Chapter – 4

PROGRAMMES FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN INDIA: ANDHRA PRADESH: ANANTAPUR DISTRICT AND BUKKARAYA SAMUNDRAM
Poverty alleviation has been an important objective of development planning in India right from the beginning of Five Year Plans. The strategies, however, have changed over time. There are various reasons for Indian Government irrespective of political party in power to poverty eradication. In the first place, it is the nature of the national struggle, which led to independence. The freedom struggle in India was, by and large, a mass movement. Large sections of the poor have participated in this struggle for advancing independence for the country with the hope that they would be given economic wherewithal once the country achieved independence. Again, the mainstream of political movement in India was profoundly influenced by the Gandhian approach that emphasised on the need to uplift the social and economic status of the poorest of the poor. So, the ideological commitment to poverty alleviation was supported by pragmatic considerations.

Even after independence, this basic orientation of economic policy did not change. It was further reinforced with the introduction of universal suffrage and multi-party political system. Under these circumstances, all political parties adopted the slogan of 'poverty alleviation'. This agreement on the principle of poverty alleviation blunted the edge of opposition to the measure for poverty reduction. The realization of professed national goals into economic programmes and policies was fractured. The persistence of poverty during all these years suggests that national consensus could not provide sufficient condition for poverty alleviation. (Acharya, 1997:1-47).
Profile of Poverty

In fact, there is no agreement among the economists on rural poverty in India. Estimates on the proportion of poor households among the total number of rural households for the year 1987-88 vary from 25 per cent to 45 per cent. Some economists maintain that households constitute as little as 25 per cent of the total rural households whereas, other scholars have come to the conclusion that the proportion is as high as 45 per cent. Again, the official sources like Planning Commission have placed the rural poverty level at around 33 per cent. According to the latest large sample survey data on consumer expenditure made available by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) from its 55th Round survey (July 1999-June 2000), the poverty ratio on a 30-day recall basis, is estimated at 27.09 per cent in rural areas, 23.62 per cent in urban areas and 26.10 per cent for the country as a whole. Though the poverty ratio declined, number of poor remained stable at around 320 million for a fairly large time period of about two decades (1973-93), this is due to countervailing growth in population. The latest estimates from 1999 to 2000 reveal that a significant reduction is observed among number of people, at about 260 million out of a total population of 997 million.

As regards methodology, it should be stated that in the earlier surveys, the NSSO estimated monthly consumption expenditure on the responses using a 30-day recall period for all food and non-food items. In the 55th Round, the consumption expenditure on clothing, footwear,
medical (institutional) and durable goods were collected using a 365 day-to-day recall period. In the case of all other non-food items, the 30-day recall period was used as earlier. The data on consumption expenditure on food items were collected using two different reference periods of at least 30-days or 7-days from the same households. Now, why should there be such a difference in the extent of poverty when the basic sources of data are the same, i.e., various rounds of the NSS. (Adelman, 1967).²

A normative nutritional requirement per person per day at some base point is the fundamental requirement for estimating the number of households below the poverty line. There is naturally a controversy about the amount of minimum calories of requirement and whether it should be the same for the people living in all parts of the country. The expenditure level of households, which are able to obtain the desired calories, serves as the poverty line. To adjust the poverty line over a period of time, price variations have to be considered. The problems also arise in deciding upon a deflator.

In sum, the factors (a) nutrition norm (translated into monetary terms) in the base year, (b) price deflator used to update the poverty line, and (c) the pro-rata adjustment in the number of households in different expenditure classes below and above the poverty line affect predominantly the magnitude of the poverty ratio. Different economists have used different assumptions for this purpose and this accounts for the difference in the estimates by the scholars. (Agrawal et al., 1975).³
Some important changes have taken place with regard to the extent of rural poverty. They may be summarised as follows: In the first place, a continuous reduction in poverty particularly in the last two decades has been observed. The proportion of rural households below the poverty line went down, going from 55 per cent in 1973-74 to 52 per cent in 1977-78 and to 45 per cent in 1983 and then to 26 per cent in 1999-2000. Second, there has been a decline in the number of households below the poverty line, practically in every state of the country. Even in the poorest states like Orissa and Bihar, there has been a remarkable reduction. Finally, noticeable improvement in the nutritional status of the poorest households as reflected in the calorie intake has been noticed. Inequality in food consumption has been reasonably reduced.

Approaches to Poverty Alleviation

The Government of India, soon after independence, launched the Community Development Programme in 1952 to rejuvenate the economic and social conditions of people living in rural areas. This programme was implemented in well-defined geographical areas or blocks. But since the programme was not supported by appropriate institutional and technological reforms, its impact on poverty alleviation was not conspicuous in most of the country.
Next, a frontal attack on poverty was pursued in three successive phases. In the first phase, lasting from the beginning of the 1950s till the end of the 1960s, the major emphasis was on abolition of functionless intermediaries, on tenancy reforms, on imposing ceiling on large holdings, securing surplus land and redistributing it among the landless agricultural labourers and marginal farmers. But unfortunately, the implementation of land reforms could not make a dent only on very large holdings and that too, in a few states. Tenancy reforms benefited mainly the middle size tenants. (Bandyopadhyay, 1988:A77-88).4

By the late 1960s, the second phase of poverty alleviation programmes started with measures that promised to address directly and exclusively the poor in the rural areas. This target-group-oriented approach started with programmes for backward regions and graduated to programmes for the development of small and marginal farmers, landless labourers, etc. It should be noted that during this phase, recourse was taken to soft and non-confrontationist measures; because, emphasis in these poverty alleviation programmes was on creating employment opportunities and distributing renewal assets among the poor. Again, efforts on poverty alleviation were not conditioned by the political labels of the ruling parties in different states. In the third phase-starting from the beginning of 1990s-emphasis has been shifted to accelerate economic growth and creating an environment for ensuring a spread-effect. The dominant thought in this
context is to create assets among the poor and enable them to get additional benefit from the secondary effects of growth, which it is presumed, will percolate down and reach the poor. (Gaikwad, et al., 1977).

In sum, over time, emphasis has shifted from structural interventions to a target-group-oriented approach, and to market-oriented polices.

**Community Development Programme (CDP)**

India has a very long history of experimenting with various approaches to rural development. Even in the pre-Independence era, a number of rural reconstruction experiments were initiated by nationalist thinkers and social reformers. Well-known among them were the Gurgaon Experiment of F.L. Brayne (1920), the Marthandam Experiment of Spencer Hatch (1921), the Sriniketan Experiment of poet Rabindra Nath Tagore (in the 1920s), the Sewagram Experiment of Mahatma Gandhi (1933), the Firka Development Scheme (1946), and the Etawah Pilot Project of Albert Mayer (1948). Besides these experiments by social reformers and missionaries, various departments of the government-agriculture, cooperation, irrigation, health, education—also tried in their own way to resolve rural problems falling within their respective jurisdictions.
The Grow More Food Campaign (GMFC) was India’s first organised effort to increase food production. Although the campaign was launched in 1943 in the wake of the Bengal famine, it did not make much headway until 1947. The campaign had a two-pronged approach. First, to bring idle but potentially productive land under the plough, and second, to stimulate cultivator interest in increasing crop yield per hectare. In 1948, the GMFC was reviewed by the Thakurdass Committee, and following its recommendations, the campaign was reoriented in 1950-51. In the following year, the GMFC became a part of the First Plan. In 1952, the Government of India appointed the Grow More Food Inquiry Committee under the chairmanship of Sir V.T. Krishnamachari to evaluate the campaign. The Committee found, inter alia, that (a) all aspects of village life are interrelated, and no lasting results can be achieved if individual aspects of it are dealt with in isolation; and (b) the movement touched only a fringe of the population, and did not arouse widespread enthusiasm, or become in any sense a national programme. The committee also made a number of recommendations regarding the future policy of the GMFC. One of the recommendations was that an extension agency should be set up for rural work, which would reach every farmer and assist in the coordinated development of rural life. It was out of this background and experience that India’s Community Development Programme (CDP) was born. (Katar Singh, 1999:155-156).
CDP Coverage

The CDP was formally inaugurated on 2 October 1952. It was intended to be the first step in a programme of intensive development, which was expected over a period of time to cover the entire country. Initially, the CDP was launched in 55 project areas located in different parts of the country. Another 110 areas had necessarily to be added to the original 55 in the course of six months. Demands for the expansion of the CDP from members in the state legislatures and from members of parliament continued skyrocketing. It was difficult to resist the mounting political pressure to expand the programme.

A new, somewhat less ambitious scheme, called the National Extension Service (NES) was evolved and launched in 1953. Whereas in the CDP, intensive development was taken up in all fields, the NES scheme was designed to provide the essential basic staff and a small amount of funds, with which the people could start the development work, essentially on the basis of self-help. The NES blocks were subsequently converted into CDP blocks. The pattern of the CDP was further revised with effect from 1 April 1958. According to this pattern, the CDP blocks had a life of 10 years, consisting of Stages I and II of equal duration, the budget provision in Stage I being higher. Besides, a one-year pre-extension phase preceding Stage I, with attention exclusively devoted to agricultural development, was introduced from 1 April 1959. From 1 April 1969, the CDP was transferred to the state sector. Originally, each of the 55...
approximately (300 villages, with a population of about 200,000 people, and cover a cultivated area of approximately 150,000 acres. A project area was to be divided into three development blocks, each comprising about 100 villages and a population of about 65,000 people. In areas where a full project was not considered feasible, one or two development blocks were started to begin with. The 55 projects were to include approximately 16,500 villages and over a crore of peoples. (Katar Singh, 1999:157-158). 7

The Small Farmer Development Agency (SFDA)

The report of the All-India Rural Credit Review Committee (1969) recommended the establishment of an agency to assist the small farmers who had not benefited from the fruits of the Green Revolution. Accordingly, the Fourth Plan laid special emphasis on enabling small farmers to participate in the process of development, and share its benefits. To achieve this objective, the plan provided for the initiation of a project, namely, the Small Farmer Development Agency (SFDA) scheme, which was sanctioned during 1970-71, but whose actual implementation started only during 1971-72. The objective of SFDA was to ensure the viability of small farmers. An autonomous agency registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 was established at the district level to implement SFDA projects. It acted as a catalyst in identifying small farmers, investigating their problems, and helping them to obtain inputs from various developmental organizations. (Agro-Economic Research Centre, 1975:96). 8
During the Fourth Plan, SFDA projects were started in 87 areas in the country. Each project was expected to cover, during the five-year period, approximately 50,000 families of identified small farmers, defined as those who owned landholdings ranging from 2.5 to 5.0 acres.

During the Fifth Plan, based on the recommendations of the National Commission on Agriculture, SFDA and the Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers (MFAL) schemes were merged into one composite scheme, called the Small Farmers, Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Project. An assessment of the performance of the SFDA/MFAL scheme is presented in the next section, after a brief review of the MFAL scheme. (Planning Commission, 1979:23).  

The Drought-Prone Area Programme (DPAP)

A Rural Works Programme was initiated in 1970-71, with the focus on the execution of rural works and employment generation, in an attempt to mitigate the conditions of scarcity in drought-prone areas. Subsequently, it was realised that a mere rural works programme would not help in attaining these goals.

The programme was sought to be reoriented on the basis of an area development approach, and was redesignated as the Drought-Prone Area Programme (DPAP) at the time of the mid-term appraisal of the Fourth Five Year Plan. The programme was confined to those areas which were originally taken up under the Rural Works Programme. (Sing, 1971:277-78).
Antyodaya Programme

Though we have completed six Five Year Plans and achieved a considerable degree of economic development, the main drawback is that the fruits of economic development have not reached the people for whom they were mainly meant. Mahatma Gandhi said that India's development lies in the development of villages. To develop the villages and to remove the rural poverty and state government have adopted the Antyodaya Programme. This programme aims at providing the minimum basic needs to the poorest among poor. Thus it plays a significant role in not only providing social justice but also in bringing about economic development. Antyodaya Programme may be called a movement for rural prosperity. (Lingaiah Karnati, 2000:2).11

In the year 1977 on the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi the Antyodaya programme was adopted by Rajasthan Government, to uplift a minimum of five poorest of the poor families from every village. The following guidelines are followed in identifying the poorest families which function is carried out by Gram Sabhas.

❖ A family having no economic assets like land, cattle, etc., and a family which has no member in the age group of 15 to 59 years capable of earning any livelihood; or
❖ A family of five members having no economic assets but having an income which is less than Rs. 1,200/- by way of employment; or
❖ A family of five members who are landless labourers, artisans etc., and whose total annual income is less than Rs. 1,200/- or ranging between Rs. 1,200/- and Rs. 1,800/-, or
❖ A family whose per capital income is Rs. 15/- or less.
During the first years of the programme it covered 45,700 families. Following the Rajasthan Government, the other state government also introduced Antyodaya Programmes on similar lines.

Food for Work Programme (FWP)

The Food for Work Programme was launched in 1977 to provide opportunities of work for the rural poor, particularly during slack employment seasons and at the same time, create durable productive capital assets in the form of roads, canals, minor irrigation projects, etc. The basic aim was one of the generating additional employment in rural areas and in the process creates durable community assets which would strengthen the rural infrastructure. The workers on the projects were paid partly in cash and partly in food grains by utilizing the surplus stocks of food grains. In the initial stages, the results were said to be quite encouraging. However, certain shortcomings have been pointed out in its operation, resulting in a steep dealing in employment in terms of man days. The FWP helped to generate additional employment of 444.34 million man days in all-India during 1977-78 and it increased to 3,557.97 million man days during 1979-80. But, disappointingly, the corresponding figure for 1980-81 was 1,611.62 million man days. In view of this, in October 1980, the Food for Work Programme was reshaped into National Rural Employment Programme. (Satya Sundaram, 2002:263). 12
The Desert Development Programme

The Desert Development Programme (DDP) was launched in 1977-78 in the hot desert areas of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Haryana, and the cold desert areas of Jammu & Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh as a central sector scheme with 100 per cent financial assistance by the centre. With effect from 1979-80, it has been operating as a central sector scheme, with expenditure being shared between the centre and the states in the ratio of 50:50 between the states and Central Government. (Venkat Reddy, 2001:61).13

Training Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM)

The National Scheme of Training Rural Youth for Self-Employment was launched by the Central Government on August 15, 1979. The main aim of the TRYSEM is to equip the rural youth with necessary skills and technical knowledge to enable them to take up self-employment in different vocations. Under this scheme, rural youth in the age group of 18 to 35 years from the target group of families in the rural areas having an income of less than Rs.3,500 per annum are eligible for training. Only one rural youth per eligible family is to be selected for training. The vocations confine broadly to the fields of agriculture and allied activities, industry, services and business activities, etc. TRYSEM, as a part of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), aims at training two lakh rural youths every year at an average rate of 40 youths per block. (Vyas, et al., 1994:2559-71).14
The main components of the scheme are:

1. Monthly stipend and daily allowance where ever necessary will be paid Tool-kits to the trainees and allowances for raw materials at specified rates will be provided;

2. Payment of honorarium to trainers/master craftsmen, etc.

3. Grant of subsidy to the trained youths at the rate of 33.3 per cent of the cost of the scheme to the trained youths to set up self-employment ventures, subject to the maximum subsidy limit of Rs.3,000 in non-DPAP areas, Rs.4,000 in DPAP areas and Rs.5,000 for Scheduled Tribe families.

4. Arrangement of the balance of the cost of the scheme through institutional finance; and

5. Besides training, the scheme envisages organizational and operational linkages with other institutions: so that credit, marketing, raw material supplies, etc., may be provided to the trainees at the appropriate time.

**National Rural Employment Programme (NREP)**

Some of the rural development schemes initiated in the early stages of the planning era aimed mainly at resource development on the individual or area. Further, special programmes for solving the problems of unemployment and underemployment were formulated and implemented in isolation of the on-going developmental projects. It is necessary to consider employment as an integral part of development
of formulated to a suitable programme. Again, it should be noted that a large number of people in rural areas are without assets or have meager assets. This segment of the rural poor depends primarily on wage employment and such rural people do not have any source of income during the lean agricultural period or during the severe drought conditions. Some of the developmental schemes can be taken up by utilizing the unemployed rural labour and derive the double benefit of generation of employment to the unemployed and creation of certain assets of durable nature that will benefit the rural community at large in due course of time. It was to fulfill this objective that the NREP was launched in October, 1980. (Lingaiah Karnati, 2000:52).^{15}

**Aims and Features of NREP**

The NREP aims both at providing employment opportunities to rural workers, particularly at a time when they are not able to find gainful employment, as well as creation of durable community assets for strengthening the rural infrastructure which will lead to the rapid growth of rural economy and rise in the income level of the rural poor. The NREP is expected to generate additional employment to the extent of 300 to 400 million man days per year. Some of the important features of the programme are as follows: (Lingaiah Karnati, 2000:75).^{16}
(1) A district/block level employment plan will be formulated taking into account skilled and unskilled work force, the number of people seeking work and the employment opportunities under different plan and non-plan projects in the district.

(2) Projects are prepared for each district/block, taking into account the felt needs of the rural community.

(3) NREP gives priority to works relating to social forestry and pasture development, soil and water conservation, irrigation, flood control and drainage, field channels in command areas, construction and improvement of village tanks and ponds, school and dispensary buildings, work relating to improvement of village ecology and environment, hygiene and sanitation.

(4) Ten per cent of the resources are earmarked for works of direct and exclusive benefits to the SC and ST categories.

(5) Ten per cent of the resources are earmarked for creation of social forestry.

(6) The execution of the work under NREP will be through the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) and implementation has been entrusted to the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDA) all over the country. The NREP will be implemented as a Centrally-sponsored scheme on a fifty-fifty sharing basis between the Centre and the State Governments. The Centre will provide its share in the form of food grains to the extent of food grains requirement.
Voluntary organizations of repute and standard can also be entrusted the responsibility of the execution of permissible work under the NREP.

The Sixth Plan made an allocation of Rs. 1,620 crores for the NREP. Allocation of financial resources to the States and Union Territories was made on the basis of prescribed criteria under which 75 per cent weightage is given to agricultural workers and marginal farmers and the remaining 25 per cent to the incidence of poverty. The wage under the programme should be on par with the minimum agricultural wages prescribed for the area and part of the wage is paid in the form of food grains. According to the guidelines, food grains were to be provided at the rate of 1 kg per man day. This is being done with a view to improving their nutritional standards, the food grains being priced since January 1984 at subsidized rates. (Lingaiah Karnati, 2000:89).  

The employment generation target under the NREP has been consistently achieved during the Sixth Plan. It is rightly observed: 'It is not known as to how much of this has been directed towards those who are landless and the poorest among the poor. To this extent, the programme has apparently lacked a direct focus on the target-group population, for whom it was meant.’ Some of the asset building works was also subject to criticism on the grounds of lack of expertise and high material costs. In some State, 10 per cent of the outlay earmarked
for works of direct benefit to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was not fully utilized. In view of its potential for creation of employment and community durable assets, the NREP was being continued in the Seventh Plan as an important component of the anti-poverty strategy.

An outlay of Rs.1, 250.81 crores has been provided for NREP in the Central sector in the Seventh Plan which was matched equally by the States. Based on the wage rate of Rs.8.61 per day and a wage-material cost ratio of 50:50, a total employment of 1,445 million days is likely to be generated during the Seventh Plan period at an average rate of about 290 million man days. The formula for allocation of resources as 25 per cent weightage for the incidence of poverty and 75 per cent weightage to the population of agricultural labourers and marginal farmers will be changed to provide equal weightage to both these. (Lingaiah Karnati, 2000:118).  

Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)

The Integrated Rural Development Programme aims at development of rural areas in an integrated way taking into consideration all aspects of rural economy. The main aim of the programme is to make the best use of resources available in rural areas in terms of men and materials. It aims, at merging all the existing agencies like SFDA, HYVP, MFAL etc., into one unit, so that only one agency can be responsible for the formulation and execution of the
plan. The future planning will be decentralized micro-level planning at block level. The development block will be considered the planning unit and block level planning will be considered the planning unit and block level planning will be integrated with district and state level planning. It will be a planning at grassroots level. At the first instance 2,000 blocks are selected for the integrated development and additional 300 blocks were added every year to this scheme. By the end of Sixth Plan nearly 3500 blocks will be brought under the Integrated Rural Development Programme.

Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) is a major instrument in government strategy to alleviate rural poverty. The main objectives of IRDP are to raise the families of identified large groups, above poverty line and create substantial additional opportunities for self-employment in rural areas.

The strategy of IRDP during the Seventh Plan has been two fold. Firstly, to consolidate the results achieved during the Sixth Plan, by providing supplementary dose of assistance to those beneficiaries who were not able to cross poverty line for no fault of their own and secondly, to provide a package of assistance to the identified beneficiaries in such a way that they cross the poverty line with only one dose of assistance. (Mathur, Kuldeep, 1995:2703-04).
This is a centrally sponsored scheme. The funds are shared in 50:50 basis between the Central Government and State Governments concerned. The implementation of the programme is through District Rural Development Agency (D.R.D.A.). The block level functionaries in the Panchayat Raj Department are also involved in the implementation of the programme at the grass-root level. A coordination committee also functions at the state level, with the chief secretary as its chairman. This coordination committee monitors the overall implementation of the programme.

As against 16.5 lakh families assisted with a total investment of Rs.4762.78 crores in the Sixth Plan, the number of families proposed to be assisted during Seventh Plan was 18 lakhs with a total investment of Rs.8852.35 crores.

It was observed that 45 per cent of the total financial assistance under this scheme went to S.C. and S.T. families as against the target of 30 per cent. Under IRDP programme, The Coverage of Women had increased from 9 per cent in 1985-86 to 25 per cent during 1988-89. Major impact of the programme was that its benefits were derived by the poorest of the poor and the most deprived sectors of the society. Many women members were also benefited under the scheme.
The subsidy available to S.C. families under IRDP Programme has now been raised 50 per cent. The monetary ceiling was also raised to Rs.5000/-. This scheme is expected to benefit about 8.5 lakh more S.C. families in 1990-1991.

IRDP and NREP have been the turn instruments of direct attack on poverty in India. Considerable resources were committed for these two programmes and these two programmes have become important planks of growth strategy namely growth with social justice. Definite targets for bringing down the poverty rates were fixed.

Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA)

The programme of Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) was initially launched on pilot bases in 50 selected districts in 1982 with United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) co-operation to strengthen the women's component of poverty alleviation programmes. (Panchayat Raj & Rural Development Department, 1989:59-60). It was started as a sub-scheme of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP). It was introduced by the Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. During the Seventh Five-Year Plan, it covered 162 districts and is being extended, in a phased manner, to all districts in a country during the Eighth Five-Year Plan period. (Panchayat Raj & Rural Development Department, 1989:66).
The need for a special programme designed exclusively for women was felt as it was noticed that women members of IRDP were not availing of the benefits of that programme in adequate measure. Women belonging to identified rural families can become members of this programme and also avail of subsidy and credit facility under IRDP, subject to overall subsidy ceilings for various social categories of the beneficiaries laid down in IRDP guidelines.

Aims and Objectives of DWCRA Programme

The objective of the programme is to serve the income levels of women belonging to poor households so as to enable their organized participation in social development towards economic self-reliance. The focus of the attention is on the women members of IRDP families to increase income and to provide supporting services for income generating activities (backward and forward linkages etc.) and linkages with other social development programmes like health, education, sanitation etc. The other objectives of DWCRA groups are to: (Panchayat Raj & Rural Development Department, 1989:66).

- Inculcate saving and banking habits among the poor;
- Secure them with financial, technical and moral strengths;
- Enable availing of loan for productive purposes and repaying the same over a period of time and in the process.
- Gain economic prosperity;
• Gain from collective wisdom in the financial matters in organizing and managing their own finance and distributing the benefits among themselves.

Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP)

The Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme was launched in August 1983 with a view to alleviating poverty, through reducing the problem of unemployment and underemployment among the rural landless workers. The programme aims mainly at (a) improving and expanding employment opportunities for the rural landless and providing guarantee of employment to at least one member of every landless labourer household upto 80 to 100 days in a year, (b) creating durable assets for strengthening of the rural infrastructure capable of boosting production. Of them, there are rural link roads, field irrigation channels, land development, reclamation of waste lands, social forestry, soil and water conservation, etc. The highest priority will be accorded to labour-intensive projects in backward areas drawn by the State Governments and approved by the Central Government. A portion of the wages will be paid in the shape of food grains wherever possible. While the NREP is for generation of additional employment for the unemployed and underemployed persons, the RLEGP provide guaranteed employment to atleast one person of every landless labourer household upto 100 days in a year. An outlay of Rs.500 crores to be fully financed by the Central Government was provided for this
programme in Sixth Plan. During 1983-85, the Central Government approved 220 projects with an estimated cost of Rs. 906.59 crores. The target for employment generation was fixed at 360 million man days against which 260.18 million man days of employment was actually generated. (Venkat Reddy, 2001:79). 23

The RLEGp has helped in the creation of a good number of durable community based assets and economic infrastructure in the rural areas. However, the tendency to concentrate on asset creation rather than creation of required quantum of employment to the landless labourers was subject to criticism. Suggestions have been made that the programmes should be merged with the NREP. However, since a substantial part, the RLEGp funds would be committed to the on-going projects, the Planning Commission proposed to make separate provision under the RLEGp for rural housing with the objective of constructing one million houses in the Seventh Plan. This will be closely integrated with housing component of the Minimum Needs Programme.

An outlay of Rs.1, 743.78 crores has been provided for RLEGp in the Seventh Plan to be borne entirely by the Centre. It is estimated that during the Seventh Plan, employment to the extent of 1,013 million man days is likely to be generated with an average rate of about 200 million man days per year.
Watershed Development Programme

Traditionally watershed activities are concentrated on water and soil conservation measures. However, integrated watershed management involves not only conservation of natural resources but also efficient and sustainable use of these resources for improving the livelihoods of all the people (landholders and landless) in the watershed. (Sonachalam, 1983:16).²⁴

Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP)

The main objectives of the IWMP are to restore the ecological balance by harnessing, conserving and developing degraded natural resources such as soil, vegetative cover and water. The outcomes are prevention of soil run-off, regeneration of natural vegetation, rain water harvesting and recharging of the ground water table. This enables multi-cropping and the introduction of diverse agro-based activities, which help to provide sustainable livelihoods to the people residing in the watershed area so as to improve their employment, income generation sources to increase the living standards and ultimately led to alleviate the poverty to the considerable extent. (Sonachalam, 1983:26).²⁵
Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY)

The JRY was launched as a centrally sponsored scheme on April 1st, 1989 by merging the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP). The main objective of the programme is generation of gainful employment for unemployed and underemployed persons, both men and women in the rural areas through the creation of Rural Economic Infrastructure, Community and social assets. This programme is targeted at people living below the poverty line. However, preference is given to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Bonded Labourers. Further, at least 30 per cent of the women are to be covered under JRY.

A review of the programme in 1992-93 revealed that the employment generated under JRY was inadequate and did not provide enough income to the poor. It was also noticed that the resources under JRY too thinly spread and adequate attention was not given to the backward areas of the country. The evaluation report brought into focus certain inadequacies against the target of 30 per cent. It was also noticed that 49.47 per cent of the works could not be completed in time on account of shortage of funds. It was further noticed that there was vast discrimination in the wages paid to the male and female workers under the scheme. Non-utilization of locally available material was another shortcoming observation. It was further noticed that the annual action plans under JRY were not discussed in the Gram Sabha.
meetings and hence participation of local people in identification and implementation of schemes was very much missing.

From January 1996 the JRY is now being implemented in two parts (a) The Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (Main Scheme) and (b) Special and Innovative Projects.

By 1996-97 an amount of Rs.25, 190.30 crore was utilized by the State out of Rs.25, 661.70 crores released by the Centre. The utilization was 98 per cent of the total fund released. In terms of physical performance, the actual employment generated the share of SC and STs was about 56 per cent and that of women was 25.5 per cent. The programme has contributed to the development of rural infrastructure in the form of irrigation works, soil conservation works, land development, drinking water works, rural roads, construction of school buildings, Panchayat Ghars, Mahila Mandals, Sanitary latrines and social forestry.

JRY is now restructured merging NREP and RLEGP and named as Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana. The object is sustained in generation of employment to the rural poor with a focus on SCs, STs categories and others who are below poverty line. (Venkat Reddy, 2001:87-88).26
Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS)

The EAS is a centrally sponsored scheme launched on 2\textsuperscript{nd} October, 1993 in 1775 identified backward blocks situated in drought prone, desert, tribal and hill areas. Subsequently, the scheme has been extended to some more blocks earlier covered under JRY. The EAS now is covering all the rural blocks in the country.

The main objectives of the EAS is to provide about 100 days of assured casual manual employment during the lean agricultural season at statutory minimum wages to all persons above the age of 18 years and below 60 years, who need and able to work. The works are to be selected by the District Collector and implemented through the concerned departments in such a way that the ratio of wage and non-wage components would in the ratio of 60:40 per cent.

Upto 1996-97 a total amount of Rs. 6,514.65 crore has been released out of which total utilisation was Rs.5,278.16 crores or 81.02 per cent. Under the EAS, 25.90 million persons registered themselves for employment. The scheme generated 1,086.60 million man days of employment from 1993-94 to 1996-97.

In the Ninth Plan EAS was a major wage-employment generation programme in reveal areas as in order to make EAS effective programme in reaching the poor and more backward areas, it is noticed that funds to states were released on the basis of incidence of poverty,
thereby preventing the better off states from cornering a larger share of the funds. The allocation of funds from the States to the districts was made on the basis of a pre-determined criterion which reflects the relative backwardness of the district. Below the district level, the works have been taken up in blocks where there was concentration of the poor and unemployed and workers have registered themselves for casual manual work. It is proposed that the scheme would be essentially implemented by the Panchayati Raj Institutions at the Block level with the funds allocated to DRDA/ Zilla Parishads (ZPs) for taking up inter-block and district level works. (Venkat Reddy, 2001:88).27

Social Security Scheme

The Government of India introduced National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) on 15th August, 1995 with a view to provide minimum needs of the poor destitutes having little or no regular means of subsistence from their own sources of income or through financial support from their family members. One of the components is National Old Age Pension scheme. Under this scheme the poor destitute aged persons of 65 and above are extended support at the rate of Rs.75/- per month.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh decided to bring the mode of disbursement of all pensions under one umbrella by transferring the widow pensions from Social Welfare Department and disabled pensions
from Disabled Welfare Department to the Rural Development Department from 1st April, 2006.

The amount of pension was Rs. 75/- per month till 2005-06. From the year 2005-06, it was increased to Rs. 100/- per month and from 2006-07, the amount of pension has been further increased from Rs. 100/- to Rs. 200/- per month. (www.rd.ap.govt.in).28

Million Wells Scheme (MWS)

The MWS was launched as a sub-scheme of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP) and the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) during 1988-89. After the merger of the two programmes in April 1989 into the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), the MWS continued as a sub-scheme of JRY till December 1995. The MWS was de-linked from JRY and made into an independent scheme with effect from 1st January, 1996.

The MWS is intended to provide open irrigation wells at free of cost to individual poor, small and marginal farmers, who are below poverty line listed in the IRDP register of the village, with special focus on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. A total of 11.04 lakh wells have been created under MWS with an expenditure of Rs.4, 003.11 crore. The Ninth Five Year Plan states that this programme achieved considerable success in certain districts of several states.
Field studies in various parts of the country have identified certain impediments to the effective implementation of this scheme. Among them the important are: (1) creation of wells without proper hydro-geological surveys, (2) declining water table and its continuous depletion due to over use, (3) non eligible persons have been included into target group, (4) poor performance in rocky and sandy strata, (5) very limited distance between wells adversely affecting the rate of discharge and low level of water yielding and (6) poor extension support from the agricultural department, etc. in releasing full potential.

(Venkat Reddy, 2001: 89).  

Rural Housing (Indira Awaas Yojana) Scheme

Housing is one of the basic requirements for human survival. Therefore, construction of houses was included as one of the major activities under the National Rural Employment Programme. The Government of India announced a National Housing and Habitat policy which aims at providing “Housing for all” and facilitating the construction of 20 lakh additional housing units (13 lakh in rural areas and 7 lakh in urban areas) with emphasis on standing benefits to the poor and the deprived. The intention is to end the problem of shelterlessness and ensure the conversion of all unserviceable pucca houses by providing pucca houses by the end of 11th plan period. The Action plan is being implemented through various programmes such as Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), Credit cum Subsidy Scheme for Rural Housing,
Innovative Scheme for Rural Housing and Habitat Development, Rural Building Centres, Equity Contribution by Ministry of Rural Development to HUDCO and National Mission for Rural Housing and Habitat. (www.google.com).  

Comprehensive Land Development Programme (Indira Prabha)

Land has always been a symbol of dignity and confidence. This is particularly true for poor farmers. To promote an equitable development process Government of Andhra Pradesh had assigned lands to large number of families belonging to weaker sections. The government has prohibited alienation of the assigned land by enacting “Prohibition of Alienation of Assigned Lands Act, 1977”. Unless these lands are developed and made productive, they are not of much use for providing the livelihoods of the poor. Though several initiatives were taken up in this direction by the government over the years, the success rate is to the extent of consideration. Some of the reasons for this are: sub critical investments on land development and agriculture, and weak institutional arrangements. Several experiences from Voluntary Organizations indicate that livelihoods of poor families could be strengthened significantly by developing assigned lands. Intensive field support, appropriate institutional arrangements, technology and comprehensive financial support are found to be the key elements of success. Experiences from large-scale government supported projects also indicate that it is important to target poor families and work with them to develop their asset base. Ensuring food security by adopting
sustainable dry land agricultural practices is the central theme in many of the above experiences. With this background, Government of Andhra Pradesh has conceptualized the “Comprehensive Land Development Project” (CLDP) named as “Indira Prabha”. This is contributing considerably to reduce the problem of poverty particularly in renal areas. (www.rd.ap.gov.in).\textsuperscript{31}

**Swarnjaynti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)**

The Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India has been implementing the Swarnjaynti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) as a major self-employment Programme in rural India since April, 1999.

Earlier Programmes like Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM), Supply of Improved Tool kits to Rural Artisans (SITRA) and Ganga Kalyan Yojana (GKY) were merged in to this programme.

SGSY would provide opportunities for self-employment to the rural poor. The programme would shift to a process-oriented approach in five stages:

- Social mobilization for formulation of self-help groups;
- Saving among the SHG members and internal lending among them;
- Provision of a revolving fund;
- Micro-finance, and
- Micro-enterprise development.
Network of institutions that promote the self-help movement would be created during the Plan period. Stakeholdership in the development process has been forged among NGOs and other community-based organizations, government agencies and other financial institutions. These have become a system of identifying and training local facilitators.

- Key activities were planned to respond to the needs of the areas. Training Programme for beneficial linkages with training institutions have been forged.
- Greater attention was drawn to marketing Rural habitats/markets at the taluka/district level would be set-up for display products. Linkages will be developed with private channels, industrial enterprises and export houses for higher value realization for SGSY groups.
- Special attention was paid to provide technical support for upgrading technology and standardization of products. Use of information and communication technology would be promoted during the plan period in this regard.
- The SGSY has been implemented as the single wage-employment programme. The programme would have three streams which would seek the address the need of rural infrastructure at the village level, ensure guaranteed employment at least 100 days in areas relief in natural calamities such as floods, droughts, earthquakes and other
contingencies. The projects under SGSY would be chosen with a view to taking up schemes that enlarge the scope for increased economic activity.

Access to land will be an important element in the poverty alleviation strategy. Tenancy reforms, record of rights of land owners and tenants, computerization of land records, prevention of alienation of tribal lands and issue of land right for women will be the major tenets of the land reform agenda. (Satya Sundaram, 2002:307-308).32

Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY)

The JRY has since converted into the rural infrastructure programme with a new name, Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) in 1999.

Cost sharing ratio between the centre and state Governments is also 75:25 ratio. The primary objective of this scheme is the creation of demand driven community village infrastructure including durable assets at the village level and assets to enable the rural poor to increase the opportunities for sustainable employment opportunities. The secondary objective is to generate supplementary employment for the unemployed poor in rural areas. Funds are to be spent by the village panchayat for which they are meant. Diversion from one village panchayat to another is not allowed. Indira Awas Yojana had not been renamed. It was merely subsumed under the Samagra Awas Yojana.
The JGSY will also be a creation of rural infrastructure rather than the wage employment scheme by changing the accounting procedure and relaxing the 60:40 funding ratio where 60 per cent has to be spent on labour.

It will also create considerable heresburn within states, with the Centre now empowering panchayats with the poor to spend up to Rs.50,000 on a scheme, without technical and administrative sanction. All the JRY funds will now be sent directly to panchayats on the basis of population. *(Satya Sundaram, 2002:283)*.33

The panchayat should become a planning and guiding machinery at the local level. Group activities would be encouraged to reduce the chances of misuse of funds.

**Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)**

The Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) was launched on 25th September 2001 by merging the on-going schemes of Jawahar Gram Samruddhi Yojana (JGSY) and Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS).

**Objectives**

The objectives of the Programme are to provide additional wage employment in the rural areas as also food security, alongside the creation of durable community assets, social and economic
infrastructure in the rural areas. The programme is self-targeting in nature with special emphasis to provide wage employment to women, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and parents of children withdrawn from hazardous occupation.

The programme resources are shared by all the three tiers viz. District Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti (Revenue mandals in case Andhra Pradesh State) and the Gram Panchayat in the proportion of 20:30:50. Each level of Panchayat is an independent unit for formulation of Action Plan and executing the scheme. (www.rd.india.nic.in).34

Salient Features of the SGRY

- The Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yogana (SGRY) is Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CCS) being implemented with an annual allocation of about Rs.6000 crore (Centre + States) and 50 lakh tones of food grains.
- Under the Scheme, 50 lakh tones of food grains amounting to about Rs.5700 crore (at economic cost) is being provided every year, free of cost to the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations.
- The cost of the cash component of the Programme is shared by the Centre and State in the ratio of 75:25.
• The payment of food grains is made by the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD) to the Food Corporation of India (FCI) directly.

• About 100 crore man days of employment are envisaged to be generated every year in the rural areas.

• Every worker seeking employment under the SGRY will be provided minimum 5kgs of food grains (in kind) per man day as part of wages. However from 1.1.2005 to 31.3.2006 food grains will be provided 31 kilo grams instead of 51 kilo grams.

• The State Government and UT Administrations will be free to calculate the cost of food grains (paid as part of wages) at either Below Poverty Line (BPL) rates or Above Poverty Line (APL) rates or anywhere between the two.

• Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) can take up works as per the felt need of the areas.

To ensure that maximum benefits of the programmes accrue to the people in villages, the Ministry has adopted a ‘four-pronged’ strategy of creating ‘awareness’ about the programmes, ensuring ‘transparency’ in their implementation at field level, encouraging people’s ‘participation’ in the development process and promoting the concept of ‘social audit’ for accountability. (www.rd.india.nic.in).35
Indiramma Housing Programme

Despite 63 years of independence and over four decades of programme for providing housing to the poor, the vast majority of the rural population lives in substandard housing, exposed to the elements of nature. The interventions of the government by providing housing unfortunately had not taken place with the demand resulting in supply/demand imbalance which only resulted in more corruption. The absence of adequate surpluses in the rural economy for investment in the housing programme has not helped the matters much.

With a view to resolve this issue, Government of Andhra Pradesh has mounted a major initiative named integrated novel development in rural areas and model Municipal areas (Indiramma) Housing Programme starting in 2006-07. Indiramma Housing Programme is aimed at achieving a slum-free and hut-free state of Andhra Pradesh in 3 year period. The underlining principle is to sanction a pucca house to all the rural households who are living in kutcha houses currently, irrespective of the caste, religion or political affiliation. The programme aimed at recognising 'living in dignity' as a basic right.

Late Dr. Y.S.Rajasekhar Reddy, the then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh launched the historic Indiramma Housing Programme in a tiny village in East Godavari district to mark the launching of the state government's prestigious scheme 'Indiramma Pathakam' on Saturday April 15th, 2006. The scheme was intended to provide basic amenities to one-third of villages and one-third of wards in the urban areas. (www.rd.ap.gov.in).36
Indira Kranthi Patham (IKP)

Poverty is widespread in India despite the impressive economic development that has taken place since independence. The poverty is a serious problem in both rural and urban India. The intensity of poverty varies widely across the states of India, with a high concentration of poor in the central region of the country. Landlessness and limited access to land are glaring features of rural poverty. The population below the poverty line is nearly 37 per cent in rural areas, compared to 31 per cent in urban areas. Perpetuation of poverty is due to the exclusion of some sections of poor from growth, and not necessarily due to lack of growth. Economic betterment through self managed activities could equip the poor to play a more assertive role in the community. Community initiatives in the implementation of such measures, backed with a strong coalition of the poor, could bring in significant differences.

To reduce the incidence of poverty, the novel idea of formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs) was introduced in India. The fundamental aim behind the formation of these SHGs is to improve the living conditions of rural poor women by motivating them for savings and providing bank loans for their betterment. (www.rd.ap.gov.in).37
Abhaya Hastham (Indira Kranthi Patham Pension and Insurance Scheme for SHG Women)

Government of AP has undertaken comprehensive eradication of poverty, in rural and urban areas through the Indira Kranthi Patham, a Programme for empowerment of women, through formation, development and strengthening of women SHGs and their federations, covering 1 Crore 25 Lakh women in rural and urban areas. During the last three years, Government is also implementing National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme to secure guaranteed wage employment by the rural poor. As a result of these measures, a large number of women and their families in rural and urban areas are enjoying stable livelihoods, increased incomes and better quality of life. While economic growth at household level is an important pre-condition for expanding the scope of Social Security, no less important is the need for adopting special social security policies. The Government considers social security as one of the important factors in improving quality of life and elimination of poverty. (www.rd.ap.gov.in).\(^{38}\)

The need for income security in their old age, when their ability to earn from their physical labour would have reduced considerably has been voiced by SHG members in various meetings they had with the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh in the month of December 2008. Responding to the demand from the SHG women, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh has conceptualized Abhaya Hastham.
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