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Subject IV

Review of the Eleventh Plan – Implementation and Impact Study at State/District level with Special Reference to Agriculture and Rural Development

Rapporteur: L.P. Swaminathan*

Given the overwhelming importance of agriculture in providing livelihood to the majority of rural population, agriculture and rural development have always engaged the attention of planners and policy makers. Growth rate in agriculture decelerated to 2.50 percent during 10th plan period. A plethora of schemes/programmes have been initiated to correct the sorry state of affairs to revive and accelerate the agriculture and allied sectors. Allocation to agriculture and allied sectors was increased to 100.27 percent and irrigation and flood control to 118.60 percent during Eleventh Plan. The analysis and documentation of the impact of these programmes by undertaking empirical studies is essential to suggest remedial solutions.

In total ten papers were submitted for discussion and all have been accepted. Of the ten, four were published in full length and six were published as summaries. Of these published papers two full length papers and two summaries were presented by the authors in this session. The rapporteur's report raised the following issues for discussion and these issues were discussed in detail.

- i) In National Rural Employment Programme- it was mentioned that the nature of the assets created and the effect on income and consumption are to be looked into. During discussion it was felt that studies specifically focusing on these issues are yet to be undertaken. The two papers on NREGA presented in the session raised some important issues.
- ii) There was a wide gap between the number of applicants for job cards and the actual job cards issued. The reasons could be that discrimination by the local leaders in issuing job cards or the applicants not interested in getting the card after application.
- iii) Regarding the nature of assets created it was felt that there is not much technical support regarding the location and the type of assets to be created by the panchayats.

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- iv) It was also discussed whether the providing employment should be focused on one per family or for all eligible persons.
- v) The issue of minimum wages and the NREGA wages were also discussed. In some places minimum wages are higher than the NREGA wages. The group felt that NREGA is meant for the poorest of poor so if some people can get wages higher than at NREGA, they can as well avail that option.

It was also found in case of the tribal population the response to NREGA was good and over the years the amount of employment generated reduced, this was because there was not much work available in the village for work.

So finally it was concluded that government should give adequate technical response to the local governments to create quality assets.

In fact the issue of National Food Security Mission received less attention since there was only one paper on this. In many states achievements fell short the targets. The fund allocated was not spent. The poor governance was felt as the important cause for this.

The participants also raised the issues of synergy between Rashtria Krishi Vikas Yojana and NREGA. It was felt that they can be very well coordinated. e.g. If a farm pond is identified by RKVY it can be carried out by NREGA.

Finally the reviewer suggested that the experiences of some of the high performing states like Gujarat and Bihar could also be discussed in this session. There was no representation from these two states to highlight the dynamics of these success stories. However it was pointed out based on a study conducted in Gujarat that factors like effective implementation of watershed programmes, effective groundwater recharge through percolation ponds, large scale implementation of micro-irrigation, wider adoption of GM cotton and implementation of Jyothi gram Yojana could be the probable reasons for faster growth of that state.