UNIT 3 INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (IRDP)

Structure

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- describe the Government Policies and Programmes for tackling rural poverty and the changes made from time to time;
- explain the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and its Operational Strategy in detail;
- describe the processes involved in the identification of the Families Below the Poverty Line (BPL Families) and the specific arrangements for the weaker sections (SCs /STs/Women) under the programme;
- analyse the impact of the programme; and
- outline the current status of the programme.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

We have read about the first two types of programmes in the two units preceding this one. In this unit we focus on IRDP—a national programme for poverty alleviation directed at specific target groups of beneficiaries. But first, let us have a brief preview of the programmes that preceded IRDP.

In the initial stages of planned development, particularly during the 1950s and the 1960s, it was thought that with accelerated economic growth both in the agricultural and the industrial sectors, the benefits of the growth will reach to all the sections and all the regions of the country through the *spread or trickle down effect*. The Community Development Programme also focused on comprehensive development of the villages hoping that through the development of the rural sector activities and rural infrastructure, all the sections of the rural population would benefit and that would take care of the poverty alleviation also. During 1960s, agricultural development became the focus as the country was facing food shortage, and as a result of intensive agriculture development programmes, particularly in areas with favourable agro–climatic conditions and high potential for agriculture, India achieved green revolution and became self-sufficient in food production.

While the green revolution was the most welcome situation, as dependence on USA and other countries for food got eliminated, it resulted in two types of problem—regional imbalances and income disparities. The regions endowed with high agricultural potential grew faster and the remaining areas remained backward. Similarly, the farmers with sizeable land, irrigation facilities and access to easy credit prospered, while others particularly the small and the marginal farmers and agriculture labourers could not reap the benefits of the green revolution. Also income disparities became visible and alarming. Mechanization of agriculture displaced human labour, particularly the unskilled daily wage earners, though it generated employment for the skilled labour. Overall, however, the total employment has declined in relation to rising labour force due to high growth in population. Thus the Green Revolution did little for generating employment opportunities for the fast expanding labour force.

It was during this period that the concept of 'Growth with Social Justice' or 'growth with redistribution' was being discussed in the developing countries as most of them were facing the problem of mass poverty. It was also felt that apart from the relative inequality in the rural population, there was also an ***absolute level of poverty***. This crystallized into the concept of **poverty line**, which became a useful tool to measure levels of poverty and also design strategies to alleviate rural poverty.

Keeping the foregoing details in view, the draft Fourth Five-year Plan suggested remedial measures to deal with both the regional imbalances and the income disparities. Accordingly, two streams of special rural development programmes, one for minimizing the regional imbalances and the other to reduce income disparities between the various sections of the rural people, were started during the Fourth Plan.

During the Fourth and the Fifth Plans, three kinds of measures characterized the approaches to the alleviation of poverty:

- A national programme of minimum needs;
- Programmes designed to reduce regional disparities and promote development of backward areas; and
- Anti-poverty programmes directed at specific target groups.

Following the recommendations in the All India Credit Review Committee Report (1969), the Fourth Five-year Plan aimed, inter alia, at enabling small and marginal farmers and agricultural labour to derive benefits from the development process. A programme specifically focused on them, called the Small Farmers Development Programme, was launched in 1973. It was expected that generally the size of the holdings of small farmers would be between 1 to 2 hectares in the case of land that could be irrigated, and up to 3 hectares in the case of dry areas. Farmers with less than 1 hectare of land holding were termed *marginal farmers*. Those who received more than 50 per cent of their income from agricultural labour were termed *agricultural labourers*. It was assumed that with the provision of credit, irrigation, price support and marketing, farming operations could be made viable.

Accordingly, special agencies called Small Farmers Development Agencies (SFDAs), registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, were set up for the implementation of the programme to assist small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and rural artisans. Each agency had a governing body, mainly consisting of representatives of institutional agencies and district administration with the Collector or Deputy Commissioner as the Chairman. The main functions of SFDAs were to:

- identify the target group beneficiaries, i.e., eligible small farmers;
- study and identify their problems;

- formulate suitable schemes for their benefit;
- seek institutional support;
- induce the institutional credit source to provide medium and long term credit;
- provide subsidy to the beneficiaries as follows – (a) small farmers @ 25 % of the project cost; b) others @ 33.33 % of the project cost and (c) for SCs & STs @ 50 % of the project cost; and
- arrange for extension services and supplies.

The objective of these schemes was to help the rural poor in raising their income levels. To achieve this, it was decided to help them to adopt improved agricultural technology, provide greater access to irrigation and other production increasing measures, and diversify their farm economy through subsidiary activities like animal husbandry, dairy farming, horticulture, sericulture, etc. They also sought to enroll the beneficiaries as members of credit cooperatives so that they could obtain credit facilities. Forty-six pilot SFDA projects were started during the Fourth Plan.

After two years of the implementation of SFDA programme, it was noticed that mostly it was the small farmer who was taking advantage of this programme, while the marginal farmers, agriculture labourers and artisans were not adequately covered. Keeping this in view and to meet the specific needs of these groups the scheme of Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Development Agencies (MFAL) was

Table 3.1: Progress of SFDA Projects since their inception and during the Fourth and the Fifth Plans.

Programme	Up to the end of Fourth Plan	During Fifth Plan (up to March 1978)	1978-79	1979-80 (up to November)	Since inception up to Nov. 1979
1. No. of beneficiaries identified (in millions)	3.93	1.73	1.66	0.22	16.53
2. No. enrolled as members of cooperatives (in millions)	1.96	4.26	0.81	0.09	7.12
3. No. of beneficiaries (in millions)					
i) Minor Irrigation	0.17	0.49	0.14	0.05	0.84
ii) Milch Cattle Programme	0.08	0.30	0.13	0.05	0.56
iii) Poultry (in '000)	0.80	0.80	0.30	0.10	2.00
iv) Other Animal Husbandry Programmes	0.03	0.15	0.05	0.02	0.25
v) Rural Artisans Programme	0.80	0.40	-	-	1.20
vi) Rural Works Programme	0.23	0.06	-	-	0.28
vii) Agricultural Implements	1.13	3.36	1.05	0.35	5.88
4. Loans disbursed (Rs. crores)					
a) Through Cooperatives					
i) Short term	*	*	49.42	20.48	*
ii) Medium term	16.18	58.84	23.07	7.90	106.00
iii) Long term	35.18	70.07	19.65	81.35	133.03
b) Through Commercial Banks					
i) Short term	*	*	55.91	21.00	*
ii) Term Loans	10.65	36.05	66.28	13.38	126.37
5. Amount released (Rs. crores)	46.84	110.91	40.64	11.13	209.53
6. Amount utilized (Rs. crores)	41.71	110.44	44.20	14.30	210.64

Note: Figures may not total exactly due to rounding of figures.

* Short term loans are for seasonal agricultural operations. Therefore, cumulative totals are not given.

Source: Annual Report of the Ministry of Rural Reconstruction– 1980, Government of India, New Delhi.

introduced in 1975. The objectives and the process of implementation of MFAL were the same as those of SFDA. MFAL, however, was merged with SFDA in the year 1976-77. Table 3.1 shows the performance of SFDAs since their inception and over the period of the Fourth and the Fifth Five- year Plans.

The Programme Evaluation Organization (PEO) of the Planning Commission undertook a study of twenty one SFDAs and thirteen MFALs in seventeen states. It was published in 1978. The study covered two hundred and ninety six villages, 2.557 beneficiaries and 395 non-beneficiaries. The main findings of the study were:

Some of the shortcomings regarding the working of these agencies were reported to be as follows:

- Proper care was not exercised in the selection of some of the project areas.
- The identification of beneficiaries was not satisfactory. Very little attention was given to agricultural labourers and artisans. More than 9 per cent of the beneficiaries were ineligible.
- Imprecise definitions caused ambiguity. Guidelines were also not very clear.
- Coordination and Review Committees were inactive which affected supervision, coordination and direction.
- Cooperative infrastructure continued to be very weak in most of the project areas. A cumbersome procedure was adopted for grant of loans.
- In most of the projects, there were cases of poor utilization of inputs including loans.
- Awareness and knowledge about the programme among the target groups was low.
- Though the project agencies did a commendable job in achieving the targets, qualitatively most of these were not satisfactory.
- Programmes related to horticulture, minor irrigation, poultry and dairying did not make much headway in the project areas.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Write your answer in the space provided.

b) Check your answer with the possible answer provided at the end of the unit.

1) What steps were taken to reduce income disparities between the different sections of farmers?

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3.2 INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

While SFDA and MFAL were wholly beneficiary oriented programmes, the programmes like the Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), the Command Area

Development Agency (CADA) and the Hill Area Development Agency (HADA) also had components (however small) for direct assistance to beneficiaries and these overlapped with those of SFDA and MFAL. Besides, the criterion used for the selection of beneficiaries was exclusively the size of land, while other sources of the family income were ignored, though as per guidelines these were also to be taken into consideration. In addition to these inadequacies, these programmes were mainly focused on land-based activities and the opportunities for employment in other sectors were not considered. In order to overcome these deficiencies it was decided to merge all beneficiary oriented elements of other programmes with SFDA and recast a new programme and integrate that with various other sectors which have considerable potential for self-employment. Consequently, the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was launched in 1978 covering 2300 blocks which were already under SFDA, DPAP, CADA and HADA.

The Draft Sixth Plan (1978-83) observed that "Integration covers four principal dimensions: integration of sectoral programmes, spatial integration, integration of social and economic processes and above all the policies with a view to achieving a better fit between growth, reduction in poverty and employment generation. More specifically, it involves a sharp focus on target groups, comprising small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and rural artisans, and an extremely location-specific planning in the rural areas".

3.3 MAIN FEATURES OF IRDP

The focus of IRDP was also mainly on the same target group as under SFDA, i.e. small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and rural artisans. There was, however, considerable deviation/difference in its operational strategy. The main features of the programme were :

- For the first time the concept of Poverty Line Income was applied for the identification of the beneficiaries and therefore land was no more the criteria for the identification and selection of beneficiaries.
- The Poverty Line Income (for definition see Unit 1) was fixed at Rs. 3500 per year for an average family of five persons. The families with annual incomes below Rs. 3500 were identified as Below Poverty Line (BPL) families and were eligible for benefits under IRDP.
- The identification of beneficiaries was done through the Base Line Survey of Family Income.
- The subsidy rates were the same as used for the SFDA beneficiaries, i.e. 25 % for small farmers, 33.33 % for others and 50 % for SC/ST beneficiaries. In addition, the beneficiaries of any category in a group scheme were also eligible for 50 % subsidy.
- At least 30 percent of the total beneficiaries were supposed to be the SCs and STs. This was later increased to 50 %.
- Women beneficiaries from all categories were supposed to be 33.33 per cent which was later increased to 40 %.
- The self-employment projects would cover all the following areas:
  - Programmes of agricultural development including efficient utilization of land and water resources with the help of technology;
  - Programmes of animal husbandry as a subsidiary occupation directed mainly to the small peasant and agricultural labour households;
  - Programmes of marine fishery including harvesting of natural resources through trawlers, mechanized boats and country boats;

- Programmes of inland water and brackish water fisheries to maximize output of fish per unit of water;
- Programmes of social forestry;
- Programmes of farm forestry through small peasant households;
- Village and cottage industries including handlooms, sericulture and bee-rearing as important occupations for the artisan classes of the rural population;
- Service sector of the rural economy as self-employment for poorer families; and
- Programmes for skill formation and mobility of labour to meet the needs of organised labour for development works.

For the implementation of IRDP it was made essential to formulate Comprehensive Block Plans. These in turn were proposed to be linked to the district and state plans. In all of the above, people were sought to be actively involved. Also, the help of voluntary agencies was sought.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Write your answer in the space provided.

b) Check your answer with the possible answer provided at the end of the unit.

1) Describe the main features of IRDP.

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3.4 ADMINISTRATIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS OF IRDP

3.4.1 Administrative Setup

For the implementation of IRDP, a District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) was established in each district. In fact, the district agencies which had been established earlier for implementing various programmes like SFDA, DPAP, DDP, CADA, HADA, etc., were converted into DRDAs. The Project Director/Officer assisted by five to seven Assistant Project Officers (specializing in various disciplines) and other support staff were posted to manage DRDAs. Also a governing body to oversee the functioning of the DRDA in each district was constituted under the District Collector/ Dy. Commissioner as its chairman and sectoral heads, elected representatives (MPs, MLAs and ZP Chair Persons), representatives of banking institutions and NGOs are its members. DRDAs are societies registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

At the national level, the Ministry of Rural Development is responsible for the execution of the programme and also for making policies, providing guidance and monitoring of the programme. At the state level, the State Level Coordination Committee (SLCC) monitors the programme. At the district level, DRDAs implement the programme through blocks and other sectoral departments.

At the block level, the chief coordinator is the Block Development Officer (BDO). He has to ensure the timely preparation of plans. He/she is assisted by Extension Officers and the Village Level Workers (VLW) at the village level. Apart from official agencies, voluntary agencies and prominent voluntary action groups concerned with socio-economic activities pertaining to rural development may also be associated with the programmes. The funds for voluntary agencies are channelled through the Council for People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART).

3.4.2 Procedure for Implementation

The step-by-step procedure for the implementation of IRDP is discussed as follows:

i) ***Identification of Beneficiaries:*** The beneficiaries are identified through Base Line Income Surveys of the households, mainly covering the target groups and those whose annual family incomes from all sources put together remains below the poverty line income. This process resulted in lists of BPL (below poverty line) families. Conducting Base Line Income Surveys is the responsibility of DRDAs.

ii) ***The Poverty Line Income:*** It is the minimum value of the annual expenditure of an average family of five persons to meet the cost of daily food that provides 2400 Kilo Calories to every member of the family. The *poverty line income* fixed by the Planning Commission during the Sixth Plan was Rs. 3,500; for the Seventh Plan it was fixed at Rs. 6,400; the Eighth Plan fixed it at Rs. 11,000; and for the Ninth Plan, the poverty line income was calculated state-wise according to the cost of living in the respective states and varied from Rs. 16,000 to Rs. 18,000.

iii) After the list of BPL families is finalized for each village, a priority list of the families is also prepared. Certain categories, like assignees of ceiling surplus land, bonded labour who have been released and handicapped persons who are capable of undertaking economic activities, are given priority in receiving assistance. Once the list has been prepared, it is placed for discussion and approval in a meeting of the *Gram Sabha* called by the BDO.

iv) Initially, the BDO used to select the beneficiaries out of the approved and priority list and after the approval of DRDA, the same was used for assisting the beneficiaries. Later, a noble method was evolved to select beneficiaries and on-the-spot decisions were taken regarding the type of project and loan-cum-subsidy to be provided to them. This method was called *the implementation*. The meeting in which these decisions were taken was also attended by the block and bank officers and occasionally by the members of voluntary action groups.

v) The approved list is displayed in the village *panchayat* and the Block Office. In the selection of beneficiaries, cluster and group activities are preferred as providing infrastructural assistance is easier.

vi) Various projects are chosen but factors like the preference of the family, its skills, aptitude and ability, availability of forward and backward linkages are kept in view. Moreover, the size of the project is determined in relation to the gap between the poverty line and the family's income. Wherever possible, projects with lower cost estimates are preferred.

vii) Any activity having a *favourable incremental capital output ration* (ICOR) may be taken up in the primary, secondary or tertiary sectors. Efforts are made to diversity into industries, services and business activities to reduce the burden on farm sector projects.

viii) Among the selected beneficiaries, SCs & STs should be 50 %, women 40 % and disabled persons 3 %.

ix) Earlier, the assets were generally procured by the DRDA or any other authorized agency, preferably a government agency. Now, the beneficiaries can buy/procure them for and by themselves and provide the proof of purchasing/procuring them to the DRDA and the banks.

x) The assets related to animal husbandry (like animals and birds) provided under the scheme should be insured and the premium of the insurance should be included in the cost of the project.

xi) In 1990, the family credit scheme was introduced to provide a package of activities to more than one member of a family. The size of investment under family credit scheme was up to Rs. 25,000.

xii) In 1995, another component, called the Ganga Kalyan Yojana (GKY), was introduced under IRDP to encourage minor irrigation through deep tube wells.

3.4.3 Funding and Financing

The schemes and activities under the programme are financed through a package of subsidy and institutional credit. Since 1986, quarterly budgeting has been introduced by the Central Government for releasing the funds. According to this system, 15 per cent of allocations shall be utilized in the first quarter of the financial year (i.e. April to June) and 20 per cent of the allocation in the second quarter (cumulatively 35 per cent by the end of September). In case of shortfalls, the allocation is deducted from the second installment. Funds for the programme are released to DRDAs stipulating that the expenditure would be shared equally by the Centre and the State. Allocations for the Union Territories are met entirely by the Centre. The Department of Rural Development, Government of India, releases funds in two installments except for cold snow-bound districts for which funds are given in one installment.

For economic activities, different rates of subsidies are provided to the target groups. The pattern of subsidy is shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Subsidy Pattern Under IRDP

Category (1)	**Rate of subsidy** (2)	**Prior to 1990** (3)	**Ceiling of Subsidy After1990**
1. **Individual family**			
a) Small farmers	25 per cent	Rs. 3,000 per family in general and Rs. 4,000 in drought prone areas.	Rs. 4,000 per family in general and Rs. 5,000 in DPAP/DDP areas.
b) Marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, non-agricultural labourers and rural artisans	33.33 per cent	Rs. 3,000 per family in general and Rs. 4,000 in drought prone areas.	Rs. 4,000 per family in general and Rs. 5,000 in DPAP/DDP areas.
c) SCs and STs	50 per cent	Rs. 5,000 per family in all rural areas.	Rs. 6,000 per family in all rural areas.
2. **Group Schemes**			
a) Group schemes except Minor irrigation projects	50 per cent of the capital costs	Rs. 3,000 per family in general and Rs. 4,000 in drought prone areas.	Up to Rs. 50,000.
b) Community minor irrigation	50 per cent	No ceiling.	No ceiling.
3. **Rearing of heifers**			
a) Small and marginal farmers	50 per cent	Rs. 3,000 per family.	-
b) Agricultural Labourers	-	Rs. 3,000 per family.	-
c) Tribal families	-	Rs. 3,000 per family.	-

Source*: IRDP and Allied Programmes (A Manual),* Ministry of Rural Development, 1988, and the revised version of 1992.

The pattern of subsidy outlined in Table 3.2 applies also to the groups of women under the programmes of Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) and TRYSEM.

The subsidy is linked to credit and given in kind to the beneficiaries (except the working capital component which may be given in cash) for projects which are economically viable. For capital investments up to Rs. 1,000 each credit linkage is not obligatory.

As far as the credit component is concerned, it is usually sought to be ensured that the subsidy-credit ration is 1:2. The main part of the credit component comes from institutional finance. Loans are provided at a 10 per cent concessionary rate of interest. Loan applications are sponsored by the DRDA. On the basis of this, bank managers process applications and sanction loans. One day in the week is kept aside as the day for disbursement of IRDP credit.

General infrastructure support to the activities under the programme is expected to come from the regular sectoral Departments concerned in the states. Initially, 10 per cent of IRDP allocation was allowed for filling up critical gaps in the infrastructure. Now, it has been increased to 20 % in general and 25 % for hilly, tribal and the North-Eastern regions.

On April 1, 1988, a group life insurance scheme, for three years from the commencement of asset distribution, for IRDP beneficiaries (between the ages of 18 and 60 years), was introduced. The cost of insurance cover was provided entirely by the Government.

As we noted, under IRDP, the beneficiaries are provided a package of subsidy and credit. The subsidy element is provided by the government (shared equally by the Central and the State Government concerned). The loan credit is provided by the banking system including Commercial Banks, Cooperative Banks and Regional Rural Banks. While the volume of credit mobilized has been increasing, there has been a decline in the share of cooperative financial institutions. In 1988-89 a total credit of Rs.1232 crores was disbursed of which Rs. 1056 crores came from commercial banks (including Regional Rural Banks) and Rs. 176 crores (16.7 per cent) from cooperatives.

Disbursement of loans and subsidy in cash was introduced as a pilot measure in 22 selected blocks on April 1, 1986, and was extended to 50 blocks on January 1, 1989. The Service Area Approach adopted by the banking system under which a rural and semi-urban branch of a Commercial or Regional Rural Bank is assigned a few villages to serve was introduced on April 1, 1989, to provide better facilities.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Write your answer in the space provided.

b) Check your answer with the possible answer provided at the end of the unit.

1) What were the administrative and organizational arrangements for IRDP?

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3.5 PERFORMANCE OF IRDP

Having looked at the conceptual, administrative and financial aspects of IRDP, we will now review its performance in this section. Table 3.3 given below provides the financial and the physical achievements from the Sixth plan to the Eighth Plan and the first two years of the Ninth Plan.

Table 3.3: Performance of IRDP from Sixth Plan to 1998-99

Items	Achievements				
	VI Plan 1980-85	VII Plan 1985-90	Annual Plan 1990-1992	VIII Plan !992-1997	IX Plan 1997-98 & 1998-1999
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1. No. of Families assisted (no. in Lakhs)	16.56	18.77	4.99*	108.36	24.89**
2. Subsidy Disbursed (Rs. in Crores)	1661.17	3315.79	1147.38	3974.94	1271.09
3. Credit Mobilization (Rs. in Crores)	3101.61	5372.54	1783.28	7566.31	2977.36
4. Total Investment (Rs. in Crores)	4762.78	8688.83	2930.66	11541.25	4248.45
5. Subsidy – Credit Ratio	1:1.87	1:1.62	1:1.55	1:1.90	1:2.21
6. SC/ST Coverage (% of total beneficiaries)	39.10	44.99	49.46	46.40	45.00
7. Coverage of Women Beneficiaries (% of total beneficiaries)	N A	18.89	32.35	34.33	34.00

*This includes the second dose for old beneficiaries.

** Up to November 1999.

Source: 1) Seventh & Eighth Five Year Plans, Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi.

2) Annual reports of the Ministry of Rural development (1986-87/1990-91/1996- 97/1999-2000)

From the above table some important points emerge. For example, the subsidy credit ratio declined from the Sixth Plan to the Seventh Plan and annual Plans of 1990-91 and 1991-92. There are two reasons for this situation : (i) the ratio of SC and ST beneficiaries increased and they are eligible for 50 % subsidy ; and (ii) during the Seventh Plan and the annual plans (1990-92) there was a provision for refinancing/second dose of assistance to old beneficiaries. In this case, under the provision that no loan was required for a working capital up to Rs. 1,000, most of the old beneficiaries were given only the subsidy part. These two factors have reduced the subsidy–credit ratio considerably. The ratio has, however, increased considerably during the Eighth and the Ninth Plans.

The performance of IRDP was monitored through a series of concurrent evaluations. The first round was conducted in 1985-86, the second in 1987-88, the third in 1989-90 and the fourth and last in 1995-96. In each round, among other things, qualitative aspects and leakage of funds were also assessed. Based on the outcome of the evaluation reports, many amendments were introduced in the programme design and also in the process of implementation. Some of the findings of the latest round of concurrent evaluation (1995-96) are as follows:

i) The percentage of the beneficiaries belonging to Agriculture and Non–agriculture labour was about 42 %.

ii) The adequacy of funds for the schemes was adequate for 69.94 % of the activities and the remaining felt that it was inadequate.

iii) The average income generated from IRDP scheme by the beneficiaries was Rs. 2498 which was about 21 % of their total annual family income.

iv) As for leakages in the programme or loss of funds by way of making payments to Government Officials for seeking favours, 21.97 % said 'yes' and the remaining 'nil'.

In April 1999, the IRDP was redesigned in a new format by merging the other five programmes (TRYSEM, DWCRA, SITRA, MWS, SITRA) and renamed the Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY). The related new guidelines too have already been issued.

3.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we discussed IRDP, the national programme for combating rural poverty. We noted that three factors led to such a shift in perception: the realization that benefits of the 'Green Revolution' had not reached all the sections; the emergence of the concept of 'distributive justice in Development Economics' and the unrest and disquiet among the rural poor that took place around that time.

Next we focused on two poverty alleviation programmes undertaken in the Fourth and the Fifth Plans. We read about two agencies that catered to the needs of particular categories of the poor, viz. Small Farmers Development Agencies and Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Development Agencies.

Following this, we studied IRDP in detail. We discussed the background in which the programme was set up. We also read about the concept of 'integrated rural development', its organizational, administrative and financial aspects. And finally, we assessed its achievements and weaknesses.

3.7 KEY WORDS

Community Development : A programme launched for rural development in 1952.

Concurrent Evaluation : Periodic assessment of the progress of programme achievements.

Credit : Loan from the banks, cooperatives, etc.

Green Revolution : Break through in increasing agricultural production during the late sixties.

Implementation : Execution of a plan.

Project Formulation : Systematic planning for a project or scheme.

Monitoring : Continuous surveillance or supervision.

Noble Method : It means a simple and transparent method.

Regional Imbalances : Developmental disparities between different regions.

Subsidy : Free government grant of money.

Weaker Sections : Socially and economically backward sections of the population, i.e. Scheduled Castes, Tribals and women.

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3.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress I

1) Following the recommendations in the All India Credit Review Committee Report (1969), the Fourth Five-year Plan aimed, inter alia, at enabling small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers to derive benefits from the development process. Accordingly, a programme specifically focused on them, called the Small Farmers Development Programme, was launched in 1973. It was expected that generally the size of holdings of small farmers would be between 1 to 2 hectares in the case land that could be irrigated, and up to 3 hectares in the case of dry areas. Farmers with less than 1 hectare of land holding were termed marginal farmers. Those who received more than 50 per cent of their income from agricultural labour were termed agricultural labourers. It was assumed that with the provision of credit, irrigation, price support and marketing, farming operations could be made viable.

Check Your Progress II

1)
- For the first time the concept of Poverty Line Income was applied for the identification of prospective beneficiaries and land ceased to be the criterion for the identification and selection of beneficiaries.
- The Poverty Line Income (for definition see Unit 1) was fixed at Rs. 3,500 per year for an average family of five persons.
- The identification of beneficiaries was done through Base Line Survey.
- The subsidy rates were 25 % for small farmers, 33.33 % for others and 50% for SC/ST beneficiaries. In addition, the beneficiaries of any category in a group scheme were also eligible for 50 % subsidy.
- At least 30% of the total beneficiaries were supposed to be the SCs and STs. The provision was later increased to 50 %.
- Women beneficiaries from all categories were supposed to be 33.33%, and the provision was later increased to 40 %.

Check Your Progress III

1) - For the implementation of IRDP, a District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) was established in each district.
   - A governing body to oversee the functioning of DRDA in each district was constituted under the District Collector / Dy. Commissioner as its chairperson.
   - At the national level, the Ministry of Rural Development is responsible for the execution of the programme and also for making policies, providing guidance and monitoring of the programme. At the State Level, the State Level Coordination Committee (SLCC) monitors the programme.
   - At the Block level, the chief coordinator is the Block Development Officer (BDO). The BDO is assisted by Extension Officers and the Village Level Workers (VLW) at the village level.