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RURAL AND URBAN SOCIOLOGY

SEMESTER VI

SOCIOLOGY

BLOCK 1

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

The course **'Rural and Urban Sociology'** introduces a specialised field of Sociology dealing with the Rural and Urban Societies. It intends to familiarize the learners with some of the basic concepts and various aspects of Rural and Urban Society. The course comprises of 15 units and are divided into two blocks. The first block consists of the first eight units and the second block consists of the remaining seven units.

Unit 1- Unit 8 discusses different aspects of Rural Society. From discussing about the emergence and scope of Rural Sociology in Unit 1, discussions on Rural Social Structure, Rural Economy and its changing trends, Rural Polity, Development of Women and Children in Rural areas, Rural Religion are made in the subsequent units.

Block 2 of the course comprises of **Unit 9-13**. Unit 9 and Unit 10 discusses about various schemes and policies regarding Rural and Tribal Development. Unit 11 makes a discussion about the impact of Globalisation on Rural Peasantry. Unit 12-15 mostly focus on Urban Society and its varied aspects. Beginning with a discussion on Origin and Scope of Urban Sociology, this block tries to introduce to the learners the basic concepts in Urban Sociology. Further, Urban Problems and Issues are also discussed at length to develop critical thinking among the learners.

BLOCK INTRODUCTION

This is the first block of the paper titled 'Rural and Urban Sociology' of B.A Sociology 6th Semester Programme of Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University. This block intends to provide the learners a basic understanding regarding one of the specialised fields of Sociology i.e Rural Sociology. After reading this block, the learners will be able to understand the different aspects of Rural Society Unit 1 will explain the learners about Rural Sociology and Rural Society. The learners will also get to know about the subject matter of Rural Sociology in this unit. Unit 2 shall discuss about the Rural Social Structure where the focus is laid on Caste, Class, Family and Kinship in Rural Societies. Unit 3 shall discuss the changing trend in Rural Society. The Unit shall try to explain to the learners how migration and urbanization have led to far reaching changes in the rural societies. Unit 4 and Unit 5 shall discuss about the nature of rural economy and the changes that have taken place in the rural economy. Unit 6 shall discuss Rural Polity. The unit shall explain to the learners about Panchayati Raj System in India. Unit 7 shall discuss about various schemes and polices for women and child development in India. Unit 8 shall discuss about the significance and functions of Rural Religion.

While going through the units of the block, you will find that unit is further divided into certain sections and sub-sections, wherever necessary, for your better understanding. Again, the units carry certain *activities* after a particular section where needed. These "ACTIVITIES" will provide you the opportunity to practically apply your own thoughts based on the knowledge gained from reading the text in a particular section. Besides, in order to give you additional information on certain relevant topics, you will find a category called "LET US KNOW" after the sections in each unit. Another category that has been included at the end of each section of a particular unit is "CHECK YOUR PROGRESS". The purpose of this category is to help you to asses for yourself as to how thoroughly you have understood a particular section. You may then match your answers with "ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS" given at the end of each unit. The section "FURTHER READING" in each unit contains the names of a few books, which you might want to consult if you are interested in learning more elaborately about the concepts discussed in a particular unit. Furthermore, the category called "POSSIBLE QUESTIONS" is intended to give you a hint of the type of questions you are likely to get in the examination.

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO RURAL SOCIOLOGY

UNIT STRUCTURE

1.1 Learning Objectives

1.2 Introduction

1.3 Scope of Rural Sociology

1.4 Characteristics of a Rural Society

1.5 Rural-Urban Continuum

1.6 Let Us Sum Up

1.7 Further Reading

1.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.9 Model Questions

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to -

- identify the sociological significance of studying rural society
- outline some of the important contributions of the sociologists in the study of rural society
- discuss different characteristics of rural societies.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

Our understanding of Indian social institutions has been largely based on knowledge of village communities. Before the advent of field studies of the Indian villages by trained sociologists and anthropologists in the 1940s, ideas regarding Indian society and its different social institutions were mainly derived from ***Indological*** literature. A few sociologists who knew Sanskrit engaged themselves in studies such as Hindu kinship, marriage, caste system, social ethics as represented in the Epics and the rites de passage. These studies were largely based on book-knowledge, which in actual reality was different. On the contrary, the field studies of the Indian villages in different parts of the country provided insights into the actual social situation. There is now a significant literature on villages, which throws light on different aspects of social structure, organisation and social change.



Indological: Understanding the Indiana through religious texts.

The study of the Indian village began in the eighteenth century, with intensive survey work regarding land holdings. Intensive empirical studies of village social life became popular in the twentieth century. The studies by *Munro, Metcalfe, Maine, Marx and Baden-Powell* considered the Indian village as a 'closed' and 'isolated' system. Sir Charles Metcalfe considered the Indian village a monolithic, atomistic and an unchanging entity. Metcalfe writes: "The village communities are little republic, having nearly everything that they want within themselves and are almost independent of any foreign relations." Now the question arises if this characteristisation of a typical Indian village is appropriate and true?

While field studies of villages have proved valuable, there is a tendency to treat them as the bases of generalisations of the Indian society as a whole. Hence, it is necessary to promote urban studies which would supplement the rural view and thus provide a balanced picture of the Indian social institutions. However, some circles of sociologists lament that the distinction between rural sociology and urban sociology is not meaningful in the Indian context because about 80% of the people live in villages, and hence there is hardly any justification for the requirement of urban studies. On the other hand, it has also been argued that, although religion, caste and kinship are the bases of social organisation in both villages and towns, there are significant differences in the working of these in the two contexts. For example, the rules of the caste system regarding occupation are to a great extent strictly observed in the villages but in cities the same rules tend to become flexible. In the urban context, the institutional framework and the constraints in which religion, caste and kinship operate are not the same as those in the villages. Therefore, in order to study rural and urban societies in their entirety, rural and urban sociologies have been developed as specialised fields of sociology in India. The development of these specialised fields help our further understanding of the social structure, system of stratification as well as the social processes which vary in rural and urban societies.

It is true that over the last few decades, the census definitions of cities and towns in India have not remained uniform. This immediately points out to the rate of urban development. The cities and towns are growing at a much faster rate. Also that increasingly improved means of transport and communication are bringing the villages near the urban centers is an accepted phenomenon. In brief, therefore, at whatever pace it may be, urban development and urbanisation are gaining momentum in the country. The moot questions are: what is their effect on the social transformation of the people involved? How far, and in what manner, then, the rural-urban differences and interrelations can be explained in context of India?

The unit begins with a preliminary discussion on the specialised field of Sociology, namely Rural Sociology. In this unit we shall mainly focus on the nature and scope of this specialised field and then we shall proceed to understand rural society in terms of different social interactions, social structures, social processes, institutions, etc. In addition, an attempt has also been made to understand that in spite of differences, there is a rural-urban continuum, that makes both depend on each other for various requirements.

1.3 SCOPE OF RURAL SOCIOLOGY

As mentioned above, Rural Sociology and Urban Sociology are specialised branches of sociology. Both branches have their own distinctive focus areas with systematic methodologies of study. Now, we shall discuss each of the specialised branches of study in detail. Rural Sociology is a specialised field of Sociology. As the name indicates, it deals with the society of village or the rural society. It is a systematic and scientific study of the rural society. The majority of the people live in villages and rural areas and follow patterns of occupation and life that if somewhat different from those living in the urban areas. Their behaviour, way of life and beliefs are conditioned and deeply influenced by their rural environment. A specialised branch of sociology called Rural Sociology, has, therefore, emerged in order to study the rural areas. According to A.R. Deasi, *Rural Sociology is the*

science of rural society. It is the science of laws of change and development of rural society. On the other hand, F. Stuard Chapin defines rural sociology as follows: *The sociology of rural life is the study of the rural population, rural social organization and rural social processes comparative, in rural society.* It is clear from the above-mentioned definitions that rural sociology studies the social interactions, institutions, and activities and social changes that take place in the rural society. It studies the rural social organisations, structure and set-up and provides us accurate knowledge about the rural social phenomenon which can help us in contributing to the development of the rural society. At present the study of the Rural Sociology, especially in developing countries like India is vital. Rural societies are changing rapidly, because of linkages with the urban centers, market linkages, and ongoing programmes of rural community development.

The scope and the subject matter of rural sociology is the study of rural society with all its complexities. The main tasks of rural sociology can be mentioned as follow:

- *Rural Community and Rural Problems*: This includes the characteristics and nature of rural community and its problems.
- *Rural Social Life*: This includes various aspects of the rural people.
- *Rural Social Organisation*: This includes the study of various rural social organisations and institutions including family and marriage.
- *Rural Social Institutions and Structure*: This includes the study of dogmas, customs, traditions, values, conventions, morals, practices and various political, economic, religious and cultural institutions.
- *Rural Planning and Reconstructions*: Rural Sociology has great practical applications. Hence, rural planning and reconstruction are also the main tasks of rural sociology to be dealt with.
- *Social Control and Social Change in Rural Social Set-up*: Here we study the impact of city on rural life. The mechanisms of social control of rural society are also examined here.

- *Religion and Culture in Rural Society:* Religion plays an important role in a rural set-up. The culture of a rural society exhibits striking peculiarities. These come within the domain of Rural Sociology.
- *Rural Social Processes*: Different social processes such as cooperation, competition, integration, isolation, differentiation, etc. that take place in rural society are also studies in Rural Sociology.
- *Differences between Urban and Rural Society*: The study of rural society also includes the differences between the urban and rural society.

Admittedly, rural sociology is a specialised application of sociology. It is, therefore, imperative to study rural life from this perspective. When a sociologist approaches rural life, he is concerned with the human relationships taking place among the village people. It would not be incorrect to say that no other discipline of study focuses primarily attention on human relationships as such. It is here that sociology differs from all other social sciences. In other words, the sociologist interests himself in human relationships simply because they are social in nature and not because they are related to economic, political, religious and other types of activities. In its broadest sense, Rural Sociology is the study of human relationships in the rural environment. This definition correctly implies that it is neither more nor any less than the sociology of life in rural setting. The systematised knowledge of rural social relationships could more aptly be called the sociology of rural life. The social relationships which take place in what we call rural society are manifested in family, caste, class or economy, such as, agriculture, politics, religion, etc.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is the importance of studying Rural Sociology?

.....

.....

Q 2: Fill in the blank.

According to……sociology is the science of rural society.

1.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL SOCIETIES

Some of the important characteristics of rural societies are:

- Rural people are basically agriculturalists. It is because a substantial part of their income is drawn from agriculture. The peasants have always stayed in contact with the land, which is the basic source of their livelihood.
- Village society is a simple society. It is simple because it is closer to nature. The people are bound up with the agricultural activities. Their festivals, fairs, folk songs and folk tales have resemblances to their agriculture. All over India, the rural folk-literature pertaining to rural life is very rich. In India, the rural folk-literature is the treasure of village traditions and culture. The tribal villages also give expression of folk songs and folk dances. Verrier Elwin, an anthropologist, has brought out several instances of the simplicity of tribal expressions. Paying the flute, dancing and drinking liquor for the whole night is the festive expression of a village life. Though these folk songs and dances do not exhibit sophistication, they are excellent examples of rural performing arts. It shows the characteristic features of rural people.
- In rural India, the police force, which exercises control over the people are based far away from the village locales. Control in the village society is exercised through informal methods. Petty issues like, stealing, disputes among the fellow villagers, etc are solved by means of informal

methods. When the less violent means of social control do not suffice,it is then that the law courts and the police play their role for necessary punishment. It is the rural public opinion which sets the society in order.

- In the rural societies, cultural usage is reflected largely in the homes. The absence or presence of certain necessities, such as cycle, motor cycle, electricity, irrigation, engine, tractor, thresher, and push carts to carry paddy from the field, etc determines both the level of living and the degree of participation in the culture. The types of houses found in the rural societies also reflect their culture. For example, mud layered bamboo walls with roofs of either straw or tins are generally found in the villages of Assam. Today, concrete houses are also coming up in the villages. A large front and back yard are common to these houses.
- One of the most obvious features of rural social life is that the importance of primary groups in the village community assumes vital significance in the patterns of interaction. It is quite interesting to know that in the Indian village an individual can be identified from his belonging to a particular village and caste group. Second, his identification refers to caste. Caste represents the hierarchical divisions in a society. There are four main castes, namely Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. The caste groups are guided by their strict rules pertaining to occupations, rules of commensality, rules of marriage, rules of purity and pollution, rules of exogamy, etc. Gradually, the caste bound occupations have been replaced by secular occupations. Even the concept of 'purity and pollution' with respect to occupations has undergone changes.

Rural sociologists have discussed the sociology of rural life in the studies largely conducted during 1950s. They have discussed village unity as a characteristic mark of India's villages. But, the contact with nearby towns and cities has brought about significant transformation in the village societies today. Migration has also become a common phenomenon in the lives of the village people. Today, the people do come out of their villages in search of newer prospects and livelihoods. With the narrowing of available

land for cultivation and pressure of increasing population on land, the rate of migration has increased. People from villages do work in the government offices or in other forms of sundry works as vegetables vendors, construction workers, shopkeepers, daily labourers, etc. Some of them commute daily, some have even settled in the urban areas, and they visit their ancestral homes only during festivals and other occasions. The developments of transport and communication have brought these villages closer to town and cities.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: Fill in the blanks.

(a) Village societies are basically……societies

(b) ……..is the most important form of social stratification in the rural societies.

1.6 RURAL-URBAN CONTINUUM

Rural and urban communities form the end points in the continuum of development of human habitats. Although, urban habitats developed out of the rural habitats, they show glaring differences in every aspect of life. Urban communities have developed out of the functional necessities of a society. They have absorbed a multitudinous and diversified population from different villages. Let us try to understand about Rural-Urban Continuum in the next section.

1.6.1 Rural-Urban Continuum

In spite of the differences, rural and urban societies are also dependent on each other for various requirements. The developments in all spheres of urban life are also making deep impact in the rural areas.

- **The role of Migration:** Rural and urban societies form two ends of a continuum and they exist side by side and interact with one another in several ways. Rural-urban migration is a main form of rural-urban contact which is promoted by the development of transport and means of communication. There has been a greater amount of migration of rural people to urban areas. The main cause of migration lies in availability of facilities in urban areas. Thus, the rural to urban stream of internal migration is the most important stream from the viewpoint of social change. There are various push and pull factors that determine the migration of rural population to the urban areas. They are:
  - **Push factors at the place of origin (rural areas) are:** poverty, lack of opportunities, landlessness, low level of subsistence, etc.
  - **Pull factors at the place of destination (urban areas) are:** bright lights of cities, availability of facilities such as housing, education, work opportunities, and so on.

People migrate from the rural areas for attaining better socio-economic prospects, more entertainments of the bright lights of the cities and a breakaway from their rural habitats. In addition, high man-land ratio in rural areas is another factor of migration, because it aggravates rural poverty. Education is an important source of social change. Young and aspiring rural population go out to the urban areas for pursuing quality higher education. The educational achievement of the rural youths is promoting a kind of attitude and desire that alienates them from their village of origin because village life becomes incompatible with their education. This is also a reason that rural youths are moving to urban areas.

Urban growth is another important pull factor of migration because it exerts its influence on the people from outside the village community. It is very closely related with migration. It compels migration in the same way in which migration stimulates urban growth. The migration to the urban areas becomes a process of

urban growth, urbanisation, social transformation, and social integration. The urban areas provide greater opportunities of highly diverse, predominantly non-agricultural services and manufacturing, better paid economic activities, business, trade, commerce, and communications. They also consist of better health, environment for social recreation, residential, and media facilities in addition to other urban amenities and overall glittering city life. All such urban opportunities are referred to as factors of attractions, which vary by the degree of urban growth, urbanisation, and development.

However, the migration of large numbers of rural population to urban areas has also shown negative impacts. These are: congestion and overcrowding, environmental conditions, creation of urban slums, housing and sanitation, and so on.

Nevertheless, the rural areas have come under the influence of urban areas in a number of ways. The migration from rural to urban areas has brought about a change in the value-orientation of the migrants and its effects on their families left behind. The migrants usually keep contact with their families to maintain personal links and family tradition. The migrants who originally followed the rural tradition are now exposed to the urban tradition and culture. They imbibe new social and material values, new skills, new outlooks towards life, experiences, knowledge, consciousness, etc. The internalised urban values are consciously transmitted and fed back into their native place and people. In addition to these changes, migration has also changed the demographic profile of rural areas. The fertility behaviour of migrants changes when migrants are exposed to the urban way of life. The modern urban influences stimulate them to accept new family norms, postpone childbearing and raise the age of marriage.



1.7 LET US SUM UP

- Rural Sociology is the specialised fields of study within Sociology. In short, rural sociology concentrates itself in the study of rural social structures.
- The sociology of rural life is the study of the rural population, rural social organisation and rural social processes comparative, in rural society. It is clear from the above-mentioned definitions that rural sociology studies the social interactions, institutions, and activities and social changes that take place in the rural society. It studies the rural social organisations, structure and set-up. It provides us that knowledge about the rural social phenomenon, which can help us in contributing to the development of rural society.
- Even though rural societies differ from urban societies in every spheres of life, both the societies also maintain a continuum. Both the societies depend on each other for their growth and development as well as fulfillment of a variety of requirements. For example, the people from the villages come to the urban areas for education, work, occupations, etc. In this way they became acquainted to the urban culture and carry urban values and cultures to their villages.



1.8 FURTHER READING

1) Chitambar, J.B. 1993. *Introductory Rural Sociology*. New Delhi: New Age International (P) Limited.
2) Desai, A. R. 1969. *Rural Sociology in India.* Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
3) Doshi, S.L. and P.C. Jain. 1999. *Rural Sociology*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications.



1.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Rural sociology is a specialised field of sociology. The sociology of rural life is the study of the rural population, rural social organisation and rural social processes comparative, in rural society. It is clear from the above-mentioned definitions that rural sociology studies

the social interactions, institutions, and activities and social changes that take place in the rural society. It studies the rural social organisations, structure and set-up. It provides us that knowledge about the rural social phenomenon which can help us in making contribution to the development of rural society. The study of the Rural Sociology, especially at present in developing countries like India is vital. Rural societies are changing rapidly because of linkages with the urban centers, market linkages, and ongoing programmes of rural community development.

Ans to Q No 2: A.R. Desai

Ans to Q No 3: (a) Agricultural (b) Caste system



1.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer each qustion in about 150 words)

Q 1: Write short notes on the following on Rural-urban continuum

Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Discuss the characteristics of rural societies.

Q 2: Explain the scope of rural sociology.

Q 3: Examine the role of migration in India's urban growth.

*** ***** ***

UNIT 2: RURAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE

UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1 Learning Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.3 Rural Social Structure

2.4 Caste in Rural Society

2.5 Class in Rural Society

2.6 Family and Kinship in Rural Society

2.7 Let Us Sum Up

2.8 Further Reading

2.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.10 Model Questions

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to -

- understand the social structure of a rural society
- describe the role of caste as an institution in rural society
- explain the nature of inter caste relations
- explain about the different classes that exist in a rural society
- discuss family and kinship as a social institution in rural society

2.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we have discussed about the origin, nature and scope of rural sociology. In this unit, we shall try to understand the rural social structure in the context of Indian society. In doing so, we shall be mainly focusing on the social institutions such as caste, family, kinship, so on and so forth. It is very important to understand these social institutions because they mould human behaviour in every society and therefore we shall examine the functions and role these institutions play in the rural context.

2.3 RURAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Rural Society as we know literally means the villages. As majority of the Indian Population resides in the villages, understanding rural social structure becomes very important for a student of Sociology. The social institutions that shape human interactions and interrelations form the rural social structure and we have to understand the significance of these institutions. While trying to understand about rural society, we must first understand that Indian Rural Society is not homogeneous. Each village differs from the other in terms of its population strength, economic development, geographical connectivity, rigidity of caste system so on and so forth. However, inspite of multiple differences among the villages, there are some common features as well. They are:

- Villages are composition of people sharing a common geographical space.
- The members of the village are bound together by a sense of 'we-feeling and solidarity'.
- Every village have well defined social, political, religious and economic ties with other villages.
- People of a particular village usually share a common history of migration and settlement.
- Each village is marked by tradition, culture, folkways and mores.
- Rural economy is primarily agrarian even though other allied occupations like poultry farming, handloom etc also exists.
- Caste in an important organizing principle in Indian villages. Different categories and composition of castes and sub-castes are found in Indian rural societies.
- Classes too exist in rural society.
- There is an established patron-client system known as Jajmani system in the rural society.

Thus from the above paragraph we have got a brief idea about the composition and features of Indian rural society. In the following subsections, we shall learn in details about the components of rural social structure.

2.4 CASTE IN RURAL SOCIETY

We have already learned about Caste in our previous semesters. By now, we know that Caste is a system of stratification, which accords different status to different groups of people in society. It is a very significant social institution in any rural society as it governs social relationships and social interactions. Caste status is ascribed and hereditary. We are born to a particular Caste, which means we inherit the caste status of our parents. Caste is hierarchical in the sense that places one caste group either in superior or inferior position to another caste group. While this hierarchical ranking of caste group bestows privileges to the Caste groups placed at the top of the hierarchy, those at the bottom suffers from disabilities and disadvantages. They face several restrictions while entering temples, public places so on and so forth. These restrictions have however been on the wane with Constitutional safeguards to the lower caste people, spread of education etc. Caste is an endogamous group whereby one is allowed to marry only from his/her caste. Further, traditionally caste fixes one's occupation but this trend is gradually diminishing in the contemporary time.

In the above paragraph, we have discussed in brief the key features of a caste system. The significance of Caste system in the rural social structure lies in the fact that it provides a social status to the people and as mentioned above, this status brings either privileges or disabilities. It determines social relationships in the village. The nature of interaction one is supposed to have with others is also determined by the Caste system. Caste rules, regulations regarding dining, and commensality, marriage so on and so forth governs the social conduct of every individual in the village. Non-conformity to the Caste Norms are meted with punishments like Social Ostracism. Therefore who will take food from whom, and whom to marry are all determined by caste. Apart from that, Caste system builds a strong solidarity among the members of a particular caste group. The members of a particular caste-group are bound together by a 'we-feeling', which strengthens their relationships. This in turn enhances mutual support and cooperation. The Caste Councils also plays a crucial role in the villages. It

resolves intra caste and inter caste conflicts in villages. The significance of caste in rural social structure lies in the fact that it contributes to division of labour in rural society thereby enhancing interdependence among various caste groups. As we have already mentioned above, one's occupation is fixed by caste. Therefore, traditionally every group has been assigned fixed occupation that its members perform. Priest, Blacksmith, Goldsmith, Cleaners are all traditional caste occupations, all of which are necessary for the sustenance of the rural society. Since one caste group cannot perform all the functions needed for its survival and sustenance, it has to depend on others and thus it creates interdependence, which binds the rural society. While talking about interdependence among caste groups it is important for us to know about the Jajmani system, which is a very important aspect of traditional rural economy. Oscar Lewis defined Jajmani system as that under which each caste group within a village is expected to give certain standardized services to the families of other castes. Jajmani System, though have declined with the advent of modern monetized economy, was once considered the backbone of rural economy and social order. The Jajmani has been derived from the term 'jajman' which has been taken from the Sanskrit term 'Yajman'.

2.5 CLASS IN RURAL SOCIETY

According to Giddens (2000), "a class is a large-scale grouping of people who share common economic resources, which strongly influence the type of lifestyle they are able to lead". Ogburn and Nimkoff defines Class as the aggregate of persons having essentially the same social status in a given society." i.e. a class-consciousness.Thus Class, in simple words, refers to a group of persons sharing a similar status in society. The basis of class is economy and hence it is an economic group. People having similar economic conditions are considered to be of the same class group. When we talk of class in Sociology, we mostly refer to a group of people occupying similar position in the economic system of production and having similar economic resources, which distinguishes them from other groups in

society.Each Social Class has its own lifestyle

When we talk of Class, what often comes to our mind is the Class system that exists in industrial societies. However, classes exist in Indian Society as well even though it is primarily an agrarian society. Though Caste is the key basis of social stratification and a very important component of rural social structure, yet we must also understand that rural social structure also has a class structure. Let us now try to understand how various thinkers discussed the class structure of rural society.

Daniel Thorner classified Indian agrarian society into three classes- Big Proprietors, Working peasants, and labourers or whom Thorner named Malik, Kisan and Mazdur. According to Thorner, the types and the nature of classes that exist in the agrarian society of India depends upon three key aspects. They are-

1. Nature or the form of income from the soil- Is it rent; Is it fruit of cultivation or Is it payment for labour
2. The type of rights an individual enjoy over a particular plot of land and the amount of land held under these rights
3. Whether the extentof fieldwork required is performed by an individual himself or does he hire others to do it for him?

Thorner argues that though agrarian classes vary from society to society, yet Maliks, Kisans and Mazdurs are common to every Indian agrarian society. Thorner distinguished these three classes on the basis of the amount of actual labour contributed by these classes to the production process and the share in the product.

According to Thorner, Maliksare that class of people whosemain source of income is generated from their property rights in the soil. They might also have other sources of income, but since they are owners of huge plots of land, major part of their family income comes from the land. Further, these people hardly work on their own land; rather they hire labourers to work for them.

The second type of class according to Thorner is theKisans or the working peasants.Theyalso own land but much lesserin comparison to the

Maliks. They work on their own land, instead of hiring laboursand earn their livelihood through this. In some cases, unlike the Maliks, the income generated by the Kisans by working in their own land may not be sufficient to meet the family expenses and therefore may have to work for others as well. However,even in that case, the income a Kisan receives from his own agricultural holdings is more than the income he earns from other sources like working in others fields as labourers so on and so forth and that differentiates him from a Mazdur.

The Third class identified by Thorner is the Labourers or Mazdurs. They are the oneswhose means of livelihood is working in the lands of other people. This class may have land holdings of their own, but the size of their land holding very small. Therefore, the income they earn as wages by working for others is much more than the income they derive by working in their own plot of land.

Thorner also tried to identify the caste status of these classes; so as to analyse the caste-class relationship in Indian Agrarian Society. Maliks, who, according to him,are at the top of the class hierarchy comprise of a small group of people usually belonging to the Brahmans and other higher castes. Their lifestyle is very different from that of the Kisans and the Mazdurs. They own all the luxuries, which can hardly be afforded that is beyond by the Kisans or theMazdurs. Unlike the Maliks, Kisans belong to the cultivating and the artisan castes and Mazdurs mostly belong to the Scheduled Castes.

From Daniel Thorner's analysis of the agrarian class structure in India,we understand how caste and class co-exist in agrarian societies and how one's caste status influence his/her class status in society. The upper caste people belong tothe upper class too and enjoy the services of the others. While the Lower class, usually belong to the lower caste and provide services to the upper caste/class people.

D.N Dhanagare in his essay on 'The Model of Agrarian Classes' in India discusses the class structure of the Indian agrarian society. According to him, Indian society being a heterogeneous one, it is difficult to find one general class structure that can incorporate all the diverse classes' that

exist in Indian Society. But he too pointed to the nexus between caste and class operating in the Indian Society and how upper class mostly comprised of people belonging to the upper castes. He cited various examples of upper caste people owning huge plots of land and lower caste people working as labourers in other's land. Thus,his analysis highlighted thatone's caste position determines or influences ones class position as well. However according to him there are exceptions to this also. Not all Upper class people belong to the upper caste and vive-versa. While some members of an upper caste may be economically affluent owning huge amount of land, some others of the same caste may farm labourers.

2.6 FAMILY AND KINSHIP IN RURAL SOCIETY

We have already learned about the meaning and definition of Family and Kinship in our previous semesters. Family and Kinship are among the core components of rural social structure. They are agents of socialisation and social control. A family teaches an individual to emulate the norms of the society and behave accordingly and this in turn help in maintaining social order and sustaining of social structure. Apart from Socialisation, family also has various religious, political and economic function in society.

Two key features mark the Rural Family structure and they are a) Joint Family and b) Patriarchal Family Structure

The family structure in a rural society is predominantly Joint. According to Iravati Karve, 'a joint family is a group of people who generally live under one roof, who eat food cooked in one kitchen, who hold property in common, participate in common family worship and are related to one another as some particular type of kindred.' Thusin this type of family two or more generations, live together under the same roof. They share a common kitchen and commonplace of worship. Further, the property is also jointly owned. However, with the advent of industrialisation and urbanisation, joint family is gradually disappearing in the villages.

The second striking feature of a rural family is that it is mostly patriarchal in nature where the head of the family is a male member usually

the father. He has the supreme authority in the matters of the family. All decisions regarding family matters are either taken by him or must be approved by him. Women are given a subordinate position in patriarchal family. They are hardly a part of the family's decision-making process.

Kinship is another social institution, which is a very important component or rural social structure. In simple words, kinship refers to a social bond or relationship between individuals and groups. It basically includes two types of relationships- a) Consanguineal relationship b)Affinal relationship.

Consanguineal relationahips are blood relationships established by birth, whereas Affinal relationships are established through marriage. The relationship between siblings is consanguineal because they are the children of same parents and thereby share similar blood relationship. On the other hand, the relationship between husband and wife is affinal as their bond is established through their marriage. Kinship relationship is not just between two individuals but it establishes relationships between groups as well. The relationship between a women and her in-laws, between bride's family and groom's family are all governed by kinship norms. Kinship governs one's social behaviour and interaction. The relationship between a daughter in-law and father in-law will not be same as the relationship between bhabi and devar (i.e between a woman and her brother in-law). The behaviour differs with different persons depending on the relationship they share. Some relations are casual, friendly, and others more formal. For example, a woman can joke with her brother in-law but cannot behave in the same way with her mother in-law. Thus, how one is supposed to behave or the nature of his/ her interaction is governed by kinship. It also imposes social restrictions in certain kinds of relationships, which are otherwise considered as illicit and is prohibited by the society.Such social restrictions are called Taboos. Thus, kinship organises relationship between individuals and groups and everyone so that the larger social structure is maintained. However, the kinship relations are region specific. While there are common features of kinship found across the country, there are variations as well. For example, the kinship system of

South India does not match with North India. Since immense regional variations exist, we have different kinship systems in different regions. However, this variations are only in terms of the nature of interaction between individuals and groups.

of kinship, that is, the way in which the relations between individuals and groups are organised, occupies a central place in all human societies. Since India is a land of immense diversity, its different regions reflect different systems of kinship.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Define Jajmani System

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.....

Q 2: Mention two key features of Rural Family Structure.

.....

.....

Q 3: Mention the two types of kinship relationship.

.....

.....



2.7 LET US SUM UP

- Rural Society literally means the villages. As majority of the Indian Population resides in the villages, understanding rural social structure becomes very important for a student of Sociology.
- The social institutions that shape human interactions and interrelations form the rural social structure and we have to understand the significance of these institutions.
- Caste is one such significant social institution in the Rural Social structure. The nature of interaction one is supposed to have with others is determined by the Caste system. Caste rules, regulations regarding

dining, and commensality, marriage so on and so forth governs the social conduct of every individual in the village. Thus, social interactions and social relationships are governed by caste in a rural society.

- Though the significance of caste is declining in the modern day society, yet it continues to exert its influence to a large extent in the rural society even today, especially when it comes to the issues of marriage.
- Class too exist in rural society. It exists within class and both caste and class co-exist in Indian rural social structure.
- Family and Kinship are among the core components of rural social structure. They are agents of socialisation and social control.
- Two key features mark the Rural Family structure and they are a) Joint Family and b) Patriarchal Family Structure
- Kinship organises relationship between individuals and groups and everyone is expected to behave as per the kinship norms so that the larger social structure is maintained.
- However, the kinship relations are region specific. While there are common features of kinship found across the country, there are variations as well.



2.7 FURTHER READING

1) Desai, A.R. (1969). *Rural Sociology in India.* Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
2) Doshi, S.L. & Jain, P. C. (1999). *Rural Sociology,* New Delhi: Rawat Publications.
3) Srinivas, M.N. (1962). *Caste in Modern India and Other Essays.* New York: Asia Publishing House.
4. Dipankar Gupta(ed.); 2010; Social Stratification; New Delhi: Oxford University Press.



2.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1 : Jajmani system is that system under which each caste group within a village is expected to give certain standardized services

to the families of other castes.

Ans to Q No 2 : Two key features that mark the Rural Family structure are a) Joint Family and b) Patriarchal Family Structure

Ans to Q No 3 : Two types of kinship relationships are a) Consanguineal relationship b) Affinal relationship.



2.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Mention some of the common features found among the Indian Villages.

Q 2: Briefly mention the features of Caste System

Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Explain how Caste and Class co-exist in Indian Rural Society.

Q 2: 'Caste governs social behaviour and social interactions of individuals in a society'. Elaborate the statement with examples.

Q 3: Write a note on how kinship governs social relationships.

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UNIT 3: CHANGING TREND IN RURAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE

UNIT STRUCTURE

3.1 Learning Objectives

3.2 Introduction

3.3 Migration

3.3.1. Types of Migration

3.3.2 Determinants of Migration

3.4Urbanization

3.4.1. Causes of Urbanization

3.5 Effects of Rural Urban Migration and Urbanization

3.5.1 Caste-Class Continuum

3.6 Let Us Sum Up

3.7 Further Reading

3.8 Answers to Check your Progress

3.9 Model Questions

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to -

- understand the concept of migration and its determinants
- explain the causes behind urbanization
- discuss the effects of urbanisation

3.2 INTRODUCTION

We are already aware that Indian society is primarily a rural society, though urbanization is fast catching up. According to the 2011 Census, 68.84% of India's population lives in rural India. Even though a large percentage of the population resides in rural areas there is a steady growth in urban population since Independence. The main reasons for the increase in urban population can be attributed to industrialization, employment opportunities, a better standard of living and better health care facilities. Such options play a big role in attracting young working population from

rural to urban areas. As a result, a huge percentage of the population migrates to urban centers or industrial regions and developed rural areas with an aspiration for better employment opportunities and better standard of living which is leading to various kinds of migrations. In this unit we will be delving into migration, urbanization and how they have brought changes to rural social sturcture.

3.3 MIGRATION

Generally, migration is a geographical phenomenon defined as the permanent or semi-permanent change of residence of an individual or group of people over a significant distance. In today's time if we observe around us an overwhelming flow of people mostly in urban pockets belonging to different age group, ethnicity and speaking myriad languages absorbed in the urban labour market. In India, it is estimated that 120 million or more people have migrated to the urban labour markets, industrial areas in search of daily income. Migration becomes essential for people from the region where there are problems related to natural calamities like floods, existence of drought like-condition and from the regions facing unresolved social or political conflicts. Other issues related to migration are lack of available local employment opportunities, indebtedness and poverty are important trigger points leading to migration from rural to urban areas.

In India, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh had been known for large scale migration since decades. Recently, North-East region along with Orissa, Madhya Pradesh have constituted bigger migrant groups to urban pockets in the states Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Gujarat. Most of them are absorbed in the construction, textile, transportation, mines &quarries, manual labour sectors etc.

3.3.1 Types of Migration

On the basis of motivation, migration has been classified as Economic migration and Social migration depending upon factors of motive and move (distance). The movement of people that take

place within the territorial jurisdiction of a country is called as internal migrations. On the other hand, where the migrants move across the international border is known as external migration. The internal migrations can be further classified into four types on the basis of their geographical movement- (i) Rural to Urban, (ii) Urban to Urban, (iii) Rural to Rural and (iv) Urban to Rural.

- **Rural to Urban:** This type of migration pattern can be observed in the underdeveloped countries. It is caused by both push and pull factors. In developing countries, like India, where there is rapid urban industrial development taking place there isa continuous flow of labour population from rural areas to the industrial areas.

The rural area becomes the push factor because of poverty, unemployment, low wages,lack and underdeveloped facilities for educational, health and availability of other services play a crucial role for such migration. At the same time, urban areas act as the pull factor as they provide better employment opportunities, regular and higher wages, fixed working hours, better living amenities for education and socio-cultural activities.

But the consequence of large scale unplanned migration from rural to the urban area had lead to the emergence of slum areas in cities. The creation of slum areas happens because the growing cities are unable to provide the minimum amenities for good living to the migrant workforce and have to live inconditions worse than those of their native rural areas. One of the famous examples is Dharavi in Mumbai.

- **Urban to Urban Migration:** Inter-urban migration takes place between one urban center to another urban center. This phenomenon is observed in highly urbanized countries of the world, for examples like the U.S.A, United Kingdom to name. The main reason for this kind of migration happens with the objective of improving their employment prospect and economic

gain. For example, shifting from Boston to New York in the USA, Beijing to Hong Kong in China area few examples.

- **Rural to Rural Migration:** This kind of migration is observed in areas where development activities like irrigation, water harvesting, intensification of agriculture and extension of farming areas started developing in areas of the sparse population experiencing large scale development activities. Such areas act as the pull factors for the rural population from crowded areas of low agricultural productivity. The main motive of such migration is economic gain with the motive of permanent settlement in the near future. In India, rural to rural migration is being witnessed in remote areas of Arunachal Pradesh where hydro-power projects are being constructed. As there is a dearth of labour force in Arunachal Pradesh the development projects have become an opportunity for people from Bihar and UP to get long term engagement at construction sites with a possibility of a permanent job after the completion of the projects.
- **Urban to Rural Migration:** This type of migration is relatively less common compared to other types of migrations. Such movement takes place at the advanced stage of urbanization. In developed countries where they have already attended a higher degree of urbanization, such phenomena are seen mostly in European countries.

Urban to Rural migration have resulted in developing better connectivity in terms of transport and communication. In major European towns, it is found that a large percentage of the working population resides in rural areas and plying to work on a regular basis resulting in depopulating the industrial cities.

To understand in-depth as to why migration has been a continuous phenomenon over the years lets understand its causes.

3.3.2 Determinants of Migration

- **ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS:** Economic motives are the most vital catalyst of people moving from one place to another. The main reasons which govern the magnitude and direction of migration are the general economic conditions of the area, availability of good agricultural land, size of land holdings, growth of employment opportunities, etc.

In areas with depressed economic conditions,there is a general trend of out-migration, whereas in areas with better economic prosperity offers greater employment potentials and attracts in-migration.

The most powerful economic factor determining magnitude and direction of migration is good agricultural land. The areas which have acute pressure of population upon their agricultural lands resource generate out-migration. India is the perfect example in this regard.

Another important factor is the availability of employment opportunities. The areas experiencing developmental activities are widening their employment potentials. With an increase in employment opportunities, migratory tendencies have also lead to the development of transport and communications.

- **SOCIAL DETERMINANTS:** Migration due to certain social norms or customs is gender-specific. In India, females tend to migrate from their place of origin (i.e. parents residence) to the place of residence of their spouses at the time of marriage. Such migration does not hold motive of economic gains.

Religious freedom is another cause of social migration. Such migration was recently experiencedby Rohingya people from Myanmar. Due to military crackdown in Myanmar, more than six hundred thousand Rohingya people have migrated from Myanmar to Bangladesh. In India, in the last decade of the 20th century,large populations of Kashmiri Pandits migrated from Kashmir to other

cities of India because of insecurity and threat.

In contemporary times, it is found that better education, more skilled and economically better off people have a greater prospect to migrate, particularly over long distances. The availability of information through education, cultural contacts widen the prospect of migration. The information network and cultural contacts widen the horizons for job opportunities.

- **DEMOGRAPHIC DETERMINANTS:** A number of demographic factors play a crucial role in triggering migration. Age is one of the most important demographic factors in controlling the degree of desire to move among potential migrants. Mostly the young adult migrates than any other age group. And the regional disparity of population also becomes another reason for migration. When in certain areas the degree of population pressure and its resource potential varies or in stress the chances of migration increases to regions of potential abundance. In India, large scale out-migration from crowded parts of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh is being witnessedfor several decades.

3.4 URBANIZATION

The urban population of the world has been growing more rapidly ever since human started to travel from one place to another in search of food, work, and economic security. In 1800's only 2.5 percent of the world's total population was living in urban areas and by 1980's over 40 percent of the world's population started living in urban areas. This process of transformation of the society has given rise to a number of issues due to fast-changing pattern of spatial interaction. Nevertheless, we can definitely say that the degree of urbanization is a fair index of the level of socio-economic development of a region.

Geographer, Lampard suggested three basic distinctions to explain the process of urbanization. They are (i) Behavioural, (ii) Structural and (iii) Demographic aspects. The behavioural aspect of urbanization refers to

the experience of elders through time and to the changes in the pattern of their behaviour. The structural aspect of the process refers to the changes in the economic structure which is a transformation from an agrarian to industrial economy of the population. The demographic aspect refers to the process of population concentration.

Riesman interprets urbanization as the whole process of change and its consequences when a society gets transformed from an agrarian economy to an industrial economy and from a small homogeneous society to a large heterogeneous mass.

Trewartha considers urbanization as a cyclical process through which the nations pass as they evolve from agrarian to industrial societies.

However, Haggett reflects that in the case of developing countries the process of urbanization may not hold same to that of developing countries because developing countries differ from the industrial countries in two aspects. First, Urbanization in developing countries started late and it's been more rapid. Second, the urbanization process in European countries was mostly the product of rural-urban migration whereas in developing countries it is both rural-urban migration and population explosion in the countryside.

Now, let us try to understand the causes and effects of the urbanization process in India to have an overall perspective of the changing rural areas into urban spaces.

3.4.1 Causes of Urbanization

- **Industrialization:** Industrialization is a major cause of urbanization. Expansion of industries has created more employment opportunities in various urban pockets. With an increase in employment opportunities,rural people tend to migrate to cities in hope ofbetter income and better standard of living.
- **Social Factors:** Cities are the main attraction to the migrant population for a better standard of living, better educational

facilities, and aspiration to elevate social status. These factors induce people to migrate to the cities.

- **Employment Opportunities:** India is primarily anagrariancountry and a larger percentage of the population depends mainly on agriculture for their livelihood. The main factor for better agricultural produce depends on monsoon. In a drought-like situation or natural calamities, rural people migrate to cities in search of other income generation avenues.
- **Modernization:** Urban areas are characterized by sophisticated technology better infrastructure, communication, medical facilities, etc. People feel that they can lead a comfortable life in cities. With that hope, a large percentage of the population migrates to cities and industrial regions.

3.5 EFFECTS OF RURAL URBAN MIGRATION AND URBANIZATION

Rural Urban Migration due to varied reasons have led to rapid expansion of urban centres. This has led to tremendous social changes. Let us have a brief understanding about it in the next section.

- **Problem of Over-population:** Concentration of population is a major problem of cities. It has resulted in accommodation problem, growth of slums, increase in crime rates, etc.
- **Disintegration of Joint Family:** Joint family cannot be maintained in cities on account of the higher cost of living because of which people migrate from rural areas but prefer leaving families back in villages and visit occasionally during festivals or family occasions.
- **Impersonal Relations:** Urban centers are characterized by highly secondary relations. The concept of neighbourhood, community life are almost absent in cities. This may have an adverse psychological effect on individualsand they become impersonal. This way of living leads to monotony in cities.
- **Stress:** Urban life can be stressful for work pressure, financial

constraints, high cost of living which can strain family relations. Stress from various reasons deteriorates the health of a person leading to many health issues both physical and mental.

- **Pollution:** In industrialized cities,pollution is a major problem because of the constant running of industries which releases fumes, smog, and release of industrial waste materials and toxins to rivers and other water bodies.

3.5.1 Caste-Class Continuum

Before we understand the dynamism of how caste and class nexus work in urban space, let us look back once what caste and class was defined as. Class depends mainly on economic differences between groups of individuals who are in possession and control of material resources whereas caste system is based on birth, religion and rituals (to the point of discriminatory at a certain point).

Looking back to thousandsof years back in the pre-historic era, individuals evolved to become families by procreation then gathered together to form societies. In the beginning, there was no difference between caste and class. Once civilization evolved over time, there was division of labour as per potentialities and ability.

In early human history, the economics of resources were linked to food and safety of the tribal clans. Since it is the most important aspect for the survival of the clans and society, people providing those services became the most important member of society. Since these people were very important for the basic survival of the society they started getting privileges. Once they started getting privileges a gap between resources and privileges within the members of the society started. The privileged ones start accumulating resources with them and after resource accumulation, they started bartering resources with other services. This is the point where the difference between social and economic statusemerged.

In urban areas, people migrate from rural areas. The population migrates based on their economic agenda, social and cultural baggage. The rural-urban migration happened gradually.In villages, the most important identity is their 'caste identity' and wants to protect their own vested interests. They form their settlement based on their caste and follow occupation which is carried over since generations. For example, Brahmin caste community will stay together mainlynear a temple or a water bodyat the center of the village and by profession are priests or guruswhereas communities from lower castes are located at the periphery of the village and are barbers or leather maker. In order to meet the financial needs of the families male members migrate to urban or industries areas to earn more than their existing financial condition to meet the demands of the family.

In cities or industrial towns, the caste difference that prevails in rural areas diminishes rather the values of an individual are based on one's potentialities, ability, and hard work. It is observed that people from lower castes take up any kind of jobs without prejudices. They are conditioned to work in any kind of environment for survival and work hard to improve their financial conditions. Whereas a man from higher caste may not be willing to take a job that is below his education or social acceptance level. In such a scenario the lower caste individual is expected to prosper better and improve his economic condition over time. He can climb up the social ladder in urban areas sooner and be accepted by the society as his economic status improves and the social caste is not relevant anymore.

In conclusion it can be said that due to the rapid socio-economic changes in urban areas, rural societies have also changed tremendously. When people migrate from rural to urban areas there is a change in the rural joint family structure. The family size shrinks and so also the nature of relationship. Further caste as a social institution has also undergone massive change in rural societies with growing migration and dissociation from caste based ocupation.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What are the different types of migration?

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Q 2: Name the various kinds of Internal Migration?

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Q 3: What is Push and Pull phenomena?

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.....

Q 4: Define Urbanization?

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.....



3.6 LET US SUM UP

- According to the 2011 Census, 68.84% of India's population lives in rural India.
- The main reasons for the increase in urban population are because of industrialization, employment opportunities, a better standard of living and better health care facilities.
- Lack of available local employment opportunities, loans and poverty are important trigger points for migrations from rural to urban areas.
- Most of the migrants are absorbed in construction, textile, Transportation, mines & quarries, manual labour sectors.
- The movement of people that take place within the territorial jurisdiction of a country is called as internal migrations.
- The migrants move across the international border is known as external migration.
- Rural to Urban migration can be seen in under Developed countries.
- Urban to Urban migration happens in highly urbanized countries with

the prospect of employment and higher economic gains.

- Rural to Rural migration happens in areas of developed irrigation facilities, use of modern technology.
- Urban to Rural migration takes place at advance stage of urbanization in advanced developed countries.
- The main reasons which govern the magnitude and direction of migration are the general economic conditions of the area, availability of good agricultural land, size of land holdings, growth of employment opportunities, etc.
- Social migration is mainly carried out by women at the time of marriage.
- Age is one of the most important demographic factors for controlling the degree of desire to move among potential migrants.
- The three basic distinctions to explain the process of urbanization. They are (i) Behavioural, (ii) Structural and (iii) Demographic aspects.
- The main causes of urbanization are Industrialization, Employment Opportunities, and modernization.
- In cities or industrial towns, the caste difference that prevails in rural areas diminishes rather the values of an individual are based on one's potentialities, ability, and hard work.

3.7 FURTHER READING

1) Chandna. R.C (2011) "Geography of Population"; Kalyani Publishers, Ludhianal.

3.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Migration can be classified as economic and social migration depending upon the factors of motive and move (distance).

Ans to Q No 2: The internal migrations can be classified into four types on the basis of their geographical movement- (i) Rural to Urban, (ii) Urban to Urban, (iii) Rural to Rural and (iv) Urban to Rural.

Ans to Q No 3: Rural areas are surrounded by poverty, unemployment, low wages, and lack and underdeveloped facilities for health and

education act as a push factor from the rural areas to urban or industrial areas. Whereas urban areas act as the pull factor as they provide better employment opportunities, regular and higher wages, fixed working hours, better living amenities for education and socio-cultural activities.

Ans to Q No 4: Urbanization is a cyclical process through which the nations pass as they evolve from agrarian to industrial societies.



3.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Question (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Why migration becomes essential for people from certain regions?

Q 2: What are the various causes of Urbanization? Explain in brief.

Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: What is Internal and External Migration? Describe the different kinds of Internal Migration.

Q 2: What are the main determinants of Migration? State and explain them in brief?

Q 3: What are the main effects of Urbanization? Explain.

Q 4: Write a short note on changing nature of the caste system from rural to urban because of migration and urbanization in India.

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UNIT 4: RURAL ECONOMY

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.1 Learning Objectives

4.2 Introduction

4.3 Land Tenure System

4.3.1. Types of Land Tenure System Pre Independence Period.

4.3.2 Post Independence Period.

4.4 Land Reforms: Meaning and Definition

4.4.1 Land Reform Measures

4.5 Green Revolution and its impact

4.5.1 Main Objectives of the Green Revolution

4.5.2 Impact of Green Revolution

4.6 Bonded and Migrant Labourers

4.7 Let Us Sum Up

4.8 Further Reading

4.9 Answers to Check your Progress

4.10 Model Questions

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to -

- know about the land tenure system and land reforms in India
- understand the impact of green revolution
- discuss about Bonded and Migrant Labourers

4.2 INTRODUCTION

Agriculture plays a vital role in the Indian economy. Over 70% of the rural population is directly dependent on agriculture and contributes to one-third of the nation's Gross Domestic Product. For centuries, Indian villages have been self- sufficient and land was available in abundance. With the advent of Mughal's rule in India, the land became one of the main sources of revenue earning for the Mughal emperor and carried over for centuries. With the dawn of British rule, the land revenue system had gone through

transformation and continued till India's Independence. To understand the land revenue nexus, let us understand how the land was seen by British during its rule in the Indian peninsula.

4.3 LAND TENURE SYSTEM

In simple terms, Land Tenure refers to the agreement between an individual and the government. The land within the political boundary of a state is absolutely owned by the government and it is the government which gives the individual or communities proprietary rights. For the proprietary rights individuals has to pay revenue to the government.

4.3.1 Types of Land Tenure System Pre Independence Period

Under the British Rule, there were three main types of land tenure systems in India. They were Zamindari, Mahalwari, and Rayatwari.

- **Zamindari System:** This system was introduced by Lord Cornwallis in Bengal in 1793. Under this system, the lands of a village or few villages together were held by a single person or family who was responsible for payment of land revenue to the British government. The Zamindars became the intermediaries between the cultivators and the state. This system was introduced in many parts of the country.

The Zamindari system was based on exploitation. The Zamindars were conferred with unlimited powers by the Emperor. In this system, tillers of the soil were exploited by way of exorbitant rents imposed by the zamindars. Approximately, one-fourth of the produce was taken away by the intermediaries in the form of rent. The tenants had to work in the houses of Zamindars on occasions like marriage, religious festivals without any return.

The British introduced the Zamindari system to achieve two objectives. Firstly, to collect theland revenues from farmers efficiently through Zamindars. Secondly, it created a class of people who would

remain loyal to the British ruler in the country.

- **Mahalwari System:** Under this system, the village lands were held jointly by the village communities. The members of the village were jointly responsible for the payment of the land revenue. The lands held by the village communities were either cultivated by the members of the village communities themselves or leased out to others on rent. The village headman was entrusted with the responsibility of collecting the land revenue and depositing it in the treasury. In return, the headman received 'Panchatra' i.e. 5% as commission.
- **Ryotwari System:** It was introduced by Sir. Thomas Munro first in Madras state and then in Bombay state. In this system, there was a direct relationship between government and the tenant or Rayat i.e. individual land holder. Under this system, the responsibility of paying land revenue to the government was of the individual 'ryot' himself. There was no intermediary between him and the state. The ryot or the farmer had full rights on his land regarding sale, transfer, sub-let or lease as long as he paid land revenue to the government.

4.3.2 Post Independence Period

After India's Independence, the Indian National Congress appointed the Agrarian Reforms Committee under the Chairmanship of J.C. Kumarappa formaking an in-depth study of the agrarian relationship that existed in pre independence periodand provides recommendation for agrarian reforms to be brought in the agrarian policies post India's independence. The committee recommended that all intermediaries between the state and the farmers should be eliminated and the land must belong to the farmers adhering to certain conditions.The state legislature passed the legislation for the abolition of zamindari and similar exploitative land tenure systems. As a result of the abolition of Zamindari and other land tenure system, more

than 20 lakhs tenants got proprietary rights to land i.e. they became owners of the land.

4.4 LAND REFORMS

Before delving into the various land reforms carried out on the recommendation of the Agrarian Reform Committee let us understand what Land Reform is. In broad terms, Land Reform refers to an institutional measure directed towards altering the existing pattern of ownership, tenancy, and management of land which existed in the pre-independence period. It entails "redistribution of the rights of ownership, use of land away from large landowners and in favour of cultivators with very limited or no landholdings".

The land reform policies constituted the most important measures to improve the economic condition of agricultural tenants along withthe redistribution of land, regulation of rent, improving the conditions of tenancy, cooperative organization, and agricultural education.

The main objectives of land reforms are:

- To change the Agrarian structure in a way that will not obstruct but promote the growth of agriculture.
- To restructuring of agrarian relations to achieve an egalitarian structure;
- Elimination of exploitation in land relations;
- Improvement of socio-economic conditions of the rural poor by widening their land base;
- Increase agriculture production and productivity;
- Facilitating land-based development forthe rural poor; and
- Infusion of a great measure of equality in local institutions.

The steps that were undertaken in the land tenure system post Independence by the government were (i) Abolition of Intermediaries, (ii) Tenancy Reforms, (iii) Fixation of Ceilings on land holdings and (iv) Redistribution of Surplus land among landless or semi-landless peasants. Besides the above stated steps special measures are adopted to prevent alienation of tribal land.

4.4.1 Land Reform Measures

- **Abolition of Intermediaries:** In the pre independence period, the Indian rural economy and polity was dominated by some big landowners. They acquired lands by paying a very small amount of money to the British government. In addition to that, an intermediate class was developed by the British government to simplify their tax collecting system. The people of this class had no direct connection with land and agriculture but captured the land with no limit. As a result, the small and marginal farmers were exploited and they were forced to transfer the land to the big landlords.

Based on recommendationsfrom the Kumarappa Committee, in the 1950s all the Indian states enacted the legislation for the abolition of intermediary tenures. It is to be noted that the nature and effects of the legislation varied from state to state.In West Bengal and Jammu and Kashmir, legislation for abolishing intermediary tenures was accompanied by simultaneous imposition of ceilings on land holdings. In other states, intermediaries were allowed to retain possession of lands under their personal cultivation without limit being set, as the ceiling laws were passed only in the year 1960.

Later the government took the land from the intermediaries. The small landowners were compensated by the government for giving their land. The amount of compensation was inversely proportional to the amount of revenue earned from the land.

The biggest impact from the abolition of the intermediate classes connected more than 20 lakh farmers directly with the government and also increased the tax revenue from the rural areas. The increase in tax revenue compensated the huge burden of the government to compensate farmers and land owners. The financial security of the farmers improved and as a result of that, productivity and rate of employment also increased.

- **Tenancy Reforms:** The Agrarian Reform Committee very strongly felt that the welfare of the Indian farmers and the progress of agriculture depended to a large extent on whether the farmers and peasants felt secure about the source of livelihood and whether the tenure system provided incentives and opportunities for local development.

The First Year Plan gave the highest priority to increase agricultural production, recommended an agrarian policy that aimed at reducing disparities in wealth and income, eliminating exploitation providing security for the tenant and worker and opportunities in different sections for the rural pollution. With the guidelines provided by the Planning Commission, the State Governments adopted certain measures like regulation of rents, the security of tenure and conferment of ownership on tenants.

The tenancy reforms undertaken by various states followed four distinct patterns. First, the tenancy laws in states like Andhra Pradesh (Telengana region included), Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh banned leasing out of agricultural land except by certain disabled categories of landowners, so as to vest the ownership of land with the actual tillers. Secondly, the state of Kerala banned agricultural tenancy altogether without having any exception. Third, states like Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, and Haryana did not ban tenancy as such. But tenants after continuous possession of land for a certain specific span of time eventually acquired the right to purchase the land they cultivated. However, in all these states, leasing-out by both large and small farmers continued.Fourth, states like West Bengal, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh did not ban leasing out of agricultural land.

Almost all State Governments provided for the regulation of rent, except for Kerala where leasing out was completely prohibited. The regulated or fair rent ranged between 1/4th to 1/6th of the produce from the land. But actual rent remained always higher than the

regulated or fair rent. In many places where small and marginal farmers leased-in land from large or absentee landowners, the situation continued to be exploitive, thereby discouraging the actual tillers in order to cultivate the land efficiently.

- **Ceilings on Land Holding:** The term 'ceiling on land holdings' refers to the legally stipulated maximum size beyond which no individual farmer or farm household can hold any land. Like all other land reform measures, the objective of such a ceiling is to promote economic growth with social justice. It has been duly recognized by India's policy makers that after a certain point any large scale farming in the Indian context would become uneconomic and also unjust. Small farms tend to increase the economic efficiency of resource use and improve social equality through employment creation and more equitable income distribution.

In 1959, the Indian National Congress resolved the agrarian legislation to cover restrictions on the size of the land-holdings implemented in all states by the end of 1959. Accordingly, all the state Governments expecting north-eastern region imposed ceilings on land holdings by the 1960's. The states of West Bengaland Jammu and Kashmir had already imposed ceilings on land holdings along with the laws for abolition of intermediaries in the early 1950's itself. However, as the ceiling laws were not ratified simultaneously with abolition of Zamindari, except in West Bengal and Jammu and Kashmir because of which several Nami and Benami transfer of land took place. This reduced the potential ceiling surplus land that could be available for redistribution. Even though there were quite large areas of lands taken under the ceiling, few categories were exempted from the ceiling laws, they were:

- Land under Tea, Coffee, Rubber, and Cocoa and Cardamom plantations.
- Sugarcane Farms,

- Co-operative Gardens, Colonies,
- Tank Fisheries,
- Land held by Religious, Charitable and Educational institutions,
- Land held by State and Central Government,
- Land held by Sugarcane Factories,
- Land awarded for gallantry,
- Land held by a public sector or industrial or commercial undertaking,
- Specified farms engaged in cattle breeding, dairying or wool rising.

Ø **Bhoodan and Gramdan:** The Bhoodan movement was launched in 1951, immediately after the peasant uprising in Telangana and another movement known as Gramdan came into being in 1957. The objective of both the movement was to persuade landowners and leaseholders in each village to renounce their land rights, after which all the lands would become the property of a village association for the egalitarian redistribution and for the purpose of joint cultivation.



Believing that all people are equally important and should have the same rights and opportunities in life.

However, both the movements failed to achieve its targeted objectives and the degree of success in respect of both land acquisition and land distribution. Of the 42.6 lakhs acres of land received through Bhoodan more than 17.3 lakh acres of land were rejected as they were found unfit for cultivation. In the majority of the cases, the village

landlords donated only those pieces of land which were either unfit for cultivation or were in dispute with tenants or government. In fact, the landlords preferred to part away with their disputed lands as a compromise under the law. In return of the land donation, the landlords received input subsidies and other facilities which were much more than they received in relation to the land unfit for cultivation.

Ø **Consolidation of Holdings:** 'Consolidation of holdings' refers to amalgamation and redistribution of the fragmented land with

a view to bringing together all plots of land of a cultivator into one block. Due tothe growing pressure of population on land and the limited opportunities for work in the non-agricultural sector, there was an increasing trend towards sub-division and fragmentation of land holdings. Because of which the task of irrigation management, land improvement, and supervision of different plots was very difficult.

After independence, almost all the states except Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, and parts of Andhra Pradesh enacted laws for consolidation of holdings. In Punjab and Haryana, it was made compulsory and in other states, laws provided for the consolidation of land holdings was done on voluntary basis,provided if it is agreed by the majority.

The consolidation acts are provided for

- Prohibition of fragmentation below standard area,
- Fixation of minimum standard area for regulating transfers,
- Schemes of Consolidation by an exchange of holdings,
- Reservation of land for common areas,
- Procedure for payment of compensation to persons allotted holdings of less market value in exchange,
- Administrative machinery for carrying consolidation schemes
- Filing of objections, appeals, and penalties.

However, due to lack of adequate political and administrative support, the progress made in terms of consolidation of holding was not very satisfactory, except in Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh where the task of consolidation was accomplished.

- **Protection of Tribal Land:** All the concerned states ratified laws for prevention of alienation of tribals from the land. In all the scheduled areas, land transfer from tribal to non-tribal population was prohibited by law. But due to various legal loopholes and administrative lapses, alienation of the tribals from their land continued on a large scale. Mortgaging of land to moneylenders due to indebtedness, poverty, and acquisition of tribal land for

irrigation, dams and other public purposes were largely responsible for the alienation of tribal land. There are continuous efforts from activities and change-makers to change the laws in order to safeguard the rights of tribal to their land.

4.5 GREEN REVOLUTION AND ITS IMPACT

Green Revolution refers to the introduction of High Yielding Variety (HYV) of seeds and increased use of fertilizer and irrigation methods. The aim of this revolution was to increase food security and make India self-sufficient in food grains. Use of newer technologies including pesticides, nitrogen fertilizers, improved crop variety was introduced to Indian farming during the Green Revolution period. The term 'Green Revolution' is applied to the period from 1967 to 1978.

The programme was started with the help of the United States based Rockefeller Foundation and was based on high-yielding varieties of wheat, rice and other grains that had been developed in Mexico and in the Philippines. M.S Swaminathan, Indian geneticist played a special role in India's Green Revolution programme.

4.5.1 Main Objectives of the Green Revolution

- To increase agricultural productivity.
- To aid the small and marginal farmers.
- To implement the usage of modern technology and techniques in farming.
- To achieve self-sufficiency in the production of food crops.
- To introduce HYV seeds, fertilizers, and irrigation projects.
- To globalize the agricultural world.

4.5.2 Impact of Green Revolution

Let us now discuss the impact that the Green Revolution brought in India:

- **High Yielding Varieties (HYV) of seeds:** The development of HYV seeds in the 1960s laid the foundation for the Green Revolution in India. The HYV seeds played the role to modernize agriculture in India like engines of change, capable of transforming a traditional farmer into a commercial producer. After the widespread adoption of HYV seeds the cereal production increased, which invariably lead to investment and increase the use of machineries.

In 1963 the National Seeds Corporation (NSC) was established. It undertook the production of breeding seeds on its own farms and foundation. NSC certified and quality tested seeds through contract growers, agricultural universities, state seeds corporations and state farms corporation in India.

In 1977 the National Seed Programme was launched in collaboration with World Bank covering 9 states of Punjab, Haryana, U.P, Bihar, Orissa, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Rajasthan. The production distribution and utilization of quality seeds have been increasing since the beginning of the Green Revolution.

- **Irrigation:** Irrigation is the second most important component of Green Revolution technology after HYV seeds. India's rainfall being unreliable, irregular and seasonal, there was an urgent need to expand irrigation potential to meet requirements of the Green Revolution for the successful introduction of HYV seeds even in rain scarce region. The availability of water at the right time and in right quantity was crucial for the success of HYV seeds.
- **Use of Fertilizers:** The use of chemical fertilizers has been the third most important input of Green Revolution after HYV seeds and irrigation. The area of land available for cultivation was limited and there was no scope for new extensive land for agricultural expansion. In order to meet the demand of the ever-increasing population and limited land for agriculture, multiple cropping was introduced during the Green Revolution. The multi-

cropping was heavily leaned on HYV seeds, irrigation, and chemical fertilizer. To encourage the use of balanced fertilizer and easy access to farmers at affordable prices, the Central Government determines the price and sells at subsidy rate.

The use of fertilizer has considerably increased over the years post-Green Revolution. In the 1970's, southern India was leading in consumption of fertilizers, later states like Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh became the main consumers. It is worth mentioning that Punjab and Haryana have 6% of the country's cropped area which consumed 18% of the fertilizers used in India.

- **Consolidation of Holdings:** As small and fragmented land holdings have been one of the main obstacles in the progress of agricultural development in India, consolidation of land holdings was introduced as a policy to solve this problem.
- **Supply of Agricultural Credit:** Credit Supply is one of the most crucial inputs in all agricultural developmental programmes. Inputs like HYV Seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation technology, and machineries depend on the availability of credit.

Earlier farmers used to get loans from moneylenders who used to charge a higher interest rate. Indian farmers borrowed loans from moneylenders because a large percentage of Indianfarmers' community consisted of small and marginal farmers who did not have their resources to invest in agriculture. They depended upon agricultural credit to carry on their agricultural operations.

After Five Year Planning Commission was commissioned Cooperatives, Commercial Banks and Regional Rural Banks extended loans to farmers on easy terms to carry out their agriculture activities.

- **Rural Electrification:** Electricity is a cheap source of energy used for lifting water by tube-wells/pump sets, processing and preservation of agricultural produce, and irrigation system in farm operations. Realizing the importance of electricity for the proper growth and development of agriculture, a massive

programme of rural electrification was taken up immediately after Independence.

Haryana was the first state to electrify all its villages in 1970. Followed by Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra where 97 to 100 percent villages were electrified by the mid of 1980s.

- **Rural Roads and Marketing:** Road connectivity and infrastructure development constituted important factors to improve agricultural productivity under the Green Revolution programme. Connecting villages to neighbouring markets and villages were essential for market linkages and selling.

Marketing is essential for progressive agriculture. Regulated markets enable the farmer to sell his agricultural produce and purchase farm implements and tools, fertilizers, pesticides, and other agricultural inputs as well as goods for daily use.

In the words of Leo E. Holman, "Marketing is the part and parcel ofthe modern production process, the part at the end that gives point and purpose to all that had gone before."

- **Agricultural Universities:** Agricultural universities and other agricultural institutes are primarily engaged in agricultural research and passing on the research findings to farmers. The success of Green Revolution largely depends upon the work done by these universities.

4.6 BONDED AND MIGRANT LABOURERS

The term 'bonded labour' has been defined by the National Commission on Labour as "labour which remains in bondage for a specific period for the debt incurred". In general, the "Bonded Labour" or "Bonded Labour System" refers to 'the relationship between a creditor and a debtor who obtains loan owningto economic compulsions confronting his day-to-day life, and agrees to abide by the terms dictated by the creditor'.The term of the agreement between the creditor and debtor is that the debtor agrees

to mortgage his services or services of any or all the members of his family for a specified or unspecified period of time.

The main causes of growth and perpetuation of the bonded labour system are economic, social and religious factors. The economic causes include extreme poverty of people, inability to find work for a livelihood, inadequate size of the landholdings to support family, lack of alternative small scale loans for the rural and urban poor, natural calamities like drought, floods, etc. The social factors include high expenses on occasions like marriage, death, feast, birth of a child, etc., heavy debts, caste-based discrimination, lack of concrete social welfare schemes to safeguard against hunger and illness, compulsory and unequal educational system. Broadly speaking, bondage originated mainly from economic and social pressures.

A 'migrant worker or labour' is a person who either migrates within their home country or outside the country to pursue work. Migrant workers usually do not have the intention to stay permanently in the country or region in which they work.Migrant labours are generally casual and unskilled workers who move systematically from one region to another offering their services on a temporary, and usually on seasonal basis.

In India, more than 120 million people or more migrate from rural areas to urban markets, industries, and farms. Migration becomes essential for people from regions that face frequent shortages of rainfall or suffers from floods or population is high in relation to land. Areas facing unresolved social or political conflicts also become prone to high out-migration. Poverty, lack of local employment opportunities and availability of work becomes the motivation for outward rural migration.

Migration corridors in India is mostly from Bihar, UP, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and recently North East region that send labours to industrial regions within the country. The migrants are employed in the construction sector, domestic work, textile, brick kiln, transportation, mines and quarries, and agriculture. Migrant workers form the largest part of India's vast unorganized work sector. The biggest disadvantages faced by the unskilled migrant workers are because they are devoid of critical skills,

information and bargaining power which lead them to low- value and hazardous work and do not get legal protection. Even though it is not widely discussed the role of the migrant workers in the economic growth and contribution to national income is enormous and there is an imminent need for social securities and laws to make the growth inclusive.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Who owns the land within the political boundary of a country?

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.....

Q 2: Who were Zamindars?

.....

.....

Q 3: What were the main objectives of the British Emperor to introduce the Zamindari System in India?

.....

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Q 4: What were the main recommendations of the Agrarian Reforms Committee?

.....

.....

Q5: What do you understand by 'Ceiling on Land Holding'?

.....

.....

Q6: What do you understand by 'Consolidation of Holdings'?

.....

.....

Q7: Define Bonded Labour and Migrant Worker?

.....

.....



4.7 LET US SUM UP

- Over 70% of the rural population is directly dependent on agriculture and contributes to one-third of the nation's Gross Domestic Product.
- During Mughal's rule, the land became one of the main sources of revenue earning of the Mughal emperor and carried over for centuries.
- Land Tenure refers to the agreement between an individual and the government.
- Zamindarisystem was introduced by Lord Cornwallis in Bengal in 1793.
- Under the Mahalwari system, the village land was held jointly by village communities.
- In the Ryotwari system, there was a direct relationship between the government and the tenant or Rayat. The Tenant themselves were responsible to pay their land revenues to the government with no intermediaries.
- After Independence an Agrarian Reform Committee was formed under the Chairmanship of J.C. Kmarappa.
- The biggest impact from the abolition of the intermediate classes connected more than 20 lakh farmers directly with the government and also increased the tax revenue from the rural areas.
- With the guidelines provided by the Planning Commission, the State Governments adopted certain measures like regulation of rents, the security of tenure and conferment of ownership on tenants.
- Small farms tend to increase the economic efficiency of resource use and improve social equality through employment creation and more equitable income distribution.
- The Bhoodan movement was launched in 1951, and the Gramdan movement was launched in 1957.
- Of the 42.6 lakhs acres of land received through Bhoodan more than 17.3 lakh acres were rejected as they were found unfit for cultivation.
- The term 'Green Revolution' is applied to the period from 1967 to 1978.
- M.S Swaminathan, Indian geneticist played a special role in India's Green Revolution programme.

- Article 23 of the Constitution of India prohibited 'traffic in human beings', 'beggar' and other similar forms of forced labour.
- Migration corridors in India is mostly from Bihar, UP, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and recently North East region that send labours to industrial regions within the country.



4.8 FURTHER READING

1) Haque.T& Sirohi. A.S, (1985) "Agrarian Reforms and Institutional Changes in India"; Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi.
2) Datt, G & Mahajan, A (2013) "Indian Economy"; S. Chand & Company Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi.



4.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: The land within the political boundary of a state is absolutely owned by the government and it is the government which gives the individual proprietary rights to individuals or communities.

Ans to Q No 2: The Zamindars were the intermediaries between the cultivators and the state. Zamindars were conferred with unlimited rights by the Emperor to exploit farmers and tenants to make more revenues for British Emperor.

Ans to Q No 3: The British introduced the Zamindari system to achieve two objectives. Firstly, to collect land revenues from farmers efficiently through Zamindars. Secondly, it created a class of people who would remain loyal to the British ruler in the country.

Ans to Q No 4: The committee recommended that all intermediaries between the state and the farmers should be eliminated and the land must belong to the farmers to certain conditions. The state legislature passed the legislation for the abolition of zamindari and similar exploitative land tenure systems.

Ans to Q No 5: 'Ceiling on land holdings' refers to the legally stipulated land size beyond which no individual farmer or farm household can hold any land.

Ans to Q No 6: 'Consolidation of holdings' refers to amalgamation and redistribution of the fragmented land with a view to bringing together all plots of land of a cultivator into one block.

Ans to Q No 7: The term 'bonded labour' has been defined by the National Commission on Labour as "labour which remains in bondage for a specific period for the debt incurred".

A 'migrant worker or labour' is a person who either migrates within their home country or outside the country to pursue work, usually, do not have an intention to stay permanently in the country or region in which they work.



4.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Question (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Define Land Reform. State the main objectives of Land Reforms in India.

Q 2: Write a short note on Bhoodan and Gramdan movement.

Q 3: What do youmean by the Green Revolution and state the main objectives of this revolution?

Q 4: What do you understand by Bonded Labour and what are the main causes of becoming bonded labour?

Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: What is Land Tenure and what are the different kinds of land tenure system exist in India. Write a note.

Q 2: Based on the Agrarian Reform Committee what were the Land Reform measures taken by the government? Elaborate.

Q 3: What are the major impacts observed from the Green Revolution? Write a note of the positive impacts.

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UNIT 5: CHANGES IN THE INDIAN ECONOMY

UNIT STRUCTURE

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Learning Objectives

5.3 Changes in Rural Economic Structure after Independence

- 5.3.1 Changes in Agriculture
- 5.3.2 Structural Changes
- 5.3.3 Transformation from Subsistence to Market Economy
- 5.3.4 Other Changes

5.4 Causes and Factors of Changes

- 5.4.1 Impact of Science and Technology
- 5.4.2 Impact of Industrialisation
- 5.4.3 Impact of Urbanisation and Rural Outmigration
- 5.4.4 Impact of Liberalisation and Globalisation
- 5.4.5 Growth of Secondary and Tertiary Sector
- 5.4.6 Poverty Alleviation in rural area

5.5 Let Us Sum Up

5.6 Further Reading

5.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

5.8 Model Questions

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to -

- identify the changes in the Indian Rural Economy
- understand the role of science and technology and industrialisation in bringing change to rural economy
- understand the impact of urbanisation and Rural Outmigration on Rural economy
- explain the impact of Liberalisation and Globalisation on Rural Economy
- discuss the impact of the growth of Secondary and Tertiary sector on Rural Economy

5.2 INTRODUCTION

Indian Rural Economy is primarily agrarian in nature. Agriculture has always been the backbone of the rural economy as well as the Indian economy as a whole. Most of the people in rural areas are still occupied in agriculture and allied activities. Even though India is a rapidly industrialising nation, Agriculture continues to be a major contributor to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country. After independence, Indian Agriculture underwent immense transformations with the introduction of Land Reforms, Advancement in agricultural technology, Green Revolution so on and so forth. We have already discussed about the nature of Indian Rural economy and the impact of Land Reforms and Green Revolution in the previous unit. In this unit, we shall mainly discuss about the role of industrialisation, science and technology, urbanization, growth of secondary and tertiary sector in bringing about transformations to rural economy.

5.3 CHANGES IN THE INDIAN RURAL ECONOMY

India today is not only self-sufficient in grain production, but also has a substantial reserve. The progress made by agriculture in the last four decades has been one of the biggest success stories of free India. In the subsections below, we shall try to understand the changes in the rural economy.

5.3.1 Changes in Agriculture

As far as the Indian agrarian society is concerned, it had in the past followed the traditional methods of cultivation. Our farmers made use of the local breed of bullocks and never used chemicals, fertilizers and pesticides of the modern type. Hence, they did not have much surplus production sale in the markets. But the introduction of modern technology has brought a lot of changes in the cultivation process.

Introduction of new technology in agriculture in the rural areashave helped the peasants to attain greater level of self-sufficiency. Whenimproved ploughing materials, hybrid seeds, chemicals, fertilizers, tractors, tillers, threshers, spraying machines and other modern equipment began to be introduced to agriculture, production increased tremendously thereby generating huge surplus production for market. Let us understand these changes in details.

- **Crops:** The 1970s saw a multi-fold increase in wheat production that heralded the Green Revolution. In the next decade rice production rose significantly; in 1995-96, rice production was 79.6 million tons. Total grain production crossed 191 million tons in 1994-95, a big leap from 51 million tons in 1950-51. During the Seventh Plan, the average grain production was 155 million tons, 17 million tons more than the Sixth Plan average.

A National Pulse Development Programme, covering 13 states, was launched in 1986, to carry improve technologies to the farmers. The Special Food Production Programme augmented the efforts to boost pulse production further. In 1995-96 pulse production was 132 million tons. With some States offering more than the statutory minimum price, sugarcane production also received a boost; in 1995-96 a record 283.0 million tons of sugar was registered.

- **Irrigation:** As efforts continued to increase the irrigation potential in the country, the last 40 years saw the gross irrigated area reach 8 million hectares. Flood forecasting has become an important activity over the years. Over 500 hydrological stations collect and transmit data through 400 wireless stations for issuing forecasts for 157 sites. About 5000 forecasts are issued in a year with 94 per cent accuracy. The country also receives international support, with the World Bank as a primary source, for developing the water resources. International cooperation is also envisaged in setting up a National Centre for Information on Water and Power.

- **Fertilizers:** The fertilizer industry in India has grown tremendously in the last 30 years. The Government is keen to see that fertilizer reaches the farmers in the remote and hilly areas. It has been decided to decontrol the prices, distribution and movement of phosphatic andpotassic fertilizers. Steps have been taken to ensure an increase in the supply of non-chemical fertilizers at reasonable prices. There are 53 fertilizer quality control laboratories in the country. Since Bio-fertilizers are regarded as an effective, cheap and renewable supplement to chemical fertilizers, the Government is implementing a National Project on Development and Use of Bio- fertilizers. Under this scheme, one national and six regional centres for organizing training, demonstrating programmes and quality testing of bio-fertilizers has been taken up.
- **Fisheries:** Fish production achieved an all-time high of 4.9 million tons at the end of 1995-96. Programmes that have helped boost the production of fish include the National Programme of Developing Fish Seeds, Fish Farmers' Development Agencies and Brackish Water Fish Farmers' Development Agencies. The Central Institute of Fisheries Nautical and Engineering Training trains the necessary manpower. To diversify fishing methods and introduce processed fish products on a semi-commercial scale, an integrated Fisheries Project has been launched. A National Fisheries Advisory Board has also been established.

5.3.2 Structural Changes

The agrarian structure has changed enormously over the time, from the pre-colonial to the colonial and after independence. In the pre-colonial period the cultivating castes or the actual cultivators were not the direct owners of the land. Instead, ruling groups such as the local kings or zamindars controlled the land. The peasants or cultivators who worked on the land had to hand over a substantial

portion of the produce to them. When the British colonized in India, in many areas they ruled through these local zamindars. They administered many districts through the zamindars. They also granted property rights to the zamindars. Under the British, the zamindarswere given more control over land than they had before. Since the colonizers also imposed heavy land revenue on agriculture, the zamindars extracted as much produce or money as they could out of the cultivators. As a result of this system the agricultural production stagnated or declined during much of the period of British rule.

Like the zamindari system, British administration introduced other types of land tenure system: mahalwari system and ryotwari system. Under these systems some modifications had been made. But the actual motivation remained the same i.e collection of more revenue instead of more production. Indirectly, through these systems, they exploited the actual cultivators. Soon after independence of India, Government implemented many policies in connection with agriculture. The Government of India and the various state governments have taken up several measures towards Land Reforms under the Five- Year Plans. We have discussed about these changes in the previous unit. as well. These land reforms have brought significant changes to the whole agriculture sector.

5.3.3 Transformation from Subsistence to Market Economy

According to A.R.Desai, transformation from subsistence to market economy is one of the important changes in rural society in India. Historically speaking, village economy has been a subsistence economy. Because of the impact of urbanization and modernization the village economy has now become a market oriented economy. It does not mean that there was no market in the subsistence economy. But it was only rudimentary and served its primary function

of supplying consumer goods to the people of the village and sometimes to the neighbouring villagers. It had never induced people to produce for a market. But owing to the impact of modernization the villagers now grow not only for their own consumption but a part of its market too. Market now constitutes the central part of the economy. Markets are also systematically expanding. They have stretched their hands to the villages also. Hence, even in the remote villages toothpastes, powder, soft drinks, biscuits, etc., of various national and international brands are available. Further, milk, egg, fruits, vegetables, etc., of even simple remote villages have reached metropolitan markets.

5.3.4 Other Changes

- **Rural Employment:** Employment in rural sector, which is associated mostly with agriculture, has stagnated after independence especially during 90's (or after post liberalization period). Indian agriculture has been a major provider of surpluses and investable funds, during the colonial regime. The terms of trade were to the disadvantage of the rural population which helped in operationalising a 'suction mechanism' for expropriating resources from the country. These resulted in a high disparity between agriculture and non-agriculture sectors.

In India 1990 was the period of liberalization. During this period, inequalities in the economy widened further. Launching of the programmes of globalization and structural reform in the country has led to the emergence and rapid growth of a few industries. Sluggish growth in production, near stagnation in productivity and high regional variation have characterized agriculture, leading to a phenomenol rise in unemployment. Agriculture and low productive non-farm activities have come under serious stress as a large number of workers have shared limited income. Increasing inequality induced through globalization would accelerate rural urban migration.

This has brought about changes on the employment structure. Among the three major sectors of economic activity, namely agriculture, industry and services, there has been a decline in the share of agriculture and increase in the share of industry and services in total employment. In the period from 1973 to 2000 the shares of agriculture declined from 74 to 56 percent and the shares of industry increased from 11 to 17 percent and in services it is 14 to 25 percent.

Thus, rural employment pattern has of one for perceptible change. The rural people are engaged not only with agriculture but also with other economic activities. The Government has introduced many developmental schemes under poverty alleviation programmes in order to help the rural population.

5.4 CAUSES OR FACTORS OF CHANGES

From the above discussion, we have learned about the changes in the Indian Rural Economy. We have understood how agricultural production improved. In these subsectionsbelow, we shall learn about the causes behind such changes.

5.4.1 Impact of Science and Technology

Science and technology plays a very significant role in the changing process of rural economy. As mentioned above, the new technology that was introduced has improved the ploughing materials, hybrid seeds, chemicals, fertilizers, tillers and other modern equipment so essential for the agrarian society. Our agricultural output therefore has greatly increased. Construction of dams- major and minor-, borewell and tank water facilities have contributed to improving the irrigation facilities. Fertilizers have radically improved the crops whereas insecticides are used to save the crops from the attack of insects, and plant diseases.

Though India is a country dominated by agriculture, it used to suffer from the scarcity of milk and milk products. But the

nourishment of improved cattle today has led to vast improvement in the availability of dairy produce. Now India is in a position to export dairy product.

5.4.2 Impact of Industrialisation

We all know that industrial revolution brought an unimaginable change to the entire process of production. With the introduction of machines, came specialisation, division of labour, so on and so forth. It resulted in time and cost efficient production, which changed the economic structure. Industrialisation therefore led to Higher Output in lesser time. The growth of Industrialisation brought about a huge change in Indian Economy. It led to the growth of non-agrarian occupation, growth of industrial working class, rural-urban migration, use of technology in agriculture production etc. All these changes have given a new shape to the Indian Economy. Industries began to be seen as 'Temples of Modern India' and massive investment has been made in industrial development since the begining of five year plans. In post independent period, Industrial growth not only contributed to the GDP of the country but also opened up several avenues for occupation. All these led to far reaching changes in the rural economy.

5.4.3 Impact of Urbanisation and Rural Outmigration

The growth of industrialisation was accompanied by urbanization. Urban Centres being the hub of industries opened up several avenues for occupation thereby attracting lot of rural people. The irregular income from agriculture also pushed people out of the villages to urban areas in search of alternate means of livelihood. They came in huge numbers to the urban areas to work in industries. Further, the lack of educational and health facilities compelled people to migrate to the urban areas and settle there. A closer look at the villages today would give us a clear picture of how Urbanisation and

Rural Outmigration has brought about a drastic change to the rural areas. From every village we find people migrating to the urban centres. If we take the example of Assam, we will see that from almost every village, there are people working in the cities outside the region. The young boys are gradually getting disinterested in agriculture and find it suitable to work in industries and companies outside the region. It is not that only the one's with educational qualifications are migrating, but even those who do not have much educational qualifications also migrate and get absorbed in different kinds of jobs like security guards, etc. If we visit places like Hyderabad, Bangalore so on and so forth, we will find lot of Assamese boys working there. This has led to tremendous change in the rural economy. The families in the villages now receive remittance from their family members who work outside. Therefore, instead of or apart from agricultural income, remittance has become a major source of family income today. There has also been an increasing tendency among the youth to engage in non-agricultural occupation even if that implies leaving their home and settling elsewhere. This is a big challenge to the Indian Agricultural sector. And perhaps therefore the contributions of Secondary and Tertiary sectors to the GDP of the country have been increasing in the contemporary time, while that of agriculture has been decreasing.

5.4.4 Impact of Liberalisation and Globalisation

The liberalization policy of India has had a very significant impact on agriculture and the rural society as a whole. The policy entails India's participation in the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which aims to bring about a more free international trading system that requires the opening up of Indian markets to import.After decades of state support and protected markets, Indian farmers have been exposed to competition from the global market.

Now, contact farming is very common in the production of

specialized items such as cut flowers, fruits such as grapes, figs and pomegranates, cotton, and oilseeds. While contract farming appears to provide financial security to farmers , it can also lead to greater insecurity as farmers become dependent on these companies for their livelihoods. Contract farming of export-oriented products such as flowers and gherkins also means that agriculture land is diverted from food grain production.

The globalization of agriculture also allows the entry of multinationals into this sector as sellers of such agricultural inputs as seeds, pesticides and fertilizers. Over the last decade or so, the government has scaled down its agricultural development programmes, and 'agricultural extension' agents have been replaced in the villages by agents of seed, fertilizer, and pesticide companies. These agents are often the sole source of information for farmers about new seeds or new cultivation practices, and of course, they have an interest in selling their products. This has led to the increased dependence of farmers on expensive fertilizers and pesticides. This has reduced their profit, put many farmers into debt trap, and has also created an ecological crisis in rural areas.

The impact of globalization on agriculture is increasingly being felt. The industrialization of agriculture which is being imposed on the developing countries like India poses a serious threat to the livelihood of the traditional farmers.

5.4.5 Growth of Secondary and Tertiary Sector

We all know that Indian Economy is comprised of the Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Sectors. Primary Sector implies primary production through extraction and collection of natural resources. Agriculture is an important primary economic activity, and is, as we have previous mentioned, a major contributor to the Country's GDP. The other economic activities falling in the category of primary sector are Mining, Fishing, and Forestry so on and so forth. Apart from the

Primary sector, the Secondary and the Tertiary Sector are also very significant segments of Indian Economy whose contribution to the GDP of the country has been rapidly increasing especially in the Post-Independence period. Secondary sector involves manufacturing of finished goods i.e itinvolves the transformation of raw materials into goods. This sector is also therefore referred to as the manufacturing sector. Industrialisation and Machine-made production has led to huge expansion of this sector thereby increasing production. Further Tertiary sector, also known as the Service Sector involves providing services such as Insurance, Banking etc.

We all know that inIndiaespecially its rural societies are predominantly agrarian in nature. But with industrialisation and urbanisation, there has been a tendency among the rural youth to search for livelihood mechanisms outside agriculture. Agriculture, as we know is dependent of the weather conditions and therefore agricultural output is uncertain. Either in times of flood or drought, agricultural production dwindles which poses challenges to those vast majority of people whose livelihood is dependent on agriculture. Hence there is growing tendency especially among the rural youths to work in non-agricultural sectors in order to have a secured source of livelihood. Along with this the growth of Secondary and Tertiary Sector have resulted in absorption of majority of people into these segments. Thus in the contemporary Indian Society, Secondary and Tertiary Sectors have emerged as major players in the country's economic growth. Their contribution to GDP has rapidly increased with growing industrialisation and mostly with the economic liberalisation in 1991. Today, the top-most contributor to the GDP of the Country is the Services Sector while the Agricultural Sector, which was once the highest contributor to GDP, now falls even below the industrial sector. This change has encompassed rural societies as well and the nature of rural economy is fast changing. Even

though large number of people are still dependent on agriculture for their livelihood, this sector has failed to maintain its supremacy and also to retain its numerical strength which was the case earlier.

5.4.6 Poverty Alleviation in Rural Areas

During the last few years the rate of poverty has considerably declined. Different poverty alleviation programmes are one of the causes of such type of development. After independence the Government of India started paying more attention to the problems of poverty and undertook many measures and launched many schemes, programmes and projects for the removal of poverty. During the various Five Years plans different developmental schemes have been launched. In 1975-78 government introduced the 20 Point Programme which included: distribution of surplus land to the weaker section, providing minimum wages to the landless workers, providing irrigational facilities to the rural peoples etc. Besides these, there are otheanti poverty programme such as JRY (JawaharRojgarYojana), SGSY (Swarnjayanti Gram SwarozgarYojana), Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS), Rural Housing Scheme - Indira AwaasYojana,SamagraAwaasYojana, etc. Though all these schemes and programmes are not entirely successfull in removing poverty from India, they have greatly helped in minimizing or reducing poverty .



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: Write about two poverty alleviation programes in India.

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Q 5: In which year was green revolution introduced in Indian agriculture?

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5.5 LET US SUM UP

- During the British rule, our indigenous education system was completely destroyed by British rulers who introduced the European education system. At the time of independence only 14% people were literate. After independence our national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and others had taken many steps for the development of education system in India. Soon after independence priority was given to Gandhiji's "Basic Education" in primary education. Our Constitution has also provided free and compulsory education for all children up to 14 years of age. After the successive years of planning our government has made many efforts to introduce different schemes for the development of Indian education system.
- Highest priority has been given to the universalisation of primary education. According to our Constitution, elementary education is a fundamental right for the children in the age of 6-14 years. Thus apart from elementary education, many changes have been brought about in the other sectors of the education system. For example, NCERT was set up in 1961 as an advisory council which assists the Central and State governments on academic matters related to school education. Regarding Higher education system UGC was established in 1956 for the determination and the maintenance of the standards of teaching, examination and research in the universities. Open education system was first formulated by IGNOU, following which many open education universities have been established in different states including Assam. Technical and management education has also been developed by establishing different institutions and introducing different courses. Privatization and globalization are also important changes in Indian education system.
- Many changes have been seen in the economic structure of rural India. Positive changes have also appeared in the agriculture sector with the introduction of the advanced method of cultivation. By introducing the land reform system after independence India has abolished the previous

land tenure system and effected changes in the structure of the rural agriculture. Besides, it has helped in improving the lives of the peasants in many ways. Changes have occured not only in agriculture but also in many other sectors of the rural economy in many directions. The rural economy has changed from subsistence economy to market economy. There are different factors that have caused changes in the rural economy. These include land reforms, green revolution, science and technology, globalization etc.

- Thus, after the Independence of India in 1947 there have been considerable changes in both the education system of India and the rural economic structure.



5.6 FURTHER READING

1) A.S.Thakur and Sandeep Berwal. Development of Educational System in India. New Delhi: Shipra Publications.
2) C.N.Shankar Rao. Sociology of Indian Society. New Delhi: S.Chand& Company Limited. Ram Nagar, New Delhi
3) K.Gopal Krishna Rao. Changing Rural Society in India. New Delhi: Authors Press.
4) Pankaj Kumar Desai. History of Education in India. New Delhi: Akhand Publishing House.
5) Ruddar Dutta and K.P.M.Sundaram. Indian Economy. New Delhi: S.Chand& Company Limited.
6) Tara Chand. Development of Education System in India. New Delhi: Anmol Publication Pvt Limited.



5.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: 2002

Ans to Q No 2: National Council of Educational Research and Trainning

Ans to Q No 3: UGC was established in 1956.

Ans to Q No 4: JawaharRojgarYojana andSwarnjayanti Gram SwarozgarYojana.

Ans to Q No 5: Green revolution was introduced in India in mid 1960s.

5.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: What do you mean by universalisation of elementary education? Write about its strategies.

Q 2: Write about the University Grants Commission.

Q 3: Discuss the land reforms system in India after independence.

Q 4: What are the poverty alleviation programmes in India? Briefly describe them.

Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Discuss the changes in education system in India after Independence.

Q 2: What are the main changes in agriculture after independence? Explain the factors influencing the changes.

Q 3: Write an essay on the changes of the rural economy of India after Independence.

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UNIT 6: RURAL POLITICAL STRUCTURE

UNIT STRUCTURE

6.1 Learning Objectives

6.2 Introduction

6.3 Traditional Caste System in India

6.3.1. Features of Caste System.

6.3.2. Evolution in the Caste System

6.3.3. Caste in Rural Political Structure

6.4 Village Panchayat

6.5 Panchayati Raj System in India

6.5.1 Salient Feature of Panchayat Raj System

6.5.2 Composition and Functions of PanchayatiRaj Institution

6.6 Women Empowerment in Panchayati Raj Institution.

6.7 Let Us Sum up

6.8 Further Reading

6.9 Answers to Check your Progress

6.10 Model Questions

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to -

- understand the history and evolution of the Caste system in India
- explain the concept of decentralization of power
- discussabout women empowerment in the Panchayati Raj System.

6.2 INTRODUCTION

During the British rule, there was no interestin the economic and social developmentofIndians. Therefore the issue of decentralization of powerwas never the agenda of the British rule.After Independence even though India took the path of democratic representation, Mahatma Gandhi believed in village-based participatory democracy i.e.Panchayat Raj. Gandhi felt that the real development of India could take place only through Gram

Swaraj. Therefore, after Independence,the Government of India launched the first five-year plan and simultaneously set up committees to study the establishment of Rural Participatory Institution. Based on the recommendation of Mehta Committee the journey towards political movementand decentralization started.Even though India was moving towards the Panchayat Raj system, one of the biggest hurdles was the existing rigid caste system and the imposition of influence by a certain class of people at local level. In order to understand the dynamics of caste and class it is important to delve into the evolution of caste system and how economic endowment changes the power relation.

One of the most important evolutions of the Panchayat Raj system is bringing women in mainstream governance. With reservation from 33% in 1993, women reservations in PRI were increased to 50% in 2009. Later in the chapter, you will understand the challenges and measures to strengthen the position of women in Panchayat Raj system and ensure their participation in governance.

6.3 TRADITIONAL CASTE SYSTEM IN INDIA

The caste system in India and Nepal originated two thousand years ago. The caste system initiallywas associated with Hinduism where people were categorized according to their occupations. Later the caste system was transformed into a hereditary structure. Each person was born into an unalterable social caste.

According to E. Blunt - "Caste is an endogamous group bearing a common name, membership of which is hereditary, imposing certain restrictions on its members in the matter of social intercourse, either following a common traditional occupation, claiming a common origin and generally regarded as forming a single homogenous community".

Ketekarexplains in his book "History of Caste in India"- 'Caste is a social group having two characteristics (a) Membership is confined to those who are born of members and excludes all persons not born of members, (b) the members are forbidden by inexorable social law to marry outside

the group.'

The term caste is derived from the Spanish word 'Breed' or 'Lineage'. The Sanskrit word for caste is 'Varna' which means type, order, colour, and class.There are primarily four main castes- (i) Brahmin, (ii) Kshatriya, (iii) Vaishya and (iv) Shudra. The Brahmins are the priestly and learned people, the Kshatriyas were the rulers, administrators, and warriors, the Vaishyas are the artisans, merchants, tradesmen and farmers and Shudras are the labouring classes. Some people born outside or below the caste system were called "untouchables".

Andre Beteille summarise, "Caste may be defined as a small and specific group of persons characterized by endogamy, hereditary membership and a specific style which sometimes includes the pursuit, by tradition, of a particular occupation and is usually associated with a more or less distinct ritual status in a hierarchical system based on the concepts of purity and pollution."

In the broad sense, caste can be defined as a hereditary endogamous group having a common name, traditional occupation, and common culture, and have distinctive status and single homogeneous community. Some of the features of the caste system are explained below:

6.3.1 Features of Caste System

- **Hereditary in nature:** The caste system is based on heredity. It is based on ascribed values from ancient Hindu scriptures rather than achieved qualities. Birth is the determinant factor of the caste system. Once born in a particular caste he has to remain the same. Status, position prestige is fixed according to his caste.
- **Segregation:** Indian society is stratified based on caste. Each caste is an autonomous group independent of the other. For this reason mobility from one caste to another is impossible and each caste has its own way of life. It has its own rules and regulations, customs, traditions, practices and rituals.

- **Hierarchy:** Various castes are ranked higher to a lower position based on their purity and impurity of occupations. It is like a ladder where pure caste is ranked on the top and impure is ranked at the bottom. D.C. Bhattacharya rightly observes that "not only do the various castes form a hierarchy but the occupation practiced by them, the various items of their diet and the customs they observe all form separate hierarchies."
- **Endogamy:** It indicates that members of a particular caste have to marry within their own caste only. Inter castes marriages are prohibited. The violation of the rule of endogamy would mean ostracism and loss of caste. However, in urban spaces inter-caste marriages are gradually increasing among educated people.
- **Purity and pollution:** Purity and pollution of caste members are judged in terms of deeds, occupation, language, dress patterns, as well as food habits. For example, liquor consumption, consuming non-vegetarian food, working in occupations like leather craft, lifting dead animals, sweeping and carrying garbage, etc are supposed to be impure.
- **Occupational Association:** During ancient times, each caste has a specific occupation and they cannot change the occupation. For instance, Brahmins do priesthood and teaching, Kayasthas maintain revenue records and writings. Baniyas are engaged in business and Chamars are engaged in leather work, etc. Due to industrialization and urbanization, people have shifted from their traditional occupation. However, in rural areas, traditional occupational are still followed.
- **Social and Religious disabilities:** The lower caste were debarred from doing many things like they were not permitted to enter the temple, they are not allowed to use water from the well/pond which is used by Brahmin caste, cannot use gold ornaments or umbrella, etc. However, things have changed

considerably and these restrictions are hardly found today.

- **Unique Culture:** Castes are small and complete social worlds in themselves and each distinguishes themselves from one another. Every caste has a distinct culture, custom, and tradition which distinguish it from those of the other castes. The food habits, occupational specialization, behavioural patterns, etc of a caste are handed down from one generation to another through the process of socialization.
- **Civil and Religious Disabilities:** The people belonging to lower castes suffer from a set of civil, social and religious disabilities. Generally, the impure castes are made to live in the outskirts of villages. They are forbidden to make use of the places of worship, cremation, cremation grounds, schools, public roads, hotels, etc.
- **Divine Plan Assumption:** The caste system is believed to have been ordained by God and is supported by religion; the system is based on the doctrine of Karma, the theory of rebirth.

6.3.2 Evolution in the Caste System

There have been visible changes in the caste system in India in the last century and more visibly since independence. There are various reasons like sanskritisation, westernization, industrialization which have played a crucial role in bringing consequent changes in the caste system. They are as follows:

- **Sanskritisation:** It is a process by which a lower caste or tribe or any other group changes its customs, rituals, ideology to adapt to the behaviour pattern, style of life, and culture of high caste. For sanskritization, a caste must have a touchable status, better economic conditions and should make a claim to membership into a high caste.Sanskritization is a group process and not an individual process over a long course of time. It does not lead to anystructural changes only leads to positional changes. Through

this process, a few lower castes in different parts of the country have changed their status into higher castes like the Lingayats, Rajputs to name a few. It is to be noted that the untouchables were not allowed to sanskritize their status.

- **Westernization:** In India, British colonizer was the biggest influencer of western style of living, language, dress pattern, and behavioural pattern. The main features of westernization are: (a) Rational outlook (scientific and goal-oriented outlook), (b) Interest in material progress, (c) reliance on the modern communication process and mass media, (d) English medium education, (e) high social mobility, etc. The higher castes were the first to expose themselves to westernization through the process of business transactions, education, and socialization. Later on, the lower castes also adapted to this process for social mobility.
- **Modernization:** It relies primarily on scientific outlook; rational attitudes, high social mobility, mass mobilization, empathy, belief in liberty, equality, and fraternity, high level of motivation to get perfection; and deal with complex organizations. With changes coming to institutional, structural, attitudinal and organizational mindset, have greatly affected the caste system where caste structures have become flexible. In urban areas castes are gradually become classes. Even though India has achieved modernization still it has not abandoned the tradition in totality. The Indian caste system has adapted suitably to modern practices, i.e. educating people, forming a formal organization and making people conscious of their existence.
- **Industrialization and Urbanization:** With the growth of industrial towns and cities, migration to industrial zones and cities have increased from rural areas over the last centurywhich has affected the caste system. In those places, strict caste rules are not applied rigidly.

- **Democratic Decentralization:** With the introduction of Panchayati Raj, local self-governments have been created in the villages. Under the Panchayati Raj, all the castes are equally represented. Equal opportunities are provided for the lower castes to empower themselves and represent themselves in matters concerning them and their communities.

6.3.3 Caste in Rural Political Structure

Caste as a social institution and a system of social stratification played and still continues to play a very important role in the traditional political structure. Power within rural society revolved around caste to a great extent. The socio-economic status of an individual is traditionallydetermined by caste, which also influences his/her position in the rural political structure. Thus, Power and Authority were traditionally determined by one's caste position.It is here we need to understand the concept of Dominant Caste in order to get a clear understanding of the connection between caste and politics. Dominant Castes are those castes usually belonging to the upper castes in the caste hierarchy. They have numerical strength and are economically affluent.These caste groups due to their economic and numerical preponderance, also occupies a position of power in the rural political structure. Thus in the context of Indian rural society, in most cases, the upper caste people also belongs to upper class and their influential socio-economic position enables them to be politically powerful as well. Again, Caste Panchayats too played a crucial role in the rural political structure. The function of the Caste Panchayats or Associations not only confined to resolving inter-caste and intra-caste conflicts but they also act as interest groups for socio-economic development of their caste.

Even today, Caste has a great significance in rural polity. Caste is a major deciding factor in Indian Polity, based on periodic elections. As described by anthropologist Owen M. Lynch and other scholars,

in the expanding political arena caste groups are becoming more politicized and are forced to compete with other interest groups for social and economic benefits. Caste associations have expanded their areas of concern beyond traditional elite emulation and local politics into the wider political arenas of state and national politics. Finding power in numbers within India's democratic system, caste groups are pulling together closely allied sub castes in their quest for political influence. Traditional hierarchical concerns are being minimized in favour of strengthening horizontal unity. Thus, while pollution observances are declining, caste consciousness is not. Here we may cite the example of the Dalits, who form a powerful group in the contemporary political context of India. They have been struggling against the traditional socio-economic deprivations and have strived to advance their social status.Dalit anger has been expressed in writings, demonstrations, strikes, and the activities of such groups as the Dalit Panthers, a radical political party demanding revolutionary change.Thus even though some practices of caste has declined in the present time, yet its position in the political arena has rather strengthened over time.

6.4 VILLAGE PANCHAYAT

Village Panchayat is the oldest system of local government in the Indian subcontinent. The word "panchayat" means "assembly" of five wise and respected elders chosen and accepted by the local community. Traditionally the village panchayat settled disputes between individuals and villages. In 1869 the British established the first nominated local self-government in Bombay. Later in 1882, Lord Ripon formally established local self-government in India with setting up of district boards in Marathwada and Vidarbha in Maharashtra.

The first piece of legislation was the Bombay Village Panchayat Act of 1920. Under this Act, the Panchayats was constituted into an elected body. Members were elected by adult male villagers. The Panchayat was

entrusted with local functions, mainly civil nature and empowered to collect compulsory house taxes. The Act of 1920 empowered village Panchayats to take up various activities including socio-economic functions.

After India became an Independent nation and states were formed, laws were introduced into the Panchayat system. Under the LokAdalat Act, 1958 and Article 40 of the constitution made it obligatory on the Panchayats to hold meetings with adult residents within first two months at the onset of every financial year and prepare an annual statement of accounts to be placed before Gram Sabha.

The main civil duties of the Panchayats were - making provisions for sanitation, street lights, and drinking water. The discretionary functions covered the fields of agriculture, cooperation, animal husbandry, self-defense, and other administrative and development works. The state government had direct control over Panchayats through District Collector.

It was found that the government control over this institutionhad seldom proved to be effective and the grassroot level communities were not getting benefits from the existing system of Panchayat Raj. In order to address the shortcomings of central committees like Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1957) and Ashok Mehta Committee (1977) was appointed, based on their recommendations the shortcomings were addressed and inserted in the Constitutional (73rd Amendment) Act of 1992. On 24th April 1993, Panchayati Raj in India came into force to provide constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

6.5 PANCHAYATI RAJ SYSTEM IN INDIA

Mahatma Gandhi advocated Panchayat Raj as the foundation of India's political system. In Panchayat Raj thepower of the government is decentralized where each village would be responsible for its own affairs also known as Gram Swaraj (village self-governance). The Panchayati Raj system was formalized in 1992, following a study conducted by a number of Indian committees on various ways of implementing a decentralized administration.

The 73rd Amendment to the Constitution enacted in 1992 added a new Part IX to the Constitution titled "The Panchayats" covering provisions from Article 243 to 243 (O); and a new XI Schedule covering 29 subjects for the Panchayats and statutory provisions for the establishment, empowerment, and functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

6.5.1 The Salient Features of the Panchayati Raj System

- **GRAM SABHA:** It is the local body consisting of all the persons registered in the electoral rolls in a village within the Panchayat area. It is the primary source of democratic power in the village. The Gram Sabha is expected to be an active institution for starting all development activities based on local needs.
- **THREE TIERS OF PANCHAYATI RAJ:** The three-tier Panchayat system would be constituted in every state- at village level, intermediate level, and district level. However, the states which were having a population below 20 lakhs are given an option to omit the intermediate level. All the members of these three levels are directly elected. The chairperson of Panchayats at the intermediate and district levels are indirectly elected from amongst the elected members.
- **RESERVATION IN PANCHAYATS:** There is a provision of reservation of seats for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe at every level. The reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in every Panchayat in proportion to their population. One-third of the seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes will also be reserved for women. Noteworthy, one-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election shall be reserved for women.
- **DURATION OF PANCHAYATS:** Every panchayat shall remain in office for five years normally. However, if it is dissolved for any reason before this period is over, the election will be held within six months.

- **COMPOSITION OF PANCHAYATS:** Representatives chosen by direct election shall fill all the seats in a panchayat. The chairperson at the village level shall be elected directly and at the intermediate and district levels the chairperson shall be elected by and from amongst the elected members.
- **CONDUCT OF ELECTION:** The direction, control and the preparation of electoral roll for conducting elections to the panchayats are vested with the State Election Commission. The State Election Commission will be responsible for conducting the election and ensures that the elections are held in a free and just manner.
- **FINANCE COMMISSION:** The Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 provides for the constitution of a Finance Commission in every state to make enough funds available to the panchayats. These commissions will be responsible for reviewing the financial condition of the panchayats and make recommendations to the respective Governors.
- **DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES:** The Act gives powers and responsibilities to the panchayats to plan and execute economic development programs. Such responsibilities include the making of plans for economic development and social justice and implementation of schemes listed in the11th Schedule. The development activities for the Panchayat Institution can be grouped under the following categories:
  - **Economic Development:** Under economic development anti-poverty programs, agriculture, land improvement, minor irrigation, animal husbandry, fishery, social forestry, minor forest produce, small scale and cottage industry, fuel, and fodder.
  - **Education:** Primary and Secondary schools, non-formal education, libraries, technical training, and cultural activities are given focus.
  - **Health:** Health and Sanitation are given prime importance.

- **Welfare Development:** It includes social welfare, welfare for weaker sections, Public Distribution System and Women and Child Development.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Roads, housing, drinking water, markets, electrification, and maintenance of community assets, etc along with Land Reforms is taken care of.

6.5.2. Composition and Functions of Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI)

Let us now discuss the administrative structure of the Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) in details.

- **GRAM PANCHAYAT:** It is the first formal democratic institution at the village level and primary unit of local self-government. The chairperson of this unit is called as Sarpanch.The gram panchayat is a cabinet of the village elders, directly elected by the adult citizens of the village.

The Gram Panchayat is the body accountable to the general body of the village known as Gram Sabha which meets at least twice a year. The Gram Panchayat must present its budget, accounts of the previous year and annual administrative reports before the Gram Sabha. The Gram Panchayat has to secure Gram Sabha's approval of the village proposals for taxation and development programs before they are enforced by the Panchayat.

- **Composition:** The gram panchayat is divided into wards and each ward is represented by a Ward member or commissioner who is directly elected by the villagers. The members of the Gram Panchayats have a tenure of 5 years. There is provision for reservation of seats for women and for SC and ST.

Each Panchayat elects a President/Sarpanch and Vice President/Upsarpanch. The Sarpanch occupies a pivotal position in Gram Panchayat. He supervises and coordinates the various activities of the Panchayat. The Panchayat Secretary and the Village

Level Worker are the two officers at the Panchayat level to assist the Sarpanch in administration.

Functions of Gram Panchayat: There isa number of functions performed by Gram Panchayats. The functions can be divided into two categories namely, the Obligatory functions and the Option functions.

a) Obligatory Functions:

- Construction, repairs, maintenance, alteration, and extension of village roads, provisions of lights on the roads and other places of public resort and removal of encroachments and obstructions on the roads and other public places.
- Construction, maintenance, and cleaning of the drainage system and provision of sanitation in the village by the removal of filth and clearance of marshy areas.
- Supply of drinking water to the villages.
- Adoption of preventive measures against epidemics and other dangerous diseases, prevention of obnoxious and dangerous trade, registration of births and deaths and the preparation of the necessary records for the purpose.
- Maintenance of common pasture and other public institutions.
- Preparation of census records of men and animals, maintenance of relevant records and submission of periodic records and returns.
- Management of Panchayat properties as assets.
- The spread of primary education and its management.
- Soil Conservation.
- Control of Markets, ferries, fairs, Ghats and other public places.

b) Optional Functions:

- Provision of adult education, the establishment of primary schools with the prior approval of the Panchayat Samiti.
- Establishment and maintenance of works for providing employment in a time of scarcity.

- To keep the records of the unemployed persons.
- Famine relief measures.
- Construction and maintenance of Dharmasalas and Rest houses.

Judicial Power: The powers of the Gram Panchayat are limited when it came to judicial power. Gram Panchayat has the authority to decide minor and criminal cases within its areas. On account of Criminal cases, the Panchayat can hear cases involving mischief, assault, theft of property, etc on payment of a prescribed fee. It is to be noted that Panchayat can only impose a fine and cannot sentence anybody to imprisonment. One thing is to be noted that the lawyers cannot appear before the Panchayats. Both the parties are to appear before the Panchayat to plead their cases. Normally the decision of the Panchayat is final but an appeal can be made to the Court of District Magistrate with its prior sanction.

- **BLOCK PANCHAYAT:** Block Panchayat is also known as Panchayat Samiti and is the second on join tier of the Panchayati Raj. Block Panchayat works for the villages of the tehsil or taluka collectively known as Development Block. The Panchayat Samiti consists of 20 to 60 villages depending on area and population. The Panchayat Samitis are at the hub of development activities and are headed by Block Development Officers (BDOs).

Composition: Following are the criteria to be elected for the Block Panchayat:

- 20 members are elected by and from all the Panchayats falling under the block area.
- Two women members and one member each from the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes to be co-opted provided they do not get adequate representation otherwise.
- Two local peoplepossessing experience of public life and administration, which may be beneficial for the rural development
- Representatives of the Co-operatives will work within the

jurisdiction of the block.

- The members of the State and Union legislatures representing the area are to be taken as associate members.
- The President of the Panchayat Samiti is elected by an electoral college that consists of all the members of the Panchayat Samiti and all the Panchas of the Gram Panchayat falling within the areas.

Functions of Block Panchayat:

- Block Panchayat co-ordinate the activities of the various Panchayats within its jurisdiction.
- The Block Panchayat supervises the work of the Panchayats and scrutinizes their budgets. It has the right to suggest measures for improving the functioning of the Panchayats.
- The Block Panchayat is charged with the responsibility of preparing and implementing plans for the development of agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, small scale and cottage industries, rural health tropic, etc.
- Establishment of primary health centers and primary schools.
- Supply of drinking water, drainage and construction/repair of roads.
- Development of cottage and small scale industries and the opening of cooperative societies.
- **ZILA PARISHAD:** The ZilaParishad is the apex of the three-tier structure of the Panchayati Raj System. Members of the ZilaParishad are elected from the district on the basis of adult franchise for a term of five years. There are seats reserved for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, and women representatives. The Collector or District Commissioner is also a member of the ZillaParishad.

Composition: The Chairman of the ZillaParishad is elected from among its members. The ZillaParishad consists of representatives of the block panchayat or Panchayat Samiti,

members of the State Legislature and the Parliament member representing the area, district level officers of the Medical, Public Health, Public Works, Engineering, Agriculture, Veterinary, Education and other development departments.

Functions of ZilaParishad:

- ZilaParishad links Panchayat Samitis within the district.
- It coordinated their activities and supervises their functioning.
- It prepares district plans and integrates Samiti plans into district plans for submission to the State Government.
- ZilaParishad looks after development works in the entire district.
- ZilaParishad undertakes schemes to improve agricultural production, exploit ground-water resources, extend rural electrification and distribution and initiate employment generating activities, construct roads and other public works.
- It performs welfare functions like relief during natural calamities and scarcity, the establishment of orphanages and poor homes, night shelters, the welfare of women and children, etc.
- ZilaParishads perform functions entrusted to them under the Central and State Government-sponsored programmes.

6.6 WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN PANCHAYATI RAJ SYSTEM IN INDIA

Women constitute about half of the world's population and are the largest excluded group in almost all spheres of life. In sharp contrast to the population record women hold only one tenth of the global income; own one hundredth of means of production and nearly 70% of the women live below the poverty line. They invariably constitute the minorities holding elected offices of the government. Though at present women enjoy equal status with men as per the constitution and legal provisions, still they have a long way to go. So women empowerment plays a pivotal role towards the development of society.

The journey to include women in the process of development in

India took a long time. The Government of India had a major shift in their policies from the concept of "Welfare of Women" in the 1970s to "development of women" in the 1980s and "empowerment of women" in the 1990s. In the year 1993, with the introduction of the Panchayati Raj Institution into the Indian Constitution women representation in governance changed. Under Panchayati Raj Institution 33% of seats were reserved for women and they were given the power to take decisions at grass root level. Later the Union Cabinet of the Government of India on 27th August 2009 approved 50% reservation for women in PRIs.

Several transformations were seen over the last two decades in terms of womens' representation under Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) which are highlighted below:

- Ø Women are taking up the challenge and gearing themselves up to enter politics at the lower level in the spirit of self- governance as committed Citizens.
- Ø Through the experience of the Indian PRI, more than ten lakh women have actively entered into the political life in India.
- Ø Womens' issues have come to the forefront at the local level and consequently state and national level.
- Ø Through PRIs women are working on creation, development, and promotion of Self Help Groups, Cooperatives, MSMEs for better employment and livelihood options in rural areas.
- v) Women are leaders in the Panchayati Rajand are transforming local governance by sensitizing the State on issues of poverty, inequality and gender injustice.
- Ø Through PRI, women are changing governance from the issues they choose to tackle; like water, alcohol, abuse, education, health and domestic violence.
- Ø Women are taking action against child marriage and juvenile female domestic labour, and promoting girl-child education.

With all the positive development through PRI women still had to face several challenges. Let us look into the challenges women faced over

time. The challenges are:

- Structural Issues: Women representatives give more importance to issues related to social development activities like health, sanitation, old-age pensions, and welfare but it becomes a challenge for them to pursue it as agenda for panchayat meetings across the country as issues related to infrastructure take priority. Social development issues such as health and education take a back seat.
- Social and Cultural Barriers: Unlike male counterparts, female candidates are exposed to several barriers that may impact their desire to run for elected office. These barriers are sex stereotyping, political socialization, lack of preparation for political activity and balancing work and family.
- Sex Stereotyping: It is due to the aggressive and competitive nature of politics and a belief that participation in the elected office requires masculine traits. Hence, the bias leveled against women stems-out from the incorrect perception that femininity inherently produces weak leadership. It had been observed that the pressure is always on women candidates to enhance their masculine traits in electoral campaigns for the purpose of wooing support from voters who identify with socially constructed gender roles.
- Political Socialization: Sex stereotyping begins at birth. Generally, it is seen that politics is a male domain. Even socialization agencies like family, school, higher education, mass media, and religion affirms the belief of stereotyping a particular sex. Each of these agencies play a pivotal role in either fostering a desire to enter politics or dissuade one to do so.
- Balancing work and family: The work-life balance is invariably more difficult for women as they are generally expected by society to act as the primary caregivers for children as well as maintenance of the home. Due to the demand for work-life balance, it is assumed that women choose to delay political aspirations until their children are older.

To overcome the above-stated challenges and making women

participation into governance more active and stronger there are few steps that can be taken to bring about social transformation within society.

- Ø To empower rural women there is a need to bring about attitudinal changes in both men and women. They believe that women are meant for household activities and bearing children needs to be replaced by a feeling of equal partnership between men and women.
- Ø Women should independently join politics so that they can have a voice in the nation-building and can help in women empowerment at all levels.
- Ø There should be an increased emphasis on ensuring the participation of women in the meetings of Panchayats at all the levels. This will promote and enhance leadership qualities and self-confidence among women.
- Ø Attendance of all women must be made compulsory from Gram Panchayat to ZillaParishad.
- Ø The government should provide financial support and infrastructure to womens' organizations and NGOs to take up the responsibility of encouraging the women elected representatives and arranging training programmes for the improvement of political, social and economic knowledge.
- Ø Proper utilization of different government policy like National Literacy Mission and SarvaShikshaAbhiyan for educating the rural men and women regarding the significance of Panchayati Raj and empowerment of women.
- Ø The media can play a vital role in restricting rural society. It can act as an agent of political socialization for inculcating the values of gender equality and gender justice.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What are the main caste categories in India? Explain the category in brief.

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Q 2: Which Act brought the Panchayat Raj System in effect?

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Q 3: What are the main administrative structures under PRI?

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6.7 LET US SUM UP

- Caste System in India originated two thousand years ago.
- The caste system initially was associated with Hinduism where people were categorized according to their occupations. Later the caste system was transformed into a hereditary structure.
- The term caste is derived from the Spanish word 'Breed' or 'Lineage'.
- The Sanskrit word for caste is 'Varna' which means type, order, colour, and class.
- There are primarily four main castes - (i) Brahmin, (ii) Kshatriya, (iii) Vaishya and (iv) Shudra.
- People born outside or below the caste system were called "untouchables".
- Main features of Caste system:- Hereditary, Segregation, Endogamy, Purity and pollution, Occupational Association, Social and Religious disabilities, Unique Culture, Civil and Religious disabilities.
- Sanskritisation, Westernization, Modernization, Industrialization and Urbanization and Decentralization of powers for the evolution and

changes in the caste system.

- Class is a category of people who have similar socio-economic status in relation to others in their community or society.
- Village Panchayat is the oldest system of local government in the Indian subcontinent. The word "panchayat" means "assembly" of five wise and respected elders chosen and accepted by the local community.
- The main civil duties of the Panchayats were - making provisions for sanitation, street lights, and drinking water.
- On 24th April 1993, Panchayati Raj in India came into force to provide constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- Mahatma Gandhi advocated Panchayat Raj as the foundation of India's political system.
- In the year 1993, under Panchayati Raj Institution 33% of seats were reserved for women and giving them the power to take decisions at the grass-root level. Later on 27th August 2009,the Government of India approved 50% reservation for women in PRIs.



6.8 FURTHER READING

1) Laxmikanth. M, (2013) "Indian Polity"; McGraw Hill Education, New Delhi.



6.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: There are primarily four main castes - (i) Brahmin, (ii) Kshatriya, (iii) Vaishya and (iv) Shudra. The Brahmins are the priestly and learned people, the Kshatriyas were the rulers, administrators and warriors, the Vaishyas are the artisans, merchants, tradesmen and farmers and Shudras are the labouring classes. Some people born outside or below the caste system were called "untouchables".

Ans to Q No 2: The Constitutional (73rd Amendment) Act 1992.

Ans to Q No 3: There are three main levels under the Panchayat Raj System. They are: i) Gram Panchayat; ii) Block Panchayat and iii) ZilaParishad.

6.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Question (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Define the caste system in India with example.

Q 2: How are Caste and Class different from each other?

Q 3: What is the Panchayati Raj System?

Q 4: What are the main reasons for the Caste system in India to change over time? Explain briefly.

Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: What are the features of the Caste System in India? Elaborate.

Q 2: What are the Salient features of Panchayat Raj System? Elaborate.

Q 3: Write a note on the composition and functions of Panchayati Raj Institution.

Q 4: What are the major challenges faced by women under PRI? and explain in points steps taken to overcome those challenges.

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UNIT 7: DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN RURAL AREA

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1 Learning Objectives

7.2 Introduction

7.3 Women in Indian Economy

7.3.1 Ministry of Women and Child Development

7.3.2 Social and Economic Development Schemes for Women

7.4Integrated Child Protection Schemes

7.5 Let Us Sum up

7.6 Further Reading

7.7 Answers to Check your Progress

7.8 Model Questions

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to -

- learn how Ministry of Women and Child Development came into inception,
- understand various schemes for Women empowerment and Childcare
- explain the development initiatives taken by the Government of India and its impact and outreach across India through its development programmes and policy implementations.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

For centuries women in India were suffering due to discrimination, exploitation and exposed to various kinds of harassment at different levels. Women constitute 48.52% of the total population of the country and therefore it becomes crucial that the development of the country make women as the nucleus to any major policy planning. It is essential because empowerment and autonomy of women will bring improvement to their

political, social, economic and health status. After Independence, the policy planners envisaged various constitutional provisions to protect the interest of women and has undertaken various socio-economic development measures for their upliftment. Over the years, experiences have shown that the development programmes were most effective when simultaneous steps were taken to improve the status of women in society. Let us now delve deeper into the policies which were implemented in the post Independence periodthat led to the inception of the ministry of Women and Child Development for empowering women in India.

7.3 WOMEN IN INDIAN ECONOMY

Attention for the development of women in India received its attention from the government since the First Five year plan (1951-56). At the beginning of the planningphase, issues of women were clubbed with the welfare of the disadvantaged group like disable, destitute and aged. From first to fifth five year plan (1951 to 1979) followed a similar pattern of focus with addition to priorities like womens' education, and measures to improve maternal and child health services. In the sixth five year plan (1980-85), a shift from 'Welfare' planning to 'development' of womenapproach was taken up. The plan adopted a multi-disciplinary approach with an emphasis on health, education, and employment.

The seventh five year plan (1985-90) stressed on raising their economic and social status to bring women population into mainstream national development. The eighth five year plan (1992-97) ensured that the benefits of development to women flowed from other development sectorsto ensure that women should be equal partners and participants in the development process.

The ninth five year plan (1997-2002) made two important changes in the strategy of development for women. First, 'Empowerment of Women';its aim was to create an enabling environment where women canfreely exercise their rights both within and outside the home as equal partners with men. The second was convergences of existing services

available in both women-specific and women related sectors. The tenth five year plan (2002-2007) target was to set certain monitorable targets for women. It focused on organizing women into Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for income generation activities and also facilitated access to services such as literacy, health, non-formal education, water supply, etc. Women's Component Plan (WCP) ensured that 30% of funds/benefits were earmarked for women under the various schemes of different ministries/ departments.

In the previous plans, there were consistent efforts to bridge the gender gap and provide an environment for women to become economically, politically and socially free and empowered. In a unique move ineleventh five year plan (2007-12) a committee of "feminist" economists was constituted to ensure gender sensitive allocation of public resources apart from identifying significant trends for women in the economy and suggesting policy measures to integrate women into the growth agenda. In the twelfth five year plan (2012-2017) the Planning Commission pushed for special dispensation for the single woman and encourages women to actively participate in the field of agriculture and animal husbandry in addition to health, education, urbanization, and governance.

7.3.1 Ministry of Women and Child Development

The Ministry of Women and Child Development came into existence as a separate ministry from 30th of January, 2006 . Previously, since 1985 the ministry was known as the Department of Women and Child Development under the Ministry of Human Resources Development, Government of India.

The ministry was constituted with the prime intention of addressing the gaps in the national-state action plan for women and children development initiatives and promoting inter-Ministerial and inter-sectoral convergence to create gender equitability and child-centered legislation policies and programmes.

The Vision of the Ministry is to empower women to live with

dignity and contributing as equal partners in development in an environment free from violence and discrimination. And, well-nurtured children with full opportunities for growth and development in a safe and protective environment.

The Mission of the ministry is to promote social and economic empowerment of women through cross-cutting policies and programmes, mainstreaming gender concerns, creating awareness about rights and facilitating institutional and legislative support. Secondly, ensuring development care and protection of children, spreading awareness about their rights and facilitating access to learning, nutrition, institutional and legislative support for enabling them to grow and develop to their full potential.

7.3.2 Social and Economic Development Schemes for Women

The following schemes are being implemented by the Ministry for the social and economic development of women.

- **BetiBachao, BetiPadhao:** The campaign was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 22nd January 2015 from Panipat, Haryana on the occasion of International Day of the Girl Child. It aims to address the issue of the declining child sex ratio. This is a national initiative jointly run by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

The main objective of the campaign was to-

- To prevent gender biased sex selective elimination.
- To ensure survival and protection of the girl child.
- To ensure the education of the girl child.

The main reason to start this initiative was because ofdownward increasing skewed female to male ratio in India. States like Haryana (861), Punjab (876), Jammu & Kashmir (892), Uttar

Pradesh (898), and Bihar (919) was showing the lowest female to male ratio in per 1000 births in the census of India 2001. This was happening because of Sex-selective abortion or female foeticide.

To sensitize the Indian population large scale sustained mobilization and communication campaign was rolled out to create equal value for the girl child and promote her education.

- **One-Stop Centres (OSCs):** These centersare intended to support women affected by violence, in private and public spaces, within family, community or at work place. Aggrieved women facing any kind of violence due to attempted sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, trafficking, honor-related crimes, acid attacks or witch-hunting will be provided with specialized services.

The Ministry of Women and Child Developmentstarted implementing the OSC scheme since 1st April 2015. Under this scheme, it has been envisaged that OSCs would be set up across the country in a phase wise manner (2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20). The Govt.of India has set up a dedicated fund called the "Nirbhaya Fund" to establish the OSCs with enhanced safety and security provisions.

The main objectives of the schemes are:

- To provide integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence, both in private and public spaces under one roof.
- To facilitate immediate, emergency and non-emergency access to a range of services including medical, legal, psychological and counseling support under one roof to fight against any form of violence against women.

- **WOMEN HELPLINE SCHEME:** This scheme is intended to provide 24 hours immediate and emergency response to women affected by violence and information about women related government schemes/programmes across the country through a single uniform number. The Women Helpline (WHL) is/will be integrated with the One-Stop Centre Scheme (OSCs) in every

state. The scheme was launched on 1st of April 2015 along with the One-Stop Centre. The Department of Telecommunication has allocated code 181 to all states/Union Territories to use it as the Women Helpline number.

The main objectives of the scheme are:

- To provide toll-free, 24 hours telecom service to women affected by violence seeking support and information.
- To facilitate crisis and non-crisis intervention through referral to the appropriate agencies such as police/hospitals/ ambulance service/ District Legal Service Authority (DLSA)/ Protection Officer (PO)/ OSC.
- To provide information about the appropriate support services, government schemes and programmes available to the woman affected by violence, and location-based information to a particular woman residing or employed in a certain area.

Ø **SWADHAR GREH:** The scheme was launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2002 for the rehabilitation of women in difficult circumstances. Under the scheme women in need of institutional support for rehabilitation to lead their life with dignity. They are provided shelter, food, clothing, health care as well as economic and social security.

Under the scheme, SwadhaarGrehwill be set up in every district with a capacity of thirty women at a time. The primary objectives of the schemes are:

- To cater to the primary needs of shelter, food, clothing, medicinal treatment and care of the women in distress and who are without any social and economic support.
- To enable them to regain their emotional strength that was hampered due to their encounter with unfortunate circumstances.
- To provide them with legal aid and guidance to enable them to take steps for their readjustment in family/society and rehabilitate them economically and emotionally.

- **WORKING WOMEN HOSTEL:** With more women leaving their homes in search of employment in big cities as well as urban and rural industrial clusters, they face the difficulty of finding safe and conveniently located accommodation.

The objective of the scheme is to promote availability of safe and conveniently located accommodation for working women with day-care facility for their children in urban, semi-urban or rural areas where employment opportunities for women exist. The working women hostel project will be made available to all working women without any distinction with respect to caste, religion, marital status, etc. The Working Women Hostel scheme makes the provision for girls'upto age 18 years and boys upto age 5 years to accompany working mothers and can avail services of the Day Care Centre as provided under the scheme.

- **Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP):** The Support to Training & Employment Programme for Women (STEP) was launched as a Central Sector Scheme in 1986-87. STEP aims to make a significant impact on women by upgrading their skills for self and wage employment. Through the scheme it aims to mobilize women in viable groups, improving their skills, arranging for productive assets/access to wage employment, creating backward and forward linkage, improving and arranging for support services, providing access to credit, awareness generation, gender sensitization, nutrition education, sensitization of project functionaries to name a few. The ultimate aim of the scheme is to develop women groups to thrive on a self- sustaining basis in the market place with minimal government support and intervention after the project period is over.

The main objectives of the schemes are:

- Mobilizing women in small viable groups and making facilities available through training access to credit and other inputs.

- **m** Enabling groups of women to take up employment-cum-income generation programmes of their own, or to access wage employment.
- **m** Provide support services for further improving and employment conditions of women and access to health care, literacy, legal literacy, and other related information.

Ø **MAHILA E-HAAT:** This is a unique direct online marketing platform for supporting women entrepreneurs/SHGs/NGOs for showcasing the products/services which are made and manufactured by women enterprises. The Ministry of Women & Child Development launched "Mahila E-Haat" a bilingual portal on 7th of March, 2016. This initiative plays a critical component for business efficiency and making it easy access to the majority of women entrepreneurs/SHGs/NGOs.

The main objectives of this online marketing platform are:

- **m** Facilitating direct contact between the vendors and buyers.
- **m** Women entrepreneurs/SHGs/NGOs can showcase their services and products directly that will strengthen their services and outreach.
- **m** The Mahila E-Haat directly supports the "Make in India" campaign through the online marketing platform.

Ø **MAHILA POLICE VOLUNTEERS (MPVs):** Gender-Based Violence (GBV), faced by women both in public and private spaces, including domestic violence, sexual assault, rape, stalking,etc is a major threat to women equality and empowerment. In order to protect and increase focused community outreach, Government of India envisages engagements/ nomination of Mahila Police Volunteers (MPVs) in all States and Union Territories to act as a link between police and the community and facilitate women in distress.

The main objectives of MPV are:

- **m** An MPV will serve as a public interface in order to fight crime against women.

- MPVs will report incidences of violence against women such as domestic violence, child marriage, dowry harassment and violence faced by women in public spaces.
- An MPV is an honorary position.

Ø **MAHILA SHAKTI KENDRA:** Mahila Shakti Kendra is 'one-stop convergent support services' for empowering rural women with opportunities for skill development, employment, digital literacy, health and nutrition'. The scheme will provide an interface for rural women to approach the government for availing their entitlements and for empowering them through awareness generation, training and capacity building programmes. The scheme was approved for implementation during 2017-18 financial years. There will be student volunteers to encourage the spirit of voluntary community service and gender equality.

The main objectives are:

- The MSK envisaged working at various levels. National Level - Knowledge support and at the state level - will provide technical support to the respective governments on issues related to women. The district and block-level centers will provide support to MSK and give a foothold to women empowerment schemes.
- Through community engagement student volunteers will be encouraged and will play an instrumental role in awareness generation regarding various government schemes/programmes as well as social issues that have an impact on the lives of women.

Ø **NARI SHAKTI PURASKAR:** Nari Shakti Puraskaris the highest civilian honour for women in the Republic of India. Every year on the occasion of International Women's DayNari Shakti Puraskaris awarded. The coveted award is conferred to exceptional Women and Institutions who have been working towards the cause of Women Empowerment.

7.4 INTEGRATED CHILD PROTECTION SCHEME (ICPS)

The ICPS is a governmental program implemented by the govt of India to help secure the safety of children, with a special emphasis on children in need of care and protection, juveniles in conflict or contact with the law and other vulnerable children. The primary purpose of ICPS is to create a central structure to provide insight and standardization for pre-existing and evolving child protection schemes in India.

In 2009 the ICPS was implemented. It was administered at the state level by state child protection societies, among other institutions.

The flagship programmes under ICPS are explained below:

- **INTEGRATED CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (ICDS):** The ICDS Scheme was launched on 2nd October 1975 and is one of the flagship programmes of the government of India and represents one of the world's largest and unique programmes for early childhood care and development. ICDS commits to children and nursing mothers and providing pre-school non-formal education and aims in breaking the vicious cycle of malnutrition, morbidity, reduced learning capacity, and mortality.

The biggest beneficiaries of the ICDS scheme are children in the age group of 0-6 years, pregnant and lactating mothers. Objectives of the scheme are:

- To improve the nutritional and health status of children in the age group 0-6 years.
- To lay the foundation for proper psychological, physical and social development of the child.
- To reduce the incidence of mortality, morbidity, malnutrition and school dropout.
- To achieve effective co-ordination of policy and implementation amongst the various departments to promote child development.
- To enhance the capability of the mother to look after the normal health and nutritional needs of the child through proper nutrition and health

education.

- **NATIONAL CRECHE SCHEME:** With growing employment opportunities more and more women are working within and outside their homes. At the same time, they face the challenges of providing quality care and protection for their children because of rapid increase in nuclear families and migration of extended family members. It became necessary to provide support to the young children quality and substitute care and other services while the mothers are at work.

The National Creche Scheme aims at providing a safe place for mothers to leave their children while they are at work and where children are provideda stimulating environment for their holistic development.

The objectives of the National Creche Scheme are:

- To provide day-care facilities for children (6 months to 6 years) of working mothers in the community.
- To improve nutrition and health status of children.
- To promote physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of children.
- To educate and empower parents/caregivers for better childcare.

- **SCHEME FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS (SAG):** SAG was devised in the year 2010 using the ICDS infrastructure with an aim at breaking the inter-generational life cycle of nutritional and gender disadvantage for girls by providing a supportive environment for self-development of adolescent girls. The SAG focuses on out of school adolescent girls in the age group of 11-14 years. The Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG)was implemented using the platform of Anganwadi Services under the umbrella of ICDS through Anganwadi Centres (AWCs).

The key objectivesof the schemes are:

- Enable Adolescent Girls for self-development and empowerment.
- Improve their nutrition and health status.
- Support out of school Adolescent girls to successfully undergothe transition phase and go back to formal schooling or bridge learning/skill training.

- Ø Upgrade their home-based and life skills.
- Ø Provide information/guidance about existing public services such as Primary Health Centers, Rural Hospitals/CHCs, Post Office, Bank, Police Station, etc.

I **INTEGRATED CHILD PROTECTION SCHEME (ICPS):** The ICPS is a centrally sponsored scheme aimed at building a protective environment for children in difficult circumstances, as well as other vulnerable children, through Government-Civil Society partnership. ICPS was proposed in 2006 and implemented in 2009. The ICPS is administered at the state level by State Protection Committees and societies and at the district level by Child Protection societies among other institutions.

The primary objectives of ICPS are:

- Ø ICPS together brings multiple existing child protection schemes of the Ministry under one comprehensive umbrella and integrates additional interventions for protecting children and preventing harm.
- Ø ICPS institutionalize essential services and strengthen structures, enhance capacities at all level, create database and knowledge base for child protection services, strengthen child protection at family and community level to ensure appropriate inter-sectoral response at all level.
- Ø ICPS aims to set up a child protection data management system to formulate and implement effective intervention strategies and monitor their outcomes.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What was the main objective of creating the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2006?

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Q 2: What was the name of the fund to establish One Stop Centres?

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Q 3: When was STEP launched and the main aims of the program?

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Q 4: Why was the Mahila Police Volunteers programme launched?

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7.5 LET US SUM UP

- Development of women in India received its attention from the government since the First 5-year plan (1951-56).
- In the 6th 5-year plan (1980-85), a shift from 'Welfare' planning to 'development' of women was taken up.
- The 9th 5-year plan (1997-2002) made two important changes in the strategy of development of women. First, 'Empowerment of Women', its aim was to create an enabling environment where women could freely exercise their rights both within and outside the home as equal partners with men. The second was convergence of existing services available in both women-specific and women related sectors.
- 10th 5-year plan (2002-2007) focused on organizing women into Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for income generation activities started.
- In the 12th 5-year plan (2012-2017) the Planning Commission pushed for special dispensation for the single woman and encourages women in participation in the field of agriculture and animal husbandry in addition to health, education, urbanization, and governance.
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development came into existence as a separate ministry from 30th of January, 2006.
- Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao campaign was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 22nd January 2015 from Panipat, Haryana on the occasion of International Day of the Girl Child.

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development started implementing the One-Stop Centres (OSC) scheme since 1st April 2015.
- The Women Helpline Scheme was launched on 1st of April 2015 along with One-Stop Centre.
- The Ministry of Women & Child Development launched "Mahila E-Haat" a bilingual portal on 7th of March, 2016. The platform was launched to play an important role for women entrepreneurs.
- Mahila Shakti Kendra is 'one-stop convergent support services' for empowering rural women with opportunities for skill development, employment, digital literacy, health, and nutrition'.
- Nari Shakti Puraskar is the highest civilian honour for women in the Republic of India. Every year on the 8th of March on the occasion of International Women's Day is it conferred.
- The ICDS Scheme was launched on 2nd October 1975, it is one of the world's largest and unique programmes for early childhood care and development.
- The Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS)was proposed and implemented in 2009. The ICPS is administered at the state level by State Protection Committees and societies and at the district level by Child Protection societies among other institutions.



7.6 FURTHER READING

1) Rao. M. Koteswara, (2005) "Empowerment of Women in India"; Discovery Publishing House, New Delhi.
2) Chopra. G, (2015) "Child Rights in India: Challenges and Social Action"; Springer, New Delhi.



7.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: The ministry was constituted with the prime intention of addressing gaps in national-state action for women and children development initiatives and promoting inter-Ministerial and inter-sectoral convergence to create gender equitability and child-centered legislation,

policies, and programmes.

Ans to Q No 2: The GoI has set up a dedicated fund called the "Nirbhaya Fund" to establish the One-Stop Centres with enhanced safety and security provisions.

Ans to Q No 3: The Support to Training & Employment Programme for Women (STEP) was launched as a Central Sector Scheme in 1986-87. STEP aims to make a significant impact on women by upgrading skills for self and wage employment.

Ans to Q No 4: Women face Gender-Based Violence (GBV) both in public and private spaces, including domestic violence, sexual assault, rape, stalking,etc is a major threat to women equality and empowerment. In order to protect and increase focused community outreach, Government of India envisages engagements/ nomination of Mahila Police Volunteers (MPVs) in all States and Union Territories

7.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Question (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: When did the Ministry of Women and Child Development come into existence and mention their Vision and Mission?

Q 2: Name the schemes implemented by GOI focusing on Women Security and Protection and write a brief note on each of the schemes.

Q 3: Name the schemes implemented by GOI focusing on Women Entrepreneurship and write a brief note on each of the schemes.

Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: What was the main objective of the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) implemented by the Government of India and discuss the various schemes launched under the ICPS.

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UNIT 8 RURAL RELIGION

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 Learning Objectives

8.2 Introduction

8.3 Religion: Definitions and Meaning

8.4 Sociological Approach to the study of Religion

8.5 Social Functions of Religion

8.6 Rural Religion in India: An Overview

8.7 Significance of the study of Rural Religion

8.8 Characteristics of Rural Religion in India

8.9 Changing Scenerio

8.10 Functions of Rural Religion in India

8.11 Let Us Sum Up

8.12 Further Reading

8.13 Answers to Check Your Progress

8.14 Model Questions

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to -

- Explain the different definitions of religion
- Discuss the meaning, concept and typology of religion
- Analyse the functions of religion in human societies
- Trace the origin of rural societies
- Discuss the characteristics of rural life in India
- Elucidate the dimensions of rural religion in India and its role and functions

8.2 INTRODUCTION

We have learnt that religion is a common element of human culture found universally in all human groups. Religion is born as an aspect of the total human need for security, not only in this world, but also in the other

world; not only in our relationships to the physical and social environment, but also in relation to the unseen forces and beings. This world of unseen forces and beings constitute what has been termed as the supernatural world.



LET US KNOW

The English word "religion" is derived from the Middle English "religioun" which came from the Old French "religion." It may have been originally derived from the Latin word "religo" which means "good faith," "ritual," and other similar meanings. It may also have come from the Latin "religãre" which means "to tie fast."

At the simplest level, religion is the belief in the power of supernatural and the transcendental. These beliefs are present in all the societies and variations seem endless. A belief in the supernatural almost always incorporates the idea that supernatural forces have some influence or control upon the world. The first indication of a possible belief in the supernatural dates from about 60,000 years ago. Archaeological evidences reveal that Neanderthal man buried his dead with stone tools and jewellery. Religion is often defined as people's organized response to the supernatural, although several movements which deny or ignore supernatural concerns have belief and ritual systems which resemble those based on the supernatural. However, these theories about the origin of religion can only be based on speculation and debate. Myth, rituals, religion, magic and numerous beliefs and practices regarding the supernatural world are the domain of religion.

Though religion is a universal phenomenon, it is understood differently by different people. On religion, opinions differ from the great religious leader down to an ordinary man. There is no consensus about the nature of religion. Sociologists are yet to find a satisfactory explanation of religion.

Again, it must be remembered that religious beliefs and practices vary from society to society, community to community, and region to region. Even within the same religion, there may be some variations in terms of urban and rural situations. Before going into the details of such variations, let us recall the meaning, definitions and social functions of religion.

8.3 RELIGION: DEFINITIONS AND MEANING

Numerous scholars have tried to find out the feature which is common to all religions. E.B Tylor, the father of the discipline of Anthropology had defined religion as the belief in spiritual beings. Some scholars in recent times have expressed that E.B.Tylor's classic definition of religion as the "belief in spiritual beings" is still valid today. For James Frazer, religion concerned the "propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man"

Durkheim, in his The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, defines religion as a ""a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them".

James. G. Frazer, in his The Golden Bough, considered religion as a belief in powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life.

Maclver and Page have defined religion as a relationship not merely between man and man but also between man and some higher power.

According to Ogburn, religion is an attitude towards superhuman powers.

Max Muller defines religion as a mental faculty or disposition which enables man to apprehend the infinite.

Spiro in 1966 has identified a belief in "superhuman beings" as the core variable

which ought to be designated by any definition of religion. Anthony Wallace saw religion as a kind of human behaviour which can be classified as belief and ritual concerned with supernatural beings, powers and forces.

According to Surajit Sinha, religion is referred to as a system of beliefs, practices and values concerned with the sacred. It is related to supernatural entities and powers which are considered as the ultimate concern of all mundane existence among human groups.

Taking various definitions together, we find that all the traditional definitions of religion involve the following aspects:

- Belief in a supernatural being or beings in a supernatural world.
- Dependence on the supernatural world for help, inspiration, and strength,
- Behaviour patterns, practices (rituals) which express the dependence.
- Religion unites human groups.

There are certain religions that may not fit well with the traditional definitions of religion. Although religion is defined as the system of beliefs and practices centring the supernatural, yet certain religious groups/sects like that of Buddhism, in its original form, is devoid of supernatural elements. Such a religion however, like other religions provide a world view, explains the events around us and has means and behaviour patterns to address the crisis that occur in our lives. The basic character is that these are considered as sacred.



LET US KNOW

Anthony F.C. Wallace proposes four categories of religion, each subsequent category subsuming the previous. These are, however, synthetic categories and do not necessarily encompass all religions.

- **Individualistic:** It is the most basic and the simplest. For example: vision quest.
- **Shamanistic:** Shamans are part-time religious practitioner. They use religion to heal and to divine, usually on the behalf of a client. The examples of shamans are spiritualists, faith healers, palm readers, etc. These are experts who have acquired religious authority through one's own means.

- **Communal:** It involves elaborate set of beliefs and practices. Group of people are arranged in clans, lineage, age groups, or some religious societies. People take on roles based on knowledge and ancestral worship.
- **Ecclesiastical:** It is the most complex of the categories. It incorporates elements of the previous three.

8.4 SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF RELIGION

In India we find followers of almost all the major religions of the world. The basic tenets of the major religions of India will be discussed in Unit IX. In this Unit we will discuss the different aspects of rural religion in India, its importance and functions. Here, we are not concerned with competing claims of different religions. This is because Sociology is mainly concerned with the social effects of religious beliefs and practices. Let us go through some of the major questions that sociologists want to explore about religion :

- How does religion reinforce the collective unity of a group through religious worships and rituals? (Durkheim).
- How religion blocks the emotional and intellectual development of people. (Marxian view).
- How a particular type of economic system, like capitalism, for example, is the product of a specific religious ideology (Max Weber), and so on and so forth.

8.5 SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF RELIGION

Religion has a significant role to play, both in the life of the individual, and social life in general. This varies according to the type of society.

- To the individual, religion provides emotional security. It helps man to rationalize his/her sufferings and make them bearable.
- Religion guides the individuals in the course of life.
- It enables men to understand and explain the events occurring around

them.

- At the social level, religion functions as a powerful means of social control. It controls human conduct and regulates behaviour through the ever prevailing fear of the supernatural forces. This feeling is inculcated (learnt) by individuals very early in their lives.
- Moreover, religion functions as a bond of social union, and unity amongst all those who follow the same religion.

However, if religion creates a sense of unity amongst those who believe in the same religion, it tends to create, at the same time, deep differences between people. This is mainly due to misinterpretation (wrong concept) of religion.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: Fill in the blanks:

a) The unified system of beliefs and practices that centre on the sacred is called as _____.

b) According to Tylor, religion is the "belief in _____beings".

Q 5: State whether the following ares true or false:

a) Durkheim's study of religion focused on the role played by religion in society.

b) Buddhism is devoid of the supernatural.

c) Buddhism provides explanations of the events around us and to cope with crisis.

8.6 RURAL RELIGION IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW

The impact of religion in rural society is tremendous. In most of the societies that we come across, religious explanations of birth, marriage, death, disease, of natural disasters as famine and flood, and of the various happenings in the world are prevalent. Most of these are associated with some rituals like the funeral rites, birth rites, etc. Even the attaining of puberty

and adulthood are associated with rites and rituals that are meant to make smooth the passage from one social stage (for example, bachelor state) to another (married state), and to resolve crisis, with the involvement of the supernatural beings. Not only disease, and natural disasters, but even events in one's life as birth, marriage, illness, disease and death are considered as events. The degree of dependence on religious rituals on these issues is different in different societies. The difference is visible when we look upon these in terms of rural and urban societies. In rural societies, people follow the religious rites strictly, according to the customs and norms – but in urban societies, due to the lack of time and opportunities, such functions are very often observed symbolically. In the succeeding paragraphs we will discuss the issues related to rural religion and its various aspects with an introduction to rural society in India.

8.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY OF RURAL RELIGION

India is basically a country of villages. It is true that urban centres did develop in India since the days of Indus civilization, about 3500 years ago, yet the proportion of urban centres as compared to villages have been continuously very small all throughout the centuries. According to 2001 census there were 4378 urban centres in India.

Indian civilization has both the rural and urban dimensions. Rural society is no doubt, a part of the general society, but it has certain element that makes it different from the urban society or the society in general. Throughout the millennia, there has been an interactive process going on between the city and the rural religion in India. This can be seen in the attraction or pull of the pilgrim centres of different faith, all over the country and through the ages.

The village society is well knit and has strong bonds of relations. Indian rural life is affected by land relations, family structure, caste variations, and above all religious variation. In fact, religion affects the thought and action of the large sections of humanity. The influence of religion on people's

economic and social life especially in India cannot be ignored. By prohibiting certain activities (taboo) and restricting others, the injunctions (command) of religion not only regulate one's philosophy of life, but also formulate one's economic activities. For example, Buddhism, with its doctrine of ahimsa and having its followers in India, China, Japan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Indo-China, are adverse to stock-raising for meat and wool. Among the Muslims, banking institutions have not developed, because Mohammad prohibited the acceptance of interest from borrowers. They eat beef, but not pork, and hence pig rearing is quite uncommon among the Muslims. The Hindu society is divided into different castes, to each of which, occupations and duties are prescribed by religion.

Thus, the Indian village life is grossly affected by religious beliefs and customs. According to A.R. Desai, the study of rural religion in India is important for the following reasons:

- It is observed that all over the world, rural people have greater predisposition for religion than urban people. The religious outlook of rural people over the world shapes their intellectual, emotional and practical life. This is particularly true of the societies resting on subsistence (barely sufficent to maintain life) basis. It is difficult to locate any aspect of their life which is not shaped by their religious beliefs and practises. Their family life, caste relations, general social life, economic and recreational life, arts and crafts, and festivals are more or less governed by religious norms.
- In India, rural societies are based on subsistence economies. The rural economy, to a large extent, is still dependent on nature. Sometimes, scientific and technological supports fail. People generally use religious means to avoid the vagaries of nature like flood, droughts, landslides, crop failure, and such other problems. Rural people often perform rites and rituals at different stages of their agricultural cycle or operations.
- Priestly leadership in rural society: Irrespective of their religion, the leadership of the village life in all domains was provided by the priestly groups, as the Brahmins, the Maulabis and such other priestly groups. They controlled the traditional Panchayats also. The traditions and

conventions of the rural life were laid down and controlled by these religious leaders. Hence, the rural life in India, in general, was moulded by the religious spirit.

- Rural religion is at cross roads: The rural religious scene is changing very fast in view of the secular nationhood and the new political environment which is basically non-religious and secular. Democratic outlook have been trying to supersede the old ones that were founded on religion.

According to Desai, contemporary rural religion in India is a battleground between the forces of religious orthodoxy and authoritarian social concepts on the one hand, and those of secular –democratic advance on the other.

These make imperative the study of religion in the context of rural India.

8.8 CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL RELIGION IN INDIA

The religious situation in India is very complex. It is due to the fact that the number of different religions is very large. Though India has no state religion, yet the Constitution guarantees everyone the freedom of following and practicing all religious faiths. Thus, Indian population is divided into innumerable different faiths and sects. Secondly, the social composition of the followers of these diverse religions is also diverse. They practice different customs and traditions. The different religious communities also have different types of social organizations.

At the same time, as has already been mentioned, the characteristics of villages in India differ from place to place, from region to region, and from community to community, due to the diverse socio-cultural, economic, geographic, and ecological factors. Each of these villages has a unique pattern and a mode of life. The religious life of rural India is also very diverse.

Yet, the village communities, all over the country possess certain

common features iin terms of their religious institutions, beliefs and practices. Several sociologists and anthropologists have made field studies of various villages in order to understand the rural religion in India. Some of the major characteristics of rural religion are discussed below :

- **Indian religion is quite practical:** It must be remembered that religion, more particularly, Hinduism as practiced in rural India is not the classical form of the religion. According to S.C Dube, Hinduism as practiced in the villages of India is not the Hinduism of the classical philosophical systems of India, for it possesses neither the metaphysical heights, nor the abstract content of the latter. It is a religion of fasts, and festivals, in which prescribed rituals cover all the major crises of life. The life histories reveal that, spiritualism cannot be said to be the keynote in the life of the community. Far from it, religion appears to be a practical one.
- Religion in Indian influences almost all aspects of rural life. The various aspects of rural life, like economic, social, political, personal, recreation, art, culture, and others are influenced by religion. All these aspects are again interrelated.
- **Neighbourhood living pattern:** Neighbourhood living pattern varies from village to village. The village may be composed of a single religious group, or a multi-religious one. There may also be differences with regard to caste composition. Different caste groups have certain distinct religious practices and rituals.
- Coexistence of different religious groups or sects is another feature of rural religious life in India.
- **Sacred centres or places of worship:** Rural religion centres round shrines, temples, mosques, churches and such sacred spaces. Whatever may be the religion, these are sacred places of the village. Such an area may be under a big tree, or on the bank of a river. Each village has such sacred centres. They are used for holding community rituals and festivities according to the religious traditions of the village. These centres have their own myths and stories of origin. They are the focal points of village life.

Every places of worship, whether it is a naamghar, temple, guruduwuara, mosque, or a local shrine, is run out of the property attached to it, or from public funds and donations. Sometimes, private persons may also build and maintain private temples or shrines. The religious focus is mainly on the shrines of the village's goddess and god.

- **Supernatural world of Indian rural life:** Rural Indians inhabit a world full of divine and semi-divine beings, such as tree spirits (yakshas), ghosts (bhootas), puranic, local, personal and ancestral gods, who co-exist in a complex hierarchy. Along with the public shrines to the gods, every Hindu home has a domestic shrine, and a veneration of sacred trees and snakes. These were attested to millennia ago, and still play an important part in the contemporary religious practices and beliefs. Unlike in orthodox puranic Hinduism, the villagers have direct access to the local gods and do not require the intercession of a priest. The Goddess also plays a larger role in local religion and rural religion is centred on specific places of perceived spiritual power. The shrines themselves are relatively simple affairs. They are usually covered and often enclosed on three sides by a low wall. Shrines with buildings on them are quite rare. The simplest form of shrine can consist of a pile of stones by a riverbank or in a field, where, at some point in the past, it is believed, a spirit had made its presence known. Villages often have a number of shrines to different deities located at the edge of the village.
- **Household sacred space:** Besides village level sacred spots, each household possesses a household shrine, however small it may be. Household deities are daily worshipped by the respective family members.
- Sacred performances like rituals and festivals are the life line in Indian villages. These foster unity amongst the people. Rural religion is expressed through the tradition of life cycle rituals (like birth, marriage, and death), festivals related to economic activities, ancestor worship and such others. We have discussed that rural religion in India is a practical one. Sociologists and Anthropologists have classified different forms of religious activities. Some of these are prayers, sacrifices, rituals,

fast, festivals, divination and such other forms.

- **Sacred functionaries:** Each Indian village bas a body of religious functionaries like Maulabi, Pandit, Purohit, and priest, either full time or part time religious specialists. The full time specialists generally do not have any other means of livelihood. In simpler rural systems, the part time specialists like medicineman, healers, astrologers, diviners and others, play crucial role.



LET US KNOW

Shaman and Religious Leader A shaman is a person who is not a part of an organized religion and is in direct contact with the spirit world, usually through a trance state. A shaman has spirit helpers at his or her command to carry out curing, divining, and bewitching. Shamanistic power is acquired individually, usually in physical and/or mental solitude and isolation from other humans. Spirits or some other supernatural entities are revealed to the shaman and he or she learns how to control them.A shaman is essentially a religious entrepreneur who acts for human clients. He or she intervenes on behalf of a human client to influence supernatural beings to perform some act such as curing an illness or discovering the cause of an unexpected death. The shaman essentially acts as a middleman in this. In contrast, a priest's clients are the gods. A priest tells people what to do. A shaman tells the supernatural beings what to do. However, both shamans and priests are paid for their services with material things and/or prestige. Shamans are common in small-scale societies. However, they do not completely disappear in large-scale societies that have organized religions. A religious leader who is part of an organized religion is considered to be a priest or priestess. Of course, different religions have different terms for these individuals—they may be known as rabbis, ministers, mullahs, imams, or something else. These individuals are the keepers of the

sacred law and tradition. They are found mostly in large-scale societies. Priests are authorized by priesthood, or some other religious organization, to perform religious rituals designed to influence the supernatural world and to guide the believers in their religious practices. Priests personally do not have supernatural powers at their command. Priests are initiated and ceremonially inducted members of an established religious organization. That is, they are members of a priesthood. Their rank and function results from holding a religious office held by others before them.

8.9 FUNCTIONS OF RURAL RELIGION IN INDIA

- **Maintaining Group identity :** Alongside the personal dimensions of worship and reverence, rural festivals and rituals can have a more basic social function in expressing, fixing and reinforcing the shared values and beliefs of a society. Rituals can aid in creating a firm sense of group identity. This function can be exploited for political ends. Humans have used rituals to create social bonds and even to nourish interpersonal relationships.
- **Means of social control :** Religion is a powerful means of social control. Each religion provides a moral code of conduct for its followers. The fear of supernatural punishment or the wrath of the god compels a person to abide by its religious norms. Thus, the fundamental function of religion, particularly in rural areas of India is to maintain social order.
- **Rural religion controls food habits:** Religion, in a rural community is very much linked with food habits. Certain items of food are encouraged while some others are prohibited or tabooed by different religions. Thus, there are religious variations.
- **Preservation and maintenance of hierarchical social order** : Indian rural society is a stratified society. It is basically caste oriented. Caste system is not only limited to Hindus only. Sociologists have shown that castes are present among Christians, Muslims, Buddhists and religious groups in India.

The stratification of the rural society was also maintained through the customs, tradition and rituals advocated by religion. Mc Kim Marriott has also identified that the ritual and religious aspects of hierarchical relations in the village are governed even today by the concept of purity and pollution.The commensal relations in the village are also governed, even today, by the concepts of purity and pollution.

- **Maintenance of inter-castes relations:** The Hindu caste society was based on an elaborate division of labour which is termed as jajmani system. Each caste has had its own hereditary occupation and each occupational caste gave their services to their clients of other castes, and received services or things on return. The village caste structure is characterised by the jajmani system. Yogendra Singh has described jajmani system as a system governed by relationship based on reciprocity in inter-caste relations in villages. According to Leach, the jajmani system maintains and regulates division of labour and economic interdependence.
- **Recreation, leisure, art and culture** : Religious rituals and festivities provide opportunities to the rural people to relax and enjoy life. The fairs are also organised in Indian villages which are based on religion. Thus, villagers get opportunities for leisure and recreation due to religious celebration. These rituals and festivals in a village are visited by people from distant areas also. Thus, through these festivals, ritual contact between far flung areas could be maintained.



ACTIVITY

Q 1: Make a list of some festivals observed in the rural areas you know.

Q 2: Systematically arrange the Bihu festival according to the agricultural activity cycle.

8.10 CHANGING SCENARIO

Several new trends have become visible in the post independence period of India. Let us discuss the changing scenario of religion in India.

- **Rising trend of communalism and the accompanying changes:** Violence has created a feeling of insecurity among different religious groups in the villages, mainly among the religious minorities. We know that India is a country with multi-religions. Even within the same religion, we find different factions and cults. There is enough evidence in our history to demonstrate that there has been cult conflict between the followers of different cults, mainly in rural areas. However, in the urban areas the effect of cult conflict is not so severe. Communalism has been a historical occurrence. In the contemporary times, with the development of communication technology, communalism becomes more organised and politicised.
- **New forces of globalization, capitalist economy, and consumerism have penetrated the rural life in India:** Improvement in communication, mobile phone, and electronic media have become part of general village life in India. All these forces and factors have reduced the importance of religion in rural life to a great extent.
- **Effects of Politics:** We have already mentioned that religion develops group identity. At the same time politics have resulted in dividing society along the lines of religion. All over the country, the local, regional and national politics have taken religion as a force for creating divisions in the country. If this trend of political activities continues, then the day is not far when religion would prove to be a highly divisive force in the villages of India.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: Mention two of the social functions of religion in rural India.

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Q 4: Cite two modern changes of religious aspect of rural society.

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8.11 LET US SUM UP

- From this Unit we have come to know that religion plays an important role in the various aspects of the social life of rural people.
- Their world view is dominated by religion. World view includes the ways a group or an individual perceives the world around and explains the events in it. As such, economic behaviour, beliefs and practices relating to health and nutrition, marriage, birth, death, etc. are influenced by religion.
- Religious practitioners acquire a prominent position in the society. They come to wield power in the group.
- Religion also binds the members of the group into a unity.
- Modern trends of globalisation, consumerism, capitalism, politicisation, and organised communalism, have brought changes in the religious aspects of social life bringing consequent changes in the other areas of social life of the rural as well as urban society of India.



8.12 FURTHER READING

1) Sankar Rao, C.N. *Society in India,* S. Chand & Co. New Delhi.
2) Madan, T.N. *Religion in India,* OUP, New Delhi.
3) Madan, T.N.*India's Religion,* OUP, New Delhi.
4) Robinson, Rowena *Sociology of Religion in India,* Sage Publication.

8.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: a) religion b) spiritual

Ans to Q No 2: a) True b) True c) True

Ans to Q No 3: Religion maintains group identity and serve as means of social control

Ans to Q No 4: Reducing of the dominance of religion on social life and politicisation of religion.

8.14 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: What are the characteristics of rural religion in India?

Q 2: Define religion. Discuss the basic aspects of religion.

Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Explain the social functions of religion. Discuss the significance of the study of rural religion.

Q 2: Discuss the changing scenario of rural religion in India.

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