The Scenario of world poverty and particularly rural poverty is perhaps the stupendous task before the world governments. This is borne by the fact that in the world "a billion people, representing a fifth of the world, live in absolute poverty; 900 million adults are unable to read or write; 800 million people go-hungry every day; 150 million children under five years of age are malnourished; 14 million children die each year before their fifth birthdays".1 Out of these poor, "about two-thirds of the under nourished live in South Asia and a fifth in Sub-Saharan Africa".2 The World Bank forecasts show a very frustrating picture in the times to come.

It may be interesting to know that the distribution of world income is highly skewed in favour of the richest peoples. As per estimates "the richest fifth receives 82.7 per cent of total world income, whereas, the poorest fifth receives 1.4 per cent of total world income".3

The above appalling disparities in income distribution expose the policies so far adopted in alleviating poverty from the world. The trickle down concept has failed to benefit the poor. Although many schemes have been taken for sectoral development like agriculture, health, education, communication and other infrastructures yet no fruitful and substantial gains have gone to the poor. Even policies of land reforms have to

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
face legal bottlenecks from the so-called power broker groups, who are influencing the policies designed for alleviating poverty.

Like many developing countries, India too, has adopted the policy for enlarging the economic base by favouring export-oriented and industrial development strategies for taking up growth at a massive scale. This led to the concentration of power and skewing of economic social and political benefits to rich sections of society thus further worsening the position of the poor classes. The composition of poverty and the poor, form a heterogeneous group but in broad terms, poverty, is mainly a rural problem. Poverty is becoming more widespread even after over four decades of growth and development in Independent India.

The co-existence of poverty with development confirms what Thomas Carlyle wrote, "In the midst of plethoric plenty, the people perish. This dichotomy is ever increasing in the present-day world. Had this world been a small pond, a small pebble could have effected the last shores of it, but alas! it is a world full of complexities, greed, ambition, passion for possession of power and prestige and this evidently leads to a position of plenty on one side and extreme deprivation on the other. In the context of India, this deprivation from generation to generation seems to have become an incurable cancer. We could not have much say during colonial rule whose policies were so designed to see this huge colony perpetually deprived. Such a strong nexus is, therefore, eventually formed between perpetual poverty and development and particularly rural development (since India is a predominantly rural economy and as per 1991 Census still 74.28 percent population is rural) that it became quite baffling to break this nexus with modern growth theories alone which were propounded, propagated, executed and being executed by

the developed and developing world alike. It demands that there is something else to be done. Gandhi was conscious of this growing deprivation of rural classes. In such a vast rural economy, as India is, nothing can be achieved unless adequate stress is given to the development of rural sector. He therefore, wished to raise a strong India on rural pedestal. His earnest desire was to see rural millions as the formidable partners of India's polity and economy. His postulates of non-possession, voluntary poverty, reduction of wants were nothing but an attempt to have a balanced and equitable distribution of resources and reducing inequalities. He took life as one entity and his concern was to develop life as an integrated concept simple but richer in quality in all spheres concerning economic, social political and moral development. With this perspective in view, the present work aims at studying: "Integrated rural Development in Gandhian perspective : A case study of district Shimla in Himachal Pradesh".

In first Chapter an attempt has been made to analyse the rural development scenario in poverty perspective since the British rule. Whether it is a British legacy or not, yet it is a fact that poverty is the principal and root cause of non-development of rural economy and hence Indian economy. The problem of rural development is basically a problem of pervasive poverty. This chapter is devoted to the analysis, causes and quantum of poverty and determination of poverty line, extent of poverty prevailing in India and the nexus between rural development and poverty which is required to be understood in the right perspective. In this context this chapter analyses the nature, scope, extent of rural development and examines its objectives in dynamic context. The poverty dimensions and problems of rural development concerning Himachal have also been attempted in this chapter. The endeavour is to give a comprehensive analysis of poverty based on available resources/literature and the nexus it has with problems of rural development.
After crystalising the problems of rural development in the context of poverty, in the second chapter, a study has been attempted, in chronological order, to understand the various strategies adopted since the early times of Christian missionaries to the present day Five Year Plans in the sphere of rural development. Some major strategies have been discussed both in pre-independent and post-independent India. This chapter simultaneously reviews the literature i.e. concept of rural development, its problems, causes and various strategies in a broader perspective.

The third chapter discusses the concept of Gandhi about rural development. Gandhi first gave the concept of Integrated rural development through his holistic conceptualisation of life. He understood the right cause of Indian poverty vis-a-vis the nexus it formed with under-development. To break this nexus the concern of Gandhi was to create more and more self employment in the rural sector so that fruits of development not only start from its logical foundation but there must emerge equitable distribution of wealth. He envisaged total decentralisation of economic, social, political and administrative structure of governness so that rural people can become active partners in the process of productive employment, social uplift and political upsurge. His concern was to first care for the small till it reaches the oceanic circle of society and for that he advocated co-operative way of production and marketing system. This integrated approach has been dealt within this chapter and alongwith it, some programmes executed on Gandhian lines by official and voluntary organisations are also explained to see the efficacy of Gandhian concept as well to review literature on Gandhian lines.

Fourth chapter analyses the present IRDP as contemplated in the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Five Year Plans. It explains the various objectives, aims, approach and methodology of the programme at the national, state and grassroot levels. Various studies conducted in the initial years to evaluate IRDP are
explained including the three major concurrent evaluations taken at national level by the Planning Commission. Evaluation of IRDP by various economists has also been analysed. An earnest attempt has been made to critically examine and review the literature available on IRDP.

The fifth chapter deals with IRDP in Himachal Pradesh. An attempt has been made to discuss the implementation of IRDP in Himachal Pradesh with supportive data up to the year 1990-91.

Sixth chapter contains the details of field survey conducted in two blocks of district Shimla in Himachal Pradesh. In order to make the study more intensive only two blocks of the district i.e. 'Mashobra' (Kasumpti-Suni) and 'Theog' were selected. This selection was made on the basis of stratified sampling with the purpose of increasing the efficiency of sample by dividing a heterogeneous universe in such a way that there is as great homogeneity as possible with in each stratum and as marked a difference as possible between the strata: 'Mashobra' (Kasumpti-Suni) block represents low hill and valley area and 'Theog' has largely hilly terrain and hence represents the mid and hill regions. Moreover, these two blocks have not been included or taken up in any systematic study evaluation conducted for IRDP up till now as far as available literature is concerned.

A critical analysis in the shape of observations and conclusions has been made of the IRDP in Gandhian perspective in the seventh chapter on the basis of Gandhian approach as discussed in chapter 3rd, the IRDP programme as explained in chapter 4th and 5th and the results derived of field study in chapter 6th.

The study is based on the primary sources. The investigator himself collected all the data. The three main methods of data collection (observation both participants and non-participants, schedule and interview) were used. The data was collected directly from ultimate beneficiaries and
non-beneficiaries. In order to cross check the validity of the data, the information was also taken from the administrative machinery at block, district and state level and the lead bank office. The investigator had long discussions with the programme implementing officials also. This helped in making observations and in drawing conclusions.

In order to make the study intensive and more recent the primary data from beneficiaries from 1985-86 and 1986-87 was collected. To collect this data a sample of nearly ten percent i.e. 110 beneficiaries was drawn out of total families assisted during the study period. Individual respondents in each block were chosen through multi-stage random sampling technique. To look into the non-participation of a fragment of the target group, a sample of another 40 non-beneficiaries out of the identified families (identified but not covered so far under IRDP) have been taken. This has been done for the sake of objective comparisons.

The main objectives of the study are as follows:-

1. To ascertain impact of IRDP in alleviating rural poverty (income) vis-a-vis rural development.

2. To analyse IRDP as a tool of economic and social development.

3. To critically examine the efficacy of IRDP as a concept of total development of rural reconstruction as envisaged by the Father of the Nation.

There is no dearth of published material on this subject. Apart from Gandhi's well known works 'An Autobiography: or The Story of My Experiments with Truth'; 'Satyagraha in South Africa' and 'Hind Swaraj' all the rest of his writings such as his journalistic articles, letters, memoranda and such of his speeches which have been recorded or of which the texts are available are now available in the 90 volumes publication project.
"The Collected Works Of Mahatama Gandhi". 'Young India' and 'Harijan', these two weekly journals of Mahatama Gandhi are also now available.

Alongwith this, the reports of the various studies conducted by United Nations Organizations, Central and State Governments in India, voluntary agencies and various experts and organisations in this field have also been scanned. Secondary sources where ever used have been just to crosscheck the information taken from the primary sources.

Chandigarh

VINOD PRAKASH GUPTA