Society & Social Justice · GS - II

‘Poverty Alleviation Programmes in India remain mere show pieces until and unless they are backed by political will’. Discuss with reference to the performance of the major poverty alleviation programmes in India.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2017	GS - II	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Political commitment; programme implementation; MGNREGA; food security; livelihood missions; leakages; social audits

Model Answer

Introduction

India has introduced multiple programmes to reduce poverty through employment, food security, housing and livelihood support. Their effectiveness depends not only on design but also on sustained political commitment, administrative capacity and accountability.

Performance of Major Programmes

- **MGNREGA:** Provides a statutory employment guarantee to eligible rural households and creates community assets. Delayed wage payments and inadequate work availability can reduce its impact.
- **Public Distribution System and NFSA:** Improve access to subsidised food grains, but exclusion errors, leakages and nutritional limitations remain concerns.

- **DAY-NRLM:** Promotes SHGs, financial inclusion and livelihoods, particularly among rural women. Outcomes depend on market access and capacity building.
- **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana:** Supports housing for eligible beneficiaries, though land availability, construction quality and timely completion affect delivery.
- **Skill development programmes:** Aim to improve employability, but mismatches between training and actual labour-market demand can limit results.

Why Political Will Matters

- Adequate funding and timely release of benefits.
- Transparent beneficiary selection and protection against local elite capture.
- Recruitment and training of frontline staff.
- Effective grievance redressal, social audits and action against corruption.
- Coordination across departments and continuity across political cycles.

Measures for Improvement

Use outcome-based monitoring, strengthen local institutions, improve portability and targeting, promote productive employment, and combine income support with quality education, healthcare and nutrition.

Conclusion

Poverty alleviation programmes are not merely symbolic, but their results are uneven. Political commitment must translate into reliable implementation, adequate resources and accountability so that intended beneficiaries experience measurable improvements in their lives.