**Anti-poverty Measures**

There are a number of causes for the widespread poverty in world. In context of India, high growth of population is the major case. The failure of promotion of economic growth and population control perpetuated the cycle of poverty. With the spread of irrigation and the Green revolution, many job opportunities were created in the agricultural sector. But the effects were limited to some parts of country. The industries, both in public and the private sector, did provide some jobs. But these were not enough to absorb all the job seekers. Unable to find proper jobs in cities, many people started working as rickshaw pullers, vendors, construction workers, domestic servants etc. With irregular incomes, these people could not afford expensive housing. They started living in slums on the outskirts of the cities and the problems of poverty, largely a rural phenomenon also became the feature of the urban sector.

Another feature of high poverty rates has been the huge income inequalities. One of the major reasons for this is the unequal distribution of land and other resources. Major policy initiatives like land reforms which aimed at redistribution of assets in rural areas have not been implemented properly and effectively by most of the state governments. Since lack of the land resources has been one of the major causes of poverty in India, proper implementation of policy could have improved the life of millions of rural people.

Many other socio-cultural and economic factors also are responsible for poverty. In order to fulfil social obligations and observe religious ceremonies, people in India, including the very poor, spend a lot of money. Small farmers need money to buy agricultural inputs like seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc. Since poor people hardly have any savings, they borrow. Unable to repay because of poverty, they become victims of indebtedness. So the high level of indebtedness is both the cause and effect of poverty.

**Anti-poverty measures**

Removal of poverty has been one of the major objectives of Indian developmental strategy. The current anti-poverty strategy of the government is based on two planks. 1. Promotion of economic growth. 2. Targeted anti-poverty programmes.

Over a period of thirty years lasting up to the early eighties, there were little per capita income growth and not much reduction in poverty. Since the eighties, India’s economic growth has been one of the fastest in the world. The growth rate jumped from the average of about 3.5 percent a year in the 1970s to about 6 percent during the 1980s and 1990s. The higher growth rates have helped significantly in the reduction of poverty. Economic growth widens opportunities and provides the resources needed to invest in human development. This also encourages people to send their children, including girl child, to schools in the hope of getting better economic returns from investing in education.

**Schemes for eradication of poverty**

**National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)** 2005 was passed in September 2005. The Act provides 100 days assured employment every rural household in 200 districts. One third of the proposed jobs would be reserved for women. The central government will also establish National Employment Guarantee Funds. Similarly state governments will establish State Employment Guarantee Funds for implementation of the scheme. Under the programme if an applicant is not provided employment within fifteen days she/he will be entitled to a daily unemployment allowance.

**National Food for Work Programme (NFWP)** 2004 was launched in 150 most backward districts of the country. The programme is open to all rural poor who are in need of wage employment and desire to do manual unskilled work. It is implemented as a 100 percent centrally sponsored scheme and food grains are provided free of cost to the states.

**Prime Minister Rozgar (employment) Yozana (PMRY)** is another scheme started in 1993 to create self-employment opportunities for educated unemployed youth in rural areas and small towns. They are helped in setting up small business and industries.

**Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP)** was launched in 1995. The aim of the programme is to create self-employment opportunities in rural areas and small towns. A target for creating 25 lakh new jobs has been set for the programme under the Tenth Five Year plan.

**Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna (SGSY)** was launched in 1999. The programme aims at bringing the assisted poor families above the poverty line by organizing them into self help groups through a mix of bank credit and government subsidy.

**Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yozana (PMGY)** launched in 2000 gives additional central assistance to states for basic services as primary health, primary education, rural shelter, rural drinking water and rural electrification.

The results of these programmes have been mixed. Now government wants proper monitoring of all the poverty alleviation programmes. We will be able to provide the minimum “necessary” in terms of only income to all people by the end of the next decade. But the target will move on for many of the bigger challenges that still remain: providing health care, education and job security for all, and achieving gender equality and dignity for the poor. These will be even bigger tasks.