CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since time immemorial India has been and is likely to continue to be a rural economy. About three-fourth of India's total population is living in the villages and a large number of rural people are still living below the poverty line. The abject poverty, hunger, disease and inhuman living conditions and the related problems of inequality and unemployment have been the well recognised basic problems of our rural economy since long time. So India's development means rural India's development and rural India's development is impossible without eradication of rural poverty. It was realised, even before independence, that any strategy of development must give priority to rural development in order to solve the inter-linked problems of poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease. Mahatma Gandhi was very right in saying that, "if the village perishes, India will perish too. It will be no more India." 1

Development implies a change for the betterment of human living. Development of a country does not merely mean an increase in its GNP or per-capita income.

The recent view is how the growth process can be tilted in favour of the poor. The main objective of development, in today's world, is not merely the reduction of poverty, inequality and unemployment but to improve the quality of life. "It has to do with the whole texture of human existence. It is not the size of the economy but the quality of life for each member of society, which is our final concern." Development encompasses various factors such as the level of satisfaction of the needs of the people in terms of food and nutrition, housing, health, education, recreation, security, spiritual satisfaction etc.".

The objectives of our planned development have been derived from the directive principles of state policy which stand for justice-social, economic and political, equality and welfare. "As a strategy of development its focus has been on the rural areas, since the mass of the poor in India are concentrated here, and urban poverty is only an outflow of rural poverty." A number of attempts for rural development were made before and after independence. But the fruits of all rural development programmes accrued mainly to the asset owning classes and they did not trickle down to the poor. Even after forty three years

2. McNamara (1971)
3. Anker (1973)
of independence and almost forty years of planned economic development we have failed to improve the living conditions of India's poor. The problem of deepening poverty has been the consequence of development strategies in which "we were taught to take care of our GNP, since this would take care of poverty." But this did not happen. Our sustained growth is still accompanied by continuing poverty and the process of growth have tended to increase relative inequality.

The poor even today are powerless, resourceless, and income-less to earn their bare necessities of life. "What is at stake in rural India is not a fair share of the land but a fair share of income and employment, education and social status---. The chief problem of rural poor is that landless labour is also capital-less, skill-less, education-less and status-less labour." Though huge public investment has been made on large number of rural development programmes, yet these programmes could not cover all the sections and no significant improvement could be made in the living conditions of the poorest of the poor people in rural India.

1.2 RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN INDIA: A REVIEW

The problem of rural development is very well understood and it has been realized by all concerned.

that unless all sections of the society develop, the total national development is impossible. The concept of rural development, is not new in India. But, with the change in approaches, it has gone under considerable changes from time to time. To make an understanding of the concept of rural development used in India, it becomes essential here to give a brief review of the past attempts made for rural development. A brief discussion of the attempts of rural development made in pre and post independence era may help us to know about the evolutionary process of rural development. It will also help us to understand about the changing concept of rural development in India.

1.2.1 PRE-INDEPENDENCE ATTEMPTS

The problem of rural development drew the attention of a number of social reformers, nationalist thinkers and government officials before independence. Several official and non-official attempts were made to deal with the problem of rural development. Some of them were:

(i) The Martandam Rural Reconstruction Experiment made in Madras in 1921 by Spencer Hatch;
(ii) The Sriniketan Experiment of Ravindra Nath Tagore, 1921;
(iii) Gurgaon Experiment of F.L. Brayne, 1927;
(iv) Baroda Experiment of 1932;
The Sewagram Experiment of Mahatma Gandhi, 1933; and
Firka Development Scheme in Madras, 1935.

These pre-independence attempts being isolated in nature, small in scale and limited in area could not help in solving the enormous problem of rural poverty. But these programmes provided a direction for a complete reconstruction and development of rural life. They generated the idea of developing a self-reliant village economy through self-help and mutual cooperation, and tried to induce the rural people to participate in promoting the community works for better utilization of locally available resources. The generation of these new ideas can be said to be the main contribution of pre-independence rural development programmes which became the basic philosophy of the Community Development Programme launched after independence.

1.2.2 POST-INDEPENDENCE ATTEMPTS

Soon after independence we started plans for development with the consistent objectives of growth with social justice, eradication of poverty and reduction of disparities in income and wealth and creation of better economic conditions for all. The Government was also committed to the socio-economic development of the rural areas. It was only after independence that a more systematic programme of all round rural development was adopted in the name of Community Development Programme (CDP).
In the year 1952 the Government of India appointed the Grow More Food Inquiry Committee (GMFIC) under the Chairmanship of Sir, V.T. Krishnamachari. This committee found that "All aspects of village life are interrelated and no lasting results can be achieved if individual aspects of it are dealt with in isolation." On the basis of the findings and recommendations of this Committee the first rural development programme was started in October 1952 together with the National Extension Service (NES). The Community Development Programme (CDP) was based upon a multi-purpose approach which was defined as a "Process by which the efforts of the people themselves are combined with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities into the life of the nation, and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress."

This programme was aimed at the total development of the material and human resources of rural areas through combined efforts of the people and the Government. Its another aim was to educate the rural people in order to bring necessary attitudinal and institutional changes.

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8. Ibid, P. 165.
to march towards progress. It was to cover almost all aspects of rural life, which are inter-linked with each other, and to bring over-all improvement in the living conditions of the rural people. It was introduced as a people's programme based on the principles of 'Self-help' and 'people's participation'. The purpose of the programme was to increase agricultural production by providing farm inputs and extensive service to the farmers.

But after sometime it was proved by a number of evaluation reports and research studies that the programme failed to achieve the expected goals. It could neither increase agricultural production nor employment nor could get "People's participation". It remained mainly a government-run programme. Most of its benefits went to the more affluent and well-to-do sections of the rural society endowed with land resources. "The lowest castes, those who are mainly landless labours, often gain nothing.... The gap between them and the other villagers frequently widens rather than diminishes on account of development projects". 9

According to S.C. Dube, "The Community Development ideology was oversold, many of its problems were beyond its capacity, were thus never accomplished. Unrealistically high expectations were allowed to be build up.... The result was frustration and disenchantment." 10

9. Srinivasan (1960)
In fact this programme failed mainly due to its limited financial and administrative resources which were "spread too thinly all over the country to produce any tangible impact on agricultural production and rural poverty".  

**INTENSIVE AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT PROGRAMME (IADP)**

During 1957-58 India was facing food grains crises and the Community Development Programme had failed to increase food production. It was realised that increase of agricultural production was most essential to achieve the goal of self-reliance and meet the problem of food crises. In order to face the food grains crises a new programme, namely 'Intensive Agricultural District Programme' (IADP), popularly known as the 'package programme' was started in 1960.  

It was a limited purpose approach or a selective development approach. This new approach was adopted on the recommendation of the 'Ford Foundation-Experts Team' which submitted its report entitled "India's Food Crises And Steps To Meet It" in 1959. This report emphasised the selection of those areas which had maximum irrigation facilities and minimum natural hazards termed as "Quick Response Areas". It laid stress upon the provision of essential inputs and services in these selective areas for rapid increase in agricultural production.

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production. In 1964 this approach was expanded to cover more areas and renamed as 'Intensive Agriculture (IAAP). In the year 1965 a new agricultural programme, the High Yielding Variety Programme (HYVP), was introduced. The essence of this strategy was the introduction of high-yielding seeds, improved irrigation and technology in agriculture and raising agricultural productivity. The package of these programmes, popularly known as the Green Revolution, showed up dramatic results in agricultural production and made India self-sufficient in food production.

The programme, in general, lived up to its promise. It laid the foundation of a new strategy of agricultural development in India. But this "production first" philosophy did not necessarily mean caring for the distributive justice made possible by agricultural development. During the sixties, agricultural development was equated with agricultural development that increased agricultural production. It was assumed that increased agricultural production would automatically benefit the all sections of the society.

But soon it was realised that the strategy was confined mainly to particular areas which had a surplus of agricultural production and other infrastructure facilities. It also benefited large farmers who could mobilise resources and inputs. It ignored the equity aspect of development and neglected the small and marginal farmers, workers and rural artisans and other villagers. The package of Green Revolution was not enough to address the issue of rural poverty.

The development strategy that was based on increased agricultural production was also constrained by the limited possibilities of employing rural labour. The need was for an integrated strategy that could address both agricultural and rural development simultaneously.
The widening gaps between the rich and the poor, regional and class imbalances which led to the "producing isolated islands of affluence in a sea of poverty would be more disastrous. Eradication of poverty could not be the residual effect of higher production and economic growth."

The theory of percolation or trickling down me under heavy attack. In early seventies it was realized that growth alone was not sufficient to solve the problems of poverty, inequality and unemployment. The objective of development policy must be to meet the basic needs of the weaker sections of the society. There should be a frontal attack on the specific problem of poverty, hunger and inequality. Thus the failures of the growth-oriented strategy of the sixties and inequitable distribution of benefits forced on rethinking which led to the formulation of group specific and area specified programs or the benefits of weaker sections and backward areas. The new thinking gave a new con

2. Srivastava (1988)p.31
to rural development policy, i.e., the removal of rural poverty.
In other words, the rural development at this stage was concerned with the development of rural poor.

**TARGET GROUP AND AREA SPECIFIC PROGRAMMES**

On the recommendations of the All India Rural Credit Review Committee (1969) two special group programmes, Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA) and Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers (MFAL), were started in 1971-72. The basic objective of these agencies was to raise the earning capacity of those target groups which had not been benefited by the earlier programmes of rural development.

The main function of SFDA and MFAL were to (a) identify the eligible small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers, (b) identify their problems, (c) find out ways to solve their problems, and (d) assist them in implementing the programmes started for improving their productivity and incomes.

The SFDA was to assist the eligible small farmers through intensive farming and animal husbandry, while the MFAL was to assist the marginal farmers and agricultural labourers by providing subsidiary occupations and generating gainful employment.

During the Fifth Five Year Plan period, in June 1974, these two agencies were merged into one scheme. And after the introduction of the Integrated Rural Development Programme
(IRDP) in 1980 these agencies were further merged in to it and renamed the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA). Now the DRDA's are responsible for the implementation of all rural development programmes in the Districts.

Since the SFDA/MEAL agencies could not identify and cover all the proper beneficiaries, its benefits also accrued to a large number of undeserving persons. Further "These agencies were designed to rectify only one category of imbalances created by IADP in rural life, viz the class imbalance." To correct the regional imbalances specific area development programmes like Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP), in 1970, Tribal Areas Development Programme (TADP), in 1972, Command Areas Development Programme (CADP), in 1974 and Hill Areas Development Programme (HADP), in 1975, were also launched to tackle the problem of rural poverty and backwardness.

The pattern of implementation of these programmes was more or less similar to the SFDA/MEAL projects. The main emphasis of these programmes was on the reduction of the inter and intra-regional disparities. This objective was to be attained by enhancing the productivity of local resources and by increasing the employment and income.

earning opportunities for the local inhabitants.

SPECIAL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES

The above mentioned programmes were mainly aimed at the resource development on an individual or area basis. To provide supplementary employment opportunities to the rural poor, particularly during lean periods, some other special programmes were started.

The Rural Works Programme (RWP) was the first major programme introduced in 1971. Then a series of special employment programmes such as, Cash Scheme of Rural Employment (CSRE) 1971, Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Projects (PIREP), 1972, Food For Works Programme (FFWP), 1977, National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), 1980, and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP), 1980, were started.

These schemes were introduced mainly to solve the problems of unemployment and underemployment in rural areas by starting additional rural works and to generate additional employment opportunities. All these were the measures of direct attack on rural poverty. But various evaluation reports pointed out that due to a number of organisational and administrative problems these schemes could not make
any significant dent on the related problems of rural unemployment and poverty.

MINIMUM NEEDS PROGRAMME (MNP)

During the Fifth Five-Year Plan another special programme, viz. the Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) was launched to supplement the income increasing effects of the above mentioned target group or area specific programmes. The MNP was to provide certain civic amenities like elementary education, rural health facilities, drinking water supply, rural roads, rural electrification, house sites for landless labourers etc. It was considered necessary to provide these facilities to improve the consumption levels of the rural poor as the provision of such amenities improves both the standard of living and the productive efficiency. It was also considered that, "the integration of social consumption programmes with economic development programmes is necessary to accelerate growth and to ensure the achievement of plan objectives". 15

The MNP is an investment in human resource development and its integration with other programmes is very essential to enrich the quality of life of the rural poor.

The various special programmes launched in seventies helped some of the poorer sections of rural population.

But in the end of seventies and beginning of eighties, it was realised that even the so-called special programmes could not reach to the poorest of the poor and help them to rise above the poverty line. It was felt that the poorest and rural people were still weak, resourceless, with no income to earn their basic necessities of life. Along with the steady economic growth, the problems of poverty and inequality are as appalling as they were at the start of planning. "Despite the repeated emphasis on the 'common man' and the 'Weaker sections' and the 'less privileged' we have failed to offer very few opportunities for helping the truly poor and the destitute." Even in the Sixth Plan draft it was observed that "the most cherished goals of full employment and the eradication of poverty seem to be as distant today as when we set out on the road of planned development." Despite all the measures taken for the development of rural areas with particular emphasis on the removal of poverty the poorer could not be benefited much, some of them became rather poorer. The target group and specific area approaches caused more imbalances in rural life. It was realised that the solution of poverty is through reaching to the really poor to improve their profitability and to ensure that its gains are evenly distributed. The problem of rural poverty or rural

17. Planning Commission (1980-85)
development is a multi-faceted one. To tackle this multi-layers problem a multi-pronged attack was required. It was also realised that the deficiency of assets and productive resources with the poor were the main causes of their poverty. With a view to remove these drawbacks a new strategy, i.e., "Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was introduced in 1978-79.

INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (IRDP)

The Integrated Rural Development Programme is the most important poverty alleviation programme which makes a direct attack on rural poverty at the grass root level. It differs from earlier programmes as it is mainly meant for the poorest of the poor. It aims at the removal of poverty by providing productive assets and employment to the identified poor families and raise their income above the poverty line.

ORIGIN OF THE CONCEPT OF I.R.D.P.

The concept of 'Integrated Rural Development' is the creation of the failures of earlier programmes which could not cover all aspects of rural life and all sections of rural society. As already stated, rural development means to bring the desired quantitative as well as qualitative changes for increasing production and productivity, for improving the standard of living of the rural poor and making the process of development self-sustaining. It is
an interaction of a large number of inter-related activities; which require an integrated approach for achieving better results. It can also be said the creation of the World Bank strategy which is popularly known as 'Mc Namara Strategy of rural development'.

The World Bank thesis stressed upon a mix of activities like health, education and housing with the productive activities, like agricultural development, in order to alleviate rural poverty. In its Annual Meeting at Nairobi in 1973 Sir Robert Mc Namara, the then President of the World Bank, stated that "in order to improve the economic and social life of a specific group—the rural poor—there was a need of growth with distributive justice. It was emphasised that the benefits of development should reach to the poorest living in rural areas." According to the World Bank, "Rural development is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a group of people—the rural poor. It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek livelihood in the rural areas. The group includes small scale farmers, tenants and the landless." 18

This approach of the World Bank made a shift in the rural development programmes of the developing countries.

India also adopted the programme of direct attack on rural poverty. The National Budget for 1976-77 put forward the thesis of the IRDP for the first time. The then finance minister Shri C. Subramaniam spelt out in his budget speech that the aim of IRDP should be to ensure "a systematic, scientific and integrated use of all our natural resources, and, as part of this process, enabling every person to engage himself in productive and socially useful occupations and earn income that would meet at least the basic needs."

He further stated, "I would like to emphasise that an effective attack on rural poverty and underdevelopment can only be planned in the framework of an integrated programme of rural development based on detailed knowledge of local needs, resource endowments and potentialities."19

THE CONCEPT OF I.R.D.P.

The concept of I.R.D.P. in its full fledged form is more comprehensive than the so-called IRDP in operation. The concept has been defined by many experts in their own ways. Mr. C. Subramaniam while addressing the 63rd Indian Science Congress on "Science and Integrated Rural Development" in 1976 explained this concept in the following way, "The aim is to evolve a package of mutually balancing programmes in which the masses are fully involved,

with the overall purpose of providing employment and increasing productivity. This is the meaningful definition of the much used concept 'Integrated Rural Development'. This can help in tackling the problems of rural poverty.

The I.R.D.P. concept emphasises, "scientific management of resources and providing adequate work to the mass of workers in the region, and in the process increase the internal potential rate of growth. It also emphasises the retaining of growth impulses in the region through providing backward and forward linkages in the non-agricultural sector and in the region."  

According to T.N. Chaturvedi, "Integrated rural development stands for the development of the rural society in all its facets—social, economic, institutional and administrative. It stands for integrated performance and accomplishment of all the objectives stipulated."  

Dr. Tarlok Singh, former member of the Planning Commission, views Integrated Rural Development in a much wider context: "It may mean inter-relationship among various agencies which work in different sectors of the village economy. It may mean integration of activities. It

also may mean that special programmes for activities in
villages shall have to be linked with the general planning
so that allocative and redistributive aspects can be taken
care of."  

According to Lalit K. Sen, "Integrated rural develop­
ment" aims at total development of the area and the people by
bringing the necessary institutional and attitudinal changes
and by delivering a package of service through extension
methods to encompass not only the economic field, for
example, development of agricultural and rural industry
etc., but also the establishment of required social infra­
structure and services in the areas of education, health,
communication, transportation and other basic civil amenities
with an ultimate objective of improving the quality of life
in the rural areas."  

A study undertaken by the United Nations Asian
Development gives a much wider idea of the I.R.D.P. Concept.
It states that the concept "is fundamentally based upon the
humanistic values rather than narrower techno-economic
notions of development. The core of this concept is the
delineation of Man vis-a-vis both material forces of production
and society and a purposeful growth of human personality".

Integrated rural development has also been defined as

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"an areal concept. It is a complete term which integrates a variety of human life and activities—social, economic, technological and natural. Rural Development means desired changes in all these components."

Thus, integrated rural development is a focus on the rural areas with the objective of development through the method of integration. In other words, development is the objective, integration the method, an rural the focus.

Professor V.K.R.V. Rao (1977) has defined the concept of IRDP in a more pragmatic way in the following words:

"The optimum utilisation of the natural and human resources of a given rural area for the enrichment of the quality of life of the population. The optimum utilisation should take into account not only production but also distribution, employment, uplift above the poverty line of all below it, and environmental harmony. The programmes and projects used for the purpose should be such as will maximise their mutual additive impact on each other and result in a higher total than the sum of its parts. The relevant total has to be measured in terms of both material well being and quality of life for the entire population." A more realistic definition of the concept of rural development, used in recent years, can be, "strategies, policies and programmes

for the development of rural areas and the promotion of activities carried out in such areas—- with the ultimate aim of achieving a fuller utilisation of available physical and human-resources and thus higher incomes and better living conditions for the rural population as a whole, particularly the rural poor, and effective participation of the latter in the development process."^{27}

As per above mentioned definitions: The comprehensive idea of integrated rural development involves several categories of integration, viz.,

(a) spatial integration, i.e. between areas;

(b) sectoral integration, i.e. integration of agriculture, off-farm activities, industry, etc. with forward and backward linkages;

(c) integration of economic development with social development;

(d) integration of total area approach and target group approach;

(e) integration of income generating schemes with the minimum needs programme of education, rural health, water supply and nutrition;

(f) integration of credit with technical services.

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^{27} Richardson (1978).
Thus IRDP involves integration both of its ends and means. It is an attempt to achieve integrated total development through integrated means.28

**BASIC PHILOSOPHY OF THE PROGRAMME**

The basic philosophy of this new strategy of rural development is to provide more opportunities of economic and social progress, more equitable share in the benefits of progress, and basic minimum standard of living to the rural poor. The IRDP is based upon the philosophy of "Antyodaya" which means upliftment of the last, i.e., the poorest among the poor should be the first to be benefitted.

The concept of 'integration' is concerned with the combined development of all aspects of village life in order to improve not only the economic conditions but also the quality of life of the rural population, especially the weaker sections. It stresses upon the "proper interaction between the area and the people, so that the locally available resources are to be utilised to the best advantage of the people living in the area."29 Under the concept "Integrated Rural Development" the term 'development' does not only mean the development of productive activities like agriculture and industry. Here development is measured by the benefits that accrue to the weaker sections of the

population of a region rather than by its gross product or per capita income.\textsuperscript{30}

Thus the concept of rural development aims at the total development of the area and the people by making the full utilisation of available physical and human resources and creating better living conditions, particularly for the rural poor. For proper use of resources and greater balances to the rural poor it lays more emphasis on their effective participation in the development process. It is aimed at providing productive assets to the target group households of the I.R.D.P. and implies a process of self-reliance, self-employment and self-responsibility of development. It is based upon the philosophy of 'egalitarianism'.

The basic philosophy of the IRDP is quite close to the Gandhian approach of rural development. Gandhiji envisaged a society based on self-supporting villages, where basic necessities of life of all are fulfilled irrespective of class, caste or creed. In fact Gandhiji's ideology of 'self-sufficiency' of each village was itself an integrated planning for rural development and removal of poverty. The new approach of integrated rural development reflects the change in development objectives varying from 'growth rate' to 'satisfaction of basic human needs', especially of the poorer section of the society. From this a new

\textsuperscript{30} Srivastava (1988), P. 47,
methodology of planning, named 'social planning' or 'integrated social approach' has emerged in which experts from all fields must be included for achieving better results. In this context the concept of development may be defined as a balanced economic and social development which implies both the growth and the change in social and cultural life. And the concept of IRDP indicates towards a systematic coordination between the mutually related fields to make the best use of locally available resources with the introduction of appropriate technology and effective people's participation for improving the quality of life of the rural masses, especially the rural poor. Here integration is a process by which all activities related with rural life are inter-related for development and obtain optimum results.

STRATEGY OF I.R.D.P. IN INDIA

In the concept of I.R.D.P. used in India 'integration' means to select some group of activities or some specific programmes for helping some specific groups of rural population. Thus, IRDP is concerned only with a part of the total rural population which cannot be said a programme of total rural development.

The basic strategy of the IRDP is to identify the target group of IRDP consisting of small farmers (SF), marginal farmers (MF), agricultural labourers (AL) rural artisans (RA), and others whose income is below the cut-off point.
and then rank them according to the 'Antyodaya' principle. The identified beneficiaries are provided productive assets to generate self-employment and increase their incomes and enabling them to cross the poverty line once and for all. It is not only to increase the beneficiaries' income but to sustain it for long. Under the I.R.D.P. family is the basic unit for improvement and eradication of poverty.

The IRDP can be said to be a "Multi-level" programme as it involves the development of rural areas at various village, cluster of villages, block and district levels; "Multi-Sector" which implies development of agricultural and non-agricultural sectors of rural economy; and "Multi-Section" programme which involves the improvement in the living conditions of Small Farmers, Marginal Farmers, Agricultural Labourers, Rural Artisans and other poor sections of rural population. 31

The IRDP is not to be seen as a government programme, but is to be made a people's programme with popular involvement and selection of schemes with their full consultation and consent. In fact, it envisages, "monitoring the progress of implementation of the schemes and taking follow up action to ensure that the beneficiaries sufficient benefits over a long period". 32

31 Gupta (1984)
At the beginning of the Sixth Five Year Plan it was observed that on an average 10 to 12 thousand families per block were below the poverty line. Out of these under the IRDP 3000 families per block at the rate of 600 per year, were to be assisted by providing loans and subsidies to carry out additional economic activities that would help them rise above poverty line. Two-thirds of these were to be covered through agricultural and related activities. 50% of the remaining one-third were to be covered in village and cottage industries and the rest 50% were to be covered in service sector. It was envisaged that of the assisted beneficiaries 30% should be from the Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes and one-third should be women.

Subsidies were to be provided to the amount of 25% to Small Farmers, 33.3% to Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers and 50% to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled tribes beneficiaries. But the amount of subsidy was not to exceed Rs. 3000/- in any case except for Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes households for whom it could go up to a limit of Rs. 5,000/- By the end of the Sixth Plan about 16.5 million beneficiaries were covered under IRDP which was more than the plan target of 15 millions. So far a number of evaluative studies have been conducted by various official agencies, institutions and experts.
These studies presented mixed results showing some beneficiaries crossing the poverty line and others not doing so. The study made by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) pointed out that 18.7% of all beneficiaries had crossed the poverty line. Another study conducted by the Reserve Bank of India (R.B.I) showed that 51% beneficiaries increased their income and 17% have been able to cross the poverty line. But Rath (1985) claims that at best "about 6.6% of the poor household in rural India would have been helped to earn higher than poverty line income."  

Most of these studies pointed out a number of weaknesses in the formulation and implementation of this programme. Even the Planning Commission has also observed that, "many of the shortcomings of IRDP outlined above would appear to stem from the fact that a programme of massive dimensions, having a multiplicity of critical parameters and functioning in a high diverse environment, was launched with, what can be called very little preparation." The Sixth plan period could thus be called a period of trial in which the programme has gradually come to be known.

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33 R.B.I. (1985)  
34 Rath (1985), P. 243.
understood and even stabilised. The gaps that have been revealed and the weaknesses that have been experienced in the process will be remedied in the Seventh Plan so as to make the IRDP an effective instrument of poverty alleviation. The Seventh Plan speaks of the package of anti-poverty programmes being continued at an accelerated pace with better planning, closer monitoring and tighter organisation for their effective implementation. In spite of so many deficiencies and shortcomings outlined, "the approach to the Seventh Plan reiterates the goal of bringing down the percentage of population below the poverty line to less than ten by 1994-95." 36

So the Seventh Plan policies were formulated after a careful analysis and distillation of lessons from the performance of various poverty alleviation programmes of the Sixth Plan and revealed through various evaluation reports. The goal of reducing the below poverty line households to about ten by 1994-95 forms the perspectives of the poverty alleviation programmes. Accordingly the below poverty line families were expected to be reduced to 28.2% by the closing year of the Seventh Plan from a level of 39.9% at the beginning of the plan period. 37

GUIDELINES

For the effective implementation of the poverty alleviation programmes during the Seventh Plan, guidelines are almost the same as were during the Sixth Plan.

POVERTY LINE

The new guidelines provide that families having an annual income of Rs. 6400/- or less will be considered to be below the poverty line. But the "cut off" line for identification of the families for assistance would be Rs. 4800/- annual income per family. However, in order to follow the principle of "Antyodaya" it would be ensured that families with an annual income of Rs. 3500/- or less are assisted first. Only after all such families have been assisted and those have come up to the level of Rs. 4800/- the families lying between Rs. 3500 to Rs. 4800/- income group would be taken up.

Two guiding principles have been laid down as:

(a) Cost Effectiveness: Which means maximum income generation per unit of total expenditure incurred and;

(b) Control of Leakages:

(i) Deviations and Distortions: To achieve the objectives of cost effectiveness and minimisation of leakages the poverty alleviation programmes would be formulated and implemented.
with the greater participation of the rural poor through promotion of co-operatives, registered societies and other informal groups. And the target oriented activities would be integrated with the normal sectoral development efforts.

(ii) Cluster approach and Group activities would be encouraged for their better success and increase the bargaining power of beneficiaries.

(iii) Supplementary or second dose of assistance would be provided to families assisted and who made proper use but could not cross the poverty line during the Sixth plan. Even assistance can be provided to different members of one family to run more than one scheme under the programme. All such families are to be assisted in the first three years of the Seventh Plan.

(iv) It is provided that at least 30% of the assisted families should be from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The percentage of assisted Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes families should be equal to Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes population percentage to the total population of a block in case the latter percentage is 50 or more.
And at least 30% of the total beneficiaries should be women.

In order to achieve the goal of cost effectiveness and minimisation of leakages by imparting the necessary flexibility in the choice of activities and by achieving integration in the programmes, a three pronged strategy was envisaged in the Seventh Plan:

(a) Poverty alleviation programmes were to be formulated and implemented in a decentralised manner with the participation of people at the grassroots level.

(b) All programmes launched through the normal sectoral efforts and target group oriented efforts were to be planned in an integrated manner and to be implemented effectively within the framework of an integrated administrative organisation as recommended by the High Level Committee set up by the Planning Commission.

(c) To take up group-oriented activities through the promotion of co-operatives, registered societies, informal groups etc. Further voluntary agencies were to be increasingly involved in the formulation as well as implementation of poverty alleviation programmes for ensuring greater
ADMINISTRATIVE SET UP

The Department of Rural Development of the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India, has the overall responsibility of policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme. There is a central Committee on IRDP chaired by the Secretary, Department of Rural Development. At state level there is a State Level Coordination Committee (SLCC) for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme at the state level. The Chief Secretary of the concerned State is its chairman and all concerned Secretaries and Heads of the departments are its members. This committee meets once in every three months and provides guidance to the D.R.D.A.s in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the programme.

DISTRICT LEVEL SET UP

At district level the programme is implemented through D.R.D.A. registered under the Societies Registration Act. This is headed by the District Collector (D.C.) and the project officer (A.D.C.) is its member-secretary. All M.P.'s and all M.L.A.s from the district, and all departmental heads at the district level are the...
members of the governing body. The Chairman(D.C.) forms an Executive Committee to assist the D.R.D.A. The Governing Body should meet once in every three months and the executive committee once in a month.

FUNCTIONS

The D.R.D.A. is the overall incharge of the planning implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme in the district. It prepares the perspective plan and Annual Action Plan of the block and finally prepares a district plan. The D.R.D.A is to implement the programme with the assistance of block level machinery, i.e., the B.D.O., Extension Officers and the village level workers (VLW). It evaluates and monitors the programme, secures inter-sectoral and inter-departmental co-ordination; informs the district and block level agencies of the basic requirements and tasks of the programme and submits periodical reports (returns) to the State Government.

In fact the project officer works as head of the D.R.D.A. and he is helped by A.P.Os specialised in different fields.

BLOCK LEVEL

The block is the basic unit for preparation of perspective and annual action plans to implement the centrally sponsored programmes and to provide feedback on the impact of the programme. The Block Development
Officer (BDO) is the chief coordinator in the block and to see that plans are prepared in time and implemented effectively. The B.D.O. should be assisted by Extension Officers appointed for every core discipline.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Active participation of the local people in the implementation of the programme starts with the association of the entire village community with the procedure of identification of beneficiaries. Beneficiaries' Advisory Committees at the block level may be constituted to provide a regular forum to the beneficiaries to actively participate in the implementation of the programme.

1.3 PURPOSE OF PRESENT STUDY

As already stated the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was launched with the objective to assist selected families below the poverty line in rural areas to cross this line by taking self-employment ventures. The programme aims to achieve the stated objective by providing income generating assets including working capital, where necessary to the target group families through package of assistance comprising subsidy and institutional credit. 39

The present empirical study is to deal with some of the major aspects of IRDP, mainly relating to the implementation, monitoring, performance and achievements and make

some suggestions for the improvement of the programme.

The main purpose of the present study is to test the following three groups of hypotheses:

GROUP A

(i) The beneficiary-oriented approach of the I.R.D.P. has not served the purpose for which it was started as the benefits in a large number of cases are going to the wrong type of households for which the programme was not meant.

(ii) There has been a tremendous leakage of resources in the sense that a very high percentage of beneficiaries were already above the poverty line.

(iii) The assistance under I.R.D.P. is availed off by the majority of beneficiaries with a sole purpose of getting subsidy.

(iv) The I.R.D.P. kind of asset creation programme and the subsidy given to beneficiaries has a trend towards corruption.

(v) There is a significant time-lag in the implementation of I.R.D.P. which results in a high cost to beneficiaries for obtaining loans and subsidy.

(vi) The assets are not purchased by the beneficiaries themselves and these are not of their own choice and of good quality. In some cases the existing or neighbour's assets are fraudulently shown to be purchased under the IRDP. The amount of loan is not sufficient to purchase the assets.
As regard to the monitoring of the I.R.D.P., there are very rare visits by senior officials. Those other officials who do the largest number of visits do so more for verification of assets or to urge repayments than for follow up action.

The 'Vikash Patrika' the identity-cum-monitoring card to register the beneficiaries economic status, repayment schedule, problems faced, remedial action needed and taken and the like, is either not distributed or if distributed no entry is made in that.

The I.R.D.P. has failed to lift the majority of the target group above the poverty line on a permanent basis.

The major causes of the poor performance of the I.R.D.P. are the failure in implementation; its design and strategy; and a combination of all these.

The I.R.D.P. has failed in bringing rural diversification in rural economy.
The assumption that I.R.D.P. would fare well in situations where developed infrastructure facilities like roads, electricity, veterinary hospitals etc. are available, does not seem to be substantiated.

All those eligible categories who got assistance from the I.R.D.P. did not either cross the poverty line or find any change in income or even find a fall in their income.

1.4 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The present introductory Chapter-I deals with the brief outline of the concept of Rural Development, programmes of rural development adopted in India, and the main hypotheses to be tested in the present study. The Second Chapter discusses the profile of the study area and the research methodology applied for the selection of the sample and collection of the secondary and primary data required for the present study. The Third Chapter presents the main aspects relating to the implementation of the programme, i.e., identification of the sample beneficiaries, their socio-economic profile, selection of schemes, sanction of loans, time-lag in getting the assistance and purchase of assets. The Fourth Chapter examines the follow-up actions and monitoring of the I.R.D.P. schemes in the study area. Chapter Five deals with the performance,
flaws in the performance, achievements and impact of the programme in terms of assets, income and employment generation. In the concluding Chapter Six we give a brief summary of the findings of the present study and make certain suggestions for improving the working of the 'Integrated Rural Development Programme'.