

Foreword

I am told that in politics we get no marks for reporting on what is real but we should instead keep promising to deliver. This perhaps inhibits us from developing a new kind of politics that takes people into confidence and discusses the state of development with them in a manner that shares concern and urgency to provoke collective action. The Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report that we initiated in 1995 was intended to do this. Looking back I am happy that it was received mostly in the spirit it was intended.

We saw the Madhya Pradesh Human Development Report 1995, as a necessary analytical complement to our thrust to strengthen the social sectors. By bringing out an independent Report, we had tried to map the gap in attainments and thereby make decision on rational resource allocation. I believe that the 1995 Report made an important contribution in focusing priority attention to the issues of human development, and helped in mainstreaming human concerns into the development discourse of the state as well as the country.

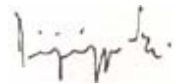
In this, the second such Report, we have attempted to carry forward the message of the 1995 Report. As the same time, since a state government with responsibilities for action cannot rest content with analysis, we feel that such a Report must also report on action. In this Report, apart from touching upon select issues relating to livelihood security and empowerment not addressed earlier, we have attempted to set out at some length the distance traveled since the last Report. There has been significant progress in many areas, less so in some others, and more still needs to be done. However forward to accelerate human development and improve the life of the people of Madhya Pradesh.

The work in Madhya Pradesh needs to be measured not merely on the basis of how much we have done on human development indicators, but in the manner in which we have sought to do it. The empowering of grassroots institutions, revitalisation of community management structures and creation of a participatory framework of action need a larger time-frame to consolidate. The process has begun. We achieved the major goal of universalising access to primary education by shifting to a community centred and rights-based model through the Education Guarantee Scheme that we pioneered. Implemented by communities and gram panchayats, the scheme as it works through, strengthens both schooling and panchayat raj and is leveraging the entire school education sector towards decentralised management. Watershed Management work when executed through peoples' watershed committees create grassroots organisations that are as or more important

than the engineering structures in the watersheds. These are only examples of how we have tried to work on a human development agenda through people's institutions and through the process strengthen both.

In this Report we have also aimed at increasing transparency and depth in the presentation of district level information and strengthening information on human development, which we hope will enhance its practical utility to representatives of the people, administrators, researchers and all those interested in human development in Madhya Pradesh. I trust that the 1998 Report will, like its predecessor, continue to provoke thought, comment, debate and reaction and keep our attention focused on the unfinished agenda of human development. Above all, I would be happy if the Report serves, as before, as a guide to people oriented action, reinforces the movement towards greater rationality in resource allocation decisions, and thereby contributes towards equal opportunities to all the people in our state to realise their potential.

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate Dr. Amartya Sen whose vision has inspired much of our government's work. I will also like to salute the memory of Dr. Mahbub-ul Haq whose pioneering advocacy carved out a place of Human Development Reports.



Digvijay Singh
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