

INTRODUCTION

India is basically a country of villages. The majority people of India as well as of Assam live in rural areas. According to 2011 census, the total population of India and Assam are respectively 68.84 % and 85.92 %. The Indian villages, generally, are the centers of poverty and backwardness. It has been observed that rural unemployment is one of the most visible faces of poverty and backwardness. Except the problems of unemployment, poverty comprises low income, low standard of living, lack of ownership of productive assets, malnutrition, low per capita income, illiteracy etc.

The progress of a particular nation can be measured through the observation of the progress of rural areas, which plays a vital role in the overall development of Indian economy. It has been observed that, the economic conditions of the majority of rural people are very poor and pathetic. So, India needs a special effort to cope up with the traditional rural poverty to bring equality among the inequalities and improve the conditions of the weaker and deprived sections of the society. The problems of rural economy can be solved through the socio-economic as well as infrastructural development in rural areas. Therefore, the Central as well as State Government of India has introduced a number of programmes for socio-economic upliftment of rural people.

The concept and strategies of rural development is widespread in the Indian society due to the implementation of various schemes which were introduced by the various Five Year Plans after independence. After independence one of the major tasks before the independent national government was to formulate and execute the plans for restructuring the Indian society (Singh V P, 1994).

The Community Development Programme (CDP) introduced in 1952 was an attempt at a systematic and integrated rural development in the country. The basic objective of the programme was to serve the rural people and to reach out to a large number of them as practically as possible. The fourth Five Year Plan

(1969-74) expressed concern for both sub- marginal farmers and agricultural labourers and emphasized on creating supplementary occupation and other employment opportunities for them as a section of the rural society. The Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA) and Marginal Farmers and Agriculture Labourers (MFAL) were introduced during the period of 1970-71 for the improvement of the condition of small and sub-marginal farmers.

In mid-seventies, a more comprehensive strategy envisaging direct attack on poverty was adopted which was basically different from the earlier approach to rural development –‘the integrated rural development’ approach as against the ‘sectoral development approach.’ The sectoral development approach tends to divide development into departmental activities. But the integrated approach to rural development emphasizes on spatial development. The integrated rural development has two major components: a) Area Development, b) Beneficiary Oriented Programmes (Singh, V. P. 1994: 9-10). The programmes in the first category have mainly focused on development of infrastructure and local resources. It includes Minimum Needs Programme (MNP), Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), Hill Area Development Agency (HADA), Integrated Tribal Area Development Programme (ITDP) and Desert Area Development Programme (DADP). The second category includes Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) with its components Training of Rural Youth for Self-employment (TRYSEM) and Development of Women and Children in Rural Area (DWCRA) and Jawahar Rojgar Yojna (JRY).

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is the flagship rural employment guarantee programme of the Government of India. It is a new form of programme which was an earlier programme RLEGP started as a component of NREP. The scheme aims at better livelihood security of the households in rural areas of the country by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year, to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Above all, the Act provides fuller wage

employment among the rural people of India. It is necessary to make a study about how the programme has provided employment among the rural people of India.

In the present study, an attempt has been made to highlight the “Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in Jorhat district of Assam”. The study also assesses the socio-economic impact of NREGAs on the beneficiaries.

The thesis is divided into seven chapters: The first chapter is aimed to discuss theoretical framework of the study. The chapter is divided into five sections. In the first section, an attempt is made to understand the concept and theories of change and development. In the second section two development approaches are explained while in the third section, an attempt is made to study the strategy of rural development in India. In the fourth section, are reviewed various studies of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) and in the last section, objectives, methodology and scope of the study are discussed.

The second chapter deals with field of the study. The chapter has attempted to depict the background of India as well as of Assam and Jorhat district in general and study three villages in particular.

The third chapter has explored the organizational setup and the planning of NREGA. It also tries to focus the views of GP members, Sarpanches, Gram Rajzer Sevek regarding awareness of organizational set up and planning of NREGA in Jorhat district of Assam.

The fourth chapter has attempted to explore to implementation of NREGA in terms of permissible works, financial performance, person days etc. The study has tried to explore the implementation of NREGA in Assam as well as Jorhat and Kaliapani Development Block in general and Pachim Teok Gaon Panchayat in particular.

The fifth chapter deals with the socio-economic background of the NREGA beneficiaries i.e. Age Group, Sex, Marital Status, Religion, Caste category,

Language known, Educational qualification, types of family, occupation, Monthly income, total land, domestics animals and bank account etc.

The sixth chapter basically deals with the impact of the Act in terms of the issues about the awareness generation, registration and job card, application for employment, wage employment, record maintenance, monitoring, social audit etc in the context of three villages of No. 7 Pachim Teok Gaon Panchayat. It also tries to focus on the beneficiaries' views regarding the impact of the Act in the context of economic security, food security, health facility, educational facility etc.

The seventh chapter basically deals with the summary and conclusions of the study. It includes the summary of the whole study, some suggestion for proper implementation of NREGA and conclusions of the study.