

# INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: AN AWARENESS STUDY

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**Abstract:** The study on awareness about IRDP revealed maximum awareness in the marginal farmers. Others like agricultural labourers, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes had either very low or medium awareness only. The awareness about the benefits of the programme was very low for majority of the beneficiaries under the study. None had the correct knowledge on the various implementing agencies of the programme. This was very marked in the socially and educationally backward beneficiaries.

## INTRODUCTION

The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) has been in operation for more than ten years now. Besides its inbuilt monitoring and evaluation, there have been several scattered attempts to evaluate the programme in Kerala State. This study was taken up to have an indepth analysis on awareness of the beneficiaries about IRDP and to study the relationship between characteristics of beneficiaries with their awareness about IRDP.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Ollukkara Block in Trichur district was selected for the study. A cluster of three panchayats in Ollukkara Block viz., Puthur, Nadathara and Ollukkara was purposively selected considering the indepth nature of the study. The category-wise list of beneficiaries of IRDP belonging to marginal farmers (MF), agricultural or non-agricultural labourers (AL) and scheduled castes and scheduled tribes of these selected panchayats was obtained. Forty beneficiaries were selected at random from among the beneficiaries of each group in the study areas. Thus, 120 respondents formed the sample size for the study.

Awareness was measured by

using the scale developed by Salunkhe (1977) under three dimensions as awareness about, a) development schemes b) the benefits and c) the implementing agencies. The independent variables of the study were age, education, material possession, extension contact, media participation, innovation-proneness, credit orientation, level of aspiration and value orientation. Zero order correlation and path analysis were the statistical tools used for the analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data of distribution of the respondents according to their awareness about various schemes, benefits of schemes and the implementing agencies of IRDP are presented in Table 1.

It is seen that only marginal farmers had high awareness whatsoever, whereas agricultural labourers and SC/ST had either low or medium awareness. About the schemes and implementing agencies, majority of the respondents had medium awareness, but about the benefits, majority had only low awareness. There was absolutely none among the respondents who had high awareness about the implementing agencies. While only 5 per cent of the marginal farmers had low awareness, the ratio was much higher in the other two cases. Overall awareness of a good majority of respondents (80.8%) was

Table 1. Degree of awareness of different categories

Degree of awareness	Schemes			Benefits			Agencies			Overall
	MF	AL	SC/ST	MF	AL	SC/ST	MF	AL	SC/ST	
Low	-	6	8	27	37	38	2	12	17	15
Medium	32	34	32	10	3	2	38	28	23	97
High	8			3	-	-	-	-	-	8

Table 2. Correlation between selected independent variables and awareness

Sl. No.	Independent variable	r
1	Age	0.2702*
2	Education	0.6690*
3	Material possession	0.5891*
4	Extension contact	0.3225*
5	Media participation	0.7017*
6	Innovation proneness	0.7053*
7	Credit orientation	0.4650*
8	Level of aspiration	0.5685*
9	Value orientation	0.6411*

Significant at 1% level

medium, while 12.5% had low awareness and 6.7% had high awareness.

Path analysis was done to get a clear picture of the direct and indirect effects of the selected independent variables on awareness. The correlation coefficients of independent variables are given in Table 2.

Path analysis reveals that age does not have high direct effect on awareness. Education has a direct effect of 0.2839 on awareness. The correlation coefficient is 0.669 which is significant at 1% level. It has a substantial indirect effect too on awareness through some

variables like innovation proneness, level of aspiration and value orientation. So education is considered to have a very good positive influence on awareness. Material possession has a direct effect of 0.1011 which is not that high. But the correlation coefficient is significant i.e., 0.589. So, though it has not got much direct effect on awareness, it has indirect influence on awareness, through some of the variables like education, innovation proneness, level of aspiration and value orientation, which have a direct effect. Extension contact and media participation have low direct effects but the correlation coefficients were significant at 1% level. This is because of the substantial indirect effects through some of the other variables. So both extension contact and media participation assume importance in the case of awareness. This finding draws support from the findings of Senthil (1985) and Godhandapani (1985).

Innovation proneness has high direct effect on awareness (0.2067) and a significant correlation coefficient (0.705). Thus since it has high direct as well as indirect effects it has great importance in the case of awareness.

This finding draws support from Rogers and Shoemaker (1971). Credit orientation does not have much direct

effect but it has a significant correlation coefficient (0.465) which may be because of its indirect effect on awareness through education, innovation proneness, value orientation and level of aspiration. Level of aspiration and value orientation have high direct as well as indirect effects. So both of them have good positive influence on awareness. This finding is supported by the findings of Vijayakumar (1983) and Viju (1985).

The study revealed that only marginal farmers had any high awareness whatsoever and that too for a minority only. Agricultural labourers and SC/ST had either low or medium awareness. The small per cent of high awareness was limited to schemes and benefits and about implementing agencies, none had high awareness. People with low awareness were usually the socially and educationally backward people.

From the path analysis the four variables that emerged as the most important in the case of awareness of IRDP were education, innovation proneness, level of aspiration and value orien-

tation. Among these, education had the highest importance, the other variables which also had some positive influence were age, material possession, extension contact, media participation and credit orientation.

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