

CHAPTER – 9

Backward Area Sub-Plan

The State Government is concerned about the need to remove the micro level regional disparities/ imbalances in terms of creation of infrastructural facilities in Backward Areas. With this in view, identification of certain areas as backward was taken up way back during the Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74) and efforts were made to identify remote and inaccessible areas which remained neglected due to their inaccessibility and difficult geographical and harsh climatic conditions prevalent in these areas. The basic criteria decided for this purpose was remoteness, inaccessibility, coupled with visual perception of the level of socio- economic development and infrastructural backwardness. This process gave birth to the formulation of the Backward Area Sub Plan which was designed to mitigate the micro-regional disparities in development and to look after the developmental needs at the micro level for these identified areas.

9.1 Initially some areas were identified as backward in nine districts of Himachal Pradesh., based on the recommendations of the Deputy Commissioners. Later, a committee was set-up under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, HP Government on 13th March, 1979 to go into the following issues.

1. To examine the existing set of norms for identification and declaration of backward areas and recommend suitable changes in the structure and weight age of the indicators/norms;
2. To examine the existing scheme of earmarking plan allocations for development of backward areas and recommend suitable changes in deciding the level of earmarking and sectoral coverage;
3. To suggest appropriate budgetary mechanism to ensure investment of earmarked provisions in the designated backward areas;
4. To examine the question of unit of declaration;
5. To suggest an appropriate monitoring and review mechanism to ensure effective implementation of development plans in the designated areas.

9.2 The State Govt. issued Notification declaring 321 Panchayats as backward vide notification No. PLG-FC(F)3-55/82 dated 10-1-1986. After this identification, exclusive earmarking in the budget under separate sub heads in various demands was introduced, which continued upto 1994-95.

9.3 Government of Himachal Pradesh framed a comprehensive policy, during the year 1995-96, for the development of backward areas. The present, Backward Area Sub-Plan came into existence because of this policy of the State Government.

9.4 Backward Area Sub-Plan mainly consists of the following components:-

- (A) Identification and declaration of areas as backward;
- (B) Socio-Economic Development of areas declared as backward through the mechanism / intervention of BASP; and
- (C) Periodic review of areas declared as backward as per the decision of the State Government.

9.5 Based on the policy adopted during the year 1995-96 the total number of backward panchayats in the state was 489 as on 16th July, 2004.

9.6 As a result of re-organizing of panchayats in the State in 2004, 23 more panchayats were added in the list of backward panchayats in 2004. 39 more panchayats were added in this list in the year 2006, increasing the total number of backward panchayats to 551. This number has remained unchanged since then.

(A) Identification and Declaration of Areas as Backward:

The objective criteria for the identification of backward areas in Himachal Pradesh for declaring any area as backward is as under:-

1. Remoteness and Inaccessibility:	<u>Weightage</u>
(a) The geographical centres of the area under consideration should be at least 15 Km. away from the main motorable road.	25
2. Demographic Indicators:	
(a) The percentage of Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe population in the area under consideration should be 25 percent or more.	15
(b) Average density of population per Sq. Km. should be 25 or less.	5
(c) Ninety percent of the total workers population in the area under consideration should be workers engaged in the primary occupation like Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, etc.	5

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| (d) The percentage of school going children in 6-14 years age-group in the area under consideration should not exceed 20 percent. | 10 |
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3. Infrastructural Indicators:

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| (a) The percentage of scarcity villages with reference to drinking water should be 60 percent or more. | 10 |
| (b) The percentage of electrified villages to total should be 25 percent or less. | 8 |
| (c) The number of health institution in the area should not exceed one. | 8 |
| (d) The area under consideration should not be served by a bank branch as per RBI norms. | 5 |
| (e) There should be no veterinary institution in the area | 5 |

4. Agricultural Indicators:

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| (a) The average holding size in the area under consideration should be one hectare or below. | 3 |
| (b) The percentage of cropped area under major cereals (Wheat, Maize and Rice) or remunerative cash crops like potato, apple, tea, etc. to the gross cropped area should not exceed 50 percent. | 1 |

Total	:	<div style="border-top: 1px dashed black; border-bottom: 1px dashed black; display: inline-block; padding: 0 5px;">100</div>
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5. Identification process of Backward Areas:

- (i) The scoring of indicators is done on an absolute basis and the qualifying score for declaring an area as backward has been kept at 60 percent;
- (ii) The unit for declaration of an area as backward would be as compact as possible for administrative purposes and the smallest units to be considered for this purpose is the panchayat circle.

(B) Implementation Mechanism of Backward Area Sub-Plan:

The Mechanism / intervention of Backward Area Sub-Plan and its salient features are as follows:-

1. The Backward Area Sub Plan comprises of three categories viz:-
 - (a) **Backward Blocks:** All Blocks having 50% or more panchayats notified as backward are declared “**Backward Blocks**”.
 - (b) **Contiguous Pockets:** Group of five or more than five Backward Panchayats forming a contiguous geographical area are called “**Contiguous Pockets**”.
 - (c) **Dispersed Panchayats:** The panchayats other than above mentioned (a) and (b), are called “**Dispersed Panchayats**”.
2. All such Panchayats which have been carved out from the existing notified Backward Panchayats, are also declared as Backward.
3. Backward Area Sub-Plan is operational in ten districts of the State (except tribal districts). Tribal areas are being taken care of under separate Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP).
4. Earmarking of the sectoral outlays is done for the following thirteen heads of development:-
 - i) Agriculture.
 - ii) Soil Conservation (Agriculture).
 - iii) Horticulture.
 - iv) Minor Irrigation.
 - v) Animal Husbandry.
 - vi) Forestry.
 - vii) Village and Small Scale Industries.
 - viii) Rural Roads & Bridges.
 - ix) Elementary Education
 - x) General Education.
 - xi) Rural Health (Allopathy)
 - xii) Ayurveda.
 - xiii) Rural Water Supply.

5. Both beneficiary and area oriented approaches are being adopted for the development of declared backward areas.
6. The outlays earmarked for the Backward Area Sub-Plan under various functional major heads are budgeted under Demand No.-15-Planning and Backward Area Sub-Plan.
7. The “Backward Area Sub-Plan” is administered through the Deputy Commissioners. Deputy Commissioners have been declared as controlling officers for this Sub-Plan.
8. All the District Planning Officers have been declared as DDOs for all the Capital heads. DDOs of the concerned departments in the districts operate only revenue heads under the Sub Plan. The District Planning Officer helps the Deputy Commissioner in implementation, physical & financial monitoring of all schemes under the Sub-Plan.
9. District Planning, Development and 20-Point Programme Review Committees (DPDCs) have been authorized for formulation, implementation, Monitoring and review of the schemes under Backward Area Sub-Plan.
10. District Planning, Development and 20-Point Programme Review Committees (DPDCs) have also been authorized to make departmental / inter- Sectoral diversion of approved Budget from one sector to another Sector/ Scheme, keeping in view the specific needs of the area for undertaking infrastructural development. Therefore, complete and absolute freedom has been given to the DPDCs which can direct the concerned department(s) and get scheme(s) executed through the locally available infrastructure.
11. Generally, the implementing agencies are the concerned line departments. However, in exceptional circumstances the DPDCs may decide to assign implementation to other agencies, depending upon the exigency of a particular situation.
12. To facilitate the quick execution of the schemes, concerned Deputy Commissioner of the district has been authorized to accord administrative approval and expenditure sanction for all the schemes which hitherto rested with the concerned Administrative Secretaries / 11. Head of Departments. Thus, absolute decentralization of powers have been given to DPDCs through this concept.
13. During the year 2008-09, all the revenue liability of departments falling under BASP have been provided in the Non-Plan side of Demand No.-

15 under BASP. Thus, the plan funds earmarked under this Sub-Plan are only for capital works which have been proposed at Rs. 2000.00 lakh in the Annual Plan 2011-12.

14. To regulate and avoid any abnormal fluctuations in the expenditure under BASP, the State Government has issued instructions during 2001 to spend the budget of BASP in the following controlled manner:-

1 st Quarter	25%
2 nd Quarter	40%
3 rd Quarter	25%
4 th Quarter	10%

15. The quarterly budget authorization under BASP to the districts is made on the above mentioned criteria.
16. The budget allocation to the districts is made in proportion to the number of declared Backward Panchayats of the district.
17. There are eight backward declared blocks in the State. The district wise detail is given below:-

District-wise detail of Backward Blocks

Sr.No.	District	Name of Backward Block
1	2	3
1	Chamba	1. Tissa 2. Salooni 3. Mehla
2	Kullu	1. Ani 2. Nirmand
3	Mandi	1. Darang 2. Seraj
4	Shimla	1. Chhohara
Total :		8

18. As stated earlier, a total number of 551 Gram Panchayats out of 3243 Panchayats in the State have been declared as Backward Panchayats. The district-wise break-up of these backward panchayats is as under:-

District-wise break-up of Backward Panchayats

District	Total No. of Panchayats	Total No. of Panchayats Declared Backward
1. Bilaspur	151	15
2. Chamba	283	159
3. Hamirpur	229	13
4. Kangra	760	17
5. Kullu	204	79
6. Mandi	473	149
7. Shimla	363	83
8. Sirmaur	228	26
9. Solan	211	7
10. Una	235	3
11. Kinnaur*	65	-
12. Lahaul & Spiti*	41	-
Total:	3243	551

* Tribal areas are being taken care of under separate Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP).

(C) Periodic Review

i) The process of the periodic review of declared backward Panchayats is under process as per the decision of the State Government taken in the review meeting of Planning Department held under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Chief Minister HP on 22nd July, 2008.

ii) During the policy review in the year 2008, the Government of Himachal Pradesh decided to review the policy for implementation of Backward Area Sub Plan in the State. An exercise was undertaken to see how many backward panchayats in the State have come out of the backwardness as per the existing norms. It was found out after a detailed analysis that if existing norms are used, only 11 panchayats out of 551 backward declared panchayats qualify for being backward and all other backward panchayats have since developed, to come out of the backward panchayat category. A comprehensive exercise is on to revise the norms for declaring panchayats in Himachal Pradesh as backward; and a view is likely to be taken shortly by the State Government on the proposed revised norms and the list of revised backward panchayats based on these revised norms.