

## CHAPTER-IX ECONOMIC TRENDS

### LIVELIHOOD PATTERN

Agricultural pursuits dominated the livelihood pattern of the district during late 19th century. In 1883, the proportion of males over 15 years of age engaged in agriculture was larger in the then Sirsa district than in any other district of the then Punjab. For Sirsa district, the proportion was 66 per cent, while for the province it was only 55. Agriculture was the main support of even a larger proportion of the population than the figures show. Land was so plentiful and other means of livelihood afforded support to so few that many men of castes whose hereditary occupation was distinct from agriculture supplemented their occupation by engaging in agriculture sometimes as labourers only, but more often by taking land separately as tenants. The number of persons in service was small and consisted chiefly of the government servants.<sup>1</sup>

Economy and livelihood pattern of the people even now is generally agro-based. According to 1981 census, of the total population of 7,07,068 persons, nearly 79.56 per cent live in rural areas as against 78.12 per cent for the state as a whole. Of the total population, 2,10,299 (29.74 per cent) are main workers and 14,956 (2.12 per cent) marginal workers. The number of non-workers is 4,81,813 (68.14 per cent). The ratio of main workers to total population is the second highest among the districts. Thus the district ranks second as regards the labour participation rate.

The ratio of workers to total population which was 38.00 per cent in 1961 decreased considerably to 29.22 per cent in 1971 and again increased marginally to 29.74 per cent in 1981. The change in definition of workers from census to census seems to be the main factor for decrease in workers ratio over the period. The 1981 census divides the total population of the district into three broad categories i.e. main workers, marginal workers and non-workers. The main workers have been further grouped into four categories viz., cultivators, agricultural labourers, workers in household industry and other workers. The distribution of the district population according to this classification is given in the table below.

Total number of persons enumerated	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4
A Main Workers	7,07,068	3,76,602	3,30,466
(i) Cultivators	2,10,299	2,01,471	8,828
	1,00,079	96,969	3,110

1. J. Wilson, *Final Report on the Revision of Settlement of the Sirsa District in the Punjab, 1879-83*, pp. 184-85.

	1	2	3	4
(ii) Agricultural Labourers		48,404	45,928	2,476
(iii) Workers in household industry		4,100	3,785	315
(iv) Other workers		57,716	54,789	2,927
<b>B Marginal Workers</b>		14,956	1,645	13,311
<b>C Non-Workers</b>		4,81,813	1,73,486	3,08,327

These figures reveal that males predominate in all categories of main workers, the proportion of women workers being far less than the percentage of males. It is only in the category of marginal workers that females outnumber males. As mentioned earlier, the proportion of main workers to total population is second highest in Sirsa district. Similarly, the proportion of males among main workers to total male population of the district is highest in the district (53.49 per cent), while that of females being very low (2.67 per cent). The proportion of workers engaged in agricultural pursuits (cultivator and agricultural labourers) is 70.61 per cent which is much higher than the state average of 60.78 per cent. As regards agricultural pursuits, the Sirsa district ranks third in the state. Non-agricultural pursuits account for 29.39 per cent as against 39.22 per cent for the state as a whole. These figures clearly bring out the fact that primary sector still dominates the economy of the district and secondary and tertiary sectors play comparatively less important role. Thus the general economic pattern of the district shows predominance of agriculture.

The following table gives the percentages of workers of the district belonging to different livelihood classes specifying their proportion under rural and urban categories :

Total Main Workers	Total	Rural	Urban
	29.74	29.85	29.33
<b>A Agricultural Pursuits</b>	70.61	85.49	11.63
(i) Cultivators	47.59	57.79	7.18
(ii) Agricultural Labourers	23.02	27.70	4.45
<b>B Non Agricultural Pursuits</b>	29.39	14.51	88.37
(i) Workers in household industry	1.95	1.62	3.25
(ii) Other workers	27.44	12.89	85.12

The above table clearly brings out the fact that agricultural pursuits preponderate in the rural areas, where cultivation of land has been prime economic activity of the people. But in urban areas, it is non-agricultural pursuits which claim a very large percentage of workers. Thus, primary sector plays an important role in rural areas while the secondary and tertiary sectors play predominant role in urban areas.

Significantly, in primary sector, the ratio of cultivators has declined since 1961. According to 1961 census, the proportion of cultivators to total workers was as high as 68.76 per cent, which declined to 54.57 per cent in 1971 and further to 47.59 per cent in 1981. On the other hand, the proportion of agricultural labourers to total workers, significantly enough, increased from 8.88 per cent in 1961 to 23.032 per cent in 1981.

Though comparable figures of occupational distribution are not available for 1981 census, however, an analysis of already available data shows that share of primary sector workers to total working force has declined from 77.64 per cent in 1961 to 70.61 per cent in 1981. On the other hand, the share of secondary and tertiary sector workers put together has increased from 22.36 per cent in 1961 to 29.39 per cent in 1981. This clearly shows that there has been more favourable shift in occupational distribution of workers in the district after 1961.

#### EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

Out of the total population of 7,07,068 (1981 census) in the district, only 29.74 per cent formed the working force. Nearly 70.61 per cent of the working population was engaged in agricultural and allied pursuits and the remaining 29.39 per cent in the other pursuits. In the absence of other data regarding unemployment, the idea of employment situation in the district can only be gathered from the working of employment exchanges in the district.

**Employment Exchanges.**—With a view to making an assessment of manpower requirement of professional, scientific, skilled and technical workers, and to determine more correctly the type of personnel in short supply, as also to find out new employment opportunities, the State Directorate of Employment maintains district-wise records of persons seeking employment. The employment exchanges in the district register the names and qualifications of the unemployed persons seeking work.

A Sub-Employment Exchange was established at Sirsa in November, 1960. It was upgraded to the level of a District Employment Exchange in 1966. A Rural Employment Exchange was opened at Mandi Dabwali in March, 1979.<sup>1</sup>

With the enforcement of the Employment Exchange (Compulsory Notification of Vacancies) Act, 1952, in June 1960, establishments in the public sector and also those normally employing 25 or more persons in the private sector, were to notify their vacancies to the employment exchange before recruitment.

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1. Two more rural Employment Exchanges were opened at Ellanabad and Kalanwali in March 1982.

The following table shows the working of employment exchanges in Sirsa district during 1979 to 1981 .—

Year	Number of Employment Exchanges at the End of the Year	Number of Registrations During the Year	Number of Vacancies Notified	Number of Applicants Placed in Employment During the Year	Applicants on the Live Register	Monthly Number of Employers Using Exchange
1979	2	8,032	4,064	2,885	9,324	36
1980	2	9,810	4,505	2,860	11,500	56
1981	2	9,737	3,590	1,862	14,697	50

The problem of unemployment in the district is complex. There is non-availability of experienced and skilled force but on the other hand, there is glut of new applicants having no work experience. The number of persons seeking employment on the live register was only 1,371 in December 1969, and it increased to 14,697 in December 1981, which included 4,487 matriculates, 2,178 under graduates, 1,100 graduates, 323 post-graduates, 421 skilled persons and 6,188 non-matriculates and unskilled. Thus problem of unemployment is more acute for the unskilled educated persons.

The functioning of employment exchanges in the district has improved the quality of services in the collection of employment market information and vocational guidance facilities. As a part of the programme of collection of employment market information, quarterly employees returns are obtained from establishments in the public sector and from employers employing 10 or more persons in the private sector. These returns contain information *inter alia* regarding vacancies which remain unfilled at the end of a quarter due to non-availability of suitable applicants. At the same time it provides information about the strength of establishments and concerns. In 1980-81, there were 240 public and 99 private establishments in the record of the employment exchanges.

There is one Vocational Guidance Unit at Sirsa, where career pamphlets, books and other useful information are provided for the benefit of students and applicants. Invitational group talks are given to students and applicants by the Employment Counsellor. Career talks are given by the Vocational Guidance Counsellors to students in the schools to guide them about better careers. Individual and group counselling work is also carried out in the employment exchanges.<sup>1</sup>

1. The occupational research and analysis and also the publication of career books and pamphlets are done by the National Employment Service at State headquarters at Chandigarh and the Directorate General of Employment and Training Government of India, New Delhi.

### Establishments and Employment.

According to Economic Census, 1980, there were 16,894 enterprises in all in the district, out of which 16,367 were non-agricultural and the remaining were agricultural. Out of the total, 16,505 were the perennial enterprises while 389 enterprises were seasonal in nature. The employment given in these enterprises is given below: —

#### I. Employment in Agricultural Enterprises/Establishments.

(a) Total (including unpaid workers)	801
(b) Hired workers	66

#### II. Employment in Non-Agricultural Enterprises/Establishments.

(a) Total (including unpaid workers)	43,059
(i) Males	39,512
(ii) Females	3,547
(b) Total Hired workers	22,185
(i) Males	19,181
(ii) Females	3,004

Thus about 20 per cent of the total working force (2.25 lakhs as per 1981 census) of the district was engaged in these enterprises.

#### PRICES

Broad idea about the price trends prevailing in the Sirsa district in the mid and late 19th century can be had from the following table<sup>1</sup>:—

#### Average prices of Sirsa, Rania and Ellanabad

(Seer per rupee)  
(one Seer is equal to 0.933  
kilogrammes)

#### Rabi Produce (About 1st June)

Five Year period	Wheat	Barley	Gram	Barley and Gram	Sarson
1850 to 1854	41	..	49	..	..
1855 to 1859	45	..	75	..	..
1860 to 1864	24	..	37	..	..
1865 to 1869	20	33	32	27	17
1870 to 1874	22	36	45	22	23
1875 to 1879	21	44	39	35	20
1880 to 1883	20	39	34	38	18

1. J. Wilson, *Final Report on Revision of Settlement of the Sirsa District, in the Punjab, 1879—83*, p. 289.

## Kharif Produce (About the End of December)

Five Year Period	Jowar	Bajra	Moth	Mung	Til	Rice (un-husked)	Gwar
1850 to 1854	..	80	..	..	..	38	..
1855 to 1859	..	54	105	..	..	38	120
1860 to 1864	..	37	42	..	22	29	57
1865 to 1869	44	20	33	27	16	22	46
1870 to 1874	48	30	33	..	13	27	41
1875 to 1879	56	31	39	25	18	28	48
1880 to 1883	38	30	36	28	17	27	42

A close analysis of the average prices of Sirsa, Rania and Ellanabad reveals that prices of a various commodities rose considerably from 1850 to 1880. A rupee during 1850—54 could fetch a person, 41 seers of wheat or 49 seers of gram or 80 seers of *bajra* or 38 seers of unhusked rice, but in 1880—1883, rupee could get only 20 seers of wheat or 34 seers of gram or 30 seers of *bajra* or 27 seers of unhusked rice.

On the whole the prices of the different foodgrains of both harvest went up or down together according to the nature of the harvest of the year and laterly with some reference to the demand for export. In years of scarcity the difference of price between the different grains became very small, In 1838, just after the famine of 1837, when grain was probably dearer than usual, the ordinary produce was valued at more than two maunds per rupee. In 1844-45, gram and barley were sold at 4½ maunds and *bajra* at 3 maunds per rupee.<sup>1</sup>

But the great era in the history of prices in the Sirsa district was the famine of 1860-61. In that year, owing to the widespread scarcity, prices rose higher than they had ever been before and trade was greatly stimulated. The peasants and grain-dealers of the district learned how profitable it was to watch the market and carry grain from where it was cheap to where it was dear; and they never forgot the lesson. Prices never again fluctuated so much from year to year and from village to village. The high prices of the famine year 1861 did not hold and prices were pretty low in 1862 and 1863, were high from 1864—67, but suddenly rose still higher in the famine year 1868-69, when they were higher than they had ever been before. They then fell gradually until the beginning of 1877, when they were

1. J. Wilson, *Final Report on Revision of Settlement of the Sirsa District, in the Punjab 1879—83* pp. 289-90.

lower than they had been for eleven years. The failure of the rains of 1877 and the demand caused by the famine in the harvests of 1878-79, the demand on the frontier caused by the Afghan War and the scanty rainfall of 1880 kept them at a high figure until the good rains of 1881 brought them down. Owing to the good rabi harvests of 1882 and 1883, prices continued to fall and in 1882-83 were lower than they had been since 1877. The period of low and high prices since 1861 have been (1) 1862 to 1867, six years of low prices ; (2) 1868 to 1871, four years of high prices ; (3) 1872 to 1876, five years of low prices ; (4) 1877 to 1880, four years of high prices ; and (5) 1881 to 1883, three years of low prices . Prices had been, however, on the whole been much higher since 1860 than they were before.<sup>1</sup>

By 1915, the improved communications with the outside world had the effect of steadying prices in the then Hisar district (including areas now comprising Sirsa district) to a remarkable degree. The prices became independent of the local conditions. This fact was exemplified in 1901-02, when, in spite of the fact that the crops on *barani* lands failed throughout the then Hisar district, prices remained normal.<sup>2</sup>

Prior to World War I (1914—18), prices were generally dependent on agricultural yield. Since the economy of the Sirsa district has been primarily agricultural, the prices in the district have been co-related with agricultural production and the imports of goods necessary for the requirements of this area. The outbreak of the war in 1914, caused a sudden rise in prices owing to imports being in short supply and agricultural production having been affected by poor monsoons and the bad harvests of 1915-16. In 1917, commenced a period of distress and hardship in which prices rose rapidly to allow the economic system to adjust itself. The strain on the railways resulting from the war caused dislocation of communications so that goods from an area of plenty could not be transported to areas of scarcity. The situation worsened further by the disastrous harvest of 1918. Closely followed by an unparalleled loss of life caused by influenza epidemic in the later part of 1918. These hardships brought matters to a climax and even good harvest in 1920 proved insufficient to contain the upward trend of prices. This upward trend continued up to 1929 when the general depression brought a big slump in the market accompanied by unemployment.

World War II broke out in September 1939. It created widespread scarcity conditions in respect of many articles of need. The situation was further aggravated by damage to crops by natural calamities. The Sirsa area was famine stricken, its farmers could not derive any benefit from the high prices of agricultural produce. There was slight recession

1. J. Wilson *Final Report on Revision of Settlement of the Sirsa District, in the Punjab* 1879—83, p. 290.

2. *Hisar District Gazetteer*, 1915, p. 171.

in prices in 1944 and 1945, but after 1945 the general scarcity of foodgrains and inflationary factors were responsible for the price level to rise enormously.

Consequent upon the Partition of the country in 1947, economic activities suffered to a very great extent due to dislocation of working population. A proper working force could not be developed for a long time and this affected the general economic conditions badly. There was a further rise in the price level. Price control was imposed by the Government of India in many sectors to stabilize the general price level all over the country. The measures taken proved fairly effective and there was reasonable decline in prices.

During the First Five Year Plan (1951—56) agricultural production increased considerably and prices of food products fell in 1953-54. The price control on foodgrains was lifted. But the upward trend in prices started again immediately thereafter. The general scarcity of foodgrains due to harvest failure and taking up of development activities with long gestation periods, gave birth to various inflationary factors to raise the price level during the Second Five-Year Plan (1956—61). In the Third Plan (1961—66), the prices of various agricultural products increased enormously. During the three annual plans (1966-67, 1967-68 and 1968-69) and the Fourth Five Year Plan (1969—74) the wholesale prices registered an unprecedented upward trend. The prices have been increasing since then.

The following table shows the average annual wholesale prices of various agricultural commodities in the district :—

(In Rs.)

Commodity	Unit	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81
Wheat	Quintals	105	110	112	121	120	115.50
Jowar	do	90	100	165	165	160	158
Bajra	do	85	90	60	100	100	122
Maize	do	80	82	90	65	70	75
Gram	do	102	135	150	210	200	332
Gur	do	130	300	300	110	165	150
Potato	do	100	500	80	60	90	125
Cotton (Desi)	per bale	240	300	300	300	340	340
Cotton (American)	do	280	455	435	340	390	450

There is a time lag between the movement of wholesale and retail prices. The reaction of the wholesale prices is quicker than that of the retail prices, because the market information regarding the movement of prices

flows down to the retailer comparatively at a slow pace. The following table shows the retail prices of important commodities in the first week of the July from 1976 to 1981 which prevailed at Sirsa :—

(In Rs.)

Commodity	Unit	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Rice (Medium)	kg.	2.00	1.75	1.80	2.00	2.25
Wheat (Kalyan)	kg.	1.20	1.25	1.30	1.35	1.50
Maize	kg.	2.00	1.50	1.60	1.80	2.25
Atta	kg.	1.30	1.35	1.40	1.45	1.60
Maida	kg.	1.80	1.90	2.00	2.25	2.40
Moong Dal	kg.	5.00	5.20	5.40	5.80	6.10
Urd Dal	kg.	4.75	5.10	5.00	5.00	5.00
Sugar	kg.	9.00	3.00	3.00	7.80	8.00
Gur	kg.	5.00	1.90	2.20	3.75	4.30
Mustard Oil	kg.	11.00	9.00	9.75	12.50	13.00
Vanaspati	kg.	13.00	11.00	11.50	12.50	14.00
Kerosene Oil	litre	1.35	1.35	1.52	1.65	1.77

#### WAGES

Wages generally signify all remuneration capable of being expressed in terms of money paid to a person for the work done by him. The level of wages obtaining at a particular period gives an indication about the prevailing conditions of a region. Price fluctuations generally influence the wage level.

During mid 19th century, in the then Sirsa district, wages generally rose very high at harvest time, often to 5 annas a man for a day, or 3 annas or 4 annas with food, which generally consisted of a seer of grain per day to each adult. Wages fluctuated with the fluctuations of the harvests and of prices. In times of plenty, or after an epidemic labourers were too few for the demand and wages rose high. When the harvests were bad, work was difficult to get and food was dear, and labourers were ready to work for very little. In the drought of 1837-38 able bodied men were satisfied with an anna a day and in the scarcity of 1877-78, wages of ordinary labourers fell from 3 annas to an anna a day and artisans who used to

get 5 annas were glad to take  $4\frac{1}{2}$  annas. The condition of labourers of all kinds went up and down with the fluctuations of the harvest but on the whole, work was plenty, wages were high and food was cheap. The labourers were generally better off in this district than in most others.<sup>1</sup>

As the district was merged with Hisar district in 1884, separate figures of wages prevailing in Sirsa district are not available for the years thereafter. However, from the figures pertaining to Hisar district (of which Sirsa formed part), one can have broad idea about the wage conditions prevailing in the areas now comprising Sirsa district.

During the last quarter of the 19th century, the wages of the skilled labourers per day were 5 annas to 8 annas and that of unskilled from 2 annas to 3 annas in the then Hisar district. In 1909, the daily wages of skilled labourers varied from 8 annas to 12 annas and that of unskilled labourer from 4 annas to 6 annas. The wages of skilled and unskilled labourers rose in the subsequent years and varied between one rupee  $2\frac{1}{2}$  annas to one rupee 7 annas for skilled labourers and 7 annas to 10 annas for unskilled labourers in 1927. There was steep fall in the wages after 1929-30 and a skilled labourer was available for 6 annas to 8 annas per day and an unskilled labourer for 2 annas to 4 annas per day during the year 1932.

In 1937, the common rate of daily wage in the Hisar district was 4 annas per day. The masons were paid at the rates varying from 8 annas to one rupee. The wages of a blacksmith also varied from half rupee to one rupee. The ploughman got monthly wage between Rs. 6 to Rs. 10. The outbreak of World War II in 1939 caused a rise in wages of both skilled and unskilled labourers. When the wage census was taken in December 1943, the rate of daily wages for unskilled labourers in the district was 12 annas and that of a carpenter and blacksmith was two rupees  $1\frac{1}{2}$  annas. The daily wages of a mason varied from one rupee 8 annas to one rupee 9 annas. The minimum monthly wages of a ploughman were Rs. 13 whereas the maximum were Rs. 27.

In 1951, the lowest rate of wage of unskilled labourers was one and a half rupee, which was six times the rate of 1937. The daily wages of carpenter and other skilled labourers varied from Rs. 3 to Rs. 5. The monthly wages of ploughman varied between Rs. 38 to Rs. 66.

During the fifties the wages remained more or less constant, it was only towards 1959-60 when the wages began to rise. The rise became steep after 1969-70.

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1. J. Wilson, *Final Report on the Revised Settlement of the Sirsa District in the Punjab* 1879-83, p. 290.

Presently the workers in the district can be divided into three categories, viz., (i) whole time workers (ii) part-time workers (iii) workers on daily wages. In 1981-82, the wage rates of selected occupations in the Sirsa district were as under :

Particulars	Wages Per Mensem		Daily Wages
	Whole time	Part time	
	(Rs.)	(Rs.)	(Rs.)
Casual Labour	Skilled	300.00	11.00
	Un-Skilled	250.00	9.50
Porter	250.00	140.00	9.50
Chowkidar	250.00	140.00	9.50
Gardner	250.00	140.00	9.50
Carpenter	500.00	275.00	22.00
Cobbler	300.00	130.00	10.00
Blacksmith	500.00	275.00	22.00
Motor Driver	550.00	300.00	20.00
Tailor	425.00	..	20.00
Washerman	250.00	140.00	9.50
Barber	325.00	175.00	12.00
Scavenger	325.00	175.00	12.00

The wages of agricultural labourers are generally determined by the customary practice prevalent in the area and are regulated by the law of supply and demand. At the peak of the season, labour being more in demand the wages are high, while during the slack season, labour can be hired at lower wages. The wages for various occupations in the rural as well as in the urban areas are paid either in cash, kind or both. In addition to cash payments, breakfast and daily meals are also provided to casual labourers during the weeding, reaping, ploughing and other agricultural operations. The normal working hours are from sun rise to sun-set with a break of one or two hours. For grazing cattle, a herdsman gets two to four rupees per head per month. The rate is different for buffaloes, which are charged higher than cows. Skilled labour like carpenters and masons are employed on daily wages. The main choice of mode of payment of wages is in the hands

of the employer as he holds the best bargaining power. The labourers who are in short supply can dictate their choice to some extent only in the peak season. Even in peak season, they are generally dependent on the employer as they want to get work in off season also. The daily wages for different agricultural operations in the Sirsa district from 1976 to 1981 have been as follows<sup>1</sup> :

(In Rs.)

Items	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Ploughing	10.00	12.00	15.00	18.00	20.00	20.00
Sowing	10.00	12.00	15.00	18.00	20.00	20.00
Weeding	10.00	12.00	15.00	18.00	20.00	20.00
Harvesting	10.00	12.00	15.00	20.00	25.00	25.00
Picking of Cotton	8.00	10.00	12.00	12.00	15.00	15.00
Other agricultural operations	10.00	10.00	12.00	12.00	15.00	15.00
Blacksmith	15.00	18.00	20.00	25.00	30.00	30.00
Carpenter	15.00	18.00	20.00	25.00	30.00	30.00

Both prices and wages on the whole have been rising in the recent years and this phenomenon is in consonance with the general rising trend of wages and prices in the country. The price rise has outrun the rise in wages and the relative position of prices and wages has not remained constant. The slower rate of increase in wages than in prices has resulted in the decline of the real income of the workers adversely affecting their standard of living.

#### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Community Development Programme was launched in the country on October 2, 1952. The basic problem in re-building the rural economy is the organisation of community effort at the village level, and the role of this programme towards this aim is of crucial significance. Rapid increase in food production is its prime object and its other allied activities are in the fields of animal husbandry, irrigation, cooperation, village industry, health and rural housing. The ultimate objective of the programme is the material development of the rural community by promoting self-reliance, solidarity and co-operative action.

1. The wages paid for different agricultural operations in the selected villages are taken to represent the whole district. The data given here relate to village Madho Singhana in Sirsa, Tahsil.

In September, 1975, when Sirsa was formed into a separate district, it had 4 Community Development Blocks, viz. Sirsa, Bada Gudha, Rania and Dabwali. There has been no increase in the number of blocks since then. On March 31, 1981 the blocks of the district and number of villages covered were as under :

Block	Date of Inception	Villages Covered
1. Dabwali	1-10-1960	71
2. Bada Gudha	1-10-1963	79
3. Sirsa	1-4-1959	95
4. Rania	1-10-1961	78

The Community Development Programme in the district has embraced multifarious fields like distribution of chemical fertilizers among the farmers, reclamation of land, pavement of lanes, inoculation/vaccination of animals and opening of adult education centres. Achievements in these programmes have made great impact on the community life in villages. It has helped to bring significant changes in their life pattern and thinking. Villagers have shed their earlier opposition to modern techniques of agriculture. They now unreservedly take advantage of the facilities provided by the development institutions and are generally more actively participating in the cooperative movement, small savings, health and sanitation, cattle development and similar other activities.

**Integrated Rural Development Programme.**—The Community Development Programme had provided an elaborate delivery mechanism in the form of development blocks and the village level extension agency. However, over the years, this mechanism had suffered considerable erosion and gradual disintegration. With the launching of the Integrated Rural Development Programme, efforts have been made to restore, to a substantial extent the mechanism provided under the Community Development Programme. Integrated Rural Development Programme in its present form was started from 1980 (earlier in 1978-79) has replaced the multiplicity of agencies for the rural poor. The programme aims at exploiting the rural productive potential so as to give benefit to the weaker section of the population in the rural areas.

#### LEVEL OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Though the level of economic development attained by Haryana is very much above that of the national, there are wide variations from district

to district both in the structure of the economy and extent of its development. A few important selected indicators for measuring the level of the economy in the various districts have been given in the Table XIV of Appendix. From this, it appears that Sirsa district is better off according to one indicator while it is backward according to the other indicator. Since the entire state is predominantly agricultural, districts with well developed irrigation are naturally better off. However, taking all the factors into consideration, it is obvious that Sirsa lies in between the most developed districts and the least developed districts of the state and it is all set for take off position.