

II

Agricultural Inputs

Irrigation

8.33 Country's Ultimate Irrigation Potential (UIP) has been assessed at 139.89 million hectares (m.ha.). So far about 68 percent of UIP has been harnessed. Average annual growth in irrigation potential at about 1.5 m.ha per annum upto the end of Eighth Plan (1992-97) was proposed to be increased to 3.4 m.ha annually by the end of Ninth Plan (1997-2002). The slower progress in creation of irrigation potential at the rate of about 1.80 – 1.85 m.ha per annum during the Ninth Plan was due to varied reasons including constraint of resources with the State Governments.

Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP)

8.34 Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) launched in 1996-97 to help the States for completion of ongoing irrigation projects through Central Loan Assistance (CLA) is now helping accelerate benefits from locked-up investments. From 1999-2000, minor surface irrigation scheme was included under AIBP in N.E region, hill states and drought prone districts of Orissa, which are treated as Special Category States/region and hence share only one fourth of the CLA and the remaining three fourth is shared by the Central Government. The other general category States are, however, entitled to receive CLA in the ratio of 2:1 (Centre: State).

8.35 To encourage reforms in irrigation sector such as revising the water rates so as to recover full operating and maintenance (O&M) cost within a period of 5 years, the general category States would receive CLA in the ratio 4:1 (Centre:State) instead of existing 2:1 and the Special Category States in the ratio of 1:0 (Centre:State) instead of existing 3:1. Effective 1st February 2002, the approved major and medium irrigation projects, which can be completed in one year shall be entitled to get 100 percent CLA under the Fast Track Programme of AIBP. Under AIBP, CLA of Rs.8480.03 crore, which includes Rs.472.86

crore provided as 100 percent loan assistance to identified major/medium projects in advanced stage of construction under the Fast Track Programme, has been released to states till end March 2002. During the current year upto December 2002, CLA of Rs 1110.38 crore has been released to the States.

Command Area Development Programme (CADP)

8.36 Command Area Development Programme (CADP) in operation since 1974-75 aiming at bridging the gap between potential created and its utilization, is proposed to be restructured during the Tenth Plan (2002-07) to improve existing conditions of water availability at the point of the Government outlets of major and medium irrigation projects and make the stakeholders responsible for operation and upkeep of the downstream systems. The restructured CAD Programme is also to take into account the need for better water management practices within and outside the major and medium irrigation commands through inclusion of tank rehabilitation, on-farm-development works in minor irrigation projects, drainage and water logging amelioration activities. During the Ninth Plan period (1997-2002) central assistance of Rs.764.42 crore has been provided to different States under the programme.

Watershed development

8.37 Of the 142.6 million hectares of net cultivated area, 57 million hectares (40 percent) is irrigated. The remainder, 85.6 million hectares (60 percent) is rainfed. Rainfed areas comprise primarily of the arid and semi-arid regions and the drought prone areas. Going by the past trend, the average expansion of irrigation is around four million hectares every five years. Extrapolating this trend, it is projected that another 20 million additional hectares may be brought under irrigation in the next 25 years. This will still leave 65 million hectares, nearly half the cultivated area, under rainfed conditions. With the Green Revolution, which remained confined to the irrigated areas, showing signs of fatigue in the irrigated areas, attention is increasingly being focused on rainfed areas

to provide impetus for future agricultural growth. The Ministry of Agriculture has accorded very high priority to the holistic and

sustainable development of rainfed areas through integrated watershed management approach (Box 8.4).

Box 8.4 : Watershed development and rain water harvesting

A watershed (or catchment) is a geographic area that drains to a common point, which makes it an ideal planning unit for conservation of soil and water. A watershed may comprise of one or several villages, contain both arable and non-arable lands, various categories of land-holdings and farmers whose actions may impact on each others' interests. The watershed approach enables a holistic development of agriculture and allied activities in the area taking into account land-use based on crops, horticulture, agro-forestry, silvi-pasture and forests.

The watershed development programme is being implemented by the Ministries of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment and Forests. The current strategy of various ongoing national, bilateral and internationally-aided projects for development of rainfed areas is based on the concept of conservation of rainwater for integrated development of watersheds, promotion of diversified and integrated farming systems, management of common property resources; and augmentation of family income and nutritional levels of participating watershed communities through alternate household production systems.

While there were some visible gains, the problem of sustainability continued to plague the first generation watershed development projects as evidenced by the unwillingness of local communities to operate and maintain completed structures and plantations on community property. The beneficiaries were too often merely passive recipients rather than active participants in the development of their watersheds.

Under the "Common Approach for Watershed Development" the watershed development programmes have been restructured by retaining the technical strengths of the older programmes and incorporating the lessons learnt from successful projects, especially on community participation. It is now mandatory for the "watershed development" to be planned, implemented, monitored and maintained by the watershed community. The restructured, second-generation watershed projects have kept people's participation at centre-stage.

The Tenth Five Year Plan period (2002-07) has a target of treating 15 million hectares of rainfed land under the various Watershed Development Programmes.