Attempt any One of the following:

1. Describe the main components of Minimum Needs Programme.

Ans: The main components of the MNP are:

1) Provision of facilities for universal elementary education for children up to the age of 14 at the nearest possible places to their homes.
2) Adult education to improve literacy among the persons above the age of 15 years.
3) Development of rural public health facilities. These would include preventive medicine, family planning, nutrition, early detection of morbidity and referral services.
4) Supply of drinking water to problem villages suffering from chronic scarcity of safe sources of water.
5) Provision of all-weather roads to all villages having a population of 1500 persons or more.
6) Provision of housing or developed home sites for the houseless in rural areas.
7) Environmental improvement in slums.
8) Rural electrification. Though these services were aimed at serving a variety of needs, they were meant to be implemented in an integrated manner. Thus, villages with primary health centres or schools were to be provided with water supply, electricity and link roads. The implication was that there would be detailed decentralized planning and implementation.

The various components of MNP were visualized as “integral parts of a package of facilities” in a given unit area through convergence of services. The plan also suggested the need for flexibility in relation to norms. Though the programmes included under MNP were already under implementation in the earlier Plans too, they were brought under MNP, as an integrated concept, which was introduced in the Fifth Plan. The Fifth Five-year Plan made a provision of Rs. 2,803 crores for MNP as against an outlay of Rs. 1,056 crores for such programmes during the Fourth Plan indicating that the MNP approach provided a thrust to improve the services under the programme with an assured investment, and to prevent diversion of funds as also to be able to monitor the progress. Subsequently, some more items were brought under MNP. For example, rural domestic cooking energy, rural sanitation and public distribution system were added to the list. Similarly, the norms specified for different components at the time of launching the programme were also modified from time to time. There was no separate specific budget for MNP. The different items under MNP were being dealt with by various ministries/departments of the Central and the State Governments which were supposed to allocate specific amounts for the items concerning them. For example, Elementary Education and Adult Education was under the Ministry/Department of Education; Primary Health under the Health Ministry; Rural Housing, Drinking Water and Sanitation under the Ministry of Rural Development. Rural Electrification was the concern of the Ministry of Power and Energy, Nutrition was under the Ministry of Food, etc.

2. Explain the salient features of Rural Employment Generation Programme.

Ans: The REGP is one of the most popular employment generation programmes in the country today. The implementation of the programme has picked up pace in many States of the country recently. As a result of this, several good and sustainable labour intensive projects have come up in the rural hinterland. However, the programme is able to touch only the fringes of the vast problem of unemployment in the county.

Much more needs to be done with regard to the marketing of products and services and training of the beneficiaries selected under the REGP.

REGP came into vision on 1st April 1995. It was crucially recommended by the high power committee which was thereafter fully launched by the prime minister of India. With the main agenda of creating and flourishing two millions jobs in the rural areas of the country it was a good show. The target group consisted of the rural poor and unemployed in the town where the population count is not more than twenty thousand as per the 91 census. The legislation words include that any area termed as a village based on the earning of the state, irrespective of the population should be under the purview of this scheme. Many Industries were set up in rural backward areas where the fixed capital investment is not more than fifty thousand rupees and who use or do not use power for manufacturing are eligible for financial assistance under this scheme.

Main Objectives of the Programme

- Ensure adequate employment in rural locations.
- Enhance entrepreneurial skills and wisdom among the unemployed youth of the rural locations.
- Ensuring that the target for the rural industrialization is achieved.
- Inviting Financial concerns to provide credits to rural industries.

Features of the Scheme

The main purview of this scheme is the village industries set up in the backward and rural locations of the country. The main idea behind the entire effort and investment is to improve the condition of the industries in the rural area and also increase the count of the industries in such areas. This would in turn help in generating more and more jobs both skilled and unskilled for the rural population. The criterion for eligibility for funding under the scheme is quite simple. The applicant must be an Individual who is rural artisan or otherwise and concerns like cooperative societies, Trusts etc. and will be eligible for a project up to Twenty five lakh rupees. This scheme eliminates the entry of partnership firms, public or private limited companies joint ventures etc. Various ways of help like capital subsidy in the form of margin money up to 25% of the project cost till ten lakhs and balance project up to 10 percent of twenty five lakh. The idea is that the borrower would need to spend ten percent of the cost and rest ninety percent would be paid by the Government via banks assigned for this work.