CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

This chapter deals with the summary conclusion of all the earlier chapters as well as some useful policies implications. Summary of the Study: India is a land of villages constitutes the very heart of India. The Indian villages scatted over its vast area consisting altogether 6.57 lakh villages each with a population ranging from 100 to 10,000 populations. The areas covered under these areas are considered as rural areas. The average size of the villages consists of few hundred acres of land supporting about 50 to 200 families. More than seventy six percent of the India’s total population lives in rural areas. With the economic progress in the country, it is generally noticed that there has been gradual increase in the ratio urban population and a Even then rural population still constitute a sizeable Part of the total population in a developing country like India.

In the rural areas, a good number of people for over the years lived in a life of dependency or almost complete slavery because of abject poverty and consequence unemployment, under-employment, or social stagnation. This under-employment and unemployment are the chronic problems in rural areas. Those remained untracked effectively in spite of series of developmental programmes undertaken during the five-year plans.

According to Planning Commission, a monthly consumption expenditure of Rs.61.30 head in rural areas and Rs.71.30 per head in urban areas (1976-77 price) would be required to meet the basic needs of a person. Such of those with an income below the levels of expenditure are considered as those who live below the poverty line. As per 38th round of National Sample Survey (1983-84) rural poverty ratio was 40.4 % while that of urban poverty was 28.1% while that of urban poverty was 28.1%, the total being 37.4%. Similarly, during the 43rd round of National Sample Survey. The rural poverty was 33.4% as against urban poverty of 26.4 % and the total being at 29.9%.

Rural poverty is visible, by and large, in the form of poor dietary conditions, with malnutrition, primitive type of shelter, poor health, low level of literacy, high propensity to consume with very low level of savings, lower ratio of capital to labour and
unproductive agriculture. It is a fact that many rural poor suffer from want of basic amenities, such as safe drinking water, reasonable food and housing, primary education, and medical facilities. These basic requirements of life and creation of infrastructural facilities needed for rural development can easily be provided if gainful employment with a living wage is provided to all unemployed and under-employed person in rural areas.

No doubt, removal of poverty and unemployment had figured in the list of objectives in our successive five year plans. In fact, several measures have been taken to eradicate rural poverty and unemployment. This has negativised the results achieved so far in the field of development. After all, what is development in the fact of mounting unemployment and under-employment? While the aspirations in our five-year plans were of high rate of development with adequate employment, in experience has been only inadequate development without adequate employment. The rural poor have been bypassed both in terms of growth and distribution of grains of growth.

Considering the characteristics of rural labour and the problems of unemployment and under-employment and widespread poverty in rural India, various rural reconstruction programmes have been taken up to ameliorate the economic condition of rural people. The first of its kind was Community Development Programme taken up in the 1st plan period (2nd October, 1952) with a view to make systematic approach to reach as much as rural poor as possible through development activities more particularly in the field of agriculture, animal husbandry public health, social education programmes for women and children, and youth training programmes etc.

In mid-seventies, Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) was introduced with the aim at an integrated development in agricultural sector to achieve optimum utilization of land, water and livestock resources, restoration of ecological balance and stabilizing the income of people, particularly the weaker section. During 5th plan period, comprehensive programme for scientific land shaping, construction of water courses with field channels for better use of irrigation potentials, construction of field drains to carry surplus water from the dields, and a system of roads enabling farmers to carry their produces to the market, so as to give optimum benefits to the farmers from land and water, Command Area Development Programme (CADP) was undertaken in selected areas.
Whole Village Development Programme (MNP) with stipulation on investment of human resources development on the provision of free subsidized services through public agencies to improve the consumption levels of persons living below poverty lines and thereby improve the productive efficiency of rural workers. Antyodaya Yojana, literally meaning upliftment of the last man in the row aiming at economic improvement of the poorest of the poor families in the villages, which was different from all the earlier programmes in the sense that it aimed at benefiting the poorest of poor of the rural population and devised to ensure that its benefits percolate down to the poorest section of the society irrespective of the caste and creed, was launched in the fifth plan period.

The successive programmes followed for providing additional employment to the unemployed and under-employed both men and women in rural areas and creation of durable assets benefiting the rural poverty groups and strengthening of rural economic and social infrastructure, and to improve guaranteed employment for at least 100 days in a year to at least one number of every rural landless family, were National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) taken up in the years 1980 and 1984 respectively.

Thus despite introduction of various programmes, the proportion of rural poor below poverty line virtually remained unchanged. This was realized by the Planners in the 6th plan period and the new Scheme namely Integrated Rural development Programme (IRDP) was launched in 1979-80 with the aim to attack poverty at the grass-root level, in order to raise the living standard of the poorest family in the rural areas above poverty line by extending them income generating assets and access to credit and other inouts. The income of Rs. 11,000/ per year per family has been taken as the poverty line. This integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) is said to be unique snit-poverty drive in the sense that previous schemes did not make any appreciable impact on the problem of rural employment and poverty because they were implemented in isolation without adopting the family as a with sole aim of making it economically viable.
5.2. CONCLUSIONS

Despite launching of various programmes for the development of rural poor, since the introduction of five year plans as also after introduction of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) from the year 1979-80, the progress achieved in various sphere of developmental activities such as agriculture, animal husbandry, irrigation, communication, education, public health, and family welfare, depicts a picture wherein 81.55 percent of the rural families are found to be below the line of poverty. By and large, success of any programme will depend on the ability and motivation of personnel who are involved in it. A thorough understanding and clear appreciation of the problems of anti-poverty programmes as well as genuine sympathy and concern for the rural poor are prerequisites for a successful implementation of the programmes. A strictly bureaucratic neutral approach to development may not be sufficient to ensure that rural poverty is eradicated. The rural people suffer from a number of handicaps apart from economic deprivation. Indeed material poverty is in many cases, only a manifestation on their very weak social standing due to historical reasons. The functionaries to be successful will have to understand the sociological and economical reasons for rural poverty and develop a realistic attitude towards the poor their problems. This requires motivation for which appropriate training and orientation programmes are necessary.

Poverty eradication programme is no doubt, very difficult task that require sociological, economical, psychological set up to deal with more successfully. It needs sincere attitude, dedication of the functionary’s involved, honest co-operation from non-officials as well as the beneficiaries. Moreover, unless the people are educated to take initiative in the various schemes of anti-poverty programmes, and unless the leakage in the increase in income consequent upon additional opportunities are checked, there will be no visible increase on the standard of living of the rural poor. The rural poor and tribal development programmes so far executed in the area have not changed the functional base of the tribal people so far. This requires satisfactory monitoring and follow-up in order to have lasting results.

People’s initiative and participation of voluntary agencies to guide the people in taking up anti-poverty programmes are badly necessary since the study area comprised of weaker sections of the society to the extent of 70:30 per cent. Effective decentralization
of power is also badly necessary and Panchayat Raj institutions are closely associated with the programme.

The various reasons, as already discussed, have actually frustrated the very basic objective of lifting the poorest of the poor in rural areas above the line of poverty. The benefits under various schemes have largely gone to the richer sections of the society who are already above or near the line of poverty, rather than the poorest of the poor.

5.3. SUGGESTIONS

As already discussed, in order to achieve better on alleviation of poverty in rural areas, few suggestions are made on the following outlines: Rural poverty will not be eradicated unless there is all round development in the rural areas. All the ideal labour in the rural areas must have to be utilized and provided with productive work. The really deserving poors have to be located, suitable avocation for them designed and appropriate project profile is prepared for institutional assistance. A radical strategy of rural development may not be possible in India. But given the political will, enlightened selfless public opinion, dedicated service of government and agency officials and alertness the society as a whole it would not be difficult to achieve the real goal of rural development vis-à-vis add to eradication of poverty in rural areas and bring sizeable population above the line of poverty.

As such the foremost and important aspect is the restricting the existing Block and village level machinery, otherwise the parrot-like slogan pf planners and policy makers of pulling up the rural living from the clutch of poverty and raising the level of their living enshrined in the main objectives of the Five Year Plans would ever remain a myth.