

Foreword

Today, the process of liberalization and economic change is sweeping the country, and indeed the world. Madhya Pradesh is a part of this process of economic change. This change is expected to bring about more rapid economic growth. At the same time, it is now universally recognized that rapid economic growth does not always automatically ensure an improvement in the lives of the poorest. Conscious, focused action is needed to step up the pace of human development and improve the well being of the people. Social investments in education, health, nutrition, and water are both an end and a means of progress, meeting human needs today as well as enabling more equitable growth in the future. This is the broad perspective in which we have prepared the Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report.

Within this overall perspective, how is the Report relevant for Madhya Pradesh? Over the last forty years, both in absolute and relative terms, much progress has been made towards eradication of poverty in the State. Similarly, our progress in education and health has been significantly better than the progress in most other States. However, this progress is not enough for us. Because of the historically low baselines, the State continues to lag behind the all India attainments in these areas.

Our Government is committed to ensuring that the lives of the people of the State improve until they are at least as well off as in the most advanced States in the country. We have taken several new initiatives to promote rapid poverty reduction and human development by putting people and their well being at the centre of the development process. I see this Report as a necessary complement to our thrust to strengthen the social sectors and expand opportunities for rural employment through a synergy of popular empowerment through Panchayat Raj and the Mission approach. We have therefore consciously prepared this independent Report, and set out in this Report a diagnostic balance sheet of the state of human development in Madhya Pradesh today. It is my hope that the Report will help all of us in the State, collectively and individually, at whatever level and of whatever persuasion, to come to grips with today's realities, and spark the demand for more rational resource allocation decisions. For us, the Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report is a critical input in focusing priority attention on the issues of education, health and livelihood security, and in helping to accelerate the pace of progress in these areas of human development so fundamental to improving the lives of the poor in our State.


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