CHAPTER - III

Implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Rural India
CHAPTER - III

IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMMES IN INDIA

"Every one has the right to work, to free choice of employment to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment" – Article 23.1: Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is a revolutionary step for India's poor. Since Independence, it was being demanded that right to work should be included in the list of Fundamental Rights. It was a matter of concern for all governments that inspire of their best efforts, the problem of unemployment and poverty never came under control. Between 1999-2000 and 2004-2005, unemployment rate for males increased from 81 to 109 in rural areas and from 72 to 78 in Urban areas. Similarly unemployment rate for females increased from 81 to 122 in rural areas and from 83 to 89 in Urban areas. It is noteworthy that a large number of rural youth have been migrating to the cities since Independence.

Therefore, it always remained the priority of the government to stop this exodus of population to the cities. Keeping this in mind poverty reduction has been an important goal of development policy since the inception of planning commission. There fore, the objective of The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is to enhance the livelihood security of people in rural areas by generating wage employment through works that develop the infrastructure base of that area. There has been many defects in the implementation of national rural design of the job cards, lack of supervising low public awareness, irregularities in wage payment and lack of worksite facilities.

Even then, there is the scope for better implementation of the scheme if people could understand the features of the Act properly. Unemployment is a perennial problem of the Indian economy. It gives birth to various social political and economic costs of the society. In order to remove them the government of India
has undertaken various employment programmes during the various Five Year Plan periods. Therefore, if the Government still has eyes to see and ears to hear the poor. It must be bolder with a much larger employment programmes (Amit Bhaduri, 2004).1

However, the unemployment has been sharply accentuated in rural areas which continues to be the major place of residence of a sizable of a Sizable Chunk (71 percent) of the Indian population (Census, 2001).

This has happened because during the first three decades of economic planning rate of growth was considered lower than the targeted rate. Therefore, jobs in adequate number were not created. Further, economic growth by itself does not solve the problem of unemployment2. At this juncture of growing and acute rural distress, there was a need for employment guarantee scheme which could play a vital role in providing employment to rural people to reduce poverty and migration of labour as well to create productive assets in rural areas. It is feasible to have an employment guarantee programme covering all rural households and offering work to all persons, on all the required days, in all districts right from the beginning at a cost lower than the one being fixed project for a restricted programme. Such a programme will be closer to the spirit of a guarantee and positive step towards securing right to work4.

In the recent development literature, inclusive growth is highlighted in the documents of international organizations like World Bank and International Monitory Fund (IMF) as well as in the plan documents of countries. Inclusive growth by its very definition implies an equitable allocation of resources with benefits accruing to every section of society, which is a Utopian concept. But the allocation of resources must be focused on the indented short and long terms, benefits and economic linkages at larger and not just equitable mathematically, on some regional and population criteria5. Defined in the Eleventh plan as a “growth process which yields broad based benefits and ensures equality of opportunity for all”6. Its stand for equitable development or growth which social justice, which have always been the watchwords worlds of development planning in India7.

The policy makers had foreseen that the menace of growing population and lack of employment opportunities in the country would create serious

52
unemployment situation. The private sector will not be able to cope with the growing unemployment. It would, therefore, be the duty of State to generate employment opportunities. This was very well taken by the makers of the Indian Constitution which refers to the Right to Work under Directive Principles of State Policy, Article 39(a) urges the state to ensure that “the citizen, men and women equally have the right to an adequate means of livelihood and under Article 39(d) it has also been mentioned that there is equal pay for work for both men and women. Further, it has been stressed under Article - 41 that the State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work.

3.2 NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT

The NREG Act aims at enhancing the livelihood security of the rural households and can provide the basis of permanent social security system and even act as an instrument for planned and equitable rural development. The provisions of the NREGA will be implemented at the state level through the State Employment Guarantee Council which will be the nodal agency to monitor and review the implementation of the Act at the state level. The panchayats at the districts, intermediaries and village levels shall be the principal authorities for planning an implementation of the schemes, under the Act.

Rural unemployment has sharply accentuated in India in the recent years. Between 1993-94 and 1999-2000 rural employment grew at the annual rate of 0.58 per cent while the rate of growth of rural labour force was much higher. In the absence of gainful employment opportunities in rural areas, an increasing number of rural households have faced complete collapse of their incomes. This miserable plight of the rural households has driven an unprecedented number of farmers to commit suicide. Recognizing this humanitarian crisis, the Government of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) at the centre, made a commitment in its Common Minimum Programme (CMP), that would immediately enact an employment Guarantee Act. The draft proposed by the National Advisory Council (NAC) envisaged legal guarantee to every household in rural areas for 100 days for doing casual manual work.
3.3. PROVISION OF EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) was enacted in September 2005 and brought into force with effect from February 2, 2006. In 200 most backward districts of the country sought to provide 100 days of guaranteed unskilled wage employment (NREGS) is different from other wage employment programmes as it bestows a legal right and guarantee to the rural population through an Act of parliament and is not just a scheme like other wage employment programmes. The ongoing programmes of Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) and National Food for Work Programme (NFFWP) have been subsumed in NREGS.

3.4 BASIC OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

1. Generation of additional gainful employment for the unemployed and the underemployed, both men and women in the rural areas.

2. Creation of durable community assets for strengthening the rural infrastructure, which should lead to rapid growth of rural economy and steady rise in the income levels of the rural poor and.

3. Improvement of the nutritional status and the living standards of the rural poor.

Only the works which directly help in strengthening the rural infrastructure and result in the creation of durable community assets in the rural areas, as also those works which improve the rural economy and the quality of life in the villages are eligible to be taken up under the programme.

3.5 TYPE OF WORKS UNDER THE PROGRAMME

- Afforestation and social forestry projects on government and community lands including lands belonging to the local bodies, road side plantations, plantations along with canal banks and on waste lands on sides of railway lines, plantation of trees in denuded forest areas and other land unfit for cultivation, plantation of fuel, fodder and fruit trees;

- Drinking water wells, community irrigation wells, group housing and land development projects for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes;
• Construction of village tanks, repairing, deepening and rejuvenation of existing tanks for providing water for human use or for cattle, for developing irrigation or fisheries.

• Minor irrigation projects including those relating to flood protection drainage and anti-water logging, construction of field channels; land leveling in the command areas of irrigation projects clearing and desilting of water conservation.

• Soil and water conservation and land reclamation projects.

3.6 ROLE OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS (PRIS)

The Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) i.e., gram panchayat at the village level, Panchayat Samities at the block level and Zilla Parishad (ZP) have been assigned a pivotal role in successful planning and implementation of NREGS.

3.6.1 Gram Panchayat

The Gram Panchayat with the involvement and recommendations of the people (Gram Sabha) shall be responsible for identification of projects in their jurisdiction and will prepare development plan and maintain a shelf of projects, decide the priority of works and recommend it to the programme officer for scrutiny and approval, prior to the commencement of the year. They will also be responsible for execution and supervision, conducting regular social audit and maintenance of the records pertaining to works and employment. The gram panchayats have been further entrusted with the responsibility to register the employment seekers, maintain details of registered households and supply the same to PO. It shall also receive applications for job and will allocate employment opportunities among the applications and intimate the applicants in writing through letters and public notices displayed at the office of gram panchayats, intermediate panchayat. Zilla panchayat, shall maintain registers, vouchers, and other documents related to the scheme.

3.6.2 Intermediate Panchayat

The block level shelf of projects (Plan) will be approved and finalized by the panchayat samitis, the PS will forward it to the ZP, supervise and monitor the projects taken-up at the gram panchayat and block level.
3.6.3 District Panchayat

The district Panchayat shall approve the block plans (shelf of projects) under the scheme supervise and monitor the projects at block and districts levels.

3.7 TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Transparency and accountability are sine qua non-to NREGS and are in-built in every project. District project co-ordinator will be responsible to ensure transparency and accountability under the scheme. For ensuring transparency, some steps like display of the list of works and persons employed, on the panchayat notice board and prominent places are required to be undertaken. A complaint register will be maintained at both gram panchayat and PO level. All complaints received shall be disposed within a week. The payments of wages in cash and unemployment allowance if any shall be made directly to the person concerned. The conflict resolution in case of disputes shall be done by the PO, the copy of the reports containing facts and figures of the projects achievements, accounts, and records muster rolls shall be made available for public scrutiny and to the public on demand and payment of such fees as specified under the scheme.

3.8 UNEMPLOYMENT ALLOWANCE

The applicant shall be entitled to get unemployment allowance if the authorities fail to provide job within fifteen days of demand for job which will be equal to one fourth of the wages for the first 30 days and thereafter for the remaining period 50 per cent of the wages which should not exceed 100 days wages. The wage payments have to be made on weekly basis.

3.9 SOCIAL SECURITY PROVISION

Sufficient social security provisions have been provided for the persons employed under the scheme like free medical facilities in case of injury on account of the work. Daily allowance equal to 50 per cent wage in case of hospitalization along with accommodation, treatment and medicines, ex-gratia payment of Rs. 25000 in case of death or permanent disability. The facilities of safe drinking water, childcare, first aid box and also Treatment in case of injury to the child accompanying the employed person, shall be provided on the work site. Delayed wage payments shall invite penalty to be paid as compensation.

56
3.10 PENAL PROVISION

There is penal provision of fine upto Rs. 1000/- in case of contravention of the provisions of the Act if the central government is prima-facie satisfied about the mystification of funds under the scheme, it can order stoppage of further release of funds to the scheme and institute appropriate remedial measures for its proper implementation within a reasonable time. The DPC/PO any other person shall not invite any suit, prosecution or legal proceedings for any thing done in good faith for implementation of the scheme. The power to make amends in the scheme lies with the central government through the parliament.

3.11 TARGET GROUP

The NREGS will be open to all the rural poor who are in need of wage employment and desire to do manual and unskilled work. The programme will be self-targeting in nature.

3.12 FUNDING PATTERN

The programme will be implemented as a 100 per cent sponsored scheme.

i) Collector will be the Nodal Officer at the district level and overall responsibility of planning, implementation, co-ordination, monitoring and supervision will be that of the collector of the district. The necessary assistance will be provided to the collector from the DRDA/District Panchayat (DP) to whom funds will be released.

ii) The focus of the programme will be on works relating to water conservation, drought proofing (including afforestation/ tree plantation) and land development. Flood-control/protection (including drainage in water logged areas) rural connectivity in terms of all whether roads and any other similar activity for economic sustainability, keeping in view the area specific problems, can be included provided the principal focus of the programme on water conservation and drought proofing is maintained.

iii) A five year perspective plan for the district and shelf of works, block wise and gram panchayat wise will be prepared under the programme.
iv) Works which can be undertaken within the resources available under any other on going central scheme or any state Government scheme falling within the perspective plan will be taken up under the respective schemes.

3.13 WAGES DISTRIBUTION UNDER THE NREG SCHEME

The wages under the NREGS shall normally be paid in cash, the wages to be paid under the NREGS both for skilled and unskilled labour shall not be less than the minimum wages fixed by the state Government under the relevant statute for agricultural labourers as applicable to the rural areas. Equal wages shall be paid under the programme to both men and women workers, payment of wages shall be made on a fixed day in a week preferably a day before the local market day.

In case the executing agencies do not pay the wages for a category of employment at the rate notified for the relevant schedule of employment under the relevant statute, the district panchayat/ intermediate panchayat shall withhold further release of funds to that implementing agency and inform the fact to the concerned authority for suitable action against the official under the relevant statute and also the central Government. Where the Central Government finds that the above provisions are not being followed. It may withhold further release of resources under the programme to the district concerned.

3.13.1 Opening of bank accounts

The NREGS funds shall be kept in a nationalized bank or a post office in an exclusive and separate savings bank accounts by the district panchayats/ DRDA's and also the implementing agencies.

3.13.2 Utilization of interest earned on deposit's

The interest amount accrued on the deposits shall be treated as additional resources under the NREGS and should be utilized as per the guidelines of the scheme.

3.13.3 Withdrawals

Withdrawal of funds by the district panchayats/ DRDAs shall be as per the existing practice only after the approval of the collector.
Withdrawal of funds for making payments towards the works undertaken by the executing agencies will be through a cheque and as per the departmental manual. In the absence of which collector may decide.

Withdrawal of funds for only other purpose shall not be permitted. Any one violating it will be liable for appropriate action.

3.14 BAN ON CONTRACTORS AND LABOUR DISPLACING MACHINES

The programme will be implemented departmentally only. Contractors are not permitted to be engaged for execution of any of the works under the programme. No middleman or any other intermediate agency should be employed for executing works under the programme. The full benefit of wages to be paid, should reach the workers and the cost of the works should not involve any commission charges payable to such contractors, middleman, or intermediate agency. No task funded under the programme shall be performed by using labour displacing machines.

In case it is reported, that contractors and labour displacing machines are being engaged, the collector shall withold further release of funds to the executing agencies initiate suitable action against the erring official for misutilisation of funds.

3.15 MUSTER ROLLS

Muster rolls shall be maintained for every work separately, showing the details of wages paid to workers, the muster rolls for all works should have entire showing the number and details of scheduled castes/ scheduled tribes/ women and others who have been provided employment those responsible for the preparation of muster rolls should be responsible for these entries also. To prevent non-payment or underpayment of wages or any manipulation, muster rolls should be maintained in stitched forms and all its pages must be numbered.

Muster rolls shall be made available to public for scrutiny and a copy of the same be made available on demand on nominal fee for the works taken up by the village panchayats. Copies of muster rolls duly certified by the panchayat sarpanch shall be placed before the gram sabha.
3.16 RECORD OF THE ASSETS CREATED

Each district shall maintain complete inventory of the assets created under the programme, giving details of the date of the start and the date of completion of the project, cost involved and benefits obtained. Employment generated and other relevant particulars, sign boards should be displayed near the works, giving these details. Photographic record of the work may also be kept the various stages of implementation before start during implementation and after completion.

3.17 PROVISION OF FACILITIES AT THE WORK SITES

Wherever required, arrangement for providing facilities like drinking water, rest sheds for the workers and crèches for the children coming with working mothers should be made. Expenditure involved for providing these facilities should be met out of the non wage component under the programme.

3.18 RURAL STANDARD SCHEDULE OF RATES

The state secretary may involve and publish rural standard schedule of rates to eliminate the role of contractors. The collectors should prepare descriptive pamphlets explaining the provisions in local languages in easy manner to understand formats.

3.19 MAINTENANCE OF ASSETS CREATED

Once the construction of a community asset is completed, it will be handed over to the panchayat concerned for maintenance. The responsibility of maintenance for other assets, each case will be decided by the collector. The state Governments will insure adequate resources for maintenance of the public assets created under the scheme.

3.20 MAINTENANCE OF ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT

DRADA or where DRDA has been merged with district panchayat, the district panchayat shall be responsible for maintenance of accounts and audit. The accounts shall be maintained separately by each executing agency also and presented for audit.
3.20.1 Audit of works

Both physical and financial audit of the works under the scheme are compulsory. This must be carried out at the end of the financial year by each district. The audit will be done by local fund auditors or by the chartered accountants listed in the panel of the State Government. The audit report together with action taken on the auditors observations is required to be submitted along with the proposal for release of second installment of funds. Such action should not be authenticated by auditor.

3.20.2 Social Audit and Vigilance at Gross-Root Level

For every work sanctioned under the scheme, there will be a monitoring committee of the villagers of the area belonging to the locality/ village where the work is undertaken to monitor the progress and quality while the work is in progress. Every such committee shall have five to nine members who would be nominated from amongst the social workers retired civil, deference or private-sector officers, other retired employees like, teachers, well-educated persons and will include an SC/ST and a women’s representative. To select the members of the committee and the convener of the committee, a meeting of the local beneficiaries will be convened by the local member of the gram panchayat, the convener of the committee so selected will conduct its future meetings. The work cannot be started unless the monitoring committee has been formed. This committee would be apprised by the implementing agency about the estimate of the work time frame and quality parameters. The final report of the committee would be attached along with the completion certificate of the work and would also be placed in the next meeting of the gram sabha of the panchayat where work has been executed. A copy will be sent to the collector.

3.21 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NREGS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

i. At the village level the gram panchayat shall be the principal authority for planning and implementation of the scheme. The Gram Panchayat (GP) shall be responsible for identification of the works in the gram panchayat area as per the recommendations of the gram sabha and ward sabhas and for executing and supervising such works.
ii. The panchayat secretary shall be responsible for receiving applications for registration and for issuance of job cards. There shall be a field assistant to assist the panchayat secretary in maintaining the records and also to assist the technical assistants being provided at the mandal level.

iii. At the mandal level, the mandal Parishad shall be the principal authority for planning and implementation of the scheme. The Mandal Parishad Development Officer (MPDO) shall assist the gram panchayats and the mandal Parishad in carrying out its functions under the scheme. The MPDO shall be provided with additional support of three technical assistants (Two from engineering and one from agriculture/horticulture) and one accountant cum computer assistant, to provide technical support to gram panchayats.

iv. There shall be a Programme Officer (PO) at each mandal level. The programme officer will be a full time dedicated officer and may be taken on deputation. Fresh recruitment may also be made on contract. The PO has a critical role in coordinating implementation processes at the mandal level. He will be responsible for scrutinizing village EGS plans ensuring that they match works with employment demand, that implementing agencies start works on time. That the employment demand is met within time and workers receive their due entitlements. His other functions are ensuring the social audit by the gram sabha, disposing complaints and grievance redressal. The PO will assist the mandal Parishad in its functions under the scheme. The programme officer shall function under the direction, control and superintendence of the district programme coordinator and will also be accountable to the mandal Parishad. The PO shall be assisted by one accountant cum computer assistant.

v. The Mandal samakhya (Federation of the village organization of the poor) will be responsible to mobilize and build capacities of the wage seekers through the village organizations and SHGs to access their rights and entitlements provided under the scheme. In addition, the mandal samakhya may assist the PO in handling information, Education and Communication activities relating to the scheme. Mandal Samakhya will be facilitated to engage a social organizer to support them, in carrying out these functions.
vi. At the district level the, Zilla Parishad shall be the principal authority for planning and implementation of the scheme. The Zilla Parishad shall approve the district employment guarantee scheme plan, which includes the consolidated mandal EGS' plans, its own proposals and project proposal received from other line departments. It shall also review the programme implementation, supervise and monitor projects taken-up at the district and mandal levels. In agency areas, the Governing Body of ITDA shall perform the functions of the Zilla Parishad.

vii. The District collector shall be the District Programme Co-ordinator (DPC) for the implementation of the scheme in the district. There shall be an EGS Unit established in the office of the Project Director DWMA to assist the DPC. DWMA Chief Executive Officer, Z.P. Project Director, DRDA and Project Officer, ITDA (in Agency areas) as additional district programme coordinators. The PD of DWMA shall assist the DPC in overall management of the scheme. The PD of DWMA shall assist the DPC in overall management of the scheme by the PRIs. The PD of DRDA shall assist the DPC in the mobilization of wage seeking families, through the self-help groups of women and their federations at village, mandal and district levels. The PO of ITDA shall assist the DPC in the management of the scheme in the agency areas.

viii. At the state level, the Commissioner, Rural Development (CRD) shall be the State Programme Coordinator (SPC). He/she shall be assisted by an EGS unit consisting of a Director and Subject specialists and support staff.

ix. The commissioner, Panchayat Raj shall coordinate the implementation of the scheme with the Panchayat Raj institutions (PRI).

x. The chief executive officer, society for elimination of rural poverty (SERP) shall ensure the involvement of DRDA's in mobilization and capacity building of the wage seeking families through the self-help groups of women and their federations at the village, mandal and district levels.

xi. The commissioner, AMR-APARD, shall provide capacity building support to the PRIs and the line departments.
xii. The commissioner, Tribal welfare, shall ensure the involvement of ITDA's in implementation of the scheme in agency areas.

xiii. The Managing Director, APSC Co-operative Finance Corporation Ltd. shall ensure the involvement of the District SC service Cooperative Societies in enabling the schedule castes households to access their rights and entitlements particularly in the development of their lands with irrigation facilities.

xiv. State Government shall make rules to carry out the provisions of the Act pertaining to states responsibilities under the Act 32(1). The State Government shall set-up the employment Guarantee fund provide budget provision for and release the state share, notify rural SSR from time to time, conduct impact assessment and evaluation studies. The state Government shall set up Andhra Pradesh State Employment Guarantee Council (SPSEGC) under section 12(1) of the Act. The APSEGC shall be the advisory body for the purpose of the Andhra Pradesh Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (APSEGS). It shall have chief minister as chairman, rural development minister as vice chairman, principal secretary (Rural Development) as member convener with 15 non-officials and 8 official members.

xv. Non-Government organizations shall be involved as partners in community mobilization, capacity building, social audit and monitoring of processes relating to rights and entitlements of the workers.

3.22 ASSETS CREATED UNDER NREGS

While creating massive employment in rural areas, National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has also been able to create a wide range of physical assets in sectors such as forestry, water conservation, water harvesting, irrigation cannals (including micro and minor irrigation works, land development flood control and protection works), rural connectivity to provide all their access, renovation of traditional water bodies including desalting of tanks. Details of assets created since its inception are given at appendices.
3.23 MONITORING OF NREGS

The performance of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is monitored regularly by the centre and the State Governments. To facilitate proper monitoring, emphasis is laid on building a strong database and periodical feedback through monthly and annual progress reports. The physical and financial achievement under the programme is monitored at the central level through monthly, quarterly and annual progress reports received from the states. The department of rural employment and poverty alleviation has evolved a system to ensure that the guidelines are followed strictly. The utilization certificates, audit reports and other parameters such as matching grants from the states, minimum expenditure are examined before the release of second installment. Periodical reviews are carried out by central government in the meeting of secretaries of the state governments. Senior officials of the ministry also see operation of various rural development programmes during their visits to the states under the area officers scheme. The scheme is supervised by officials of the DRDA/ Zilla Parishad at the district level. The state level coordination committee (SLCC) monitors the programmes at the state level. State Government Officials also inspect the programmes.

For better monitoring and the cheque diversion, misappropriation of rural development funds including National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Government of India has issued instructions to State/ District and Mandal level. In many states these committees have been constituted and started functioning.

3.24 CONCURRENT EVALUATION OF NREGS

The ministry of rural areas and employment had undertaken concurrent evaluation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.
TABLE 3.1

PHYSICAL AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME 2006 - 2010

(Amount in lakhs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No. of households provided employment</td>
<td>16490951</td>
<td>27296363</td>
<td>451.10</td>
<td>52479624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Total person days (in lakhs)</td>
<td>6200.51</td>
<td>19603.53</td>
<td>21632.50</td>
<td>28281.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Funds available (in lakhs)</td>
<td>588079.84</td>
<td>1605888.98</td>
<td>3630046.00</td>
<td>4603648.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Expenditure (in lakhs)</td>
<td>588079.84</td>
<td>983395.47</td>
<td>272501.00</td>
<td>3847442.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Work on going</td>
<td>400428</td>
<td>902590</td>
<td>277.50</td>
<td>2512280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Works completed</td>
<td>279455</td>
<td>408801</td>
<td>121.40</td>
<td>2084128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The above table reveals that total number of households provided employment is 16490951, during the period of 2006-07. In the same way 27296363 in 2007-08, 451.1 lakh in 2008-09. 52479624 households were provided employment in 2009-10 as compared to 2006-07 more than three fold employment generated. Total funds were Rs. 588079.84 available in 2006-07. Rs.1605888.98 were in 2009-10. Total 279455 works were completed in 2006-07. 408801 works were completed in 2007-08. 121.4 lakh works were completed in 2008-09. 2084128 works were completed in 2009-2010.
### TABLE 3.2

**PRODUCTIVE ASSETS CREATION UNDER NREGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of work</th>
<th>Completed works</th>
<th>Ongoing works</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water conservation and water harvesting (Digging of new tanks ponds and check dams)</td>
<td>118296 (33.71)</td>
<td>138727 (33.14)</td>
<td>257023 (19.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation of traditional water bodies (Desalting of tanks/ponds/old canals, traditional pen wells)</td>
<td>20515 (5.84)</td>
<td>28033 (6.69)</td>
<td>48548 (3.63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of irrigation facility to land owned (Scheduled castes, and scheduled tribes, beneficiaries of land)</td>
<td>27058 (7.71)</td>
<td>52947 (12.65)</td>
<td>80005 (5.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro irrigation works (Micro irrigation canals)</td>
<td>10973 (3.12)</td>
<td>15244 (3.64)</td>
<td>26217 (1.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drought proofing (Afforestation and tree plantation)</td>
<td>27056 (7.70)</td>
<td>45490 (10.86)</td>
<td>72546 (5.43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flood control and protection (Drainage in water logged area, obstruction and repair of embankments)</td>
<td>8891 (2.53)</td>
<td>6011 (1.43)</td>
<td>14902 (1.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural connectivity</td>
<td>76803 (21.88)</td>
<td>75656 (18.09)</td>
<td>152459 (11.41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land development (Plantation land leveling)</td>
<td>41154 (11.72)</td>
<td>44237 (10.56)</td>
<td>651700 (48.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other activity approved by MORD</td>
<td>20199 (5.75)</td>
<td>12186 (2.91)</td>
<td>32385 (2.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>350945 (100)</td>
<td>418531 (100)</td>
<td>1335785 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source**: Union Ministry of Rural Development.

The Table reveals that productive asset creation under NREGs 33.71 per cent of the water conservation and water harvesting (Digging of new tanks, ponds and check dams) works were completed during the period of 2008. 20.88 per cent of
rural connectivity and land development particularly plantation and leveling works were completed in the same year. 7.71 per cent provision of irrigation facility to land owned particularly scheduled castes and scheduled tribes beneficiaries of land were completed followed by 7.70 per cent of drought proofing like forestation and tree plantation were completed 6 per cent renovation of traditional water bodies like desalting of tanks, ponds, old canals, traditional pen wells were completed, 5.75 per cent of any other activity approved by Ministry of Rural Development were completed. Then 3.12 per cent of micro irrigation works were completed, and then 2.53 per cent of flood control and protection such as drainage in water logged area, construction and repair of embankments were completed in the same period.

3.25 POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMMES IN INDIA

Poverty eradication and employment generation have always been the two key objectives of India's economic development. Growth of the economy and specific target oriented poverty alleviation programmes have been tried as major tools in the planning era. Various target-oriented as well as area oriented programmes and schemes have been implemented from generation of income with the purpose to eradicate poverty, inequality and backwardness of rural areas. The alleviation of poverty has been a major objective of planned development in India from early 1970s onwards and there has been a greater state intervention in the alleviation of poverty, through beneficiary-oriented programmes, area development programmes and other development programmes. These programmes led to the decline of poverty in India during pre-reform period. But the rate of reduction in poverty has slowed down during the post-reform period, in spite of an average annual growth rate of 5.6 per cent achieved during this period. As such, the role of antipoverty programmes to supplement the growth effort is not only important during the post reform period but assumes still greater significant to protect the rural poor against adverse consequences of economic reforms.

Thus though government has undertaken a lot of development programmes and beneficiary oriented poverty alleviation programmes during the plan period, the fact remains that poverty is still the biggest challenge to development planning as well as to the policy makers. Inspite of the emphasis laid on the integrated package of projects for development of the backward areas and weaker sections, these are still plagued by abject poverty.
Economic growth is necessary but it does not benefit automatically and in equal proportion to all regions and sections of the population. For various reasons such as historical factors, resources endowments, social and political conjunctures and of course, government policy, growth happens to be very uneven across regions. This fact is beyond dispute. It happens that regions which are poorly developed to begin with have also growth at a slower rate than average. Hence there is a need of the government intervention in the form of various programmes and policies for ensuring equity and justice. However, the evaluation of policies and programmes meant to tackle this problem may be haphazard and in some respects even incoherent, nevertheless one can see a clear pattern in the way, they seek to recognize and address differing needs of backward areas with special problems, and of different segments of the poor and unprivileged.

When a substantial segment of a society is deprived of the minimum level of living and continues at a bare subsistence level that society is said to be plagued with the mass poverty. It is also believed that poverty every where is a threat to prosperity every where. Eradication of poverty and hunger through employment in the community has been one of the main goals of planning in India. Since planning era, various target oriented as well as area oriented programmes and schemes have been implemented for generation of income with the purpose of eradicating poverty, inequality and backwardness' from rural areas. Alleviation of poverty has consistently been of the major objectives of our economy. However, we can divide poverty alleviation programmes into two – time periods.

i) poverty alleviation programme upto 1990.

ii) poverty alleviation programmes in reforms period.

3.26 POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMMES UPTO 1990

In order to tackle the poverty problem, various target based schemes were introduced ever since Independence. However, it was during the Fifth Five Year Plan that a sustained and real attack on poverty was evolved as a key plan strategy it was noted that the elimination of poverty can not be attained as a grollary to certain acceleration in the rate growth of the economy alone. Major poverty alleviation programmes introduced during 1950 to 1990 were the following.
3.26.1 Wage Employment Generation Programmes in Rural India

Wage employment programmes have become important instruments for alleviating poverty and smoothening consumption during critical periods including drought and flood situations. They have been perceived to be both protective through income transfer and promotional through infrastructure development in the form of safety nets. The Rural Works Programmes (RWP) was the first major government intervention aimed at providing employment to the unemployed particularly in the lean season. It was introduced in 1971. However, due to its limited scope and its various organizational and administrative deficiencies it did not make any significant dent in the problem of unemployment.

A series of special employment programmes followed the RWP the major programmes of the series were as follows:

- Rural Man Power Programme (RMP)
- Rural Works Programme (RWP)
- Crash Scheme for Rural Employment (CSRE)
- Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP)
- Small Farmer Development Agency and Marginal Farmer Agricultural Labour (SFDA-MFADL)
- Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Project (PIREP)
- Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS)
- Minimum Needs Programme (MNP)
- National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS)

3.26.2 Rural Manpower Programme (1961-62 to 1965-66)

This project was taken up at the end of the Second Plan in 32 blocks on a pilot basis. With the objective of providing employment for 100 days to at least 2.5 million persons by the year of the Third Plan, particularly in areas exposed to pronounced seasonal unemployment and urban employment for the programme which covered 1000 CD
Blocks by the end of 1964-65, only a little over 20 per cent of the originally contemplated outlay of Rs. 150 crores could be provided, due to resource constraints. Nevertheless, it generated 137 million man days of employment until 1968-69 the year in which the programme was terminated.

3.26.3 Rural Works Programme (RWP)

The rural works programme (RWP) was launched in 54 selected districts of 13 states which were identified as drought prone on the basis of well defined norms such as extent of irrigated area, quality and distribution of rainfall, and high frequency of drought, with the objective of initiating gradually the severity of scarcity conditions in these areas. In terms of population and geographical areas, the programme covered 600 lakhs or 12 per cent of the population and 5.65 sq.kms or about 20 per cent of the area in the country respectively. The objective was sought to be achieved through taking up of schemes of long-term productive nature in areas prone to recurrent drought and providing employment opportunities to the people in these identified areas. The programmes forced mainly on the execution of rural works such as medium and minor irrigation, soil conservation and a forestation, road building dirking water supply and generation of employment opportunities through these rural works.

During the Fourth Five Year Plan, the report of the task force for integrated rural development programmes set up by the planning commission in October 1971, the strategy of development under the RWP underwent a change after realizing that development of drought prone areas demand long term measures. And the need for a comprehensive programme in the direction of restoration of the proper ecological balance and optimum utilization of land, water, live stock and human resources. Accordingly, in 1973 the programme was reoriented and human resources. Accordingly, in 1973 the programmes was redesignated as the Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) which is still in operation in selected areas in the country.

3.26.4 Crash Scheme for Rural Employment (CSRE)

In 1971 government of India was again seriously concerned with the unemployment problem adequately and special measures were necessary. A crash scheme for rural employment was taken up for implementation during the last three
years of the Fourth Five Year Plan. The objectives of the scheme were two fold: firstly provision of employment of 1000 persons in each district through labour intensive works and secondly, creation of durable assets, the scheme was implemented in all the districts of the country. A uniform provision of Rs.12 ½ lakhs per district was earmarked. The total outlay for the scheme for three years was Rs.150 crores. So far as employment targets were concerned, these years were exceeded in most of the states. The total expenditure for three years amounted to Rs. 126.82 crores resulting in generation of employment to the extent of 31.59 crores man-days. Despite this, there has been much criticism of this scheme. The criticism mainly was, that number of very small works were taken up there was hardly any proper pre-planning, roads formed a major chunk of the works executed, most of the roads remained, katcha or semi-katcha, and there was no satisfactory arrangement for future maintenance of the roads in many areas. Another major criticism was that the scheme was operated uniformly in all the districts of the country, without taking in to consideration the need of any particular area.

Since these programmes Viz., rural man power and the crash scheme for rural employment were ad – hoc in nature, their coverage was limited, and resources were thinly spread over a vast area, they did not bring any major impact in the employment situation in the country.

3.26.5 Drought-Prone Area Programme (DPAP)

The central Government had also taken up a separate rural works programme for chronically drought affected areas with an outlay of Rs.100 crores in the Fourth Plan. This underwent a very major conceptual change in the Fifth Plan. It was restricted into an area development programme and redesignated as Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP). The programme initially aimed at mitigating the severity of scarcity conditions by organizing labour intensive and production- oriented works. To start with the programmes were implemented in 54 districts and certain contiguous areas in other 18 districts covering 13 states. An expenditure of Rs.92 crores was incurred during the Fourth Five Year Plan resulting in the generation of about 1500 lakh man days to employment. During the Fifth Five Year Plan the employment under the programme has shifted to optimum utilization of land, water and human resources of the area under operation. The DPAP in the Fifth Plan as an
area development programme rightly lays emphasis on development of irrigation resources, soil and moisture conservation after restoration of ecological balance, integrated area development maximum utilization of new technology, distributive justice in respect of development benefits and employment generation both direct and indirect the central outlay is of the order of Rs.187 crores and a matching amount will be provided by the state governments.

3.26.6 Small Farmer Development Agency and Marginal Farmer Agricultural Labour (SFDA - MFADL)

Besides these two, other important programmes through not specially employment oriented but having a substantial component of public works programme were also undertaken for the weaker sections of the rural community. These programmes are: SFDA and MFAL (small farmer development agency). These schemes were in operation in 87 districts in the Fourth Five Year Plan. In the Fifth Plan both the programme, i.e., SFDA and MFAL were merged and extended to cover 160 districts. Studies conducted and reports available so far indicate a family good pay-off in most of the project districts.

In addition another special employment scheme known as Half A Million Jobs Programme was launched towards the end of the Fourth Plan deserves mention.

The crash scheme for rural employment had a limited impact. The objective of providing a minimum quantum of employment in every district of the country obviously resulted in a very thin spread of the benefits and, therefore it was felt that a more concerted effort need be made, at least in some selected areas, to bring out clearly the impact of a scheme providing for future programming. Bhagawati committee on employment in their report had suggested taking up action cum study project in selected blocks to study the problems of employment and response of works to employment opportunities.

3.26.7 Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Project (PIREP)

In pursuance of this suggestion, the government of India started 15 pilot projects from November 1972 for a period of 3 years under a scheme known as PIREP. This scheme can be termed as an experiment in full employment. This scheme was wholly financed by the central government. The objective of the PIREP is.
To provide gainful employment on work project not requiring skills of a high order in selected compact areas progressively to all those that offer their services for a wage.

To utilize the funds appropriated for the project for creating durable assets, preferable. Such as will have the multiplier effect of creating new jobs opportunities of a continuing nature and will form part of an area development plan.

To explore the possibility of imparting new skills to at least some of the works employed on project works during the period of employment and of assisting them in finding continuous employment in the secondary and tertiary sections rural or urban areas.

To study, through the implementation of the project in selected areas, the nature and dimensions of the problem of employment among the rural wage seeking labour and the effect in any of the project of the wage level in the area with a view to evolving a comprehensive programme for the rest of the country.

The project was scheduled to be completed in October 1975 after its terms of 3 years.

The project envisaged providing employment to one third of the unemployed persons in the first year of its operation, two thirds the second year and to all the unemployed persons in the third year in the 15 selected blocks of the country situated in areas with different socio-economic conditions. An unemployment survey was carried out to find out the number of people who would be available for employment, the different periods for which they would need employment and the kind of jobs for which they would be suitable. The survey brought out that work projects were to be formulated for providing employment to 2,87,946 persons. The requirement of funds worked out to be Rs. 1260.09 lakhs during the third year.

It was not found possible to provide the funds of the order envisaged due to financial constraints. Thus employment has been generated on limited scale limited by the funds released to the state governments.

Studies in the 15 selected blocks covered under the project, are being carried out by various research intuitions. Some of the research institutions have submitted their reports.
3.26.8 Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS)

The employment guarantee scheme (EGS) of Maharashtra was introduced in 1972 as a part of the fifteen point programme of the state which aimed at accelerating the pace of growth of the state economy. The main emphasis of the EGS was to guarantee employment to the unemployed. The main emphasis of the EGS was guaranteed employment in the faced of unskilled manual work to all adults above eighteen years of age (also to fifteen).

Eighteen years, if that was specified that the worker would not have any choice about the nature of work. It was specified that the worker would not have any choice about the nature of work. It was specified that the worker would not have any choice about the programme also aimed at product durable community assets. This would increase the growth as well as employment potential of the economy. The activities to be undertaken under the EGS were expected to have a 60:40 ration between their labour and material components and were expected to be in plummeted by the government department without any help from labour contracts.

The EGS has been evaluated by a number of agencies during the last decade. The reports show that in spite of employment generation and the wage ratio, it has been suggested however, that the programme needs to be strengthened in the areas of planning and origination.

3.26.9 Minimum Needs Programme (MNP)

The availability of certain public services, facilities and amenities represents real income and constitutes part of the standard of living. It is particularly with respect to these community facilities and civic amenities that rural people are not a great disadvantage. Duly recognizing the need for provision of these facilities and services in rural area the government of India development a launched the Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) in the Fifth Plan. The MNP included: 1) elementary education 11) rural health .111) rural health supply. 1V) rural roads. V) Rural electrification. VI) House sites for the landless laborers. VII) environmental improvement of urban slums. VIII) Nutrition.

The concept of the MNP emerged and crystallized out of the experience of the previous plans which showed that neither growth nor social consumption can be sustained. Much less accelerated, without being mutually supportive.
The programme is essentially an investment in human resource development the provision of free or subsided services through public agencies is expected to improve the consumption levels of those living below the poverty line and thereby improve the productive efficiency of both the rural and urban workers. This integration of social consumption programmes with economic development programmes necessary to accelerate growth and to ensure the achievement of plan objectives.

In the absence of such a programme is essential an investment in human resource development, the provision for investments in the development of infrastructure and production sectors left a relatively small allocation for social services? Even such out any as were available were the first to get reduced in any conflict of priorities created by resource constants. Further, the benefits of social services cannot reach the poorest without conscious efforts to the end. Disparities in social consumption obtain not only between income groups but also between areas. The level of development of the various social services and infrastructure varies widely from state to state.

The Minimum Needs Programme emphasizes the urgency for providing social services according to nationally accepted norms within a time bound programme. Its allocations are earmarked and it seeks to ensure the necessary provision of resources.

3.26.10 National Rural Employment Programme (NREP)

The Food for Work Programme (FFWP) was restructured and renamed as National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) from 1980, this is being implemented as centrally sponsored programme with 50 per cent central assistance. Additional employment of 300-400 million man days per year for the unemployed and employed is envisaged under the NREP the major objectives of the programmes are.

1) Generation of additional gainful employment both for the unemployed and under-employed persons. (Men and Women) in the rural areas.
2) Creation of durable community assets for strengthening rural infrastructure which will lead to rapid growth of rural economy and steady rise in the income levels of the rural poor. And.

3) Improvement of nutritional states and the living standards of the rural poor.

The implementation strategy of NREP is as under

a. The programme is being implemented through the DRDA which requires to prepare a shelf of projects on the basis of felt needs of rural people, as well as to approve the annual action plan.

b. Works are executed through panchayat raj institutions so as to ensure effective involvement of the people.

c. Wages are paid as per "minimum wages Act"

d. One Kg. of food grams per day is distributed to workers at subsidized rates as part of wages. The subsidy is borne fully by the central government.

e. Only works which result in the creation of durable community assets are permitted to be taken up at any time during the year when there is need for providing employment.

f. In order to achieve the twin objectives of providing employment as well as creating durable assets, the permissible limit of the material component is 50 per cent for the district.

g. Contractors are not permitted for execution of works under the programme. It has been done to ensure that the full benefit of wages to be paid are passed on to the workers and the cost of the works does not go up on account of commission charges payable to such contractors or intermediate agencies.

h. The DRDA is overall responsible for super vision and monitoring the implementation of the programme.
Most of these programmes were conceived and funded by the central government which determined the criteria for allocation between states. Actual implementation was left to the state government agencies subject to guidelines regarding the scope and content of schemes, and their targeting and implementation procedures. Only a few have been taken up entirely at the initiative of states. However, up to 1970s none of these programmes comprehensively covered the whole country, though in certain parts of the country, some of these programmes operated simultaneously for the same target groups. Apart from these territorial overlap, the major limitation of these programmes was that they were reduced to mere subsidy-giving programmes, lacking any planned approach to enable the rural poor achieve a higher level of income. The element of aphorism in these programmes further reduced their effectiveness from the point of view of poverty alleviation. Hence, the need was felt for undertaking programmes, which were not only far more comprehensive in coverage but could also make a direct assault on rural poverty.

In view of the above, IRDP, NREP and RLEGP were conceived during 1980s aimed at achieving the objective of poverty alleviation. Initially, the IRDP was started only in 2300 development blocks as a programme of development, but later on during Sixth Plan, it was extended to the entire country. However, the IRDP conceived as anti-poverty programmes aimed at helping the small and marginal farmers, landless laborers and artisans. It was thought by the planners that these people were poor because they possessed neither any productive assets nor any special skills. Therefore, IRDP was designed to help the poor by creating new assets for them. The basic strategy was self-employment of the poor with the help of these assets so that they manage to earn enough to rise above the poverty line.

3.27 POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMMES IN REFORM PERIOD

For the purpose of poverty alleviation, several special programmes for employment generation are being implemented both in rural and urban areas during the reform period. These programmes provide employment to targeted poor, enhance their income and generate assets to poor families. The major programmes which have been adopted during the reform period of the series were as follows:
• Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS)
• Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY)
• National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)
• Swarnajayanti Shahri Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY)
• Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)
• Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana (PMGY)
• Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)
• Pradhan Mantri Gari Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)
• Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana (VAMBAY)
• Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)

3.27.1 Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS)

The EAS was launched on 2nd October 1993 in 1778 development blocks in the rural areas of 261 districts. The main objective of this scheme is to provide profitable employment of not less than 100 days to every desirous person aged between 18 years and 60 years during the lean agricultural season. Also, to create economic infrastructure and community projects for creating sufficient employment and development activities. EAS is a demand driven programme.

3.27.2 Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY)

PMRY was also introduced on 2nd October 1993. Under this scheme every selected educated unemployed youth in the age group of 18-40 years and having family income below Rs. 40,000 is provided a loan of up to Rs.1 lakh for opening his own enterprise and Rs. 2 lakh on other activities. During 1993-94, this scheme was implemented only in urban areas but since April 1994 it is being implemented both in urban and rural areas.
3.27.3 National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)

The NSAP was launched in August 1995. It has three components:

- National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS);
- National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS); and
- National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS).

The NSAP is a centrally sponsored programme that aims at ensuring a minimum national standard of social assistance over and above the assistance that states provide from their own resources. The NOAPS provides a monthly pension of Rs. 75 to destitute BPL persons above the age of 65. The NFBS is a scheme for BPL families who are given Rs. 10,000 in the event of the death of the breadwinner. The NMBS provides Rs. 500 to support nutritional intake for pregnant women.

3.27.4 Swarnajayanti Shahri Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY)

SJSRY is operational since December 1997. This scheme provides gainful employment to the urban unemployed and underemployed poor through encouraging the setting up of self-employment ventures of provisions of wage employment.

3.27.5 Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY)

SGSY was launched in April 1999 after restructuring of the erstwhile IRDP and allied schemes. It is the only self-employment programme currently being implemented. It is conceived as a holistic programme of micro enterprises covering all aspects of self employment. Its objective is to bring the assisted Swarojgaris above the poverty line by providing them income-generation assets through bank credit and Government subsidy. Since its inception, and up to April 2004, a total allocation of Rs. 6734 crore was made available by the centre and states. Out of this Rs. 4980 crore was utilized up to April 2004, hence benefiting 45.67 lakh Swarojgaris. However, SGSY is funded by the centre and states in the ratio of 75:25.

3.27.6 Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana (PMGY)

PMGY was launched in 2000-01 in all states and union territories in order to achieve the objective of sustainable human development at village level. PMGY initially had five components viz. primary health, primary education, rural shelter,
rural drinking water and nutrition. Rural electrification was added as an additional component from 2001 -02. The Planning Commission is carrying out both financial and physical monitoring of this programme.

3.27.7 Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)

AAY was launched in 2000. The scheme aims at providing food security to poor families. Under the scheme 1 crore of the poorest among the BPL families covered under the targeted PDS are identified and 25 Kgs of food grains were made available to each eligible family at a highly subsidized rate of Rs. 2 per kg for wheat and Rs. 3 per kg for rice. The quantity has been enhanced from 25 to 35 kgs with effect from April, 2000. The scheme had been further expanded in June 2003 by adding another 50 lakh BPL families.

3.27.8 Pradhan Mantri Gari Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

The PMGSY was launched in December 2000 to provide road connectivity to 1.6 lakh unconnected habitations with population of 500 persons or more in the rural areas by the end of Tenth Plan period. It is being executed in all the states and UTs.

3.27.9 Valiniki Ambedkar Awas Yojana (VAMBAY)

The VAMBAY was launched in December 2001 to ameliorate the conditions of the urban slum dwellers living below the poverty line without adequate shelter. The scheme has the primary objective of facilitating the construction and upgradation of dwelling units for slum dwellers and providing a healthy and enabling urban environment.

3.27.10 Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)

SGRY was launched in September 2001, by merging the ongoing schemes of Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) and Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS). The objective of this programme is to provide additional wage employment in the rural areas as also food security, along with the creation of durable community, social and economic infrastructure in rural areas. This programme is open to all rural poor who are in the need of wage employment and desire to do manual and unskilled work in and around the village. The scheme is implemented through Panchayati Raj Institutions. The scheme envisages generation of 100 crore man-days of employment in a year.
At present the Government of India has several programmes and schemes to reduce urban as well as rural poverty. Old schemes are reviewed, new schemes are implemented and new strategies are being evolved to accelerate growth and reduce poverty.

3.28 CONCLUSION

The NREGS scheme is successful in creating an impression in the minds of people that it would help in minimizing the pilferages and ensure the benefits of Government programmes reach the real beneficiaries. The scheme has an impact in raising the standards of living and the agricultural wage level in the villages. It is leading to the creation of durable community assets. More importantly, the payment to the laborers is done through the accounts in banks and post offices. This had laid the foundation for inculcating the habit of savings in the minds of people. If implemented properly with revision of minimum wage from time to time, the distress migration from rural areas especially during the off-season can be checked. Finally, the scheme has the potential to change the rural edifice of the district and can act as a model rural development scheme.

NREGS promises a revolutionary demand-driven, people-centered development programme, especially supporting the socially backward classes by assuring them to earn dignified livelihood, even if only for 100 mandays. It is also producing tangible results for the poor as rural infrastructure is built in the vicinity of the poor house-holds which, in turn, will help the poor in getting sustainable and fruitful livelihood in the long-run.

We can say that desertification of the district of Chittoor is to some extent stopped because of this programme as the workers and farmers are involved in contour bounding, tree plantation and water storage management. It results in the stopping of the migrations of farmers and labourers in good numbers. Because of the increase in their income levels, their children are able to get good education and comfortably settle in life. Education leads to better opportunities to the students hailing from the working class.

The alleviation of poverty has been a major objective of India’s development plans. The ‘Garibi Hatao’ slogan given by Indira Gandhi in the early 1970 marked
the beginning of an intensified approach to help the poor as reflected in a wide range of programmes for direct intervention to benefit the backward and poor sections of the society. These programmes have had some notable achievements to their credit, such as a public distribution system with a wide rural coverage, employment programmes with significant impact on the rural poor, and improvement in rural amenities and infrastructure like roads, schools, health centres, banks, communication, building of facilities. A good indicator of the impact of the anti-poverty programmes in India is the reduction in the extent of poverty. The percentage of population living below the poverty line has declined from 55 per cent during 1973-74 to 36 per cent during the 1993-94 and further to 26.1 per cent during 1999-2000 for the country as a whole. However, it may be noted that the whole of the decline in the poverty cannot be attributed to anti-poverty programmes alone but there appears to be a consensus among the researchers that these programmes have been an important factor in the reduction at present over the last three decades.

The policy makers would have to take a careful look at the past experiences to see how anti-poverty strategy could be strengthened to meet the objective of eradication of poverty since reduction in poverty is not the same thing as eradication of poverty. A person/ house-hold above the poverty line may still be subject to severe deprivation along with other dimensions of well-being. Eradication of poverty should mean reduction of deprivation along the major and important dimensions of well-being including but not confined to food deprivation. Raising the poor above presently defined poverty line needs no more than a good delivery system for the poor capable of reaching the unskilled unemployed provision of subsidized food and free education and health facilities on a sufficient large scale. On the other hand, a much wider policy frame work and institutional structures are needed currently, the anti-poverty strategy in India is in the process of shifting its focus from poverty line to a broader concept of poverty but its capabilities hardly match the ambitious goals implied by the broader concept.

It is recognized that along with growth-promoting policies, direct poverty alleviation programmes are also needed to raise the incomes and purchasing power of the poor. The major programmes for the poor in India can be broadly be schematized into following three categories, viz.
i) Wage – Employment programmes

ii) Self – Employment programmes

iii) Public Distribution System

However, the income-generation orientation of poverty alleviation programmes do not ensure that the poor can really manage to get adequate food all the year round for the family with the increased income, because this depends on the price, supply care and timely distribution of income. These programmes are basically relief-oriented and are not creating durable assets. They do not recognize the importance of increased flow of social inputs through family welfare, nutrition, social security and minimum needs programmes in poverty alleviation. There is also some consensus among the scholars that the present form of public distribution system is not helping the poor and it is not a cost-effective, anti-poverty programme. Hence there is a need for restructuring the existing form of public distribution system. The major criticism of the government-based anti-poverty programmes relates to lack of peoples’ participation. The government approach seems to be more technocratic and ‘top down’ in implementing these programmes. In order to overcome these limitations, the anti-poverty strategies need to be firmly grounded on two key strategies. First, expanded capabilities to deal with aspects like education, health, nutrition, and skills so that there are convergences in tackling the problems encountered by the poor. Secondly, it is necessary to have functioning Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIS), NGOs self help-groups and community-based organizations in the rural areas, capable of formulating and implementing development programmes. And for strengthening government programmes, such an approach can ensure the convergence of resources and efforts aimed at the alleviation of poverty.
REFERENCES


