CHAPTER VI

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Integrated Rural Development Programme was conceived in 1976 and was included in the budget of India in 1976-77. By 1978 the IRDP was introduced in 2,300 blocks and all the blocks in the country were brought under IRDP by the end of 1980. In order to administer IRDP each district in the country was provided with District Rural Development Agency by 1981. The rapid progress made by IRDP was due to the emphasis given to development of rural poor in India.

Basing upon the definitions of Subramaniyam (1977), Rai (1979), Naidu & Murali (1979), Parthasarathy (1981), Desai (1983) and others, integrated rural development could be considered as a strategy based on integrated use of all resources for generation of employment and income for the benefit of the rural poor. The programme was based on the objectives of promoting full and gainful employment among the rural poor, developing opportunities of employment, promoting effective use of natural resources and creating mass awaking and scientific temperament.
In the Sixth Plan period the programme covered 64.63 lakhs target people in rural areas involving an expenditure of rupees 1,766 crores. The Seventh Plan was intended to extend IRDP to cover 20 million poor at an estimated cost of Rs. 3,473 crores. Andhra Pradesh made rapid progress in implementation of Integrated Rural Development Programme. During the years 1980 to 1988 about 20 lakhs of rural poor were covered by IRDP in Andhra Pradesh.

While the progress made by the IRDP in terms of the number of beneficiaries covered exceeded the targets, studies on the impact of IRDP pointed out that the programme succeeded only partially. The study made by P.E.O. in 1985 concluded that only 49 percent of the beneficiaries were able to cross the poverty line. NABARD (1984) has come to the conclusion that 26 percent of the schemes did not reach the rural poor. Findings of Srivastava in Punjab revealed that the programme failed to enlist people's participation. Rao & Natarajan (1988) were of the opinion that majority of the beneficiaries failed to raise their economic status and that they were unable to repay the IRDP loans.

Keeping in view the need for studying the impact of IRDP on rural poor, the present study "Integrated Rural
Development Programme: A Study of Problems and Prospects of the beneficiaries at Mylavaram Mandal in Cuddapah district, has been undertaken. The primary objective of the study is to analyse the impact of IRDP in developing rural poor in Mylavaram Mandal. The other objectives of the study are:

1. To study the scope and extent of IRDP programme launched in Cuddapah district in general and Mylavaram Mandal in particular.

2. To study the socio-economic profile of the IRDP beneficiaries.

3. To assess the impact of IRDP on the socio-economic conditions of the beneficiaries.

4. To examine the critical points of the programme and the problems confronted by the beneficiaries in programme implementation.

5. To suggest measures for improving the effectiveness of IRDP.

The present study is based on the responses of 122 IRDP beneficiaries in Mylavaram Mandal of Cuddapah District. Being part of chronically drought affected area, Cuddapah district consists of 62 percent of people who can be considered
as poor. However, since majority of the poor are skilled and since the region is having fertile land and natural resources, the scope for IRDP is very wide in this district. Over the years, more than 70,816 poor families were covered by IRDP in Cuddapah District.

Mylavaram Mandal is predominantly characterised by the rural poor, to be precise 65.5 percent of its households are living below the poverty line. Agricultural labour, marginal farmers and small farmers account for majority of the rural poor. Out of 4,044 poor families in the mandal, 328 families were covered by IRDP during the year 1984 to 1990. Thus IRDP has reached only a minor segment of the target population. The conclusions of the study on implementation of IRDP in Cuddapah district and Mylavaram Mandal are given below:

1. Cuddapah district in general and Mylavaram in particular are very backward with 62.4 percent and 65.5 percent of the respective population living under poverty line.

2. A total number of 70,816 families were covered by IRDP in Cuddapah district during the years 1980-1988.
3. There was a gradual decline in the beneficiaries covered in Cuddapah district from 1982 onwards upto 1985-86.

4. The IRDP beneficiaries in Cuddapah district were given a subsidy of nearly 728 lakhs upto 1988. The amount of subsidy distributed in 1983-84 and in 84-85 was less than the subsidy given in the corresponding previous years.

5. Credit to the extent of Rs. 1,460 lakhs was given to the IRDP beneficiaries in Cuddapah. The credit given in 1981-82, 1982-83, 1983-84 and 1984-85 was less than the credit extended in the corresponding preceding years.

6. As against a total number of 4,044 per families in Mylavaram mandal only 328 (8.11 percent), were covered under IRDP. The coverage is very low with reference to the landless families and rural artisans.

7. Inspite of prevailing drought, majority of beneficiaries covered by IRDP in Mylavaram mandal were helped in programmes concerned with agriculture, sericulture, horticulture etc.

8. Only 25 percent of the beneficiaries in Mylavaram mandal could under take programmes in territory sector.
9. There was decline in the implementation of IRDP programme in terms of beneficiaries covered and subsidy and credit extended to them in the years 1985-86 and in 1988-89.

While the coverage of IRDP in terms of beneficiaries in Cuddapah district as well as Mylavaram Mandal is low, to measure the impact of the programme on the beneficiaries, a sample of 122 beneficiaries were studied with the help of an interview schedule. The beneficiaries presented the following features.

1. Despite of the guidelines to give preference to women in selection of IRDP beneficiaries, only 12.3 percent of beneficiaries were found to be women.

2. Majority of the beneficiaries were middle aged persons as nearly 64 percent of them were in the aged group of 40.60 years.

3. Inspite of high illiteracy, IRDP programme in Mylavaram mandal covered mostly the literates. Precisely, 65.57 percent of the beneficiaries were literates.

4. The beneficiaries in Mylavaram mandal were drawn from socially weaker sections. 36 percent of the beneficiaries belonged to Scheduled Castes and 7.4 percent
were from Scheduled Tribes.

5. The beneficiaries represented various occupational groups such as agricultural labour (21.3%), artisans (24.6%), Marginal farmers (19.7%) and small farmers (10.7%).

6. The annual income of the beneficiaries shows that 32.8 percent did not satisfy the stipulation that the income of beneficiaries should not exceed Rs.4,800.

7. The extent of awareness on Integrated Rural Development among the beneficiaries was found to be very poor. Only 20 percent of the beneficiaries were aware of the objectives of the IRDP. About 36 percent of the respondents had sufficient knowledge about the conditions of eligibility of IRDO assistance. Only 42 percent of the beneficiaries had knowledge about the identification process and only 58 percent of the respondents were aware various programmes implemented under IRDP.

The conclusions on the programme participation could be listed as:

1. Agriculture, irrigation, sericulture and horticulture attracted nearly 45 percent of the beneficiaries.
2. 24.6 percent of the beneficiaries sought help for weaving and related activity.

3. Programmes of animal husbandry like sheep and goat rearing and fishing were adopted by nearly 24 percent of the beneficiaries.

4. More than half of the beneficiaries obtained a credit ranging from ₹ 8,000 to 10,000.

5. Only 17 percent of the beneficiaries were given credit in cash while 65.6 percent were given credit in goods or kind form.

6. The subsidy was given to all the beneficiaries and 78.7 percent of them were given subsidy ranging from ₹ 1,500 to ₹ 3,000.

IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME

IRDP schemes in Mylavaram Mandal succeeded in most cases in generating assets for the beneficiaries. The assets varied from bullock carts to ploughs, agriculture implements, tube-wells, horticulture plantation, sericulture units, sheep, goats, dairy animals, poultries, fisheries, tailoring units, leather kits, weaving units, weaving accessories, musical instruments, and petty business shops.
Only eight respondents failed to utilise IRDP schemes in raising assets of their own. About 93 percent of the respondents could acquire assets through IRDP schemes. However, assets valued at more than Rs. 1,500 were acquired only by 22 percent of the respondents.

Opportunities for employment generation were created through IRDP schemes in all cases. However, reasonable employment (90 to 270 days per year) was generated in case of the schemes adopted by 73 percent of the respondents only.

The assets and the employment opportunities resulted in generating additional income in case of 96 percent of the beneficiaries. However, only 10.66 percent of the beneficiaries were in a position to earn more than Rs. 3,000 annually through IRDP schemes. The annual income generated through the IRDP schemes in case of 63 percent of the respondents was to the tune of Rs. 1,000 to 2,000.

The schemes related agriculture and irrigation (58.97%) were found to be more successful in generating more than Rs. 2,000 annual income additionally. It was followed by schemes concerned with sericulture and horticulture.
(44.4%) and artisan development (41.2%). Thus the performance of schemes under petty business and animal husbandry was found to be unsatisfactory. The schemes adopted by forward castes and backward castes generated better income than the schemes followed by Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The overall impact of IRDP can only be measured through the number of families that crossed poverty line after adopting various programmes. In Mylavaram Mandal, out of 122 beneficiaries, only 34 were found to have crossed poverty line. However, 22 of them were having income of more than Rs. 6,400 even to prior to the introduction of IRDP. Thus only 12 families have come to cross poverty line due to IRDP. The schemes, in other cases, have helped to increase the annual income of the beneficiaries.

The final conclusions of the study in relation to the objectives of the study are discussed here under.

**SCOPE OF IRDP**

Cuddapah district and Mylavaram Mandal consists of 2,17,456 and 4,044 poor families respectively. Hence IRDP
has a wide scope in this area. As the district is a chronically drought prone area, there is a necessity to evolve schemes concerned with cottage and rural industries in the district. The availability of natural mineral resources in Cuddapah district could be used effectively in raising the standard of rural people.

The progress of IRDP in Cuddapah district and Mylavaram Mandal is very much limited, as only 70,816 families in the district and 328 in Mylavaram Mandal were covered by IRDP schemes so far. The extent of coverage thus comes to 32.56 percent in the district and 8.11 percent in Mylavaram manda.

Agriculture and animal husbandry are major sectors in which most of the schemes of IRDP are being sponsored. Agriculture schemes account for 36 percent at the district level and 57 percent at the Mandal. Animal husbandry programmes were extended to 18 percent of the beneficiaries in Mylavaram Mandal and 14 percent in Cuddapah district. The schemes related to tertiary sector account for 6 percent of the beneficiaries in district and 9 percent at the Mandal. Thus there is a strong need for identifying IRDP schemes related to territory sector in the area.
THE BENEFICIARIES

The guidelines for identification of beneficiaries under IRDP in the VIth Plan prescribed a limit of an annual income of Rs. 3,500. Subsequently the limit was raised to Rs. 4,800 in the Seventh Plan. These limits were prescribed with an objective of ensuring developing assistance exclusively for the rural poor. However, as per our study, 18 percent of the respondents were earning more than Rs. 6,400 annually and they cannot be considered as poor.

The programme of IRDP envisaged that 20 percent of the beneficiaries should be women. Against this norm, only 12.3 percent of the beneficiaries were found to be women in Mylavaram Mandal. The selection of IRDP beneficiaries in Mylavaram Mandal certainly helped the Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and Backward Castes. About 95 percent of the beneficiaries were drawn from these weaker sections.

While 65.6 percent of the beneficiaries in Mylavaram Mandal were found to be literate their awareness level on IRDP was found to be very low.
IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME

The programme of IRDP succeeded in promoting assets as well as employment opportunities among the beneficiaries. Assets were generated in as many as 93.4 percent of the schemes. However, assets valued at more than ₹. 1,500 were generated in case of only 22.13 percent of respondents. All the schemes launched in Mylavaram succeeded generating employment opportunities for beneficiaries. However, reasonable employment was created only in case of 72 percent of the scheme.

The schemes failed to generate additional income only in case of four percent of the respondents. The additional annual income generated by 41.81 percent of the respondents was more than ₹. 2,000.

The net impact of the programme shows that 10 percent of the beneficiaries were able to enhance their level of income over and above the poverty limit. About 20 percent are likely to be cross poverty line very shortly. By and large, every respondent was in a position to improve his economic status.
CRITICAL AREAS OF IRDP

The beneficiaries confronted many problems in applying IRDP schemes. Some of them (15.57%) faced problems getting their names included in the beneficiaries list. More than half of the respondents complained against the official delay in processing their applications. About 67 percent of the respondents felt that there was undue delay in sanctioning of credit by the banks. 73 percent of the respondents felt that they had problems in marketing their products. Thus there is need for evolving a simplified and foolproof system of identification of beneficiaries and processing their applications. There is need for arranging timely credit, working capital and marketing facilities for enabling the schemes to deliver the expected results.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF IRDP

The most prominent suggestion offered by the respondents is to appoint a Village Coordinator for IRDP schemes. The coordinator can look into matters related to identification of beneficiaries processing the applications, sponsoring suitable schemes and coordination with banks, insurance agencies and marketing organisations.
Some of the respondents suggested a time limit, preferably of one month, for processing the applications by the officials and by banks. To solve the marketing problem, the beneficiaries suggested that IRDP should be linked to the co-operative and public marketing agencies. Some of the beneficiaries also felt that each beneficiary must be given a short term orientation and training so as to ensure effective utilization of the development assistance. The beneficiaries also suggested that the local leaders should be eliminated from identification process as they felt that the local leaders are biased in their selection.

The analysis of the schemes and their effectiveness leads us to the conclusion that only routine schemes that concerned with agriculture and animal husbandry are being encouraged in Mylavaram Mandal as well as Cuddapah district. Artisans with traditional skills are being neglected. It is essential to diversify the rural population to the territory sector through promoting schemes related to pottery, blacksmithy, carpentry etc..

As quarrying is a major activity in Cuddapah District, the beneficiaries could be encouraged to take quarry works
either individually or in groups. There is a vast potential for introducing schemes concerned with food products in this district. Preparation of pickles, fruit juice, fruit cakes etc., can be considered as priority schemes in this region, since horticulture is a major activity of people in this district.

In the conclusion it can be stated that the IRDP schemes introduced in Mylavaram Mandal reached only a small portion of the rural poor. Most of the schemes were concerned with primary and secondary sector. While the schemes were successful in generating assets and employment, only 10 percent of the beneficiaries were able to earn sufficient income to cross the poverty line. By extending this scheme to more number of beneficiaries; by diversifying this scheme to the tertiary sector; by giving sufficient orientation to the beneficiaries; by reducing the time taken for processing the application; by improving the marketing facilities; and by appointing a co-ordinator for IRDP programme exclusively, integrated rural development programme could tackle the problem of rural poverty more effectively.