

CHALLENGES AND OUTLOOK

10.70 With the objective of inclusive growth taking centre stage, the Government has strengthened its efforts for social sector development in recent years. Expenditures of the Government of India on social services and rural development have more than doubled over the last four years. Impressive outlays on education, health, water supply and housing indicate the emphasis which Government places on these sectors. These expenditures have supplemented sustained high level of economic growth in achieving better social sector performance and improvement in the quality of life. Several initiatives have been launched, especially for the poor. Programmes like the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, Aam Admi Bima Yojana and Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana, can go a long way in improving the living conditions of the common man in the remotest part of the country. Proper implementation of these programmes is essential. Consequently the role of States and district administrations responsible for the implementation of the welfare schemes is vital.

10.71 Along with higher economic growth and poverty reduction, there has been an improvement in many important social indicators like life expectancy, infant mortality rate and gross enrolment ratios at primary level of education. However, disparities continue at the State and regional level. Better governance and improved service delivery are essential to ensure that leakages are plugged and the funds under the welfare schemes reach the intended beneficiaries to the maximum extent. Local governments and panchayati raj institutions as well as social and non-government organizations can play an important role in this area. It is essential that these higher outlays result in better outcomes. To achieve this objective, the Government has taken the initiative of introducing outcome budgets.

10.72 The Eleventh Five Year Plan also aims at reducing poverty and the disparities across regions and communities. The pattern of funding also has the objective of making States more self-reliant. Proper monitoring and evaluation against the laid down benchmarks along with the use of modern technology like e-governance can help in ensuring that higher outlays result in better outcomes and more inclusive growth.

