

Eradication & Poverty Alleviation Programmes in India - An Analysis

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Abstract: “Poverty” as “Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter; is being sick and not being able to see a doctor; not having access to school and not knowing how to read; is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time. Primary causes of poverty are Unemployment, Inflation, Poor management of resources, Government policies, Under-Education, Debt, Corruption, Extreme weather,, Lack of control in local food, Lack of access to education, Mental illness - lack of proper psychiatric care, World hunger, Epidemic diseases, Automation - Technological Unemployment, Over Population, Historical causes like Slavery, War, Conquest Etc., Poverty Eradication strategies are broadly categorized here based on whether they make more of the basic human needs available or whether they increase the disposable income needed to purchase those needs. Poverty and inequality are interlinked. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Training Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM); Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA); National Rural Employment Programme (NREP); Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP); Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY); Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS); Million Well Scheme (MWS); Prime Minister’s Rozgar Yojana (PMRY); Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY); Jai Prakash Rozgar Guarantee Yojana (JPRGY); Rural Housing Schemes; Poverty can be eradicated only when the various facilities and concessions for the up-liftment of the downtrodden actually reach them.. Several poverty alleviation programmes have been launched by the central government for the rural poor, comprising small and marginal farmers, landless labourers and rural artisans. Providing the basic amenities in rural areas such as roads, drinking water, schools, medical help, credit supply (banks) and marketing facilities and so on is must. All these will create employment opportunities in rural areas and shall help in reducing poverty. The approach of this scheme is to employ the poor on building durable and productive community assets such as roads, small irrigation facilities, school buildings, rural electrification. These durable productive assets after completion would create employment opportunities on sustained basis.

Keywords: Poverty; Eradication of Poverty; Programmes; Measures; Guidelines; Eradication of Poverty Schemes; Employment Generation Schemes

1. Introduction

The World Bank Organization describes “poverty” as “Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not having access to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time. Poverty has many faces, changing from place to place and across time, and has been described in many ways. ”Poverty” the state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions. Poverty is said to exist when people lack the means to satisfy their basic needs. Poverty is about not having enough money to meet basic needs including food, clothing and shelter. However, poverty is more, much more than just not having enough money.

“The International Food Study Institute” had a brief on a collection of extensive studies that analyzed the causes of poverty, analyzing household data and reviewing empirical research in 20 countries. Primary causes of poverty are Unemployment, Inflation, Poor management of resources, Government policies, Under-Education, Debt, Corruption, Extreme weather,, Lack of control in local food, Lack of access to education, Mental illness - lack of proper psychiatric care, World hunger, Epidemic diseases, Automation - Technological Unemployment, Over Population, Historical causes like Slavery, War, Conquest Etc.,

The World Bank forecasted in 2015 that 702.1 million people were living in extreme poverty, down from 1.75 billion in 1990. Extreme poverty is observed in all parts of

the world, including developed economies. Of the 2015 population, 231.3 million (13.5%) lived in South Asia. According to the World Bank, between 1990 and 2015, the percentage of the world's population living in extreme poverty fell from 37.1% to 9.6%, falling below 10% for the first time.

Poverty Eradication: Various Poverty Eradication strategies are broadly categorized here based on whether they make more of the basic human needs available or whether they increase the disposable income needed to purchase those needs. Poverty and inequality are interlinked. Control of population growth, higher economic growth and income redistribution etc. are the most important measures of eradication of poverty. Various anti poverty measures have been taken during the plan period starting from the first to the 9th five year plan. Various special anti-poverty employment programmes. Like JRY, NRY etc. have been launched from time to time. Various social security measures like NOPS, ESIC etc. have been launched.

2. Poverty Alleviation Programmes in India

The poverty alleviation programmes in India can be categorized based on whether it is targeted for rural areas or urban areas. Most of the programmes are designed to target rural poverty as prevalence of poverty is high in rural areas. Also targeting poverty is challenging in rural areas due to various geographic and infrastructure limitations. The programmes can be mainly grouped into Wage employment programmes, Self-employment programmes, Food security programmes, Social security programmes, Urban poverty alleviation programmes.

Poverty, however, can be eradicated only when the various facilities and concessions for the up-liftment of the downtrodden actually reach them. Then, there should be proper utilization of these concessions and facilities. Several poverty alleviation programmes have been launched by the central government for the rural poor, comprising small and marginal farmers, landless labourers and rural artisans. They are as follows: The five year plans immediately after independence tried to focus on poverty alleviation through sectoral programmes. Several poverty alleviation programmes have been launched by the central government for the rural poor, comprising small and marginal farmers, landless labourers and rural artisans. They are as follows:

- 1) Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)
- 2) Training Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM)
- 3) Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA)
- 4) National Rural Employment Programme (NREP)
- 5) Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP)
- 6) Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY)
- 7) Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS)
- 8) Million Well Scheme (MWS):
- 9) Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY):
- 10) Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY):
- 11) Jai Prakash Rozgar Guarantee Yojana (JPRGY):
- 12) Rural Housing Schemes:
- 13) National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS):
- 14) National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS):
- 15) National Maternity Benefit Scheme:
- 16) Annapurna
- 17) Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awaas Yojana

1) Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)

The Integrated Rural Development Programme initiated in 1978-79 extended to all development blocks in the country in 1980-81. It is based on "the local needs, resources, endowments and potentialities." Its objective is to enable selected families to cross the poverty line by taking up self-employment ventures in a variety of activities like agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry in the primary sector, weaving and handicrafts in the secondary sector, and service and business activities in the tertiary sector. While the central and state government provide financial resources for the programme and lay down broad guidelines for its implementation, the main administrative unit of its implementation is the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs). At the Block level a number of extension officers are provided for programme implementation.

2) Training Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM)

The scheme of TRYSEM was initiated in August, 1979, with the primary objective of providing technical skills to the rural youth to enable them to seek employment in fields of agriculture, industry, services and business activities. Only youth in the age group of 18-35 and belonging to families living below the poverty line are eligible for training.

3) Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA)

The scheme of DWCRA was introduced in 50 districts in 1982-83. The major thrust of DWCRA is to improve the socio-economic status of rural women through the creation of income-generating activities in a district on a self-sustaining basis.

4) National Rural Employment Programme (NREP)

National Rural Employment Programme was launched in October 1980 as a centrally sponsored scheme on 50:50 sharing basis between centre and states. Generating additional gainful employment opportunities, creating durable community assets and improving the overall quality of life in rural areas constitute the three fold objectives of the programme. The programme is implemented through DRDA.

5) Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP):

Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme was launched on 15th August 1983 to generate additional employment in rural areas particularly for the rural landless workers. Under this scheme employment is given to at least one member of every landless family upto 100 days in a year.

6) Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY)

The programme was launched in April, 1989. It is preeminently a wage employment programme. Under the scheme, it is expected that at least one member of each poor family would be provided with employment for 50 to 100 days in a year at a work place near his/her residence. About 30 per cent of the jobs under this scheme are reserved for women. The scheme is implemented through village Panchayats. It covers 46 per cent of our population. At present Jawahar Rozgar Yojana is not in operation.

7) Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS)

The EAS was launched in 1983 and expanded in phases to cover the whole country in 1996. It aims at providing 100 days of employment to two members of a rural family in a year.

8) Million Well Scheme (MWS)

The MWS is funded by the centre and states in the ratio of 80:20. The objective of the scheme is to provide open irrigation wells free of cost to poor, small and marginal farmers belonging to SCs and STs and freed bonded labour.

9) Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY):

The PMRY is a self-employment programme for the educated unemployed youth. This programme has been implemented since October 2, 1993 to provide employment opportunities to the educated unemployed youths in the country.

10) Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY)

This scheme is in operation from 1999. It is implemented only at the village level to create village infrastructure and generates employment opportunities to alleviate poverty. Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) is the restructured, streamlined and comprehensive version of the Jawahar

Rozgar Yojana (JRY). It was started on 1 April 1999. The main aim of this programme was development of rural areas. Infrastructure like roads to connect the village to different areas, which made the village more accessible and also other social, educational (schools) and infrastructure like hospitals. Its secondary objective was to give out sustained wage employment. This was only given to BPL (below the poverty line) families and fund was to be spent for individual beneficiary schemes for SCs and STs and 3% for the establishment of barrier free infrastructure for the disabled people. The village panchayats were one of the main governing body of this programme. 1841.80 crore was used and they had a target of 9.347 lakh works. 15.07 lakh works were completed during 2015-2016.

11) Jai Praksahrozgar Guarantee Yojana (JPRGY)

The JPRGY has been launched (2002) to provide employment guarantee to the unemployed in the most distressed districts of the country.

12) Rural Housing Schemes

Indira Awas Yojana was launched by the government in 1985. Under this scheme house is given free of cost to SC/ST families and free bonded labourers. Its scope has been extended to include non-scheduled rural poor. Under the Ninth Five Year Plan, Samagra Awas Yojana has been launched to ensure integrated provision of shelter, sanitation and drinking water to poor rural households.

13) National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS)

This scheme came into effect on 15 August 1995. The scheme provides pension to old people who were above the age of 65 (now 60) who could not find for themselves and did not have any means of subsistence. The pension that was given was 200 a month. This pension is given by the central government. The job of implementation of this scheme in states and union territories is given to panchayats and municipalities. The states contribution may vary depending on the state. The amount of old age pension is 200 per month for applicants aged 60–79. For applicants aged above 80 years, the amount has been revised to 500 a month according to the 2011–2012 Budget. It is a successful venture.

14) National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS):

This scheme was started in August 1995. This scheme is sponsored by the state government. It was transferred to the state sector scheme after 2002-03. It is under the community and rural department. This scheme provides a sum of 20000 to a person of a family who becomes the head of the family after the death of its primary breadwinner. The breadwinner is defined as a person who is above 18 who earns the most for the family and on whose earnings the family survives.

15) National Maternity Benefit Scheme

This scheme provides a sum of ₹6000 to a pregnant mother in three installments. The women have to be older than 19 years of age. It is given normally 12–8 weeks before the birth and in case of the death of the child the women can still avail it. The NMBS is implemented by states and union territories with the help of panchayats and municipalities. During 1999–2000 the total allocation of funds for this scheme was 767.05 crores and the amount used was

₹444.13 crore. It is for families below the poverty line. The scheme was updated in 2005-06 into Janani Suraksha Yojana with 1400 for every institutional birth.

16) Annapurna

This scheme was started by the government in 1999–2000 to provide food to senior citizens who cannot take care of themselves and are not under the National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS), and who have no one to take care of them in their village. This scheme would provide 10 kg of free food grains a month for the eligible senior citizens. The allocation for this scheme in 2015-2016 was 465 crore. They mostly target groups of 'poorest of the poor' and 'indigent senior citizens

17) Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awaas Yojana

This scheme aimed at creating housing for everyone. It was initiated in 1985. It aimed at creating 20 lakh housing units out of which 13 lakhs were in rural area. This scheme also would give out loans to people at subsidized rates to make houses. It was started in 1999–2000. In 1999–2000, 1438.39 crore was used for this scheme and about 7.98 lakh units were built. In 2000-01 a central outlay of 1710.00 crores was provided for this scheme. It improved the standard of living of rural areas: health, primary education, drinking water, housing, roads. The scheme has proved to be a major boost in Indian rural population's income.

The Ministry of Rural Development (MRD) is the nodal Ministry for the implementation of NREGA. It is responsible for ensuring timely and adequate resource support to the States and to the Central Council. It has to undertake regular review, monitoring and evaluation of processes and outcomes. It is responsible for maintaining and operating the MIS to capture and track data on critical aspects of implementation, and assess the utilization of resources through a set of performance indicators. MRD will support innovations that help in improving processes towards the achievement of the objectives of the Act. It will support the use of Information Technology (IT) to increase the efficiency and transparency of the processes as well as improve interface with the public

3. Important Programmes Adopted to Eradicate Rural Poverty in India

The government has relied mainly on three approaches for reduction of poverty. The first entails pursuit of higher economic growth which will improve the levels of living of all groups of people in the society including the poor, the second involves direct anti-poverty programmes and the third has stressed high priority to government expenditure on social sectors. After independence, the Government has launched several poverty alleviation programmes, the important among these are as follows:

- 1) Legal elimination of bonded labourers.
- 2) Preventing the centralisation of wealth by modifying the law.
- 3) Antyodaya plan.
- 4) Small Farmers Development Programme (SFDP)
- 5) Drought Area Development Programme (DADP)
- 6) Twenty point programme

- 7) Food for work programme
- 8) Minimum needs programme (MNP)
- 9) Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)
- 10) National Rural Employment Programme (NREP)
- 11) Rural Labour Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP)
- 12) TRYSEM scheme
- 13) Jawahar RojgarYojna (JRY)
- 14) Swarna Jayanti Gram SwarozgarYojna.
- 15) National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)
- 16) Rural Housing Programme

- a) **Five-Year Plans:** The First Five-Year Plan was launched in April 1951. Since then eleven plans have been formulated and implemented. The central objective of all the plans was to raise the living standards of people and to open out to them opportunities for a richer and more varied life. The social objectives are to reduce inequalities of income and wealth on the one hand and the welfare of the community on the other.
- b) **Policy of Nationalization:** To achieve the 'socialistic pattern of society, one of the objectives of economic policy, the government adopted the policy of nationalization. As a result, many banks were nationalized in 1969. Following this policy, the coal mines were also nationalized in 1972. Later on, this policy was adopted in many other fields also.
- c) **20-Point Programme:** In consonance with her slogan of Garibi Hatao (1971), Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister, launched 20-point programme of development. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP): It was a programme of poverty alleviation launched in March 1976. Its main objective was to enable selected families to cross the poverty line.
- d) **AntyodayaYojana:** This programme was initially launched by the then Government of Rajasthan on 2nd October 1977 and later on the governments of Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh also followed this model of development in 1980. The main plank of this programme is to develop the poorest of the poor. Antyodaya means development (udaya) of the people who is at the bottom level (ant) of the ladder.
- e) **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS):** This scheme was started in February 2006. It was first applied only in 100 most backward districts on an experimental basis. Later on, in September 2007, it was extended to whole of India. The main objective of this scheme is to provide wage employment to rural people. The present UPA government has proposed many changes in this scheme. Unfortunately, like all other government schemes, it is also found to be full of corruption and weaknesses as revealed by the report of Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

4. Relevant Measures to reduce Poverty in India

The nine important measures which should be taken to reduce poverty in India are as follows:

- 1) **Accelerating Economic Growth:** In the fifties and sixties it was generally thought that poverty in India can be significantly reduced by accelerating economic growth.

According to this view, benefits of economic growth will trickle down to the poor in the form of more employment opportunities, greater productivity and higher wages. With this it was expected that the poor will be raised above the poverty line. Though this is correct that higher rate of capital formation is necessary for accelerating economic growth and thereby for solving the problem of poverty, but this will not generate sufficient employment opportunities if labour – saving capital-intensive techniques of production are used in the process of growth. Therefore, while efforts should be made to accelerate economic growth but if it has to make a significant dent on the problem of poverty the use of capital-intensive technologies imported from the Western Countries should be avoided. In fact, we should pursue labour-intensive path of economic growth. Such monetary and fiscal policies should be adopted that provide incentives for using labour-intensive techniques.

2) Agricultural Growth and Poverty Alleviation:

Agricultural growth has been recognized as an important factor that contributes to marked reduction in poverty. The growth in agricultural output in these states propelled by the adoption of new-high yielding technology caused a marked reduction in poverty in these states. Rural poverty ratio in Punjab and Haryana was 6.4 and 8.3 per cent respectively in 1999-2000. employment generated by new green revolution technology has been cancelled out by increasing mechanisation of agricultural operations in various parts of a country. Thus, even in the light of the finding of zero employment elasticity of agricultural output at the all India level, positive impact of agricultural growth on the incomes of small farmers and, more particularly on the wage income of agricultural labourers, cannot be denied. To ensure marked decline in rural poverty through agricultural growth, rate of agricultural growth should be accelerated by increasing public investment in irrigation and other infrastructure.

3) Speedy Development of Infrastructure:

An important measure to generate employment opportunities for the poor and to raise their productivity is the speedy development of infrastructure. Since private sector is not attracted to make adequate investment in infrastructure, public investment needs to be stepped up for its development. Infrastructure development consists of building of roads, highways, ports, telecommunication, power and irrigation. They involve mainly construction work which is highly labour intensive. Besides, the availability of infrastructure such as power and irrigation greatly raise productivity of labour.

4) Accelerating Human Resource Development:

Besides physical infrastructure development, poverty can also be reduced through human resource development. Human resource development requires greater investment in educational facilities such as schools to promote literacy, technical training institutes and vocational colleges to impart skills to the people. Further, human resource development requires health care by public investment in Primary Health Centres, dispensaries and hospitals. This human resource development not only generates a good deal of employment opportunities but also raises productivity and income of the poor. Further, people equipped with skills, education and

good health can easily get wage employment or self-employment with higher productivity.

5) Growth of Non-Farm Employment: For reduction of poverty growth of non-farm employment in the rural areas is of special importance. Non-farm employment is created in marketing (i.e., petty trade), transportation, handicrafts, dairying, and forestry, processing of food and other agricultural products, repair workshops.

6) Access to Assets: Rapid growth of population after independence has led to greater sub-division and fragmentation of agricultural holdings and lack of employment opportunities in industries and other non-farm sectors has worsened the conditions of agricultural labour and self-employed small farmers.

7) Access to Credit: Availability of credit to the poor on easy terms can create the conditions for small farmers gaining access to productive resources such as HYV seeds fertilizers, construction of minor irrigation such as wells and tubewells. This will enable the small farmers to adopt high-yielding technology to raise their productivity. The new technology is size-neutral, that is, it can be adopted equally well by small farmers. But the adoption of new technology requires financial resources which are lacking with the small farmers. Besides, the non-farmer poor need credit for marketing, food processing, dairying, forestry, development of handicrafts which can provide them gainful employment. An important step in credit delivery system for the poor has been setting up of regional rural banks (RRB). Regional rural banks are primarily meant to meet the credit needs of the poor. The Government should take effective steps to improve the functioning of these financial institutions so as to ensure availability of adequate credit to the poor.

8) Public Distribution System (PDS): Therefore, an effective way of raising rural incomes and ensuring food security to the poor households is an assured supply of adequate quantity of food-grains and other essential commodities at subsidised prices, that is, at prices which are lower than the market prices. A properly functioning public distribution system which is targeted to the poor households is an important element of the strategy for poverty reduction. The Central Government Organisation 'Food Corporation of India' procures the food-grains from the farmers at the minimum support prices (MSP) and store them in their warehouses located throughout the country.

9) Direct Attack on Poverty: Special Employment Schemes for the Poor: It was realised in the early seventies that it would take a very long time for economic growth to generate enough employment opportunities to provide productive employment to all the unemployed and poor in the country. Therefore, a strategy of providing employment to the poor in the short run, special schemes of employing poor on rural public works. The special employment scheme of rural public works which was launched by the Government in 5th Five Year Plan constitutes a direct attack on poverty as it does not depend on the trickle-down effect of economic growth on the poor. There are mainly two types of

such special anti-poverty schemes launched by the Government from time to time.

10) Recently, the UPA government is trying to enact a Food Security Act, as a major step in alleviating poverty.

5. Suggestions/Guidelines for Removal of Poverty from India

- 1) **Population Control:** Population in India has been increasing rapidly. Growth rate of population is 1.8%. For removal of poverty the growth rate of population should be lowered.
- 2) **Increase in Employment:** Special measures should be taken to solve the problems of unemployment and disguised unemployment. Agriculture should be developed. Small scale and cottage industries should be developed in rural areas to generate employment.
- 3) **Equal distribution of Income:** Mere increase in production and control on population growth will not remove poverty in India. It is necessary that inequality in the distribution of income should be reduced.
- 4) **Regional poverty:** In States like Orissa, Nagaland, U.P and Bihar etc. the percentage of the poor to the total population is high. Govt. should give special concession for investment in these regions. More PSU's should be established in these states.
- 5) **Problem of Distribution:** The public distribution system (PDS) should be strengthened to remove poverty. Poor section should get food grains at subsidized rates and in ample quantity.
- 6) **Fulfillment of minimum needs of the Poor:** Govt. should take suitable steps to meet minimum needs of the poor e.g., supply of drinking water and provision of primary health centres and primary education.
- 7) **Increase in the productivity of the Poor:** To remove poverty, it is necessary to increase productivity of the poor. The poor should be given more employment. More investment should be made in public and private sectors to generate employment.
- 8) **Changes in techniques of Production:** India should adopt labour intensive techniques of production. We should have technical development in our economy in such a way that labour resources could be fully employed.
- 9) **Stability in Price Level:** Stability in prices helps to remove poverty. If prices continue to rise, the poor will become more poor. So Govt. should do its best to keep the prices under control.
- 10) **Development of Agriculture:** The agriculture should be developed to remove poverty. Rapid rate of growth of agriculture production will help to remove urban as well as rural poverty. Agriculture should be mechanized and modernized. Marginal farmers should be given financial assistance.
- 11) **Increase in the rate of growth:** Slow rate of growth is the main cause of poverty. So growth rate must be accelerated. In 2003-04 the growth rate has been 6.5% despite that 26% of population remains below poverty line.

6. Conclusion

Poverty, however, can be eradicated only when the various facilities and concessions for the upliftment of the downtrodden actually reach them. Then, there should be proper utilisation of these concessions and facilities. Several poverty alleviation programmes have been launched by the central government for the rural poor, comprising small and marginal farmers, landless labourers and rural artisans. This highlights the need for making reforms in these schemes so that they lead to the expansion of productive types of wage-employment and self-employment. Providing the basic amenities in rural areas such as roads, drinking water, schools, medical help, credit supply (banks) and marketing facilities and so on is must. All these will create employment opportunities in rural areas and shall help in reducing poverty. First, there are several special schemes of providing wage employment to the poor. The approach of this scheme is to employ the poor on building durable and productive community assets such as roads, small irrigation facilities, school buildings, rural electrification. These durable productive assets after completion would create employment opportunities on sustained basis.

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