backward regions and to reduce the regional disparities.

5.3 Conclusion :

Infrastructure development has been an important dimension of the development plans of the country. Infrastructure constitute a powerful instrument for the realisation of the objective of balanced regional development. Planning for infrastructure development is
set with a number of problems, such as problems of choice between different alternatives.

Planners tend to show preference for economic infrastructure covering power, transport and irrigation for investment neglecting investment in social infrastructure which essentially mean investment in human capital. Investment in social infrastructure is also directly related to productivity and growth. Thus, investment in human capital is as important as investment in material of physical capital.

A proper balance between the need for expansion and creation of new facilities, proper management and efficient running of the existing infrastructure facilities have to be secured by the planners. As a result of neglect of maintenance, the large power houses running with extremely low capacities and hospitals without doctors and medicines, primary schools etc. without the necessary facilities. Hence, adequate attention of the planner is necessary in these aspects and sufficient investment have to be made for proper maintenance of existing facilities by the government. Due to the inefficient management of various public utilities in the country, there are huge losses exists in the State Electricity Boards, State Transport Corporation, Major Irrigation works, etc. Improvement in the efficiency of running of these services is of no less importance than the creation of new facilities.

There is excessive adhocism and rule of thumb in the allocation of funds to the infrastructure facilities. There is also lack of integration in planning the infrastructure development in the country. The location of infrastructure facilities has also not received proper attention which are often governed by political rather than economic and technical considerations. Political pressures play a dominant role rather than scientific approach to the creation of infrastructure facilities at the local level. As a result, marked inter-state and inter-district disparities in infrastructure facilities exists.

There is also a marked imbalance between urban and rural areas with regard to infrastructure facilities. There is generally an urban bias in the development of infrastructural
facilities because the problem of large urban centres attracts greater attention of the

government. As a result, the vast rural area is neglected in providing the minimum basic
ecessary services required for rural development. This abets the process of rural-urban
migration in a predominantly rural economy like India. Immediate attention should be paid
y the central as well as state government to remove the imbalance between rural and urban
areas not only from the point of view of the social needs of the rural people but also for the
apid economic development of the rural areas.

A number of efforts including adoption of a professional management approach, end of
political interference, proper personnel policies, adequate provision for the maintenance,
timely replacement of worn out equipments, strict realisation of dues, etc. are required to
improve the working of the public sector enterprises responsible for the provision of
different public utilities.

In formulating the plan for the infrastructure development in different regions of the
country, the specialization of regions should be kept in mind. The facilities should be
provided in a region in accordance with the needs of the economic base of that particular
region.

Though there is a qualitative expansion of infrastructural facilities in the country during
the past plan period, the development of infrastructural facilities reveals marked inter-state
and inter-district disparities. While some states like Maharasthra and Tamil Nadu attained
considerable progress, some others including Assam has bagged far behind. In Assam,
inter-district disparities in the level of infrastructure facilities reveals that some districts
like Nagaon and Kamrup are considerably developed compared to Karimganj, Morigaon,
Dhemaji, Bongaigaon and Hailakhandi. The government have to paid immediate attention
to remove the disparities in the level of infrastructural facilities in the state. Inspite of
non-availability, there are also non-existence of some infrastructure facilities in some dis-
tricts in the state. The planning authorities should consider the aspects while formulating
future plan for the development of infrastructure facilities in the state.
Lop-sided development of infrastructure facilities in the state results in inter-district disparities in the level of infrastructure facilities. Inspite of considerable quantitative expansion of infrastructure facilities in Assam, its spatial impact has been very discouraging as the benefits of infrastructure facilities have not percolated to the large part of the state. Bulk of the districts have remained backward in respect of various infrastructural facilities. Perspective plan for infrastructure development should aim at spatial distribution of infrastructure facilities so that various sectors in the backward areas can develop at a faster rate. As infrastructure is the core of development, supply of reliable and cheap infrastructure facilities is a must for the rapid development of any region and especially of backward regions. Hence, removal of regional disparities in the level of infrastructure facilities is necessary for the development of backward regions as well as the development of backward sector in the state.

Infrastructure facilities can be improved in the state by adopting a package of corrective measures as outlined in section 5.2 of the study. It is expected that infrastructure will become not only a more powerful tool for removing regional imbalances and promoting development and improving the quality of life of the people, but also much better returns will be secured for the heavy investment already made under the various plans.