Preface

The discourse on human development has come a long way since the publication of the first global Human Development Report was published in 1990. Ever since then, people have become central to development issues, with the main concerns being that all sections of the society should benefit from economic prosperity, enjoy long, healthy and productive lives, and optimise their potential in all spheres.

Proceeding with a similar sensibility, the first Human Development Report for Delhi was published in 2006, and was structured around the central theme of ‘Partnerships for Progress’. The Report highlighted the need for increased people’s participation in order to achieve progress in human development on the basis of the partnerships forged between the community and the Government.

The theme of the Delhi Human Development Report, 2013, the successor to the first Human Development Report of 2006, is “Improving Lives, Promoting Inclusion”. This theme is particularly relevant for Delhi in the context of the multi-layered society of this great megapolis, wherein the wealthy and the poor live side by side, where opulent mansions and crowded slums jostle for space with each other, and where people speak in myriad tongues and follow a multitude of cultures.

The economy of Delhi has witnessed a high growth rate during the last decade. Poverty has been reduced considerably. There has been an expansion in employment opportunities as well as in access to housing and many basic services. Public health facilities and educational opportunities have undergone tremendous expansion. This has been reflected in a very high level of satisfaction expressed by people across the board regarding the various aspects of life in Delhi. Notwithstanding the overall impressive gains accruing to various groups, however, disparities still persist amongst these groups. There are some particularly vulnerable groups of people such as the homeless, child workers, the differently-abled and the elderly, whose relative exclusion based on human development considerations, warrants focused attention from policy-makers. Public safety has recently emerged as a major area of concern bringing forth an important aspect of human development.

This Report has been prepared by a group of dedicated researchers at the Institute for Human Development (IHD), who have prepared background papers based on their subject matter specialization and has been synthesised and edited by an experienced team. The preparation of the Report has benefited from the involvement of a high level Steering Committee chaired by the Chief Secretary, GNCTD. The Report has been enriched by the views of the people of Delhi through a perceptions survey of about 8000 households, conducted by IHD, and also through focus group discussions (FGDs). The Report has benefited greatly from the organisation of various thematic consultations and a comprehensive stakeholder workshop inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Delhi, which entailed brainstorming sessions among national and international academicians and researchers, and discussions and feedback from Government officials/departments. These interactions helped garner a lot of enriching and useful inputs for incorporation into the Report. Our sincere endeavour in preparing this Report comes with the hope that it would become a tool for evidence-based policy formulations, thereby facilitating a better understanding of the various attributes that underlie the human development paradigm, especially in the context of Delhi.

It has been a great privilege for the Institute for Human Development to be associated with the preparation of the Delhi Human Development Report 2013. The Institute is grateful to the Government of Delhi for providing it this opportunity. The conduction of a Perceptions Survey, encompassing various issues directly related to human development, helps in bringing the voice of the residents of Delhi to the fore and highlighting people’s feelings about the quality of their lives as residents of this city. Various interlinkages exist between the availability of human development-related services such as education, healthcare, basic services, and safety, and the perceptions of the people who avail of these services, especially the vulnerable and the marginalised. These links at the locality/neighbourhood, household and individual levels need to be understood closely in order to efficiently address the pervasiveness of various disparities as well as to assure better access and utilisation of essential services thereby promoting inclusion. The DHDR 2013 is a small but steady step in this direction.

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