Chapter - V

PLANNING IN THE DISTRICTS
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Planning is an inherent part of an individual and of co-operative or collective endeavour. It is "a rational process characteristic of all human behavior. Planning is a recognised intellectual procedure occurring both in individual life and in society. It implies programming of economic activities in space and time in a manner such that conflicts and inconsistencies between sectorial and spatial target are resolved within a comprehensive framework. While designing strategies for development, therefore, the focus has been on the one hand, on maximising the growth rate of different production sectors and, on the other hand, on achieving a regional balance. Planning is the use of collective intelligence and foresight to chart direction, order, harmony and progress in public activity relating to the human environment and general welfare. Planning is resorted to for a variety of purposes, economic growth, socio-economic development, self defence, social welfare, power politics, etc. Thus, planning in one form or the other can not be dispensed with by any society aspiring to raise the standards of living of its members.

The idea of planning has always been there in the mind of man right from primitive times till today. Stone Age man planned to produce various implements from different types of stones, planning has been for against something. In peace time, the aim of planning is constructive while during war, it becomes destructive.

Thus, planning is the co-ordinated efforts which are to be directed towards bridging the gap between present needs and future sufficiency. The choice of planning as a means to promote development was felt to be not only essential but also inevitable.\footnote{4}

The word “Planning” is commonly used in everyday life which refers to the organization of daily activities. Planning in present day in its universal connotation means “an orderly arrangement of the future”. In this sense, planning stands for the triumph of reason over superstition, of understanding over ignorance, of organised initiative over fatalistic helplessness.\footnote{5}

However, the term “Economic planning, refers to the conscious government effort to influence direct and in some cases even control changes in the principal economic variables (consumption, investment, savings, export ,import etc) of a certain country or region over the course of time in order to achieve a predetermined set of objectives. The essence of planning is summed up in these nations of government influence, direction and control.\footnote{6} In the words of Gadgil, “Planning for economic development implies external direction or regulation of economic development and regulation activity by the planning authority which is, in most cases, identified with the government of the State”.\footnote{7} Dinock defines planning as “the use of rational design as contrasted with chance, the reaching of a decision before a line of action is taken instead of improving after the action has started.”\footnote{8}

In the words of Millet, planning is the process of determining the objectives of

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\item \footnote{4} Chaya K. Degaonkar, District Planning in India (Jaipur: Pointer Publishers, 1907), p. 1
\item \footnote{5} Lubhashi P.R., Grammar of Planning (Delhi: Indian Institute of Public Administration, 1983), p. 1
\item \footnote{6} Todaro M.P., Economics for a Developing World (London: Longman, 1977), pp. 361-362
\item \footnote{7} Ghosh H., New Horizons in Planning (Calcutta: The World Press Pvt. Ltd., 1982), p. 1
\item \footnote{8} Dimmock M.E. and Dimmock G.O., Public Administration (New York: Rineheart and Co., 1936) p. 89
\end{itemize}
administrative effort and of devising the means calculated to achieve them”. According to Secler Hudson, “Planning is the process of devising a basis for a course of future action.”

Thus, in modern times, every modern man or an institution or organisation is expected to plan for the future. As a result of this, planning has become an inevitable and distinctive characteristic feature of any modern society or economy. In fact, to the extent which planning has become a part and parcel of organised social action, the society could be described as modern and progressive.

Planning in India

In India the significance of planning was recognised even before Independence. The important plans which were discussed in the politico-economic circles were the Bombay plan, the people’s plan and the Gandhian plan. The Congress party had taken initiative in appointing a high level committee to give a blue print for National Planning and even at the governmental level, the planning and development was created in India in 1944. But the World War II and the instability following it, did not provide for any systematic adoption of planning as an instrument of economic development. It was only after the attainment of Independence that serious thinking on the subject was resumed.

Planning is broadly divided into two types- medicative and compulsive planning. The best example of the former type is Japan or France and of the latter was the erstwhile Soviet Union. India opted for a middle path of both the types and steps are being taken

up towards the establishment of a socialistic and non-communistic society through planning by a democratic process.

The importance of planning as a means of achieving certain goals of economic development in India was first visualised by our great leader Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. The Planning Commission of the Government of India was set up on March 15, 1950 and the First Five Year Plan commenced on April 1, 1951.

Since the inception of the First Plan (1951-1956) till date there has already been ten Five Year Plans with the latest being the ongoing 10th plan (2002-2007). There also has been Annual Plans which are known as ‘Plan Holidays’. These Annual Plans were forced on the economy by the Indo-Pak Conflict in 1965 and the subsequent suspension of foreign aid, devaluation of the rupee and the two successive draughts in 1965-1966 and 1966-67. In actuality, it represented a period of instability and in-cohesion in the Indian politico-economic system and their impact on the Indian economy has been dysfunctional.

The precise formulation of the specific objectives varied from plan to plan. Yet essential objectives of planning in India have been mainly three-growth, self-reliance and social justice. Elimination of poverty has become one of the greatest challenges of India. So in every Five Year Plans targets are made to eliminate poverty from the land. The subsequent plans have stressed the reduction of inequalities of wealth and income. The main objective of planning in India is to raise the standard of living of the people and to open out to them new opportunities for a richer and more varied life.

Constitutional Status of Planning

The subject of socio-economic planning which encompassed the whole national economy, does not get central place in the Indian Constitution. The only mention regarding this Five Year Plans in the Constitution of India is by making “Economic and Social Planning” a concurrent legislative power (entry 20, list III). The two most eminent bodies engaged in providing direction to planning, viz., the Planning Commission and the National Development Council are extra-constitutional bodies. But by the 74th Amendment Act, 1992 the subject of planning for Economic and Social Development has been included (item 3) in the Twelfth Schedule of the Indian Constitution to be read with the newly inserted Article 243, relating to powers, authority and responsibility of Municipalities. Another insertion of Article 243 2D pertains to the creation of District Planning Committees.

Process of Planning

Planning is not a simple operation which can be done in one day in one step. It is a complicated chain of operations which connects one to the other, planning has to be done for various time periods, e.g. long term, medium term and short term. Aggregative national planning has to be followed and linked up with planning for various sectors primary, secondary and tertiary, public, cooperative and private. It has to be done at various levels - national, state, district and other local levels and finally the projects or enterprise level.\(^ {16}\) It has to be given a concrete shape by formulation of policies, programmes and projects. Its practical success should be ensured by proper machinery for plan implementation. Thus planning is a succession of steps through which the planner must go. These steps are: understanding of the objective to be achieved; evaluation of

the situation or setting; consideration of the possible courses of action and selection of the best course of action. Seckler Hudson suggests six steps in systematic planning, namely (a) a careful definition and limitation of the problem to the extent possible; (b) the exploration of all available information pertaining to the problem; (c) the posing of possible alternative solutions or methods of handling the problem; (d) the testing of one or more tentative solutions through actual operations; (e) the evaluation of results in the light of experience, continuous research and new developments; and (f) reconsideration of the problem and the results, and redcision if justified. 17

Broadly and briefly the planning process in India can be discussed as follows:

(1) Perspective targeting: The Planning Commission in the light of the basic national objective, lays down tentative and general goals for long term development, say for 15-50 years. These goals may or may not be implicated, but against their background only, are broad targets for a Five Year Plan formulated.

(2) Formulation of guidelines: The five year targets are given provisional guidelines by a number of Central Working Groups, created for each important sector. These groups comprise specialists, economists and administrators in the central ministries and the planning commission. They formulate targets for their respective sectors, keeping their needs and resources in view. The Planning Commission also seeks suggestions from the State and Union Territories Governments on the structure of their respective plans.

(3) Preparation of the approach plans: On the basis of the reports of the working groups and the details received from the State Governments and Union Territories,

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the Planning Commission prepares and Approach Aaper for the Five Year Plan. This Approach Paper is discuss and approved/modified by the National Development Council.

(4) **Publication of the draft plan:** On the basis of the approach paper, the Planning Commission prepares and publishes the draft Five Year Plan. This is done several months before the plan is to come into force. The draft plan outlines the set of objectives of the plan makes resource assessment and provides broad indications of the priorities and targets in various sectors. The draft is discussed in governmental as well as non-governmental circles at the central and the state levels.

(5) **Finalization of the plan:** On the basis of the reactions, responses and modifications, resulting from discussions with central ministries and state governments, the final version of the plan is formulated. The plan represents a synthesis of the technical, financial, administrative and even political imperatives of growth and development. The Five Year Plan is formally endorsed by the Union Cabinet and then presented to the Parliament, where it is generally approved following discussions.

(6) **The Phase of implementation:** The final plan is communicated to the concerned central ministries and state governments. The process of implementation starts with the release of sanctions by the Ministry of Finance, and the State Level, by the respective Departments of Finance.

(7) **The Exercise of Evaluation:** Periodical evaluation and appraisal of the plan is undertaken at the levels of the National Development Council, the Planning Commission, Central Ministries, State Government and the District Authorities. Certain readjustments may have to be made in the plan in the light of the evaluations.
Annual plans are formulated broadly on the above pattern. An Annual Plan is a component of the Five Year Plan. The work on the Annual Plan starts in September-October and detailed consultation of the Planning Commission with the Central Ministries and the State Governments take place in November-December. The draft plan is discussed and modified at various levels by February, the Annual Plan for the next year is expected to be ready. Then, it gets integrated with the Annual Budget of the Central/State Government. By April, the finalized plan is ready for implementation. And the process of monitoring and evaluation continues periodically.

The State Planning System

In a federal set-up like India close co-ordination between the Central and the State Governments in the sphere of development policy and administration is essential for a balanced and rapid socio-economic development. Since ‘Planning’ is incorporated in the concurrent list both Central Government as well as State Government are responsible for the planned development through systematic formulation, implementation and evaluation of plans.\(^{18}\)

The real importance of a state lies in its nature and composition of outlay and the importance of the heads of development on which the state plan is concentrated. The Central and State plan have a complementary relation to each other. A broad understanding of the nature and problems of planning at the state level may help us to identity the character and procedure of state planning in contrast to planning at the national level. This will give us a perspective to understand and review the existing planning organisation at the state level.

\(^{18}\) Ramesh K. Arora and Rajni K. Goyal, \textit{Indian Administration} (Delhi: Vishwa Prakashan, 1997), p.435
The scope of state plan is limited as against the national one since the central plan outlay undertaken within the geographical limits of a state does not form a part of the state plan. The scope of the national planning agency i.e. the Planning Commission, is the entire economy and all sectors including the public (central and state), private and co-operative sectors, whereas the state plans are largely confined to the development outlays of the state government sector. Therefore, it is clear that the state's responsibility for planning is confined to fewer areas of economic and social activity, pertaining only to a few sectors. But a distinctive feature of state planning is that at this level it is observed that some kind of direct involvement and participation of local people in the formulation and implementation of plans and programmes at all three levels namely-state, district and block are found.

Thus, all the states of India have a planning department. The planning department of a state is headed by the Chief Minister or a senior Cabinet Minister. Even if the Chief Minister is not a chairman of the planning department major issues of planning reach him, through him it goes to the cabinet for final approval. At the administrative level, the Chief Secretary is the head of the planning department.

The state planning finalises all plan proposals in each state have numerous duties including annual as well as five year plan formulations, review of the economy, responsibility for day to day affairs related to planning, guidance of the Technical Departments in plan formulation, allocation of outlay/investment/expenditure/collection/consolidation and scrutinizing of plan proposals/plan co-ordination/holding of discussion/meetings with technical departments/presentation of the plans to the state cabinet and legislature/maintenance of liason with the Planning Commission/sanctioning of schemes and preparation of plan programmes.

The State Planning Department under the overall supervision of the Development Commissioner is the apex co-ordinating department in respect to all sorts of development activities. All planning cell/units in different departments, concerned with development function on the basis of policy guidelines issued by the State Planning Department.

The Development Commissioner runs the State Planning Department with the help of the Joint Secretary, the Deputy Secretary and the Under Secretary. The Research Cell in the State Planning Department consists of a Special Officer and number of Research Officers, Assistant Research Officer, and Research Assistant.

**State planning board.** Since long it has been felt that just as there is the agency of Planning Commission at the central level, there also should be their counterparts in the states. The Planning Commission has the Prime Minister as the leader along with a few Union Ministers to guide as well as also national level functional experts in its functioning whereas at the state level, the planning departments which are responsible for the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of five year and annual plans do not appear to have been adequately effective. It is felt that a regular bureaucratic organisation, without the continuing assistance of eminent subject experts, is not in a position to introduce an element of specialized competence in the state planning process. It is for this reason that there has been a demand, emanating from various quarters, for the creation of specialised and competent planning organisations which would complement the existing governmental machinery at the state.

Much before the ARC (Administrative Reforms Commission) gave its report on the machinery of planning (1967), recommendations were made by different state level administrative reforms committees for the setting up of a board or commission like institution at the state level with a view to make the state planning system increasingly
meticulous. The Planning Commission of the Government of India has emphasized the need for creating such a machinery at the state level. The commission has always favoured strengthening of the state planning machinery in order to make the planning process integrated, realistic and effective.  

Initially, the commission has suggested that the State planning departments be strengthened but later on it subscribed to the view that a separate State planning board ought to be created to play a complementary role to the State planning department. In March 1962, the Planning Commission had recommended the setting up of a State planning board in every state.

The Commission envisaged that such a board would be in a position to effect proper co-ordination among the various governmental departments and take decisions concerning the plan outlays presented by the various departments in accordance with the long term objectives of the state’s socio-economic development. It was hoped that such a board would be able to enhance the standard of state level planning by developing simple and more rational methods of formulations of annual plans, and all other proposals submitted to the Central Government, for seeking financial assistance. Besides, such a board was expected to formulate perspective plans and maintain continuing linkages between the state government and the planning commission. It was hoped that the states, with the help of the planning boards, would be in a better position not only for mobilising resources and appraising the plans on a more scientific lines but they would be enhancing their capabilities for bargaining with the planning commission for higher outlays and increased central assistance.

23. D.O. of Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission to the State Chief Ministers, D/O, No. 4(G)/62 Plan dated March 20, 1962, p.32
The history of State Planning Boards in most of the state has been chequered. As for example, in the state of Andhra Pradesh, the State Planning Board was set up in 1974. It met a couple of times and then become defunct. In 1983, it was revived in the form of State Development Board, with organic linkage with the District Planning Boards that were set up in 1984.

**Composition.** The composition of the State Planning Board are manned by two categories of people who do the entire exercises of planning viz; (i) the public men mainly the politicians and (ii) the bureaucrats. The non-official members, are entirely those who are political practitioners, some are elected members of the Legislative Assembly or District Council, while others come from amongst the unsuccessful candidates, or social workers are virtually nil except a few included in the panel of experts. In some meetings where an item of special importance is to be discussed subject experts are specially invited for that meeting. The dominance of the politicians in the deliberation leading to policy recommendations persist without any hindrance. The other category, viz, the bureaucrats dominate the planning mechanism in a quite, calculating way having command over the files, statistic and concerned financial rules, regulations etc. All the departments collect data relating to them and according to the guidelines issued by the Planning Commission and the Government of India, they prepare their departmental plans which are sent up to the State Planning Board (SPB) for its approval and recommendations.

**Functions of the planning department.** Throughout India, the functions of the Planning Department in each state were executive in character. Its numerous duties included Annual and Five Year Plan formulations, reviews of the economy, responsibility

27. Ibid, pp.70-72
for the day to-day affairs related to planning, guidance of the Technical Departments in Plan formulations, allocation, consolidation and scrutinizing of the plan proposals, plan co-ordination, holding of discussion, sanctioning of schemes, preparation of progress reports and evaluation and monitoring of plan programme.  

**Manipur State Planning Department**

Let us examine the existing planning organisation in the State of Manipur. In Manipur the Planning Department came into existence in the early part of the Fifth Five Year Plan. Prior to that in 1970’s it functioned as a cell in the State Secretariat under the overall incharge of a Development Commissioner as Head of Department, one Assistant Director, three Assistant Research Officers and other sub-ordinate staffs in the state headquarters. It was only after the fourth plan it started functioning under a full-fledged Director with more subject experts and specialists in different fields. The District Planning in the districts also started operating in the early part of 1979. In the districts, District Planning Officer is generally an IAS Officer or a senior MCS officer. He is assisted by one Assistant Research Officer and few other sub-ordinate staffs.

Today, the State Planning Department is headed by a Director and assisted by three Joint Directors and one Deputy Director. It also has three Research Officers, three Assistant Research Officers and other sub-ordinate Staffs in the state head quarter. The department has become an apex body responsible for formulation of long term and short term development policies of the state. The Planning Departments also formulates Five Year Plans and Annual Plans for the State, determines the intra-sectoral priorities etc.

30. Ibid.
It directly engages in overseeing, monitoring and reviewing progress of plan schemes implemented by different departments. The Planning Department also co-ordinates the activities of various departments in the state in the formulation of state/NEC plans. It also acts as a nodal department between different departments in plan matters. The Planning Department of Manipur also acts as a nodal department for the implementation of Border Area Development Programmes (BADP), schemes funded from Non-lapsable Central Pool of Resources. Thus the State Planning Department under the overall supervision of the Commissioner (Planning) is the apex body co-ordinating department in respect to all sorts of development activities. All planning units have different departments, concerned with development function on the basis of policy guidelines issued by the State Planning Department. There exists a regular plan cycle which revolves around the formulation of the annual and the Five Year Plans and their constant evaluation and monitoring. In some states, Planning Department and Development Co-ordination Committees are found existing. These committees under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary are instruments of collective decision making in matters pertaining to inter-departmental developmental projects. They include senior secretaries and directors, relating to the concerned subject areas and senior officers of the concerned autonomous organizations. The number of these committees varies from time to time. There are state planning agencies and developmental co-ordination committees on subjects like agricultural production, animal husbandry, IRDP, industries and mines, medical and health, tourism and transport, irrigation and power, tribal area development etc. As per conventions, the decisions taken in these committees are considered as decisions of the State Government. In appropriate cases, however, a matter may have to be referred to the concerned ministers or the Chief Minister and the state cabinet.

32. Ramesh K. Arora and Rajni Goyal, Indian Public Administration (Delhi: Vishwa Prakashan 1996), p.435
As the planning department of a state continues to be the key unit for the formulation and evaluation of State Annual and Five Year Plans, there has been stress on increasing its effectiveness. In 1972, the Planning Commission recommended to the states that their planning departments should be made more competent by setting up in them units which do not exist in their own respective states like perspective planning, monitoring, plan formulation and evaluation unit, project approval, regional district planning, plan co-ordination unit, manpower and employment unit etc. Since the central financial assistance was available for the purpose of state planning departments, most states have availed themselves of this facility. But there is no uniformity in the structural configuration of the planning departments at the cross-state level though there exist a kind of functional uniformity.

The Manipur state planning board. It may be pertinent to make a brief reference to the State Planning Board in Manipur. At the state level the SPB preforms the responsibility of an advisory body. It is composed of both official and non official members and is headed by a non official member. The non-official members are mainly drawn from amongst the people’s representatives and subject experts. Among the official members of the State Planning Board are the Chief Secretary, the Additional Chief Secretary, the Development Commissioner and a Special Secretary from the Industries Department. The Chief Minister is the Chairman of the Planning Board and an elected member of the State Legislative Assembly is the Deputy Chairman. The Commissioner (Planning) is the member Secretary of the Board. Among the official members of the State Planning Board are the Chief Secretary, the Development Commissioner and Special Secretary. The Joint Secretary, Planning Department is the Secretary to the SPB. At present there are eleven non-officials and five official members.
SPB is an apex body of formulation of policies and directions in respect of
development programmes with the planning department, functioning as its secretariat.
In Manipur, beside Planning Board at the state level, a Hill Planning Advisory Board
was established for the hill areas.

**North-Eastern Council**

At the state level, eventhough all the states have their own planning board, planning
is found to be highly bureaucratized, views of the experts and local bodies are hardly
consulted. There is no research done to make plan strategy at the grass root level. In
actual practice, state plans are first prepared at the respective departmental level and
then integrated at the secretariat level, keeping in view the known wishes of the Centre
and proposals of the Planning Commission with little weights to spatial issues.
Except for a debate at the state legislature, there is no public discussion on general or
specific plan objectives. Against this compartmentalized, lopsided and disintegrated
approach, the North-Eastern Council has emerged with the prospect of becoming a
meaningful regional planning authority, to guide and help state planning body by inward
transmission of the local planning strategy to the centre so that the planning strategy to
the centre so that the planning as a whole becomes an integrated and perfectly dovetailed
structure. The NEC was established by an Act of the Parliament in 1971 with the aim of
bringing about an integrated development of the North Eastern States. The NEC, although
initially conceived as an advisory body, also draws up plans and funds them. The
Governors and Chief Ministers of the seven north eastern states are members of the
council. It has its Secretariat at Shillong.

The NEC from time to time reviews the implementation of the regional projects
and recommends measures for effecting co-ordination among the Government of the
states concerned in matters of utilization of outlay to reach the target and finally, a purely
non-political body with no right of eminent domain to review the maintenance of security and public order of the constituent governments and help them in this regard. The transfer of resources from the centre to the north-eastern states, including Manipur, taking place through the North-Eastern Council.

**Micro Level Planning**

The world has already in their possession a considerable amount of experience of economic planning. Most of this experience, however, relates to centralized macro level planning. Micro level planning has not gained ground and have not enjoyed much of the attention it deserves. But there is an increasing realization of the need for decentralizing the process of planning. Some significant steps in this direction have already been taken in recent years by the governments of several developing economics, as can be seen from a publication of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations which describes the experiences of several countries in Asia and the Pacific.  

India is among the first few countries which realizes the importance of micro level planning. Its need is felt in India and efforts are made to decentralize the planning process. The history of attempts made to introduced planning at the sub-state level is quite old. Decentralization of planning process was a thinking and concept which exist since the inception of planning in India. It could not get materialized due to various political and administrative constraints. The idea of planning from below was advocated even at the time of the formulation of the First Five Year Plan, which had noted the idea of a village production council for agricultural planning. The Second Five Year Plan (1956-61)  

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35. Planning Commission, "Second Five Year Plan" (Delhi:Government of India,Manager of Publications,1956), p.64
did recognised the need for spatial diversification of economic activity but the action in this direction did not go beyond scarcity relief works. There was neither a special programme nor a strategy. The Third Five Year Plan (1961-66) went a step further. Following the reports of Balwant Rai Mehta Study Team, the Third Plan emphasized the role of people's participation at local level i.e., planning under the frame work of democratic decentralization of the Panchayati Raj.

The Third Plan have undertaken various schemes like state road programme, rural road programme, inter-state transport scheme, central sector schemes like hill area development programme, tribal sub-plan, backward area development programme, etc. The concept of micro-level planning was first enunciated in the Fourth Five Year Plan (1961-1966) documents though merely in articulation. The plan incorporated an elaborate statement of the importance of reducing regional disparities through more attention to the development of smaller areas. It was eloquent declaration of intentions. There was no specific plan. It was left to the state governments to initiate programmes for the smaller areas. In this connection the Planning Commission issued guidelines to the states in 1969 to formulate district plans in order to fulfill the broad objectives of micro-level planning. This is the first major document giving a comprehensive outline of the methodology of district planning. Thus, it can be said that district planning had a chequered history.

During the regime of the Janata Government in 1977, the decentralized planning was revived though in a slow pace. Further, the Janata Government tried to decentralise

36. Planning Commission, "Third Five Year Plan" (Delhi: Government of India, Manager of Publications, 1961), p.43
the planning process to the level of block, which is a sub-unit of the district. The Planning Commission during the Janata regime, started formulating guidelines for the block level Planning. In November, 1977, it appointed a working group on block level planning under the chairmanship of M.L. Dantwala. The Janata Government had also appointed a committee on Panchayati Raj Institutions under the chairmanship of Ashok Mehta which submitted its report in August 1978. The Sixth and Seventh Plan also emphasized on decentralization of Planning and to strengthen the planning machinery at the districts. Another significant development that has taken place in recent years relates to the formulation of district and block credit plans by the commercial banks which have been increasingly involved in development functions after nationalisation in 1969.

**Need of district planning.** Planning in India has been functional as the function based ministries or sectorial as that of the departments the overall result was that there was a uniform approach to the formulation and implementation of development scheme. This kind of approach leads to inter-state disparities in the levels of development and the needs and priorities. Even through this approach has its own advantages of feasibility and co-ordination, it has its own share of disadvantage of wastage of resource and uneven outputs from the massive resource inputs. It is here that the need arises for the regional or area planning so as to complement the federal planning by fulfilling the specific needs of the regions or areas and by assessing and augmenting the local resources in a rational manner. Rakesh Hooja feels that while planning for a region i.e. a district “the integration effort should also keep in mind the social background of the particular area and the various diversities (custom-wise, skill wise, income wise and the like) of the various groups which form the population of the area.” In the district level planning, we can observe some unique feature of the involvement and sense of participation of the

40. Ibid.
local people. In this regard, V.K.R. V Rao stated at a welcome speech at a District planning Officer Conference in April 1973. The whole raison d'être of district planning rests not only on technical grounds but also on the involvement and participation of the people of the district, what is meant by grassroot planning is that it is not only technically but also operationally more efficient because of psychology it creates of a movement for development and social and economic change because of popular participation. The evaluation of the First Five Years Plan feared that people were found to be only passive onlookers and spectators assuming development programmes as “Governmental concerns”.

The idea of the district planning was already under consideration by the time of 2nd Five Year Plan. But despite many trials through various programme, it never got materialised. During the Third and Fourth Five Year Plans, the plan purposes for the district level planning was that various state level heads of departments could, under the supervision of the State Planning Development Board and in conformity with the Approach Paper to the National Plan, draw up a list of the funds available for a district under various departmental heads as well as a list of the schemes and projects proposed for, or situated in each district by the various departments. The Draft Approach Documents of the eighth plan emphasised the two objectives of decentralization and people’s participation in the process. It should be clearly understood that the only way to ensure better and more effective planning is to decentralize the planning process and the district has been correctly chosen as the proper unit for the purpose.

Thus, District Planning, a form of decentralized planning is very essential to strengthen the structure and spirit of democracy in a country like India as it is more

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42. Ibid.
likely to enhance the sense of responsibility, dignity and responsiveness among all those who are involved in the formulation and implementation of such planning.

The working group on district planning of the Planning Commission had remarked that decentralization (through district planning) enables a better perception of the needs of the local areas, makes better informed decision making possible gives people a better voice in decision concerning their development and welfare, serves to achieve better co-ordination and integration among programmes, enable to feel the needs of the people to be taken into account, ensures effective participation of the people, serves to build up a measure of self-reliance by mobilizing resources of the community in kind or money, making development of local resources and growth potential of local area for improved productivity and increasing production feasible. The Singvi Committee’s concept paper on Revitalisation of Panchayati Raj (1986) advocated district planning for constructive rural development and its link with the nation-building process. Thus district level planning has been emphasised in the multilevel planning of India since participation of the people in the overall process of socio-economic planning and programming calls for it.

The First Three Five Year Plans were successful and brought tremendous progress to the country by fulfilling its objectives viz. of growth and self-reliance. But she has failed miserably as far as the objective of social justice is concerned. There is no gain-saying the fact that these whole years of economic planning in India failed to ensure minimum social justice like removal of poverty and provision of minimum amenities of life to the sizeable sections of the country’s population. Thus, it is evident that at the macro level, the country can make great achievements, yet on the micro level or to the levels further down, much was left to be done.

44. Ramesh K. Arora and Rajni Goyal, Indian Public Administration (Delhi: Vishwa Prakashan 1996), p.299
Every local unit has its own peculiar wants, endowments, potentialities which is distinct from others. Planning is a dynamic process and for proper planning it is necessary to have total command on the grass-root level information on various aspects like mineral and manpower resources, ethnic variation, techniques of production, distribution network etc., of the region.46

The local people knows best about their respective areas. And if large scale people's participation is to be ensured for achieving balanced economic growth, it is necessary to draft and implement the plan from below. In a large country like India with pronounce regional differences in many matters, the contents of economic development as defined for the national economy as a whole require certain significant modification in the context of the constituent regions. A national interest and aspiration is bound to generate regional dis-satisfaction and social unrest ultimately, seriously jeopardizing the success of the national plan itself.47 Each state plan should be divided into different district, sub-division, block and panchayat level units and each unit should be allowed to fix their target in order to achieve the desired goal. Moreover, India is a large country, with an area of over three million square kilometers, with a big population. The natural environment is typified by extreme differences in climate, topography, vegetation and so on. The resource endowment is very uneven over geographical space. Socially, the country is highly differentiated in terms of languages as well as institutions due to historical reasons.48 The levels of economic and social development vary enormously among different areas. In such a situation it is axiomatic that uni-level centralized planning would be relatively inefficient to comprehend and deal with such a diversity of factors.49

48. Y. Venugopal, Multi-Level Planning in India (Delhi: Vikash Publishing House, 1979) p.11
49. Ibid.
So the plan process can be restructured to enable those who ‘know’ to take decision. This is possible by introducing additional tiers of planning. A decentralized planning enables local participation and better mobilization of local resources. Moreover, it is expected to help reduce regional tensions.

The later years of 1960s were highly significant from the point of view of state level planning. It was then that Prof. D.R. Gadgil, the doyen among economists and the architect of decentralized planning, underlined the futility and difficulty of state level planning under the prevalent conditions and the necessity for decentralized planning by delegating greater responsibility to the states and districts. Gadgil when he was the Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission, described the distribution of responsibility between the Centre and the States as in the following words, “The centre builds up and maintains the overall instrumentalities of national economic life....” The states are concerned on the other hand, with acting the total life of all the people in their charge and on all the diffused dispersed small scale units and activities. The centre’s is concerned with the most generalized features of the national frame and with highly concentrated action a few strategic points; the states must affect all areas and localities, all the relevant fields and all units.50

Thus, it was quite a well known fact that the idea of decentralized district planning has for a long time been regarded as an idealistic approach to planning in India. In the Fifth Plan, it appears that most of the states gave priority to planning at the district level in the Fifth Five Year Plan, an attempt was made to draw up developmental plans for districts and blocks as well as production plans for villages. During this plan, the Planning Commission accepted the principle of multilevel planning by constituting State Planning Board and District Planning Cells to plan from below.

Since planning in India is still from the macro to the micro level, district planning will have to be linked up with overall planning. District planning in the states are therefore, conducted within the framework of overall sectoral planning, for an overall co-ordinated development of the whole country, the local plans should be incorporated in the national plan. In other words there should be a fusion or balance between national priorities and budgetary allocations.

**District as a unit for micro-level planning.** With a view to correcting the regional imbalances, the Planning Commission has suggested that the districts should be accepted as units for micro-level planning. District offers many facilities for formulation of a plan and its implementation because of having an established administrative framework and definite geographical boundaries. It is at the district level that a co-ordination between the macro and micro level planning can be achieved by people’s participation in the process of economic development and translating the national priorities and goals into action. The peoples involvement in the planning process is also achieved through the district councils, already existing in most of the states. For achieving a balanced urban-rural relationship, the district is the most suitable unit for micro-level planning.

In democratic planning there is always a tendency for regions to link their political and economic aspirations and to advocate for determining the priorities and policies for their development. With increasing political awareness, the people of the regions have come to realise that government policies stimulating or restricting investment in a particular area play an important role in the development of a micro-region. The efforts to bring about the democratic decentralizations have aroused aspirations and expectation among the people. In the process, the people of different areas have become very much conscious of their rights to attain a level of socio-economic welfare not lower than any other region.
Thus, for long had been stressing on the State Governments for establishing proper planning machinery at district level. In September, 1969, Planning Commission had issued guidelines to states for formulation of district plans. But the work of formulation of district plan could not get momentum as most of the states expressed their inability on account of non existence of suitable planning machinery at district level for undertaking this work. It was also intimated that due to poverty of funds, the states are unable to set up suitable staff at district level. The Planning Commission examined the position and came forward with scheme or strengthening of planning machinery at district level. This was communicated to all chief secretaries by the commission. The pattern of sharing of expenditure between centre and states was proposed 50:50. The centre’s purpose of the scheme was to provide assistance for establishing a planning cell at the district level. The proposed district planning team was composed of a chief planning officer, an economist and five other specialists, together with their supporting staff, consisting of two research assistants one of whom was statistician, three steno-typists and five orderlies.

**Existing Setup.** District Planning Committee - District Collector was designated as Chairman and its members were District Development Officer. All MLA’s of district, district level officers concerned with minimum needs programme sectors, Zilla Pramukh and Zilla Parishad.

**Proposed setup.** (1) District Planning Council with Minister in charge of the district as its Chairman. (2) District Planning and Executive Committee.

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Present setup at District Level in Manipur

The district planning concept, as visualised by the politicians, are a system in which all the planning activities earmarked for the district to develop on a single planning body at district level. But as organised today, it is difficult for the district to implement this idea as there is an element of fundamental dysfunctionality between requirement of district planning and the existing structure of the administration. If this is to be corrected, it would require a very bold attempt leading to administrative reorganisation from the state level downwards, which may not be easy to bring about, at least in the short run. One way of eliminating the dysfunctionality is to increase the autonomy for planning given to the district planning bodies gradually, so that over a period of time they would be able to graduate to the planning levels. When this change has been affected, a large part of public resources would be mobilised and controlled by district itself. It would also imply that the district would have largest say in the utilization of resources allocated to it by the state. In such a concept of district planning, the district setup will have its own decision making authority and control over the whole range of development functions assigned to the district level. Admittedly this is an ideal stage and would be difficult to reach all of a sudden in the context of the existing situation in the state. The state has recognised this difficulty and has, therefore, adopted a practical but progressively gradual approach.

In the way district administration has grown in the state and in the context of various poverty alleviation programmes that are being undertaken for achieving redistribution with growth, considerable functional fragmentation has occurred at district level. This was particularly in the Fifth Five Year Plan period (1974-1979). And only from the Fifth Five Year Plan, all the policies and programmes of Five Year Plan were enjoyed by the State of Manipur as earlier to this period Manipur was not a full-fledged
State but a Union Territory. And only from the Fifth Five Year Plan all the poverty alleviation programmes were particularly accentuated, due to the proliferation of large compliments of planning activities, with their own organisational structure, limited to specific problems or sectors of activity e.g. Command Area Development, DPAP, DDP, Tribal Area Development Programme etc. Separate guidelines for these area programmes exist and each programme carries with it its own rigidities, staffing pattern, and pattern of financial allocations and implementation. In this context, the task of district planning is to co-ordinate these diverse efforts into a consistent framework. As these individual area programmes are already entrenched in the district area and therefore at this state. It is difficult to hand over their individual function to a common district planning body. The best that can be done under the present circumstances and in the short run, is to nest their planning activities into the overall district planning framework ensuring necessary linkages and infrastructural support needed for these programmes. Admittedly, this kind of ex post facto integration of small area plans into the overall district plans is a difficult and strictly speaking not a very satisfactory solution. However, in the existing circumstances this is the only practical way of making a beginning towards integrated district planning. In due course, the planning undertaken for such small areas in a fragmented fashion must disappear and all planning activities at the district level must be untied. It is only in this context that effective establishment of appropriate inter-sectoral complementaries could be ensured. However this is a process of development which can come about in the long run.

**Constitution of district planning cells.** In view of long felt need and continuous stress by the Planning Commission, district planning cells were setup in the state.\(^5^2\) It is headed by chief planning office. It is manned by IAS/Senior MCS/Selectiongrade MCS research officers, research assistants and ministerial staff.

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This district planning cell was introduced at the time of the introduction of Mini Secretariat in districts in the state of Manipur in 1978-79.\textsuperscript{53}

This district planning board was constituted to look into the matter of planning at the district level. It consists of both official and non-official members. The chief executive member of the district council or his representative and the Deputy Commissioner are the ex-officio members of the board and the district planning officer acts as the member secretary to the district planning board while his office provides the necessary secretariat assistance to the board.

The district planning office act as the secretariat of the board along with a group of staff members. The staff works under the supervision of the collector and consists of the technical and ministerial staff.

At district level, the district planning and development council (DPDC) is in existence with a designated minister of the district as chairman. One state minister from the district as vice-chairman and district planning officer as member secretary an overall view of the staff sanctioned in the district planing cells can be seen from the organisational chart of district planning cell as follows:

\begin{center}
\textbf{Organisational chart of the District Planning Cell :}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c c c c c}
\hline
& District Planning Officer & & & \\
\hline
& Technical Staff & Ministerial Staff & & \\
1 Research & 2 Computer & 3 Research & 1 UDC & 2 LDC \\
Investigator & operator & Assistants & & 1 Steno \\
& & & & 2 Peon grapher \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{53} Administration Report, 1978-79 (Government of Manipur, 1978), p.34
**Functions and duties of district planning cells.** With the establishment of district planning cells, prime job entrusted to the cells by planning department of the state government was preparation of resource paper of the district. For this purpose guidelines were sent to district collector.\textsuperscript{54} Since chief planning officers were appointed from different disciplines, efforts were made to have uniformity in preparation of resource paper of the district. In this connection affairs from planning department and officers of directorate of economics and statistics were associated for guiding the district planning officers in the preparation of such papers. Resource papers for all the districts are ready in the same year.

For preparation of resource paper association of all the district level officers was taken. Since the work was being undertaken under the overall control and supervision of district collector, all the district level officers took active interest. The supporting staff of district planning cell collected the information and the publication became ready.

District planning cells have been entrusted for preparation of district annual plans containing availability of total budget provisions for the district, under all the sectoral development schemes of ongoing schemes. Since the state government has not taken any decision for devaluing district plans with the state plan, the district planning cells have remained largely of academic importance only.

Decentralised planning in Manipur is dealt with under two heads (i) in Valley (ii) in districts-Revenue administration as well as other developmental function including law and order. One block development officer (BDO) is posted as separate officer in the valley. One S.D.O is also posted in the same area. Under the B.D.O. development agencies exists viz. extension agriculture officer (A.O), fisheries officer, veterinary officer.

\textsuperscript{54} Government of Manipur, Planning Department Order No. F3(2) Plan/DP/81 Dated April 3, 1981.
etc. these various officers work hand in hand with the panchayats or zilla parishad to work towards development (or to realise the various developmental schemes of the districts). e.g. Rearing of eel or earth worm etc. For such a scheme or project the VLW (Village Level workers) go from door to door in the villages or the locality where the scheme is to be taken up and make the people aware of the particular scheme or else this mass wareness is reached to the people through the pradhan of the panchayat.

For decentralised planning in Manipur, at the district level, the DC is the chairman of the planning cell. Under him there are two wings (i) DRDA (different schemes under taken for development wing) (ii) District Planning Development Council though Government of India have given notification to all.

Though Government of India have given notification to all the state to introduced Mini - Secretariat at the district level. In our state, all the districts still called them as district planning. Mini Secretariat as per the instruction of the central government. But in reality the mini secretariat exist only for name’s sake. To be a mini secretariat there should be financial power involved. A Joint Secretary should be there for this purpose. But in Manipur, no post of joint secretary is created. Perhaps this may be due to the inevitable conflict that may arise between the joint secretary and the D.C. Because at the district level, Joint secretary and D.C. works at the same ranking. As the D.C. is overburdened with various tasks like law and order, revenue etc, he hardly finds time to tend to the various developmental task which is very essential for a backward state like Manipur. As a result, In 1979-80, in accordance with the Hanunantha Rao Report, Government of India, recommended for creation of the post of one development officer in each district.
The district planning and Development Council (or District Planning Board) was created in 1979-80. And its first chair man was Helkhomang Haokip. Under District Planning and Development council, there is the executive planning committee (EPC) which consists of district level officers. All the schemes and plans for various developmental prospects are tested by these scientific officers (in the field of Agriculture, veterinary, fishery etc) and submit their report to the EPC e.g., if crop plantation of orange is found suitable in Tamenglong District, but not in other districts, they submit the report to EPC and hereafter plans are made to introduce developmental planning in that prospect in accordance with the reports. These scientific officers are members of EPC.

The structure of planning is as follows:

State Planning Board

District Planning Council

Executive Planning Council

- a) For hills, all the plans are implemented by district councils.
- b) For valley districts, Panchayat and Block Level is the implementing unit.

In hills, many officers who are subject experts concerning irrigation, forestry etc. were posted. But in hills, it is found not to be functioning efficiently and effectively.

**District rural development agency in Manipur.** In 1970-71 Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Government of India introduced two schemes of ‘Small Farmers Development Agency’ (SFDA) and ‘Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labours Development’ (MFAL) as a pilot experiment in 87 project areas throughout the country. The schemes were introduced on the recommendations of
National Commission of Agriculture in order to increase the productivity of agriculture
produce and economic upliftment of down trodden. In 5th Five Year Plan (1974-80),
many scheme for benefit of poor persons were introduced for direct implementation. In
order to have a uniform pattern, District Rural Development Agencies were set up in all
the districts.

All the developmental schemes for rural areas is implemented through District
Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs) at the district level. They are normally headed
by the Collector. The composition of a DRDA are chairman, members and
member-secretary. The Chairman is the collector and the members are all MPs and MLAs
of the District, Chairman of Regional Rural Bank, Lead Bank Officer, General Manager,
DIC etc. and also the member secretary are Project Officer or Director. The Chairman of
the DRDA is empowered to form an Executive Committee. The Governing Body of the
DRDA should meet once a quarter and the executive committee once a month.

The DRDA should take the full responsibility of the planning, implementation,
monitoring and evaluation of the programmes in the district. The main function of the
DRDA can be studied as under:

(a) To inform the basic parameters of the programme to the district and block
level agencies.
(b) Preparation of the District Plan.
(c) To evaluate and monitor the scheme to ensure its effectiveness.
(d) Maintenance of inter-sectoral and interdepartmental co-ordination and
co-operation.
(e) Sending of periodical returns to the state Government in the prescribed
formats.
**Block level.** The Block is the basic unit for preparation of perspective and annual action plans, implementation of the programme as per the approved plan and provide feedback on the impact of the programme. The Block Development Office (BDO) is required to perform the role of the chief co-ordinator in the block and also see that plans are prepared in time and implemented effectively. The BDO should be assisted by Extension Officers whose number should be determined by the need of the area. Usually there should be an Extension Officer each for every core discipline. The discipline should include Women's Programmes. One post of a joint BDO per block may be create for the blocks having a population of more than one lakh, ten village levels workers and seven extension officers in position.

Active participation of the local people in the implementation of the scheme starts with the association of the entire village community with the procedure of identification of the beneficiaries. The voluntary organisations should be involved in implementation of the scheme.

Beneficiaries Advisory Committees at the block level may be constituted to provide a regular forum to the beneficiaries to actively participate in the implementation of the scheme. The main functions of such Committee can be explain as under:

(a) To discuss the programme procedures of the scheme on the basis of the experience of the beneficiaries.

(b) To identify the gaps in backward and forward linkages and give suggestions for filling up these gaps with particular reference to the contribution of the beneficiaries in helping to fill up these gaps.

(c) Identity the responsibility and contribution of the beneficiaries in creating their own bargaining power in the market.
(d) To undertake steps for developing the awareness of beneficiaries.

BDO should provide the secretarial assistance to the committee. The tenures of the committee and its office bearer should be one year. The new committee should be constituted every year following the prescribed procedure of election etc.

Formulation of district plans

The district plans in Manipur was prepared by the District Planning Cell, with the overall guidance of the District Collector. Other participants of this work are Chief Planning Officer, Planning Officer, DRDA of the districts, statistical assistants, computer operators, LDCs and UDCs. In the formulation of the plans, all the panchayats and autonomous district councils are included. They collected the datas and descriptions of available natural and human resources, socio-economic infrastructure and on-going schemes. Based on these, they formulated the plans for their respective districts and submit the reports to the district collector.

Implementation and evaluation of planning at district level

Most of the departments of the state government are engaged in developmental activities. These departments have their district level set up which engage in implementation of activities assigned to them. All departmental district authorities are well known about assignment and each year they are allotted budget for execution of activities with specific works and activities 55. District Planning Cell assembles all the activities and schemes for the year into a publication with department-wise outlays under state plan and centrally sponsored schemes and physical activities to be done with the allotment.

The work of district planning so far being done by the different agencies at district level would have to be recognised in view of the 73rd Constitutional amendment.  

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992, empower the panchayat institutions with various powers pertaining to preparation of plans for economic development and social justice and the implementation of various schemes entrusted to them. The subjects connected with such programmes are listed in XI Schedule (Article 243 G).

The late Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi, once disclosed that out of the money which is allocated for various developmental programmes, the real beneficiaries get only fifteen paise out of one rupee. This statement perhaps is not completely untrue. The present planning implementation is not being done in true spirit. For each plan investment, there is an expected result for which purpose funds are allocated. But in practice desired expected result are hardly obtained. It is a well known fact that unwanted law and order situations etc. hinders the plan implementing process but there also exists man-made problems which are upto a great extent responsible for implementation of plans. There are also sometimes arose some forces which is totally a creation of some few vested interests. For instance, the renovation schemes of the Ima Market and the State Capital of Imphal cannot be carried out because of this reason. This is the case of non-utilisation of total funds and non-fulfillment of desired targets. Besides there are cases of utilisation of total funds but non-fulfillment of desired targets. And in some other cases, there is total utilisation of fund achievements of partial targets. Thus the above mention situations arise out of sheer defective implementation, lack of supervision, irresponsible management and in-effective control.

56. Ibid.
In order to check the mal-practices and faulty implementation of programmes some suggestions are as follows:

a) There is necessity to fix co-relation between expenditure and achievement of benefits. The executive agencies are bound to adhere the norms.

b) Timely issue of sanctions and finalisation of location of programmes are basic necessity of programme implementation. A time-bound programme need to be kept for this purpose.

c) Constant efforts should be made by the administrative departments for timely release of funds.

d) Evaluation teams need to be formed to supervise the programme execution at field level.

e) Training programmes through other than departmental agencies need to be supervised vigorously. State level officers in teams need to make sudden inspections of these institutions.

f) Selection of economically weaker section needs to be done in the Gram Panchayat meetings and complain of wrong listing may be entertained by DRDA and proper enquiry need to be conducted to drop non-eligible persons.

g) There is need to fix responsibility on officers and officials engaged in execution of programmes. There are many cases of misappropriation and embezzlements. The officers supervising the activities need to be made accountable for not bringing the irregularities in the notice of senior officers.

h) Audit of accounts of DRDA's and Panchayati Raj Institutions need to be put with government agencies as chater accountant cannot.
**District Planning in the Hills**

The people inhabiting the hill areas developed their own set of social, economic and political institutions suitable to them and their surroundings through the ages. With whatever little they have and with whatever norm and form of living, they adjusted and feel satisfied. This self-prevailing style have led them to be isolated from the people of the plains and necessary conditions for interaction did not arise. The relationship between the hill and plain people before Independence were confined to mainly on trade. They did not have much social contact. But after Independence the Government of India took up as its important task to bring in development to those under development areas with the spread of community development projects and provisions of social privileges to the tribals, the process of acculturation has been accelerated. Through these programmes, the Government tried to bring the tribals in the mainstream of the Indian nation.

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**Need for separate tribal development plans.** Many economic factors combined with other social and cultural factors keeps the levels of living of the tribal poor depress highly low. In fact, they are at the lowest rung of development with some other non-tribal communities. Incomes are low, social status is very inferior, level of education is low, housing and sanitary conditions are bad, and general standard of health is poor. Taking into account of some particular characteristics, the Government of India has specified 427 communities and has included them in the categories of Scheduled Tribes. Thus, they are entitled to special protection and privileges under the constitution of India.

As poverty is a big problem of the tribals, there is need to formulate special plans for their development. Because the tribals, in addition to the common problems, face problems that are specific to them alone. They were subjected to exploitation of the non-tribals. Also, centuries of isolation from the main civilization has kept the tribals ignorant of modern institutions, scientific and technological developments and changing environment and has contributed to their ignorance, illiteracy, primitive mode of living, and poor resource base of their economy.

Keeping in view of all these considerations, the Government of India initiated special schemes for the development of tribal areas to supplement the benefits accruing from general programmes of development in different fields such as agriculture, co-operation, communications, health, housing etc. They can be grouped broadly under four headings (a) Communications, (b) Education and Culture, (c) Development of tribal economy and (d) Health, housing and water supply. To carry out these programmes, tribal development blocks were established on the lines of the community development block. Such tribal development blocks are constituted in areas predominantly inhabited by the tribals and each block intended to cover only about 25,000 persons against the average coverage of 66,000 persons in the community development blocks.

In Manipur, five of the six districts comprise the hill areas in the state. There is a special constitutional provision for the administration of the hills areas of Manipur. There is a separate hill area plan within the state Plan for these areas which also happens to be predominantly tribal areas of the state. The hill areas plan of Manipur, therefore, is also the tribal sub plan of the state. In pursuance of the strategies for tribal development initiated during its Fifth Five Year Plan, separate sub plans have been prepared for these areas. All areas of tribal concentration in a district have been covered under an integrated tribal development project. Thus, for the purpose of planning, the state is clearly divided
into two parts, viz., predominantly tribal areas and the rest with separate planning systems. Thus, tribal sub-plans are being prepared for all predominantly tribal area in the region except the Sixth Schedule areas. These sub-plans comprise efforts for these areas. These sub-plans are sub-divided into Integrated Tribal Development Projects, which generally cover the tribal majority areas within a district. These projects comprise the total plan effort at their level.

Tribal sub-plans (TSP) to enhance economic growth. All of the National leaders aimed at lifting up of the backward class of our country so that they can live on par with the better of section of the society. Therefore, since the inception of Five Year Plans in 1951, special provisions are made in all the plans for the welfare of the backward classes specially the SCs / STs. But unfortunately, in spite of all efforts, a review of all the forgone Five Year Plans shows that the general plans could not make much progress or impact on the socio-economic life of the tribals. Therefore, at the end of the Fifth Five Year Plan, a new strategy was made to ensure proper allocation of plan provisions. This new provisions was meant for the tribal concentrated areas where fifty percent or more of the population is composed of tribals. The main objectives of the tribal sub-plans are to narrow the gap between the level of development of tribal areas and other areas and also to improve the quality of life of the tribals. This provision was also to ensure a faster pace of economic development of the Nation as a whole with these aims in view of elimination of all forms of exploitations in the tribal areas, particularly in land, money-lending, mal-practices in the exchange of agricultural and forests products, was given great importance under the tribal sub-plans. Towards the end of the Fourth Plan Period, the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Act, 1971 was passed. This

Autonomous District Council was set up for entrusting more and more local development matters to the people for the all-round development of the hill areas of Manipur.63

Intensive implementation of block development programmes started functioning properly. Several major programmes from both the state and centrally sponsored programmes like post-matric scholarships, girls hostels, co-operation, research and training institutes were introduced for the improvement of the living and working conditions of the tribals.

The Working Group also felt that will be necessary that the special elements relating to the various constitution and statutory obligations prevalent in different states as also the special features of the tribal sub-plans should be preserved. To that extent, the district plan should be in the nature of a comprehensive frame having a clear objective accommodating a variety of other sub-goals.

**District Councils.** The Autonomous District Council was introduced in the state in order to enable the people belonging to tribal and backward classes in the hill areas to participate for development works of their district. The district council is responsible for establishment, maintenance and management of the elementary/primary schools in the entire hill areas and the constructions and repair of all buildings connected with these institutions. At present, 818 Primary Schools are maintained.64 The establishment, maintenance and management of both medical and veterinary dispensaries in the entire hill areas of Manipur are also within the jurisdiction of the district councils. The district council is therefore, maintaining 28 medical dispensaries and 35 veterinary

64. Planning Department, *Mid-Term Appraisal for Tenth Five Year Plan* (Imphal: Government of Manipur, 2004), p.44
dispensaries. However, the overall implementations of the welfare schemes of the schedule tribes was under the control of Development Commissioner of Tribal Welfare at the district level.

Planning for Future Development

An attempt has been already made to analyse and understand different aspects of planning viz. process of plan formulation, techniques of implementation, evaluation of the plans and the co-operative mechanism of the district planning. There are still aspects of district planning which deserves attention and consideration from the apex planning bodies. It is necessary to go for an integrated approach towards district planning.

To formulate district plan, within the operational framework of future action, it is reckoned to make a critical assessment of the existing situation and thereafter to formulate integrated strategies for further development for each sub-region and for the district as a whole on the basis of available resources and potentials, the natural infrastructure available to fulfill local needs and the problems to make proper use, the trend of development availed so far the priorities assigned to different socio-economic activities. This is to be done in the overall framework of basic objective adopted for the state and the country as a whole.

Development of a sub-region is determined by the correlation of the following factors:

- Physical
- Cultural

a) Physio-geographical characteristics such as elevation, location, general topography, climatic condition, rainfall etc.

65. Ibid.
b) Quality, quantity and variety of natural resources available in the area.

c) Level of development and coverage of infrastructural facilities.

d) Natural abundance of primary and secondary economic activities.

e) Availability of human resources, technological skills and entrepreneurial talent.

f) Quantum of financial resources locally and externally available.

g) The organisational and institutional framework in existence in the area.

Variation in potentials available in different sub-regions leads to different economic patterns and calls for a different type of infrastructural development and different distribution of investments. Let's take for instance a particular area has a lot of valuable and easily accessible mineral resources, the strategy for its long term development from the strategy for an area which has a preponderance of natural endowment vegetation.

The most difficult task faced by a planner is to decide as to what strategies of development be adopted in respect and measures to be taken up in the immediate future to organise long term strategy for an area.

While determining the specific strategy for each-region, four inter-related objectives have to be kept in view. They are:

a) Increase in the per unit productivity.

b) Better utilization and conservation of natural resources.

c) More equitable distribution of the benefits of development between

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different areas and communities through more rational location of facilities and services.

d) Expansion and diversification of employment opportunities.

In order to work out the details of the development strategies for different sub-regions the first step to be taken is to identify the economic activities such as agricultural forestry, pisciculture or small industries which may occupy the central position in the plan of development of the area. The subsidiary economic activities to be undertaken depends largely upon the nature of basic activities which need to be developed in an area. In a district where agriculture is the main economic activity, greater attention is to be paid to the provision of irrigations and the establishment of storage, credit facilities, processing industries and marketing facilities. Whereas these factors have quite different significance in areas whose development is likely to depend more substantially on the establishment of mining and mineral based industries.

While drawing up a programme for development of specific activities, it is desirable to keep two things in consideration. The first is to look at the specific activities, not as unrelated items but as inter-related items, subsidiary or supplementary activities and the draw up plans for all the related activities in an integrated manner. The second point to be remember while planning for a sub-region is that an economic activity should be such in its true perspective in a dynamic context. Keeping the above things in view strategy for different areas need to be planned as to see to it that facilities provided in various areas are followed with economic activities in their respective directions.

**Constraints in Development.** The State of Manipur has a plethora of development constraints besides the poor financial aspect. In 1972, the Planning Board
of West Bengal requisitioned the services of anthropologists of Anthropological Survey of India to supply some basic information about the villages of the state and to provide fresh perspective to their planning programmes, particularly in their plans at the district level. This process can be applied even in case of the state for a more appropriate planning. There is too much dependence of agriculture on monsoon. Population is on the raise and educated unemployed youths is emerging as an area of grave concern. Because of such drawbacks, it has become one of the reasons for them to go underground. The problem of poverty always shares in its stark nakedness. Per capita income is very low when compare to the national average.

The above mentioned inherent constraints to development causes the state economy to be still backward. In many aspects of development central assistance is needed in order to bring the state economy on par with other states with a better-off economy. Much of the region’s wealth lies untapped in absence of infrastructure. Because of this reason, the region presents a paradoxical picture of being poor in the midst of plenty. Lack of market network, and absence of good communication network are the constraints responsible for slow industrialisation of the region. If railway service is provided, it would serve the purpose of development. Shortage of power is another factor hindering the promotion of industries though there is a great potential for hydel and thermal power generation. There is one more aspect of state with regard to its capacity for generating resources for future plans. The few state undertakings like Manidco are running losses. The state took up such projects so as to make the economy to be self-sufficient and earn profits so that the government can finance its Five Year Plans with upgraded resources. But instead of it becoming an asset to the state it is becoming a liability. In such cases, the active support of Government of India is called for improving their performance.
Many projects under the centrally sponsored schemes can be successful if the Centre releases the funds on a year basis regularly. This can enable to work out their plans and programmes and thus can prepare strategy of developmental plans of the state. The districts can also be benefitted with this system as these will enable them to prepare their plans in advanced and lay out for plans priorities at district level.

**Peoples Participation**

In most of the village and towns, many retired technical persons or experts can be found existing. They are serving professionals, businessmen, manufacturer and progressive farmers who possess a wealth of knowledge and information about their particular specialities. But fortunately, the panchayats and the governmental agencies have utilised them. At the same time, there are complaints of the lack of expert knowledge in plan formulation. It can be suggested to set up a formal mechanism to involve the locally available experts in the formulation of plan, especially at the village, block and district levels. In this connection, the spadework has already been done in 1969 when the Planning Commission has recommended discussion of the preliminary framework with progressive farmers small farmers and other entrepreneurs. People’s participation is highly essential because the people have better information about local resources and idea of their local needs. Such participation may help them to become more conscious of their rights and responsibilities. This will again indirectly facilitate social change.

It may also put leaders on the alert taking decisions which are not in the interests of the majority of the people. Involvement of the people in the planning process may

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also provide them with an opportunity for advancement on the basis of self-help and mutual co-operation, thus augmenting development effort. The views of the public would be specially useful at the stage of formulation of objectives and priorities of the plan, as this would ensure that the objectives and priorities are related to the felt needs and problems of the people. Public participation by way of discussion in open assemblies in village may be equally useful in identification, formulation, selection and location of schemes of importance like those relating to provision of drinking water, health centre, school buildings etc. Thus people's participation in planning would be beneficial at every stage of planning such as setting of goals, determination of strategies and priorities, formulation of schemes, collection of data and informations, monitoring and evaluations. People's participation can be given more emphasis by restructuring the District Planning Boards and by involving the public and their representatives in the formulation of schemes at lower levels. The restructuring of the DPB should be done to provide better representation to those elected representatives of the people who are accountable to the concerned local population.

Further the various economic or occupational groups, voluntary agencies of repute, weaker sections and local experts should also be involved in the planning process by constituting advisory bodies or committees/sub-committees, etc. Planning Boards with adequate representation of the public may be constituted at the block level and the proposals/schemes emanating from such bodies should be given due consideration at the district level.

Thus at present the people's participation is extremely limited. Some degree of participation by panchayat in the IRDP and NREP exists. There is also an involvement of MLAs, MLCs, MPs and representatives in the participation of the people at village level planning. By and large, most of the rural planning development programmes and schemes are planned primarily by governmental machinery. This is not a healthy situation. A more vigorous participation is needed.