Implementation of Various Rural Employment Programmes in Odisha

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Employment generation is one of the major priorities drawing the attention of the government and economic planners all over the world. India is no exception. The approach to tackling unemployment problem has varied from time to time. In the initial years of planning, no attempt was made to define an independent employment strategy. The focus on economic growth was viewed as essential for improving the employment situation. Thus, in the five year plans, the generation of employment was viewed as part of the process of development. It was however observed that the rate of growth of employment was generally much lower than the GDP rate of growth of the economy. Successive plan strategies, policies and programmes were redesigned to bring about a special focus on employment generation as specific objectives.

The rapid growth of rural population and agricultural labour, failure of land reforms, rural indebtedness, low wage rate, instable agricultural income and output inflation and the adverse effects of new agricultural strategies are the main for rural poverty. The government has implemented a series of employment programmes. The Planning Commission has the belief that employment is surest way to enable the rural poor to cross the poverty line.

In the seventies for the first time government used rural employment programmes for eradication of unemployment. Rural employment programmes are divided into self employment and wage employment programmes. These two programmes aims at generating income at the rural poor so that they would be able to cross the poverty line.

Self employment programmes include IRDP, TRYSEM, DWCRA, and SGSY.

Wage employment programmes include, FFW, NREP, RLEG, JRY, EAS, SGRY etc.

Self employment programmes were introduced at the national level in the late 1970s, initially the programmes were designed to provide skills, subsidies, credit and infrastructure support to small farmers and agricultural labours so that they could find new sources of income.

Integrated Rural Development Programmes

Programmes such as SFDA and beneficiary oriented elements of Drought Prone Programmes (DPAP), Command Area Development Agency (CADA) and Hill Area Development Agency (HADA) were brought together and new programme called Integrated Rural Development Programmes (IRDP) was introduced in 1978 initially covering about 200 blocks considered to be the most backward in all blocks of the country in 1980, a target of covering nearly 15 million families below poverty line was fixed for the sixth five year plan (1980-85).
Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment

Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment was introduced along with IRDP and was a direct attempt to bring rural unemployed youth under self employment by imparting skills in various traditional as well as modern vocations in the areas of service, trade and manufacturing activities. Under this programmes about 30 to 40 youth (15 to 35 age group) belonging to poor households (BPL) are selected in each block and according to their choice, capability and availability of opportunities in the area, trained at industrial training institutes, Khadigramodyog and Handicrafts training-cum production centres, other vocational institutions of government and non governmental organization. Financial support is provided to the trainees, trainers as well as the training institutions.

Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojagar Yojana

In 1999, several self employment programmes were integrated into Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojagar Yojana. The key feature of the SGSY is that it does not seek to promote individual economic activities. It seeks to promote self help groups that are trained in specific skills so they can formulate micro enterprise proposals. Such projects are based on activities that are identified for each block on the basis of local resources, skills and market. The projects are supported by bank credit and govt subsidies. The SGSY is implemented by DRDA. The objective of SGSY is to bring the existing poor families above the poverty line by providing them income generating assets through a mix of bank credit and government subsidy and to ensure that an assisted family has monthly net income of Rs.2000/-. Subsidy under SGSY is uniform at 30/- of the project cost subject to a maximum of Rs.7500/-. In respect of SC and ST it is Rs.50/- subject to maximum of Rs.10,000/-.  

WAGE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES

During the fourth five year plan wage employment programmes were introduced on a trial basis to help agriculture labour to get employment during the lean season. Two programmes were under implementation during the fourth and fifth five year plans were CREP and PIREP covering nearby 200 blocks which were indentified as having concentrations of agricultural labour with acute problems of unemployment and underemployment.

A number of wage employment programmes were designed and implemented during sixties and seventies. Towards the close of 1960-61, the Rural manpower programme (RMP) was taken up in 32 CD Blocks on a pilot basis with the object of providing employment for 100 days to at least 2.5 millions by the last year of third plan particularly in the areas exposed to pronounced seasonal unemployment and underemployment.

Realizing the need for providing employment opportunities through special programmes during the fourth plan, the crash scheme for rural employment (CSRE) was launched in April 1971 for a period of three years with annual outlay of Rs.50 crores.

Alongside of the CSRE in November 1972 a “Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Programme” (PIREMP) was started for a three – year period in 15 selected CD Blocks with the basic objectives of providing additional unskilled employment opportunities, creation of assets that have a multiplier effect creation of new skills through project work on site, and finally and importantly to attempt to some kind of manpower budgeting with respect to wage-seeking labour with a view to ultimately evolving a comprehensive programme for the rest of the country.

During 1970-71 the Rural Works Programme (RWP) was launched in 54 selected districts of 13 states which were identified as drought prone on the basis of well defined norms.
Such as extent of irrigated area, quantify and distribution of rainfall and high frequency of drought, with the objective of mitigating gradually the severity of scarcity conditions in these areas. In terms of population and geographically area the programme covered 600 lakhs or 12 per cent of the population and 5.65 sq.kms or about 20 per cent of the areas in the country respectively.

Food For Work

The problem in rural areas is of seasonal employment, unemployment and under employment. To provide supplementary employment opportunities in rural areas, this programme was launched in 1977. The wages were paid in the form of food grains; hence nomenclature food for work or food for employment programme was given. The food grains were released to the states as per their requirements.

To provide opportunities of work for the poor persons living in rural areas especially during the period when there is no work in agriculture.

To utilize the stocks of food grains available with central govt. as a resource for meeting the additional expenditure required for the purpose.

To create durable infrastructure assets for the villages in the form of roads, tanks etc.

National Rural Employment Programme

The National Rural employment Programme (NREP) was introduced during the sixth five year plan. In October 1980 the Government of India launched the NREP which replaced the then existing food for work programme with the effect from April 1981, the NREP became a centrally sponsored plan programme on a 50:50 sharing basis between the Govt. of India and the State Govt. The NREP was continued as plan programme during the seventh plan period also. The basic objectives of the programme were (a) generation of additional gainful employment for the unemployed and underemployed men and women in the rural areas. (b) creation of durable community assets to strengthen the rural infrastructure which would lead to a rapid growth of the rural economy, a steady rise in the income level of the rural poor and improvement in their nutritional status and living standards.

Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme

With view to tackling a direct and specific manner the hardcore of rural poverty particularly pertaining to employment opportunities for the landless during lean agricultural period this programme was introduced from 15th Aug 1983 during sixth five year plan by the Government of India with objectives of (a) improving for the rural landless with a view to providing guarantee of employment to at least one member of every landless household up to 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. Though the programme was to be fully financed by the central government, the implementation of the programme was entrusted to the states. Backward areas having predominant population of unemployed landless labours and the areas with low wage pockets were to the given priority. This programme was more or less on the lines of employment guarantee scheme of Maharashtra.

Jawahar Rozgar Yojana

In order to realize the benefits of the wage employment programme, it was felt necessary to involve village people especially through the village panchayats and to cover all the villages. NREP and RLEGP were merged and new programme Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) was launched in 1989.

Jawahar Rozgar Yojana was started with a view to expand the coverage of wage employment opportunities to all villages and to
activate the objective of providing employment to all wage seekers to close proximity to their villages, accordingly the responsibility to implement the programme was given to the gram panchayat.

The primary objective of JRY was to generate additional gainful employment for the unemployed and the underemployed in rural areas.

The secondary objectives of JRY were to create productive community assets for direct and continuity benefits to the poor and strengthening rural economic and social infrastructure which would lead to rapid growth of rural economy and as a result improve the income levels of the poor and to bring about improvements in the over all quality of life in rural areas.

The share of the central and state government assistance was now 80:20. Now the share of the states has been restricted to 10 per cent. Road construction, irrigation and other infrastructure development is being undertaken under this scheme so as to avoid additional funds for such work. The programme aimed at providing wage employment to atleast one member of each rural family for 50 to 100 days in a year near to his residence.

There are three sub-programmes under JRY.

**Employment Assurance Scheme**

The Government of India introduced revamped public distribution system in the year 1992-93 to ensure subsidized and adequate supply of food grains to the poor. There were 1778 blocks across 261 districts in the country, identified as difficult and backward areas for PDS. Subsequently to intensify the poverty alleviation programme and to enhance the employment opportunities in these blocks, a new programme called Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) was launched on 2nd October 1993 covering all the 1778 blocks under RPDS.

The primary objective of the EAS is to provide gainful employment during lean agricultural season in manual work to all able bodies in rural areas who are in need and desirous of work, but cannot find it. The secondary objective is the creation of economic infrastructure and community assets for sustained employment and development. Central and states share the expense of this programme in the ratio of 80 : 20.

In the beginning the scheme was introduced in rural areas of 1778 blocks of 261 districts. The scheme aimed at providing assured employment of 100 days of unskilled manual work to the rural people who are in need of employment and seeking it. The assurance of 100 days extends to all men and women over 18 years and below 60 years of age. A maximum of two adults per family are to be provided employment under the scheme.

**Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana**

After evaluating the outcome of JRY it was felt that there was a need to develop village infrastructure based on local needs. It was felt that the village panchayats could better judge these local needs because they are close to the ground realities. Accordingly the government decides to streamline and restructure Jawahar Rozgar Yojana with its new focus on the development of rural infrastructure and it was renamed as Jawahar Gram Samriddhi Yojana.

To provide a greater thrust to additional wage employment, infrastructure development and food security in the rural areas, the Hon’ble Prime Minister of India announced on 15th August 2001 launching of an ambitious new scheme with an annual outlay of Rs. 10,000 crores. The Ministry of Rural Development reviewed the schemes of the employment assurance scheme (EAS). The only additional wage employment scheme for rural areas, the Jawahar Gram Samriddhi Yojana (SGSY) a rural infrastructure development scheme and by merging them into one scheme launched the new scheme of the

The Sampoorna Grameen Rojagar Yojana (SGRY) implemented in the country with following objectives (i) The primary objectives of the scheme is to provide additional wage employment in all rural areas and thereby provide food security and improve nutritional levels. (ii) The secondary objectives is the creation of durable community social and economic assets and infrastructure development in rural areas.

The SGRY targeted all rural poor who are in need of wage employment and desire to do manual and unskilled work in and around his village/habitat. The programme is self targeting in nature while providing wage employment.

At the state level the government of Maharashtra formulated the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme under the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Act, 1977 to provide wage employment to those who demanded it and thereby providing a statutory framework to wage employment programmes. Based on the experience of the programmes the national rural employment guarantee act was enacted in 2005 to reinforce the commitment towards livelihoods security in rural areas. Accordingly the National rural employment guarantee scheme implemented with effect from 2 February, 2006 in India initially started from 200 most backward districts of the country. Now it is operated all over the country. In Odisha this scheme came into operation in 19 districts namely Bolangir, Boudh, Deogarh, Dhenkanal, Gajapati, Ganjam, Jharsuguda, Kalahandi, Kendhamal, Keonjhar, Koraput, Malkangiri, Mayurbhanj Nawarangpur, Nuapada, Rayagada, Sambalpur, Suvaramapur, Sundargarh with effect from 2nd Feb 06. NREGS is in implementation in full swing in all 30 districts at present. As per the NREGS guideline and available data relating to different aspects of NREGS performances and progress the analysis broadly focuses on four major aspects such as employment generated (in terms person days), number of works completed and creation of community aspects. Now 17,09,268 lakh households provided with wage employment and 711.22 lakh person days generated and total works taken up is 253167. Total works completed is 65633 lakhs. Overall performance shows a satisfactory progress of the Scheme. The National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme is most ambitious income security programme for India and Odisha rural poor in post independence era. Virtually this scheme provides the necessary safety net for job seeking rural poor and it is a milestone towards realization of right to work.

References:

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