

Indian Planning Experience

A Statistical Profile



***Planning Commission
Government of India
January 2001***

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Planning Commission has completed 50 years of its setting up on 15th March, 2000. We thought it appropriate that at this juncture of our development it would be useful to bring out a statistical profile capturing five decades of planned economic development in India. The intention was to document the successes as also the failure of our efforts. We have not entirely succeeded in our objective, for the reach and scope of such an exercise is truly immense. However, I do feel that a fair amount of information, both at the macro as also at the sectoral level, has been compiled in this document.

At the time of independence, with the launching of a national planning process, we opted for a mixed economy, guided by the principles of democratic socialism. The public sector was visualised as having a crucial role in guiding and directing the economy towards the objectives of growth, modernisation, self-reliance and social justice. We embarked on a strategy of five-year plans, anchored in a 15 year rolling perspective plan. The five-year plans were to be operationalised through successive annual plans. The principal task of the Planning Commission, in this context, was to formulate the five year and the annual plans for the most effective and balanced utilisation of the country's material, capital and human resources, appraise from time to time, the progress in their implementation and suggest adjustment of policy and such other measures that were considered necessary in light of these appraisals.

In discharging its functions, in the decades so far, Planning Commission has been largely confined to undertaking investment planning of the economy by focussing, primarily, on its planning and allocative functions. These involve distribution of plan funds between the Centre Sector Plan and the Central Assistance to State Plans as also across Ministries / Departments in the Central Sector. Intrinsic to this exercise is the process of plan formulation-delineating programmes and projects of priority in various sectors- their review in terms of impact, monitoring and the requisite follow-up. Of late, it may seem that this exercise has lost some of its importance on account of dwindling share of public investment to the total investment in the economy and also due to changing economic policy regime and administration, which is placing an ever-greater reliance on the market to deliver on the nation's development goals. It has also been observed that in the face a fast paced integration of the economy with the emerging global order, the instrument of investment planning is no more the only, or the more predominant, or even the most effective means of pursuing development goals. However, the relevance of

planning for overseeing and coordinating the process of capacity building in crucial social and physical infrastructure sectors, continues to be as important, demanding and urgent as ever before. It is true that aside its areas of core competencies and relevance, the role of State and, hence, of Planning has to gradually move away from direct intervention in economic activity in general and production process in particular, towards facilitating an environment that encourages individual initiatives. Against the background of these developments, the role of Planning Commission as a “Think Tank”—a repository of expert knowledge—for the nation has to be strengthened. We, in the Planning Commission, are taking up this issue seriously, and evolving an institutional structure that enables the Commission to discharge, more effectively, its role as a Think Tank for the Government. An important facet, perhaps, of this role is to make available relevant data and research findings of retrospective and anticipatory nature for providing a convincing basis for policy analysis and development options. This document is a small step in this direction.

The compilation and presentation of this document has been undertaken by the Plan Coordination Divisions from information forwarded by various Divisions in the Commission. I would like to make special mention of the contribution and tireless efforts of Shri Rajeev Malhotra, Deputy Adviser, in putting together and bringing out this Profile. Ms. Kusum Makkar, Senior Research Officer took up this work very ably. Shri Anil Kumar has assisted in preparing and printing the many drafts of this document. I hope that the effort they have put in, along with Shri Sanjay Nanda of Space Communications in designing and layout of this document, is found useful by planners, academicians and researchers engaged in policy making and analysis.

Saxena

N C Saxena

Secretary, Planning Commission

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