

A Review of Rural Development and Poverty Amelioration Programmes in India

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Abstract

Rural poverty in India is very much historical but now it has multiplied with the population explosion and unemployment situation. The slogan 'Garibi Hatao' was very much specific for poverty alleviation programmes. In India, a number of rural development programmes has been implemented in the Five Years Plans to raise income, provide employment, make masses literate and alleviate the poverty of rural poor. This paper critically evaluates different rural development programmes launched by the government during pre-independence and post-independence periods. The trend of poverty in the country is also discussed.

Introduction

Poverty is a state wherein an individual cannot satisfy his minimum wants for reasonable healthy living in a given social environment. It indicates a condition in which a person fails to maintain a living standard adequate for his physical and mental efficiency. Poverty is the outcome of low income induced by low productivity, and its unequal spatial distribution. Rural poverty is very much in India having increasing trend parallel to population explosion after independence. 'Poverty reduction has been one of the major goals of development planning since independence and the planning process has been sensitive to the needs of the poor. Accordingly, the development efforts have been directed in creating adequate livelihoods and provision of services for a better quality life for the poor. Poverty in India is not merely an economic phenomenon but a social one as well. Poverty, lack of knowledge due to lack of education, lack of resources, social systems and a variety of socioeconomic and political dimensions affect on rural poor in

access of poverty amelioration programmes of the government and sustainable livelihood itself. While poverty is an outcome of multiple deprivations, the measurement has largely dealt with economic deprivation (income/consumption expenditure). The recent body of literature highlights the multidimensionality of poverty and also the heterogeneity of the poor. It also highlights the need to go beyond income poverty by using indices of human development and overall welfare. Poverty is not simply a matter of inadequate income but also a matter of low literacy, short life expectation and lack of basic needs such as drinking water. Human Poverty concept of UNDP highlights essentially the deprivations in health, education and income. Gender inequality adjusted human development indices are helpful to trace the group and region specific disadvantages and for initiating appropriate remedial measures. Since these deprivations are inter-related, a comprehensive approach alone can eliminate poverty and ensure optimal utilization of human resources for sustainable development. Furthermore, the

recent empirical research highlights the nature of hard-core poverty in India. Thus, multi-pronged and convergent approaches with proper targeting are deemed essential for elimination of poverty' (Planning Commission, 2006).

Millions of people in India are unable to meet the basic standards. According to government estimates, in 2006 there were nearly 220.1 million people living below the poverty line which was recorded 222.0 million in 2003 (Table-1). About 27.5 percent of Indians lived below the national income poverty line in 2007 while it was 28.6 percent in 2003. More than 60 percent of women are chronically poor imparting 43 percent of Scheduled Tribes and 36 percent of Scheduled Caste groups. More than 90 percent of the overall workforce was employed in the informal economy including 96 percent of women; 48.6 percent of farmer households were in debt and only 27 percent have access formal credit; 296 million people were illiterate and 233 million were undernourished; 254 per 100,000 live births was the maternal mortality rate (Planning Commission, 2006). It is an indicator not only of the quality of maternal health care services but

also of the level of empowerment of women. Instead of severe hunger and starvation, poverty has been more relative with the increasing gap between rich and poor in recent years (Tiwari, P.K. 1994). India's poverty, especially 'rural poverty', has gone so deep into the marrow of our bones that, as a nation, we have dutifully acquired the knack of living with it. Moynihan (1969) in explaining the vicious cycle of poverty argues that 'the vicious cycle, in which poverty breeds poverty, occurs through times, and transmits its effects from one generation to another. There is no beginning and no end to the cycle. The concept behind the rural development programmes for poverty alleviation is basically to mobilize the human as well as rural resources for the national development. Providing minimum need to the rural poor push them to break the vicious cycle of poverty and contribute their human power for the regional development. The concept is also behind the programmes to enhance the rural employment condition maintenance of social justice and participation of beneficiaries in the implementation of the development programmes.

Table 1: Poverty in India at a glance

Total population (million), 2003	1,064.4
Rural population (as % of total), 2003:	71.7%
Total labour force (million), 2003	473.3
Female labour force as % of total, 2003:	32.6
Number of rural poor (million) (approximate)	222.0
Poor as % of total rural population, 2000	30.2
Population living below US\$1 a day (%), 1990-2002	34.7
Population living below US\$2 a day (%), 1990-2002	79.9
Population living below the national poverty line (%), 1990-2001	28.6

Source: www.ruralpovertyportal.org

Rural development is a process of developing and utilizing natural and human resources, technologies, infrastructural facilities, institutions and organizations, and government policies and programmes to encourage and speed up economic growth in rural areas, to provide jobs and to improve the quality of rural life towards self-sustenance in addition to economic growth (Malik, 2003) extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in rural areas. Agarwal (1987) emphasized the Gandhian Philosophy of rural poor and rural development programmes which included (a) Economic Points (Rural orientation and concern for poverty more than for productivity and efficiency) (b) Cultural Points (Self-reliance, Community cooperation, Respect for women and Equality) and (c) Technical Points (appropriate technology, traditional techniques and people's knowledge). Fan, Peter and Thorat (2000) have argued that, to reduce rural poverty, the Indian government should give highest priority to additional investment in rural infrastructure. Ray (2000) has investigated that the backward classes and female headed household have higher poverty rates than others. Thakur, Bose, Hossain and Janaiah (2000) analyzed rural poverty and income distribution based on an intensive survey of eight villages representing all agro-ecological regions of Bihar. Vaidyanathan (2001) discussed some important issues concerning concepts and measurement of poverty as well as the design and implementation of policies. Deaton and Dreze (2002) presented a new set of integrated poverty and inequality estimates for India and Indian states. Kumar and Aggarwal (2003) determined the extent of poverty in Delhi slums through consumption

patterns, employment and educational states of the slum population. Rath (2003) introduced the basic methodology of the Planning Commission to define poverty line in Bihar. Krishna, Kapila, Porwal and Singh (2003) searched out that reasons for falling into poverty will need to be tackled separately through suitable public policies and appropriate non-government actions. Beteille (2003) stated that the study of both poverty and inequality has been closely associated with an interest in economic and social change. Sundaram and Tendulkar (2004) estimated the poor in the Indian labour force of 1990s. Bardhan and Mukherjee (2004) examined poverty alleviation effects of West Bengal panchayats comprising implementation of land reforms and pro-poor targeting of credit, agricultural mini-kits of employment programmes and fiscal grants. Peter and Shariff (2004) searched out that the direct contribution of the non form sector to poverty reduction is possibly quite muted as the poor lack assets, but it has been found that the growth of certain non-form sub-sectors is strongly associated with higher agricultural wage rates. Nayyar (2005) analyzed the effect of policies and institutions on poverty reducing impact of growth. Thomas Pogge and Reddy (2006) suggested that a new methodology of global poverty assessment feasible is necessary. Martha, Joann and James (2006) argued that there is a need to reorient economic policies to promote more and better employment in order to reduce poverty. Laxmi Lingam (2006) reviewed the relation among gender, households and poverty indicating our understanding of gender and gender relations Barbara (2006) discussed to mitigate poverty through social transfer. He added that it is not possible to eradicate the processes that

create poverty under capitalism. He also suggested ways to regulate these processes and to protect against their impact. Murty and Soumya (2007) stated that the increase in income will lead to reduction in poverty in rural India. Werhane (2009) argued that poverty can be reduced if we recalibrate our mindsets regarding poverty issues. Olayinka (2010) examined early life education for under-fives as a means of economic empowerment of mothers and sustainable poverty amelioration.

Methodology

The study deals with the review of rural development and poverty alleviation

programmes launched by Government of India in the whole country. The country-wide programmes are critically evaluated by dividing into (i) Pre Independence period and (ii) Post Independence period (during Plan periods). The data and literature has been collected from different sources like different offices of Government of India, Planning Commission, India Year Book and several web sites etc.

Poverty Amelioration and Rural Development Programmes

The concept of 'rural development' has been changed after the mid-sixties in India. 'Rural development' earlier implied agricultural

Table 2: Rural Development programmes (1951-1969)

Plan Period	Programme	Year of Introduction
First Five Year Plan	Community Development Programme	1952
	National Extension Service	1953
Second Five Year Plan	Khadi and Village Industries Programme	1957
	Village Housing Projects Scheme	1957
	Multi-Purpose Tribal Development Block Programme	1959
	Package Programme	1960
	Intensive Agricultural District Programme	1960
Third Five Year Plan	Applied Nutrition Programme	1962
	Rural Industries Projects	1962
	Intensive Agricultural Areas Programme	1964
	High Yielding Variety Programme	1966
Annual Plan (1966-69)	Farmer's Training and Education Programme	1966
	Well Construction Programme	1966
	Rural Works Programme (RWP)	1967
	Tribal Development Block	1968
	Rural Manpower Programme	1969
	Composite Programme for Women & Pre-school Children	1969

This is a list of selected programmes only, compiled by the authors

development and community development enveloping the entire population of rural areas as a part of modernization of the underdeveloped and backward areas. In the context of modernization of the entire society, it means, development which affects the entire population of rural areas enveloping all facets of transformation of rural India as a part of socio-economic growth. This was the dominant view of rural development till the late fifties but has undergone a sea of change since then. 'Rural development' is now viewed narrowly as a strategy specifically designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of rural people, viz., rural poor (Desai, 1987). As the World Bank sector paper entitled 'Rural Development', published in 1975, points out, rural development is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people—the rural poor. It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas. The 'group' includes small-scale farmers, tenants and the landless (World Bank, 1975). The new stance appeared in India is '*Garibi Hatao*'. It was adopted to prevent some of the rural poor from plunging deeper and deeper into the bottomless levels of primary poverty and increasingly finding fewer avenues of livelihood and purchasing power in the context of the path of development. It is necessary to draw attention to the implication of this strategy of the rulers in approaching the rural poor, in the name of rural development as differently defined. This shift in strategy enables the state to evolve various tactical programmes and pragmatic policies to appease selected fragments of the poor temporarily to divide them, by specific relief measures

by choosing selectively target groups from the rural poor to serve the basic interests of the rulers with a view to diffuse and fragment the rising upsurge of the various segments of the rural poor (Tiwari, 1994). To counteract these assertion and struggles the government evolved a two-pronged strategy (i) smothering and suppressing the assertions of the poor on a larger and more brutal scale and (ii) evolving schemes comprising specific measures under the new rubric characterized as 'rural development'. The main purposes of the new strategy of rural development were (a) To assuage-a-small section of the poor selectively chosen and through a few crumbs of relief of them and (b) To prevent a small section of the middle and small operating in dry farming areas from being pauperized further and making them productive by providing a variety of specially worked out assistance and support and thereby, absorb them into the mainstream as it is called, of development (Desai, 1987).

It is vital that all those concerned with the poor and particularly with rural poor should realize the necessity to comprehend this double-pronged strategy of increasing assault against the assertions of poor, by suppressing the human rights of the rural poor, with greater and ever growing ferocity and the strategy of selective appeasement and relief by throwing a few crumbs to the rural poor, now designated as 'rural development' or sometimes as 'integrated rural development as dialectically interconnected, i.e., two facts of the new strategy by the state, which is determined to pursue capitalist path of development, in the changed context of both the national and international situation since mid-sixties (Desai, 1987). Broadly speaking, the period

of the rural development and poverty alleviation programmes in India may be divided in to (1) Pre-Independence and (2) Post-Independence

Pre-Independence Rural Development and Poverty Amelioration Programmes

Some attempts were made by different agencies for rural development work during Pre-Independence era with the beginning of the 20th century, and the notable Co-operative Movement (1904) started by Frederic Nicolan initiated rural development programmes in the recent past. Later on a number of projects, such as, Sri Niketan Suraj Gram Project, Gurgaon Project, Marthandam Project, Sabarmati and Seva Grain Project under Gandhian movement, Kasamba Village Development Project, Congress Village Development Programmes, Firka Development Project and Indian Village Service etc. were tackled and implemented for the rural upliftment in India.. The beginning of Co-operative Movement (1904) in India was made by Frederic Nicolan, who was known as the 'Father' of this movement. The co-operative board act, to provide loan to the farmers, was made in 1904 on the basis of his recommendation, which was acted in 1912 for purchasing and selling. Sri Niketan Suraj Gram Project was started by Ravindranath Tagore for the development of socio- economic conditions in the villages. He also founded Vishva Bharti in the same spirit in 1944. This programme was successfully implemented at the time, but later on, it failed due to non-cooperation by the government and the people. Gurgaon Project (1920-26) was started by F.L. Brayne with the objective to increase the

agricultural production, to cut unnecessary expenditure, to improve health, women education and housing development. Later on, it failed due to lacking interest in people and workers, inexperienced and untrained guidance. Marthandam Project (1928) was started in Marthandam village (Kerala) and also implemented in surrounding 40 villages under the guidance of Dr. Spencher Hatch. The objectives were to emphasize on mental, spiritual, physical, social and economic development. This programme was successfully implemented, but later on, it had been dismissed due to non-cooperation by the society. Sabarmati (1920) and Sewa Gram Programme (1938) were started by Gandhiji to create self-reliance and filling the economic gap between the rich and the poor. He emphasized the main formula '*Hath Se Kam Karake. Kamao Aur Seekho*' (earn and learn by yourself). Gandhiji gave priority to spinning on large scale, use of handmade things, development of handicrafts, social and communal unity, removal of touchability, Nashabandi and village unity (Tiwari, 1994). Such programmes were formulated as the base of rural development after Independence. Kasamba Village Development Project (1931-32) was started by V.I. Krisnamachari in Baroda to improve the living standard of villages, development of village industry as well as training and social development of rural youths. Village Development Programmes (1936), were started such as, foundation of model villages and helping centers, development of village communication facilities, adult education programme, development of village industry and foundation of district board in the state. Firaka Development Project (1947) was started in Madras for achieving the objectives of '*Gram Swarajya*' on the basis

of Gandhian principles which implied basically the educational and economic development. Indian Village Service (1947) Programme was started in Etah (V.P.) by W.H. Wisner which aimed to give the villagers self-reliance education. It was successful but the high society did not appreciate their co-operation.

Post-Independence Rural Development and Poverty amelioration Programmes

Before Plan Period

During British rule, Indians were exploited so badly that there was widespread poverty, ignorance and disease etc. at the event of independence. Consequently the first few years of Indian Independence faced with many extraordinary problems of floods, disease and droughts. Hence in Post-Independence' era some special emphasis was laid on rural development aspects specially in agriculture sector. Large number of approaches was, therefore, made to achieve quick results. This period was characterized by the division of the country which created many socio-economic problems in the country. For the up-gradation of the people and to solve the above problems, three significant projects were implemented. Grow More Food (1947) Programme was implemented due to food crisis in 1947 in which the emphasis was given to use HYV seeds, fertilizers, development of irrigational facilities provide loans for the farmers and give other agricultural facilities. Neelokheri Project (1948) was started in Neelokheri (Haryana) to re-habilitate the refugees from East-Bengal at the time of division of the country which aimed to develop industries by skilled and trained people and to make fertile the *usar* lands. Etawah Pilot Project

was started in Mahewa (Etawah, U.P.) and its surrounding 50 villages and it was known as Albert Mayer's Project. It was planned for increasing the agricultural production, social reform and development of self-reliance. It was successfully implemented in Gorakhpur and Faizabad districts too.

During Plan Period

First to Third Five-Year Plan and Plan holidays

India began the process of planned development nearly sixty years ago with the start of the First Five Year Plan in April, 1951. The central theme of planning was identified as initiating 'process of development which will raise living standards and open out to the people new opportunities for a richer and more varied life'. To initiate a process of all round balanced development which would ensure a rise in national income and a steady improvement in living standard over a period were the twin objectives of the First Five Year Plan. The implementation of Community Development Programme (1952) along with its block organization and the National Extension Service (1953) focused on people's participation and the reintroduction of Panchayati Raj, the abolition of Zamindari and Jagirdari and other land reform measures. Keeping the 'rural weak' and the 'rural poor' in the centre, the programmes emphasized the development not merely in agricultural production but also in the fields of village sanitation, public health, education, cooperation, youth women and child welfare etc. Its main objectives were to bring about a change in the mental outlook of the people, instill in them an ambition for higher standards of life and the will and

determination to work for such standards. It seeks to 'build up the community and the individual, a builder of his own village and of the country in the larger sense'. By the end of the Plan period per capita income recorded an increase of 10.5 per cent and the per capita levels of consumption had probably increased by 8 per cent.

The basic objectives of the Second Five Year Plan (1955-61) have been summed up in the phrase 'socialist pattern of society'. Essentially this means that the basic criterion for determining the lines of advance must not be provided profit but social gain, and that the pattern of development and the structure of socio economic relations should be so planned that they result not only in appreciable increase in national income and employment but also in greater equality in national incomes and wealth. It was suggested that employment opportunities would be provided to the labour force to remove under-employment in agriculture and the village and small scale industries (Planning Commission, 1956). The implemented programmes (Table-2), like, Khadi and Village Industries Programme (1957), Village Housing Projects Scheme (1957), Multi-Purpose Tribal Development Blocks Programme (1959), Package Programme (1960), Intensive Agricultural District Programme (1960) etc. for the benefit of the rural poor and the rural weak continued with higher resource allocations and greater coverage. The Second Plan advocated the establishment of 40 multi-purpose pilot projects in the plan period (the actual number of projects started was 43) for 'intensive and coordinated development in tribal areas on the general pattern of community development but modified to

suit tribal conditions and supplemented by additional resources'. The Intensive Agricultural District Programme (1960) is intended to increase agricultural production rapidly in the selected areas and to include new innovations and combinations of practices which may be of special value elsewhere.

The basic objective of development programmes launched during the Third Five Year Plan was to provide opportunities to the masses to lead a good life by combating the course of poverty, with all the ills that it produces and it is recognized that this can only be done through socio-economic advance, so as to build up a technologically mature society and a social order which offers 'equal opportunities' to all citizens. The first condition for securing equality of opportunity and achieving a national minimum is assurance of gainful employment for everyone who seeks work (Planning Commission, 1961). A number of programmes were implemented (Table-2) during this period, viz., Applied Nutrition Programme (1962), Rural Industries Projects (1962), Intensive Agricultural Areas Programme (1964) etc. The Applied Nutrition Programme embodied the respective heads of development like minor irrigation, horticulture; fisheries and poultry development which were drawn up to the implementation of the programmes. The programmes of intensive agricultural development, like, the Intensive Agricultural Development Programme, the Intensive Agricultural Areas Programme (1964) and the High Yielding Variety Programme (1966) were to benefit mainly certain favourably placed areas and sections of the farming community. It was, therefore, very necessary from the point of view of

long term development strategy that an appropriate proportion of the increments in income resulting from these programmes should be topped. The Rural Industry Project (1962) aimed at evolving effecting techniques, methods and programmes for the intensive development of small industries in selected rural areas. The programmes covered 49 project areas in this Plan period, but due to the two wars (Indo-Pak conflict and Indo-China war) and two successive droughts during the Third Plan Period, the objectives of Third Plan could not be achieved. Therefore, three Annual Plans (1966-69) were adopted by the Government to achieve the objectives of the Third Five Year Plan. It was also termed as 'Plan Holiday'. Therefore, the Draft of the Fourth Five Year Plan was adopted during 1969-74. During the Annual Plan Period, the implemented programmes (Table-2) like Farmer's Training and Education Programme (1966), Well Construction Programme (1966), Rural Works Programme (1967), Tribal Development Block (1968), Rural Manpower Programme (1969) and Composite Programme for Women and Pre-School Children (1969) etc. were for the upliftment of rural people. The objective of the Rural Works Programme (RWP) was to provide additional employment to agricultural workers during slack seasons in areas with high incidence of unemployment and under employment. The Rural Manpower Programme aimed at the effective utilization of rural manpower resources for productive activities and for building up community assets in rural areas. The programmes followed two-fold objectives of providing employment and broaden opportunities for the unutilized and under-utilized rural manpower and of imparting new skills

through 'on-the-job training' to the rural labour force with a view to improve the employment ability.

Fourth to Seventh Five Year Plan

The major focus of the Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74) was aimed to promote equality and social justice attaining of economic self-reliance with adequate growth rate and the acceleration of the progress towards a socialist society through the provisions of employment and education. The plan aimed at ensuring better standard of living for the people by enlarging the income, supplies of food articles, agricultural raw materials and agricultural production, reducing the growth rate of population and the development of human resources by providing substantial additional facilities in the social service sector, especially for the rural areas. In the plan it was proposed that per capita income would go up from Rs. 448/- in 1964-65 to Rs. 532/- in 1970-71 i.e., by 3 per cent (compound) per annum (Planning Commission, 1966). A number of schemes related to "area development programmes" and "family beneficiary programmes" with specified target groups and identified under-developed and backward areas were taken up. These included (Table-3) the Drought-Prone Areas Programmes (1970), Cash Scheme for Rural Employment (1971), Small Farmer's Development Agency (1971), Tribal Area Development Programme (1972), Pilot Projects for Tribal Development (1972), Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Programme (1972), Minimum Needs Programme (1972), Command Area Development Programme (1974) etc. Drought-Prone Areas Programmes (DPAP) was started in areas chronically

affected by drought with the principal objective of organizing permanent works to obviate scarcity relief and generate adequate employment through, labour-intensive schemes, viz., major, medium and minor irrigation works, soil conservation, afforestation, and village and district roads necessary to open up the area for agricultural production. In the Fourth Plan, after the mid-term appraisal, this programme was re-designated as Drought-Prone Areas Programmes (DPAP) and re-oriented as an integrated area development programme with the objective of developing the land, water, livestock and human resources of these areas. A cash scheme for Rural Employment Scheme envisaged direct generation of employment in all the rural districts (numbering 350) of the country through the execution of labour intensive rural works. The Small Farmers Development Agencies (SFDA) with a view to take up specific programmes for crop, husbandry, subsidiary occupations and other related activities for improving the income of the small farmers was initiated successfully. Along with the SFDA projects, another programmes for the development of Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers (MFAL) Programme was also started with accent primarily on subsidiary occupations and generation of employment. A special programme for the development of selected tribal areas was started on a pilot basis., The core programme for economic development in these projects consists mainly of agricultural development, minor irrigation, animal husbandry and other subsidiary occupation, reorganization of credit institutions, updating of land records, debt redemption and land restoration, control of shifting cultivation, encouragement to

agro and minor forest-based industries. The objective of Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) is to establish a network of basic services and facilities of social consumption in all areas up to a nationally accepted norm, within a specified time frame.

The principal objective of the programme for the development of different small industries in the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974- 79) was to facilitate the attainment of some of the major task for, the removal of poverty and inequality in consumption standards of the people concentrated' in rural and backward areas through the creation of large scale opportunities for fuller and additional productive employment and improvement of their skills so as to improve their level of earnings (Planning Commission,, 1974). The implemented programmes (Table-3), viz., Hill Area Development Programme (1975), Special Livestock Production Programme (1975), Food-for-Work Programme (1977), Desert Development Programme (1977), Whole Village Development Programme (1979), Training Rural Development Programme (1979), Integrated Rural Development Programme (1979), etc., have been adopted for removal of poverty in this Plan period. Food for Work Programme (FWP) generated of additional gainful employment to a large number of unemployed and underemployed persons in the rural areas, particularly during the slack season, thereby improving their income as well as their nutritional levels; and on the creation and maintenance of durable public and community assets arid strengthening of the rural infrastructures. Desert Development Programme (DDP) was initiated in the arid region during this period. The main emphasis in this programme was to improve the ecological

conditions as well as resource development and utilization with a view of supporting and ameliorating the economy of the local population. Training Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM) programme with the objective of providing technical skills to 'rural youths to enable them to take up self-employment in the broad fields of agriculture and allied activities, industries, services, and business activities were created for the rural masses. It was also indicated that a minimum of 30 per cent of the trained youths should belong to Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) community and minimum of 33 and 1/2 per cent of the rural youths trained should be women. The most important programme was Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) during this Plan period. The special area development programme of SFDA, DPAP and CADP were brought under one plan frame. The IRDP aims at raising income levels of those below the poverty line by providing them with a variety of productive assets for land and water based activities and for industry, service and business.

Removal of unemployment and under-employment within 10 years had been proposed as the principal objective of the Sixth Five Year Plan (1978- 83). The Planning Commission had regarded unemployment and poverty as twin problems and the solution had been envisaged through reduction in unemployment (Planning Commission, 1978). But due to political instability in 1977 and 1979, the programmes of Fifth Five Year Plan had not been implemented effectively. Poverty reduction through fuller employment of human resources was the major objective of the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85). This plan emphasized on (i) a progressive reduction in the incidence of

poverty and unemployment (ii) improving the quality of life of the people in general with special reference to the economically and socially handicapped population, through a minimum needs programme, (iii) strengthening the redistributive bias of public policies and services in favour of the poor contributing to a reduction in inequalities of income and wealth, and (iv) a progressive reduction in regional inequalities in the pace of development and technological benefits (Planning Commission, 1980). The implemented programmes (Table-3) such as, National Rural Programme (1980), Prime Minister's New Twenty Point Programme (1980), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (1982), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (1983), etc., and continued of Fifth Plan Programmes like IRDP;- TRYSEM, MNP, etc. were diversified during this Plan period. The National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) provided supplementary employment opportunities for the landless labourers aiming, at the same time, to create useful community assets and improve nutritional status as well as living standards of the poor. Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) was launched with the objectives of (a) improving and expanding employment opportunities for the rural landless with a view to provide guarantee of employment to at least one member of every landless household upto 100 days in a year and (b) creating durable assets for strengthening the infrastructures so as to meet the growing requirements of the rural economy.

The development strategy of the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90) aimed to reduce the poverty at faster rate. It was expected

Table 3: Rural Development Programmes (1969-1989)

Plan Period	Programme	Year of Introduction
Fourth Five Year Plan	Drought-Prone Areas Programmes	1970
	Cash Scheme for Rural Employment	1971
	Small Farmer's Development Agency (SFDA)	1971
	Tribal Area Development Programme	1972
	Pilot Project for Tribal Development	1972
	Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Programme	1972
	Minimum Needs Programme	1972
	Command Area Development Programme	1974
Fifth Five Year Plan	Hill Area Development Programme	1975
	Special Livestock Production Programme	1975
	Food-for-Work Programme	1977
	Desert Development Programme	1977
	Whole Village Development Programme	1979
	Training Rural Youth for Self-employment	1979
	Integrated Rural Development Programme	1979
Sixth Five Year Plan	National Rural Employment Programme	1980
	Prime Minister's New Twenty Point Programme	1980
	Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas	1982
	Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme	1983
	Council for Advancement of Rural Technology	1984
Seventh Five Year Plan	Special Livestock Breeding Programme	1985
	Small and Marginal Farmers Productive Plan	1985
	District Composite Rural Training & Technology Centre	1985
	Organisation of Beneficiaries	1985
	Indira Awas Yojana (IYS)	1985
	Strengthening of Extension Training Centres	1985
	Composite Rural Training and Technology Centres	1985
	Integrated Rural Energy Planning Programme	1986
	National Drinking Water Mission (NDWM)	1986
Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY)	1989	

This is a list of selected programmes only, compiled by the authors

that the percentage of population with a consumption standard below the poverty line would come down from 36.9 per cent (222.2 million rural poor) in 1984-85 to 25.8 per cent (16.8 million rural poor) in 1989-90.

The NREP, IRDP and RLEGP constituted the major elements of the anti-poverty programmes in this plan. The Plan also envisaged the continuance and expansion of the National Rural Employment Programme

(NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) ever started in the Sixth Plan (Table-3). They were particularly important in providing additional incomes to landless labour households who lack a resource-base in the form of land. The Seventh Plan had provided for a closer linkage between the IRDP and the allied programmes on the one hand and the special wage employment programme on the other. The 'Concurrent Evolution Report' brought out to link IRDP with other poverty alleviation programmes like NREP, RLEGP or even with TRYSEM, DWCRA. During Seventh Plan period newly implemented programmes like Special Livestock Breeding Programme, Small and Marginal Farmers Productive Plan, District Composite Rural Training and Technology Centre, Organisation of Beneficiaries, Strengthening of Extension Training Centres, Composite Rural Training and Technology Centres and Integrated Rural Energy Planning Programme etc. were successful for poverty alleviation in some extent.

The rural development and poverty amelioration programmes launched up to the Seventh Five Year plan highlighted basically the implications, limitations and class significance of the newly designed rural' development strategy. As John Harris pointed out 'rural development has emerged as a distinctive field of policy and practice, and of research in the last decade The strategy came to be formulated as a result of the general disenchantment with previous approaches to development planning at national and sectoral levels and it is defined by its concern with equity objective of various kinds - especially the reduction of inequalities in income and

employment and in the access to public goods and services and the alleviation of poverty' (Harris, 1982). Desai (1987) examined the features and limitations of the 'rural development strategy' which had been in operation since the late sixties. He classified the programmes (i) beneficiary-oriented programmes focusing on specific target groups (rural poor), (ii) specific area-oriented programmes (drought-prone areas, desert-development programmes, hill area development programmes etc.), (iii) sectoral programmes related to well-being of rural society (education, health care, transport, providing drinking water etc.) and (iv) raising production, and productivity programmes (enhance agriculture, dairy development, rural industries etc.). These programmes were criticized on their overlapping nature, over looking real meaning of the poor, high degree of centralization (Maheshwari, 1985) and little involvement and participation of the people.

Eighth to Eleventh Five Year Plan

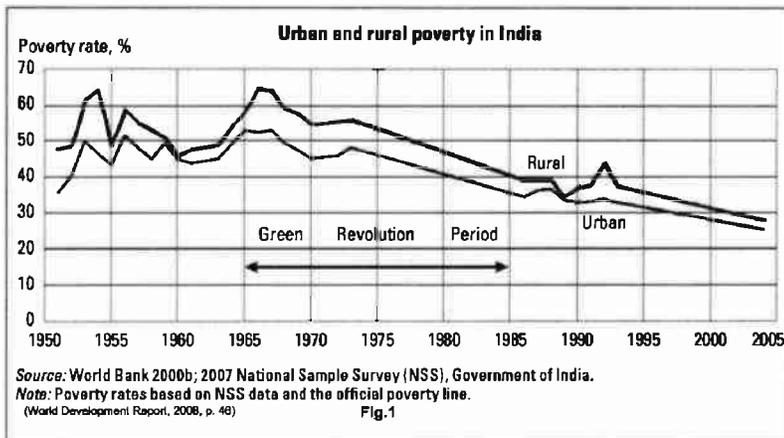
The eighth plan recognized human development as the ultimate goal of planning. Employment generation, population control, literacy, education, health, the supply of drinking water and adequate food, and basic infrastructure were listed as priorities. The existing programmes (Table-4) were Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Training of Rural Youth for Sell Employment (TRYSEM), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Wage Employment Programmes, National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP), Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), Drought Prone

Area Programme and some Land Reform programmes. The Eighth Plan approached some Special Employment Programmes to eliminate poverty. Expansion of employment opportunities, augmentation of productivity and income levels of both the underemployed and employed poor were the main instrument for achieving this objective during the Eighth Plan. This plan integrated Poverty Alleviation Programmes for Rural Development emphasizing over the role of voluntary organizations in rural development.

Most programs concentrate on the creation of rural wage and self-employment and basic amenities during the Ninth Five Year Plan (Table-4). The most prominent among these was the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), which brought together the National Rural Employment Program and the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Program. Other programs include the Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP), the Employment Assurance Scheme and the Accelerated Rural Water Supply Program. JRY and IRDP had been renamed as Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) and Swarnajayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), respectively. Many ambitious targets for poverty reduction were launched during the Ninth Five Year Plan. But, some serious problems in formulation as well as implementation were pointed. For instance, The IRDP, had involved “sub-critical investment, unviable projects, lack of technological and institutional capabilities in designing and executing projects utilizing local resources and expertise; illiterate and unskilled beneficiaries with no experience in managing an enterprise; indifferent delivery of credit by banks (high transactions cost, complex procedure, corruption, one time

credit, poor recovery), overcrowding of lending in certain projects such as dairying, poor targeting and selection of non-poor, absence of linkage between different components of the IRDP, rising indebtedness, and sale of IRDP outstripping capacity of government and banks to absorb” (Saxena, 2000).

The Tenth Five-Year Plan lays emphasis on alleviation of poverty, generation of adequate employment and provision of basic minimum services such as drinking water, shelter and connectivity to all in a time bound manner. Programmes (Table-4) for providing self employment, generating income, imparting technology and skill upgradation training (SGSY) and wage employment (SGRY), Special Area development programmes (MLACDS, WGDP, DPAP), programme for people’s participation to accelerate the effort of the development process and to provide for community maintenance of public assets (Self-sufficiency Scheme) and programmes pertaining to institutional reforms for people’s participation in decentralized governance, planning and development constitute the core of the Rural Development Programmes. The SGSY is conceived as a holistic programme encompassing all aspects of self-employment such as organization of the rural poor into self help groups (SHGs), training, capacity building, planning of activity clusters, infrastructure build up, technology, credit and marketing infrastructure. The Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) programme was to provide additional wage employment and thereby food security by creation of durable community, social and economic assets and infrastructure development in rural areas. Among Rural Housing Programmes.



Indira Awaas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana (PMGY), Member of Parliament Local Area Development Programme. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana (RSVY) were prominent. Some State Schemes were also launched, such as, Village Fair Development Scheme, Village Self-sufficiency Scheme, Member of Legislative Assembly Constituency Development Scheme (MLACD), Integrated Sanitary Complex for Women, Clean Village Campaign and Rural Sanitation etc. During the Tenth Plan the Department of Land Resources implemented three area development programmes on watershed basis, namely Integrated Wasteland Development Programme, Desert Development Programme and the Drought Prone Areas Programme. The Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) was under implementation in 972 blocks of 182 districts in 16 States. The Desert Development Programme (DDP) was implemented in 235 blocks of 40 districts in 7 States, including the cold desert areas of

Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. The main objectives of the program were to restore the ecological balance, conservation of soil and water and to arrest the formation of deserts through shelter belt plantation. The Integrated Wastelands Development Project (IWDP) was implemented in 443 districts of the country for the development of degraded and waste land areas. Other Programmes (Community Development) were Improvement of Rural roads, Central Rural Sanitation Programme, Integrated Rural Sanitation and Water Supply Project and Provision of Infrastructural facilities in Tribal blocks implemented in this plan.

In the context of the formulation of Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012), different sector wise 25 Working Groups/Steering Committees/Task Force have been set up by Planning Commission, to make recommendations on various policy matters. For the rural Development sector, Working Groups for Democratic Decentralization and Panchayati Raj Institutions, Land Relations, Poverty Elimination Programmes, The Rainfed Areas, Social Protection Policy -National Social Assistance Programme

(NSAP) and Associated Programmes and Rural Housing; Steering Committee on Rapid Poverty Reduction and Local Area Development and Expert Groups for Equitable Development have been constituted. Working group of Democratic Decentralization and Panchayati Raj Institutions recommends implementation of panchayati raj for decentralization of administration. updating of land records, on-line maintenance with use of modern technologies, removal of rural unrest, restoration of tribal lands, development of Land Markets , to protect small and marginal farmers and landless agricultural workers, to prevent sale and purchase of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes are suggested by Working Groups for Land Relations. Poverty Elimination Programmes working group suggested to work out Comprehensive Database about the Poor, Models for Empowering the Poor and Strengthening Their Livelihood Base such as *Kudumbashree Model of Kerala*, *SHG Model of Andhra Pradesh* and *Individual Household Model of Gujarat*, Special Institutional Arrangements in poverty concentrated states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Orissa and Assam, and in social groups such as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, *Livelihood and Rural Poverty Alleviation Mission*, *Social Audit* for peoples' participation, Demand-Based Skill Development, Marketing and Technology for the Poor, Focus on Scheduled caste and Tribes. The Working Group on Poverty Social Protection Policy and Programme recommends abolition of hunger and abolition of beggary. It is suggested that the Government adopts "Bhukh Mitao, Bhikh Hatao" as the slogan

for the Plan. The working group recommends National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) consisting of National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS), National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS), Pension for the Disabled, Pension for the Widows and National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS). Working Group on Rural Housing recommends the appropriate change in the programmems i.e., Indira Awaas Yojana, HUDCO and National Housing and Habitat Policy and National Housing Bank (NHB) etc. To facilitate the use of cost effective, environment friendly and energy saving technologies in the construction of dwelling units in rural areas in the Eleventh Five Year Plan. Steering Committee on Rapid Poverty Reduction and Local Area Development recommends the Programmes for Rapid Reduction of Poverty including Development of Rain-Dependent Water-Stressed Areas, continuation of Integrated Wasteland Development Programme, Desert Development Programme, and the Drought Prone Areas Programme (Table-4).

Trends of Rural Poverty

Over all, India is attaining rural development goals through different rural development programmes. The level of rural poverty is reducing continuously during its planning periods. Radhakrishna wrote, "the trends in poverty reveal two distinct phases. The first phase, from the beginning of planning to the mid-70s, was characterized by wide year-to-year variations with no significant trend; large proportions of the population were below the poverty line. The number of rural very poor had risen from 182 million in 1956-57 to 261 million in 1973-74, almost accounting for half the additions to rural

Table 4: Rural Development programmes (1989-2007)

Plan Period	Programme	Year of Introduction
Annual Plan (1991)	Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission (RGNDWM)	1991
Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97)	Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)	1993
	Prime Minister Rojgar Yojana (PMRY)	1997
Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)	Swarnjayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana	1999
	Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana	2000
	Annapurna	2000
	Sampoorna Grameen Rojgar Yojana	2001
Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07)	National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NPNPSE)	
	Mid-Day Meal (MDM)	2002
	Hariyali	2003
	National Food for Work Programme	2004
	National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS)	
	Twenty Point Programme	2006
	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act	2006
Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12)	National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS)	2007
	Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS)	2009
	Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS)	2009
	Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS)	2009
	National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) and National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS).	2009
	Janani Suraksha Yojana	2009

This is a list of selected programmes only, compiled by the authors

population during the period. The failure in poverty reduction could be attributed to the poor performance of agricultural growth; agricultural production barely kept pace with population growth during the period, the annual growth of per capita output being negative. Agricultural production per rural person, agricultural wages and rising food prices were found to be the major factors underlying the year to year variations in the percentage of rural poor. In the second phase, from the mid-70s to the close of the

year 2000, the country achieved substantial reduction in the incidence of poverty; the proportion of the country's population living in poverty declined from half to one-quarter. Even in this second phase, the decline in poverty was not smooth; poverty increased during the early years of the 1990s before it witnessed decline in the later years. Despite the decline in the incidence of poverty during 1974-94, the absolute number of poor continued to increase" (Radhakrishna et al, 2005 & 2006). The green revolution

enhanced agricultural production and raised farmers' incomes dramatic, especially in northwest India. Rural poverty fell from 64 percent in 1967 to 50 percent in 1977 and to 34 percent in 1986. Growth in the agricultural as well as service sector reduced poverty in both urban and rural areas but the industrial sector was left behind. Land reform, rural credit, and education policies also played a role in the 1970s and 1980s. "Beginning in 1991 India instituted sweeping macroeconomic and trade reforms that spurred impressive growth in manufacturing and especially in services. Poverty data for 2004, comparable to the 1993 figures, show a continuing decline in poverty rates" (World Development Report, 2008) (Fig.1). "Although there is a consistent poverty-reducing pattern across almost all Indian states, growth has been uneven. From 1980 to 2004 initially poorer states grew more slowly, resulting in income divergence in both absolute and relative terms. The rapid trade liberalization of the 1990s had sharply differentiated regional impacts. Rural districts with a higher concentration of industries hurt by liberalization had slower progress in reducing the incidence and depth of poverty because of the extremely limited mobility of labor across regions and industries. Urban incomes and expenditures also increased faster than did rural incomes, resulting in a steady increase in the ratio of urban-to-rural mean real consumption from just below 1.4 in 1983 to about 1.7 in 2000. Even then, India had fairly low income inequality. But despite impressive growth and poverty reduction in the 1990s, the picture of overall welfare gains is nuanced, because health outcomes have not improved. India's recent reforms, unlike China's, were not directed at agriculture. Today, there is

a renewed policy focus on agriculture in India, because many believe that the full poverty reduction potential of agriculture in India has yet to be unleashed" (World Development Report, 2008).

Conclusion

Planning is a process by which a society undertakes to overhaul itself and to achieve given socio-economic goals by consciously diagnosing the problems and making a course of action to resolve them. The goal of all planning is human development-the welfare of man, but the significant consideration is the relationship between plan formulation and plan implementation. And, moreover, to what extent it is implementable particularly at the local and regional levels. Development planning, especially at the grass-root level, can realize its full potentials only if the people are motivated and actively involved in an organized way. Participatory planning process is one by which individuals lowest in the organizational scale are enabled to have effective voice in decision making. However, these anti-poverty programmes cannot be expected to remove poverty by themselves on a sustainable basis, but it can only in the framework of an expanding economy and dynamic agricultural sector. Considering resource endowment, needs and development potential of each district/block, consistent and comprehensive design of development schemes may be more fruitful to eradicate the rural poverty. Employment promotion programmes and arrangements for supply of raw materials and marketing of products at district and block level also need to be improved and strengthened. Poverty can be reduced, if not *eradicated*, both locally and globally, but

this will occur only if we change our shared narratives about global free enterprise, and only if we recalibrate our mindsets regarding how poverty issues are most effectively addressed (Patricia, 2009).

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