Rural development remains to be one of the main objectives and a central point of India's development process since the inception of the First Five Year Plan. The concept of rural development has undergone various changes with a number of rural development programmes experimented in India. In this study an attempt has been made to give a brief view of the evolutionary process of various rural development programmes practised in India which evolved into the present day 'Integrated Rural Development Programme'.

The Integrated Rural Development Programme is the most important poverty alleviation programme. It can be said as the first programme of its kind because of its various unique features such as its vast dimension and main thrust on "Antyodaya" principle that the poorest of the poor must be helped first. The provision of providing assets to the poor and the direct involvement of commercial banks to partly finance the programme are also some of the new experiments of I.R.D.P. A number of weaknesses or causes of failure of I.R.D.P. have been pointed out by a number of evaluative studies. In the present study we have made an attempt to re-examine the
main issues relating to the implementation of I.R.D.P. and assess the impact of I.R.D.P. on selected sample beneficiaries. The study is primarily based upon primary data collected through a well designed questionnaire. For this study a household survey of selected sample beneficiaries belonging to the ten blocks of Rohtak District situated in the State of Haryana was conducted.

The present study examines three groups of hypotheses relating to the implementation, monitoring and performance of the programme. On the basis of the findings of this study we came to certain important results and make some practical suggestions which can be of considerable help regarding improvement in the implementation of the programme.

Integrated Rural Development Programme is a research work of mine submitted to Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak for the award of the degree of 'Doctor of Philosophy'. I am highly grateful to my research supervisor Dr. Shri Bhagwan Dahiya, Head of the Department of Economics, to motivate me to take up this work and for his intelligent guidance, valuable comments and suggestions to improve this work. I am specially thankful to my college authorities and my Principal, Shri Ram Kishan Dahiya, who gave me full support and
encouragement for completing this work. I further express my gratitude to all those who helped me directly or indirectly in completing this work. First of all I am very thankful to the University Grants Commission of India for awarding me a 'Teacher Fellowship' for this study. I am thankful to the staff and officials of the D.R.D.A., Rohtak who helped me generously and provided all the necessary data about the implementation of the I.R.D.P. in the study area. I am also indebted to a number of colleagues and teachers of the department of economics as well as that of my college for their kind comments and suggestions throughout the drafting of this work. In particular I am thankful to Dr. Surinder Kumar, Dr. Kailas Sarup and Dr. S.D. Chamola for their kind encouragement and cooperation.

I also wish to place on record my thankful appreciation for the cooperation extended to me by the staff members of the Maharshi Dayanand University Library, Hissar Agricultural University Library and the Rattan Tata Library of the Delhi School of Economics and the Library of the Institute of Economic Growth Delhi.

I do not have adequate words to express my heartfelt gratitude to my wife, Chander Devi, and affectionate daughters, Sunita and Manju, for
cheerfully suffering my involvement in this study.

In the end, I would like to thank Mr. Jai Parkash Bhardwaj for his hard work and excellent job of typing this work.

September 1, 1990

(I. S. HOODA)