PREFACE

Today rural development is recognised as the 'sine qua non' to the faster economic development and welfare of the masses. Rural development is not the development of rural areas but also the development of quality of life of the rural masses into self reliant and self-sustaining modern little communities. India lives in villages and rural community is the essence of India. Villages and villagers play crucial role in Indian economy. With the attainment of independence in 1947, India found itself in a pathetic condition with a shattered socio-economic and cultural structure. The country was backward and undeveloped. Poverty, unemployment, weak industrial base and inadequate infrastructure facilities were the major characteristics of our economy. Therefore, the government of India faced a gigantic task of re-building the shattered economy so as to provide employment and better standard of living to the people.

Development implies structural changes. Rural development is concerned with the modernization and monetization of rural society and with its transition from traditional isolation to integration with the national economy. The objective encompasses improved productivity, increased employment and thus higher income for target groups as well as minimum acceptable level of food, shelter, education and health. As majority of population lives in rural areas, hence rural development has been the abiding concern of the successive five-year plans. The government has started number of schemes to uplift the rural community starting with the country wide Community Development Programme in the year 1952. At present there are number of schemes/programmes to uplift the rural community. But with the changing needs of time, the poverty alleviation efforts have been revamped and restructured to make them more effective and people oriented. Moreover, keeping in view the vastness of the country and other aspects like growing population, poor infrastructure facilities, growing need for employment and shelter, old schemes have been reviewed and new strategies are being evolved to accelerate growth with social justice and reduce poverty.

The present research work concentrates on the Impact of Rural Development Schemes in Himachal Pradesh. Here efforts have been made to study the impact of
various RDS's being implemented by the State on the beneficiaries' socio-economic position. For this purpose the present study is divided into seven chapters. Chapter-1 deals with introduction and throws light on conceptual framework of rural development like, need for rural development, policies of rural development etc. and provides an account of various rural development schemes being implemented by the State Government. The review of literature has been described in Chapter-II. Research design, which deals with need, scope, objectives, sample design, methodology and limitations of the study has been presented in Chapter-III. Chapter-IV reveals a brief evaluation of different RDS's being implemented by the State Government. Chapter-V deals with the socio-economic profile and awareness among beneficiaries. The impact of rural development schemes has been analysed in Chapter-VI. Finally, Chapter-VII contains summary, conclusions and suggestions with a view to affecting a proper implementation of the various rural development schemes in Himachal Pradesh.

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