ABSTRACT

Rural Development, based on scientific utilization of India’s natural resources, has been given highest priority for amelioration of the living conditions of the rural masses. With this aim in view, several efforts were made at rural development to better the socio-economic lot of villagers from ancient times to British period. These were experiments in rural development from Snnikethan in 1921 to community development in 1952. After independence, many rural development programmes have been implemented to tackle the problems of poverty and unemployment in rural India.

Among the rural development programmes implemented during the last decade, Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and Jawahar Velai Vaippu Thittam (JVVT) (referred to as Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) at the National level) form major poverty alleviation programmes in India. The objective of IRDP is to enable the identified rural poor families to cross the poverty line. This objective is sought to be achieved by providing productive assets and inputs to the target groups consisting of small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and rural artisans. Launched in October 1980 all over the country, the IRDP is implemented in all the blocks in the country as centrally sponsored scheme funded on a 50:50 basis by the Centre and the State Governments.

In the last year of the Seventh Plan i.e., from April 1989, the non-existing employment programmes viz National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEG) were merged with a single rural employment programme known as Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) (JVVT as referred to in Tamil Nadu). The primary objective of JRY is to generate additional gainful employment for the unemployed and the underemployed men and women in rural areas with the secondary objectives of creating sustained employment by strengthening rural economic infrastructure, community and social assets in favour of the rural poor for direct and continued benefits and overall improvement in the quality of life in rural areas. The people below poverty line constitute the target group under JRY.

In the face of all such on-going rural development programmes in India at present, it is pointed out that nearly 39 percentage of Indian population are still
said to be below the poverty line. Therefore, an attempt is made in the present study to evaluate the IRDP and JVVT programmes implemented in rural areas of Tamil Nadu over a period of time. The present study on IRDP and JVVT covers Nilakottai Block in Dindigul Mannar Thirumalai District.

**Following are the findings of study:**

The nature of benefits of IRDP varied across different age groups, religion, caste, occupation and family income of beneficiaries. Beneficiaries who belonged to non SC/ST, literate, other than agricultural labourers and low income group benefited more than their counterparts.

As for change in occupational status, nearly one fourth of beneficiaries stated that there was change in their occupation after receipt of IRDP loan. The average number of working days has been changed significantly from 4 days before receipt of IRDP loan to 6 days after receipt of IRDP loan in the case of 3 per cent of IRDP beneficiaries. The average monthly income of Rs.282/- before the receipt of IRDP has been changed to Rs.393/- after the receipt of IRDP loan. In view of this, the notion that poverty will continue even after receipt of IRDP benefit has been disproved.

Regarding JVVT, among those who were personally benefited, a little more than two third (69 per cent) of respondents had wage employment for 15-30 days in a year and the remaining 31 per cent had wage employment for 31-45 days in a year. The benefit of employment is significantly more among younger age group (21-30 years) nuclear family, illiterates, agricultural labourer; and monthly income of Rs.400/- or less when compared to their counterparts.

**Hypotheses Framed**

1. Culture of poverty will continue even after the receipt of benefit under IRDP.
2. Impact of IRDP and JVVT does not vary among socio-economic groups.
3. JVVT has not created community assets and not improved the village life.

In general, the data on several dimension of IRDP and JVVT disproved the above hypotheses.

The thesis contains VIII chapters.