

Outlook

The combined effects of economic growth and measures for direct interventions for poverty alleviation have translated into impressive decline in the incidence of poverty in the recent past. With a sustained growth momentum and launching of the major initiative for creation of rural employment in the form of the NREGS, this trend will continue in future. Progressive increase in the coverage of this programme from the current level of 200 districts to the whole country in the next five years, effective implementation along with transparency through the Right to Information Act and accountability through decentralized Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) are expected to make a permanent dent on the incidence of unemployment and poverty in the country.

There has been a consistent upward trend in the public expenditure on the social sectors both by the Centre and the States. This trend will continue with the launching of certain major initiatives undertaken during 2005-06.

Coverage under various programmes in the social sector has been considerably enhanced during the Tenth Plan. This is true of the sectors of elementary education, primary health care, nutrition, water supply, welfare and development of the backward classes, and programmes for development of women and children etc. The focus under many of these programmes is likely to shift from universalisation of the coverage or quantity to improvement in delivery or quality of the programmes. A number of new initiatives launched during 2005-06 specifically aim at achievement of these objectives. In the coming years, there will be greater stress on improvement in the quality of elementary education being imparted, quality of primary health care being delivered, quality of water supply and creation of productive assets through wage employment programmes. This will ensure tangible human development which will enhance capacity building of the people and improve the opportunity for their productive participation in the growth process.