CHAPTER VII

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Findings

2. Recommendations
CHAPTER-VII

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An attempt is made here to present important findings of the study and offer some suggestions.

Before going into the details of the findings, it will also be useful to note some important points such as follows,

Poverty of the masses still remains as a major problem in India despite the all round development of the economy, through planning. It is widely known and accepted that incidence of poverty is positively associated with unemployment and under-employment. This relationship is more evident in case of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes people; because wage employment is a main source of livelihood of these people. Majority of the people do not own any type of assets nor they are involved in any lucrative business. Therefore, wage employment occupies a very important place in providing the livelihood for these people. After Independance conscious efforts are made to improve the socio-economic conditions of these groups by undertaking
various programmes. Generation of additional employment opportunities through various programmes is one among such other programmes. "National Rural Employment Programme" (N.R.E.P) which is the subject matter of present study is one of them which was started in 1980, as a centrally sponsored scheme with certain objectives. The purpose of present study is to make a critical assessment of the programme (N.R.E.P) with some specific objectives mentioned earlier.

For the sake of convenience the study is divided into seven chapters as given earlier. Some important findings of this study are as follows.

MAIN FINDINGS

1. Failure of heavy investment approach to generate employment opportunities.

As discussed in Chapter second, the long term solution of unemployment problem in both urban and rural areas lies only in heavy investment has failed. High rate of capital accumulation and investment was considered as a key factor for attaining higher rate of economic growth and generation
of employment opportunities. This approach no doubt increased the rate of industrial growth but at the same time it could not help to increase employment opportunities. So in short, the earlier approach especially upto 60's which accorded a high priority for capital intensive technique could not help to reduce the number of unemployed persons in the country. It required a new policy approach to generate more and more employment opportunities, and hence several new programmes were designed after a thorough study. The programme which is subject matter of present study "N.R.E.P" is one among such programmes.

2. There are certain defects in designing of the scheme and also lacks uniformity in its implementation. As discussed in the chapter number IIInd, the guidelines on "N.R.E.P." suggest that those works should be undertaken, which will strengthen rural infrastructure and create durable community assets. But no scientific method or procedure has been given to identify the gap in the infrastructural development of different villages. Therefore, there is every possibility of arbitrary decisions being taken by the D.R.D.As which are
influenced by political pressures. The word "Durable Assets" is also very loosely used without giving any conditions or characteristics of durability of assets.

Moreover, as it is observed, the implementing agency lacks uniformity. The guideline states that District Rural Development Agency (D.R.D.A) will be the only authority which will be responsible for the implementation of N.R.E.P. But, different practice is being followed in different states while implementing N.R.E.P. For example, in states like West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh, "N.R.E.P" is not implemented by D.R.D.As. It is kept outside of their jurisdiction. In Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh, the D.R.D.As executive the works under N.R.E.P. with technical staff, provided specially for the purpose. In case of Maharashtra and Rajasthan, the D.R.D.As have been entrusted the work of execution of N.R.E.P but they have not been provided with technical staff. In Maharashtra state, "N.R.E.P" could not be implemented as a separate programme right from the beginning except for few years. Initially "N.R.E.P", was implemented as a part of "E.G.S" as the funds of N.R.E.P. were treated and used as additional funds for "E.G.S." from 1980 to 1982 and again recently, it has been merged into the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana in 1989.
The method of allocation of funds among different states and in between districts is incorrect, because while allocating the funds in different states and districts, only 25% weightage is given to the incidence of poverty in the state or respective district, which is incorrect.

Peoples' participation in formulation of the work plan is also a noble idea which is incorporated in the "N.R.E.P" but it is not a practicable suggestion because the villagers and their Gram Panchayats do not have expertise and knowledge of formulating work plans for them, at the most they can suggest some need based works to be undertaken by the D.R.D.As.

3. Lack of co-ordination and proper linkages with other ongoing programmes.

"N.R.E.P." is one among several other programmes which are implemented in rural areas with some difference for employment generation. These programmes mainly include I.R.D.P., E.G.S., R.L.E.G.P. etc. All these programmes are isolatedly implemented. Therefore, however high may be the objectives of these programmes the benefits of these programmes are very thinly spread over.
Not only this, but it is also observed that "N.R.E.P." do
d not have its own target group, but its approach is that
of a general in nature. Other programmes mentioned above
are related to their specific objective group, for example
I.R.D.P. concentrated on such persons who are below poverty
line or "R.L.E.G.P." is meant only for rural landless people,
but N.R.E.P. lacks in this aspect of being non-objective
to a target oriented group.

After having seen, the findings as above about the scheme's design,
now let us note some findings about the scheduled castes to
whom the study is mainly concerned.

4. The socio-economic life of scheduled castes is much
governed by their caste factor even today. As discussed in
Chapter II/III, they mainly live in rural areas and are
dependent on wage employment as agricultural labourers, or
as traditional leather workers, scavengers bone collections,
rope making etc.

Their economic status could not change much over last 42 years
of independance. Land reforms and service reservations
could not help much, despite the government's best efforts.
Social and economic deprivation, denial of opportunities, half starvation, nakedness among these population remained a naked fact, which compels them to live under a social and economic insecurity.

5. The performance of N.R.E.P. cannot be called as satisfactory for the reasons mentioned below.

That, the allocated funds for "N.R.E.P" are not fully utilised in the country. However, in Marathwada, the position seems to be improved in 1984-85 over the previous year 1983-84. The percentage of funds utilised has gone up from 75% to 91% in the above period.

Same is the case with number of works taken up and completed. As discussed in Chapter 4, that in 1983-84, only 14.98% of the total works were completed and in 1984-85, only 34.21 per cent of the total works taken up were completed in the Marathwada region.

In case of employment generation, we find that very few people could get employment under the programme in various districts of the region and that too, the duration of employment was on an average only for 83 days in a year, which is
short by 167 days to be called a person fully employed in a year. Another thing which is noticed in the study is that, generation of employment for few days has been considered as an end in itself rather than as a means to eradicate poverty. Because the works undertaken do not increase consistently the income, rather they are repetitive in nature like construction of road, or gutters or school building, or gram panchayat house etc. These works do not provide continuous source of income but employment for few days.

6. The idea of food grains distribution could not take a practicable shape.

One of the important objectives of the "N.R.E.P" was to increase the nutritional status of the participating rural poor by providing them one kilogram of food grains per day as a part of wage payment at subsidised rates. This provision of wage goods was made mainly for two reasons. One was, to increase nutritional status and second to avoid inflationary effects. But these two objectives are defeated because, it is observed as discussed in Chapter no: 4, that in each year the total foodgrains, which was made available, was not utilised
in the country but it remained unused. For example, except in the year 1980-81, 81-82 near about 50% food grains remained unutilised in the country. However, the position is still worst in the study area. As discussed in the 4th chapter, no foodgrain was made available neither it was distributed except in Beed district under the programme. So either the nonutilisation of food grains or nonavailability of food grains for distribution under the programme has defeated the very purpose as explained above.

7. The wage rate is inadequate. The workers working on N.R.E.P works are given a wage rate which is equal to the Minimum Agricultural wage rate. The minimum agricultural wage rate differs from one zone to another as per the provisions of the minimum agricultural wages Act, 1976. This rate was ranging in between Rs. 6.00 and Rs. 10.00 per day.

8. The consumption pattern of the beneficiaries remained unchanged. As discussed in the foregoing Chapters the consumption pattern did not change, even though the total consumption expenditure on various items has increased from Rs. 2,608.00 per year to Rs. 3,453.50 paise of each family. The monthly increase per family is very negligible which is
just Rs. 10.90. This shows simply the inflationary impact on consumption expenditure.

If we look to per head daily availability of food, we find that in case of cereals it was .400 kgs. in 1980, which was reduced to .366 kgs in 1985, same is the case with other important food items like milk, meat, and sugar in the surveyed area of Phulambri in Aurangabad district. The total expenditure including food and other items like, education, clothing, consumer durables shows a net increase of Rs. 184.83 in 1985 over the base year 1980. This increase per family is very marginal.

9. It is also observed that data base is poorly maintained at all levels, including village panchayat, block, district and divisional level. It is especially true in case of the 10% special provision of budget which is made for the benefits of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

It is provided in the scheme that 10% amount of the budget will be spent on the scheme which are directly benefitting the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. But in course of enquiry and in the annual reports of D.R.D.As, no sufficient clarification regarding the use of this amount each year was given.
Also, a balance unspent, works undertaken from this provision has not been provided. Inadequate data restricts the scope of scientific enquiry and also it does not permit to take a stock of the performance of the programme at the grass root level.

Obtaining the data from implementing agencies also requires sufficient energy and time because of the provision of "For Office use only" and it also depends on the mercy and availability of time at the disposal of the concerned officials.

Finally, one can conclude from the above discussion that "N.R. V.P." had very ideal objectives but practically it has remained as a short term employment providing scheme and hence, could not help to rehabilitate the people in general and scheduled castes in particular.
RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the above findings, some recommendations can be made as follows.

1. In order to increase employment, only such investments should be taken up which can absorb maximum labour in the rural areas.

2. Uniformity needs to be maintained in its implementing structure. In "N.R.E.P" (now merged in Jawahar Rojgar Yojana), sufficient care should be taken to see that only such works should be undertaken, which are having maximum multiplier effects. Income multiplier and employment multiplier should be given sufficient considerations.

3. Method of allocation of funds should be reconsidered as it has been pointed out earlier that only 25% weightage is given to incidence of poverty under the scheme. It should be increased at least to 75%. In this way whenever the funds are allocated in different districts and blocks or villages it should be necessarily seen that while allocating the funds percentage of population below, poverty line should be main criteria for allocation of funds.
4. Overlapping of the schemes especially schemes for employment generation in rural areas should be reconsidered. As it has been noticed that there are number of schemes which are being implemented for employment generation in rural areas. This multiplicity of schemes leads to thin spreading of financial resources or budgetary allocations on each scheme. Moreover the benefits also are very thinly spread over. Therefore, it is suggested that the whole policy of rural development to be reshuffled and only few viable schemes be worked out for employment generation.

5. To see that local initiative and peoples participation is sought in the programmes like "N.R.E.P", the formula of Matching Grants should be accepted. The Panchayats should contribute it's share may be in the form of some cash if possible, or by way of labour. This help to develop a spirit of co-operation and a sense of participation so that, the development programmes may not remain as government programmes only thrusted upon the people from above.

6. In order to see that employment of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes people is increased in rural areas, the government along with other measures such as land reforms,
should adopt such policies, which can absorb these people in private works also through government funds under N.R.E.P. Some small agro based projects should also be taken up to increase employment for scheduled castes in rural areas.

7. While planning for rural employment an element of "Wage goods" be necessarily introduced as a part of the scheme. Not only this but it should be effectively implemented. It was principally provided under "N.R.E.P" also but it has not been properly implemented. This should be avoided. Planning in this way will achieve the twin objective of avoiding inflation and increasing of nutritional status of the rural poor.

8. The minimum wages should be increased to at least Rs. 25-00 per day for manual or unskilled works and they should be linked with the monthly movements in the consumer's price index numbers.

9. The data base needs to be systematically maintained. It should give a correct picture of yearwise expenditure on different types of works, especially the earmarked 10% budget $
for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and the works
taken up from this provision should be clearly shown. It
should be made obligatory and a part of the duty of the
implementing agencies to make available the necessary
information and data to the researchers. All schemes are
financed from the public money. Therefore, nothing should
be kept secret and the records should be made free from
the provisions of "FOR OFFICE USE ONLY".

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