

Approach to the Eleventh Five-Year Plan  
(2007-08 to 2011-12)  
for West Bengal

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## Approach to the Eleventh Five-Year Plan (2007-08 to 2011-12) for West Bengal

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### Prologue

While conceptualizing the Approach to the 11th Plan for our State, we have to take into consideration the basic determinants in today's globalized economic scenario. The process of liberalization of Indian economy that started in the 90s with the onset of globalization has had its telling effect on the economy of the State as well. The State Government which has to function within the framework of the Constitution of the country has little scope to make policies independent of the ones crafted at the national level. It is needless to mention that globalization and liberalization have not benefited the poor and the marginal. Rather, the effect of globalization, as evident from various data, has become disastrous for them. The opening up of Indian market has resulted in stiff competition between the indigenous products and foreign goods. There has been shrinkage of employment opportunities because of the gradual decay of the labour-intensive industries and rise of the capital-intensive industries. Cottage and Small Scale industries have also been exposed to fierce competition in the free market regime. The rate of growth of imports has been much faster than that of exports with the result that the gap between exports and imports which was only Rs. 3.8 thousand crore in 1991-1992 has increased by more than 50 times and has now crossed Rs. 2 lakh crore. The policies pursued by the successive Governments at the center have not only accentuated the alarming developments of the early 90s in the subsequent years but also contributed to their reaching an irreversibly critical turn in the recent years. These policies have again helped develop industrial sickness countrywide. The agriculture sector, too, has been severely affected due to these policies. "Jobless Growth"- the inevitable product of globalization and liberalization accompanied by deprivation of a large number of people of the basic opportunities of decent livelihood has exposed the society to new threats. It is a common feature in the underdeveloped countries. Additionally, West Bengal Human Development Report 2004 revealed areas of human development concerns and the need for specific areas for policy intervention. Such areas of concern encompass increase in landlessness, granting of land rights to women, urban rural income disparities, poverty alleviation linked employment generation programme, nutritional status of women and children, deteriorating status of public food distribution

system, sub-optimal health care delivery system, spatial and social pockets of illiteracy, regional imbalance in education provision etc. All these issues need to be addressed through programme efforts by the State Government during the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan. In the background of these grim realities, our State Government seeks to finalize the Approach to the 11th Five Year Plan with the clear understanding that it is a daunting task to achieve the basic objective of the Plan – to bring about qualitative change in the life of the people with an inclusive approach – in the present socio-economic system especially in the face of constitutional constraints and limited financial powers.

### General Economic Scenario of the State

In spite of the constitutional limitations and financial constraints of the State Government as discussed above, it has over the last three decades made sustained efforts to reach the benefits of the Plan to all sections of people particularly those belonging to the vulnerable groups. Land Reforms, Decentralized planning, setting up of Self-Help Groups in wide scale, Mass Literacy and “Health for All” programmes are the major policy initiatives that substantially benefited wide cross sections of people of the State. It is worthwhile to mention that Land Reforms measures, institutional framework in the form of PRIs, decentralized planning process, empowerment of the people with focus on women accompanied by synergy in activities of different departments have been the major contributory factors to the healthy growth of the State’s economy. It has achieved an average annual growth rate of 7.59% in its SDP (at constant prices) during the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan period, with the annual rate of growth showing a rising trend in the last two years, with 8.07% in 2005-06 and 8.20% in 2006-07. Its per capita income also increased at an average annual rate of 5.47% in this period. This growth in income in the 10<sup>th</sup> plan has also been accompanied by improving health status of the population in the state as evident in the significant decline in the birth rate, death rate and infant mortality rate at the end of 2005. According to the latest State-wise data published by Government of India (2005), the death rate in this State has fallen to 6.4 per thousand, which is not only lower than the All-India average (7.4), but also the lowest, along with Kerala, among all the States. The infant mortality rate in this State has now fallen to 38, which is again much lower than the All-India average (59) and the fourth among the States, after Kerala (14), Maharashtra (36) and Tamil Nadu (37). The birth rate in urban areas has also fallen to 12.6 which is lowest among the urban areas of all the States. Literacy in the State during the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan has also improved. According to NSS 60<sup>th</sup> Round

Report on Household Consumer Expenditure (January – June, 2004), overall literacy has increased to 72.2% in 2004 from 68.64% in 2001. In the health and education sectors not only have their outcome indicators improved during the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan, but also in both these sectors considerable progress has been made in improving and expanding the physical infrastructure as well as the quality of the available service. The SDP (at constant prices) from agriculture in West Bengal over the period from 1993-94 to 2003-04 has grown at an average annual rate of 3.64 per cent, which is not only much higher than the average annual rate of growth (1.53 per cent) of SDP from agriculture for all the States over the same period, but is also the highest among all the States (Source : Central Statistical Organisation, Government of India). For the remaining three years of the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan period, 2004-05 to 2006-07, the average annual rate of growth of SDP from agriculture has been 2.50 per cent, which would have been much higher but for the widespread floods affecting the agricultural production in each of these years. Moreover, according to the NSS 55<sup>th</sup> Round (1999-2000) 46.62 of the total workforce in the state was employed in the agricultural sector (inclusive of agriculture, animal husbandry, fishery and forestry sectors). In 2004-05 (NSS 61<sup>st</sup> Round) the agriculture sector employed 45.78% of the total workforce in the state. Thus, the share of the agriculture sector in the total workforce has declined only marginally during this period. On the other hand, as is usual, the share of the agriculture sector (as defined above) in total SDP (at constant 1999 – 2000 prices) has declined progressively from 30.86% in 2001-02 to 28.60% in 2003-04 and to 27.17% in 2004-05 as a result of the impact of differential sectoral growth rates. This implies that 45.78% of the State's workforce produced only 27.17% of the total State income. This relative overcrowding of the agriculture sector inhibits the intensification of the production process.

Despite this growth in agriculture, there is a significant scope of improving the per hectare yield of crops as well as increasing the cropping intensity through wider extension of irrigation facilities and adoption of comprehensive drainage and flood-protection schemes.

The growth in employment in the rural and urban areas of the state between 1999-2000 and 2004-05 (NSS 55<sup>th</sup> Round and 61<sup>st</sup> Round) has been 3.34% and 3.56% per annum, respectively. These growth rates were higher than the annual rate of growth of the labour force during this period. Moreover, combined (rural + urban) poverty (% below the poverty line) has declined from 27.02% in 1999-2000 (NSS 55<sup>th</sup> Round) to 20.60% in 2004-05 (NSS 61<sup>st</sup> Round).

The industry sector in the state, which was dominated by the traditional labour intensive industries at the beginning of the 9th plan, faced adverse situation because of the telling effect of the New Economic Policy (NEP) introduced by the Central Government in 1991. In fact, the new policy regime exposed this sector to uneven competition particularly from the products coming to the Indian market in the prevailing Free Trade Regime. Although a large number of new capital-intensive units were set up in the state specially from the late nineties, the production of these new units could commence only after a gestation lag. This new phase of the industrial development i.e. the gradual decline of the old traditional industries and coming on stream of new productive units with a lag, therefore, had a regressive effect on the movement of industrial production in the state. However, in the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan period, average rate of growth of GDP from organized and unorganized manufacturing sector was 7.4%. In 2005-07, this rate of growth has been 8.8% which clearly indicates that the state has been able to effectively counter the situation and face the challenges of the unfolding realities. This has been possible because of the enabling situation created by the State Government for more and more investment through a set of measures and policy initiatives appropriate to the demand of the ground realities.

Most other indicators of social and economic development have also been satisfactory during the 10<sup>th</sup> plan. Especially significant has been the average annual growth rate of 8.1% of the tertiary sector during the first three years of the 10<sup>th</sup> plan.

While the sectoral performance of the economy has been according to expectations during the 10<sup>th</sup> plan, further improvement in future will, however, be dependent on macro-economic stability in the country. Integral to this also is the State's ability to garner adequate resources for increasing public investment during the 11<sup>th</sup> plan not only for sustaining the investment demand in the economy but also to ensure an inclusive growth process.

## Objectives of the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan

Based on the performances during the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan period and considering the State Government's determination to frame pro-people, pro-poor, pro-marginalized sectors, pro-weaker sections policy measures which will improve the quality of life of the masses of the population the following broad objectives have been set forth for the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan.

### Human Development :

The premise of Human Development would be central to the planning vision of the Approach of the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan. The pillars of equity, efficiency, sustainability and participation would be the guiding factors. The growth process would be pro-poor pro-jobs, pro-women and pro-nature to ensure social political and economic inclusion. The inclusive approach would be broad based and go beyond target groups and beneficiaries. To emphasise the Human Development angle, it will be necessary to bring into focus the concept of Human Poverty in place of Income Poverty.

### Regional balance and removal of pockets of backwardness

In ensuring that the developmental efforts are instrumental to level off regional backwardness and barriers to growth in identified pockets, the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan would address issue of backwardness from locational/regional and sector specific deficiencies. The pockets of backwardness of 4612 villages would receive priority consideration for programme coverage during the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan. 5821 ITDP mouzas covering 113 blocks in 13 districts would be other priority areas for programme coverage and outreach. The regional backwardness of Sundarban and areas covered under Paschimanchal Unnayan Parshad and Uttarbanga Unnayan Parshad may also fall under this category. Human Development related backwardness, demographically backward districts, infrastructurally backward districts and backwardness of important sectors would be addressed to improve the locational and regional status as part of the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan.

Further for removing regional disparity the following approach would be undertaken:

- Reduce regional disparity by increasing the flow of government resources to the backward areas;
- Leverage credit from banks and funds from other sources to increase the livelihood options in these areas;

- In order to develop areas dominated by the scheduled castes and tribes and other minority communities, earmark additional departmental funds for the areas according to a prescribed formula ;
- Allocate plan fund based on status of HDI in the districts.

## Employment

Sustainable employment may be an important focused area of the Approach of the 11th Five Year Plan. It may be taken as a direct objective rather than being a byproduct of different sectoral initiatives. Since population, food security, education and remunerative employment are closely interlinked the employment objective of the 11th Five Year Plan may be based on these inter connectedness.

While food security has been achieved to a great extent, sufficient employment opportunities to have purchasing power is required to be ensured. Gainful employment is one of the most essential conditions for food security and economic security. Incidentally, food security is also an essential requirement for raising the productivity of the labour.

In addressing the employment objectives of the 11th Five Year Plan efforts may be made to take care of rural and urban employment problems separately. While in the rural areas On farm employment opportunities out of programme initiative of watershed development programme, expansion of irrigation activities, raising crop yield through labour intensive programme and diversification of cropping pattern through cash crops specially horticulture and vegetables may be undertaken, the Off farm employment opportunities may be provided to downstream processing, packaging, distribution activities etc. Agri business and other agriculture and allied initiatives may be promoted.

In the urban area SME sector may be the central focus as it is better insulated from the volatility of the world trade and the capital market. It is also the vehicle for new technology adoption and entrepreneurial development. In this area the scope of employment for unskilled, semiskilled, skilled and professional would be appropriately addressed. Textiles and SSI are also important sub- sectors for providing substantial employment.

The emergence of self-help groups and its linkage with sustainable employment would be other area that may be addressed during the 11th Five Year Plan with required skill up gradation entrepreneurship development, credit support and marketing link-up.

## Nutrition and Health

NSS enquiries on consumption have been showing that a small percentage of West Bengal households are reporting their perception of not having enough food for all members. While such reports may not be reliable, the matter can not be ignored. Every effort will be made to provide food security to the poorest households some of whom may be suffering from semi-starvation and related diseases.

- Provide nutrition security (i.e. nutritious food at an affordable price) to all, specially to the vulnerable sections like women, children and the backward communities;
- Ensure preventive and curative health care of acceptable quality for all with special attention to women, children and the old;
- To ensure that the coverage of all immunization programmes is 100% in respect of the target groups;
- In order to achieve health security (i.e. health care at an affordable cost) for the poor, develop and expand the infrastructure for the health sector, especially in the rural areas;
- Monitor the health status of the population in terms of tractable targets for different health indicators including nutrition.

## Environment, Forest, Shelter, Drinking Water and Sanitation

- Ensure a healthy environment by reducing air, water and noise pollution especially in urban areas and safeguard environmental norms in all spheres.
- Concerted action to improve solid waste and bio-medical waste management;
- Renovation and upgradation of sewerage system of old towns;
- Extensive afforestation to preserve & protect the ecological balance;
- Promote social forestry for reclamation of waste land as also for providing alternative income sources for the poor;
- All out efforts to provide shelter and safe drinking water for all households;
- All out efforts for universal coverage of sanitary latrines.

## Education

In order to improve the capability of the poor achieve 100% literacy;

- To make special effort to ensure 100% literacy among girls from backward and minority communities;
- To further enhance the capabilities of the poor, achieve universalisation of elementary and secondary education and to ensure enrolment at the higher secondary level of all those who pass the secondary level and are willing to continue school education ;
- Reduce dropout rates and improve the retention ratios at all levels of school education;
- To make all out efforts to eliminate `dropouts' at the primary level totally;
- Improve the infrastructure at all levels of school education, specially at the elementary level with provisions for pucca school building, adequate space for pupils, separate toilets for girls and boys and drinking water sources;
- Improve the quality of education at all levels of school education by recruitment of trained teachers and provision of scientific teaching materials;
- Focus on proper training of teachers and to ensure 40:1 pupil-teacher ratio at the elementary level;
- To make all out efforts to eliminate existing social and gender gaps and to increase the enrolment of girl students specially from SC and ST, tribal and minority communities;

In order to focus attention on the significance of welfare of minority communities and women, sub-plan for allocation for these groups, along with existing sub-plan of SC & ST, will be introduced.

- In order to increase the scope of employment for the school leaving students introduce vocational training courses in all schools at least from the secondary level;
- Expand the technical education facilities at the degree and the diploma levels commensurate with the demand for technical personnel in the economy and to encourage private investment in the technical education sector;
- A manpower plan with estimates of requirement of various types of technical skill and specification need to be drawn up.
- Introduce computer education in all secondary, higher secondary schools and colleges and to tie up private sector on setting up of computer education centers;

- Expand the capacity of college level education in tune with the rising number of school leaving students with emphasis on expanding the capacity for technical and functional courses at the college level;
- Expand the intake capacity of the universities and explore avenues for introduction of modern courses relevant to the economy at the university level.

## Gender

To make all out efforts to eliminate all gender discrimination at the household, work place, educational centres and in the wage - salary structure, etc. and to take more proactive steps for increasing the representation of women at all levels of governance and administration;

- To have Gender Plan under State Annual Plan and also at the respective District Plan covering cross sectoral issues relevant to gender initiatives.

## Land and Water

- Extension of Land Reform measures and distribution of vested lands to the landless with special emphasis on SC/ST and other socially and economically backward sections of people.
- Reclaim waste land and other degraded land for extending the area under cultivation;
- Draw up a 'habitation policy' for the state so as to minimize the attrition of agricultural land;
- Prepare a land use map as a background to formulate land use policy for the state severely restricting the use of agricultural land for non-productive use;
- Conserve water by promoting the cultivation of less water-intensive crops. Limit the use of ground water by relying more on surface water. Encourage rainwater harvesting even in urban housing projects;

## Strengthening Decentralized Planning

- Rural and urban local bodies to design their Eleventh Five Year Plan based on district vision out of their own resources and also through other tied and untied fund provided by the Government.

- Strengthen the decentralized planning process by involving the people in formulation and implementation of plans from the village level up to the district level.

- Promote increased involvement of people in formulation of G.P. plans through the Gram Unnayan Samity and Municipal Plan through Ward Committee.

- The District Plan to be formulated after consolidating the Panchayat and the municipal Plans and would form a part of the state plan.

- Metropolitan Plan would also form a part of the State Plan.

Some of the above objectives have been quantified in terms of monitorable targets.

## Target Growth Rate of the State Domestic Product for the West Bengal Economy during the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan

The West Bengal economy registered an average annual growth rate of 7.11% (in its SDP (at constant prices) between 1994-95 and 2001-02. Its per capita income increased at an average annual rate of 5.51% in the same period. In the 10<sup>th</sup> plan (first three years) West Bengal continued to post 'over 7%' growth in its SDP and 'over 5%' growth of its per capita income.

These growth rates could be achieved when the state was facing severe fiscal crisis especially in the later years of the 9<sup>th</sup> plan and during the 10<sup>th</sup> plan period. Moreover, it is expected that there will be significant improvement of performance in the agriculture and allied sectors in the 11<sup>th</sup> plan period. It is also expected that the manufacturing sector will register a growth of 10%. It will be the state's endeavour to increase the growth from the agriculture sector to 4% per annum. As the production structure in agriculture is broad based, such a growth will have significant impact on the quality of life in the rural areas and could, through generation of off the farm activities, reduce the dependence on cultivation. Thus an annual growth rate of the State Domestic Product (at constant prices) ranging from 9% will be the target for the 11<sup>th</sup> plan.

Monitorable Targets for the 11 <sup>th</sup> plan		
Annual Growth Rate of SDP (at constant Prices) (%)	9%	
	Rural	Urban
Annual Growth in employment (%)	3.34	3.55
Expected Annual Growth Rate of the Labour Force (%)	3.29	3.39
Target for Poverty reduction in the terminal year of the 11 <sup>th</sup> plan (% of persons below poverty line)	Below 10%	5 to 6%
Target for vital statistics at the end of the 11 <sup>th</sup> Plan	Rural	Urban
i) Birth Rate *	18.5	11.5

ii) Death Rate **	6.2	5.6
iii) Infant Mortality Rate ***	26.5	20.0
Enrolment Ratio (%) at the end of the 11 <sup>th</sup> plan	Rural	Urban
i) Primary	100	100
ii) Upper Primary	100	100
iii) Secondary	100	100
	Rural	Urban
Water Supply	100% full coverage of habitations and population	100% coverage of population
Village Electrification	100% coverage as well as intensification of power system in all villages	

\* No. of live births per thousand population

\*\* No. of deaths per thousand population

\*\*\* No. of infant deaths per thousand live births

## Basic Strategy

The state, in keeping with the basic objective of increasing the scope of livelihood of the masses, has carried out land reforms and provided crucial non-land inputs to the beneficiaries of the land reform measures so as to allow them to take up productive activities. In other sectors also the state's policy has been to encourage and facilitate the economic activities of the small producers. These policies together with the intensification of the panchayat based decentralized planning process have directed the growth of the economy towards benefiting every section of the society.

However, in recent years it has been experienced that it is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain such a small producer centric economic system because of the competition from larger economic entities following the liberalization of Indian economy. While some of these emerging trends have far reaching consequences it remains a fact that over the past two decades and a half the ability of the state to bring large segment of the rural and urban poor into the productive fold has created the demand base for a sustained growth of the state's economy. The growth in agricultural production, rapid increase in small scale and unorganized manufacturing units specially in the rural areas as well as growth in the service sector and the consistently high growth in per capita income, together with the rapid improvement of the health indicators and the reduction of rural and urban poverty (which was around 50% in the mid-seventies) have proved the efficacy and effectiveness of the strategy. It is, therefore, the policy of the State Government to pursue this basic strategy and to synchronize it with the unfolding realities both at the national and global levels. However, within the broad ambit of this small producer centric strategy, newly emerging problems as in the agricultural sector during the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan, will be addressed through a judicious mix of government intervention and market trends. In the following sections, sectoral policies and objectives are discussed in detail.

## AGRICULTURE

### Slowdown of agricultural growth

In the agriculture sector during the 10<sup>th</sup> plan, the growth in the production of the main crops in the state was far below the expectation. Although actual production of crops like aus, aman, and boro fluctuated near the maximum achieved during 2001-02, production of none of these crops crossed this maximum. The production of wheat, oilseeds and pulses has generally been lower than their production in the base year of the 10<sup>th</sup> plan (i.e. 2001-02) except for the odd year. What is more pertinent is that the yield rates of most of these crops have stagnated during the 10<sup>th</sup> plan.

### Reasons for the slowdown of agricultural growth

The cost of production of most crops has increased significantly in recent years without commensurate increase in the price of these crops. This is specially true for the staple aman rice crop. According to available data (Source : Farm Management Studies of 1999-2000 to 2000-2001), while value of main product (aman paddy) from 1 acre of land increased by 5.22%, its paid out cost of cultivation for 1 acre increased by 22.02%. Between 2001-02 and 2004-05, the corresponding figures were 21.6% and 30.13%. This has been the trend for most major crops except in particular years when specific factors like decline in production or other local factors like increase in procurement or spurt in demand, etc. have jacked up crop prices.

In addition, in recent years there have been repeated floods adversely affecting vast cropped areas and thereby preventing what could have been a much higher growth in agricultural production. This calls for introduction of comprehensive drainage and flood-protection schemes.

### Distress of marginal farmers

The marginal farmers with very small operational area have been more adversely affected than those with relatively larger holdings. Thus, monthly receipt from cultivation for farming households with operational area below one hectare was below their consumption expenditure per month. These farmers in order to meet their consumption needs had to earn income from activities other than cultivation. This also holds to a lesser extent for farmers in

the 1 – 2 hectares operational size class. Only farmers in the higher size classes of 2 – 4 hectares and 4 to 10 hectares seems to be faring well from cultivation [Source : NSS 59<sup>th</sup> Round Report on Consumption Expenditure of Farmer Households (2003)].

### Poverty of farmers

Poverty estimates (% of persons below the poverty line) for farmer households show that poverty was higher among farmer households than in the general rural sector.

### Advantages from owning land

Although the marginal fragmented holdings are in general unviable, ownership of land bestows a number of advantages to a rural household. It ensures greater availability of credit. It provides security in adversity. Farmers earn some income, however meager, from these tiny plots. Moreover, West Bengal is a land scarce state. Intensive utilization of land in the state is a must. Small farmers use the land more intensively than big farmers through higher cropping intensity. According to the NSS, 59<sup>th</sup> Round Report on Income, Expenditure & Productive Assets of Urban Households (2003), highest record of production and employment generation per hectare is obtained from the lands of small and marginal farmers. It may also be noted from the NSS data (55<sup>th</sup> and 61<sup>st</sup> Rounds) that between 1999-2000 and 2004-05, the rate of growth of employment (Current Daily Status) in rural areas of West Bengal has been 4.46% which is much higher than the corresponding all India figure (2.86%).

### The fragmentation of land holding

Fragmentation of land holding is a major problem of the agriculture sector. Increased productivity of the tiny plots will arrest the problem. Another area of intervention will be to generate additional employment opportunities in the rural sector. To sustain the achievements of the land reforms, the State Government will consider the positive recommendations of the Expert Group of Planning at the Grassroots Level and involve the Panchayats in a more decisive manner so that the interests of the poor and marginal farmers are adequately protected.

## Overcrowding in the agriculture sector and the need for the development of the food processing industries

Over-crowding in the agriculture sector is an issue that the State Government will address on the basis of the present realities & available opportunities.

An exercise carried out showed that with rising yield rate and somewhat stagnant demand for the staple rice, a large cultivable area presently under rice could be released for other crops. Thus if area is diverted to the horticulture crops and huge investments in post harvest infrastructure take place, the potential for rapid growth of the food processing sector would be created. This would create substantial employment opportunities in the rural areas and reduce the overcrowding in the agricultural sector. The expanding market opportunities nationally and globally will also be tapped to ensure steady growth of this sector.

Attempt will also be made to use the area released from the cultivation of the staple crop for animal husbandry (fodder cultivation). The rapid growth of the animal husbandry sector would also allow absorption of some of the farmers engaged in cultivation. The growth of this sector as well as that of the fishery sector will also be consolidated through creation of sector specific infrastructure. The development of these sectors would also generate downstream processing units. Horticultural products, animal husbandry products and even fishery provide scope for value addition and, therefore, have multiplier effect on employment. In other words, serious efforts will be made to transform the agriculture to agribusiness to the best interest of the farmers.

The growth of rural industries like handloom, sericulture and other unregistered manufacturing industries will also be paced up and integrated with the sectors integral to the overall growth of rural economy.

The new entity of micro industries (discussed later in the section on village and small enterprises) that provides scope for financial as well as other assistance to the large number of rural units in the manufacturing and service sectors will also be encouraged as a part of developing the agriculture sector. In addition, attempt will be made to attract large-scale industrial investment during the 11<sup>th</sup> plan, for having a compelling effect in absorbing some of those employed in the agriculture sector. In fine, a two pronged strategy of rapid industrialization and the process of agricultural growth through increased productivity, diversification, modernization and agribusiness will be pursued to combat the problem of over crowding in the agriculture sector.

### Intensification of the cultivation process and land holding size policy

The falling prices and rising cost of cultivation could impel the more dynamic of the cultivators to intensify the cultivation process through mechanization. They could also resort to leasing in more land. The process has already started in the state. Farmers mainly having 4 to 10 hectares of land are resorting to this. If the practice is emulated by the small and marginal farmers widely, it is likely to develop a new pattern in the agriculture sector. The State Government will consider intervening in this regard within the existing legal framework if situation so demands.

### Public investment in agriculture

Despite the actual expenditure (CAG) data, showing that the plan expenditure of the State Government in agriculture and rural development has increased from Rs. 1,899 crore in the ten year period from 1985-86 to 1994-95 by nearly 100% to Rs. 3,622 crore in the next ten year period from 1995-96 to 2004-05, and that State's plan expenditure in irrigation and drainage has increased from Rs. 1,122 crore in 1985-86 to 1994-95 by more than 100% to Rs. 2,601 crore in 1995-96 to 2004-05 there is a need for further enhancement of public expenditure in this sphere.

While these structural factors impede productivity enhancing activities by the cultivators, the stagnancy in the yield rates of most crops in the state in recent years is also related to the declining public sector investment in the agriculture sector. A large increase in public investment in the agriculture sector is, therefore, imperative to increase agricultural productivity and induce private investment.

### Measures for increasing the productivity of crops

Every effort will be made to increase the productivity of different crops. The distribution of improved variety of seeds of different crops will be ensured. The benefits from using these seeds, as well as from adapting improved farming techniques will be popularized among farmers through proper extension activities. Extension personnel will be properly trained so as to impart the latest technical inputs to the farmers. Knowledge Centres will be set up at the Block and G P levels under agricultural graduates to provide technical assistance to farmers at their farm gates. Infrastructures will be developed to percolate the benefits of scientific research and technological innovations to the farmers. Agro clinics will be

organized and crop doctors will be pressed into service for providing training in improved practices from sowing to harvesting as well as to motivate the farmers for correct choice of crops so as to increase the productivity of land to the benefit of small and marginal farmers. Field applications of biotechnology will be made after taking due care against intrusion of genetically modified crops. The Universities of the State where agricultural research occupies pride of place will be effectively utilized to achieve the desired objectives. Other requirements like irrigation, soil conservation, reclamation of wasteland etc. that are necessary to increase the productivity of existing cultivable land and to extend it further will also be adequately taken care of.

## HORTICULTURE

### Measures for increasing the production of horticultural crops

The horticulture sector is one of the focused sectors in the 11<sup>th</sup> plan period. The basic objectives in this sector would be to provide modern technology for crop cultivation to the small and marginal farmers, ensure improved pre and post harvest management and arrange for processing and marketing of different products from the sector.

Farmers will be made aware of the improved practices for cultivation of horticultural crops and encouraged to diversify from traditional crops to plantations, orchards, vineyards, flowers, fruits, medicinal and aromatic plants.

Joint sector projects for production of hybrid seeds for different horticultural products will be promoted without interfering with the environment.

The number of pack houses, cold storages, cold chains will also be increased significantly.

Availability of good quality planting materials will be ensured through setting up of progeny orchards, nurseries, etc. Additional numbers of Agri-Export Zones for different products will also be set up and the proposed ones for cashew nuts and floriculture etc. will be followed up vigorously.

### The need for the development of infrastructure

As already noted, post-harvest infrastructure will be developed either through private investments or PPP. NABARD schemes in this area will be given special attention. As much of these infrastructures could have multiple uses, the possibility of co-promotion of these

infrastructures with animal husbandry, fishery, agri-marketing and agricultural departments will be explored. Similarly, vigorous extension services will be pursued in the horticulture sector to promote modern production techniques.

### Promotion of food processing industry

Every effort will be made to increase the flow of investments to the food processing industry. The State has already made significant headway in this sector and the achievements already made will be sustained through appropriate policy measures and promotional activities.

## AGRICULTURE MARKETING

The Agriculture Department marketing oversees the development and regulation of the agriculture-marketing infrastructure in the state. The major objectives in this sector during the 11<sup>th</sup> plan will be :

- Amendment of West Bengal Agriculture Products Marketing (Regulation) Act in consonance with Draft Model Act by GOI;
- Intensive application of PPP model in agri-marketing business;
- Introduction of direct marketing by the farmers through active farmers' marketing societies;
- Provide trading facilities to farmers in various markets;
- Formation of a Potato Development Board;
- Provide funds for market development under NABARD schemes;
- Creation of terminal markets for fruits and vegetables.
- Connect the department, directorate, State Marketing Board and all Regulated Market Committees through WAN (Wide Area Network).
- Develop infrastructure like link roads, godowns, shops, etc. in Regulated Markets.
- Strengthening of the State Marketing Board.
- To make concerted efforts for marketing of traditional crops like jute.
- Linkage with Jute Technology Mission, National Bamboo Mission, etc.
- Setting up of agri-business centers.
- Commissioning of cold storage and cold chains in consultation with other departments.

- Setting up of commodity exchanges to function as Risk Management Institutions for Agriculture Marketing.
- Strengthening of procurement of rice by emphasizing the collection of paddy at a fair price from the farmers through the SHGs and cooperatives so that the benefits of fair price can reach the cultivators, and at the same time through the PDS to the common consumers and beneficiaries of employment and anti-poverty programmes.

## AGRICULTURAL CREDIT

### Increase in flow of credit in recent years

The availability of adequate and cheap credit will be a major initiative for marginal and small farmers to thrive. In recent years, the flow of credit to the agricultural sector has improved. In 2004-05, Rs. 1962.53 crore of credit was provided to the agriculture sector, which was 80.46% of the target. In 2005-06, the flow of credit to the agriculture sector was Rs. 2970 crore; this was 83% of the target. It will be ensured that the flow increases in the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan.

### Measures to improve the flow of credit

Restructuring and the strengthening of the cooperative sector will be expedited as the efficient functioning of the sector is crucial to the overall rural growth during the 11<sup>th</sup> plan. This apart, the role of SHGs has become increasingly important in providing micro-credit in the rural areas. The State Govt. will take full advantage of the Central Government initiatives in this regard and ensure that the SHGs could access to the credit from the banking sector.

## IRRIGATION

In this sector the general strategy in the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan will be to rely more and more on surface water sources and minimization of overuse and misuse of ground water in order to avoid over - withdrawal of ground water.

### Major irrigation

In the major irrigation sector, the Teesta Barrage Project (TBP) has made halting progress. It has the target for creating irrigation potential of 5.27 lakh hectares. This is the biggest on-going irrigation project in the country. Given that TBP project seeks to create irrigation potential in the six backward North Bengal districts, the project is of national importance and should be funded by the Central Government. Moreover, if even a part of the Subarnarekha Barrage Project (SBP) is taken up under the Bharat Nirman programme , it will be a big leap-forward. This apart, new avenues will be explored to harness irrigation potentials as a step towards maximizing output in this sector.

The necessity to carry out flood control measures has created a fund crunch and the state is finding it difficult to execute the maintenance and repair of existing major and medium irrigation of projects. Thus, apart from the Subarnarekha Barrage project, extension, renovation and modernization of a few components of completed major and medium irrigation projects require to be included in Bharat Nirman Programme. The funding pattern under Bharat Nirman Programme should be 75% (grant of Government of India) and 25% state's share.

As the emphasis in the 11<sup>th</sup> plan will be on utilization of surface water on an increasing scale, special importance will be given to the completion of the 7 on-going medium irrigation schemes. A number of other medium irrigation projects will also be taken up. Instead of concentrating on large irrigation projects, which takes years to complete and are difficult to finance, it would be the attempt of the State Government to take up some medium irrigation projects. These will allow the creation of additional irrigation potential in a very short time.

### Flood and erosion control

The State across the districts is subject to devastating floods and cyclonic disasters almost on a regular basis requiring large State investment during flood and also for post-flood restoration works. For flood protection measures the State Government spends through plan

schemes sizeable amount for maintenance and upgradation of the major and medium irrigation projects. There is urgent need to take up long term flood protection measures by way of taking up Subarnarekha Barrage Project, Ganga-Padma erosion protection measures, Bhagirathi-Hooghly river protection system and Ichhamati flood zone related works under Bharat Nirman Programme. Since the State Government incurs significant expenditure on the flood control schemes, adequate sharing of future expenditure should be made by the Government of India particularly keeping in mind national level importance of several of these schemes.

#### Task Force

Following the flood of 2004, a Task Force was constituted by the Government of India to look into the problem of recurring floods in Assam and neighbouring States as well as Bihar, West Bengal & Eastern U.P. under the Chairmanship of Central Water Commission with suitable items of reference. The task force submitted its report on 31.12.2004.

Under centrally sponsored schemes, a bunch of schemes approved by the TASK FORCE shall be taken up during Eleventh Five Year Plan on anti-erosion works in the Ganga Basin.

#### Minor Irrigation & Water Investigation and Development

In the minor irrigation sector every effort will be made to prevent over-exploitation of ground water. In this context, the West Bengal Ground Water Resources (Management, Control and Regulation) Act, 2005 will be effectively implemented to control misuse of ground water sources. Water harvesting tanks, percolation tanks, etc. will be effectively used in checking surface runoffs during monsoon and help in the conservation of surface water and in recharging the underlying aquifer.

The inclusion of minor irrigation projects proposed by the state and also the Repair, Renovation and Restoration of Water Bodies Scheme under Bharat Nirman Programme would give a fillip to the development of minor irrigation potential in the state.

In addition, the matter of sanctioning of the World Bank financed minor irrigation project as well as the Government of Japan financed similar project will be taken up with the Government of India. Attempt will be made to begin these projects in the early years of the 11<sup>th</sup> plan. Project for Accelerated Development of Minor Irrigation for creating additional irrigation potentials (ADMI) is also sought to be implemented in the State with the assistance of the Govt. of India.

The envisaged Centrally Sponsored Project of Artificial Recharge to Ground Water and Rain Water Harvesting will not be confined to the districts of Bankura, Purulia and Paschim Midnapore but extended to Blocks where ground water assessment has shown that complete recuperation of ground water has not been achieved after the monsoon.

The process of handing over minor irrigation schemes set up by the public sector agencies in consultation with the Panchayats to the beneficiaries for operation and maintenance will be accelerated. Guidelines will be provided to these committees on the basis of assessment of their functioning.

## SOIL CONSERVATION

West Bengal has 22,32,600 hectares of degraded land which is 29.07% of the total non-forest land in the state. Accelerated and wider implementation of soil conservation schemes will be attempted during the 11<sup>th</sup> plan. As most schemes for soil conservation fall under the Centrally Sponsored Natural Resources Management Programme, state resources will be effectively utilized to leverage larger flow of funds from the Central Government. This is a crucial programme as restoration of degraded land on a large scale would add to the cultivable area of the state.

The degraded areas, moreover, will be indicated at the Block/Mouza level in suitable maps so that in case the land cannot be restored within a reasonable cost, alternative use of the land will be considered. Advanced scientific & technological know-how including GIS will be fully utilized to achieve the set targets in this sector.

## ANIMAL RESOURCES

As of now, the production of different animal husbandry products in the state is too inadequate to meet the minimum nutritional norms for these products. The usual policy of stock up-gradation, providing health care and arranging for feed, have been trotted out over the successive plans. However, these measures have not resulted in a marked development of the sector.

### Shortage of land for fodder cultivation

One of the problems is that the 'green matter', recommended in the feed mix for cattle, is not available in the state in sufficient quantity. According to a rough estimate 'green

matter' required for the cattle population in the state in 2000-01 would have required 6.30 lakh hectares (assuming an average yield rate for grass). In 2011 using the estimated consumption of green matter by the projected cattle population, the area under fodder/grass would be around 7 lakh hectares. In 2004-05, the total grazing ground available in the state was 4.5 thousand hectares. Even if land under miscellaneous trees and groves (which is 58.5 thousand hectares), is included, the State will be nowhere near the requirement for green fodder. According to official data the state has 130.02 thousand hectares under fodder. This is also much lower than the required area.

#### Animal husbandry not profitable

The cost of concentrates and other annual feed in the state is on the higher side. It is necessary to formulate alternative fodder policy so that farmers have access to cheap feed which will allow them to take up cattle rearing on a profitable basis. This apart, the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan will attempt development of adequate infrastructures for milk processing and milk collection. The best practices in other parts of the country will be effectively utilized.

#### Need for cheap feed for poultry

In the poultry sector, high cost of feed also constrains the growth of layers since they have to be fed a longer period than broilers. This erodes the profitability of layer rearing. It has to be seen that Cheap poultry feed is made available. In formulating policy on cheap cattle and poultry feed the assistance of experts and universities will be taken.

## FISHERY

#### The need for accelerating the area under fisheries

In the fishery sector the coverage by FFDA of water bodies each year needs to be enhanced. There is a perceptible decline in the pace of extending fish farming to hitherto unutilized water bodies. Of the total 2.76 lakh hectares of impounded water area, about 70% to 79% is presently under fish culture. In other water bodies the utilization is much lower except for sewage fed fisheries. Fuller utilization of these water bodies at a rapid rate will considerably improve the rate of growth in fish production. The 11<sup>th</sup> Plan's objective will be to address this area seriously.

### Development of infrastructure

Considerable development of the infrastructure for the fishery sector is necessary. With a developed infrastructure in place, the state could look for markets outside the state. Although the state has been exporting prawns, fish production dependence on other states for meeting domestic requirement of fish will have to be reduced through accelerated growth of fish production. The scope for food processing in the fishery sector will also be explored.

## FOREST

### Strengthening of joint forest management groups

West Bengal has about 5000 villages within 2 km. from forest boundaries. Strengthening of Joint Forest Management (JFM) groups is necessary to protect vegetative cover. A case-by-case approach in determining the functioning of JFM in West Bengal will be carried out and suitable measures taken in the light of objective analysis of the situation.

### Objectives in the forest sector

The major objective in this sector is to extend the green cover in the state, and in pursuing this objective the social and other forests programmes will be so tailored as to ensure long term social benefits as well as to generate employment besides meeting the local demands for firewood etc.

## SUNDERBANS DEVELOPMENT

### Profile of Sunderbans

Sunderbans is a backward deltaic region. The major problems in this region are inadequate communication facilities and limited livelihood opportunities.

In Sunderbans, 45% of the population belongs to backward communities against the state average of 28.5%. Only 12% of the cultivable land is irrigated and the cropping intensity is only 120 against 180 for the state. Thus most of the area is mono-cropped.

Although 85% of the population in the region depends on agriculture, only 30% of the workforce is actually employed in agriculture. The unemployed workforce is 63% of the population.

Without livelihood opportunities, the poor in Sunderbans intensively exploit the available natural resources. This puts severe strain on the ecological balance in the area. Thus, the Sunderban Biosphere Reserve is continuously under threat. The West Bengal Human Development Report 2004 has suggested a number of measures for accelerating the pace of development of this region. The State Government will, therefore, take comprehensive strategy to address the special requirements of the region.

### Strategy for the development of Sunderbans

The most important policy measure contemplated is extension of the irrigated area through sweet water harvesting and other suitable methods to open scope for the cultivation of a second crop. Scope for horticulture crops will also be explored. Besides, construction and maintenance of embankments to protect the inhabited and cultivable areas, construction of roads, bridges and culverts to improve communication, development of marketing infrastructure like modern markets, godowns, cold storages, etc. and to provide facilities for skill formation relevant to the region in order to improve scope for non-agricultural employment will be major initiatives. Afforestation on an extensive scale, especially of mangrove plantations with the involvement of the people to arrest decline in green cover in forest fringes will be taken up. An integrated and inclusive development strategy ensuring participation of the local people and strengthening the local administration including the Panchayat Raj bodies will be pursued.

### **PASCHIMANCHAL UNNAYAN PARISHAD**

As planning initiative for special area programmes in the five districts in the Western part of the State Paschimanchal Unnayan Parshad was constituted in May, 2000 comprising 74 blocks in districts of Purulia, Bankura, Paschim Medinipur, Birbhum and Burdwan to effect integrated development in the red laterite dry zone inhabited predominantly by Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and mostly by people below the poverty line. This initiative was instrumental to meet unmet needs of critical gap of plan fund of rural local bodies. The works taken up under this programme were additive in nature to meet the demand driven locally felt priority developmental schemes of the weaker community in the format of restoration/reclamation of agricultural land, development of rural roads, extension of irrigation facilities, extension of educational facilities, dwelling units for the poor and safe drinking water etc.

A new department namely Department of Paschimanchal Unnayan Affairs has been created by the State Government to ensure focused outcome out of the plan initiatives of all the departments working in the region. The department will also work on coordination of development schemes and projects executed by government functionaries in the region, besides looking after social planning as well.

The focus during the 11th Five Year Plan will be :

- enlarge irrigation potential by practicing rain-water harvesting and artificial ground water re-charge on a wider scale;
- Introduce crop diversification with high value commercial crops like horticulture, floriculture, fodder, medicinal plants, maize, bio-diesel etc.;
- Increase supply of fuel, fodder, food fibre etc. to protect forest area along with improvement of cultivation and marketing of Kendupata and Babui;
- Improve the animal health care by increasing fodder production and availability, extension of veterinary care services, breed improvement with the self-help groups;
- Develop solar electrification in the non-electrified area;
- Increase supply of safe drinking water ;
- Promote educational facilities by way of augmentation of infrastructural support including adult education;
- Improve health care system in the area with mobile health van for the remote areas;
- Encourage low-cost rural residential houses for the tribal groups.
- Ensure road connectivity along with bridges or culvert where it is absolutely necessary.

## SPECIAL AREA PROGRAMME FOR NORTH BENGAL

Six districts of North Bengal namely Coochbehar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur and Malda are relatively backward on ground of geophysical conditions including erosion, floods and lack of infrastructure. For restoring regional balances within the State Uttarbanga Unnayan Parshad was constituted in the year 2000-01. The Parshad was required to formulate and implement schemes for comprehensive development of the areas of the district through the Panchayats, the urban local bodies, government authorities and the NGOs located in North Bengal. This special area fund was utilized broadly under two categories, for example, (a) Uttarbanga projects having inter-districts

implications and (b) projects for meeting critical gaps in the District Plan. A revolving fund of Rs. 50 lakh was also set apart for development of markets for the districts.

In order to ensure that programme initiatives of this Special Area Programme of North Bengal are properly addressed the Parshad has been constituted with Chief Minister of West Bengal as Chairman and with Members of Ministers of North Bengal, MLAs, Sabhadhipatis of Zilla Parishad and District Magistrates. Commissioner, Jalpaiguri Division is the Member-Secretary. The Parshad in its periodical meeting monitors the programme and ensures its quality outreach. It also ensures programme convergence of other plan implementing departments working in North Bengal. The Special Area Programme has been fairly successful in improving the regional balance.

During the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan the priorities of the Uttarbanga Unnayan Parshad would be as follows:

- Agriculture & Minor Irrigation;
- Irrigation & Flood Control;
- Soil conservation;
- Industry-Small Scale and agro-based Industries;
- Infrastructure Development-Road, Bridges, Culvert & Drain etc.;
- System equipment – Power Supply;
- Education Sector : Construction of Schools & Colleges;
- Health Infrastructure for improvement of health services and health care facilities.

## RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The successful implementation of rural development programmes is integral to the involvement of the rural poor through the three tiers of the Panchayat system in formulating, implementing and monitoring of schemes. The state has a functioning decentralized planning system for over two decades. The State Government is determined to further consolidate the achievements in this area and to create enabling situation for wider participation of the people in the whole process so that the benefits of the RD programmes enhance the capabilities of the people with empowerment of the people, particularly the women and weaker sections as the central focus.

In the rural development sector a plethora of schemes like SGRY, SGSY, NREGP, IAY, PMGSY, PROFLAL, RSVY, etc. is being implemented with the involvement of the

Panchayats. All these schemes are important and crucial for attaining the objectives of expanding livelihood opportunities and alleviating rural poverty. As the on going Strengthening of Rural Decentralisation (SRD) project (in operation in 304 Blocks of six districts) has already revealed, there is, inter-alia, considerable scope for strengthening the capacity of the Panchayats at all levels ; its scope will be fully explored. Similarly, the district and state level administration relevant to decentralized planning will also be strengthened substantially. SHGs will also be involved in the whole process of rural development. Capacity building, empowerment, manpower development and strengthening of resource base will be vigorously pursued for sustainable development as well as to help the rural economy emerge stronger besides making the Panchayat System the symbol of people's collective choice & freedom.

## WATER SUPPLY

### Urban water supply

In the urban sector the coverage of urban water supply schemes will be extended to 100% of the urban population in the 85 non-KMD municipalities. Water-supply schemes in most of these towns which require augmentation, will be carried out on a priority basis.

In the non-municipal urban areas, the uncovered areas will be covered in the shortest possible time within the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan period. Efforts will be made to include water supply schemes for these areas in the Central Government's Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns (UIDSSMT).

### Rural water supply

The state has set the target of covering all 'scarcity' (i.e. not covered or partially covered) habitations by March, 2007 and quality affected habitation (i.e. arsenic, fluoride, saline affected ground water) by March, 2012.

Efforts will be made to achieve the targets through intensified initiatives and interdepartmental coordination particularly the PHE, H&FW, School Education, P&RD Departments. The harvesting of rainwater and after proper filtration using it as drinking water specially in contaminated ground water will also be considered. In the arsenic affected areas, awareness of the people of the problems of arsenic or fluoride contamination will also be ensured. Involvement of the people through GP/ULB in arsenic mitigation schemes will

be given special attention. R + D efforts will be intensified to develop full-proof system for disposal of arsenic affected sludge from arsenic removal systems.

## SANITATION

It is expected that around 75% or a little more of the rural households will have sanitary toilets by the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> plan. During the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan, the remaining 25% or a little less of the households without sanitary latrines will be covered expectedly within the first two years. It is expected that all schools will be provided with sanitary latrines by the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> plan. However, it is apprehended that separate toilets for boys and girls in each and every school might not be possible within the 10<sup>th</sup> plan period. The 11<sup>th</sup> plan, therefore, envisages construction of separate sanitary latrines for boys and girls in schools. Qualitative improvement of existing toilets will also be carried out. New schools being set up will also be provided with toilets and drinking water sources.

## INDUSTRY

In the large-scale industry sector the objectives of the State Government in the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan is to make West Bengal a safe and attractive investment destination and to accelerate the paces of industrial development based on the intrinsic strengths and competitive advantages of the state which is rich in natural resources and having integrated infrastructure, superior connectivity steadily maturing industrial base, huge market potential, top rated social and civic amenities and mature industrial relation. Research and development would be a thrust area and technological upgradation would be facilitated wherever necessary.

Tea sector occupies an important position in the industrial scenario of the State. Total tea production in West Bengal was 233.29 M.Kg in 2006, which is 24.40% of all India production. It has, however, been passing through a very critical phase, mainly because of ups and down in the global market and uneven competition. The State Government has set up a Committee to make an in-depth study of the whole range of problems facing the tea sector. In its report the Committee suggested a number of remedial steps. It needs to be mentioned that the causes of closure/ sickness/abandonment are varied and multifaceted. Government of India appointed an Expert Committee to make a thorough study of the causes of the problems of closed Tea Gardens.

The State Government attaches importance to the jute and allied fibre sector that occupies a unique position as eco-friendly, bio degradable, renewable natural fibers with substantial value addition at each stage of processing. The jute industry in India is beset with many problems including competition from synthetic substitute, high labour cost, obsolescence of machinery and un-economic working which have resulted in large scale sickness in the industry. The State Government has been coordinating with different departments of the State Government and Jute Manufacturers' Development Council for overall development of Jute sector.

### Importance of developing the industrial infrastructure

The process of establishing industry specific parks that gathered momentum in the 10<sup>th</sup> plan will be further intensified. Generation of employment opportunities and development of infrastructures on a massive scale are the two important areas of concentration in this regard. Efforts will be made to attract FDI where we do not have the relevant technology and effect on employment generation is significant and also to encourage private sector in these spheres. The completion of the on-going growth centers by WBIIDC, specially the three major growth centers will be ensured by the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> plan or at least by the first year of the 11<sup>th</sup> plan. Construction of infrastructure for the proposed Chemical hub in Haldia is another priority area. Other upcoming projects in the infrastructure sector will also given priority.

While the major national highways in the state are being upgraded under National Highway Development Programme and the National Golden Quadrangle programme, the expeditious completion of the ADB financed North-South economic corridor is high on the State Government's priority. Construction of Eastern-link Highway will also be taken up to improve connectivity as a step towards bringing the inaccessible areas of the backward district of South 24 Parganas and to reach the benefits of the project to the people of North 24 Parganas, Purba Medinipore and South 24 Parganas as well. The construction of the Highway will also spur economic activities in 100 Km. stretch of the Highway and improve the quality of life of the people on a sustainable basis.

In recent years the Kolkata and Haldia Ports (specially the Haldia port) have registered significant growth in cargo handled. The modernization of these ports will be vigorously pursued.

Setting up of a deep-water seaport on the West Bengal coastline, modernization of Kolkata Airport construction of the Kulpi minor port cum special economic zone, construction of Greenfield Airports are also the priorities in the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan. As a part of infrastructural development, a world class International convention centre will also be set up in the Rajarhat New Township. With improved infrastructures, availability of power at cheap and competitive rate and the congenial industrial climate the confidence of the investors is expected to grow stronger that will positively contribute to the faster industrial growth of the State in the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan.

### Thrust industries

While the industries like chemicals and plastic, metal based industries, food processing and IT and ITEs, are expected to continue to post encouraging growth in the coming years, the revival process of the traditional industries like jute, tea and the old engineering industry will also be given further impetus. Each of these industries has its own specific problems some internal to an unit, some general to the industry. Emphasis will also be placed on revival and opening of sick/closed industries, where viability is possible.

The growth of toy, gem and jewellery, leather industries in recent years has been picking up. All these industries have export potential. All out efforts will be made to sustain the growth. Through establishment of Biotechnology Parks, growth of industries in this sector will also be speeded up. Efficacy of institutional mechanism will be enhanced to realize the objectives of rapid industrial development.

Especially significant will be the rapid growth of the food-processing industry in the state. The growth of this industry is the crux of the rural development strategy. Increasing production of horticultural crops backed by a developed post-harvest infrastructure will allow the rapid growth of the food-processing industry. With the involvement of national and international companies in the industry, the problem of markets will be obviated. Moreover,

the whole process would allow the shift of employment from the cultivation of traditional staple crops to that of value added crops or to the processing units or to the related tertiary sector.

## TOURISM

West Bengal has widest variety of attractions in terms of tourist spots from bustling Kolkata megapolis with its historical and modern charms to the Zones of tranquility like to Himalayan terrain in the North to the Sundarbans in the South.

The Government of West Bengal, therefore, attaches importance to the tourism sector to fully utilize its potentials to develop. Appropriate policy framework has been developed to attract more tourist as well as investors in this industry. The major thrust areas of the policy are :

- Promote sustainable development of Tourism in the State.
- Preservation and promotion of local art, tradition, heritage, culture & environment as well as identification of heritage buildings & sites as a step towards prosecuting heritage-tourism.
- Promotion of Sports Tourism, Adventure Tourism, River Tourism, Rural Tourism, Eco-Tourism, Forest & Wildlife Tourism.
- Notification of Special Tourism Areas in the State.
- Public Private Participation in creation of tourism infrastructure.

The State Government also emphasizes the importance of development of Tea-Tourism. In the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan, the State Government will take all necessary measures to ensure steady growth of this sector which provides tremendous scope for employment generation.

## IT INDUSTRY

Information Technology is one of the fastest growing sectors in the Indian economy both in terms of output and exports. Aggressive marketing and series of initiatives have put West Bengal on the global map of IT expansion with some 223 companies employing more than 32,000 professionals. During 2001-05 it has witnessed 70% growth against the national average of 37%. The State's vision is to emerge one among the top three IT destinations in India by 2010 – contributing 15% to the country's IT revenues. IT literacy in the State will be expanded further in the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan. Connectivity with the rural areas through WBSWAN will

be extended to the GP level in all districts. This will revolutionise the inter-active process between GP, district and state headquarters. e-Governance will be energetically promoted with the State e-Governance Mission Team at the forefront. The State Government will also continue to persuade the Central Government to locate the next international (optical fibre cable) landing station in West Bengal.

## PUBLIC ENTERPRISE

Based on the experiences and success of this Public Sector Restructuring in the first phase, the second phase of restructuring will be conducted within the framework evolved during the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan. The basic thrust of the restructuring process is to reduce budgetary pressure and use the scant resources of the State in more important social sectors. While restructuring the PSEs, it is the policy of the state to close down the unviable units, enter into joint venture in respect of the units which can survive after manpower & financial restructuring and to retain the profit making units after proper financial and manpower restructuring. The State Government is, however, determined to protect the interests of the employees & workers of these PSEs. Keeping this in view, Social Security Net has been designed. Now, the Net is extended to the workers covered under Financial Assistance to workers in Locked out Industrial Units (FOWLOI) and in the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan over 25,000 workers are sought to be covered under the programme.

### Micro & Small Scale Enterprises & Textiles Department

The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Act, 2006, (MSMEDA) of the Central Government has brought about complete change in the environment for village and small enterprises (as CSSI are now called). According to the Act, units in the manufacturing sector with investment in plant and machineries above Rs. 25 lakh and up to Rs. 500 lakh will be considered to belong to the small-scale industries category. Those units with investment in plant and machineries below Rs. 25 lakh will be considered to belong to Micro Industries category. Enterprises in the service sector will also be considered as an industry under the Act. In the service sector, the enterprises with investment on equipments above Rs. 10 lakh but below Rs. 200 lakh are to be treated as a small-scale enterprise. An enterprise with investment below Rs. 10 lakh will be treated as Micro Enterprise.

### The need for greater flow of credit to the SSI sector

The major problem of small-scale industries has been the inadequate flow of bank credit to the sector. In 2005-06, the credit provided to the sector was only 57% of the target. The flow of adequate credit specially to new small scale units could increase significantly the number of SSI units set up each year.

### Policy measures for promoting the C&SSI

The State Government's focus on the development of Cottage and Small Scale Industries is aimed at generating more and more employment as well as to strengthen its traditional base even in the face of stiff competition – an inevitable consequence of the liberalization and globalization of Indian economy. In order to pursue this objective the following measures will be taken, as a strategy, to sustain the growth of this sector :

- i) Providing escort services to micro and small scale entrepreneurs in setting up new units ;
- ii) Formation of SHGs for promotion of micro, village and handicraft industries & development marketing outlets for market the products ;
- iii) Promoting the formation of industrial clusters ;
- iv) Assisting the formation of ancillaries and downstream units;
- v) Developing the infrastructure for the sector through PPP ;
- vi) Consolidation and expansion of cluster development approach;
- vii) Arranging for the flow of credit to SSI units ;
- viii) Undertaking a study to determine the potential for identifiable industries at the Block level ;
- ix) Quality Assurance and creating brand equity ;

The handloom, powerloom, garment, hosiery and sericulture sectors will be given impetus. These industries have considerable employment potential. Appropriate policy initiatives will be evolved to ensure steady growth of these areas.

## POWER

### Development of the Energy Sector

The basic objective of the energy sector during the 11<sup>th</sup> plan is to provide 'energy security' for the citizens of West Bengal based on optimal utilization of energy resources including renewable energy, natural gas and hydro. According to the Planning Commission, energy security implies the availability of power to meet all requirements of the people at an affordable price. Moreover, an important aspect of the strategy in this sector is to provide clean and convenient 'lifeline' energy for the well being of the poor even when they cannot fully pay for it. In this efforts it will endeavour to promote balanced development of the energy sector based on optimum utilization of resources such as coal, natural gas, hydro, renewable sources of energy and nucleus substances or materials.

West Bengal at present has surplus power except during evening peak hours. Significant addition to generating capacity is being implemented during the 10<sup>th</sup> plan. All these projects are expected to be synchronized by 2007-08. The additional generating capacity of these projects is 1570 MW. On the basis of projected demand for power during the 11<sup>th</sup> plan, it has been estimated that the state would have surplus power on the basis of installed power capacity at the end of 2007-08.

In the 11<sup>th</sup> plan additional capacity of 3550 MW is envisaged. It is also estimated that demand for power is expected to surge in the 11<sup>th</sup> plan with power intensive industrial units coming on stream and rapid growth of rural industries. In addition , power use in the agricultural sector is set to increase at a much faster rate than in the past. The need for additional hydel capacity during the 11<sup>th</sup> plan will be taken into consideration to improve the adverse hydro-thermal mix, which is at present disproportionate.

### Strengthening the transmission and distribution system

In spite of the significant investment on the transmission and distribution system in the state during the 10<sup>th</sup> plan, investment in this sector will continue on a large scale during the 11<sup>th</sup> plan.

### Rural electrification

West Bengal's performance on the electrification of villages has not reached the expected level. Rural electrification has been included in the Bharat Nirman programme of the Central Government. The national target for rural electrification is to electrify all villages by the end of 2007-08 and provide universal access to all households by March , 2010. Under Rajeev Gandhi Grameen Vidyatikaran Yojana (RGGVY) electrification of 5000 unelectrified villages in the state has been taken up as a crash programme. However, achieving universalisation of access in the rural areas by 2010 will be quite difficult. But, every effort will be made to achieve the deadline. The progress of this programme is being closely monitored. The State Government will fully explore the potentials of non-conventional energy sources for the areas without access to conventional power service level comparable to those covered under the conventional power system.

### Other areas of priority

"The State Electricity Board has already been restructured to make it self-reliant and competitive. The State Electricity Board has been making operating profit for the last few years; this will be monitored for further improvement. Stringent action would be taken against theft of electricity and efforts would be made to further reduce AT & C losses. Government will facilitate harnessing of captive sources of energy. Power Trading will be allowed in a transparent manner as permissible under law, in the overall interest of the consumer. The professed policy of government, of not providing power free of cost, will be continued. The regulatory mechanism will be further strengthened, and its independence safeguarded in the overall interest of the sector. The possibility of cross-border cooperation in energy will be explored."

### BIO-FUEL POLICY including Jatropha cultivation

The depletion of oil reserves, national security considerations on dependence on imports and its increasing cost and the urge for diminished non-toxic fallouts call for alternative sources of energy to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. Bio-fuel is gaining wide acceptance as an environment-friendly and cost-effective alternative energy resource. It is a renewable liquid fuel and self-sustaining besides being suitable under our soil conditions and gifting valuable organic manure as byproduct. Bio-diesel produced from jatropha etc. mixed with petro-diesel extends the engine life. Additionally, this waste-land-friendly lower gestation period

agricultural crop improves soil character and meets the social objective of employment creation. The global market for bio-diesel is poised for explosive growth and it is possible that as much as 20% of all on-road diesel could be met from this source.

Having regard to the potentials of bio-fuel the State would design its separate bio-fuel policy. During the 11th Five Year Plan focused efforts would be made to make use of all sources of bio-fuels including jatropha for sharing a considerable burden of our energy load and for value addition to the growth of the rural economy. For extending jatropha cultivation the State would tie-up National Rural Employment Guarantee Schemes initiatives along with other State plan initiatives.

The state government has already initiated a programme to set up 10,000 'family size' biogas plants every year. The West Bengal Renewable Energy Development Agency, formed in 1993, has a mandate to promote renewable energy technologies and ensure their commercialisation through innovative projects. In rural areas of West Bengal, 150,000 are already using bio-energy for cooking purposes. At present, WBREDA have two major biofuel programmes in the state, one is the setting up of cattle dung based biogas plants and the other is rice husk based gasifier plants. Apart from electricity generation, research is also being carried out to use biofuel agricultural waste in the transport sector as clean fuel.

## MEDICINAL & AROMATIC PLANTS

There is demand for supply of medicinal and aromatic plants for use by various pharmaceutical companies. Problems lies in the market being unregulated with the big buyers bothering more about cost rather than being quality conscious. Efforts have been made by the West Bengal State Medicinal Plant Board for the large companies to register source of materials. Focus should also be on growing the plants without chemicals to avoid residues in the finished products. Major plants of interest include Sarpagandha, Aswagandha, Thankuni, Kalmegh, Chirata, Zinger, Turmeric, Gritakumari, Tulsi, Citronella, Neem, Brahmi, Pudina, Amloki, Nayantara, Anantamul etc. along with the requirement of standard quality materials and sustainable cultivation procedures. There is also the need for correct identification of the plant materials by trained experts. The people of rural areas can be assisted through training and motivating in the conservation, cultivation, harvesting and processing of medicinal and

aromatic plants. Marketing of products have to be facilitated through buy-back arrangements with end users.

## URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The basic objective in the urban sector during the 11<sup>th</sup> plan is to provide an acceptable level of urban amenities to the expanding urban population in the state. In the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan, the State Government will make all out efforts to effectively utilize the opportunities unfolded by JNNRUM. The local bodies and Development Boards constituted for different regions will be geared to the maximum for adequate development of infrastructures and other facilities towards improvement of quality of life of expanding urban population. Moreover, integrated approach will be taken to ensure dispersal of growth commensurate with emerging demands and requirements in the context of national and global perspective. It is also the strategy of the government to fully explore PPP mode in areas where Government cannot alone help.

### Urban Dispersal Centres

The rapid economic development during the last decade and the online economic stimuli have been quickly reshaping the rural-urban character by way of big push towards accelerated change of urban maps in West Bengal. For modern and environmental friendly urban towns the necessity of urban vision has assumed paramount importance. As a part of the urban growth vision to absorb the first paced urban growth the State is required to develop urban dispersal centres on regional and decentralized consideration. Such initiatives already in the pipeline would be improved upon during the 11th Five Year Plan in the following regions: Kharagpur-Salboni-Haldia in the Medinipur region, Asansol-Durgapur in the Burdwan region, Malda-Raigunj in one part and Siliguri-Jalpaiguri in other part of the North Bengal division, Dankuni-Hooghly in the Hooghly district and rejuvenating Kalyani in the district of Nadia. Additionally, urban agglomeration areas of the districts would also be linked with the urban vision and urban planning during the 11th Five Year Plan.

## ROADS

Roads and the connectivity they create are important not only for promoting economic activities but also for reducing poverty. Roads allow timely and affordable delivery of basic services like health , education and water, connect communities to markets and enhances mobility and scope for employment, improves school attendance, reduces the time spent by women on domestic chores, etc.

Thus, apart from well-developed highways that promote industrial and economic growth, connectivity of habitations by all weather roads is a crucial element in ameliorating the distress of the poor.

### PMGSY

Under the Prime Minister's Gramin Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) all weather roads to connect all habitations with population over 1000 have been taken up. The target under PMGSY is to construct 19000 km. of roads in the state by 2009. Till the end of 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2006, 3636.42 kms. of road have been constructed under the programme. Work on 2700 km. of road length is continuing and tendering process is going on for 1647 km. of road length. The remaining 11017 km. of road length is to be completed by 2009.

### Rural roads

Apart from this, the construction of 4000 km. of rural roads has been taken up under a Asian Development Bank (ADB) financed project. Till the end of July, 2006, work on 129 road schemes with a total road length of 956.32 km. has commenced.

### Major highways

While the upgradation of highways under National Highways Development Programme (NHDP) and National Golden Quadrangle are set to improve the national highway system in the state, the slow pace of implementation of the North-South Economic Corridor, an ADB financed project of the State Government, is a matter of concern. Its implementation will be expedited.

### Role of PW and PW (Roads) departments

The PW and PW (Roads) will be geared up to upgrade the secondary road system comprising of State Highways and Major District Roads. More emphasis will be given in areas inhabited by SC/ST and other backward segments of the society. The aim is to improve

quality of life of the people through accelerated pace of economic development where improved connectivity is extremely crucial. The secondary road system is important as it connects the primary road system (i.e. national highways) with the tertiary road system (i.e. rural roads).

It is the target of the Government that the construction of bridges on the unbridged gaps in the secondary road system in the state is completed by the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> plan. Weak and narrow bridges will be suitably strengthened. The State Government will also impress upon the Govt. of India the urgency of completing the Railway over bridges over important railway crossings. Projects will also be taken up for construction of Bye-passes. Within city/town limits apart from strengthening the road systems, the rate of circulation of traffic will also be increased through appropriate traffic engineering.

#### Public transport corporations

The most important issue in the transport sector during the 11<sup>th</sup> plan will be the re-vamping of the public transport corporations. While an element of subsidy will always be there in the public urban transport system, initiatives will be taken to improve services and make the system cost-effective , yet affordable to the people.

## HOUSING

### Housing Department

In the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan, the State Government's priority is to address the housing need of different sections of the society at affordable cost. PPP mode will be preferred in most cases. Housing Department has already set up 8 joint sector companies and assisted in the formation of 6 private companies for the construction of houses. The role of the Department in the coming days will shift slowly to that of a facilitator for the construction of houses by private builders. The policy of the State Government will be to leverage private participation in building houses at a minimum cost. Construction of houses for the urban and the rural poor will be the main thrust of the State Government , and in both the areas targets will be so phased that homelessness of the target group could be adequately addressed in the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan.

### Indira Awas Yojana

Every year considerable number of houses are constructed in the state for poor families under Indira Awas Yojana. Kuchha houses are also upgraded under the programme. At least 60% of the beneficiaries under IAY are SC/ST households. Till 2004-05, 4.91 lakh new houses have been constructed and 1.74 lakh kuchha houses have been upgraded. There are around 48 lakh SC & ST households in the rural areas of West Bengal. One of the problems faced in implementing IAY is that many eligible poor households do not have homestead land. It is, therefore, considered necessary that a portion of IAY fund is utilized for acquiring homestead land to facilitate construction of houses for the deserving people who are still going without this basic minimum need.

### Chash-O-Basabaser Bhumidan Prokalpa

The State Government will make the most of the programme during the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan by adopting strategies suited to the ground realities. Chash-O-Basabaser Bhumidan Prokalpa i.e. CBBP (homestead and kitchen garden) will also be introduced in the state plan during the 11<sup>th</sup> plan. The scheme seeks to provide to the houseless and homesteadless poor families, specially those belonging to the SC/ST communities. Rs. 2000/- will be spent for each family. Another scheme for construction of houses for artisans having no land of their own will also be taken up. It is targeted to provide 20000 artisan families with homestead land each year. This programme will be dovetailed with IAY. The problem of no homestead land for eligible households under IAY could be overcome by provision of land under CBBP. Under VAMBAY dwelling houses for the poor slum dwellers in urban areas will be constructed. Each ULB will be asked to draw up a comprehensive plan to provide proper dwelling units to all urban slum dwellers by the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> plan. The resources under Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana (VAMBAY) will also be utilized fully for achieving this objective.

## HEALTH

In the health sector comprehensive, holistic and all encompassing initiatives have been set in motion during the 10<sup>th</sup> plan. As the 11<sup>th</sup> plan for the health sector will be greatly influenced by the programmes during the 10<sup>th</sup> plan, the major initiatives in the health sector during the 10<sup>th</sup> plan will be further intensified during the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan.

Improving the primary health sector is a priority area. Fund for this has been obtained by pooling financial resources from state plan, National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), KFW assisted Basic Health Project, EC assisted Sector Improvement Project and DFID financed Health System Development Initiative. Construction of large number of sub-centres and their reorganization is in progress. A second ANM is being engaged in each sub-centre as per the guidelines under NRHM. Work on converting 342 Primary Health Centres into 10 bedded hospitals with 24 hours service facilities is going on. Upgradation of Block Primary Health Centres to 30-40 bedded facilities has also commenced. Commensurate expansion of higher level of health facilities will also be taken up. It is also the avowed objective of the State Government to create state-of-the-art health facilities to cater to the needs of the people. The initiatives taken during the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan will be completed during the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan. Apart from developing various sectors of the Health System, modern system of Health Management inclusive of IT based Health Manager Information System in all secondary and tertiary level hospitals will be fully utilized. Private investment in the health sector will be encouraged and modern facilities will be extended to every nook & corner. The 11<sup>th</sup> Plan's focus is "health for all people".

The basic objectives are :

- 1) To improve the accessibility of the poor and unreached groups to curative, preventive, promotional and rehabilitative health services
- 2) To reduce maternal and child mortality and the burden of communicable, non-communicable and nutrition-related diseases and disorders
- 3) To ensure quality at all levels of health and medical care services
- 4) To maintain excellence in education and research in medicine and all activities (including management)

Moreover, the process of decentralization by involving PRIs and ULBs in all aspects of health care management will also further strengthened and improved on the basis of the experience of the 10<sup>th</sup> plan. More focused attention will be given in the development of health facilities in rural areas. Special attention will be paid to the districts that have relatively weaker rural health infrastructure.

A health care insurance scheme for the poor will be initiated on the basis of the pilot studies now underway. The existing laboratory network will be strengthened and new

laboratories will be set up. In this sphere PPP will be encouraged. Medical education will also be suitably expanded to meet the critical gaps in the manpower requirement of the health sector. While pursuing a well-coordinated policy for development of this sector, Government will also make every effort to strictly regulate and monitor the private Health Care facilities and ensure their qualitative improvement.

In all other areas the programmes of the 10<sup>th</sup> plan will be intensified and wherever necessary modified on the basis of the experience of the 10<sup>th</sup> plan.

## ENVIRONMENT

In the sphere of environment the emphasis has shifted from regulatory to promotional measures. The State Government feels that development and environment conservation are complementary and any degradation of environment will eventually constrain the development process. In the 11<sup>th</sup> plan, the thrust areas for conservation of the environment in the state will be :

- 1) Measures to control industrial pollution;
- 2) Monitoring of air and water pollution as also noise pollution;
- 3) Conservation of natural resources and ecological system specially conservation of bio-diversity through the West Bengal Bio-diversity Board, conservation of wetlands and water bodies, promotion of rainwater harvesting, etc. ;
- 4) Support to the West Bengal Solid Waste Management Mission;
- 5) Preparation and implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan;
  - a) Undertake a comprehensive Environment Impact Analysis of all development projects;
- 6) Encourage people's active participation in environment management and programmes;
- 7) Develop and disseminate environmental information;
- 8) Promote R + D in environment;
- 9) Build up capacity and infrastructure of organizations overseeing the environment sector.

The potential for Carbon Credits out of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) will be explored during the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan.

## EDUCATION

### Current status of literacy and of school education

Literacy in the state has substantially increased. In rural West Bengal literacy has increased to 67.4% of the 7+ rural population in the first half of 2004 from 63.42% in 2001 (census). Urban literacy has increased to 86.4% in 2004 from 81.25% in 2001. And overall literacy has increased to 69.22% in 2004, as per SSA Report from 68.64% in 2001.

As of 01.04.2006 as per SSA Report, the net enrolment ratio was 98.03% at the primary level and 78.74% at the upper primary level given this position the state hopes to achieve the objective of universalisation of elementary education well before 2010.

### Eleventh plan strategy

In the 11<sup>th</sup> plan the following basic objectives have been set for school education :

- 1) Try to ensure universalisation of secondary education;
- 2) All out efforts for elimination of existing social and gender gaps in school education;
- 3) Ensure better quality of education at all levels;
- 4) Converge all resources from different sources to finance development of school education.

At the primary level the objectives for the 11<sup>th</sup> plan are :

- 1) To bring all the schools, gram sansad and wards under coverage of SSAs;
- 2) To create resource centers at all levels from state to gram sansad level;
- 3) To strengthen the process for the involvement of parents and the community in primary education so as to improve the quality of education;
- 4) Involve PRI in management and planning for primary schools ;
- 5) To fill up vacancies of teachers and create posts for teachers for ensuring 40:1 pupil-teacher ratio;
- 6) To pay special attention to disadvantaged groups like SC/ST, linguistic and religious minorities, educationally backward areas/communities and physically handicapped children in order bridge the social gap in education;
- 7) To effect convergence between ICDS and primary education so as to allow automatic transition from pre-primary to class I;
- 8) To increase the enrolment and retention of girl students;

- 9) SSA support to SSK and opening of similar short-term study centers in order to bridge the gaps in access to primary schools.

In addition, in the upper primary level the following aspects will be given due emphasis:

- 1) Extend support of SSA up to class VIII to all junior high, high and H.S. schools including Madrasahs;
- 2) To improve the functioning of District Institute for Education and Training (DIETs) so that scope for training of teachers is expanded and qualitatively improved;
- 3) Improve the infrastructure facilities not only at the upper primary level but also at the secondary and higher secondary level;
- 4) To extend the mid-day meal scheme up to the upper primary level at the first instance and then to the secondary level after due evaluation and monitoring.
- 5) Upgrade upper primary schools and Madrasahs so as to increase the capacity of higher level of school education.

In all fairness, it will be the attempt of the State Government to mainstream alternative schooling facilities like SSK, SSP and MSK and reduce the dropout rate at least up to the elementary level to zero. All out efforts will be made to construct 'Pucca' school buildings with drinking water and separate toilet facilities for girls and boys. Supply of dresses to girl students and free textbooks to students will be extended up to the secondary level. It is also contemplated to provide to all male students belonging to SC/ST and economically backward communities free school dress. Special effort will be made to improve the enrolment of SC/ST girls at least up to the upper primary level. In this context ,the effective implementation of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGVV) programme of G.O.I. will be ensured.

The most important facet of school education during the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan would be to introduce vocational training from the secondary level in all schools. All the 341 Blocks will be covered for extending facilities for vocational education. Continuing Education Programme will also continue in all the districts. This will be supplemented by the project for 'eradication of residual illiteracy'. This later project will be extended to all districts.

The scope for non-formal, adult education as well as education for the disabled will be increased significantly after evaluating their performance in terms of the desired result in the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan. The expansion of the library service up to the Block level will be ensured. Effective measures will also be taken to improve the operational efficiency of the libraries specially in the rural and inaccessible areas.

#### Expansion of diploma level technical educational facilities

The scope for diploma level technical education will also be increased significantly in keeping with the demand for technical persons in the economy. The functioning of ITIs, Polytechnics and other technical institutions will be more intimately related with industries. The Polytechnics, apart from running the Diploma Courses, are actively engaged in expansion and proper implementation of the Vocational Education and Training Programme in the State. Special attention has been given to organise vocational training programme for the students belonging to SC/ST category. Expertise from the Corporate Sector will be drawn for efficient functioning of the technical institutes. In other words, industry-institute synergy will be affected more meaningfully and fruitfully.

#### Higher Education

The current trend of introducing new courses at the undergraduate and at the university levels will be intensified. The need to introduce degree level courses on IT in colleges will be given serious attention. Introduction of new courses in existing colleges is cheaper than setting up new colleges. Moreover, even though it is expensive, colleges will have to be set up in areas not having colleges. The disciplines taught in these colleges will be carefully selected so that they are relevant to the present socio-economic realities. Appropriate measures will be taken for improvement of the quality of education at colleges and universities. This is applicable not only for specialized and technical institutions for higher education but also for institutions providing general degree level education.

The Planning Commission has pointed out that the number of institutions providing quality technical education specially in engineering and medical sectors has not increased at a rate sufficient to provide access to rising percentage of those aspiring to opt for these disciplines. This is one of the crucial issue of that the State Government will give special

attention in the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan and take effective measures for expansion of the technical higher education system.

The number of institutions providing quality education, in other words 'Centres of Excellence' will be increased either through PPP or in the private sector. While encouraging private investment in this area, the State Government will ensure that the faculty and other facilities match international standards. It shall also be the endeavours of the Government to effectively regulate and control the private institutions catering to the needs of students so that quality of teaching and other aspects integral to excellence in standard of education are full-proof. The objective of the state in higher education is to maintain rich heritage of Kolkata- the 'Centre for Learning' catering to students not only from the districts of the State but also from the east, north east and other parts of India as well as from abroad.

The State Government is determined to keep pace with the fast changing needs of the society in today's globalized world.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Science and Technology is intended to be tailored to assist the development process, and to address the socio-economic disparities as well as to enhance the efficacy of life of the people. The State Government's during the 11<sup>th</sup> plan in this regard has the following features:

- 1) Using Geo-Information and Remote Sensing to determine land use, cropping pattern, wasteland, micro watershed, identification of lineaments (geological fault lines through which water seeps into the ground and is lost), etc. ;
- 2) Satellite Data Map Compliant site specific information for construction of water harvesting structures ;
- 3) Groundwater quality assessment ;
- 4) Environmental planning for sitting of industries – this involves identification of suitable sites for various categories of industries through environmental management.

The State Government will take comprehensive measures to promote R + D on specific issues relevant for the welfare of the people and also to induce the application of R + D developed outcomes to actual field operations. The promotion and application of biotechnology and tissue culture will also be intensified in the 11<sup>th</sup> plan period.

Training for skill development and employment generation through the application of science and technology (S + T) will be promoted. This is an important application of S + T. Some of the training schemes intended to be taken up are : (i) development of income alternatives of the forest fringe dwellers through rural development activities with particular emphasis on wasteland development; (ii) medicinal and aromatic plants for rural health care system; (iii) entrepreneurship development in diversification of jute products; (iv) mechanical training on power tiller engines commonly used in Sunderbans area for SC/ST people. The application of S + T for assistance to the disabled will also be explored.

The setting up of a 'Knowledge Park' and a Bio-IT Park during the 11<sup>th</sup> plan would facilitate the application of emerging new technologies for the development and welfare of the people of the state to a great extent.

## WOMEN AND CHILD

**GENDER PLAN** In tune with faster and more inclusive growth the State would have distinct and focused Gender Plan to ensure address of the gender related issues, programme outreach and level of social and women empowerment. All cross sectoral issues under Gender Plan would be coordinated and convergence of programme initiatives ensured in partnership with civil society both at the State level and also at the decentralized levels. To this end there would also have decentralized Gender Plan under District Plan and also to all tiers of the Panchayat and the Municipality/Corporation Plan. The following items are intended to be addressed under Gender Plan.

### Gender Plan at the State Level

- General Literacy drive to bridge Gender Gap in education
- The special programme like National Programme of Education for Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) has been running to intensify the need-based delivery mechanism for promoting the girls education and reducing the gender gap.
- A new programme – Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya has been launched in educationally backward blocks providing residential facilities for the girls students
- Improving infrastructural facilities like separate toilet, boundary wall etc. for co-educational/girls schools.

- Special programme for remedial teaching, book grant, merit scholarship etc.
- Enlarging Need based Hostel facility
- Institutionalising vocational education at the school level and business orientation as required
- Intensifying special focus on skill development programme having marketable linkage
- Dissemination of livelihood related options including wage employment, self-employment, pension and others available for the women having regard to education, skill, age, special category etc.
- Arranging sale-outlets/market complex for products of the women groups
- Organising gender friendly institutional delivery units in partnership with Government and Non-government service providers. Promotion of village based trained dais in remote areas
- Mobilisation of social support on dangers of too early pregnancies & Child marriage
- Ensuring complete stoppage of female foeticide by strict implementation of Preconception & PNDT Act.
- Updated ECCR based prenatal and antenatal care including other health support care for the mother and the children
- Special focus on adolescent care and nutrition
- Organising institutional Care of Short Stay Homes, Destitute Homes, Day Care Home, Oldage Home, Creches etc.
- Decentralised Counselling network for protection issues related to women including domestic violence trafficking, harassment in workplaces, dowry and other related regularity issues etc.
- Forming local bodies specific unit for tracking of migration of women
- Awareness of dangers of HIV and AIDS related issues
- Gender disaggregated data for all issues related to women

## CHILDREN PLAN

For the children of today and tomorrow the State Government would build up children-specific support system for our children to grow as citizens of future India keeping in consideration the rights of the child and also the need for faster and more inclusive growth.

- Establishing Sick Newborn Care Units (SNCU) and Sick Newborn Stabilisation Units (SNSU) in all districts of West Bengal by 2010. Community Care Units would be supplemented for newborn care initiatives. Sub-centres at GP HQs would be expanded with a clinic for delivery facilities.
- The essentials of care of neonates would be appropriately disseminated during anti-natal stage.
- Updated ECCR would be based for child health care monitoring
- Strengthening infrastructure in maternity wards for the urban areas
- Rejuvenating school health check up system to cover all school children across the State
- Ensuring routine immunization for all children
- Registration of births and deaths

### Child Labour

The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act has been passed for prohibition of child labour in hazardous employments. Engagement of child labour in domestic work, hotels, restaurants, agriculture and industrial sectors have been banned. Employment of child labour has been abolished in tea industry by virtue of a tri-partite agreement. Under the National Child Labour Project, awareness generation programme has been taken up. Special schools of child labour are running in all districts and enrollment position has improved.

### Nutrition

- Ensuring quality nutrition coverage under ICDS setup.
- Extending supplementary feeding for lactating mothers from 6 months post birth to 1 year to cover all infants
- A pilot nutrition programme for 0 – 2 years of children would be undertaken in collaboration with the nodal departments and the Panchayat to improve the nutritional status of the special category
- Arranging for school adolescent girls iron supplementation and advice on nutrition through institutions and for out of school adolescent girls through Anganwadi Centres and Self-help Groups
- Ensuring quality of mid-day meal programme in Primary Schools and Sishu Siksha Kendros

- Ensuring convergence of nutrition support care with all programme partners

#### Water & Sanitation

- Providing safe drinking water to all schools
- Arranging School Sanitation with separate arrangements for girls
- Introducing hygiene education plan for schools and for others through AWCs
- Ensuring access to household latrines to the children from the beginning

#### Education

- Bringing Class-V in Primary Section to keep parity with the all India pattern
- Increasing the number of Upper Primary Schools to provide access to all children completing Primary education
- Developing innovative strategies for migrant children, child labour and deprived urban children
- Giving greater focus to 100% retention through improved teaching by skill up-gradation of teachers and improvement in classroom environment
- Upscaling innovative practices like SLIP+, ILIP etc for improvement in quality of Primary Education
- Enlarging scope for special needs of institutional and non-institutional support system, including vocational education for physically challenged and mentally retarded children.

#### Child Protection

- Forming Child Protection Body at the State level and down to address child protection issues in a concerted manner
- Encouraging the ULBs and Panchayats to set up crèche, day care centres and short stay homes for children in difficult circumstances
- Monitoring of child trafficking activities at the Panchayat level

#### HIV/AIDS

- Introducing life style education system through civil society
- Reaching out programme to out of school youths through peer-education approach
- Expanding PPTCT up to BPHC level

### Integrated Child Development Services

One of the most important programmes being implemented in the state for women and children is the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS). At present there are 55000 Anganwadi Centres and 17100 additional centres will be operationalised in 2006-07. Further G.O.I has been moved to sanction 17500 additional Anganwadi Centres for ITDP mouzas, Sunderbans and for Darjeeling. At present 37.54 lakh children in the age group 6 month to 6 years and 4.55 lakh pregnant and lactating mothers benefit from ICDS. The most important programme under ICDS is the Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) for children (6 months to 6 years) and pregnant and lactating mothers. The ICDS programme also provides pre-primary schooling for children below 6 years.

At present 60% of under 6 children and 54% of eligible mothers attend Anganwadi Centres and are given cooked meals fortified with vitamins. The coverage will be universalised. It is , therefore, proposed for addition of 10,000 Anganwadi Centres more during the 11<sup>th</sup> plan. Special arrangements like opening of crèches, supply of take-home ready to eat nutritious food will have to be made for children of poor working women. The feeding of lactating mothers at Anganwadi Centres will be extended to one year from 6 months at present in order to motivate mothers to attend Anganwadi Centres. Thus both mothers and children would get fortified food for one year. This will reduce absenteeism of the children in the age group 6 month to 1 year from Anganwadi Centres. As a result there will be more time for Anganwadi workers to teach the mothers the benefit of breast-feeding and the importance of nutritious food. The State Government will also make special efforts to improve the infrastructure for the ICDS programme in the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan. Special emphasis will be given on the welfare of children (below 14 years) who have to work for their livelihood.

The operation of Integrated Street / Working Children programme at present is confined to Kolkata and Howrah. This will be extended to other districts.

Moreover, the following measures will be taken :

- i. Infrastructure improvement of Anganwadi centres and clubbing them with health sub-centres wherever it is possible.
- ii. Converting Anganwadi centres from mere feeding centres to centres for comprehensive care of children.

- iii. Improving sanitation and hygiene at home and schools by increasing the availability of safe water and sanitary toilets. Increasing awareness of poor families for the need for more hygienic environment.
- iv. Strengthening pre-school education in Anganwadi centres.

#### Programme for adolescent girls

The National Programme for Adolescent Girls (NPAG) presently being implemented in only two districts will be extended to all the districts of the state. NPAG and Kishori Shakti Yoyana (in operation in all ICDS projects) are complementary projects and would provide a comprehensive coverage to women's health need. A mission approach will be adopted for adolescent girls.

#### Nutrition Security

The essence of food security and health - for all would be to ensure outcome of nutrition security for the children, the adolescents, the women and the aged. Monitoring of the nutrition status of the population in terms of tractable targets for different nutrition indicators would be made.

#### Swayamsiddha

Convergence of the Schemes like Swayamsiddha & Janami Suraksha Yojana will be effected towards full realization of the objectives set forth.

### WELFARE OF MINORITIES

The relative backwardness of the largest minority in the state in terms of education, livelihood opportunities and other indices of welfare will be addressed in a concerted manner in keeping with the findings of the Sachar Committee. In this Prime Minister's new 15 point programme for the welfare of the minorities would also be kept in view. The 11<sup>th</sup> Plan will make determined efforts to create enabling conditions for betterment of their conditions.

The number of general schools from primary to H.S. level will be increased in minority concentrated districts. Opening of colleges, diploma level technical institutions, computer training centres, etc. in minority concentrated areas will be ensured during the 11<sup>th</sup> plan. Vocational education will be introduced in all schools specially in minority dominated

areas from the secondary level. Integrated approach will be taken for opening more avenues for reducing economic, social and educational backwardness of the minorities. District-wise physical target may be set as far as possible. The West Bengal Minorities Development Corporation looking after development agenda for the minorities will be made to synchronize its activities with other departments and organizations of the Govt. in this regard. The State Government has also introduced Minority Sub-Plan to give impetus to the minority development in a more focused manner.

The number of hostels for Muslim school girls will also be increased. It will be considered if girls in lower classes could be made eligible to stay in these hostels. At present girls in class X and above can stay in the hostels. Minorities other than Muslims will also be allowed to stay in these hostels. Apart from these programmes and initiatives, Maulana Azad Educational Scheme for meritorious students will be vigorously implemented and the programme to bring the minority concentrated areas under the network of the ITIs will be intensified. A Minority Databank will also be set up to assess forward movement over time on socio economic aspects of the Minorities.

## Sustainable Development : 11<sup>th</sup> Plan's overall objective

The carrying capacity of demographic load is enormous in West Bengal. The size of population and its density are high in proportion to available land having serious implications for sustainable quality of life over time. Efforts would be made to ensure that runaway population situation does not overtake plan initiatives in the State. Demographically explosive zones would be monitored through programme efforts by means of transparent monitoring format.

The main focus of the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan is sustainable development through the route of integrated development strategy where the qualitative improvement of the life of the people at different rungs of the society is the basic intention. Empowerment of the people, infrastructure development, intensification of mass literacy programme, creation of world class health facilities, agricultural growth, rapid industrialization, reducing regional imbalances, bridging the urban-rural gaps, strengthening of the SHGs, good governance, institution building ensuring people's access to opportunities and development of scientific temperament among the people will be the guiding principles in pursuing this strategy.

The targeted reduction in poverty would be attained through higher growth of income from the agriculture sector (inclusive of animal husbandry, fishery and forest sectors). This, supplemented by rapid growth of the non-farm sector in the rural areas, increasing government expenditure on rural poverty, employment and infrastructure development programmes, intensification of SHG network for generating self-employment, private sector investment in the post-harvest infrastructure of the horticulture and other sectors like animal husbandry, fisheries, etc., is expected to significantly impact on the quality of life of the people of the rural area. This process of rising production and investment would be complemented by provision of supplementary nutrition to children and pregnant and lactating mothers, strengthening of the public distribution system, providing improved health care facilities, ensuring rapid spread of literacy and scope for technical and vocational training, providing safe drinking water and ensuring general improvement in hygiene in rural households, etc.

Incidentally, Self-Help Groups as supporting programme initiative has been taken up in the State as a component to enlarge poverty alleviation programme as well as social sector programme to the poorest of the poor women groups. This labour intensive initiative based on principles of equity and social justice is likely to ensure that women programme partners actually reap the benefits of economic and social programme. SHGs have become programme partners of various schemes administered by plan implementing departments and also the bank linked programme of the NABARD. The social intermediation programme followed by NGOs have accelerated the process of organizing the poor particularly women into Self-Help Groups. More than 1,00,000 Self-Help Groups have been formed by different organizations with Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY) contributing around 55699 SHGs. Self-help Groups are partners for about 20 programmes being implemented in the State. However, the optimum use of them has still to take a definite pattern and that specific assessment of employment potential and the location specific requirement of SHGs network have to be worked out. For programme convergence of SHGs based programme at the grassroots level the necessity of formation of Federation of SHGs has been felt. 15 blocks in five districts have been selected for experimentation of this project.

The size of credit and the need for its linkage are crucial factors requiring SHG growth with professional mode. The need for training for exposure to market behaviour and for utilising market related facilities need to be professionally dealt with.

In areas where still now extreme poverty grips the people , convergence of programmes of different departments will be ensured. Thus, programmes of the Rural Development, Women and Child Development, Food and Civil Supplies, PHE, Health etc. will be targeted specifically to these areas. The coverage of supplementary nutrition programme will be intensified. Above all, the scope for income generating activities will be enlarged through the creation of irrigation facilities, supply of inputs and credit, formation of SHGs, etc. Similar effort will be made in pockets with high concentration of disadvantaged sections of the rural population, which might not be co-terminus with the above areas. In other words, all efforts will be converged for qualitative improvement of the life of the people who state live on the margin. In the 11<sup>th</sup> plan efforts will be made to improve the quality of employment. In order to achieve this attempts will be made to draw investment in small and medium enterprises (SME), IT and related service sectors, real estate and building industry,

organized tertiary sectors, etc. The rapid growth of these major sectors would induce the growth of the unorganized and informal sector. The envisaged large investment on urban renewal projects and on green-field urban projects would also generate considerable employment during the 11<sup>th</sup> plan. The scope of self employment programmes will be enlarged further. Moreover, in order to continue with the 'all inclusive' growth process, the small producer centric production structure will be promoted across all sectors during the 11<sup>th</sup> plan. It is envisaged that with declining urban 'income poverty', easy availability of quality health services, spread of literacy, removing of the residual illiteracy in urban areas, health and education inadequacies in urban areas will be considerably reduced at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> plan.

The State is now on a steady integration mode between vibrant agricultural economy and the emerging sectors of modern industrial economy. As has already been stated at the outset, the State has to navigate through uneven contours for realization of its own vision mainly because of the constitutional limitation that allow little scope to the State Government to pursue industrial policy independent of the one followed at the central level. With the process the process of globalization & liberalization gathering momentum and the old traditional labour intensive industries declining and Cottage and Small Scale Sector facing stiff competition in the globalized economic scenario, the task of accelerating the process of industrial development of the State on the basis of the felt needs of the people is faced with new challenges with far reaching socio-political implications. It needs to be emphasized that though the service sector has been registering steady growth accompanied by new employment opportunities, the halting growth of the manufacturing sector has impacted on the employment scenario as a whole. Though the IT & ITE sectors have created substantial employment opportunities for the urban youth, steady growth of manufacturing sector is crucial to the overall improvement of employment scenario. It is also equally important to ensure steady growth of cottage and small scale industries to further improve the situation. The State Government will make vigorous efforts in the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan to address the issue of unemployment both in rural & urban areas. As has already been pointed, the agriculture production structure will increasingly come under threat of cheap imports and supply of agricultural products from other states. Moreover, rising cost and almost stagnant harvest prices have eroded the profitability of crop cultivation. In this situation, rising productivity could ensure competitiveness of the crops produced by farmers in the state.

In full appreciation of the ground realities particularly in the agriculture and allied sector, the State Government will adopt suitable strategy to ensure vibrant growth of rural economy where the Panchayat Raj System will have a dominant role and the network of SHGs will be expanded further as a measure of empowerment of women as well as to involve them in economic activities in increasing number. This is aimed at accelerating the process of socio-economic transformation of the State.

Another important area of intervention will to increase public investment in the rural sector (specially in the cultivation related sectors). This will induce private investment in the agriculture sector. The growth of productivity in the agriculture sector is crucially dependent on this.

## Financial position of the State Government

1. The Government of West Bengal, along with other State Governments, started facing a serious financial problem from the year 1999-2000 onwards. It is important to mention the major issues behind the financial problem, and also how the State Government has taken steps to come out of the problem. Four factors were primarily responsible for the financial problem : (1) the impact of the revision of pay of the Central Government employees on the basis of the recommendations of the Fifth Central Pay Commission on the finances of the State Government together with non-availability of assistance from the Central Government in terms of the discussions in the meeting of the National Development Council (February 19, 1999), (2) increase in the burden of the Central loans on the States due to national policies, (3) shortfall in the State's share of Central taxes in relation to the amounts estimated by the Eleventh Finance Commission and (4) shortfall in the collection of State's own taxes. Of these factors, shortfall in the collection of State's own tax revenue is the weakness at the State level, but all other factors are closely linked to the policies of the Central Government.

2. As a result of the combined effect of the factors mentioned above, there was a sharp deterioration in the financial position of the State Government beginning with the year 1999-2000. The ratio of revenue deficit to revenue receipts which was 25.4 per cent in 1997-98 increased to 90.9 percent in 1999-2000, the ratio of fiscal deficit to State Domestic Product (SDP) increased from 4.1 per cent in 1997-98 to 9.2 per cent in 1999-2000, the ratio of outstanding debt to SDP increased from 26.7 per cent in 1997-98 to 32.1 per cent in 1999-2000, and the State's plan expenditure came down to the level of Rs. 2,529 crore in 2003-04.

3. Confronted with this situation, the State Government repeatedly raised, on the basis of data and analysis, a demand for solution to those problems which are linked to the policies of the Central Government, namely, shortfall in the States' share of Central taxes and the burden of the Central loans on the State, before the Government of India and later the Twelfth Finance Commission. It is unfortunate that these justified demands have still been left unattended. In this situation, the State Government decided to undertake necessary steps regarding issues where steps on the part of the State Government were necessary.

4. As a result of special emphasis given by the State Government on increasing its own tax revenue through implementation of Value Added Tax and improvement of tax administration and also reduction of non-plan revenue expenditure through better financial management, the average annual rate of growth of State's own revenue over the period from 1999-2000 to 2006-07 has been 13.4 per cent while the average annual rate of growth of non-plan revenue expenditure over the same period has been 8.3 per cent. This has resulted in a significant improvement in the indicators of financial performance of the State Government. The ratio of revenue deficit to revenue receipts has been reduced from 90.9 per cent in 1999-2000 to 31.1 per cent in 2006-07, the ratio of fiscal deficit to SDP has been reduced from 9.2 per cent in 1999-2000 to 4.5 per cent in 2006-07, and the State's plan expenditure has increased from Rs. 2,529 crore in 2003-04 to Rs. 5,990 crore in 2005-06, and then again increased significantly to Rs. 7,978 crore in 2006-07. In the current financial year (2006-07), the State's own revenue has grown by about 20.7 per cent and the account of the State Government have not been in overdraft even for a single day in the last two years since March, 2005.

5. The higher position of the growth of State's own revenue relative to the non-plan revenue expenditure will be improved more in 2007-08, and this will lead to further improvement in the financial indicators. Specifically, the revenue deficit as percentage of revenue receipts will fall to 23.4 per cent, the rate of fiscal deficit to SDP will fall to 3.9 per cent, and the State plan expenditure has been estimated to increase further to Rs. 10,224 crore in 2007-08. It is estimated that the size of Eleventh Five year Plan (2007-12) will be about Rs. 61,785 crore.

6. Even after this improvement of the financial situation of the State through State's own efforts, the problem which remains unsolved is the burden of the Central loan to the State. The main component of the Central loan in the case of West Bengal is small savings-related loans (nearly 80 per cent, at the end of 2006-07) on terms and conditions fixed by the Central Government. The State Government has always attached special importance to small savings schemes in the interest of the common people of the State and has occupied the first position among all States in respect of small savings collection. Since according to terms imposed by the Central Government, 100 per cent of the net amount collected out of small savings from the people of the State is compulsorily transferred to the State as loan at a high rate of

interest, the success of the State in small savings collection has resulted in a steep increase in the debt burden of the State. The package of debt relief recommended by the Twelfth Finance Commission excluded from its purview the small savings loan given by the Centre to the States from 1999-2000 onwards. As a result of this, the State of West Bengal has not benefited at all from the recommendations of the Twelfth finance Commission in so far as debt relief is concerned. The recommendations of the Sub-committee of the National Development Council which was constituted on the suggestion of the Government of West Bengal for reviewing the issue of relief on outstanding small savings loan have also not addressed the serious debt problem of the State. Of late, the State government has been in interaction with the Finance Ministry, Government of India for a justified reduction in the State's debt burden. If the debt problem is properly addressed by the Central Government and the demand of the State for justified debt relief is accepted, then it will be possible for the State Government to increase further the size of the Eleventh Five year Plan, beyond the presently estimated sum of Rs. 61,785 crore, and deploy more resources for development of social and infrastructure sectors.

7. Along with these efforts, the State Government may access specific projects with external assistance (loan or grants) provided these projects are consistent with the priorities of the State Government, and they do not unduly enhanced the debt burden of the States.

## CONCLUSION

In spite of all the limitations and constraints it will be the endeavour of the State Government to ensure faster economic development of the State during the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan and progressively reach the goal of sustainable development.