INTRODUCTION.

Statement of problem:-

Hitherto, various agricultural development programmes have been launched in this country to modernise and commercialise agriculture which is the mainstay of the 70 per cent of the people of this country. To make 'Green Revolution' a success, the government has taken various measures to raise yield level and income level of the farmers to enable them to lead a better life. The Package programme has been a most important programme in the series of rural uplift programmes i.e., Grow More Food campaign, Community Development programme, National Extension Scheme, Intensive Agricultural Area Programme etc.

Notwithstanding that concerted efforts were being made during the three Five Year Plans, the self-sufficiency in food supply could not be achieved. The population explosion not only consumed the additional food production but also created multifarious problems of serious magnitude. The agricultural development programmes did not achieve massive success which was expected of them, owing to various factors i.e., lack of improved technology, inadequate material resources, lack of trained personnel, ineffective administration etc.
In the light of these drawbacks, the package programme was devised to modernise and commercialise agriculture with the help of modern technology and material resources. Hence an assessment of the impact of package programme on the economic conditions of the farmers of Raipur district has been undertaken. The problem selected for research study is:

Economic impact of Package programme in Raipur District
(A case study of Santapara and Bilaiygarh development blocks).

The main objective of this study is to assess the economic impact of package programme in Raipur district and to ascertain the benefits or gains received by the small, medium and large farmers. The Raipur district is situated in Chhattisgarh region (Madhya Pradesh). The region is a developing region so far as the agricultural development is concerned. The farmers are, still tradition bound, unskilled and poor. With the establishment of Ravishankar University Raipur, a number of research studies on the various aspects of Chhattisgarh region have been initiated which is a healthy symptom for the uplift of this region.

Specific Questions to be answered:

1. How far has the programme achieved the short term objectives regarding the rapid increase in food production?
2-whether the programme has reached all the farmers -small, medium and large or its benefits have been consumed by some privileged farmers.

3-How far has the programme raised the yield levels per acre and the income levels of the farmers.

4-whether the programme has benefited all the villages of the district equally or only few villages have received the major part of the benefits.

5- How far has the co-operative structure helped the farmers in adopting improved agricultural practices by providing timely supply of cash or kind credit.

6-The extent to which the farmers have adopted and accepted the new technology and science.

7-whether the programme has offered additional employment opportunities to the agricultural and the landless labourers or not.

8-How far has the programme changed the attitudes and understanding of the farmers.

9-what are the main factors which have affected the progress of the programme, adversely?

10-whether the prevailing prices have been remunerative or not, and whether the marketing organisation is functioning effectively or not.

Along with these specific questions, some allied problems have also been undertaken for analysis i.e. adaptability of the new technology to the local conditions,
economic implications of new technology, efficiency of administrative machinery etc.

The Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Community Development and Co-operation (Department of Agriculture) appointed an Expert Committee on Assessment and Evaluation of Intensive Agricultural District Programme to 'provide overall guidance for the assessment and evaluation effort' and 'to make an objective appraisal of and give approval to the evaluation findings before they are officially released.' Till now, the committee has released four reports on assessment and evaluation of Package Programme.

But the official reports are, more or less of descriptive nature which give an overall summary of the performances of the programme rather than an analytical study based on the field observations and primary data. The objectives of such reports are quite different than those of research studies. In Raipur district, the programme has completed a period of ten years of its operation which is enough to give a reasonable perspective on its operations.

Two development blocks—Bhatapara and Bimaigam development blocks—have been selected for a case study. Apart from these blocks, several other blocks from all the three zones have been studied with the help of a questionnaire. All the development blocks were toured
in order to inquire the farmers and the extension officers into the accomplishments of the programme and the benefits received by the farmers. Since the district possessed inadequate means of transportation and communication, the author visited the interior villages with the help of cycle or on foot. The official statistics has been utilised only when it was unavoidable. Various difficulties arose in filling in the questionnaires as the farmers did not remember the correct information and did not use standard units of weights and measurements etc. However, great care has been taken in the collection, classification, and analysis and interpretation of data, in order to avoid bias.

The available literature on the subject has been carefully studied and utilised in the form of references but the findings in this report are based on the information collected by the author himself. A selected bibliography regarding the available literature on the subject has been annexed at the end of the thesis.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS IN THIS THESIS:

1. The Raipur district did not fulfil any of the conditions laid down for the selection of the package districts as the district did not possess even the most essential factor - the assured water supply.
2-It has been observed that the package programme has not reached all the farmers - small, medium and large. On the contrary, its fruits have reached the rich farmers of the developed areas. Horizontal and vertical disparities have been observed between and within the development blocks, villages and farmers.

3-The most limiting factor regarding the adoption of improved technology is the lack of economic considerations. Hitherto, technology has remained science oriented rather than economics oriented. The technology is not locally adaptive.

4-The full potential of technological advancement cannot be realised unless economic motivation is provided to the farmers, unless locally adaptive technology is developed for the district; unless adequate education is provided to the farmers; unless the economic resources of the farmers are developed; unless the marketing organisation is made more effective; unless adequate and timely credit is provided to the needy farmers; unless the labour accommodating capacity of the package programme is increased considerably; unless policies and institutions are created to provide overall motivation etc.

5-It has been observed that credit has reached only 50 per cent of the farmers. The medium and large farmers have been benefited most by the co-operative institutions. The loans have been granted to the farmers who possessed more than 7 acres of land. The most noxious element in the
functioning of the co-operative societies is the complicated and time consuming procedures which not only involve dilatoriness but also encourage corrupt practices. In the whole district 40 to 60 per cent short term and long term loans have been reported unrecovered.

6-The yield level per acre remained 35 per cent less than the estimated yield on control plots and 45 per cent less than the expected yield on package plots. The heavy doses of fertilisers added more cost than revenue due to lack of favourable conditions i.e. adequate rainfall, irrigation facilities etc. The farm planning approach has been used as a method of enlisting participation of the farmers rather than a method of extension education. The farmers who participated in the programme and implemented the farm plans did not harvest the bumper crops as compared to those who did not participate in the programme, as the unfavourable weather conditions affected the new varieties more adversely than the local varieties and the favourable weather conditions benefited both the varieties equally.

7-Being predominantly a paddy district, the labour absorptive capacity of agriculture in Raipur district should be more than the wheat areas but the labourers get employment for 170 days in unirrigated areas and 207 days in irrigated areas. The female labourers are 25 per cent more than the male labourers. In off-season the problem of joblessness compels the labourers to leave the village in search of employment.

8-The small farmers have almost negligible quantity of
marketable surplus. The farmers sell their produce to the village bank at the lower rates. Linking has not played a vital role in the loan recovery as only 50 per cent of loan has been recovered through linking. The prices are consumers oriented rather than producers oriented.

9- It is unfortunate that only 117 villages out of 355 villages have been selected for the stage II village programme. The yield rates in stage II villages have gone up due to heavy doses of fertilisers and adequate irrigation facilities. But the difference between the average and highest yield rates is very high.

10- The package programme has completed 10 years of its implementation. In general, the programme has not kept its promise, specially in reaching all the farmers and in providing a strong economic base to the rural economy.

11- It is unrealistic to think about commercialisation of agriculture for next two decades. At present agriculture is a deficit economy to the farmers. Even the heavy investment in agriculture cannot lead it towards commercialisation unless the size of holding is made economic. Land is scarce factor and the supply of labour is more than its demand which contributes little to the output and consumes the whole of its surplus.

12- In the road side villages, the pattern of expenditure has changed to a great extent owing to the increasing wants of luxuries. The use of small machines, electric pumps, implements, chemicals etc., has increased the
knowledge of the farmers. But in the interior villages, there has been no change in the traditional mode of expenditure.

13-The existing pattern of organisation of package programme is not suitable for the development programme of this nature. The package programme should work as an extension agency rather than to educate the farmers in new technology and improved agricultural practices rather than a distribution centre of inputs.

14-In future, sophisticated research and technology; economic implications of new technology; additional job opportunities; medium and long term credit; effective marketing system; adequate irrigation facilities; etc. will need greater attention than ever.