

Irrigation

20. Success in enlarging the area under irrigation is crucial to raising agricultural production. An efficient irrigated cropping system alone can sustain India's ever expanding population. Irrigation provides food security against the vagaries of monsoon and enables cropping intensity to increase. The progress of development of irrigation potential and its utilisation is listed in Table 8.13. Due to shorter gestation period and relatively lower investment levels, preference is given to minor irrigation schemes covering both surface and ground water. While ground water schemes include dugwells, shallow tubewells, and pump sets, the surface water schemes include tanks and reservoirs diversion schemes and, lift irrigation from rivers and streams. Because of comparatively advantageous water table levels, the eastern sector was accorded special attention for development of minor irrigation during the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97).

21. Strengthening of irrigation infrastructure is one of the main objectives in irrigation supply management. There are 119 major, 176 medium and 67 Extension, Renovation and Modernisation (ERM) projects carried forward from the past at the start of 1997-98.

22. With a view to ensuring early completion of projects for providing irrigation benefits to the farmers, Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) has been in operation since 1995-96.

During 1997-98, additional Rs. 2500 crore has been made available through RIDF. The Government launched Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) in 1996-97. Under the programme Rs. 500 crore has been released as central loan assistance to the States during 1996-97. Allocation of Rs. 1300 crore has also been provided in the 1997-98 Budget for AIBP. The other major elements of the strategy to extend irrigation benefits to more areas include promotion of better water management practices, installation of sprinkler and drip irrigation systems in water scarce and drought prone areas, conjunctive use of surface and ground water and farmers' participation. To reduce the gap between the irrigation potential created and its utilisation, Command Area Development Programme (CADP) has been under implementation since 1974-75. During 1996-97, Rs.138.36 crore were released to States as central assistance under the programme.

23. Increased fresh water demand in rural and urban areas is creating acute pressure on water resources. Wastage of fresh water in irrigation system and on farms needs to be reduced through improved water management practices. Rivers, lakes and estuaries are faced with high degree of pollution. Concern for water quality needs to be given adequate priority in water resource development and management policy.

Irrigation Schemes	At the end of Seventh Plan	During 1990-92	During Eighth Plan		End of 1996-97*
			Target (1992-97)	Anticipated* (1992-97)	
Major & medium irrigation					
Potential	29.9	0.8	5.1	2.1	32.8
Utilisation	25.5	0.8	4.2	2.1	28.4
Minor Irrigation					
Potential	46.6	3.7	10.7	6.2	56.5
Utilisation	43.1	3.4	9.4	5.8	52.3
Total					
Potential	76.5	4.5	15.8	8.3	89.3
Utilisation	68.6	4.2	13.6	7.9	80.7
* Anticipated achievement					
Note: Irrigation projects with a Culturable Command Area (CCA) of more than 10,000 hectares are classified as major projects and projects with CCA of more than 2,000 hectares and up to 10,000 hectares as medium projects. Minor projects have CCA less than 2,000 hectares.					