I am very pleased to introduce the first Human Development Report for Punjab. Human development is defined by the United Nations Development Programme as enlarging the range of people’s choices. The most critical of these wide ranging choices are to live a long and healthy life, be educated and to have access to resources required for decent standard of living.

Punjab has the distinction of being one of the most prosperous state in the country. India’s transition from a food importing country to a country not only self-sufficient in food grains but as a food exporter, is in large measure a success of the Green Revolution spearheaded by Punjab. The state also has high levels of achievement in education and health sectors. However, there is still a lot of scope for improvement.

The gains of development have not benefited all equally. The Punjab Human Development Report highlights the disparities in the levels of achievement among the various sections of the society. I am confident that this report would enable the formulation of future strategies for further improving the human development attainments in Punjab.

I would like to thank the Planning Commission, Government of India, and the United Nations Development Programme for all the assistance and support provided for the preparation of this report and look forward to future cooperation in following up the messages of this report. I also thank the ‘Sanket’ and Economic & Statistical Organisation, Punjab, Department of Planning, for preparing this report.

August 28, 2004

(Captain Amarinder Singh)
Message

Punjab has a creditable record of development. It is the trendsetter state in the green revolution strategy adopted during mid-sixties. It is not only the country’s largest granary but also plays a crucial role in defending India against military aggression. India’s journey from a country, which had to import food-grains to one, which now produces a food surplus has been led by Punjab. The enterprise and hard work of the Punjabi farmer and the support provided by both Central & State Governments have contributed in crucial ways to Punjab’s agricultural dynamism.

However, amidst prosperity, pockets of deprivations remain amongst sections and areas. In other words, the benefit of development has not reached equally to various sections of the population or to people living in different regions of the State. In particular progress has been uneven in the field of education, health & nutrition despite the remarkable growth of the economy. In this background under the dynamic leadership and guidance of the Hon’ble Chief Minister, the State Government had undertaken the preparation of the first Human Development Report as part of its commitment to “people-centred” development. This report is an important research-cum-policy document, which focuses on the current levels of the achievement, area of the concern and possible ways of progress with reference to crucial socio-economic indicators. The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and objective assessment of the status of human development within the state to help in deciding inter-sectoral as well as inter-regional financial allocations and enable us to identify areas that require particular policy attention. With this in mind I am extremely pleased to share the report with the people of Punjab and all who have stake in the future progress of this strategic state.

August 31, 2004

(Surinder Singla)
Message

We congratulate the Government of Punjab for preparing its first Human Development Report.

The state of Punjab occupies an extremely important position in India. India's transition from a food importing country to a country not only self-sufficient in food grains but as a food exporter has been spearheaded by Punjab.

Yet, as the report highlights, the remarkable achievements of the state have not been equitable. Development in Punjab has had a gender dimension, a class and caste dimension and even a geographical dimension to it. The Punjab Human Development Report analyses the challenges faced by agriculturists, the backward sections, the migrants and women in the state.

Punjab is at a more advanced stage of development than most other Indian states and is currently facing second generation development challenges. The state can once again lead the nation by demonstrating how to overcome these challenges, as it did during the Green Revolution.

We once again felicitate the Government of Punjab for preparing its Human Development Report and hope that the report will give an impetus to the Government’s effort towards equitable development.

Rohini Nayyar
Adviser (RD), Planning Commission
Government of India

Maxine Olson
UNDP Resident Representative &
UN Resident Coordinator
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A unique feature of the Human Development Report for Punjab, is that it has been prepared by a well-known non-government agency, namely Sanket, having rich experience and expertise in preparing State Human Development Reports. The aim of assigning this report to a non-government agency was to have an objective view of the reality of the Punjab state. We wish to thank the Sanket team that prepared the report – Mr. Sandeep Dikshit, Mrs. Romila Dhawan, Ms. Monika Banerjee, Ms. Deeksha Vasundhara, Mr. Rajkumar, Ms. Sutiksha Mishra and Mr. Devkant Tripathi.

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A.R. Talwar, IAS
Secretary to Govt. of Punjab
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Contents

Foreword iii
Messages iv
Acknowledgements vii

Chapter 1
Introduction 1

Chapter 2
Punjab: A Background 11

Chapter 3
Economy and Livelihoods 31

Chapter 4
Health in Punjab 61

Chapter 5
Education – Building People 93

Chapter 6
Women and Children – Facets of Human Development 111

Chapter 7
Dalits – On the Margins of Development 143

Chapter 8
Migrant Labour – Problems of the Invisible 155

Chapter 9
The Agriculturist in Punjab 167

Chapter 10
An Agenda for Human Development 179

Technical Notes

Statistical Tables 193
District Profiles 211
Glossary 229
Abbreviations 231
References 235
List of Tables

Table 1.1 Human Development Index for India – Combined 5
Table 1.2 Human Development Index – 1991 6
Table 1.3 Human Development Index – 2001 8
Table 1.4 Gender-related Development Index in Punjab – 2001 8
Table 3.1 Average Annual Compound Growth Rate of Gross State/National Income (in Percentage) 32
Table 3.2 Percentage Share of Capital Formation of Gross State Domestic Product of Punjab 33
Table 3.3 Percentage Distribution of Net State Domestic Product of Punjab at Factor Cost at Constant Prices (at 1980–81 prices) 34
Table 3.4 Distribution of Workforce in Punjab 35
Table 3.5 Decennial Rate of Growth of Per Hectare Returns at Cost A1, B2, and C2 40
Table 3.7 Livestock Population in Punjab – 1977, 1990 and 1997 (in lakhs) 44
Table 3.8 Composition of Milch Animals in Punjab – 1997 44
Table 3.9 Agricultural Labour in the Total Workforce of Punjab, 1971, 1981 and 1991 45
Table 3.10 Distribution of Main Workers in Punjab (in Percentage) 46
Table 3.11 Number of Non-Agricultural Establishments and Persons usually Working 47
Table 3.12 Trend of Growth Rates in Output of Manufacturing and Agricultural Sectors of Punjab 50
Table 3.14 Selected Indicators of Industrial Progress in Punjab (in percent) 52
Table 3.15 Industrial Workforce in Punjab – 1971, 1981 and 1991 Census 52
Table 3.16 Value of Exports and Industrial Production of Industrial Goods in Punjab, 1974–75 to 1998–99 55
Table 3.17 Share of Industrial Workforce in Public and Private Sectors in Punjab 1971–98 55
Table 4.1 Life Expectancy in the Indian States 62
Table 4.2 Life Expectancy by Sex and Place of Residence (1992–96) 63
Table 4.3 Ranking of Districts by Life Expectancy in Punjab, 1981 and 1991 64
Table 4.4 Infant Mortality Indicators by Place of Residence 66
Table 4.5 Regional Estimates of Infant Mortality Rate in Punjab, 1992 67
Table 4.6 Age Specific Share of Deaths to Total Estimated Deaths in 1996 (in Percentages) 69
Table 4.7 Age Specific Mortality Rates of Women in Punjab 69
Table 4.8 Estimate of TFR for Punjab 70
Table 4.9 Number of Persons Ailing per 1000 (Population) in Indian States 71
Table 4.10 Rate of Prevalence of Diseases of Poverty by Place of Residence and Estimated Number of Patients, 1993 71
| Table 4.11 | Broad Category-wise Outdoor Patients, Indoor Patients treated and Number of Deaths among Indoor Patients in Punjab, 1999 | 72 |
| Table 4.12 | Cases Treated at the De-addiction Centre, Mohali (November 1991–December 1998) | 76 |
| Table 4.13 | Hospitalised and Non-Hospitalised Treatment Received in Punjab and India | 77 |
| Table 4.14 | Public Medical Institutions in Punjab by Location and Ownership, 2000 | 78 |
| Table 4.15 | Public Medical Institutions in Punjab by Type of Institution, 2000 | 79 |
| Table 4.16 | Population Served per Medical Institution, per Bed, per Medical and Paramedical Personnel in Punjab | 80 |
| Table 4.17 | Number of Children Expected to be Born in 2001 per 1000 Females in the Reproductive Ages | 82 |
| Table 4.18 | Targets and Achievements of the Immunisation Programme in Punjab, 1999–2000 | 84 |
| Table 4.19 | Vaccination Coverage in Punjab as per NFHS I and II, and, NSS 52nd Round, 1995–96 | 84 |
| Table 4.20 | Villages Covered under Rural Drinking Water Supply Schemes in Punjab (Year 2000) | 85 |
| Table 4.21 | Number of Households per 1000 Using Different Processes to Clean Drinking Water | 87 |
| Table 4.22 | Types of Latrines and Types of Drainage Used per 1000 Households in Punjab | 88 |
| Table 4.23 | Budget Allocation for Health in Five Year Plans | 89 |
| Table 4.24 | Expenditure on Medicine and Public Health by Government of Punjab, State Budget 1998–99 | 90 |
| Table 5.1 | Literacy Rates by Sex in Punjab (in percent) | 94 |
| Table 5.2 | States and Union Territories Ranked by Literacy Rate, 2001 | 95 |
| Table 5.3 | Ranking of Districts by Literacy (in percent) | 96 |
| Table 5.4 | District-wise Data on the Rural-Urban Divide and Percentage Decrease in Rural-Urban Differential | 98 |
| Table 5.5 | District-wise Literacy Rates by Sex | 99 |
| Table 5.6 | Comparative Male-Female Literacy Rates in Punjab | 99 |
| Table 5.7 | District-wise Male and Female Literacy in Urban and Rural Areas, Punjab, 2001 | 100 |
| Table 5.8 | Decadal Decrease in Illiteracy Rates of Males and Females, 1991–2001 | 101 |
| Table 5.9 | Estimated Enrolment Rates in Primary Schools in Punjab, 1999 | 102 |
| Table 5.10 | Year-wise Provision of Schools | 103 |
| Table 5.11 | Teacher-Student Ratio at the Three Levels of Education | 103 |
| Table 5.12 | Graduate and Post Graduate Education Institutions in Punjab | 104 |
| Table 6.1 | HDI for Indian States, 2001 | 114 |
| Table 6.2 | Gender Equality Index (GEI) for Indian States, 1991 | 115 |
| Table 6.3 | HDI and GEI for Indian States, 1991 | 116 |
| Table 6.4 | HDI and GDI for the Districts in Punjab | 116 |
Table 6.5  Ranking of Districts by Sex Ratio: 1991 and 2001  
Table 6.6  Sex Ratio of Punjab and its Districts 1901 – 2001  
Table 6.7  Sex Ratio in the 0-6 age Group for Punjab and its Districts  
Table 6.8  Districts with the Lowest Child Sex Ratio in India, 2001  
Table 6.9  Age-specific Mortality Rate by Sex and Residence, 1997 (Punjab)  
Table 6.10  District-wise Total Infant Mortality Rate, Male Infant Mortality Rate and Female Infant Mortality Rate for 1981 and 1991  
Table 6.11  Mortality Rate of Children Under 5 Years  
Table 6.12  Birth Rate and Total Fertility Rate in Punjab (1971–1997) by place of residence  
Table 6.13  Some Maternal Health Indicators of 15 Major States, 1995–96  
Table 6.14  Literacy Rate in Punjab  
Table 6.15  District-wise Literacy Rate in Punjab: 2001  
Table 6.16  Ranking of Districts by Sex Ratio and Literacy Levels 2001  
Table 6.17  Total Workers, Main Workers, Marginal Workers and Non-Workers as Percentage of Total Population, 1991 and 2001  
Table 6.18 (a)  Percentage of Main, Marginal and Non-Workers in Punjab by Sex  
Table 6.18 (b)  Ranking of Districts by Female Workforce Participation Rate and Sex Ratio  
Table 6.19  Representation of Women in Lok Sabha from Punjab 1952–1998  
Table 6.20  Representation of Women in State Legislative Assembly, 1952–1997  
Table 6.21  Corporators in Punjab as on 1.11.97  
Table 6.22  Number and Percentage of Electors and Voters in Punjab in 1999  
Table 6.23  District-wise Number of Crime Cases Against Women  
Table 7.1  Population of Major Scheduled Castes in Punjab, 1991  
Table 7.2  Population and Literacy amongst Scheduled Castes in Punjab, 1991  
Table 7.3  Literacy Rate amongst Scheduled Castes in Punjab in 1991  
Table 7.4  Sector-wise Share of Employment of SC and non-SC Community in Punjab in 1991  
Table 8.1  Estimation of Inter-State Migrant Labour in Punjab in late 1990s  
Table 8.2  Estimates of Total Migrant Workers in Punjab Agriculture  
Table 9.1  Occupational Distribution of Scheduled Castes, 1991  

Statistical Tables  
Table 1  Human Development Index 2001 – Punjab  
Table 2  Gender-related Development Index 2001  
Table 3  District Information  
Table 4  Demography  
Table 5  Sex Ratio  
Table 6  Sex Ratio (Children below 6 years)  
Table 7  Work Participation Rate  
Table 8  Land Use
Table 9 Percentage Distribution of Net State Domestic Product at Factor Cost by Sectors in Punjab at Constant 1993–94 Prices (percent) 198
Table 10 Percentage Distribution of Net State Domestic Product at Constant Prices (1980–81) for Punjab State 199
Table 11 Per Hectare Yield of Wheat and Rice in Punjab (kg.) 200
Table 12 Per Hectare Yield of Cotton in Punjab (kg.) 201
Table 13 Number of Non-Agricultural Own Account Enterprises by Major Activity Groups, 1998 202
Table 14 Transfer of Resources from Centre to Punjab (Rs. Crore) 202
Table 15 Advance-Deposit Ratio of Public Sector Banks 203
Table 16 Distribution of Registered Working Factories and Workforce Employed by Size-Groups 203
Table 17 Share of Manufacturing Sector Output of Registered and Unregistered Sectors in Punjab 204
Table 18 Growth of Registered & Working Factories and Workers Employed in Punjab – 1971–1999 204
Table 19 Growth Pattern of Small and Medium/Large Industries in Punjab, 1970–71 to 1998–99 205
Table 20 Structure of Output and Workforce Employed in the Manufacturing Sector of Punjab 206
Table 21 Life Expectancy at Birth 207
Table 22 Infant and Child Mortality 207
Table 23 Population Served per Medical Institution, per Bed, per Medical and Paramedical Personnel in Punjab 208
Table 24 Health – District-wise Number of Institutions 208
Table 25 District-wise Male and Female Literacy in Urban and Rural Areas, Punjab, 2001 209
Table 26 Infrastructure 209

List of Maps
Map 1 Punjab Human Development Index – 2001 7
Map 2 Punjab Gender Related Development Index 9

List of Boxes
Box 1.1 UNDP Human Development Reports 2
Box 2.1 Guru Nanak (1469–1539) 12
Box 2.2 Guru Gobind Singh (1666–1708) 13
Box 2.3 The Freedom Struggle 14
Box 2.4 Case Study of Village Barwali Khurd, Machchiwara Block, Samrala Tehsil, Ludhiana 19
Box 4.1 Ailments and Births in a Year 79
Box 4.2 Immunisation of Children 83
Box 4.3 Following the Example of Kerala 91
Box 5.1 Jomtien Declaration, 1990 93