

Impact of Public Works Programmes: A Strategy for Poverty Alleviation in India

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Abstract

Poverty alleviation has been an overarching goal of India's development efforts since its Independence. In pursuing this objective, the planning process in the country has devised several interventions, often successful but sometimes overlapping. The Government of India, deeply concerned with widespread poverty, has implemented several anti-poverty schemes. These schemes have given thrust on creating adequate livelihood opportunities for the marginalised segments of the population, provisioning of public services and goods for improving standard and quality of life, strengthening of institutions and delivery mechanisms to empower the poor and targeted development of backward regions through resource transfers and supportive policy measures. To ensure inclusive growth, the emphasis on having a more desirable composition of gross domestic product (GDP) growth by targeting an average 4 per cent per annum growth in AgGDP has found favour with the policy makers in the country's Eleventh Five Year Plan (Government of India, 2007-12). Though there has been a significant decline in the incidence of poverty at the national level in India, there are several concerns that take away the shine from this Accomplishment. In spite of significant reduction in poverty, India is home to about 315 million poor people, 74 per cent of them residing in the rural areas. Further, the concentration of poverty is more rampant in landless agricultural labour households and marginal farm households which account for more than 50 per cent of the total poor in India. Therefore, the needs and aspirations of these vulnerable groups must be taken care of to ensure inclusive growth in agriculture. Most of the studies conducted so far are focused on the aggregate rural and urban poverty and the dynamics of poverty among farming households and agricultural labour households has not been studied much. In this backdrop, this paper examines the trends in poverty rates among farming and agricultural labour households; their linkages with agricultural growth, and possibilities of achieving targeted growth in agriculture.

Keyword: Rural development • Poverty alleviation • Rural business • Marginal Farmers • Panchayati Raj

Introduction

Rural Development in India is one of the most important factors for the growth of the Indian economy. India is primarily an agriculture-based country. Agriculture contributes nearly one-fifth of the gross domestic product in India. In order to increase the growth of agriculture, the Government has planned several programs pertaining to Rural Development in India. The Ministry of Rural Development in India is the apex body for formulating policies, regulations and acts pertaining to the development of the rural sector. Agriculture, handicrafts, fisheries, poultry, and dairy are the primary contributors to the rural business and economy.

Rural development in India has witnessed several changes over the years in its emphasis, approaches, strategies and programmes. It has assumed a new dimension and perspectives as a consequence. Rural development can be richer and more meaningful only through the participation of clienteles of development. Just as implementation is the touchstone for planning, people's participation is the centre-piece in rural development. People's participation is one of the foremost pre-requisites of development process both from procedural and philosophical perspectives. For the development planners and administrators it is important to solicit the participation of different groups of rural people, to make the plans participatory.

Aims and Objectives

Rural development aims at improving rural people's livelihoods in an equitable and sustainable manner, both socially and environmentally, through better access to assets (natural, physical, human, technological and social

capital), and services, and control over productive capital (in its financial or economic and political forms) that enable them to improve their livelihoods on a sustainable and equitable basis.

The basic objectives of Rural Development Programmes have been alleviation of poverty and unemployment through creation of basic social and economic infrastructure, provision of training to rural unemployed youth and providing employment to marginal Farmers/Labourers to discourage seasonal and permanent migration to urban areas.

Impact of Public Works Programmes

In India, specific anti-poverty programmes, especially rural works programmes, have been in operation since the 1960s, but their scale has been enhanced since 1980, with considerable increase in the funding of these programmes. This was required despite the decline in poverty, because the number of poor remained large. Wage-employment programmes provide relief to the unemployed/under-employed rural poor in lean seasons and, by intervening in the labour market, smoothen seasonal fluctuations in employment and incomes. An important feature of wage employment programmes like the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) and the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) is their 'self-targeting' nature. The work requirement associated with these is supposed to function as a screening device. It is expected that only the poorest, who do not have any other opportunities open to them, will participate in these programmes, as payment of wages is contingent on fulfilling the work requirement. A demand for unskilled labour is created via these programmes as skill accumulation tends to be low among the poorest classes. It is stipulated that all projects undertaken under these schemes will use labour and capital in the ratio 60:40 (i.e. the ratio between wage and non-wage cost of projects). This is to ensure that these projects have a high labour content and hence high employment potential. The benefits accruing to the poor from these programmes are classified into transfer benefits, both direct and indirect, and stabilization benefits [1]. Direct transfer benefits relate to the short run income gains to the poor from being employed, whereas indirect benefits relate to the benefits accruing to the village community in terms of the infrastructure and/or other community development projects undertaken as part of the programmes. As for stabilization benefits, the wage incomes earned through the JRY or EAS provide a stream of income during the lean season and thereby prevent the distress selling of assets by the rural

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Received 31 July 2021; **Accepted** 18 August 2021; **Published** 25 August 2021

poor. In this sense these schemes have a stabilization effect on the income streams of the poorest classes. Further, they also lead to the creation of some durable assets. These include social forestry, minor irrigation works, soil conservation, wells, tanks and ponds, rural roads, school buildings, anganwadis, community halls etc. Let us briefly examine the impact of public works programmes on the poor. The JRY was launched by the Central Government in April 1989, by merging the erstwhile rural wage employment programmes. The main objective of the programme was the generation of additional gainful employment for the unemployed and underemployed rural poor through the creation of rural economic infrastructure and community assets. It was largely implemented through the elected local bodies at the village level, called the 'gram panchayats'. However, as each village had to be covered, it resulted in a thin spread of resources, and the employment effects were meagre.

Impact of Wage-Employment Programmes

Targeting

Wage-employment programmes are self-targeting in nature which is considered a major strength of these programmes. However, a number of studies report widespread mis-targeting where the benefits meant for the poor fail to reach them altogether. This is a serious problem even in Kerala, which is a highly developed State, as studies report widespread inclusion of ineligible beneficiaries in the anti-poverty programmes in the State. In particular, two aspects of mis-targeting have been estimated empirically. One refers to E-errors, which measure the proportion of non-poor among the total number participating in the programme. The second, F-errors, measure the proportion of poor population in the programme area excluded from programme benefits. The sum of the E- and F- errors give an aggregate measure of accuracy of targeting of the programmes. The greater the value of (E+F) the lower is the overall accuracy. Studies by Gaiha [2] reveal substantial E- and F- errors in the case of the wage employment programmes. Mistargeting tends to occur via the level of wages offered under the JRY and EAS. Where these wages are higher than the prevailing market wage rate in the village, there is incentive for the non-poor to participate in the programmes. The notion of a poverty line in India is based on adequacy of calorie intakes for subsistence. However, even those above the poverty line could do with some extra money for meeting other basic requirements like clothing, health care, expenses on religions, cultural functions, marriages, etc. Therefore, persons from 'above poverty line' families could also seek work on public works programmes especially in lean seasons. In so far as minimum wages are paid to them for doing hard physical work, in our opinion these people are needy and hence to some extent the mis-targeting may be justified.

Scale and Coverage

The outlays for JRY and EAS increased rapidly from the early to the mid 90s a. However, thereafter, there was an apparent decline, which is really illusory. This is attributable to the fact that from 1995-96, two special schemes of the erstwhile JRY, namely, the Indira Awas Yojana (Rural Housing) and the Million Wells Schemes, were delinked and made into independent schemes. With the exclusion of these two schemes, the outlays were perhaps constant. However, in the year 2000-01, there is a sharp decline in the outlay as a conscious decision was made to allocate more for watershed development while keeping the overall outlay for the rural development sector more or less constant. It may be noted that in terms of man days of employment generated, there is a significant decline over the period 1996-97 to 2000-01. Part of the explanation lies in the fact that from 1999-2000, JRY became a rural infrastructure development programme without the stipulation that 60 per cent be spent on wages and 40 per cent on materials. This obviously had a noticeable impact on the extent of employment generated in 1999-2000. With the earlier stipulation of 60:40 for labour material component on these works, it was felt that there was wide scale fudging of muster rolls and of measurement books in order to meet these mandatory conditions. Clearly the relaxation of the stipulation may have reduced the fudging of muster rolls as there was no pressure on meeting targets consistent with the stipulated wage material norm.

Employment and Incomes

Several attempts have been made to quantify the employment and income benefits, both direct and indirect, of these programmes. The World Bank has summarised the results of 'a benefit incidence analyses of the alternative poverty alleviation programmes carried out by several researchers in the Indian context. These studies show that wage employment programmes are by far the most effective in reaching the poor. Direct income benefits accrue to the poor through income transfers. In a study of Ahmednagar, it was found that the direct transfer benefits to the EGS participants were high and, given the lack of alternative employment opportunities, the income stabilization effects were also substantial. In the absence of EGS some of the poorest would have been without incomes for survival. Considering the paucity of funds, the participation was less than it would have been, given the extent of demand for work. Yet, the programme was more honestly and effectively implemented and hence had a positive impact. In another study, it was again observed that the EGS projects did generate net income gains to the participants and these direct transfer benefits led to a reduction in poverty [2].

Wage-employment programmes can also make an impact on income levels through wages. Firstly, one mechanism operates through the effects the employment projects have on agricultural productivity and via that on the agricultural demand for labour. Second, to the extent that the employment programmes contribute to a greater awareness of the potential for collective action among rural workers, the oligopsonistic power of large landholders in wage bargaining is likely to be weakened. This puts further upward pressure on agricultural wages. The additional employment opportunities created during the agricultural lean season, via these programmes, prevent the market wage rate from falling below a certain minimum level and help to reduce out-migration to the urban areas. For instance, Parthasarathy points out that employment programmes led to upward pressures on the minimum wages in rural Andhra Pradesh. In effect, by providing an alternative, these programmes lead to a uniform wage rate rather than a segmented labour market in a single locality, as suggested by the experience of West Bengal. An evaluation of the Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) in Maharashtra by Gaiha [3] reveals that the short-term impact of EGS on agricultural wages is small while the long-term effect is relatively large. Sharma cites evidence from Bihar to show that the JRY influenced the rural labour market and led to upward pressures on the agricultural wage rate. In a more recent survey of 36 villages in Bihar, it has been shown that where the presence of Government programmes was larger the market wage rates were higher than in the other districts. A cross-section regression analysis reveals that the percentage of beneficiaries covered has a significant and positive impact on the daily average wage rates within the village. The indirect benefits of a programme like EGS, through wage-increases have also been observed. In a study for the period 1979-89, it was found that participation under EGS dropped from 17.7 per cent to 9.4 per cent. This drop took place between 1986-87 and 1989-90. In 1986-87, 186.7 million person days of employment had been generated while in 1989-90 it was only 78 million person days. This was largely attributable to the wage increase that took place in 1988. This has been attributed to rationing, which was inevitable as wages increased without a matching increase in the outlays for EGS. While Ravallion showed that about 86 per cent of reduction in EGS attendance was due to rationing, Gaiha [3] attributes 50 per cent of the reduction to rationing. Further, it is likely that the reduction in attendance was due to an expansion in farm and non-farm activities. Clearly, the impact of this reduction in employment would have adversely affected the poor as many of them would have been excluded from EGS work opportunities. However, it is difficult to estimate the aggregate welfare measure of the poor consequent on the reduction in employment consequent on a rise in wages. It could be argued that fewer persons would have been able to get employment on EGS works, given the same quantity of funds. However, it must be remembered that the EGS programme guaranteed employment to those who had registered for work and were willing to do manual jobs. Hence it could be presumed that more people were not looking for employment on EGS works as there is no case reported of people seeking work and not getting it with compensation having

to be paid to them. Both under JRY and EAS the employment generated per person has been too inadequate to bring about any meaningful increase in the earnings of the beneficiaries. As per the concurrent evaluation carried out by independent researcher agencies, 11 days of employment was generated per person in 1993-94. Again in a recent evaluation of the EAS, it is estimated that on an average 31 days of employment had been generated on EAS works and an annual 25 per cent of those who registered themselves in work got employed. In a quick evaluation study of JRY it has also been pointed out that on an average only 16.67 man days of employment [4].

Role and function of the Government

The Government's policy and programmes have laid emphasis on poverty alleviation, generation of employment and income opportunities and provision of infrastructure and basic facilities to meet the needs of rural poor. The Ministry of Rural Development in India is the apex body for formulating policies, regulations and acts pertaining to the development of the rural sector. Agriculture, handicrafts, fisheries, poultry, and dairy are the primary contributors to the rural business and economy. The introduction of Bharat Nirman, a project by the Government of India in collaboration with the State Governments and the Panchayati Raj Institutions is a major step towards the improvement of the rural sector. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 was introduced by the Ministry of Rural Development, for improving the living conditions and its sustenance in the rural sector of India. The Ministry of Rural Development in India is engaged in legislations for the social and economic improvement of the rural populace. The ministry consists of three department's viz., Department of Rural Development, Department of Land Resources and Department of Drinking Water Supply. Under the department of rural development, there are three autonomous bodies viz., Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART), National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) and National Rural Road Development Agency (NRRDA). The objective of the ministry can broadly be elaborated as to encourage, promote and assist voluntary action in the implementation of projects for the enhancement of rural prosperity, strengthen and promote voluntary efforts in rural development with focus on injecting new technological inputs, act as the national nodal point for co-ordination of all efforts at generation and dissemination of technologies relevant to rural development in its wide sense and assist and promote programmes aimed at conservation of the environment and natural resources [5].

However, various ministries in the central government are engaged directly or indirectly for implementation of many programmes and schemes for the development of rural areas like Ministries of Agriculture, Health and Family Welfare, New and Renewable Energy, Science and Technology, Women and Child Development and Tribal affairs etc. In addition, to strengthen the grass root level democracy, the Government is constantly endeavouring to empower Panchayat Raj Institutions in terms of functions, powers and finance. Grama Sabha, NGOs, Self-Help Groups and PRIs have been accorded adequate roles to make participatory democracy meaningful and effective [6].

Strategies and programs for rural development

The rural economy is an integral part of the overall Indian economy. As majority of the poor reside in the rural areas, the prime goal of rural development is to improve the quality of life of the rural people by alleviating poverty through the instrument of self-employment and wage employment programmes, by providing community infrastructure facilities such as drinking water, electricity, road connectivity, health facilities, rural housing and education and promoting decentralization of powers to strengthen the Panchayati raj institutions etc. The various strategies and programs of the Government for rural development are discussed below:

Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP)

First introduced in 1978-79, IRDP has provided assistance to rural poor in the form of subsidy and bank credit for productive employment opportunities through successive plan periods. Subsequently, Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Supply of Improved Tool Kits to Rural Artisans (SITRA)

and Ganga Kalyan Yojana (GKY) were introduced as sub-programs of IRDP to take care of the specific needs of the rural population.

Wage Employment Programs

Anti-poverty strategies, like assistance to the rural poor families to bring them above the poverty line by ensuring appreciable sustained level of income through the process of social mobilization, training and capacity building. Wage Employment Programs have sought to achieve multiple objectives. They not only provide employment opportunities during lean agricultural seasons but also in times of floods, droughts and other natural calamities. They create rural infrastructure which supports further economic activity. It encompasses Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) and National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) etc. NREGA is an act of parliament. It is not merely a scheme or policy. It aims at enhancing the livelihood security of the people in rural areas by guaranteeing hundred days of wage employment in a financial year, to a rural household whose members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The objective of the Act is to create durable assets and strengthen the livelihood resource base of the rural poor [7].

Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS)

EAS was launched in October 1993 covering 1,778 drought-prone, desert, and tribal and hill area blocks. It was later extended to all the blocks in 1997-98. The EAS was designed to provide employment in the form of manual work in the lean agricultural season. The works taken up under the program were expected to lead to the creation of durable economic and social infrastructure and address the felt-needs of the people.

Food for Work Program

The Food for Work program was started in 2000-01 as a component of the EAS in eight notified drought-affected states of Chattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Uttaranchal. The program aims at food provision through wage employment. Food grains are supplied to states free of cost. However, lifting of food grains for the scheme from Food Corporation of India (FCI) godowns has been slow.

Rural Housing

Initiated in 1985-86, the IAY is the core program for providing free housing to families in rural areas. It targets scheduled castes (SCs)/scheduled tribes (STs), households and freed bonded laborers. The rural housing program has certainly enabled many BPL families to acquire pucca houses. The coverage of the beneficiaries is limited given the resource constraints. The Samagra Awas Yojana (SAY) was taken up in 25 blocks to ensure convergence of housing, provision of safe drinking water, sanitation and common drainage facilities. The Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) has extended its activities to the rural areas, providing loans at a concessional rate of interest to economically weaker sections and low-income group households for construction of houses.

Social Security Programs

Democratic decentralization and centrally supported Social Assistance Programs were two major initiatives of the government in the 1990s. The National Social Assistance Program (NSAP), launched in August 1995 marks a significant step towards fulfillment of the Directive Principles of State Policy. The NSAP has three components: a) National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS); b) National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS); c) National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS). The NSAP is a centrally-sponsored program that aims at ensuring a minimum national standard of social assistance over and above the assistance that states provide from their own resources. The NOAPS provides a monthly pension of Rs. 75 to destitute BPL persons above the age of 65. The NFBS is a scheme for BPL families who are given Rs. 10,000 in the event of the death of the breadwinner. The NMBS provides Rs. 500 to support nutritional intake for pregnant women. In addition to NSAP, the Annapurna scheme was launched from 1st April 2000 to provide food security to senior citizens who were eligible for pension under NOAPS but could not receive it due to budget constraints.

Land Reforms

In an agro-based economy, the structure of land ownership is central to the wellbeing of the people. The government has strived to change the ownership pattern of cultivable land, the abolition of intermediaries, the abolition of zamindari, ceiling laws, security of tenure to tenants, consolidation of land holdings and banning of tenancy are a few measures undertaken. Furthermore, a land record management system is a pre-condition for an effective land reform program. In 1987-88, a centrally-sponsored scheme for Strengthening of Revenue Administration and Updating of Land Records (SRA & ULR) was introduced in Orissa and Bihar.

Science and Technology for rural development

Ministry of Science and Technology plays a pivotal role in promotion of science & technology in the country. The departments has wide ranging activities ranging from promoting high end basic research and development of cutting edge technologies on one hand to serving the technological requirements of the common man through development of appropriate skills and technologies on the other. Appropriate rural technology focuses mainly on those technologies which are simple and within the reach of the ordinary people for their own benefit and the benefit of their community and harness the local or regional capacity to meet local needs without increasing dependence on external factors. A large number of governments, public and private non-government organizations are involved in developing technologies for rural areas. However, these technologies have hardly touched the lives of the rural population. Apparently, the problem lies not only in the generation, diffusion and adoption of technologies but also in poor documentation. Recently, efforts have been made by several organizations like NRDC, CAPART, TRCS, NIRD, DST, DBT, CSIR, ICAR, KVKs and other voluntary organizations etc. to bring out a compendium of technologies for rural areas for wide information dissemination and public awareness. A brief account of technologies which are low cost, energy-efficient and environment-friendly as well as appropriate and sustainable for application in rural areas is presented in the Appendix I.

Government schemes focusing on Science and Technology are:

S&T Application for Rural Development (STARD)

Aims at facilitating development of promising S&T based field groups and innovative technologies related to rural development.

S&T for Women

To promote research, development and adaptation of technology, improve the life, working conditions and opportunities for gainful employment of women especially in rural areas.

S&T Application for Weaker Sections (STAWS)

Aimed at the development of economically weaker sections of the society in rural and urban areas.

Tribal sub-plan: Aims at improving living conditions of scheduled tribes based on sustainable science and technology activities

Special Component Plan (SCP)

Aims at improving the lot of the poor sections of SC community through intervention of Science & Technology.

Rural Development (Significant achievements by CSIR)

- Swaraj- India first indigenous tractor to facilitate mechanized agriculture.
- Value addition through post-harvest technologies like essential oil / menthol production.
- Cheapest water purification technology including terracotta purification disc, portable arsenic detection kit, ultrapore membrane-based purifiers for removing virus & bacteria.
- Over 365 technologies passed on to the rural masses through

publications, training sessions, etc.

- Construction of around 30,000 dwelling units using cost-effective construction technologies.
- Reverse Osmosis plant for desalination in Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu.

It needs to be mentioned here that in a collaborative project jointly initiated by the Andhra Pradesh Government and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research in Karim Nagar, Central Food and Technological Research Institute, Mysore played a key role in establishing small-scale agro-based industries in that district for better livelihoods of the rural communities and promote the setting up and modification of existing rice mills units at Mulkanoor for better yields.

Rural Development is the main pillar of Nation's Development. In spite of rapid urbanization, a large section of our population still lives in the villages. Secondly, rural India has lagged behind in development because of many historical factors. Though, the 11th Plan began in very favorable circumstances with the economy having grown at the rate of 7.7% per year in the Xth Plan period, there still exists a big challenge to correct the developmental imbalances and to accord due priority to development in rural areas. Ministry of Rural Development is implementing a number of programmes aimed at sustainable holistic development in rural areas. The thrust of these programmes is on all round economic and social transformation in rural areas, through a multi-pronged strategy, aiming to reach out to the most disadvantaged sections of the society. The actual realization achieved during the Xth five year plans and the proposed target and strategy of the XIth five year plan have been highlighted and presented in Tables 1 and 2 respectively.

Rural development - Review of Xth Five Year Plan

- The approved outlay for Xth Five Year Plan was Rs. 1, 41,320 lakh. An

Table 1. The XIth plan allocation under various schemes/programmes.

S.No.	Scheme/Programme	Proposed out lay XI th Five Year (2007-2012) (Lakh Rs.)
1.	SJGSY	29656.12
2.	SGRY	18016.64
3.	DPIP9SS (EAP) / EAPII Phase	23158.72
4	Rural roads	50000.00
5	Indira Avas Yojana	27766.71
6	IWDP	10598.56
7	DRDA	6012.36
8	DPAP	21294.84
9	Gramin Ajivika Pariyojna	22480.00
10	National Rural Rojgar Guarantee Scheme	199881.85
11	MP Rojgar Guarantee Council	3800.00
12	Mid-day meal	69,462.00
13	BRGF	225695.00
14	Community Development	29265.20
15	Walmi	1250.00
16	Road maintenance	2030.00
17	State rural road Connectivity	8647.60
18	CM Awas Yojana (Apna Ghar)	6200.00
19	State SGSY	1800.00
20	Training	50.00
21	Master Plan	1363.00
22	Sutradhar scheme	50.00
23	Gokul Gram adhosanrachan	5000.00
24	Godan Yojana	1000.00
Grand Total		7,64,478.50

Table 2. Scheme-wise physical targets proposed for XIth Five year plan.

Sl. No.	Scheme/Programme	Unit	Proposed target XI th Five Year (2007-2012)
1.	SJGSY	No. of beneficiaries in lakhs	4.52
2.	SGRY	Lakhs employment	900
3.	DPIP(SS with WB support)	No. of groups in lakhs	2.05
4	Rural roads (PMGSY)	Kms.	20000
5	Indira Awas Yojana	No. of houses in lakhs	4.44
6	Gramin Aajivika Pariyojna	No. of household in lakhs	3.20
7	National Rural Rojgar Gurantee Scheme	Lakhs mandays	17300
8	Mid-day meal	Students in lakhs	466.35
9	BRGF	No. of workers	20000
10	Road maintenance	Kms.	20000
11	M.P. Rural Livelihood Project	No. of families	320000

expenditure incurred during the plan period was Rs. 30,580.31 lakh in 2002-03, Rs.33, 234 lakhs in 2003-04, Rs.69, 610.07 lakhs in 2004-05 and Rs.70, 299.70 lakhs in 2005-06.

- Approved outlay for Annual Plan 2006-07 for various schemes/programmes was Rs. 92, 070.39 lakh against which an expenditure of Rs. 1, 01,168.63 lakhs is anticipated.
- Target of constructing 2.83 lakhs houses was fixed. Against this target, 3.10 lakh houses were constructed under Indira Awas Yojana. During Tenth Plan period 2.11 lakh families have been benefited under Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana. Out of this, 1.23 lakh beneficiaries i.e. about 58 % are from SC/ST category. Under Integrated Wasteland 89 Development programme, 82 projects were sanctioned for 3.93 lakh hectare of land. Out of this, 1.50 lakh hectares land was treated

During plan period, 1466 Micro Water sheds were sanctioned and 4.28 lakh hectares land has been treated. In Sampoon Grameen Rojgar Yojana, the GOI has allocated 17.28 lakh MT of food grains out of which 15.04 lakh MT food grains have been utilized. 6.95 lakh works were sanctioned out of which 6.25 lakh were completed and 176.23 lakh mandays were generated.

Under PMGSY 13,500 Kms roads were completed. In Rastriya Sam Vikas Yojana, 12,504 works were sanctioned. Out of this, 11,496 works were completed. Under DPIP, 41,978 common interest groups of 2.84 lakh families were benefited during the plan period. M. P. Rural Livelihood project is under implementation in 827 villages of 8 districts. Under this scheme 4,000 families were benefited during the Xth Plan period.

The state has been a frontrunner in implementation of NREGS. Nearly 1500 lakh mandays have been generated under Madhya Pradesh Grameen Rojgar Guarantee Yojana.

Target and strategy of the XIth Five Year Plan (2007-2012)

Adequate provision has been made for the state share in continuing Centrally Sponsored Schemes like Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SAGSY), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), Integrated Waste Land Development Programme (IWDP), Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), Mid Day Meal Scheme, DRDA Administration and National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS).

Besides these, World Bank aided DPAP project is being implemented in 14 districts for the last 6 years. Support for this will continue under the second phase of the scheme in the eleventh plan. Similarly, M.

P. Rural Livelihood Programme (MPRLP) is being implemented with the help of Department of International Development (DFID). Water and Land Management Institute (WALMI), DRDA Administration Yojana, Gokul Gram and Godan Yojana and community development programme are proposed to be continued into the XIth Plan.

Besides these, the State Government is supporting 5 new schemes namely,

State Rural Road Connectivity Scheme, C. M. Rural Housing 90 Scheme, Master Plan Scheme, SGSY scheme, Training IEC scheme and Sutradhar scheme.

As a successor to Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana (RSVY), Backward Regional Grant Fund (BRGF) scheme will be implemented in 24 of the 48 districts.

National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS)

State of Madhya Pradesh has been the frontrunner in implementation of this scheme. NREGS was launched in 18 districts of M. P. from 02.02.06. The central share of the scheme is 90 %. The objective of the scheme is to provide a minimum of 100 days unskilled employment to adult members of rural families. 44.19 lakh families have registered, out of which 44.10 lakh families have been provided job cards.

During the financial year, 1, 48,229 works have been sanctioned up to 31.12.06, out of which 74,185 works have been completed and 74,044 works are in progress. Of the total sanctioned works, 1, 11,327 works are of water conservation, while 22,593 are of rural connectivity. In this scheme, a provision of Rs. 282.29 crores and Rs. 1998.82 crores has been provided for the annual plan 2007-08 and 2007-2012.

The target man-days for the year 2007-08 is 2,600 lakhs and for the XIth five year plan, it is 17,300 lakh man-days.

M. P Rural Livelihood Programme (MPRLP)

An amount of Rs. 23.15 crores was available in the scheme for the year 2006-07 as per previous balance and other receipts in which state share is Rs. 0.49 crores out of which upto November 2006 Rs. 22.42 crores spent which is 96.05% of total available fund. For the year 2006-07 the target for livelihood programme is 25,000 families against which up to November 2006, the achievement is 16,700 families and the percentage is 66.80.

For the year 2007-08, Rs.31.40 crores ceiling is proposed in which Rs. 0.80 crores is state share. Hence, accordingly for the XIth five year plan ceiling is proposed for Rs. 224.80 crores.

For the year 2007-08, the target is 80,000 families, hence, accordingly for the XIth five year plan the number of beneficiaries is 3.20 lakh families.

District Poverty Initiatives Program (DPIP)

The DPIP programme, which focuses its activities in over 53 Blocks in 14 districts of MP, will alleviate poverty by improving the capacity and opportunities for poor and disadvantaged people with special focus on women. The project period is 5 years. The overall project cost is Rs. 600 crores out of which World Bank loan would be Rs. 500 crores and the remaining amount will come from the Government of Madhya Pradesh and from rural communities as their contributions during project implementation.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana is being implemented in the state with

effect from 25.12.2000. For the proper monitoring and implementation of the scheme, M. P. Rural Road Development Authority was formed. The objective of the scheme is that by the end of Xth five year plan, all villages having more than 500 habitants should be linked with major roads having 12 months connectivity. A distance of 26,544 km long road construction works were sanctioned up to September 2006 out of which 11,153 km roads constructions completed. A number of 2,115 villages having more than 1,000 habitants and 576 villages having 500 habitants are linked with 12 month connectivity roads. Now this scheme is included in Bharat Nirman Scheme from 2006-07 onwards. Under this scheme, new and up gradation of 48000 km roads is proposed. By the end of 2009, all villages having 1000 habitants will be connected with newly constructed roads.

Rs.100 crores allocated for the year 2007-08 and for the XIth Five year plan, an amount of Rs. 500 crores is proposed. The state government target for the year 2007-08 is 4,000 kms and for the XIth five year plan 20,000 km accordingly.

Backward Regional Grant Fund

The scheme is sanctioned by the Ministry of Panchayatraj in 2006-07. The duration of the scheme is five years. For each district, every year about Rs. 15 crores will be sanctioned and this programme will cover 24 backward districts of the state. Total fund for this scheme is provided by the Panchayatraj Ministry, Government of India.

For the year 2007-08, the plan outlay is Rs. 423.39 crores and for XIth five year plan outlay is Rs. 2,256.95 crores is proposed (Table 1).

New Schemes proposed under the XIth plan

Some new schemes viz., State Rural Road connectivity, State Rural Housing, State SGSY, Training, Master Plan and Sutradhar are proposed for XIth Five Year Plan period (Table 2). The provision made under new schemes for 2007-12 is Rs. 18,110.60 lakhs and for 2007-08 is Rs. 6,720.00 lakhs. Scheme-wise activities have been described briefly as follows-

State Rural connectivity

Under PMGSY, the construction of all weather roads is not permitted if the villages are less than 500 meter away from the main route/road. Such left out roads and bridges will be covered and connected under the scheme with state support. During annual plan 2007-08, a provision of Rs. 25 crores has been made to construct such missing links.

Mukhya Mantri Awas Yojna

In spite of the scheme being under Bharat Nirman, as against nearly 38 lakh houseless families in the state, annual allocation under Indira Awas Yojna is only about 46,000. At this rate, it will take about nine decades to fulfill the existing need. The State Government has decided to flag off the Chief Minister Rural Housing Scheme. The main objective of the scheme is to provide housing to the houseless SC/ST families. During annual plan 2007-08, a provision of Rs. 32 crores has been provided for constructing 12,800 houses.

State SGSY

To strengthen the SHG movement, it has been decided to constitute SHG Federations on the basis of activity and the geographical location. Rs. 5 crores and Rs. 18 crores have been proposed for Annual Plan 2007-08 and XIth five year plan 2007-12 respectively.

Training IEC Scheme

A New scheme will be initiated from 2007-08 for the training on project implementation and its monitoring. For this scheme, during 2007-08, Rs. 0.1 crore is proposed.

Working Plan for Water Storage

It is a plan on the basis of a survey of the catchment areas and flow of water direction. On the basis of watershed specificities, identification and cost estimation of the probable water harvesting structures is done. On the basis

of this study, the master plans have been prepared for all the districts of the State. On the basis of the master plan, works of nature of pond deepening and renovation, check dam construction and other watershed activity will be taken up in a planned and systematic manner in 14 districts not covered by NREGS and BRGF. For the implementation of works, according to the Master Plan, an outlay of Rs.5 crores is proposed for the 2007-08.

Sutradhar Yojana

The establishment of the kiosks has been planned to facilitate access in rural areas to electronic communication and information and government schemes and programmes. These kiosks will facilitate provisioning of up to date information about Centre/State Government organizations and schemes. For this scheme, Rs. 0.1 crore is proposed for the annual plan 2007-08. An outlay of Rs. 7, 17,783.60 lakh for the XIth Five Year Plan is proposed. Out of this, Rs. 18,110.60 lakh is proposed under new state schemes. An outlay of Rs. 1, 29,196.60 lakh is proposed for Annual Plan 2007-08, of which Rs. 6,720.00 lakh has been allocated for new schemes.

Suggestions

Although concerted efforts have been initiated by the Government of India through several plans and measures to alleviate poverty in rural India, there still remains much more to be done to bring prosperity in the lives of the people in rural areas. At present, technology dissemination is uneven and slow in the rural areas. Good efforts of organizations developing technologies, devices and products for rural areas could not yield high success. Experiences of many countries suggest that technological development fuelled by demand has a higher dissemination rate. However, in India, technology developers for rural areas have been catering to needs (with small improvement), rather than creating demand. There is no industry linkage machinery to create demand-based-technology market for rural communities. Besides, there is also an imbalance between strategies and effective management programmes. Propagation of technology/schemes for rural development is slow and there is a lacking in wider participation of different stakeholders. An ideal approach may therefore, include the government, panchayats, village personals, researchers, industries, NGOs and private companies to not only help in reducing this imbalance, but also to have a multiplier effect on the overall economy.

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How to cite this article: Seenivasan R, "Impact of Public Works Programmes: A Strategy for Poverty Alleviation in India." *J Account Mark* 10 (2021): 342.