

An Analysis of Some Poverty Alleviation and Employment Generation Programmes in India

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ABSTRACT

Alleviation of poverty remains a major challenge before the nation. While there has been a steady decline in poverty over the last two decades, the total number of poor people has perhaps remained constant because of growth in population. Acceleration of economic growth which is employment intensive, facilitates the reduction of poverty in the long run. However, this strategy needs to be complemented with a focus on provision of basic services for improving the quality of life of the people through State intervention in the form of targeted anti poverty programmes. The specifically designed anti poverty programmes for generation of both self employment and wage employment have been redesigned and restructured in India. In this research paper we have elaborated some important facts about the poverty and employment generation programme in India.

Keywords: Acceleration, Framework, Accountability, breast feeding, Entitlements

Introduction:

Employment generation coupled with improving employability in the country including rural areas and small towns is the priority of the Government. Multi-pronged strategies are being taken by the Government to address issues relating to employment opportunity through Centrally Sponsored Schemes viz. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM), Deendayal Upadhyay- Gramin Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Shyama Prasad Mukherjee RURban Mission, National Career Service (NCS) etc.

Further, the Government of India has taken various steps for generating employment in the country. The Government of India has announced Aatmanirbhar Bharat package to provide stimulus to business and to mitigate the adverse impact of Covid 19. Under this package, the Government is providing fiscal stimulus of more than ¹ Twenty-Seven lakh crore. This package comprises of various long term schemes/ programmes/ policies for making the country self-reliant and to create employment opportunities.

The Government launched the Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan (GKRA) of 125 days on 20th June, 2020 to boost employment and livelihood opportunities for returnee migrant workers and similarly affected persons including youth in rural areas, in 116 selected districts across 6 States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The Abhiyaan has achieved an employment generation of 50.78 crore person days with a total expenditure of ¹ 39,293 crore.

Data Methodology:

The present study is based on secondary data collected from different journal, magazine, government report, conference volume books and websites and different government report and economic survey. This paper will analyse the government scheme and programme that how these are helpful in removing poverty and employment generation.

Research and Discussion

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)

After, the notification of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act on September 7, 2005,

a new scheme named “National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS)” (which later on the Act changed with the name Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) has been launched on February 2, 2006. The ongoing programmes of Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) and National Food for Work Programme (NFFWP) were subsumed within the NREGS in the 200 districts identified in the initial stage. Implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) is a flagship programme of the government that directly touches lives of the poor and promotes inclusive growth.

The salient features of MGNREGA are as follows:

- **Right based Framework:** For adult members of a rural household willing to do unskilled manual work.
- **Time bound Guarantee:** 15 days for provision of employment, else unemployment allowance.
- **Guaranteed Employment:** Upto 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year per household, depending on the actual demand.
- **Labour Intensive Works:** 60: 40 wage and material ratio for permissible works at the Gram Panchayat, no contractors/machinery.

Decentralized Planning

- * Gram Sabhas to recommend works.
- * At least 50% of works by Gram Panchayat for execution.
- * Principal role of PRIs in planning, monitoring and implementation.
- **Work site facilities:** Creche, drinking water, first aid and shade provided at worksites.
- **Women empowerment:** Priority shall be given to women in such a way that at least one third of the beneficiaries shall be women who have registered and requested for work under this Act.
- **Transparency & Accountability:** Proactive disclosure through Social Audit Grievance Redressal Mechanism.
- **Funding:** 90% borne by Central Government and 10% by State Government.

The Act came into force on February 2, 2006 and was implemented in a phased manner. In Phase one it was introduced in 200 of the most backward districts of the country. The MGNREGS is in operation in all 682 districts 6861 Blocks and 262273 Gram Panchayats of the country as on January 16, 2019. 12.94 crore job cards have been issued till Jan. 16, 2019. 2730 crore workers have been benefited with a cumulative expenditure of ¹ 500616 crore under this programme since its inception.

The Government of India has allocated an additional ¹ 6,084 crore at RE stage to MGNREGA. This brings the total allocation to the scheme to ¹ 61,084 crore in 2018-19, making it the highest ever allocation. Governance reforms and thrust on sustainable livelihoods through durable assets has ensured better lives for the poor through wages, incomes and durable assets.

- The first and foremost requirement was to ensure full transparency in wage payments, asset creation, and payment for materials. It is for this reason that efforts were started for a 100% of geo-tagging of assets. AADHAAR linking of Bank Accounts, IT/DBT transfers for all wages, and material payments and Geographic Information System (GIS) based planning of works. As on 08.01.19, GeoMGNREGA is implemented in 31 States/UTs and 3.40 crore works out of 4.08 crore completed works since inception of the programme, are already geo-tagged and are in public domain.

- There has been a remarkable increasing trend in the budget allocation of the Central Government and release for the programme from ¹ 32,977 crore in financial year 2014-15 to ¹ 55,167 crore in the financial year 2017-18. This is clear evidence of the increasing faith of the people in the programme. The MGNREGS witnessed a record expenditure of ¹ 63,644 crore in 2017-18 including state share, the highest since the programme was launched. This year is going to be even higher.

- The issue of creation of durable assets was very important. The 60 : 40 ratio was mandated at Gram Panchayat level often leading to non-productive asset being created simply because 60% had to be spent on unskilled wage labour in that Gram Panchayat.

- On account of reforms, it was possible to take up pro-poor public infrastructure like Aanganwadi Buildings under the MGNREGS. The linkage of MGNREGS with women SHGs, infrastructure for Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) activities has also supplemented incomes of very poor households. The skill development opportunities for MGNREGS workers to become certified rural masons, barefoot technicians or in other skill programme of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDUGKY) and Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs) makes a difference to poverty in the long run.

- In its provision for work for the disabled and for women, MGNREGS has only improved further in the recent years where more than half the workforce is women and over 4 lakh disabled persons get work every year.

- The generation of payment within 15 days has moved up from 26 per cent in 2014-15 to 91 per cent in 2018-19

Wages Rates under MGNREGA Raised

Union government has linked the wages paid under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) with the Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labours on January 6, 2011, government announced to pay wages to labourers under MNREGS as per the Consumer Price Index for Agriculture Labours (CPI-AL). As per the initial provisions of MNREGA, a worker was entitled for ¹ 100 as wage per day for minimum of 100 days in a year. Now, after getting associated with inflation index, MNREGA worker will get more wage than ¹ 100 per day. As per the revised structure, linked with CPI-AL, wages in MNREGA in different states will go up between 17 to 30 per cent on the base of ¹ 100. This move will benefit 5 crore workers in the country. The enhanced rates of wages under MNREGS have become effective since January 1, 2011.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), a 100 per cent centrally sponsored scheme was launched on December 25, 2000. The prime objective of the PMGSY was, to provide connectivity

to all Unconnected habitations in the rural areas having population of more than 500 persons, through goods all-weather roads. In respect of the Hill States (North-East, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand), Desert Areas and Tribal (Schedule-V) Areas, the objective is to connect habitations with a population of 250 persons and above.

The PMGSY set out to provide all Weather Road connectivity to 1,78,184 habitations of 500 population in plain areas and 250 population in hilly areas. As of March, 2014, 97838 habitations (55%) were connected. As on January 1, 2018, 1,30,947 habitations stand connected under PMGSY and another 14,620 through State Governments' programmes bringing the total habitations connected to 82%. In 2016-17, a total of 47,447 kms roads were constructed at a speed of 130 kms per day. Efforts are being made to take this to 51,000 kms at a speed of 140 kms per day in 2017-18. This will enable achievement of completed all weather road connectivity to all the eligible habitations by March, 2019. This will further strengthen Phase-II which is already under implementation. 1,10,000 kilometers of upgradation is proposed as PMGSY-III. To do so, annual funding support of ¹ 19,000 crore will be maintained, from the Central Government upto 2022.

National Food Security Scheme-2013:

The National Food Security Scheme has finally launched on August 2013, the birth anniversary of late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, in NCR Delhi, Haryana and Uttarakhand. The scheme has been launched through The National Food Security Ordinance, 2013 promulgated by the President of India on July 3, 2013. This is a step towards the goal of 'Food for All'. The Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha passed the bill on August 28 and September 3, 2013 respectively. The salient features of the NFS Act are the following :

- The Act extends to the whole of India and "shall be deemed to have come into force on the 5th day of July 2013". [NB : This is the date when the National Food Security Ordinance 2013 came into force.

- Priority households are entitled to 5 kgs of foodgrains per person per month, and Antyodaya households to 35 kgs per household per month. The combined coverage of Priority and Antyodaya households (called ‘eligible households’) shall extend ‘up to 75% of the rural population and up to 50% of the urban population’. The PDS issue prices will be 2 3/4 kg for rice, 1 2/kg for wheat and 1 1/kg for coarse cereals. These may be revised after three years.

- For children in the age group of 6 months to 6 years: an age-appropriate meal, free of charge, through the local *anganwadi*. For children aged 6-14 years, one free Mid-Day Meal every day (except on school holidays) in all government and government-aided Schools, up to Class VIII. For children below six months, “exclusive breast feeding shall be promoted”. For children who suffer from malnutrition, meals will be provided to them free of charge ‘through the local *anganwadi*’.

- Every pregnant and lactating mother is entitled to a free meal at the local *anganwadi* (during pregnancy and six months after child birth) as well as maternity benefits of 1 6,000, in installments.

- The NFS Act provides for the creation of State Food Commissions. The main function of the State Commission is to monitor the implementation of the Act, give advice to the state’s governments and their agencies, and inquire into violations of entitlements.

- The Act provides for a two-tier grievance redressal structure, involving the District Grievance Redressal Officer (DGRO) and State Food Commission. State governments must also put in place an internal grievance redressal mechanism which may include call centres, help lines, etc.

- Mandatory transparency provisions include: (1) placing all PDS-related records in the public domain; (2) conducting periodic social audits of the PDS and other welfare schemes; (3) using information and communication technology ‘to ensure transparent recording of transactions at all levels’; (4) setting up vigilance committees at all levels to supervise all schemes under the Act.

- The Food Commissions have powers to impose penalties. If an order of the DGRO is not complied with, the concerned authority or officer can be fined up to 1 5,000.

- The main obligation of the Central Government is to provide foodgrains (or, failing that funds) to state governments, at prices specified in Schedule I, to implement the main entitlements. The Central Government has wide-ranging powers to make Rules ‘in consultation with the state government’.

- The main obligation of state governments is to implement the relevant schemes, in accordance with the Central Government guidelines. State governments also have wide-ranging powers to make Rules. They are free to extend benefits and entitlements beyond what is prescribed in the Bill, from their own resources.

- Local Authorities and Panchayati Raj Institutions are responsible for proper implementation of the Bill in their respective areas, and may be given additional responsibilities by notification.

Deen Dayal Antyodaya: National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM)

Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, restructured the Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rojgar Yojana (SJSRY), which was in operation since December 1, 1997 in all urban and semi-urban towns of the country, and launched the National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM) in 2013. NULM has been under implementation w.e.f. September 24, 2013 in all district headquarters and all the cities with population of one lakh or more. SJSRY was allowed to continue till March 31, 2014. Self-Employment Programme (SEP) is one of the components of NULM assistance through a provision of interest subsidy on loans to support establishment of individual and Group Enterprises and self-help groups of urban poor. Components of NULM are following —

- Social mobilisation and institutions development.
- **Capacity Building and Training.**
- Employment Through Skills Training and Placement.

- Self-Employment Programme.
- Support to Street Vendors.

GoI, on February 20, 2016 renamed NULM as Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana—NULM and extended its coverage to all 4041 statutory urban local bodies in the country.

Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)

In order to make TPDS more focused and targeted towards the poorest section of population, the ‘Antyodaya Anna Yojana’ (AAY) was launched in December 2000 for one crore poor families. Initially AAY contemplated identification of one crore poorest of the poor families from amongst the BPL families covered under TPDS within the States and providing them foodgrains at a highly subsidised rate of ¹ 2 per kg for wheat and ¹ 3 per kg for rice. The States/UTs are required to bear the distribution, cost, including margin to dealers and retailers as well as the transportation cost. Thus, the entire food subsidy is being passed on to the consumers under the scheme.

The scale of issue that was initially 25 kg per family per month has been increased to 35 kg per family per month with effect from 1st April, 2002. AAY is now a component of National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA), which provides for coverage of 75% of the rural and 50% of the urban population for receiving foodgrains at highly subsidised rates of ¹ 1/2/3 per kg for coarse grains/wheat/rice respectively.

National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)

The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) was launched on 12th April, 2005, to provide accessible, affordable and accountable quality health services even to the poorest households in the remote rural regions. The difficult areas with unsatisfactory health indicators were classified as special focus States to ensure greatest attention where needed. The thrust of the Mission was on establishing a fully functional, community owned, decentralized health delivery system with inter-sectoral convergence at all levels, to ensure simultaneous action on a wide range of determinants of health like water, sanitation, education, nutrition, social and gender equality. Institutional integration within the fragmented health sector was expected to provide a focus on outcomes,

measured against Indian Public Health Standards for all health facilities. From narrowly defined schemes, the NRHM shifted focus to a functional health system at all levels, from the village to the district.

NRHM is being operationalized throughout the country with special focus on 18 states which includes 8 Empowered Action Group States (Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Odisha and Rajasthan), 8 NE states, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir.

Among major innovations of the NRHM are creation of a cadre of Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) and improved hospital care, decentralisation at district level to improve intra and intersectoral convergence and effective utilisation of resources through NGOs and community in general.

Under NRHM, over 1.4 lakh health human resources have been added to the health system across the country (upto September 2012). Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) have been engaged in each village in the ratio one per 1000 population.

National Urban Health Mission (NUHM)

The Union Cabinet on May 1, 2013 approved the ¹ 22,507 crore National Urban Health Mission (NUHM) that seeks to address healthcare challenges in towns and cities with focus on urban poor. The scheme will now be introduced as a submission under the National Health Mission (NHM). The mission will be implemented in 779 cities and towns, each with a population of more than 50,000 and cover over 7.75 crore people.

The Objectives of NUHM:

(i) To improve the health status of the urban population in general, and the poor and other disadvantaged sections in particular, by facilitating equitable access to quality healthcare through a revamped primary public healthcare system.

(ii) Targeted outreach services and involvement of the community and urban local bodies.

(iii) Reduction in the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR).

(iv) Universal access to reproductive health care

(v) The convergence of all health-related interventions.

The key highlights of NUHM are the following:

- The NUHM will be on the lines of the Health and Family Welfare Ministry's flagship National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) launched in 2005 to address the health challenges of rural India.

- One Urban Primary Health Centre for a population of 50,000-60,000, one Urban Community Health Centre for five to six urban Primary Health Centres will be set up in big cities.

- An Auxiliary Nursing Midwives (ANM) for a population of 10,000 and an Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) (community link worker) for 200 to 500 households.

- The Central government is to provide a share of ¹ 16,955 crore toward the estimated cost of NUHM for five years ¹ 22,507 crore.

- While the Centre will fund 75 per cent of the mission and the State 25 per cent, the funding ratio for North Eastern States and special category States of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand will be 90 : 10.

Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)

The Central Government on August 14, 2008 announced a new employment generation scheme to create over 37 lakh jobs by merging the existing Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY) and the Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP). Government has targeted to Create 37 Lakh New Jobs through this New Credit linked Subsidy Scheme.

The new credit-linked subsidy programme, called Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) was approved by government in the second week of August 2008.

Under the PMEGP which will be implemented through the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, the maximum cost of a project admissible under the manufacturing sector will be ¹ 25 lakh and in the business sector ¹ 10 lakh. There is to be no ceiling on the annual income of the beneficiary.

In urban areas, the subsidy for the general category would be 15 per cent and 25 per cent for special categories such as the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes, the other Backward classes, minorities, women, ex-servicemen, the physically handicapped, the north-east and hill and border areas.

In rural areas, the subsidy would be 25 per cent for the general category and 35 per cent for the special categories. The owner's contribution would be 10 per cent in the general category and five per cent in the special category.

National Social Assistance Programme

The National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) which came into effect from 15th August, 1995 represents a significant step towards the fulfilment of the Directive Principles in Article 41 of the Constitution. The programme introduced a National Policy for Social Assistance for the poor and aims at ensuring minimum national standard for social assistance in addition to the benefits that states are currently providing or might provide in future. NSAP at present, comprises of Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS), Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS), Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS), National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) and Annapurna.

Under the National Social Assistance Programme Government is committed towards extending direct transfers to over 30 million old age, widow and differently abled beneficiaries belonging to below poverty line families. The cash transfers being facilitated under the National Social Assistance Programme are an important subset of overall social security net including food security and health insurance extended by the Government to families facing deprivation.

Ever since the strategic decision to bring the NSAP scheme within the umbrella of 'Core and Core' scheme in 2016, the financial commitment towards meeting the 100%

requirement of the scheme by the Central Government is continuously increasing. For the year 2018-19, an amount of ₹ 9975 crore has been allocated to NSAP schemes, which is 38% more than the budget allocation of 2014-15 which stood at ₹ 7241 crore. An amount of ₹ 8696 crore has been released to States/UTs under NSAP during 2017-18, which is 23% more than the releases of 2014-15.

At present, NSAP comprises the following schemes:

1. Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme, (IGNOAPS): Under the scheme, BPL, pensions in the age group of 60-79 years are entitled to a monthly pension of ₹ 400 and BPL persons of age of 80 years and above are entitled to a monthly pension of ₹ 500.

2. Indira Gandhi National Widows Pension Scheme (IGNWPS): BPL widows aged 40-59 years are entitled to a monthly pension of ₹ 300.

3. Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS): BPL persons aged 18-59 years with severe and multiple disabilities are entitled to a monthly pension of ₹ 300.

4. National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS): Under the scheme a BPL household is entitled to lump sum amount of money on the death of the primary breadwinner aged between 18 and 64 years. The amount of assistance is ₹ 20,000.

5. Annapurna: Under the scheme, 10 kg of foodgrains per month are provided free of cost to those senior citizens who, though eligible, are not receiving old age pension.

Conclusion:

With above discussion and research, we come to conclusion that, poverty and unemployment decreased in India after introducing poverty and employment generation programme. These above-mentioned programme made financially sound of India.

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