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## UNIT 19 MICRO LEVEL PLANS: FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

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### 19.0 LEARNING OUTCOME

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After studying this Unit, You should be able to,

- understand the significance of micro level planning,
- identify the issues in micro level planning;
- discuss the constraints in micro level planning; and
- describe the tenth plan priorities.

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### 19.1 INTRODUCTION

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Currently, the emphasis has shifted in development planning, from top-down to a bottom-up approach. This trend is not restricted to India or the Third World. It's a worldwide trend, especially with respect to city administration in developed countries. Bottom-up approach is a revolutionary shift from earlier approaches based on central planning irrespective of the nature of polity; i.e. whether *controlled* or *liberal*, or the nature of planning, *indicative* or *controlled*. Bottom-up planning is being referred as *micro* planning, denoting the level at which planning is to be attempted, that is, as closer to grass roots as economically efficient and administratively feasible.

The state apparatus has grown considerably, especially in welfare state countries, where the state is enjoined considerable responsibilities pertaining to almost all aspects of individuals' lives, proverbially, from the cradle to the grave. Most activities have proved economically unviable. Expected results have not been attained and the state machinery has grown to unmanageable proportions. In the neo liberal paradigm, many functions hitherto reserved for the state would be devolved on the private sector and relevant non-

government organisations. The State would function as the catalyst in fructifying such effort. Planning as is wrongly construed, would not get irrelevant; but would find anew orientation that it would consider broad long term issues and devolve short term concerns and issues relating to plan implementation to local levels.

Micro planning is an alternate approach, which would make plan implementation efficient at the local level which would expectedly result in better plan performance, especially with regard to human development index, involving poverty alleviation and health care, child care and nutrition status, et al. This would make many central organisations and their field counterparts dispensable since much could be achieved with far less costs with local planning and effective implementation of plans. Top- down planning without doubt has proven a costly venture. In this unit we will be discussing the limitation of macro level planning, importance of micro level planning and also discuss the issues and constraints of micro level planning.

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## 19.2 MACRO LEVEL PLANNING: LIMITATIONS

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Planning at macro national or state level is sector- wise and in a terms of averages. Data regarding Employment, Housing, Education, Services etc. are collected/considered in gross terms. Required detailing with a view to 'factoring' relative concerns of diverse regions/target populace is left to successively lower levels of planning and administration. Macro level planning concentrates on resource development in broad terms, in terms of investments as per expected target growth, leaving the necessary detailing in terms of service delivery and distribution to local planning and administration where expertise and know-how is lacking. This has necessitated several alterations from time to time, in decisions at local levels since plans in the first place were not in accordance with local requirements and resource capacity. For example, plan resources are distributed among states on the basis of the broad parameters outlined in the Gadgil formula. These broad parameters are not inclusive enough of regional specificities or specific requirements of the target population. For example a housing programme for weaker sections designed for families with income less than Rs. 300 can take a straight average of Rs.150 to identify beneficiaries, which would be fallacious. (*Chandrashekhara, 1986*).

In case of rural development, excessive compartmentalisation of the executive into Ministries/ Departments has ensured that planning proceeds in terms of narrow sector strategies mutual synergies that are absolutely vital for social sector programmes are not built up at the field level. Duplication and procedural hurdles that result have blocked benefits from flowing to the beneficiaries. Mid term appraisal of the ninth plan has brought out that around 400 billion per annum flows from the center to the states for rural development in various sectors, viz. tribal development, watershed development and agriculture, health and family welfare etc. Benefits however, have not percolated down in sufficient measure to intended beneficiaries, through state run development schemes. The primary reason for the same is poor governance on the part of local administration that has failed to translate guidelines into action and have been, behaviorally, rather unresponsive, corrupt and non-performing. Administrative officials allegedly enjoy too much discretion in service delivery in that indulge in 'political rent seeking behaviour' by way of charging monopoly prices even for their regular slate duties, as accountability mechanisms are either non-existent or too weak to be enforced (Tenth Plan, 2002-07).

Poor implementation largely explains unbalanced regional development and general/overall sub- optimal plan performance with respect to rural development. As observed in the

tenth plan, “ in India, there a number of regions, or states within regions, or even districts within states where development outcomes in terms of social indicators do not match with the available resources and the inherent potential of the people. States that are rich in minerals are not necessarily industrially developed, and those with rich cultivable lands and assured irrigation are often lagging behind in agricultural development.”

Given the administrative constraints, it has been considered proper to affect a paradigm shift from macro, sector –specific, to micro generalized spatial planning for better outcomes.

Moreover, political instability has meant that the tenure of the Finance Commission and the government, for example the 13<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha is not conterminous. This has made, synergetic functioning between the Planning Commission, the Finance Commission and the government rather difficult. Given the constraints of coalition politics, an alternate arrangement by way of continuity and stability in local administration is being considered, which explains the emphasis on institutionalisation of local level development planning proposes to provide an alternate stability mechanism (Tenth Plan, 2002-07).

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## 19.3 ISSUES IN MICRO LEVEL PLANNING

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### Choice of Region

The term micro level planning remains rather vague unless the actual level of planning is defined. Levels could be demarcated on different criteria. According to V. Nath, the abiding concern irrespective of criterion adopted is contiguity, in terms of geography or exchange relations, formed on the principle of *homogeneity* and *inter relationship* and *external contrast*. In other words, regions should be based on distribution of related phenomena ‘in some respect’. Accordingly, there could be climactic regions; geographical regions based on distribution of physical phenomenon, viz. geological structure, topography, climate, hydrology, soils, natural vegetation; or regions based on distribution of the physical phenomena such as agricultural land use, population density and occupational patterns. By the same argument, sociologists and cultural anthropologists employ cultural criteria, in the sense of people forming a community on the basis of shared mores and practices and not being an unrelated mass with incomprehensible heterogeneity. Hence, there could also be industrial regions or economic regions, which are explained by Losch as “the market area of a commodity and an economic region as system of such market areas.” Each basis serves some rational criterion for demarcation/purpose in development policy. In addition, it is also desirable that the region should be small enough to be close enough to people and large enough on some homogenous criteria to constitute a viable economic unit for planning. The crux of the discussion is that a region should be a recognisable entity for a planner and not a disaggregated zone, which cannot be planned for on any rational criterion. As per ESCAP discussions, the “district” has been accepted as a viable functional spatial unit for local level planning. However, Indian administration is characterised by lack of uniformity as also in countries like Pakistan and Indonesia in that some districts are ridiculously small and others too large. For such areas, sub district levels such as the block in India are considered suitable with respect to certain subjects in planning. However the experience with block level planning has been largely unhappy. Chief factors accounting for lack of success in this regard were lack of adequate expertise at the block level, both in the sense of policy planning and technical know how. While in developed countries the free operation of the market mechanism has provided adequate institutional infrastructure for effective local government economies; in developing countries

by contrast, such mechanism is rather weak or lacking, which makes planning at the local level rather difficult. To elucidate, markets are distant, storage facilities are inadequate, local industries are sparse, institutions- administrative/otherwise academic lacking, hence, know- how is limited (Sundaram, 2003).

According to V. Nath (1984) there should be built in flexibility in policy design regarding the spatial extent of a policy as for example, in the development of water resources a river valley system could be the right spatial unit, for metropolitan planning it is necessary to plan with the metropolitan area of the city as the unit. Similarly for power resource development, and development of transport, suitable aerial extent should be the domain of policy. To further illustrate, the Himalayan areas of U.P Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, and J.K form a geographical area in the sense of common features such as arid topography, common patterns of resource use, occupational patters, economic activities pursued like horticulture, grazing, exploitation of forest resources etc. Hence, development plans would be relatively easy to devise and implement on the basis of geographical homogeneity of the area. According to V. Nath, such regions should be used as supplements to administrative units in planning.

In India resource allocation for education is rather low which contributes further to system weaknesses. Administration is more or less inefficient owing to lack of resources, separate staff, concentration of expertise at the top, precisely a top-heavy orientation of administration. Lack of adequate technical expertise required for Development Planning at the local level is a major constraint. There is also lack of adequate database for planning since the planning mechanism at the state level- the state planning commission and the state planning boards is rather weak. Hence, consensus has more or less emerged in favour of district as the level of local planning in India (Sundaram, 2003).

To address/ possibly settle the dilemma regarding choice of level, a multilevel planning framework by way of a three-tier arrangement has been attempted in the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendments. As per the 74<sup>th</sup> amendment, The DPCs / MPCs need to be constituted under the State Zilla Panchayat / Regional and Town Planning Acts. A three tier planning structure is envisaged in the states – Panchayats / Municipalities level, district and metropolitan level and state level. Under this framework, Panchayats/ Municipalities would prepare plans for their areas, which would be consolidated at the district level in the form of draft district development plans. The detailed process is as follows:

Following the 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment, the constitution and functions of PRIs at different levels are as follows:

*At Village Level:* To prepare Village Data Inventory (VDI) , convene Gram Sabha meetings, list out the needs of the village, prioritise the needs on the basis of resources available and prepare a village plan to be submitted to Panchayat Samiti (Elected body at Block level).

*At Block Level:* To prepare Block Data Inventory (BDI), aggregate all village plans, and prepare block level plan to be submitted to the District Panchayat.

*At District Level:* To consolidate all block plans, disaggregate them by item, year and cost (according to their link with rural development programmes and sectoral programmes of the State and Federal Governments), distribute the activities to different local governmental departments sector wise and finally prepare the district plan to be presented before the district planning committee for finalisation and approval for both Perspective plan and Annual Action plan (NRDMS, 2005).

The metropolitan development plan would be prepared by the MPCs. All district and metropolitan development plans would then congregate in the formulation of a plan at the state level.

### **Functional Demarcation of Plan Subjects**

There will be functional demarcation, between tier with respect to issues as per suitability/practicability. The 11<sup>th</sup> schedule of the Indian Constitution lists the functions assigned to local bodies. The 12<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Constitution (74th Amendment) Act lists the 18 functions of the municipalities, which among others include: (i) urban planning including town planning; (ii) regulation of land use and construction of buildings; and (iii) planning for economic and social development. In this regard, the state governments could be more specific and definite in assigning functions to local bodies. In the absence of clarity in assignment of functions, the State Finance Commission would not be able to assess the fiscal needs at a level and allocate adequate resources accordingly. Importantly, the 74<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment (CAA74) expressly recognises a role for the ULBs within the constitutional framework and provides for devolution of financial powers from the state government for strengthening of municipal finances. The CAA74 also provides for constitution of Ward Committees in municipalities with a population of more than 3 lakh, Metropolitan Planning Committees and District Planning Committees for consolidation and preparation of plans of spatial, economic and social development. From a “top down” approach, the emphasis has thus shifted to, “bottom- up” approach. The main issue therefore in functional demarcation would be avoiding overlapping of functions between tiers and choosing the right tier for a function for maximum impact.

In view of the challenges facing by ULBs the planners have to prepare themselves for a new role and much wider responsibilities. As a bridge between the civil society and the politico-economic structure, the planners have to perform the role of the catalysts of change. Equally importantly, there would be need for suitable administrative adaptations by way of securing personnel equipped with required technical capability for plan implementation and managerial capacity to institute desired partnerships with civil society. To that end, manpower planning and training would be necessary. Modifications in recruitment policy to emphasise technical expertise would also be necessary.

### **Question of Orientation**

What should be the subject matter focus in micro level planning? Understandably, there are too many subjects to choose from, implying the ideological focus of micro level planning. Orientations differ between ‘environments centric’, ‘employment centric’ and ‘productivity centric’ approaches. The objectives may be congruent or may offer distinct choices, as one opposed to the other, which could be difficult given the imperatives of each requirement. Eventual choice would be a matter of value orientation of the party in power or political imperatives, like pressure and articulation with respect to demands from internal and external sources, immediate needs et al. Facts should inform values. A more flexible approach in keeping the requirements of the situation would be better suited than ideological stance. Environment, as a result, has been a relatively neglected area. Comparatively now, there is better interest articulation with respect to sustainable use of natural resources, but not before the plundering reached crisis proportions.

Multi level planning is especially pertinent with regard to environmental safeguard because natural resource use has ‘externalities’ which cut across state boundaries. For example, pollution on the part of one state affects agricultural productivity in another state. Hence

concerted effort at all levels is needed for development. The issue of 'choice of region' for development planning has been referred earlier in the Unit. The emphasis on region is in focus, particularly to cater to the requirements of environmental protection policy. Micro planning at the district level would have no impact, if the state at the macro level carries on with unscrupulous resource use. Hence, an intra level-partnership arrangement, involving, regions, states, states, districts, blocks et al is required for successful effort in this regard." The emphasis is on an integrated approach where environment, human capital formation, and industrial growth in conjunction with agricultural growth all form part of the planning process."

### **Process Requirements**

Based on case studies undertaken in subcontinent countries, K.V. Sundaram (2003) outlines the basic requirements for integrated local level planning:

The planning approach should concentrate on a small geographic area, where required inter sector linkages could be explored. The approach adopted should be, "area development."

Plan efforts should relate to resource constraints and administrative capability of the area in that it should not be beyond what is possible. Planning method adopted should be flexible and adaptable to changes. It should be area specific since resource capability and requirements in different areas would be different. Case studies have brought forth that uniform application methodology has been the primary cause of lack of success in meeting objectives indifferent geographical areas.

Accordingly, there should be better power with local administrators to re appropriate/ reallocate resources as per requirements, for which financial devolution would need to be provided in requisite measure.

Technically, systematic effort would be required in the following areas:

- a) Resource inventory and data collection, bringing out the present state of development, future potentials and constraints.
- b) Identification of priorities of the specific area and selection of programmes accordingly.
- c) Decisions about coverage (spatial dimension) and time frame (temporal dimension) of particular projects should be part of an integrated framework, and a perspective plan in terms of long-term vision for the area translated in terms of specific objectives/targets.
- d) Stress on optimum utilization of existing manpower resources and instituting means to augmenting capacities of human capital.
- e) Continuous assessment and audit of resources spent and available and innovative solutions to augment the same.

The technical requirements presuppose technical planning body/expertise, which would be essential prerequisites for enjoined effort. For the same, manpower planning would need to be attempted which envisages development of capability at the local level through need based training programmes for immediate requirements and long term education through technical institutes etc.

Development in three sectors, namely, agriculture industry and services has to proceed conjointly, with needed integration. Hitherto, programmes like the IRDP (Integrated rural development) programme have suffered because of piecemeal approach.

Financial constraints would need to be overcome as a necessary requirement. Given the constraints of local finance, viz., inadequate grants from state governments *et al* resources could be augmented sufficiently by cutting tax evasion, better realisation of arrears and cutting back non-plan expenditure on extensive government establishment, which could be controlled through, containing underemployment which is massive in India.

Administrative constraints relating to lack of coordination between various sector departments would need to be overcome through institutional delineations. Behavioral expectations with regard to informal coordination/voluntary cooperation on the part of officials and non-officials involved in various governmental and non-government organisations may not be sufficient. Presently coordination is almost totally dependant on 'personal relations' of the district chief with the departmental heads! For that purpose, micro level plan would be crucial since it would be the instrumentality to establish formal modalities for needed coordination. With role definitions unequivocally specified and jurisdictions/scope delimited there would be less scope for role confusions/ambiguity on the part of department officials. Administrative reform in the sense of greater autonomy to the district chief to impart better cohesion to the exercise would be desirable.

Integration refers mainly to securing the multiple objectives of more production, more employment, and more equitable distribution and most importantly, sustainable development, which necessitates factoring environmental concerns in development policy. Coordination can be secured through planning and monitoring developments relating to impact of decisions on related sectors. It implies a paradigm shift from sectoral and departmental approach towards area development/ beneficiary oriented approach.

### **Activities Involved**

In the Planning phase the following steps are to be taken in sequence:

- Formulation of the major objectives
- Compilation of data
- Assessed needs and strategies
- Assessment of resource allocation strategies; articulation of fresh allocations where perceived necessary, incremental adjustments as per constraints etc.
- Identification of inter-linkages among projects and programmes'
- Organisation and Management to ensure bridging up of implementation gaps;
- Assessment of resources for allocation;
- Creation of links between the District Plan, the Regional and State Development Plans.

Hence the chief activities involved in local planning are:

- Needs analysis
- Information collation regarding geographical and socio economic data such as soil type land use pattern, occupational profile, Climate, human, natural and livestock resources etc.
- Resource strategising

- Priority ordering
- Setting up implementation mechanism.
- Evaluation

As per Sundaram, stipulated tasks are represented below in a tabular form:

**Table 1**

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Steps</b>
i) Resource analysis	Resource Inventory Socio economic benchmark survey Identification of constraints to Development Assessment of on gong programmes
ii) Strategy Formulation	Identification of Goals Formulation of Development Strategy
iii) Plan Formulation	Identification of schemes and projects Individual household planning for the target groups Infrastructural Planning Locational Planning Employment Planning Institutional Planning
iv) Implementation Planning	Programme Integration Programme Sequencing Financial Programming Programme Monitoring Evaluation

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## **19.4 CONSTRAINTS IN MICRO LEVEL PLANNING**

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### **Institutional Constraints**

Planning from above has the following advantages:

- It is expeditious
- Technical personnel viz. the district block and lower level officials of various departments are generally available,
- There is no problem of adjustment of district and lower level plans with the state plan
- Implementation of the plans is virtually assured

Planning from below can be a time consuming and difficult process.

Plans should keep in view the availability the general guidelines of their departments in respect of availability of funds and manpower and achievement of targets etc.

Finally the village or multi level plans have to be adjusted and modified before they can be included in the plan for CD/block/taluka or mandal. (*V. Nath, 1993,*)

### **Information Constraints**

At the local level, situation can be described a one of “information crisis.” Since

administration has had a top-down orientation through centuries, data is accordingly oriented in that there is ready data for macro level planning e.g. national accounts, covering national income, savings and investments, foreign trade and the monetary system etc. and successively meager at subordinate stages. Relevant data for local level planning is either inadequate or irrelevant to plan requirements. Since the orientation of development planning at the local level is *spatial*, data is required for socio economic analysis, spatially, in *specific* terms and not in terms of aggregates. There is under information with regard to demographic data, vital socio-economic indicators like for local manpower and employment planning, primary data relating to income, consumption, employment, health, housing, nutrition or nutrition behavior. As per the official document of the Ministry of science and technology. The development of database technologies, entry of computers in India in the late 70's and first Indian Remote sensing Experiment in 1977, triggered the possibility of introduction and integration of geo spatial information in the planning. The Government of India initiated a number of technology-based programmes to support the Local level planning in 1980s viz. Natural Resources Data Management System (NRDMS) of the Department of Science & Technology, National Natural Resources Management System (NNRMS) of the Department of Space and Geographical Information System (GISNIC) and District Information System (DISNIC) of the National Informatics Center (Ministry of Communication and Information Technology). However, there is need for integrated approach in data collection, which brings out inter sector impacts in policy suggestions.

Both *quantitative* and *qualitative* data is required regarding socio-economic indices like cultural preferences with regard to nutrition, employment, indigenous construction practices, cultural mores; figures for unemployment, poverty across spatial extents, nature of poverty, specific requirements in particular areas to ameliorate the situation, etc. which are presently lacking. Often there is a surfeit of data, but is irrelevant, as is unrelated to programme requirements. Ad-hoc studies are conducted from time to time for the purpose, but there is no systematised mode of transfer of such information to planning agencies for plan purposes on a consistent basis. Accordingly, there is need for corresponding information processing agencies alongside planning agencies at each level to perform the vital task of research, information collation, processing and communication to relevant decision making centers. Immense potential of the information communication revolution could be tapped or the purpose.

### **Peoples' Participation**

The Constitution (74th) Amendment Act, 1992 provides for a democratic and participatory planning process to incorporate the needs of the people, particularly the poor and socially disadvantaged, in development policy. The act stipulates the setting up of District planning Committees (DPCs) and Metropolitan Planning Committees (MPCs) for integration of spatial and economic development and rural and urban planning. This is in recognition of the need for integrated regional planning with due attention to regional and local infrastructure, environmental conservation and investment planning and their spatial and *other* impacts, accounting for *externalities*.

The most vital component of micro level planning is interest articulation on the part of the people, possibly through a forum, organised particularly for the purpose. Cooperative societies are being looked upon as the instrumentality to realise the objective. Peoples' participation in administration is often criticised as an "ideology without a methodology." The successful experiment of Kundrakudi village in Tamil Nadu however is a fitting reply

to such cynicism. A Village Planning Forum (VPF) was organised in the village, comprising of selected peers in the village from all walks of life, such as businessmen, scientists, panchayat union officials, credit officials from commercial and cooperative banks, educationists, agriculturists et al representing various government departments and was registered under the cooperative societies act of the State of Tamil Nadu. It has successfully energised the local population in articulating interests and participating otherwise actively in political matters directly related to their concerns. It has attempted development planning successfully, which is visible in improved paddy cultivation through adoption of scientific cultivation practices, improved irrigation through community wells etc. Most importantly, it has ensured successful implementation of government schemes such as the DPAP, which had suffered due to lapses in identification of beneficiaries for distribution of assets such as milch cattle etc. Identification and distribution through the VPF has effectively plugged the loophole. Wasteland cultivation for horticulture and sericulture have been taken up, active women's collaboration in plan initiatives has been secured. Looking at the advantages, such institutionalisation of social capital, inter- departments, between departments and, departments and civil society, that is, non-government organisations and individual village peers in civil society can be stressed. Such arrangements could be brought within the broad aegis of the Panchayat institutions, where found necessary/ desirable for compliance with legal or institutional stipulations, such as in the form of a committee of the panchayat. Replication elsewhere, or on successively macro scales could be attempted.

### **Cultural Constraints in Micro Level Planning**

Panchayati Raj is a historical institution in India, not a modern innovation. It has however gone through different phases as per relative freedom and effective say enjoyed in development planning. It is largely acknowledged that local institutions enjoyed better democracy and more cultural legitimacy in ancient and medieval times, when they functioned truly as institutions of local self-government and evoked peoples' participation in requisite measure. Trend towards centralisation was concomitant to the process of political consolidation spanning several centuries, initiated under Akbar and carried to its logical conclusion under the British, facilitated by the introduction of the Railways and the Post and Telegraph. Effectively, when the British handed over power in 1947, Indian state had a unitary bias albeit, federal constitution. The imperatives of the politico economic circumstances at the time necessitated a strong nation- state; hence centrifugal forces in whatever form, were discouraged. Constraints apart, Directive Principle Art -40, enshrined in the Constitution of India, affirmed the promise of "self- government" by way of energising grass roots democracy. Practical efforts towards the same have brought forth the following cultural constraints (Khan, 1993):

The Bureaucracy by and large resented subordination to elected bodies at the local level. Lack of reconciliation was articulated as disagreements on vital policy issues and subsequent super sessions.

Lack of political will on the part of the state executive for real democratic decentralization at the grass roots resulted in inadequate devolution of powers and functions to local bodies, irregular elections, often with inordinate delays and frequent super sessions. Exploring the behavioural dimension, there was power politics involved as well, in that Local MLAs had to vie with gram pradhans for political mileage in the 1969 Vidhan Sabha elections in Rajasthan and subsequently.

Lack of resources has been the toughest constraint. Perpetual indebtedness of state governments, which reduced them to the status of “glorified municipalities.” Hence, they could obviously not sustain the added strain of supporting local governments.

Arguments for a strong center have been ideologically supported with reference to the Westminster model of democracy, by which sovereignty resides in the Parliament, even though the Indian situation is vastly different (sovereignty resides in people). No subordinate tier can effectively share ‘sovereignty’ following the argument. People seem inspired even though the judiciary in India exercises sufficient/considerable restraint on the executive and the legislature. (Mathur, 1986)

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## 19.5 MICRO -LEVEL PLANNING IN THE FIVE-YEAR PLANS

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The main focus of the development effort in the initial years was on tackling food security, and decreasing reliance on imports for the capital goods sector. During the second five-year plan, the concept of a local horizontal plan was discussed. During the third five-year plan, state level planning with states and regions was attempted. A Three-tier local government structure based on the recommendations of the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee Report was also introduced. However, expected success could not be achieved which led to a consensus among policy makers that development planning at the local level was vital for success of overall planned development. The realisation arose from the fact that development strategies had shown sub optimal results at the local level since policies had not been based on felt needs of the local people and were not in consonance with their resource strengths/weaknesses. Policies framed at the top had failed to take regional variations into account with regard to resource endowments and adaptive capacity of the people in different regions. Accordingly, the Planning Commission issued a set of guidelines in 1969 and a scheme for strengthening the planning machinery at the state level was launched in 1972. Decentralization received further impetus during the fifth five-year plan when a number of area specific and Target group specific schemes were launched. Keeping in view the “location- specific” requirements of these plans the block was considered the proper unit for planning. The Planning Commission set up a working group under the chairmanship of Prof. M.L. Dantwala to draw up guidelines for block level planning. Simultaneously a committee was set up under Mr. Ashok Mehta to study the possibilities of local government in the light of new requirements. Block Planning however remained limited to a budgeting exercise. Gujarat and Maharashtra provided the lead in setting up the Zilla Parishad at the district level as the viable Unit of planning. During the Sixth Five year plan, the Planning Commission set up a working group under the chairmanship of Prof. Hanumantha Rao to examine the methodological aspects of planning. It was revealed that operationalisation of district level planning left a lot to be desired by way of a culture of decentralization which would concretize only in time, through persistent and genuine efforts.

Following a series of workshops involving District Collectors and Magistrates and pilot projects, district was accepted as the “ sub state-working Unit, within a system of multi level planning. In contrast to national and state plans, district plan represents the district as a multi-sector package of area investment package of area specific investment proposals, and institutional arrangements suited in the context.

The G.V.K Rao Committee on Administrative Arrangements for Rural Development and the Hanumantha Rao Working Group both dealt with the subject of district planning in

detail. While the Hanumantha Rao working group concentrated on modalities of operationalising district planning, the G.V.K Rao Committee concentrated on the contextual dimension, that is adapting district planning to the democratically constituted local bodies at the district level; the Zilla Parishads.

The following prerequisites of district planning were recognised by the two working groups:

- Political will and commitment
- A District Planning Body
- Setting up of a suitable machinery for planning
- Demarcation of Planning Functions
- Devolution of Financial Resources
- Delegation of administrative powers
- Public Participation in planning processes at all stages and training and retraining at all levels.

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## **19.6 TENTH PLAN PRIORITIES**

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The Tenth Plan has announced a shift from a 'resource plan' to a 'reform plan'. Plan implementation needs rectification. To that end qualitative aspects of planning as per administrative behaviors, process requirements, ecological context of planning et al are as vital as quantitative targets. Hence, the Tenth Plan has announced an unequivocal shift from macro, sector specific planning to broad spatial micro level planning. The roll back of the state paradigm of governance has been accepted, especially in areas where civil society is well institutionalized and government is performing inefficiently. Hence, stress would be on involving voluntary organizations (VOs) more closely with planning and implementation and make them perform more at the cutting edge level in citizen government interface. For that purpose, their core competencies would be built upon to enhance their potential further; build institutional bases where lacking, ensure better fund flow to voluntary organizations (VOs) through transparent processes and built in accountability mechanisms. Closer involvement with the PRIs is being mooted. More financial contribution for involvement would be elicited from the non-government sector. Database would be built up through Research and Development regarding innovative models of development proposed/devised by the VOs.

Strengthening monitoring mechanisms would be the focus to check plan progress. It has been noticed that existing mechanisms have not be used properly by the agencies responsible for plan implementation. Also, no visible effort has been made to strengthen existing mechanisms. In the absence of effective monitoring, there has been much wastage and spillage of scarce resources, which has gone unreported.

As per public choice approach, steps would be taken to improve the fiscal health of the government by proper pricing regimes for public utility services like water, power, irrigation etc. to ensure better revenue collection for the government and also infuse discipline with regard to their use for sustainable development, and cutting back subsidies.

Civil service reforms would be attempted through involvement of professionals on a

contract basis, ensuring transparency through right to information for people, instituting a just system of rewards and punishments, reducing scope for exercise of discretion, hence corruption be strengthening accountability mechanisms, balancing authority with responsibility at each tier (often former surpasses latter), rightsizing government through control of underemployment, elimination of unnecessary procedural controls and regulations that stifle entrepreneurial energy, breed corruption and affect the common man. This would involve rationalizing rules, proper documentation and notification, enforcing accountability of each official, fixing time frame for each decision and providing for legal and administrative recourse in case of *malafide*.

Project/Programme design should be attempted in a more professional manner with implementation responsibilities clearly divided and monitoring as per benchmarks.

Reengineering of processes and rules would be attempted through E governance to provide SMART (simple, moral accountable, responsive, transparent) user-friendly administration.

Rationalisation of centrally sponsored schemes and central sector schemes would be carried out through mergers where many schemes are found to serve similar purposes. Introduction of new schemes, strictly as per need. Rationalization through the 'Cafeteria Approach' whereby, states choose required schemes from a motley mix offered. All of these measures are designed to curb waste and make the plan implementation process efficient.

Project linked reform assistance has shown good results and would be persisted with. Reference is to Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP), Accelerated Power Development and Reform Programme (APDRP), Urban Incentive Facility (UIF) and Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana (RSVY).

To get over information constraints, the NRDMS targets for the X Plan (2002-2007), regarding data availability for local level planning are:

- Establishment of NRDMS District Centres
- A laboratory for NRDMS Methodology in Karnataka
- Promote R&D initiatives for
  - a) Improvements in database management
  - b) Development & adoption of new techniques for data generation & analysis
  - c) Promote NRDMS methodology for
    - i) Land & water systems analysis
    - ii) Bio-Geo database for Ecological modeling for Himalaya
    - iii) Landslide studies
    - iv) Coastal Zone Management & Conservation

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## 19.7 CONCLUSION

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Hence, the idea of decentralised planning has been mooted which is area specific and resource based instead of a macro resource development exercise since expected betterment of quality of life through spin off effects of state development plan schemes did not translate into practice. Focus is now on improving processes of plan implementation

and monitoring of plan progress for meeting preset targets. The civil society would participate more actively in plan formulation and implementation. Vigorous efforts would be made to evoke peoples' participation in required measure.

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## 19.8 KEY CONCEPTS

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- Gadgil Formula** : Before the fourth five-year plan there was no definite criteria for devolution of plan funds through the planning commission. Criteria were evolved in 1969. It has undergone revisions in 1969, 1980, 1990, and 1991. Broadly, tax effort, fiscal position, per capita income, population, efforts towards population control and family planning determine the quantum of allocations to states.
- NRDMS** : Natural Resources Data Management System (NRDMS) - an S&T programme of the Government of India has been launched by the Department of Science and Technology(DST) to catalyse the evolution of methodologies and techniques for formulating development strategies. In a scenario of large diversity of data sets, data users and data generating agencies, the Programme aims at developing and demonstrating the use of spatial decision support tools for integrated planning and management of resources at the local level.

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## 19.9 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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## **19.10 ACTIVITIES**

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- 1) Discuss the limitations of macro level planning.
- 2) Explain issues involved in micro level planning.