



सत्यमेव जयते

**Report of the Committee**  
**on**  
**Development of Small Towns**  
**in Hill and Border Areas**

**Ministry of Health Government of India**

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# Foreword

The Joint Session of the 9th meeting of the Central Council of Local Self Government and the 4th Conference of the State Ministers for Town Planning held at New Delhi in September, 1963 had rightly drawn attention towards the general backwardness of the Hill and Border Areas and their Small Towns in all spheres of economic, industrial and agricultural development, and appointed this Committee "to study the problems and requirements of Small Towns in Hill and Border Areas". The Committee was handicapped in its work for want of requisite statistics and details from some of the States concerned. Nevertheless an attempt was made to make good the deficiency by personal contact and referring to published material and technical reports etc.

The study of the problems of the hill towns and of the wider areas with which they are organically linked shows that they are backward in almost every aspect of social economy. The overall occupational pattern, the agricultural and industrial sectors, the economic infra-structure consisting of transport, communication and power, the social overheads like education and health—all these are far below the norms of development in other parts of the country. Obviously underdevelopment of such a large territory certainly acts as a great drag on the economy of the country. Although, to a certain extent, the comparative backwardness of these areas has an element of inevitability attributable to their peculiar circumstances including topography, climate and niggardliness of nature, yet in the context of the Chinese aggression and in view of our not very pleasant relations with Pakistan, the socio-economic development of hill towns and hill and border areas has acquired a national importance and urgency for reasons of security of the country.

The Committee having considered the various problems and deficiencies of these areas in the context of the regions in which they are situated has made a number of useful recommendations. Some of the main recommendations are that the economic base of these areas should be strengthened by laying greater emphasis on potato cultivation, horticulture, poultry and sheep breeding, sericulture and forestry. It has also been suggested that the possibilities of growing herbs and medicinal plants and extracting minerals should be fully explored and exploited. Emphasis has been laid on the setting up of technical institutions and research laboratories in the hill towns. The Committee has also made recommendations for development of agro-industries, service industries, forest—based industries and woollen goods and other cottage industries having regard to the availability of raw materials and potentials for industrial development. For obvious reasons considerable emphasis has been laid on development of transport and communications in these areas and one notable recommendation in this connection is that, as far as possible, border roads presently under construction should serve the hill towns, preferably directly, otherwise through link roads. The Committee has also made recommendations for provision of essential services, civic amenities, social services etc., in adequate measure and the notable recommendations

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in this regard are that Master Plans should be prepared for these areas and the scope and the pattern of subsidy for water supply and sewerage schemes should be widened and liberalised for these areas. The recommendations also contain suggestions for certain land reforms and administrative reforms. I would like to make a special mention of the suggestion for the treatment of these backward hill and border areas on the same lines as was done in the case of the four eastern districts of Uttar Pradesh and would commend the same for favourable consideration of the Planning Commission.

I would like to clarify that this Committee consisting of the Ministers of Local Self-Government has made general recommendations which will be further considered and implemented by the departments concerned.

It is a lucky coincidence that the various suggestions for tackling the problems are ready at the time when the proposals for the Fourth Five Year Plan are under consideration. I would consider the labours of the Committee amply rewarded if the problems of these hitherto neglected but strategically important areas are viewed in their proper perspective and with a due sense of urgency by the framers of the Fourth Five Year Plan and a concerted effort is made to solve them.

I am happy to say that in spite of the handicap due to the lack of requisite data from some of the States concerned, the Convenor and his colleagues prepared the Report covering all the problems of these areas and with the active cooperation of the Members of the Committee, the analytical portions of the Report have been further improved and amplified. I am thankful to the Ministers and Officers of the States concerned for their active cooperation and valuable contribution in the deliberations of the Committee and to Shri GIAN PRAKASH, Convenor and his colleagues for their sincere efforts to make the Report as comprehensive and useful as possible. My thanks are also due to Shri J. P. SAH, Economic Planner in the Town and Country Planning Organization of the Government of India for drafting the Report and for sincerely assisting the Committee in its work.

Sd./

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