

# **REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON DISTRICT PLANNING**



**VOLUME-I**

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
PLANNING COMMISSION**

**MAY, 1984**

D.O. No. PC (P)/35(1)/82-MLP



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May 10, 1984

Dear Shri Chavan,

I have great pleasure in submitting a copy of the report of the working Group on District Planning set up by the Planning Commission in September 1982.

I hope the report will stimulate further thinking on district planning so that district planning can be taken up by all the States from the first year of the Seventh Plan, as part of the decentralization of planning process.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

(CH HANUMANTHA RAO)

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN,  
Deputy Chairman,  
Planning Commission,  
New Delhi.

## FOREWORD

The crucial importance of decentralised planning for a balanced, acceptable and meaningful development of our country has been recognised since the beginning of the planning era. But it has not been an easy concept for operationalisation due to various constraints, like the inadequacy of the planning machinery itself and the lack of a uniform enthusiasm on the part of the States who were required to operationalise it. Even though the Planning Commission issued some guidelines on district planning to the States in 1969, the idea could not catch up because many States were not ready to undertake it. But with the changes in the orientation and structure of development planning over the last two decades as would be evident from the large number of beneficiary oriented schemes and area development schemes, decentralisation of planning and decision-making has become urgent. In view of the developments that have taken place since 1969 and as the methodology for local level planning has considerably evolved all over the world, there was need to take a fresh look at the whole matter. This Working Group was, therefore, set up by the Planning Commission for this purpose in September, 1982. This is because the Planning Commission has a special responsibility in this regard, and a definite role to play in the task of assisting the States in formulating and implementing reasonably satisfactory plans following a sound methodology.

The concept of district planning adopted by the Working Group is akin to the concept of integrated area planning. This, however, is the ultimate goal. The Working Group found that the States are at different stages of progress towards decentralised planning. It has, therefore, advocated a gradual step-by-step approach towards this final goal. It is hoped that this report will stimulate district planning activity in the States enabling them to adopt the 'Stages Approach' to district planning and to prepare State-specific guidelines/manuals for district planning. After having done so, the States may take up comprehensive district planning during the Seventh Plan period.

This report represents the common thinking of the Working Group. The Working Group had set up sub-groups to go into the various aspects of district planning in depth. The deliberations of these sub-groups reflected in their reports formed the basis of this report.

In order to take full note of the developments including thinking in respect of decentralised planning in various States, four regional Workshops were held at Gandhinagar, Bangalore; Bhubaneswar and Srinagar. In these workshops, which also included field visits to district centres to study the problems concerned with district planning, besides members of the Working Group and officials of the State Governments concerned, some non-officials connected with State planning, participated. These workshops proved useful experience-sharing forums leading to cross fertilisation of ideas which became vital input for this report.

The Working Group acknowledges with gratitude the work done by the sub-groups under the guidance of their Chairmen—S/Shri M. J. K. Thavaraj, P. R. Dubhashi, T. S. Sankaran, Waheeduddin Khan, K. S. Chandrasekharan and B. D. Sharma.

The Working Group is also indebted to S/Shri M. J. K. Thavaraj, S. Sundararajan and K. V. Sundaram, who formed the Drafting Committee as also the S/Shri P. R. Dubhashi, T. S. Sankaran and D. Bandyopadhyay who did the final editing of the report. Shri S. Sundararajan and Dr. K. V. Sundaram make special case studies in selected States and prepared the first draft of the report. Shri S. Sundararajan, Joint Secretary (State Plans) and Dr. K.V. Sundaram, Deputy Adviser (MLP) with the support and assistance of Shri M. M. Saigal, Senior Research Officer (MLP) and Smt. S. Salhotra, Research Officer shouldered the main burden of planning the meetings of the Working Group and the Regional Workshops. The Working Group would like to express its high appreciation of the work done by these officers.

# REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON DISTRICT PLANNING

## VOLUME—1

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