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## **UNIT 2 RESEARCH IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT RETROSPECTS: NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES**

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## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

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Rural development aims at increasing the opportunities of rural people in respect of health, knowledge and skill development, income and participation in decision-making. It also creates a conducive environment in reducing social and economic inequalities and conflicts by bringing all present and potential natural resources to most optimal use, conservation and development.

Rural Development encompasses a broad spectrum of subjects related with both natural and human resources in an integrated manner, most probably, this is the reason research studies available on these areas have yet to be compiled in an exhaustive manner. We can, however, group the areas of research in rural development as follows.

- Rural Development
- Voluntary Actions in Rural Development
- Integrated Rural Development Programme
- Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas
- Employment Generating Programmes
- Area Development Programmes
- Rural Infrastructure Development Fund
- The Public Distribution System
- Labour and Wages
- Status of Employment
- Agricultural Wages
- Education, Health, Social Development
- Gokul Gram Yojana
- Indira Awaas Yojana
- Integrated Wasteland Development
- Integrated Tribal Development Agency
- Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana
- Concurrent Evaluation of Million Wells Scheme
- Poverty Alleviation Programmes
- District Rural Development Agencies
- Panchayati Raj in Rural Development
- People's Participation
- Employment Guarantee Schemes
- Role of Cooperatives in Rural Development
- Socio-Economic Surveys

In this Unit an attempt has been made to introduce you to different areas of research on rural development. Under each area, a synoptic view of research studies has been projected covering objectives, methodology and findings of the studies.

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## **2.1 OBJECTIVES**

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On the completion of this Unit, you should be able to:

- analyse the trends of research in rural development in a few selected areas;
- state the different research methodologies used in rural development;
- list the findings of studies conducted in India and abroad; and
- work out further research priorities in rural development.

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## **2.2 RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

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Rural development is a broad area of research. There have been several attempts to conduct studies on some selected dimensions of this area. Some of the major research studies on various dimensions of this area were conducted by Richa (2004), Madhu (2003), Krishnakumar (2003), Haloi (2002), Thaha et.al. (2002), Srivastava, Rao (2002), Rao and Shridhar (2002), Badari (2000), Purushothaman (2000), Francken and Bhagat (2000), Acharya (1996); World Bank, (1995a), Mohiuddin; Prasad, Yadapanavar, Achari (1988). The common findings from these studies are that the organisational structures for rural development are generally integrated within a larger system of overall economic growth and social development. Within each approach/strategy of rural development it follows certain overall policy statements on their roles and functions. The systems, however, have unique policy making models. Some diagnostic studies (Mohiuddin, et.al.1988), were conducted to highlight organisational effectiveness, its strength and weaknesses and areas of opportunities for future change.

Richa (2004) has made an attempt to examine inter-state disparities in rural infrastructure in India and its impact on agricultural development and rural poverty through a cross sectional study of six major states. The study reveals that extreme disparities continue to persist with respect to the availability of economic and social indicators in rural areas at the state level. Correlation and multiple regression analysis have been used to study the relationship between rural infrastructure and agricultural development and rural poverty. Economic and social infrastructure was found to have a strong positive effect on agricultural productivity and a strong negative, effect on rural poverty. Indicators such as irrigation, rural roads, institutional credit and rural literacy were identified as being most critical in enhancing agricultural productivity, while in the case of rural poverty infrastructural facilities particularly irrigation, rural roads, post offices, bank credit, educational qualification and literacy were identified as more vital factors. The analysis provides inputs for improving policy initiatives.

The study conducted by Madhu (2003) in Nigeria has drawn international attention. In this study the researcher has made an attempt to examine the role of Institutional Framework for Rural Development Administration. The study reveals that different bodies pursue rural development in most developing countries, and each of them operates with its various defined objectives as though the others did not exist. Moreover, the author feels that, rather than build up rural development traditions within their national administrative set-up, the countries including Nigeria continue to practice the system of creating ad hoc bodies to implement their programmes of

rural development. The result is that neither coordination nor sustainability of rural development is achieved. Herein lies the justification for the institutional framework for the administration of rural development in Nigeria.

Kumar (2003) in his study on Decentralised Planning and Sustainable Development examines the decentralised planning exercise undertaken in Kerala with mass participation during the Ninth Five Year Plan. The study tries to examine two water resource harvesting projects undertaken in the local level in the state. Kumar observes that the popular participation has ensured the successful completion of these projects but beyond that the process of decentralised planning raises many questions. In the process of making projects “incentive compatible”, the local bodies are constrained to ignore their preoccupation with considerations of egalitarianism. The study argues that this could probably lead to macro-economic price mechanism making its indirect entry into the pricing of public utilities.

Krishnamurthy (1989) studied the problems and prospects of rural development in terms of structural determinants by identifying the different structures of the rural community in order to understand the resource distribution and control over resources by different groups. The study further examined the familiarity of rural people of different development programmes and identified the felt-needs and aspirations of the different groups.

Chaudhary (1988) was of the opinion that factions and factionalism affects the ongoing process of rural development in a positive or negative way. He also explored how factions can be used for rural development.

Charyulu, et.al. (1988), conducted case studies – one each in rural workers organisers scheme, anti-poverty beneficiary group and voluntary organisations and delineated socio-economic and political profile of the beneficiaries. The study identified and demarcated the problems of policy, programmes and organisations. It also examined the relative merits of the schemes and also studied the impact of these schemes on rural poor.

Panda (1988), made an attempt to examine the processes and programmes of rural development in India and to suggest an alternative approach for rural development.

An attempt was made by George et.al. (1988) to compare the Rural Development in South Asia. The studies were based mainly on secondary data, examines the strategies of rural development, various programmes implemented in this connection, problems faced in the implementation vis-à-vis administrative structure for rural development and also the impact if these efforts on poverty alleviation in the country.

Another study undertaken in South, West and East districts of Sikkim examines the problems of rural development in Sikkim with special reference to agriculture and concludes that rural development programme is very much bureaucratic oriented (Dasgupta and Sahistaram, 1987).

To assess the impact of development and levels of living among Scheduled Castes and Tribes, Pandey (1989) conducted a study to find out the pattern of income, asset distribution, monthly consumer expenditure, nutritional level, indebtedness, capital formation, housing condition, educational level, etc., of the scheduled caste and tribal households in the ten sample villages. A large number of the respondents expressed satisfaction with the development programmes. Study revealed that the impact of development was higher on families near the poverty line when compared to others.

**Check Your Progress 1**

List some of the areas of research in Rural Development.

**Note:** a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

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### **2.3 VOLUNTARY ACTIONS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

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A study undertaken by Despande (1987) took an overview of the activities of voluntary organisations engaged in resolving the problems of rural development in general and development of the rural poor in particular. Highlighting the contributions of voluntary organisations, the researcher explains the activities pertaining of socially deprived castes and communities. He also analysed their contributions in understanding problem and development of backward regions.

The study undertaken by Narayana (1988) to examine the organisation and management of voluntary organisations reveals that building up a viable organisational base becomes problematic for most voluntary agencies. The organisational pattern observed is a blend of traditional Indian organisation and Western professional organisation.

Arul (1988) studied a voluntary organisation called Association of Seva Farms to examine the role of voluntary actions in rural development. This is a study of the functioning of Association of Seva Farms – a voluntary organisation engaged in rural development in Natham block of Tamil Nadu with an intention of drawing lessons for rural development efforts at large. It notes that Association of Seva Farms helps the people to evolve their programmes resulting in great assortment of schemes. The study also identifies certain lessons for rural development elsewhere.

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### **2.4 INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (IRDP)**

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This programme was initiated in 1978 with a view to integrate different activities locally in a micro-level planning framework at the district and block levels, in the revised Sixth Plan. However, while the canvas was extended from selected districts to the whole country, the programme was simplified mainly as a small loan-cum subsidy scheme for generating self-employment among families identified below the poverty line, i.e. those whose annual incomes did not exceed Rs. 3500 (1980 prices). There were subsequent alterations in the Seventh and Eighth Plans: it was decided to refinance some of those families who had not been able to cross the poverty line; up to 30 per cent coverage was to be made for women even though this was a family targeted programme: the investment output ratio was raised to exceed 2.5-3 against 1.5 in the Sixth Plan and investment schemes were diversified to include rural industries and occupations. The cost of the programme was equally shared between the Centre and states.

Rath (1995) studied the programme and critically evaluated the scheme. He questioned the administrative targeting approach, the excessive centralisation in decision-making and utilisation of loan by the poor. He stated that the programme hardly made any impact on the poor. Dreze (1990) concluded similarly. Four large-sample based studies, by the RBI, NABARD, Planning Commission and Institute of Financial Management Research (IFMR) concluded that the IRDP has not been an unequivocal failure. These studies found that there are regional variations: more than half the sample households in each study had received IRDP funds and 20-50 per cent had crossed the poverty line. An overwhelming majority of the respondents expressed satisfaction with the IRDP. Studies done on regional variation revealed that the more developed regions and those families near the poverty line showed a better performance when compared to others (Subbarao, 1985; Rao and Rangaswamy, 1988). Kurien (1987), in an elaborate study based on concurrent evaluations in the mid-eighties, concluded that the assistance went to the deserving poor, the communities had adequately participated in beneficiary selection, the assets distributed were sectorally balanced and the record of repayment was no worse than that in other government programmes. Kurien's findings, and for that matter data from the concurrent evaluation studies, are, however, generally viewed with skepticism. The government has meanwhile admitted that the IRDP has not been as successful as expected since the numbers crossing the poverty line were few and overdues were very large (GOI, 1992).

Bogaert and Chank (1987) undertook an action research project and evaluated the effectiveness of the IRD Programme by comparing terminal results with the data of the benchmark survey conducted for this purpose. They observed that economic conditions of the beneficiaries did not improve in a significant manner because of the assistance and also the intervention of the NGO did not result in any significant changes in the organisational set-up or the motivation of delivery mechanism.

Balakrishna and Rangacharyulu (1987) conducted an action research on IRDP Monitoring in Vikarabad block of Ranga Reddy district of Andhra Pradesh. The objectives of this action research were: to monitor the compliance of the guidelines for implementation of IRDP; to find out the problems faced in implementation and monitoring, and to devise appropriate innovations for effective remedial action. Among the problems recognised in implementation of IRDP include inadequate staff, lack of wholehearted involvement of the borrowers in the activities taken up and also conversion of IRDP loans into consumption loans. Absence of the extension officer in the block to look after IRDP work and also general attitudinal resistance are the problems identified in the monitoring.

A Case Study of Gulbarga District in Karnataka was conducted by Naik, (1988) to assess the economic impact of IRDP. This study examined the income and employment generation and asset formation under IRDP implemented in Gulbarga district of Karnataka. The study revealed that income, employment generation and asset formation was much below the expected level.

Similar study was also undertaken in Kerala state to identify various schemes implemented under social forestry programme and to assess the impact of social forestry programmes on income and employment generation in rural areas and the extent to which these programmes were successful in meeting the basic needs of the rural population (Varghese, 1987)

Singh (1987), conducted an evaluation study of Integrated Rural Development Programme in Bichpuri Block, Agra District (With Special Reference to Canara Bank). The study was based on the data collected from IRDP beneficiaries of Bichpuri block of Agra district. In all 64 beneficiaries (8 from each selected scheme financed by IRDP) from each popular schemes having at least 15 beneficiaries

financed under it, were selected and interviewed for this study. The study evaluates the impact on the economic status of the beneficiaries financed under IRDP, the financial viability of the selected schemes and identifies the problems of beneficiaries. The analysis shows that by adopting IRDP the average family income of sample beneficiaries. The analysis shows that by adopting IRDP the average family income as a whole. The total man-days of employment increased from about 658 in pre-assistance period to about 951 in post-assistance period. On the whole, 39.06 per cent of sample of beneficiaries were lifted above the poverty line.

Another study was undertaken in Madurai district of Tamil Nadu with the objectives to find out whether the beneficiaries are provided with substantial assistance under IRDP for generating additional income and to examine the opinion of the people towards official machinery. The study infers that there is an increase in income after IRDP assistance. However, it is observed that majority of people are not aware of various schemes under IRDP (Murugesan and Selvaraj, 1988).

Based on the data collected from Basti (Basti block), Garhwal (Khirsu block), Budaun, (Basauli block) and Etah (Aliganj block) districts of Uttar Pradesh, Verma, et.al., 1988 examined the process of selecting the IRDP beneficiaries, criteria adopted in selecting projects, and also the impact of IRDP on scheduled castes vis-à-vis beneficiaries belonging to non-scheduled castes.

Selvary, (1987) assessed the impact of IRDP on the socio-economic conditions of the weaker sections of the society in Chengelpattu district of Tamil Nadu.

A study carried out in Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland states to evaluate the performance of IRDP concludes that the programmes are partially successful in these states and only some beneficiaries have been able to come above the poverty line as a result of IRDP implementation (Srivastav, 1988).

As a part of concurrent Evaluation of Integrated Rural Development Programme Jose (1988) evaluated the effectiveness of IRDP in the case of both 'old' and 'new' beneficiaries and found out the inadequacies and shortfalls in IRDP performance in Kerala and Laskshadweep.

This study, carried out Tharakan, et.al., (1986) in Trivandrum district of Kerala state, aims at (i) examining the practice and problems relating to identification of beneficiaries under the programme, adequacy of funds, utilisation of loans and repayment performance and (ii) suggesting remedial measures for the improvement of the performance of the programme.

This evaluation study conducted by Basu (1988), covering a sample of respondents from all the twelve districts of the state, highlights the socio-economic features of the IRDP beneficiary families, implementation of the programme and economic levels attained by the beneficiaries. The study notes that the average income generated by the IRDP assets in the state is Rs. 1430 with an average investment of Rs. 3683 per family. Eight per cent of the beneficiary families have crossed the poverty line of 6400 p.a. and 80 per cent still hold the possession of the assets.

A research project undertaken by Sharma (1987) reviews human and physical resource endowments of Dholka and Dhandhuka taluks of Ahmedabad district of Gujarat, assesses the impact of various development programmes on the socio-economic conditions of the people and suggests coordinated development plan for the future.

A research study by Balaji (1986) based on the questionnaires survey and case studies, examines in a holistic manner the principal issues involved in the continuing and complex problems of rural poverty and rural development. The study calls for the effective government involvement in the role of facilitating and enabling the

effective functioning of organisations, including well thought out programme of investment in infrastructure and social overheads, improving mechanisms for dissemination of information concerning rural development programmes and procedures, and also enlisting professionals as advisors for tackling rural problems.

Muthayya, et.al. (1987) undertook a study on Motivational Patterns of Different Types of Beneficiaries of IRDP. This study of IRDP beneficiaries in three blocks of Tanjavur, Madurai, Ramanathapuram in Tamil Nadu, examines the motivations and aspirations of IRDP beneficiaries and also evolves a suitable strategy for these groups. The study reveals that rural population perceives only land as the means through which money can be earned and also assistance rather than relying on personal efforts for improving their life situation. Majority of the respondents shows a higher aspiration to their material possession.

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## **2.5 DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN RURAL AREAS**

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Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), as one of the sub-schemes of IRDP, was initiated in 50 districts in 1982-83 and was expanded to all the districts gradually and continued till 1998-99. The performance of DWCRA had established that group approach centring on women produced better results than individual-oriented schemes of IRDP. However, the results and experiences were not uniformly encouraging across the states. Several evaluation studies pointed out that though the scheme had been conceived well, the concept and philosophy had not been understood by implementing personnel. Target chasing had resulted in reporting unreliable quantitative performances while quality aspect of implementation was altogether neglected (Rajakutty, 1997).

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## **2.6 EMPLOYMENT GENERATING PROGRAMMES (EGP)**

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The practice of initiating public works to create jobs for the needy during times of droughts and famines is age-old. In the post-Independence period the earlier experiments of rural works programmes, crash employment programmes and the Pilot Rural Employment Project provided the experience to formally launch the EGS in Maharashtra in 1976, which was the forerunner to the all-India programmes in the 1980s and 1990s. In the 1970s, the urgency to initiate these programmes stemmed from the need to check rural to urban migration during the recurrent droughts, but in the 1980s and later, they have been judged to be necessary in combating unemployment among those who are available for work at the minimum wage for unskilled jobs.

The main problems associated with employment programmes are some what similar to those of the IRDP, despite these being self-targeting unlike the IRDP. Corruption is endemic, people's participation is woefully lacking, estimates of projects are unrealistic, community assets created wither away rapidly both due to lack of upkeep and inaccurate engineering specifications and the wages are too low. Some states have tried to diversify: the Maharashtra Government has actively linked the EGS activities with infrastructure creation and agricultural development in a village under its 'ideal village scheme' but so far there has been little success. Field observations reveals that guarantees are only on paper; in reality jobs are not provided for weeks for want of funds and bureaucratic indifference. Also, in the absence of any appreciable impact on employment generation, the state is burdened with a sizeable problem of keeping a large contingent on its payrolls which is turning out to be non-viable (Acharya, 1990; GOI, 1992).



Interestingly, there have been few critics of wage programmes unlike the IRDP and none have proposed discontinuing them. There are many who have proposed improvements and expansion in these studies to combat poverty more effectively. Despite all this, the JRY, EAS or any similar state sponsored schemes, which began with a lot of promise, failed to live up to expectation, as beneficiary participation has been missing. Even the EGS in Maharashtra has slowed down after the mid-nineties.

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## **2.7 AREA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES (ADP)**

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Two major programmes of Area Development are Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP). Rural Manpower Programme of 1978 was redesigned into DPAP and DDP for mitigating the severity of scarcity conditions by organising NIRD, Hyderabad labour-intensive and production-oriented works through augmenting land and water resources. Watershed approaches have come to be the primary strategy under these programmes.

Since the introduction of watershed approach land and water conservation and augmentation measures through DPAP, DDP and also EAS received substantial resources. Several Ministries (Agriculture, Rural Development, Environment and Forest) were sponsoring and implementing schemes of this nature. The guidelines and methodology, however, differed. These programmes produced mixed results.

A study of 32 watershed management projects representing 10 major agro-ecological regions spread over 14 states of India showed that such projects are economically sound, socially acceptable and environmentally desirable (Babu and Dhyani 1998, The Citizens' Fifth Report 1999). Replication of such experiences, however, has been rather slow. The key to the success in all these areas had been the creation of many peoples' institutions at various levels to promote community involvement.

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## **2.8 RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT FUND (RIDF)**

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In the context of the need for stepping up agricultural growth rate to 4.5 per cent in the Ninth Five-Year Plan, emphasis was considered necessary for developing rural infrastructure in sectors like irrigation, roads, bridges, etc., as an essential requirement for better productivity of capital and labour. However, one of the basic limitations to create adequate infrastructure was lack of resources. Difficult financial position of the state governments, who are mainly responsible for development and maintenance of rural infrastructures has been a cause for concern. It was, therefore, considered desirable to create a fund out of the shortfall in commercial banks' lending for agriculture in the name of Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) to be managed and operated by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).

The impact of these projects on the poor, marginal and small farmers of the project were examined by Jose (2001). It was found that, in general, the change in livelihood patterns together with sharing pattern of benefits among various stakeholders was not significant.

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## **2.9 THE PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM (PDS)**

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The PDS has been a part of the larger food policy, which has all along aimed at reaching inexpensive food to urban dwellers and to rural areas as well. At the

same time the growers are offered a minimum guaranteed price and market for their crops so that production is not affected for want of markets and profits.

For procuring food the Government has, with breaks, followed a zoning policy, with restrictions in the movement of food grains. Thus, if surplus is found in, say, Punjab and Haryana, it would be procured there itself and distributed in deficit states rather than permit the grain to find markets at unusually high prices in far away deficit regions. This has reduced the inter-state variation in the availability of food (Suryanarayana, 1995).

In certain situations, 'ensuring physical availability of food' to the rural population is much more important than raising the level of income through poverty alleviation programmes (Suryanarayana, 1995). The next argument relates to price. A rise in food prices erodes the purchasing capacity of the net food buyers, particularly the poor, and hence stability in prices is essential. This is particularly because wages lag behind prices. The opponents find the whole operation beyond the administrative capacity of the Government, as a result the poor do not gain and the subsidies find their way to the corrupt and the undeserving. The underlying dictum that markets provide the highest welfare too is violated. A programme of food stamps has been favoured instead.

Acharya and Parikh, 1996 examined data on utilisation of PDS food from the 42<sup>nd</sup> round of NSS. His secondary data analysis show that at all-India level about 13 per cent of the cereal purchase of a rural household originates from the PDS, it being about 11 per cent for the very poor and about 14 per cent for the non-poor.

Some empirical studies nevertheless show a positive correlation between food subsidy and quantities purchased from the PDS, subsidy and population coverage and subsidy and coverage of the poor (Suryanarayana 1995). Further, it has been found that the urban bias had been somewhat balanced out for sugar and rice, according to calculations made by Dev and Suryanarayana (1995). Revamping the PDS to targeting the arid/semi arid/hilly areas and tribal people in the Field studies show that the schemes are most ineffectively managed in tribal and backward areas because the users are unable to fight for their rights. Their involvement and interest are thus minimal (Acharya and Parikh 1996; World Bank 1996). Thus, like every other top-down programme that aims to target the beneficiaries, the PDS too suffers from similar set of inadequacies.

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## 2.10 LABOUR AND WAGES

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Independent studies show that the elasticities of labour absorption in several sectors have fallen in the recent decades. Absorption outside fell in the recent decades. Absorption outside agriculture is becoming increasingly difficult (Acharya, 1993; GOI, 1990). In the 1990s, construction activity, the most labour using sector, too has ceased to grow.

The limited possibility to absorb labour outside agriculture also stems from three interrelated factors. Non-agricultural activities grow more than proportionately to growth in agriculture (World Bank, 1991), but agriculture itself has not shown a spectacular growth recently, particularly in the 1990s and generally in areas outside some green revolution belts, except perhaps in West Bengal. It is also seen that infrastructure growth has been very tardy, particularly in the rural areas of semi-arid and eastern states. As a result, most non-farm activities are non-viable there. The Rakesh Mohan Committee on infrastructure has been most explicit on this aspect. Governments have had fewer funds to spare for such activities following the fiscal squeeze in the 1990s. Finally, the quality of human resources is poor

since basic schooling is yet to reach the hinterland, not to speak of its quality and relevance. It is now established that private rates of return to education are higher at the primary levels in rural areas than in any other category (Acharya, 1996; World Bank, 1995a). Yet, investments in this sector are low and the quality poor. This urban bias and a low priority accorded to spending on social sectors (expenditure on education is less than three per cent of the GDP in India compared to a figure double this in East and South East Asia) is a significant retarding factor in occupational diversification.

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## **2.11 STATUS OF EMPLOYMENT**

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Casual wage work is the lowest paying occupation and a large number of workers and their households in this work category are below the poverty line (Dubey 1998). This is because, there is large unemployment and underemployment, owing to seasonality of agriculture and its allied activities. The activities are of low intensity, very often not providing work beyond 150 days a year and the wage paid is rarely beyond subsistence. The supply side causes have already been stated: these workers neither command physical resource nor human capabilities.

Literature on this subject is extensive (Vaidyanathan, 1994; Sen, 1994). Some field studies show that as labour intensity rises, the additional labour is hired rather than one's own. There are instances of backward bending supply curve of labour too, particularly of women, in several parts of the country (Acharya, 1992; Jose, 1989). Hired hands working for a wage are not necessarily asset less (Bremen and Mundle, 1991). Others suggest that with increased sub-division of holdings, the number of days of work available on land per worker is lesser—not more than two months each – and workers tend to join the casual labour force, in the vicinity of the village or even away from it (Acharya and Parikh, 1996). Yet others suggest that employment avenues in road building, soil conservation etc. are sustaining increased numbers (Dev, 1995). It is well-established that most small and marginal farmers and the landless workers have a living from more than one source.

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## **2.12 AGRICULTURAL WAGES**

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Data on agricultural wages compiled Acharya and Papanek (1995) shows an annual rise in real wages to the extent of 1.5 per cent in every state. A three per cent growth rate means doubling of the real wage rate every 22 years. This continuous rise in wages, though not spectacular, perhaps explains why poverty proportions have not risen.

Trends in wages show a close correspondence with the reduction in poverty proportions, which once again confirms the fact that it is the landless labourers who are the poorest and that a rise in their wages directly reduces poverty. A rapid rise in wages over the period 1975-87, as brought out by Acharya and Papanek (1995), or for the period 1970-85 as brought out in Jose (1988), also coincided with a near 8-15 per cent reduction in poverty over the 1970s and 1980s. The rise in wages slowed in the later period, particularly in the 1990s.

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## **2.13 EDUCATION, HEALTH, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

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A research study sponsored by the World Bank using household surveys spanning forty years, has demonstrated that continuous efforts towards development of human capital and infrastructure holds the key for poverty reduction (World Bank, 1998).

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## **2.14 GOKUL GRAM YOJANA (GGY)**

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Gokul Gram Yojana, an innovative rural development programme for economic improvement of rural poor, was assessed by Chatterjee (2002). While highlighting the impact he identified a number of major constraints for effective planning and management of Gokul Gram Yojana.

To prepare a comprehensive development plan of the district using state of the art technology with people's participation using state of the art technology, Thaha, et.al. (2002) undertook a study entitled 'Comprehensive development model plan for a district for a sustainable development'.

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## **2.15 INDIRA AWAAS YOJANA (IAY)**

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The studies on Indira Awaas Yojana (Vadivelu, 2000, Pancharmukhi, 2000) revealed that beneficiaries are happy to have received the assistance of housing. But there are problems like lack of basic facilities, lack of assistance, payment of bribe and involvement of official in the selection etc. This programme needs to be extended to see the poor irrespective of their social group. Prasad, et.al. 2001 while evaluating the Indira Awaas Yojana found that the status/quality of the houses constructed under the programme was found to be good with adequate space and facility for drinking water.

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## **2.16 INTEGRATED WASTELAND DEVELOPMENT**

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There have been several attempts to conduct studies in this area. Badari (2000), Haloi (2002), Rao (2002), Rao and Shridhar (2001) are some of them. These studies mainly focussed on the problems of inter and intra sectoral co-ordination and linkages in implementations of integrated wasteland development project and suggesting/recommending measures needed for improvement of wasteland strategies. To know the impact of watershed management on productivity, equity, employment opportunities, social development and standard of living of rural people. Haloi (2002) undertook impact assessment research study (a case study) on the project in Imphal. The common findings from these studies are that the impact of the project on the user groups (farmer beneficiaries) and the areas is not very satisfactory.

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## **2.17 INTEGRATED TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

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Srinivas (2001) undertook a comparative study of accessibility of services by advanced (Lambadas) and primitive (Gonds Kolams) tribes across regions of ITDA, Utnoor, A.P. The study explores: (1) The effectiveness of delivery of services to tribals by ITDA, Utnoor, (2) The access to services by the tribals across regions and tribes; (3) The coordination/overlap among various informal institutions such as village tribal development agency, Vana Samrakshana Samithis (VSS – forest protection group), watershed committees, etc. that impinge on tribal issues.

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## **2.18 JAWAHAR GRAM SAMRIDHI YOJANA**

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This scheme has been studied by a number of researchers. Srivastava (2001), Jayalakshmi (2001), Reddy (2001), Sarumathy (2001), Bhaskar Rao (2001) Vittal

(2001), Annamalai (2001) are some of them. All these studies basically tried to understand the perception of elected representatives and people at large about the programme and benefits that accrued to the area. Some of these studies also tried to assess the role of Gram Panchayat and Gram Sabha in implementation of the yojana.

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## **2.19 CONCURRENT EVALUATION OF MILLION WELLS SCHEME**

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Prasad, Kanta et al. (2000), evaluated the Million Well Scheme for Goa. Major findings of the study were:

- 1) Most of the works under project were completed and only a few were under progress.
- 2) Applications for assistance under Million Wells Scheme were recommended mainly by gram Sabha/panchayat meetings in a majority of districts. MWS projects were sanctioned as per beneficiaries' request in all districts.
- 3) No amount was paid by any beneficiary for getting sanction of the scheme

The study concludes that: the time taken in the disbursement of the sanctioned amount to the beneficiaries varied from one week to more than 3 months as per guidelines. The construction of wells has to be undertaken by the beneficiaries themselves both through their own labour and by hiring local labour. The average increase in the case of income of beneficiaries generated from crop production was Rs. 4,674 in the case of individual beneficiaries and Rs. 6,674 in that of group beneficiaries.

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## **2.20 POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMMES (PAP)**

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There are number of evaluative research Poverty Alleviation Programmes. Researchers have analyse the factors underlying the performance, keeping in view the vast regional disparities in the country.

Shah (2001) studied poverty alleviation programmes and critically evaluated the scheme. He questioned the excessive centralisation in decision-making and utilisation of loan by the poor. He stated that the programme hardly made any impact on the poor. Taking a holistic view, Francken and Bhagat (2000) attempted to examine the influence of social factors (social cohesion within the community) on the development of the area or the village. The study found that there are regional variations: a large number of the sample households had crossed the poverty line. An overwhelming majority of the respondents expressed satisfaction with the programmes. Study revealed that the more developed regions and those families near the poverty line showed a better performance when compared to others (Subbarao 1985; Rao and Rangaswamy 1988). Kurien (1987), concluded that the assistance went to the deserving poor, the communities had adequately participated in beneficiary selection, the assets distributed were sectorally balanced and the record of repayment was no worse than that in other government schemes.

A series of case studies were reported during 1985-1987 by Singh and Tiwari (1987) which broadly examines social, cultural, planning, organisational and behavioural problems affecting the achievement of poverty alleviation. Based on these studies, authors also come out with suggestions for more effective management of the process of poverty alleviation.

The study carried out by Dhoble (1988), in Aurangabad Panchayat Samiti area of Aurangabad district, Maharashtra examines the magnitude and the problems of poverty and analyses the implementation of anti-poverty programmes namely, IRDP, NREP, TRYSEM/SCP. The study concludes that the new strategy of direct attack on poverty has been more effective. However, proper identification of beneficiaries under the programmes and more rigorous implementation of the programmes are suggested to achieve better results.

An empirical study, based on survey method, on Anti-Poverty Programmes in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh was conducted by Rama Rao (1987). This study examined the implementation of different anti-poverty programmes and evaluated their impact on the target group. The study found that a large number of the sample households had crossed the poverty line. A majority of the respondents expressed satisfaction with the programmes. Study also revealed that the families near the poverty line showed a better performance when compared to others. Study concluded that the assistance went to the eligible poor.

Another study, conducted by Subramanian (1987) in Karnataka (Tumkur and Mysore districts), Orissa (Puri and Ganjam districts), West Bengal (Puri and Darjeeling districts) evaluates the linkages of block development plans under the Lead Bank Scheme. The study observes that: the bankability of the IRDP schemes have not been adequately brought out; instead of following a piece-meal approach a total view of credit requirements for all programmes should be developed; credit has been standardised without any relevance to the needs of individuals and schemes and also that a detailed strategy be worked out at the block level and the block credit plans be based on block development plans.

The study conducted by Basu, et.al. (1988) in two blocks each, of all the twelve districts in the state of Himachal Pradesh, makes an estimation of quantum of indebtedness among the poorest section and (IRDP beneficiaries) in the rural areas, nature and sources of finance, etc. It is revealed that 36 of the IRDP beneficiaries are under debt which is on an average to the tune of Rs. 2260 (excluding the assistance received under IRDP).

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## **2.21 DISTRICT RURAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES (DRDAs)**

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Studies have been conducted to highlight the management, functional interactions and behavioural manifestations of functionaries of District Rural Development Agencies. Sridhar (1988) enquired into the management of District Rural Development Agencies their organisational structure and interaction among different organisation. The study, in particular, focuses on functional interactions and behavioural manifestations. Naidu, (1988) and Sastry (1988) studied District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs) and have described in detail the management (including planning, implementation, monitoring) of the agency, its organisational structure and also operational and structural difficulties. The study also recommends various measures for improving the performance.

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## **2.22 PANCHAYATI RAJ IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

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Introduction of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in 1959 was a landmark in the history of administrative reforms, the follow up action in different states, however, failed to provide a positive direction, particularly, in the realm of development administration. The spirit of democratic decentralisation had evolved over the years and yet is being practiced only in a limited way and could not experience a wholesome

sustainability. It was probably this state of affairs which ultimately paved the way for a crucial national agenda on Panchayati Raj reforms, culminating in the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment.

The system of Panchayati Raj Institutions consequent to the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment, has been established in almost all the states. While some of the state have regarded the Panchayati Raj Institutions essentially as an organisational set-up emanating from the concept of 'democratic decentralisation', other states treated them merely as 'agencies' for the implementation of the rural development programmes. This approach eclipsed the character of elected bodies as units of self-government. In most of the states no serious exercises have been carried out to devolve the powers to the three tiers of Panchayati Raj Institutions in a balanced way, keeping in mind the principle of subsidiary. However some steps had been taken, these were on piecemeal basis. Karnataka, Gujarat, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and Himachal Pradesh have done relatively better than other states in terms of transfer of powers to the local self-governments. It was also seen that while wide ranging powers had been conferred on the lower and intermediate tiers, sufficient powers and resources had not been devolved on higher bodies. In fact, there is a tendency to control the entire spectrum of activities of Panchayati Raj Institutions by the state government in several states. Consequently, these institutions, by and large, continue to function ineffectively, primarily because of the conflicting roles of bureaucracy and elected bodies. It is being argued that the Acts are yet to infuse any significant amount of value additionally as far as the finance and functions of the pre-1992 Panchayat Raj Institutions are concerned. Nevertheless, the State Finance Commission (SFC) had been formed in most states and in many states SFCs also submitted the recommendations on devolution of resources. The indications are favourable and with a few caveats, the process could lead to a thorough restructuring of the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in ensuring effective self-governance and integrated development.

In the Scheduled Areas, the proposed Panchayati Raj Institutions as conceptualised is 'representative democracy', while the Panchayati Raj Institutions in non-scheduled areas are visualised as 'participative democracy'. Certain other lacunae in the Acts passed by states for the Scheduled Areas include: "dilution of the intent of making the gram sabha as a living organisation, wielding full powers and to manage the affairs of the community within its territorial jurisdiction; the controversy over the definition of minor forest produce and the lack of clear idea of the terms, 'local self-governance' (Srivastava, 1999)". Notwithstanding such shortcomings, which are bound to happen in the initial period of transition, the immediate achievements of decentralisation cannot be underestimated.

The mandatory provision of 33 per cent reservation for women and SC/STs has resulted in substantial participation of these groups in the mainstream of governance. Most of these women have been from non-political background and entered politics due to persuasion by the family members or pressure from village community or pressure from political party and some members due to personal interest. The important aspect is that the women who reluctantly entered into politics showed great maturity in outlook, enthusiasm, increasing political consciousness and the increasing perception of their goal and the responsibilities (Panda, 1997). The experiences from the state of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, West Bengal where reservations for women began even before 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act indicate that women could put some of the priority issues like safe drinking water, girl education and basic health services on the panchayat agenda (Bohra, 1997).

Yalakaturi (1987) studied Panchayati Raj Institutions in Andhra Pradesh and analysed the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in the implementation of rural development programmes. He also studied the organisational structure of and the problems faced by the machinery which is responsible for the implementation of development

programmes. The author suggests a strategy for involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions in effective implementation of rural development programmes. The study observes that the respondents with higher level of education and landholding have shown greater awareness of the Panchayati Raj Institutions and also have a positive opinion about the programme.

Shiviah and Srivastava (1988) undertook a research study covering states of Gujarat, Karnataka and Rajasthan and analysed factors impinging on the development of Panchayati Raj Institutions. On similar lines Rajashekhar and Harish (1988) studied Panchayatiraj institutions and brought out its significance in rural development.

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## **2.23 PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION**

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Widespread successes of several initiatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) attempt to involve local communities in managing their own affairs encouraged many state governments to launch schemes to promote people's participation. Centrally sponsored schemes stipulated community based organisation (CBOs) to plan and implement development programmes. Foreign funded projects, at the instance of donors, made specific provisions for CBOs and laid emphasis on micro planning involving local people.

Ramasamy (1989) while identifying the factors (structural, administrative and psychological) which determine people's participation points out the role of communication in development. He also examined the extent of achievement of objectives (programme) and evaluated the working of the development schemes in terms of people's participation.

Suresh and Joseph (1987) made an effort to assess the level of people's participation and examined the role of rural leadership as the motivating force in people's participation on the basis of a study of 24 non-governmental organisations selected from Ernakulam and Trivandrum districts of Kerala.

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## **2.24 EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME (EGS)**

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This evaluation of Employment Guarantee Scheme, and its impact on women workers, conducted by Datar (1987) in Ahmednagar, Bhandara, Beed and Dhule districts of Maharashtra, observes that there is a lot of scope for improvement of EGS. However, structural changes are not sufficient, bureaucracy which is basically a well designed, needs to be more committed, it can reduce number of people below poverty line and create assets.

Bhat (1987) evaluated the performance of NREP/RLEGP programmes in terms of the extent to which employment is provided to the weaker sections, improvement in their earnings, problems faced by them and the difficulties faced by the agencies in the effective implementation of the programmes.

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## **2.25 ROLE OF COOPERATIVES IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

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The study conducted by Suresh (1988) assesses the impact of cooperatives on the income generation and distributional pattern of benefits and identifies the major determinants of business and organisational performance of cooperatives. 170 member beneficiaries from the primary agricultural credit societies are selected



from Trichur district of Kerala. The study concludes that though the performance of credit cooperatives is satisfactory, they have failed to act as effective agents of rural development.

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## 2.26 SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEYS

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There are quite a few socio-economic studies which reflects upon the impact of rural development. Some of them are reported in the following paragraphs.

The survey by Chand et.al. (1987) of 51 villages from Burmu (Ranchi district), Chandwa (Palamau district), Tandwn and Keradari (Hazaribagh district blocks of Bihar reveals that, for the villages which are in and around the coal mining centers, social infrastructures and also socio-economic life of the people residing in villages which are in and around the coal mining centers have substantially improved and undergone a rapid transformation in comparison with other villages.

Chand et.al., (1988) in another survey covering 46 villages from Gomia (Giridih district), Mandu and Churchu (Hazaribagh district) blocks, Bihar State highlights the improvement in socio-economic life and other related conditions of the villagers in the hinterland of coal mining centers. It is observed that the villages that are far away from mining centers have primarily remained underdeveloped and backward.

The same research team conducted a survey of 54 villages in Magadh, Amrapali area, which reveals the extent of underdevelopment. The infrastructure, it is noted, is poorly distributed in villages. The economy of the area is extremely weak and imbalanced. The social indicators of development are far behind the state and national norms.

### Check Your Progress 2

List out the areas of research in rural development which are yet to be explored.

**Note:** a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

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## 2.27 LET US SUM UP

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Rural development encompasses a broad spectrum of subjects related with both natural and human resources in an integrated manner. Most probably, this is the reason, research studies available on these areas have yet to be grouped in a more specified groups. We can, however, group the areas of research in rural development as follows: Rural Development, Voluntary Actions in Rural Development, Integrated Rural Development Programme, Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas, Employment Generating Programmes, Area Development Programmes, Rural Infrastructure Development Fund, Public Distribution System, Labour and Wages, Status of Employment, Agricultural Wages, Education, Health, Social Development,

Gokul Gram Yojana, Integrated Wasteland Development, Integrated Tribal Development Agency, Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana, Concurrent Evaluation of Million Wells Scheme, Poverty Alleviation Programmes, District Rural Development Agencies, Panchayati Raj in Rural Development, People's Participation, Employment Guarantee Schemes, Role of Cooperatives in Rural Development and Socio-Economic Surveys.

There have been several research studies in the area of rural development. Some of the common findings from these studies are that the organisational structures for rural development are generally integrated within a larger system of overall economic growth and social development. Each approach/strategy of rural development follows certain overall policy statements on their roles and functions. The systems, however, have unique policy making models.

Many evaluation studies have been conducted on Rural Development Programmes. Researchers have questioned the administrative targeting approach, the excessive centralisation in decision-making and utilisation of loan by the poor and concluded that the programmes hardly made any impact on the poor. Studies, concluded that the programmes have not been an unequivocal failure. These studies found that there are regional variations. It was revealed that the more developed regions and those families near the poverty line showed a better performance when compared to others. Elaborate studies based on concurrent evaluations in the mid-eighties, found that the assistance went to the deserving poor, the communities had adequately participated in beneficiary selection, the assets distributed were sectorally balanced and the record of repayment was no worse than that in other government programmes. It is, admitted that the programmes have not been as successful as expected since the numbers crossing the poverty line were few and over dues were very large.

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## **2.28 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: THE KEY**

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- 1) Research in rural development aims at increasing the knowledge base in the subject and it also explores achievements and failures. It also creates areas which need attention of policy makers.

Research helps implementors in reducing the cost of the programmes by bringing all present and potential natural resources to most optimal use, conservation and development.

- 2) Subjects related with rural development which are yet to be explored are:
  - i) Impact of rural development on quality of life
  - ii) Rural Development contribution to Social development
  - iii) Rural development vis-a-vis Human development
  - iv) Impact of Globalisation on Rural development
  - v) Impact of Education on Rural development.

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