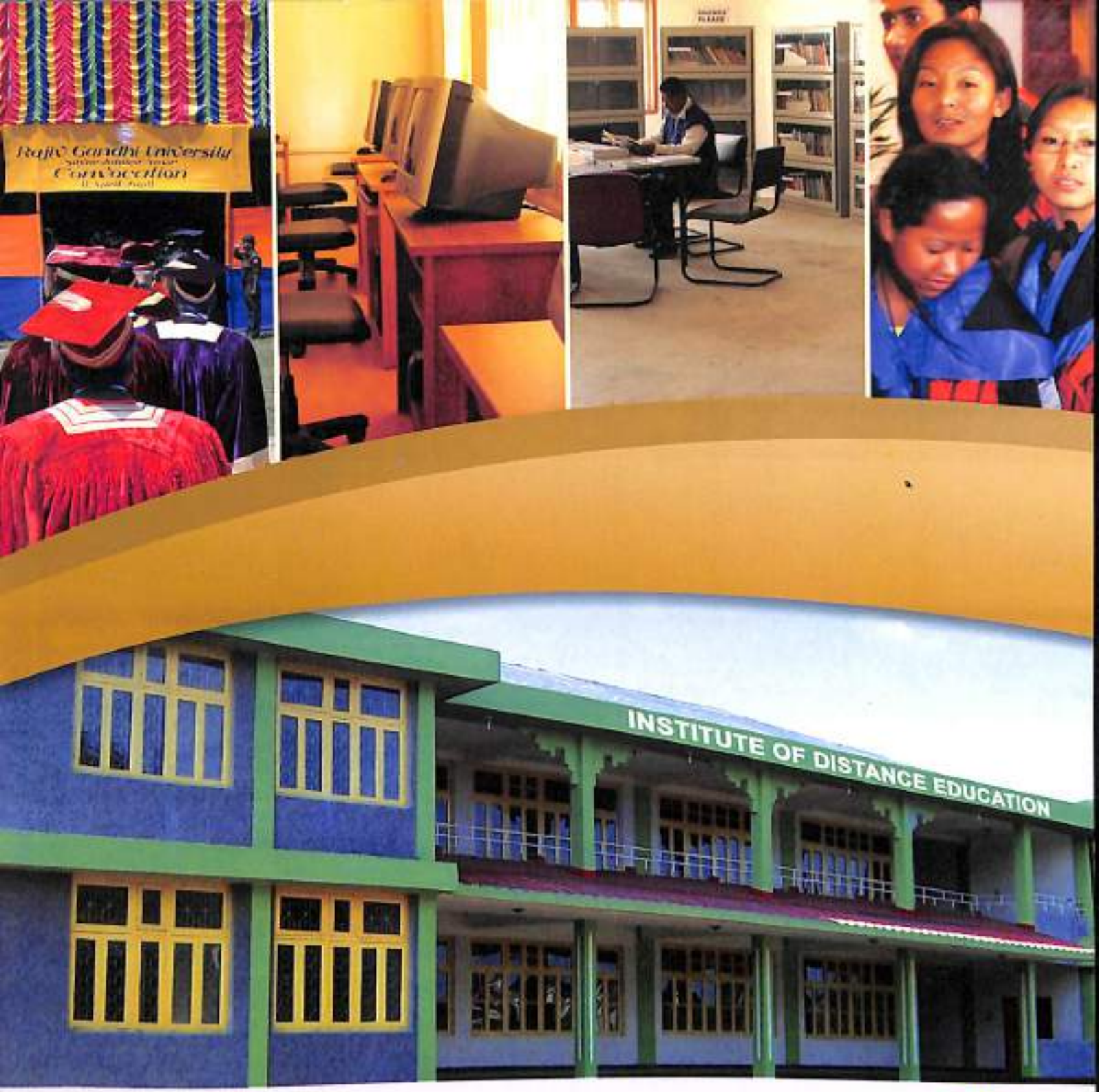

MA (Sociology)

FIRST SEMESTER

MASOC 404

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RURAL SOCIOLOGY

RURAL SOCIOLOGY

MA [Sociology]
First Semester
MASOC-404

RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY
Arunachal Pradesh, INDIA - 791 112

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About the University

Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly Arunachal University) is a premier institution for higher education in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and has completed twenty-five years of its existence. Late Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, laid the foundation stone of the university on 4th February, 1984 at Rono Hills, where the present campus is located.

Ever since its inception, the university has been trying to achieve excellence and fulfill the objectives as envisaged in the University Act. The university received academic recognition under Section 2(f) from the University Grants Commission on 28th March, 1985 and started functioning from 1st April, 1985. It got financial recognition under section 12-B of the UGC on 25th March, 1994. Since then Rajiv Gandhi University, (then Arunachal University) has carved a niche for itself in the educational scenario of the country following its selection as a University with potential for excellence by a high-level expert committee of the University Grants Commission from among universities in India.

The University was converted into a Central University with effect from 9th April, 2007 as per notification of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The University is located atop Rono Hills on a picturesque tableland of 302 acres overlooking the river Dikrong. It is 6.5 km from the National Highway 52-A and 25 km from Itanagar, the State capital. The campus is linked with the National Highway by the Dikrong bridge.

The teaching and research programmes of the University are designed with a view to play a positive role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the State. The University offers Undergraduate, Post-graduate, M.Phil and Ph.D. programmes. The Department of Education also offers the B.Ed. programme.

There are fifteen colleges affiliated to the University. The University has been extending educational facilities to students from the neighbouring states, particularly Assam. The strength of students in different departments of the University and in affiliated colleges has been steadily increasing.

The faculty members have been actively engaged in research activities with financial support from UGC and other funding agencies. Since inception, a number of proposals on research projects have been sanctioned by various funding agencies to the University. Various departments have organized numerous seminars, workshops and conferences. Many faculty members have participated in national and international conferences and seminars held within the country and abroad. Eminent scholars and distinguished personalities have visited the University and delivered lectures on various disciplines.

The academic year 2000-2001 was a year of consolidation for the University. The switch over from the annual to the semester system took off smoothly and the performance of the students registered a marked improvement. Various syllabi designed by Boards of Post-graduate Studies (BPGS) have been implemented. VSAT facility installed by the ERNET India, New Delhi under the UGC-Infonet program, provides Internet access.

In spite of infrastructural constraints, the University has been maintaining its academic excellence. The University has strictly adhered to the academic calendar, conducted the examinations and declared the results on time. The students from the University have found placements not only in State and Central Government Services, but also in various institutions, industries and organizations. Many students have emerged successful in the National Eligibility Test (NET).

Since inception, the University has made significant progress in teaching, research, innovations in curriculum development and developing infrastructure.

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Unit III: Rural Power Structure Traditional Rural Power Structure, Dominant Caste, Panchayat Raj, Changing Leadership and Emergence of Elites	**Unit 3:** Rural Power Structure **(Pages 65-91)**
Unit IV: Rural Development Social Transformation and Development of Rural India, Approach to Rural Development — Modernization and Globalization, Land Reforms — Zamindari, Ryotwari and Mahalwari Systems, Bhoodan Movement	**Unit 4:** Rural Development **(Pages 93-134)**
Unit V: Five Year Plans and Rural Development Overview of Rural Development Programmes in Five Year Plans, Rural Development Programmes: CDP, IRDP, EAS, ITDP, SGSY, PMRY, MGNREGA, SHGs — Problems and Prospects	**Unit 5:** Five ear Plans and Rural Development **(Pages 135-184)**

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INTRODUCTION

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Rural Sociology is a subject of sociology. It comprises two terms—rural and sociology, which implies that it is the study of sociology of life in the rural environment. Rural society is basically an agrarian society. Rural Sociology is a mirror of rural social life. According to A. R. Desai, '...the basic task of rural sociology...is to discover the basic laws of development of rural society.' Rural Sociology provides knowledge of such laws and makes possible the planning of a strategic approach for desired changes.

India is a country with rural or village area covering over 70 per cent of the total area. Villages are predominant in our country as they affect the country's economic and social conditions. Rural society is characterized by a homogeneity in all the fields like social, cultural and economic, where people lead almost the same kind of life with simple dressing and food habits, culture and traditions.

Each country has its own social and political traditions, which are typical to it. Similarly, India too has its own unique system of government. The organization of political system took place over a period of time to reach its present shape and structure. The rural power structure came into being with the discovery of village panchayats. Rural development implies both the economic betterment of people as well as greater social transformation. In order to provide the rural people with better prospects for economic development, increased participation of people in the rural development programmes, decentralization of planning, better enforcement of land reforms and greater access to credit are needed. The Department of Rural Development is implementing a number of programmes in rural areas through the state governments for poverty reduction, employment generation, rural infrastructure development, provision of basic minimum services and so on. This book will discuss all the above discussed areas like rural society, rural social institutions, rural power structure and rural development.

This book, *Rural Sociology*, is written in a self-instructional format and is divided into five units. Each unit begins with an *Introduction* to the topic followed by an outline of the *Unit Objectives*. The content is then presented in a simple and easy-to-understand manner, and is interspersed with *Check Your Progress* questions to test the reader's understanding of the topic. A list of *Questions and Exercises* is also provided at the end of each unit, and includes *Short-Answer Questions* as well as *Long-Answer Questions*. The *Summary* and *Key Terms* section are useful tools for students and are meant for effective recapitulation of the text.

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UNIT 1 RURAL SOCIOLOGY: INTRODUCTION

Structure

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Etymologically, the word 'rural' means all the aspects related to the village. The word 'sociology' has Latin and Greek origins. The Latin word *socius* means companion and *logy* means the 'study of'. After combining the two words together we get the definition of sociology, which means the 'systematic study of society'. These definitions together prove that Rural Sociology deals with each and every concept of village society. As has been rightly observed by A. R. Desai, '… the prime objective of rural sociology should be to make a scientific, systematic and comprehensive study of the rural social organization, of its structure of development and on the basis of such study to discover the laws of its development.'

From the above words it is clear that Rural Sociology is the mirror of rural life which covers the various aspects of rural life ranging from culture, religion, economic to political aspect of villages. Also, when one studies all these aspects one becomes aware of the facts and principles which govern the planning of rural reconstruction. *Rural Sociology* is therefore the scientific study of rural society. It involves a systematic study of rural society, its institutions, activities, interactions and social change.

In this unit, you will get acquainted with the meaning, scope, nature and significance of Rural Sociology and the emergence of Rural Sociology as an academic discipline.

1.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Discuss in detail the meaning of the term 'rural sociology'
- Understand the emergence of Rural Sociology as an academic discipline
- Evaluate the nature of Rural Sociology

- Assess the similarities between Rural Sociology and other fields of study
- Explain the scope and significance of Rural Sociology
- Discuss the different forms of rural social institutions

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1.2 MEANING OF RURAL SOCIOLOGY

India is a country with rural or village area covering over 70 per cent of the total area. Villages are predominant in our country as they affect the country's economic and social conditions. The glimpses into history through the eyes of literati like Munshi Premchand, Maithili Sharan Gupt, and others show beautiful images of rural India. The characters of their classics are life-size and form indelible impressions on the minds of the readers. Rural India is the backbone of India.

Mahatma Gandhi too was a great naturalist. He lived close to nature and strongly advocated rural life. He was in favour of using the most natural fabric, *khadi*, and that too hand-spun so that we become self-reliant. He strongly and very aptly stated, 'Nature has enough for man's need but not his greed'. His philosophy and theory of closeness to nature brings us closer or nearer to rural India.

Development starts from the smallest or lowest level in villages which develop to form towns, which gradually transforms into cities, and then into metropolitans. The initial stage is at the village or rural level. We first need to take heed of the situation and then find the best possible way to utilize the resources in the villages and then make its best utilization.

The youth is considered to be the biggest human resource of any country. They say that the population of Indian youth is the highest in the world. It means that India has the biggest human resource reserve today. But it is quite paradoxical that despite such large resources, our position in the global market is not a very favourable or profitable one. The youth power is not harnessed well and their talent is not tapped in the best way so as to make them a profitable asset to the country. On the other hand, the youth is the cause of major problems like unemployment, beggary, theft, crime and so on. Greater attention needs to be paid towards this glaring issue of the youth. More policies or programmes need to be urgently developed specially for these youngsters who have immense potential and the power to shape India's future. Youth of India today needs freedom from unemployment, crime, unhappiness, frustration, and all other negative feelings.

Rural and Sociology: Meaning

Rural means anything that is not urban. 'Rural' according to the Oxford Dictionary means connected with or like the country-side.

Sociology according to the Oxford Dictionary means the scientific study of the nature and development of society and social behaviour.

Society means people in general or living together in communities.

Putting all these definitions together we understand that in simple words, **Rural Sociology** means the systematic and scientific study of the people living in a country or the village areas. It includes the study of the traditions, customs, and cultures of the villages as well as the social interactions of people among themselves, the economic conditions of rural folk, their ways of living, and other patterns of life.

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Thus, the study focuses on the social conditions of people in rural areas, their living, and every other aspect of their lives.

1.2.1 Emergence of Rural Sociology as an Academic Discipline

Rural Sociology is a science that originated in the United States of America. It is an authentic American creation. It was in the United States that the basic infrastructure of Rural Sociology was developed and initiated.

It was in 1862 that President Lincoln signed the Morrill Land Grant Act so as to form the institutional infrastructure to establish Rural Sociology. According to the Act, federal land in each state had to be set aside so that public colleges could be built for the study of 'agriculture and the mechanical arts'. This step was taken so that education could not only remain limited to the elite and the rich, but also reach the commoners and ordinary people. This step was further strengthened by the Hatch Act of 1887, according to which Agriculture Experiment Stations were created in each state which provided federal funding pipelines. These programmes provide scholarships and funding to students for higher studies especially in rural areas.

In 1914, the Smith Lever Act was passed according to which academic research was brought to public use. The common public also got direct access to research institutions, which hitherto was limited to only the elite or the moneyed people. In 1890, the second Morrill Act created seventeen black land-grant colleges, and in 1994, twenty-nine Native American tribal colleges were given the land-grant status.

The situation at that time was that out of the total population in the United States, about one-third lived in farms. The country farmers played an important role in politics and social movements. Though farm families started moving out from their farms and villages to cities, it was important for the government to keep the farmers on their farms.

It was in 1908 that President Theodore Roosevelt created the Country Life Commission (CLC). The purpose of this Commission was to find out the problems faced by farm families and document them by launching investigations nationwide. Surveys were conducted and information was compiled. Based upon all this information, a report was prepared which formed the basis of the subsequent National Policy. The purpose of this Commission was to find ways to control or stop farmers from migrating.

The Commission focused on various relevant issues like individual's human capital, cultural values, weaknesses of rural schools, and churches. The main focus of the Commission was to improve the deficits or the drawbacks that the rural people faced. This led to a widespread awareness among people which in turn enhanced their well-being. The field was developed very conscientiously and a lot of effort was devoted on the improvement of the situation of rural people, so that they were provided with all the facilities in the villages itself, thereby encouraging them to stay on in the villages and not migrate.

It was in 1925, with the passage of the Parnell Act, that Rural Sociology was formally recognized as a separate field of study. After this, federal funds were provided to carry out sociological research, teaching, and outreach. It was during this time that America faced agricultural depression (1920). It was in response to this that the Parnell Act was passed to devise ways and means to overcome the problematic situations. During that time, Rural Sociology became part of agriculture colleges. Though Rural Sociology was more of an interdisciplinary subject, it became part of the mainstream studies (mostly related to biology).

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In 1915, Cornell University created separate departments of Rural Sociology. In other universities, Rural Sociology was part of other disciplines and subjects. Later, the Rural Sociology faculty was appointed in agriculture colleges, as part of multi-disciplinary departments.

The report of the Commission was published in 1911. This report was an outline of Rural Sociology as a new field of study. This study not only presented the rural problems, but also gave suggestions for remedial measures towards improvement of rural problems.

Studies of Rural Community in India

The earliest works on Rural Sociology is considered to belong to Robert Redfield. Research studies were carried out on large scale in the US, which is basically the place of origin of Rural Sociology.

In India, Rural Sociology is a rather new subject. There was a great thrust in this field in India post-Independence. The government took keen interest in the field and a lot of work on rural communities was conducted.

The Point Four Programme and America's Ford Foundation encouraged lot of research on the subject. The Ford Foundation provided financial assistance to Professor D. N. Majumdar, who directed the study of Mohana village in Lucknow. Later, some more assistance came from the Planning Commission as well. The result of this research project was published in the form of a book titled *Caste and Communication in an Indian Village* in 1958. On similar lines, the Chairman of the programme evaluation organization of the then Planning Commission, Dr D. G. Karve, invited Oscar Lewis to study Rampura, a village close to Delhi. The results of this research task were published in the form of a book titled, *Village Life in Northern India* (1958). This book was published by Illinois University.

Dr A. R. Desai wrote *Introduction to Rural Sociology in India,* which was published in 1935. This book provided a lot of information about the rural community. He emphasized the need for conducting research in this field. Dr Desai published another book, *Rural Sociology in India*, when the previous one was no longer available. In this book, he put together all the latest studies related to Rural Sociology.

Another eminent scholar who contributed immensely to the field was Dr S. C. Dubey. He conducted a study of Shamirpet village near Hyderabad, which was titled, *Indian Villages* and was published in 1955. In the year 1956, Dr Dubey's research paper was published in the *Journal of Asian Studies*, 'Cultural Factor in Rural Community Development'. In 1958, another book by Dr Dubey was published, which was titled *India's Changing Villages*.

Professor M. N. Srinivas has also contributed much to the field of Rural Sociology. In 1961, he edited a book, *India's Villages*, which was a collection of studies of various villages in different states of India. Another epoch making book by him was published in 1962 under the title *Religion and Society Among the Coorgs of South India*.

Other important research papers which were published during that time were not plentiful. However, the following compilation gives us a fair knowledge of the work done in this field:

1948: 'The Division of Labour in an Indian Village', *A Reader in General Anthropology* by M. E. Opler

1950: *Village Life in North India* by M. E. Opler.

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1950: *Occupational Structure of a Malwa Village* by K. S. Mathur.

1951: *Caste Survey in a Model Village with Stereotyped Discriminations* Sridhar Misra.

1951: *An Indian Outcast* by Hazari.

1952: *Village Administration in India* by N. G. D. Joarder.

1952: '*Village Structure in North Kerala*' by E. J. Miller, in *Economic Weekly*.

1952: *The Misal: A Structural Village Group of India and Pakistan* by M. Smith, in *American Anthropologist*.

1953: *Change in the Leadership of a Mysore Village* by A. R. Beals.

1954: *Some Aspects of Urban Migration from a village in North Central India* by Edvin Games.

1955: *Interplay Among factors of change in a Mysore Village* by *Village India* .

1955: *Leadership and Groups in a South Indian Village* by A. S. Dhillon, *Govt. of India*.

1955: *Population and Economic Structure of an Indian Rural Community* by Edvin Games in *Eastern Anthropologist*.

1955: *The Social Structure of a Tanjore Village* by E. K. Gough.

1955: *Intercaste Relations in Cohana Kallah: A Village Near Lucknow* by Majumdar, et al in *Eastern Anthropologist*.

1955: *Western Medicine in a Village in North India: Health, Culture and Community* by Mckim Marriott.

1955: *Functional Relations of Lohars in North India Village* by N. S. Reddy.

1955: *The Social System of a Mysore Village* by M. N. Srinivas in *Village India*.

1955: *Some Aspects of Social Organization in a Mohova Village* by K. S. Mathur in *Journal of Research*, Agra University.

1955: *Economic Study of a Malabar Village* by T. Sher in *Economic Weekly*.

1956: *Development Projects in an Indian Village* by A. C. Mayor.

1956: *The Unity of an Indian Village* by R. D. Singh in *Journal of Asian Studies*.

1.3 NATURE OF RURAL SOCIOLOGY

Rural Sociology is a branch of sociology dealing with all the different aspects of village life. Since sociology falls under the category of social sciences, rural sociology is also taken as a subject under social studies. Basically, it deals with the systematic investigation about society and its nature and how man is placed in it. Subjects like sociology, civics, political science, anthropology, etc., are by and large included in it.

The above mentioned different subjects deal in a systematic manner employing different techniques and scientific methods to study different aspects of society. Though different subjects covers different topics to be studied, yet there is a certain amount of overlapping among these subjects. The common point or thread which runs through all

Check Your Progress

1. Define rural sociology.
2. Where did rural sociology as a science originate?
3. State the reason for the creation of the Country Life Commission (CLC).

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the social science subjects is its essence. In order to understand this there is a need to understand the methodology employed in both scientific and social methods.

Rural Sociology categorically deals with problems and complications associated with village life and for this a well-organized system is needed. This takes us to the crux or root of the problems. This branch of Rural Sociology is quite a new field of social sciences and has evolved from other disciplines. Therefore, the subject matter which we study under Rural Sociology comes from other subjects related to sociology, and so there is an association among the methods and techniques of social sciences. Rural Sociology draws its content from general sociology, urban sociology, social anthropology, history, political science, and also economics. Therefore, the techniques followed in Rural Sociology are mostly borrowed from other disciplines.

Though sociology is a social science, it borrows all its basics from pure sciences. C.W. Right Mills, Peter Berger, and others feel that sociology is only an 'imagination', an art. Initially, it was taken as a branch of philosophy and also a part of positivistic science. But after some time it was decided that due to its subject matter or content, it could not be taken as a subject of natural science. Pierre Bourdieu strongly points out that, 'Sociology seems to me to have all the properties that define it as a science. All sociologists worthy of the name agree on a common heritage of concepts, methods and verification procedures.'

After analysing the various aspects of sociology, one concludes that the subject matter is very systematic and scientific in nature. It is a diversified subject focusing on various different areas of study, ranging from demography, caste, villages to economics. However, the variety of subjects is studied in a scientific way. The different points to support this aspect can be understood by analysing all the points in detail. These aspects are:

1. Empiricism

Empiricism refers to the method of conducting experiments so as to reach a particular conclusion. This method is in line with the studies in subjects like physics, chemistry, and biology which are science subjects. In sociology also, the methods of experimentation, observation, and verification based on collected facts and data are used. The subjects covered in sociology show that the data collected are verified and rechecked and is based on logical findings and observation.

2. Accumulated Facts

Just like other sciences, the findings in sociology are based on data collected from different areas and periods. Rural Sociology, especially is a field which is based on accumulated facts. These facts are based on the data which are collected from different villages in remote and unreachable areas along with easily accessible areas.

Different research methods are employed to collect primary data as well as secondary data. These genuine data enable the researcher to reach logical and correct findings and conclusions.

3. Objectivity

Objective approach means the ability to record things or observations as they actually are. This involves the clear study of facts and is unbiased. Any personal desire, attitude or attribute should not affect the study. Science which is objective deals with the honest collection and interpretation of data. The data which is collected by the sociologist has to

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be within the objective approach, but it is quite possible that subjectivity enters the field and is permissible to that extent. This subject involves detailed investigation and study. But like other sciences, sociology has an objective approach. The study or problem starts with a specific purpose and this is followed objectively.

4. Precision and Accuracy

The important characteristic of scientific study is the precision and accuracy of values with minimum deviation. The measurements have to be based on meticulous studies and recordings. This is the meaning of precision and accuracy. Similar properties of precision and accuracy are found in the field of sociology as well. When data are collected in the villages and remote areas, it is very carefully analysed. The methods of study are meticulous and extremely precise and scientific in nature. Accuracy in the observations is an essential part of Rural Sociology. This is one of the reasons why sociology is scientific in its approach.

1.3.1 Methodology

Science is a field which follows a well-authenticated methodology. It follows a particular procedure of obtaining results from the collected material or data under study. The research methods involve validity and reliability. Sociology involves very accurate methods and procedures to reach final results. Each step can be verified and cross-checked by any person in the world.

Science is a subject which is based on theoretical as well as implied considerations. Laboratory as well as field experiments play an essential role in the study of various sciences. All new theories are based on lot many years of rigorous theoretical as well as practical work. To support the truth of the above statement, C. Wright Mills claims that 'theory without data is empty but data without theory are blind.'

Social sciences too, especially Rural Sociology, is the subject which bases all its findings on the data collected from the rural areas. The survey method employed to get raw data regarding caste, family and other rural aspects is very accurate and is based on scientific procedures and methods.

1.3.2 Similarity between Rural Sociology and Other Fields of Study

Since sociology borrows a lot from all subjects which are essentially of scientific nature to the humanities, we get a taste of both in this subject. Rural Sociology shares common points with a wide variety of subjects like general sociology, economics, and archaeology. Some similarities are explained in the following section:

• Rural Sociology and General Sociology

Rural Sociology is a branch of sociology which specifically deals with the village or rural life. The problems are specific only to this branch. Both the rural and urban societies are influenced by the similar factors which may be geographical or organizational, financial or whatever nature. Still there are some unique or specific aspects of both the rural and urban societies and so both cannot be measured with the same yardstick. Though initially both were conceived as two sides of a coin but gradually one could understand the specific limitations. Due to this, Rural Sociology was recognized as an independent discipline. Let us take an example of the growing menace of vehicles and limited parking lots. This problem is common only in urban areas and does not affect the rural people. Each problem needs to be sorted out differently.

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Though general sociology deals with both urban and rural sociology, the latter is specific only to the rural or village life while general sociology also includes rural sociology as one of its branches of study.

• Rural Sociology and Urban Sociology

The rural and urban areas are distantly identified by the density of population in both the areas and also by major professions followed. The rural area is less dense and the profession is mainly agriculture. On the other hand, urban areas have more dense population and work is more industry based. However, both groups complement each other as one acts as a reference to the other. The urban areas are studied with reference to the rural and vice versa.

The lifestyle of both these areas can be studied by relating one to the other. The subject matter of urban and Rural Sociology is inter-linked and inter-dependent. Both these are in continuance or in consistency with each other. This means that life in the village and cities can be fully analysed and understood by their comparison. The urban areas can be related well and compared and contrasted with each other. Both the aspects are studied in relation to each other, contributing economically and socially to each other.

• Rural Sociology and Social Anthropology

Anthropology deals with the study of the human race, especially its origin, development, customs and beliefs. When we speak of social anthropology, we analyse all the aspects of the human race, i.e., the preventive societies and the behaviour of human beings. Their arrangement forms the essential aspects of social anthropology. The subject matter of sociology and anthropology is essentially overlapping and common. Both subjects study the same aspects of society and man, the interaction between man and his surrounding society. Though both these involve the same part of society, yet there is hairline difference between the two. Rural Sociology would involve study of the village life, people and their innovations in relation to man's behaviour in primitive society.

• Rural Sociology and Economics

Economics is the field of study that deals with money. All activities or aspects of work in society, related to generation of money, in cash or kind, is dealt with in economics. The needs and production in a society are also related to economics. Economics also studies the trends of demand and supply of commodities and explains how a balance between these two can be struck and maintained. The social and political factors greatly influence this balance. These factors need to be studied by the economist. It is observed that rural society also plays a definite role in logical economics.

Rural areas provide economy from agricultural produce and other small cottage industries which in a country like India contributes towards the country's economy. This has led to the development of a new field called rural economics. Rural economics deals with all the aspects of rural economy like how agriculturists can increase their production with the help of better agro-techniques and high quality seeds, how they can generate more employment by self-sustaining business and their limitations, all these new innovative ideas and techniques can be put into action by understanding the psychological attitude of the village people. Therefore, economics is closely related to Rural Sociology. It studies the basics of rural society, its people, their lives and all aspects related to them. Similarly, a rise in economic activities in rural areas also leave a great impact on its

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people's actions. For example, when the village becomes aware of different schemes, loan system and subsidies, it helps them to make best use of these facilities and draw benefits from them.

All peasants, labourers working in the fields of others, all other aspects which are characteristic of the villages, are covered in rural economics and are an inevitable part of Rural Sociology. Both the subjects are so deeply inter-twined that it is not possible to study one without referring to the other. The subjects are related to each other as two sides of the same coin, both being indispensable.

• Rural Sociology and Archaeology

Archaeology deals with both the ancient civilizations and the prehistoric civilizations. It is the science of carrying out excavations to find out more about ancient civilizations like how people lived, what kind of organization of villages they led and so on.

Having studied the above mentioned portion we can now conclude that Rural Sociology is a mixture of science and the arts subjects. Its components are of dual nature.

1.4 SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF RURAL SOCIOLOGY

The subject matter or the scope of rural sociology is not narrow, as revealed by the definitions, especially in those countries where the majority of the people reside in rural areas. The subject matter of rural sociology has been changing from time to time. They can be classified as under.

When we talk about rural sociology, we get to know that it is deeply interested in understanding the rural people and the social organization of the villages. Rural sociology studies various aspects of the society like social stratification, caste system, social institutions and many more. Rural sociologists are greatly involved in the betterment of the rural life and the sociologists are responsible of collecting data concerning the rural life and analyse them keeping in mind the development of the rural areas.

Further, the goal of the rural sociologist is to come in contact with the rural people and analyse their behaviour. They have to also assess the factors that determine the behaviour of the rural people.

Recently, Rural Sociology has taken up as independent study of the social sciences which has its own features and characteristics. They also possess their own characteristic ideology and viewpoints. According to Nelson, the subject matter of Rural Sociology is the assessment and account of the advancement of the numerous societies that exist under the purview of rural environment. Moreover, Bertrand too has considered Rural Sociology as the study of human relationships in the rural environment. Hence, this viewpoint stresses the importance of all social relationships that exist in a rural society, i.e. in the village.

There exists two schools of thought regarding the scope of Rural Sociology. The first school propounds that Rural Sociology offers only scientific knowledge of the villages and also provides a complex image of the villages. The second school of thought concerns itself with the study of rural-urban continuum, rural-urban contrast and also acts as a tool for bringing about rural reconstruction.

Check Your Progress

4. Why is it said that the techniques followed in Rural Sociology are mostly borrowed from other disciplines?
5. What is the objective approach?
6. State the difference between general sociology and rural sociology.
7. What does rural economy deal with?

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Despite the differences between the two schools of thought, there is one point of similarity between the two schools that is they both are of the view that Rural Sociology deals with the various aspects of rural life in a scientific and systematic manner. The scope of Rural Sociology can be summed up as follows.

1.4.1 Rural Social Organization

Social organization in rural and urban areas is the arrangement of people from different strata or levels. When we study the sociology of villages, we come across different dimensions of the rural society. We find that great importance and value is given to caste and class in rural India. In urban areas of course this impact is not so profound. Since the roots of rural India are found in agriculture, we find that agriculture forms the axis of all activities in villages.

Stratification or classification in rural India is based on two approaches. These are:

- Marxist approach
- Non-Marxist or Weberian approach

Marxists analyse society with reference to production. It is the historical approach which keeps in mind the factors related to production.

Weberian approach keeps in mind the concepts of wealth, power and prestige. In simple terms, wealth means the occupational category. It would include assets like real estate or any other ability to produce income or money. Power means the ability to dominate the course of events in life. Prestige means the style of living and the honour one has in life. All these variables are the factors which determine a person's position in society.

Whatever the criterion of stratification, it shows the inequality of society. This inequality is depicted in the form of class, status and power of people in all societies. Each society follows a pattern of inequality.

Forms of Social Stratification

- **Slavery:** Slavery refers to the owning of workers by the landlords. The slaves are supposed to do all the work for the owner/master just like a bonded labourer which is no longer practiced.
- **Caste:** Caste system is prevalent in India. Indian system has a wide and complex system of castes which is diverse in its belief, systems and culture. Each caste practices a different system of cultural activities and values.
- **Estate:** Estates are referred to as the feudal clusters having powers in their respective areas. These were found mostly in Europe, the United States and Asia. On similar lines, in India we found the Zamindari and the Jagirdari systems. In India, these systems of covers are extinct, however, the estate holders earlier had a lot of power and till today are the most powerful people.
- **Class:** Classes are the categories which have no firm division in societies. These are fluid in nature having no specific boundaries. Individuals are assigned a class on the basis of their achievements, social mobility, economic status, and contribution to society. In other words, a class is a large scale grouping of people who share common economic resources. The lifestyle is influential and it has a strong effect on the lifestyle of others. In India, the main classes that exist are:

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- o Upper class
- o Middle class
- o Working class or the lower class

According to Yogendra Singh, a noted Indian sociologist, caste is a major form of stratification. He writes, 'Sociologists who look across the cultural view of caste, have right from the beginning, associated it with an autonomous principle of stratification. The basis of which are institutionalized inequality, closure of social system in respect of social mobility, an elementary level of division of labour legitimized on ritual bases of reciprocity, and emphasis on quality (ritual purity or racial purity) rather than performance. In other words, caste is associated with an anonymous form of cultural system or worldview.'

Caste as the Major Form of Stratification

It is an inequality that exists in all the different communities. Caste structure is a phenomenon which is not a permanent feature, it keeps changing. According to Yogendra Singh, caste is not only a cultural phenomenon but also a structural one. When caste is considered as a structural phenomenon, we analyse it as a system of social organization, an institutionalized system of interaction among groups of people. This would include the concepts of marriage, occupation, division of labour, cultural norms and values and the performance of rituals based on the lines of purity and pollution.

The structural properties of caste include endogamy, hierarchy, caste and occupation, which have a direct influence on social stratification. The cultural aspect of stratification includes the value system.

Functions of Caste in Rural Society

The Indian society is dominated by the caste in different situations. The functions it performs are as follows:

- **Phases of life:** In all phases of life, from birth to death, one needs people of specific caste to perform particular functions. Different phases of life such as birth, tonsure, marriage, engagement and even death requires a Brahmin to perform various religious ceremonies. At every stage of life it is essential to have a Brahmin perform these rituals. In cities, the role of the Brahmin is somewhat ignored but it is definitely not in rural areas.
- **Exogamy and endogamy:** Marriage within one's *gotra* is called endogamy. This is strictly prohibited. Marriages have to take place outside one's own *gotra*. Exogamy which means marrying outside one's own village or *gotra* is practiced in rural areas as well. But in some tribal areas, if a person marries within his village, it is taken as a loss of status.
- **Caste associations:** Ghanshyam Shah, author of *Social Movements in India*, emphatically states that caste plays a decisive role in political matters. Researchers have maintained that the caste plays a very important role in rural India. Political decisions, even today, are governed by caste, though this may not be the case in urban India.

  With the Indian Constitution providing reservation provision for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the villages have been divided into two parts. The caste war has become multi-dimensional. Another category of caste has developed which is called as *avatar* by M. N. Srinivas. This has also influenced the hierarchical

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relations among the members of different castes. The caste system has become weak in some areas while it has become strong in others.

- **Occupational interdependence:** When the caste system began in ancient India, it was mainly based on division of labour. People were divided according to the work they did in order to carry out the smooth functioning of society. Also the money which came in, was entirely dependent on the Jajmani system. Jajmani system includes a system having jajmani or clients. These clients look for the services from the villages, i.e., the *kumbhar, nai, mochi, dhobhi* or even *chamar* and paid them in kind.

  This way one realized that each caste had a special role to play and was respected and valued for that. This led to an interdependence of castes. But today, that to in urban societies, such arrangements are missing. People today are moving away from rural roots and taking up professions according to their qualification and choice irrespective of what the family had been doing for years.

- **Caste is the mirror of rural society:** Villages are occupied by people of different castes. Mostly we find that each village has a majority of a particular caste. There are villages that are Brahmin villages or Jat villages.

- **Hierarchical set-up:** In the villages, caste set up dominates the social interaction. Caste forms a kind of pyramid of relations with the Brahmin occupying the top most position. The Rajput and Bania occupy the lower positions in the pyramid. This trend existed not only in villages of north India but in the south as well.

  According to A. R. Desai, 'Caste has fixed the psychology of the various social groups and has evolved such minutely graded levels of social distances, and superior-inferior relationships that the social structure looks like a gigantic hierarchical pyramid with a mass of untouchables at its base and a small stratum of elite, the Brahmins, almost unapproachable, at its apex.' The Hindu society is composed of hundreds of distinct self-contained caste societies piled one over the other.

- **Economy and caste:** The economy of rural areas is directly related to the caste dominant in that area. Even today, the traditional work or profession contributes to the income of that particular area. In Kashmir, we find that a lot of economy is generated by the handicraft industry. Even today, this is their major source of income like the previous years. The traditional work is still being done and providing economy to the area.

  However, a caste strongly dominates the economy pattern of a certain area. For example, in central Gujarat, the areas occupied by big landlords are now being replaced by the *patidars* as the dominant caste provides a source of belongingness and boosts the morale of the people.

- **Joint family system and caste:** The caste factor also determines the family structure. The nature of the family, i.e., joint or nuclear, is also determined by the caste structure. In rural India, caste is a cluster or group of joint families.

  In rural areas, one finds that the joint family system is still prevalent. Parents, brothers, families of brothers, all live together under the same roof. But with modernization and mobility, people have ventured out and so trends are changing now. By and large, we find that the system of joint families still exists in rural India.

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Change from Caste to Class System in Rural India

Social scientists have observed another trend in the rural areas. They are witnessing a transition from caste to class. There is definitely a close association between the two.

We find from the works of Pauline Kolenda, the author of *Caste in Contemporary India*, that the village caste system is changing fast into village class system.

In her study of the five hamlets of Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu, Kolenda brings out very vivid observations. She states that in a lot of villages, people have lost their small pieces of land. The reasons for this, she observed, were either some investment in business which eventually failed, some sold off their land to contest elections, while others sold it off to meet household expenses. The main losers were the Brahmins and Velalars while the Thevars, Kallars, and Nadars became the new landowners.

The urban people have started investing in land in the villages. The villagers are now losing their land. So this observation from Kanyakumari district clearly indicates that the caste system is soon fading while class system is establishing itself in rural areas.

Kolenda claims that in rural India, the caste system is being replaced by the class system. The class which is emerging is the middle class. The class changes take place when the youngsters of the villages move out of the villages and do well professionally in jobs. It is observable not only in south India but in the north as well, that a strong and large amount of middle class are emerging and engulfing the castes.

Factors for Transformation of Caste into Class in Rural Societies

The factors for the transformation of caste into class in rural societies are as follows:

- **Government policy:** According to Jan Breman, a Dutch sociologist, most of the policies of the government have gone in favour of the big farmers. Green Revolution, White Revolution, facilities of irrigation, electricity supply, and other facilities have benefitted the big farmers more. All policies mostly benefit the rich farmers since they have the resources to buy new and modern implements.

- **Correlation between caste and class:** Gail Omvedt, an American-born Indian scholar, strongly feels that there are feudal forces in the caste system and as a result of this, the zamindars and jagirdars have come out to be the capitalistic peasant. Breman and Kolenda say that the intermediate classes have become classes, while Omvedt observes that the former high castes have become higher classes.

- **Dominant class replaced:** M. N. Srinivas, who has done extensive work on the caste systems of India, gave the concept of dominant caste. Dominant caste are the lower caste people who start adopting the mannerisms of the higher caste and try to imitate them. But this concept is a rather old one and is losing its relevance in today's world. Dominant caste no longer exists in the present rural settings. The lower castes have been empowered with the help of various provisions of the Constitution.

  K. L. Sharma finds out the reason for this. He says, 'The idea of "dominant caste" or group dominance is based on certain assumptions, and since these are not found valid, group dominance tends to be a nightmare rather than a reality. The new power welders are not the same as they were in the past. However, quantitative difference between the old and the new power elites has been much.

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The basic difference between the two is in the fact that rank of a group as a determinant of elite position has withered away. Today, elites are an aggregation and not an active functioning primordial group as the members lack group homogeneity, equality or status and rank, and equal distribution of power and prestige.'

In simple words, it means that in the earlier times caste formed a very important part of the rural set up. With the changing times, the importance is getting undermined. Today, with increase in resources and opportunities, caste dominance is surely becoming less evident.

- **Capitalist mode of production:** The production in agriculture has undergone a great bloom post-independence. Modern techniques and technology have brought about an improvement in the agricultural production. The high yielding varieties of seeds and chemical fertilizers, which bring about a higher production are only within the reach of the rich and big farmers. Again this benefit goes to the big farmers irrespective of their caste.

1.4.2 Rural Social Institutions

P. B. Horton defines an institution as, 'An institution is an organized system of social relationships which embodies certain common values and procedures meets certain basic needs of society.' The system of civilization followed in rural places is same as followed in urban areas. Family, marriage relationships, relatives, all form the essential organs of society. The basic unit of sociology is institution. Institution is that aspect of society that does not change.

J. H. Fitcher has defined an institution as 'a relatively permanent structure of social patterns of roles and relations that people enacting certain sanctioned and unified ways for the purpose of satisfying basic social needs.' These institutions are everlasting. Men come and go while these institutions are permanent features of society.

Patterns of relationship revolve around status and roles of people forming the society. The needs which have to be fulfilled may vary in rural and urban areas.

Rural Institutions and Types

When we study rural institutions, we need to specifically analyse family, marriage, and kin (relatives and relations) as an essential part of the community. Family is given prime importance in the community. Family is also given prime importance in the village, much more than urban areas. In villages, people are identified through their families. There is no place of individualism. While in urban areas, since most people have come to the cities for jobs or business, they are more individualistic.

Let us now discuss the different aspects of social institutions of villages which are as follows:

- Ecology
- Family
- Marriage
- Religion

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1. Ecology

Ecology means the whole ecosystem, i.e., man and his relationship with his surrounding environment. It involves the interactions that man has with his environment. In villages, we find that life revolves around agriculture. Agriculture involves all the activities, the work, source of income, and employment of people.

We find that in the hilly areas, people live close to their farms while in plains, generally, the farms are far away from the houses. Another distinctive feature is that people belonging to same caste have their houses in close vicinity while those of different castes are placed far off.

Discussing about the ecology of villages, Irawati Karve, an Indian sociologist, speaks of villages in Maharashtra. She discusses three types of villages. These are:

- **Highly nucleated villages:** These villages are nucleated (isolated) from the fields as in Deccan plateau. The habitation area is clearly differentiated from cultivation area.

  Second type of village is found on the western coastline of Maharashtra. In this area, houses are placed all along the road, lengthwise. Houses are surrounded by fruit and coconut trees. Houses are fenced from all sides and have their own fruit trees. Cultivation in villages is of two types—horticulture and agriculture. Horticulture includes growing of fruits while agriculture involves growing crops, but that is done far away from the house.

  Third type of villages are found towards the north-western boundary of the Marathi-speaking region of Maharashtra. This region has the influence of the Satpura Mountains. This region has valleys in between mountains. Villages have a different and unique setting, having two or three huts clustered together.

  Similarly, each geographical area has a typical set-up of huts and habitation. In the hilly regions of Himachal Pradesh houses are scattered. The size of the houses are small, roofs are slanting and made of slates so as to overcome the cold during winters. Small doors and windows are attached to keep off the cold.

2. Rural Family

A typical rural family structure is based on the joint family system, wherein all the members stay together in one house with a common kitchen. Let us look at some of the main characteristics of the rural family:

- **Joint family:** The most important feature of the rural family structure is the joint family. As the term suggests, the 'joint family' includes the eldest male member of the family, who is looked up to as the head, his wife, children, parents, aunts, uncles, nephews, and sometimes other members as well. Not only do all the members stay under the same roof, they eat together too. The food is cooked in a common kitchen.
- **Great respect for women:** In the rural areas, women enjoy a lot of respect. Manu, the great law giver emphasized the fact that even God prefers to dwell in a place where women are respected. In rural society, men and women share the same work, which is why it is not unusual to find women working in the fields alongside the men. However, in the case of women belonging to very superior/ high castes, stepping out of the house and appearing before the general public, especially men, was taboo.

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- **Religiousness/duty/discipline:** Rural families are founded on spirituality and religion. The members are governed by religious principles. The focus is always on duty, which is why, there are rarely any conflicts as each one performs his/her duties without questioning. The elders are the role models for the younger ones. Nobody bothers about rights. Family members fulfill their duties with great sincerity and discipline. As a result, general harmony and peace prevails in the house.
- **Homogeneity/Harmony:** Rural families function as homogeneous units. All members maintain cordial and harmonious relations with one another. Relationships are characterized by mutual cooperation and affection. The families are close-knit and homogeneous, with each member lending support to the other.
- **Mutual affection/love:** In rural Indian families, which are mostly agrarian, all members contribute to the income of the house by doing their share of work. With such economic cooperation, it is not difficult to ensure that each family member, including the children is properly looked after. The young children take the cattle out to graze, while women manage the kitchen and household chores and at times help out in the fields too. The men folk handle all the heavy work, such as tilling, maintaining the house, and protecting the fields and cattle from wild animals.
- **Family honour:** In rural areas, the name and honour of the family has to be preserved and protected at all times. Family honour is given top priority, and is the most important thing for all. Since all members of the family together function as one single unit, the slightest threat to the honour of any one member is seen as a threat to the entire family's name and honour. There is a group/community feeling, which is very strong. The head of the family ensures that no member does anything that would bring disgrace or a bad name to the family.
- **Hospitality**: Guests are treated like gods in the Indian rural setup. They are welcomed with open arms, greatly respected, provided with the best of food and comforts and showered with affection. This concept of hospitality is very typical of any Indian rural household.
- **Family discipline/control:** The 'family' has a very strong hold over all the members. It imposes social responsibility on the members and ensures that they not only follow the rules and regulations set by the elders but also discharge their individual duties properly. Therefore, the family plays a significant role in ensuring law and order. It is because of the control of the family and its elders that members abide by social laws and respect the rules of the society. The family is a social, religious and economic unit. The family's status determines the social status of its individual members. No rules are broken as these form the strong foundation of the family structure.
- **Customs and traditions**: In rural society, customs and traditions are highly valued and followed sincerely. People adhere to traditions even when times change and there is advancement in science and technology. That is why, we find that rural families are not as impacted by technological changes as their urban counterparts. In the family too, all the relationships are governed by age-old traditions. Family relationships are maintained and preserved as they are founded on traditions.
- **Patriarchal system**: The father is the head of the family in the rural Indian setup. He has the last say in all the economic and social matters. In the absence of the father, it is the eldest male member who is considered the head of the family, taking all major decisions. His authority is not questioned by anyone. The children, no matter how old they are, always obey the father's orders.

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- **Discipline in family:** In rural families, there is a great degree of discipline and a feeling of sharing. There is a sense of duty towards the family head. Even marriages are fixed by the elders.
- **Deity worship**: In rural India, it is a common practice to worship ancestors on specific days of the year, such as 'Pitripaksh'. Special ceremonies are held during these days. Idol worship is popular. It is believed by the rural folk that one can live a happy life only with the blessings of the gods, especially deities like Lord Shiva, Goddess Parvati and Lord Ganesha. Mass participation with immense enthusiasm is seen in these religious ceremonies and festivals.

Relationship in Rural Family

The main patterns of relationship in rural family are as follows:

- **Male family head:** The eldest male member is the head of the family, whose name the family bears and who enjoys a lot of authority. The responsibility of the entire family rests with him. Even the property is in his name and without consulting him, no important decisions are taken, even in matters like marriage.
- **Marital life:** When it comes to the relationship between husband and wife, in most rural families, especially the middle class, both enjoy equal rights. In the poor families, both the husband and wife go out to work and the income is usually shared. Generally, the husband is considered superior and his orders are expected to be followed by the wife. However, the wife does get to express her opinions and have her say in matters. There is mutual respect for each other. Women are considered to be Goddess Lakshmi personified, that is, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. Therefore, they are respected.
  - In the upper caste families, the women observe *purdah*, that is, they do not show their faces to outsiders. Even in the poor rural families, the women generally observe *purdah* in front of the elder/senior males. While in most households, the wives are financially dependent on the husbands, if women do earn some money they have the option of keeping their earnings with them, or handing it over to their husbands or keeping just a part of it with them. Husbands take care of all the needs of the wives and children. The wives, in turn, perform all household chores and respect their husbands, so much so that they do not even call them by their names. It is a common practice for wives to eat only after the husbands and the rest of the family have eaten.
- **Relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law:** In the past, the mother-in-law enjoyed the supreme position amongst the women in the house. Her authority was never questioned. But things are changing for the better now. As the eldest woman in the family she still enjoys the respect of the daughters-in-law but she is no longer a figure to be feared. Gone are the days when the daughter-in-law used to obey all the instructions given by the mother-in-law without asking any questions. Today, even though the daughters-in-law may touch the feet of the mothers-in-law as a mark of respect, the relationship is more casual. Instances of cruelty towards the daughters-in-law on the part of the mothers-in-law have greatly reduced, giving way to cordial relationships.
- **Relationship between father-in-law and daughter-in-law:** In rural areas, the daughter-in-law respects the father-in-law just like her own father. She touches his feet every morning, as a sign of respect. *Purdah* is also observed in some

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areas, where the daughter-in-law avoids the presence of her father-in-law, even though she takes care of all his needs—providing food, doing his laundry, etc.

- **Parenting:** In rural India, parents take care of the needs of their children and bring them up well, providing them good education, food and clothes. However, the sons are given more freedom than the daughters. While the boys help their fathers in the fields and lend a hand in all the heavy work, the girls assist their mothers in household chores and also carry food for the men of the house working in the fields. While most are allowed to go to school and study, the practice of getting them married at a young age still prevails. By and large, the relationship between parents and children is quite cordial except in the rare cases of property disputes.
- **Relationship between husband's brother and his wife:** Mostly the relationship is very cordial. The wife and husband's elder brother have a very formal relationship. She treats him like her own elder brother and respects him like the father-in-law. She even observes *purdah* in his presence. In the case of the younger brother, the relationship is not so formal. Rather it is one of affection and informality. He can meet the brother's wife at any time and she does not observe *purdah* in his presence. It is not uncommon for a woman, following her husband's death, to marry his younger brother. The practice is encouraged in many communities.
- **Pathetic condition of widow:** In rural India, while the wife is regarded and respected like Goddess Lakshmi, on becoming a widow, she is considered inauspicious. Widowhood is a curse for women in rural India. Widows are not allowed to participate in any religious or auspicious ceremonies. They are expected to wear white always and abstain from using cosmetics or anything to beautify themselves. In many households, they are treated as maids. Since they are financially dependant on their husband's family, their condition is rather pathetic. Some of the narrow-minded communities believe that widowhood is a curse for the woman, from the Gods.
- **Illegitimate relationships:** While the marital vow is considered very sacrosanct in rural areas, sometimes on the death of the wife, the man keeps another woman without marrying her. There are cases where even in the presence of a wife, the man keeps another woman without marrying her. The second woman is also considered as his wife and the man provides for her upkeep. The second woman may or may not belong to the same caste. There are instances of wives being bought too. The practice of keeping a woman as a wife without actually marrying her is not uncommon in rural areas, nor is it considered wrong.

Joint Family

Joint family is a group of kins of several generations, ruled by a head, in which there is joint residence, hearth, and property and whose members are bound with each other by mutual obligations. The chief characteristics of the joint family are common residence, common kitchen, joint property, and common worship. This will be clear from the following definitions of the joint family.

- Iravati Karve believes, 'A joint family is a group of people who generally live under one roof, who eat food cooked at one hearth, who hold property in common, who participate in common worship and are related to each other as some particular type of kindred.'

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- Julius Jolly says, 'Not only parents and children, brothers and step-brothers live on the common property, but it may sometimes include ascendants, descendants, and collaterals upto many generations'.
- I. P. Desai says, 'We call that household a joint family which has greater generation depth (i.e., three or more) than the nuclear family and the members of which are related to one another by property, income and mutual rights and obligations.'

Advantages of Joint Family

The chief advantages of joint family are as follows:

- **Economic advantages:** The joint family system has proved to be a very advantageous institution from the economic viewpoint. It prevents property from being divided. Land is protected from extreme sub-division and fragmentation. When divided into many small pieces, land becomes an uneconomic holding. Besides keeping the land intact, the joint family also assists in economic production. In a joint agriculturist family, the male members do work such as furrowing, sowing, and irrigation. Women assist at the harvest. Children graze the cattle, and collect fuel and manure. In this way, cooperation from all the members helps to save money which would otherwise be paid to labourers. In the rural areas, the joint families are such in which men, women, and children collaborate. Even among the middle and upper classes, the family can obtain capital and reliable assistance from the joint family for establishing and expanding a business.
- **Protection of members:** Jawaharlal Nehru was much in favour of the joint family. Nehru had said that the system of joint family is an insurance for the family members which carried a guarantee for those who are mentally and physically weak. In times of crisis, the joint family can provide assistance to the children, the women, the old, the insane, the widows, and the helpless. The joint family is capable of providing much assistance at such emergencies as pregnancy, sickness, and if a person dies, his wife, and children are looked after properly in the joint family. In a joint family, a place is provided for all members to which they can retreat at all times and their honour, wealth, and prosperity are protected collectively.
- **Initiation of good qualities:** The joint family system makes possible the idea of development of the good qualities of man. In the care of elders, the undesirable, and anti-social tendencies of the young are checked, they are prevented from straying from their path, and they learn to exercise self-control. In the joint family, young men and women learn the lesson of generosity, patience, service, co-operation, and obedience. A sense of sacrifice replaces selfishness. All members learn to obey family control and to respect those older than themselves.
- **Cooperation and economic help:** The joint family fosters cooperation and economic help to an extent achieved by few. A sense of cooperation exists among the members. There can be much economy in expenditure. The joint family can be rightly called an ideal centre of cooperation and mutual aid.
- **Socialism in money matters:** According to Sir Henry Maine, a joint family is like a corporation, the trustee of which is the father. He is known as *Karta*. D. N. Majumdar has written, 'The *karta*, of the joint or extended family has the right to make the decisions for his family, he is the working head, the judge and the jury, he decides family quarrels, he is the political head as every family has a place and

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is represented by the head of the family in the social, ceremonial, and community activities, and in the local Gram Panchayat.' According to Jathar and Berry, everyone in a joint family earns according to his capabilities but obtains according to his needs and in this way to a large extent achieves the socialistic ideal; from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.

Disadvantages of Joint Family

The following are the main disadvantages of the joint family system:

- **Hindrance in the development of personality:** The most glaring defect of the joint family system is the hindrance in the development of the personalities of its members. In the joint family, the head is the absolute ruler. He is usually the oldest member of the family who looks after and treats men and women as children even when they attain adulthood. In this way there is very little opportunity for the fostering of individual autonomy or self-dependence.
- **Deplorable condition of women:** The bad condition of women is also a major defect in its disintegration. In a joint family, the daughter-in-law does not get an opportunity to develop her personality. She looks after her children. She hardly ever meets her husband during the day and even when he returns late at night, he gratifies his sexual desire with her and falls asleep. There is no limit to the injustice done by mother-in-law, and the other relatives do everything to add to that suffering. In some cases, this oppression is so inhuman and unbearable that the women often commit suicide.
- **Domestic violence:** If the daughters-in-law contradict the bad behaviour or if their husbands speak or act in their favour, the house becomes a battle ground. When the daughter-in-law retaliate to their mother-in-law, they are abused, and even beaten by their husbands who are provoked by their mothers. Hatred and jealousy between the wives of brothers can lead to a conflict between brothers which can assume dangerous proportions.

  There is continuous strife and fighting over the doings of children. Most of the time of the adult members is consumed in finding solution to petty problems.
- **Laziness:** Due to common responsibility, many people take their minds off their work and become completely lazy. In this state, the condition of those who literally break their backs and those who are very lazy is, more or less, the same. Hence, laziness is encouraged. When a person can eat comfortably without exerting himself, he is unlikely to indulge in effort and hard work. The wives of the hard working people tell them to desist from such toil as they do not benefit from it. Mostly, in the joint family it happens that some people have to exhaust themselves while the lazy ones lead a life of utter lethargy. There is no dearth of such people in big and rich joint families whose entire routine consists of eating, sleeping, and begetting children.
- **Large number of children:** In a joint family the responsibility for the upbringing and education, of children is shared. Thus, no individual considers it necessary to lay stress on controlling procreation. In the family, no distinction in the status of the family member is made on the basis of their respective earnings and the corresponding number of children. The offspring of one member is treated in the same way as that of the others irrespective of the level of earning and the number of children that one has. In this way, in a joint family, no direct benefit is acquired

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by any individual by family planning or by earning more. Consequently, people lose much of their family planning ideology.

- **Poverty:** As a consequence of almost daily strife, the bad condition of women, absolute rule, lack of responsibility and blind procreation, the economic condition of the joint family becomes very unenviable. If the conflict is strong enough to bring about division of land and property the condition becomes even worse. The property of the family, being jointly owned is sometimes allowed to go waste and it is gradually lost through constant neglect.
- **Other problems:** In addition to the above-mentioned major shortcomings, the joint family system is further blemished by many other minor defects. Family strife leads to litigation. Customs and traditions are strictly adhered to in the joint family and superstition reigns supreme because the guiding hand is that of the oldest member. Due to the strict administration of the old men, the younger people do not gain self-confidence and self-dependence, and they fail to adopt new currents of thought. Thus, the disadvantages of the joint family far outweigh the advantages. Consequently, the joint family is in fact, becoming disorganized. It is impossible to save the institution of joint family from disorganization, though its advantages can, with efforts, be reinstituted in novel form in small families.

Role of New Social Legislation

In India, joint families have been influenced by certain new social legislations. These have some direct bearing on the characteristic features of joint family, joint habitation, joint kitchen, joint property, and the authority of the head. The following are the major ones among the social legislation:

- **Hindu Married Women's Right to Separate Residence and Maintenance Act:** This legislation was enacted in 1946. According to this Act, under specific conditions a wife can demand alimony while living separately from her husband.
- **Hindu Marriage Act:** According to para 13 of this Act, any husband and wife, who have been married either before or after the enactment of this legislation can, under specific conditions, apply to the court for divorce. This law was enacted in 1955.
- **Hindu Succession Act:** This Act became a law in 1956. According to this, the daughter was given equal rights to the property of the father and the women also got the right to dispose off, mortgage, and use property in any manner they pleased.

The above mentioned Acts or legislations have influenced the solidarity of the joint family. As a result of the Hindu Marriage Act, the number of divorces are increasing. Earlier, the women silently suffered many injustices and outrages. In joint families the status of women was extremely low. Sometimes the mother-in-law behaved badly towards her daughter-in-law. Their husbands also treated them in the same way. Now having got the support of the law, women have revolted against this oppression which is leading to a disorganization of the joint family. Upon being maltreated they can now leave their husbands, live separately, and demand money from them in order to meet their expenditures. This provision has given a sharp blow to the joint family system.

Another feature of the joint family is the joint property. The Hindu Succession Act has influenced it adversely. Now that women have the right to sell their property, and the girls too share equally in the property of their father, it is almost impossible to maintain the family property conjointly. Hence, the result is that the joint families are

disintegrating at a rapid rate. Modern legislation has put an end to male ascendency. This too has profoundly influenced the organization of the joint family. The daughters-in-law in the joint family come from other families. Thus, it is obvious that they should resent having to give up their own pleasure for the well-being of the family. Earlier, they had to suffer silently the doings of their husbands, but now having got equal rights in almost all respects, they can fight for their rights. As a result of modern legislation, the women whose husbands earn more can now force their husbands to break off from the joint family and set up an independent establishment. The parents-in-law also realize their power. The husbands too cannot behave indiscriminately with them. They also have the same rights over the children as their husbands. Due to all these reasons even small misunderstandings can result in a situation where separation can take place. Actually, the causes of the disorganization of the joint family are not constitutional but mainly social. But there is no doubt in the fact that the present legislation has also played a part in its disorganization.

3. Rural Marriages

Marriages in India are mostly arranged by parents and elders. The boy and girl meet each other with the family consent. These days youngsters choose their life partners themselves. This trend is common only in cities. In rural areas it has remained unchanged.

Patterns and Restrictions

In rural India, marriages typically take place in two patterns:

- Village exogamy
- *Gotra* exogamy

In village exogamy, marriages take place outside one's own village. These marriages are the most common, wherein the boy and girl who are to marry must not belong to the same village. *Gotra* exogamy means that the boy and girl who are to marry must not belong to the same *gotra* (clan). In villages, marriages take place between boys and girls from different villages and different clans (gotras), but never from different castes. The bride and the groom must belong to the same caste. Inter-caste marriages are uncommon in rural India and never encouraged.

Marriage between cousins does not take place at all. But in southern India, certain areas do witness such alliances. There are instances of hypergamy (when a high-caste boy marries a girl from a lower caste) and also hypogamy (when a low-caste boy marries a girl from high caste). Hypergamy cases are more common than hypogamy cases.

This is because, villagers believe that the village from which a girl has been accepted is lower in status than their own. Therefore, if A is a girl from village X who has got married to a boy from village Y, then B, a girl from village Y, will not be easily accepted as a bride for any boy from village X. The status and reputation of a family is given a lot of importance in rural societies, especially when it comes to match making. But slowly and steadily, the focus is shifting to the competence and capability of the boy instead of the family's status. Earlier, even distance was a criterion for choosing a match. While a distance of about 5 to 10 miles was taken to be comfortable, anything less than 40 miles was never considered. But this criteria varies from village to village and community to community. For some families, no matchmaking is done within 100 miles of the village. Mostly, marriages are arranged by the elders of the family—father or grandfather—and their decision is taken as final. The boy and the girl have little say in the matter.

Stages and Steps of Marriage

The marriage ceremony in rural India is a long and complicated affair involving several steps and rituals. India is a huge country with different cultures and rituals. Therefore, the customs associated with weddings also differ from place to place. Each region has a different set of ceremonies.

Some common steps involved in a typical wedding in rural India are as follows:

- Search for a suitable groom/bride
- Formal engagement/betrothal
- Wedding preparation
- Reception (of groom/baraat and the bride)
- Consummation of marriage

(i) Search for Suitable Groom

The families of boys and girls of marriageable age look for prospective matches within their own caste but definitely not in the same *gotra* or clan. The hunt may take them outside their own village. The match is finalized by the eldest member of the family.

(ii) Engagement/Betrothal

This is a formal ceremony, like a pre-wedding event. Rings are exchanged between the prospective bride and groom. Gifts are also exchanged between the two families, and the date of the wedding is finalized.

(iii) Wedding Preparation

The formal day of the wedding is announced, invites are sent and preparations begin in earnest. On the day of the wedding, many ceremonies take place, some of which are as follows:

- ***Lagan***: The ceremonies begin on the auspicious time. The priest comes and starts the ceremony.
- ***Sehrabandi***: The groom dresses up (usually wearing a shervani) and wears a head gear with a veil of flowers, which covers his face. This is called the *sehra*.
- ***Ghurchari***: Once the groom is ready, the family leaves for the bride's house on a mare. This is called *ghurchari*, a process of climbing onto a mare. The whole marriage party or group moves in a procession, called 'Barat', along with the groom on the horse, to the bride's house.
- ***Milani***: Once the *barat* reaches the bride's house, the milani takes place. This ceremony involves a meeting between the fathers and mothers of the bride and groom respectively. The bride's family gives gifts to the groom's family after garlanding them.

(iv) Reception of Barat

The whole *barat* or procession is received by the bride's family. The groom is welcomed by the bride's mother, who performs a prayer at the door and guides the groom into the house. In some places, she pulls the groom's nose and brings him in. After this the other ceremonies take place. The auspicious fire is lit around which the '*pheras*' take place. This ceremony is the most important and involves the bride and groom taking the marital vows while doing seven rounds of the holy fire. The groom applies *sindoor* or vermillion

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on the bride's forehead. With this action, the marriage is considered complete. The groom also ties the *mangalsutra* around the bride's neck—the holy thread which signifies the marriage. Once all these ceremonies are over, and the *barat* is served an elaborate feast, the groom leaves the bride's house along with his bride/wife. This ceremony is called 'Vidai'. All the relatives of the bride hug her and send her off with tears in their eyes.

(v) Reception of Bride in Bridegroom's Village

The *barat* returns to the village along with the bride. A number of ceremonies take place in the groom's house as well.

- ***Dwar rokna*:** In this ceremony, the groom's sisters stop their brother from entering the house with his wife, until and unless he fulfills their demand for some gift. Only when the brother gives money or some other gift to the sister(s) is he allowed to enter.
- ***Mukh dikhana:*** Once the bride enters the house, the groom's mother welcomes her by performing a welcome ceremony, and then arranges a *mukh dikhai*. This is a function in which all the women of the village come and see the bride's face by lifting her veil or *ghoonghat*. They place money in her lap, one by one, as a welcome gift.
- ***Kangan khelna:*** After the *mukh dikhai* is over, the women of the family gather all the relatives together and arrange a game to be played by the newly-weds. In a huge pan containing a mixture of milk, water and rose petals, a finger ring of the groom is dropped in. Both the bride and groom are asked to locate the ring, whoever succeeds is declared the winner. Then another game is played where the groom holds the ring in his fist and the bride tries to force open the fist. The same is repeated with the bride. The bride and the groom are asked to untie the *kangana*, which is tied to their wrists. All this while, a lot of jokes are exchanged. There is a lot of singing, dancing and merry making. Sometimes, the younger brother of the groom (if he is small) or his nephew, comes and sits in the lap of the bride demanding some sweet. The bride offers him a *ladoo* before taking him off her lap. This is supposed to bring her luck and make her capable of bearing a male child.

(vi) Visit to Temple

Once all these ceremonies are done the bride and groom are taken to the temple(s) in the village to seek the blessings of the deities.

(vii) Gauna

This is the final step of the marriage, the time when the bride finally goes to the groom's house and starts living with him as his wife. In olden days the brides and grooms were rather young— kids who hardly understood the implications of marriage —and so the bride continued to live at her parents' house after the marriage ceremony. Once she became older, her parents fixed a date and sent a message to the groom's family. The girl would then dress up in ceremonial attire and be bedecked with jewellery. She would be allowed to accompany her groom (who comes to fetch her) to his house on the *gauna* day.

The bride's parents shower her and the groom with gifts—cash, clothes, jewellery and household items. The couple is given a warm send-off by the bride's parents, friends

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and other villagers. Once the bride and groom reach the groom's house, the women of the groom's village gather to welcome the bride, sing songs, and sit around to see the gifts that the bride's parents have given her. The groom's sister(s) are allowed to take anything they fancy from among the gifts brought by the bride. This is how, the bride finally comes to her husband's house.

1.5 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- India is a country with rural or village area covering over 70 per cent of the total area. Villages are predominant in our country as they effect the country's economic and social conditions.
- Development starts from the smallest or lowest level in villages which develop to form towns, which gradually transforms into cities, and then the metropolitans.
- Rural Sociology means the systematic and scientific study of the people living in a country or the village areas.
- Rural Sociology is a science that originated in the United States of America. It is an authentic American creation. It was in the United States that the basic infrastructure of Rural Sociology was developed and initiated for.
- It was in 1908 that President Theodore Roosevelt created the Country Life Commission (CLC). The purpose of this Commission was to find out the problems faced by farm families and document them by launching investigations nationwide.
- Rural Sociology is a branch of sociology dealing with all the different aspects of village life. Since sociology falls under the category of social sciences, rural sociology is also taken as a subject under social studies.
- Empiricism refers to the method of conducting experiments so as to reach a particular conclusion.
- Though general sociology deals with both urban and rural sociology, the latter is specific only to the rural or village life while general sociology includes also rural sociology as one of its branches of study.
- The rural and urban areas are distantly identified by the density of population in both the areas and also by major professions followed.
- When we talk about, rural sociology, we get to know that it is keenly interested in understanding the rural people and the social organization of the villages. Social organization in rural and urban areas is the arrangement of people from different strata or levels.
- Jajmani system includes a system having jajmani or clients. These clients look for the services from the villages, i.e., the *kumbhar*, *nai*, *mochi*, *dhobhi* or even *chamar* and paid them in kind.
- The caste factor also determines the family structure. The nature of the family, i.e., joint or nuclear is also determined by the caste structure. In rural India, caste is a cluster or group of joint families.
- M. N. Srinivas, who has done extensive work on the caste systems of India, gave the concept of dominant caste. Dominant caste are the lower caste people who start adopting the mannerisms of the higher caste and try to imitate them.

Check Your Progress

8. Name the forms of social stratification.
9. What is the Jajmani system?
10. What are the chief characteristics of the joint family?
11. What are the two kinds of marriages that take place in India?

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- The most important feature of the rural family in India is the practice of joint family system.
- Joint family is a group of kins of several generations, ruled by a head, in which there is joint residence, hearth, and property and whose members are bound with each other by mutual obligations.
- The joint family fosters cooperation and economic help to an extent achieved by few. A sense of cooperation exists among the members.
- The first kind is village exogamy and the second is *gotra* exogamy. In village exogamy, the boy and the girl who are to be married must not be from the same village; and in the *gotra* exogamy, the boy and the girl marrying must not be from a single clan but must belong to different clans.
- *Phere* means going round the sacred fire amidst chanting of the sacred mantras by the bride and the bridegroom: tied together, that is, coupled.
- In India, since time immemorial, it has been observed that the peasant has been poor and always depends on others, sometimes the zamindar, the moneylender, or the government.

1.6 KEY TERMS

- **Rural Sociology:** Rural Sociology means the systematic and scientific study of the people living in a country or the village areas.
- **Empiricism:** Empiricism refers to the method of conducting experiments so as to reach a particular conclusion.
- **Anthropology:** Anthropology deals with the study of the human race, especially its origin, development, customs and beliefs.
- **Social organization:** Social organization in rural and urban areas is the arrangement of people from different strata or levels.
- **Dominant caste:** Dominant caste are the lower caste people who start adopting the mannerisms of the higher caste and try to imitate them.
- **Joint family:** Joint family is a group of kins of several generations, ruled by a head, in which there is joint residence, hearth, and property and whose members are bound with each other by mutual obligations.

1.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Rural Sociology means the systematic and scientific study of the people living in a country or the village areas.
2. Rural sociology is a science that originated in the United States of America. It is an authentic American creation.
3. The purpose of this Commission was to find out the problems faced by farm families and document them by launching investigations nationwide.
4. Rural Sociology draws its content from general sociology, urban sociology, social anthropology, history, political science, and also economics. So the techniques followed in Rural Sociology are mostly borrowed from other disciplines.

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5. Objective approach means the ability to record things or observations as they actually are. This involves the clear study of facts and is unbiased.
6. Though general sociology deals with both urban and rural sociology, the latter is specific only to the rural or village life while general sociology includes also rural sociology as one of its branches of study.
7. Rural economics deals with all the aspects of rural economy. How agriculturist can increase their production with the help of better agro-techniques and high quality seeds. How they can generate more employment by self-sustaining business and their limitations.
8. The forms of social stratification are:
   - Slavery
   - Caste
   - Estate
   - Class
9. Jajmani system includes a system having jajmani or clients. These clients look for the services from the villages, i.e., the *kumbhar, nai, mochi, dhobhi* or even *chamar* and paid them in kind.
10. The chief characteristics of the joint family are common residence, common kitchen, joint property, and common worship.
11. The first kind is village exogamy and the second is *gotra* exogamy. In village exogamy, the boy and the girl who are to be married must not be from the same village; and in the *gotra* exogamy, the boy and the girl marrying must not be from a single clan but must belong to different clans.

1.8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What does the study of rural sociology include?
2. State why rural sociology is taken as a subject under social studies.
3. Differentiate between social anthropology and rural sociology.
4. Who are the dominant caste people?
5. List the characteristics of the rural family.
6. What is a joint family?
7. Write a note on the role of new legislations that have influenced joint families.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss in detail the meaning of the term 'Rural Sociology'. Also discuss the emergence of Rural Sociology as an academic discipline.
2. Evaluate the nature of Rural Sociology.
3. 'Sociology has an objective approach.' Explain.
4. What are the similarities between Rural Sociology and other fields of study?
5. Explain the scope and significance of Rural Sociology.
6. Discuss the different forms of rural social institutions.

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1.9 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 2 RURAL SOCIETY AND RURAL SOCIAL INSTITUTION

Structure

2.0 Introduction
2.1 Unit Objectives
2.2 Rural Society and its Features
2.3 Rural-Urban Differences and Continuum
  2.3.1 Urban Influence on Rural Life
  2.3.2 Folkways and Urban Continuum
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  2.4.1 Caste System
  2.4.2 Religion
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  2.5.2 Indian Villages during the Buddhist Era
  2.5.3 Village System in Mauryan Period
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  2.5.5 Significance of Village Studies
  2.5.6 Some Village Studies in India
2.6 Summary
2.7 Key Terms
2.8 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
2.9 Questions and Exercises
2.10 Further Reading

2.0 INTRODUCTION

India, being an agricultural country finds villages at the top of its priority list. Rural society includes all the people living in the villages. The socio-cultural environment of the village along with the norms, way of life and traditions followed in rural areas form the basis for the rural social life.

Rural society is characterized by a homogeneity in social, cultural and economic aspects of village life, where people lead almost the same kind of life with simple dressing and food habits, culture and traditions. Family is an important unit in these societies where the joint family system is still preferred. There is lack of individuality in these societies and there are hardly any turmoil amongst the members of the society. A society is never static, it keeps changing. Similarly, a rural society too undergoes a series of changes due to development at a great speed. In this unit, you will be acquainted with the features of the rural society, the differences between rural and urban areas, the institution of family, caste, religion and economy, and the features of village studies.

2.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Describe the rural society and discuss its features
- Analyse the rural-urban differences and continuum

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- Evaluate the institution of family, caste system, religion and economy
- Discuss the various features of village studies

2.2 RURAL SOCIETY AND ITS FEATURES

A rural society is a society which is thinly populated. Agriculture is the main occupation of villagers. People living in rural societies lead a very simple life with simple traditions and culture surrounded by a natural environment. There is homogeneity in their professions, ways of living, dress and traditions. In such societies, the rate of change is very slow as there is lack of facilities like transportation, technology and communication.

Little Community is a group of people inhabiting a definite locality bound together by the feeling of oneness. E. S. Bogardus defines Little Community as 'a social small group with some degree of "we feeling" and living in a given area'. David Osborn and Martin Henry Neumeyer has defined community as a group of people living in a contiguous geographic area, having common centres of interest and activities, and functioning together in the chief concerns of life. Thus, in the definition of Little Community, greater emphasis is laid on unity of its regional aspect. The community includes the whole life of its members and is marked by the expression of community sentiment. It is the first sentiment which joins a group of people with either the same community and is also the first to differentiate 'the people belonging to different communities'.

Thus, community sentiment may be defined as the feeling of unity among the members of a community. In absence of such a unity, no group can claim to be a 'community'. Community sentiment naturally arises among the 'people who share common ways of living and live together for a long period.' People who speak a common language or share a common goal or have common interest, naturally possess a feeling of oneness which binds the members of the community. The 'people living in a village form a community. They take part in all important occasions which occur in a neighbour's home. They are 'present when marriages, deaths, births take place in any family'. They celebrate the festivals together and jointly face the calamities which descend upon the village.' Thus, community sentiment provides the following three elements:

- **We-feeling:** The most important element in the community sentiment is the 'we-feeling'. As a result of this feeling, individuals consider themselves a part of the group and empathize with the pain or pleasure of any section of the group.
- **Role-feeling:** In a community, individuals have their own status and they must play their role for the benefit of the community at large. People should shoulder their responsibility towards the community and consider themselves as a part of the community.
- **Sense of dependency:** In a community, individuals believe themselves to be dependent upon the community and deny themselves existence separate from the community. Due to this dependence, they abide by the regulations which the society imposes on them. It may be noted that class consciousness differs from community sentiment. MacIver brings out this distinction as, 'If the latter admits no grades, the former is rooted in the principle of hierarchy and the sentiment of class is essentially a sentiment of disparity'. Although it unites those who feel distinct from other classes, it unites them primarily because they feel distinct. Above all, it unites the superior with the inferior. Hence, class sentiment involves entirely different attitudes with respect to one another within the hierarchical system.

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Following are the features of a rural society:

- **Family:** Family is the basic unit of Indian social structure. It has an important place in the rural society. Apart from performing various basic and important tasks, the family is also involved in socialization, social control and performs various economic activities. The family controls the behaviour of the individuals. It controls the religious activities of the family members in the rural society. Another characteristic feature of the rural society is the joint family system. Generally, the father is the head of the family and is also responsible for maintaining the discipline among members. He manages the affairs of the family. It is the family, which introduces the members to the customs, traditions and culture of the society.
- **Agriculture is the main occupation:** Agriculture is the main occupa- tion of the rural people and forms the basis of rural economy. Farmers need to perform various agricultural activities for which they need the cooperation and help from others. Usually, these helpers are from their families. Thus, the mem- bers of the entire family share agricultural activities.
- **Caste-system:** The second most important feature of rural society is the caste system. Caste system in the rural areas determine the status, occupation and social position of the rural people in India. The caste system is based on endogamy and sometimes has common economic position or linkage. In rural society, social stratification is a traditional characteristic which is based on caste. In rural areas, mobility is rigid as all the occupations are based on caste. Shifting from one occupation to another is difficult as caste is determined by birth. Thus, caste hierarchy determines the social status of the rural people.
- **Social solidarity:** The degree of social solidarity is greater in villages as com- pared to urban areas. Common experiences, purposes, customs and traditions form the basis of unity in the villages.
- **Homogeneity of population:** The village communities are homogenous in nature. Most of the inhabitants are connected with agriculture and its allied occupations, though there are people belonging to different castes, religions and classes.
- **Internal rural organization:** Internal organizations govern and determine the social and individual life of the rural people in India. Normally all villages have Panchayats, head of which is elected with the consent of all the adult members of the village. Generally, there is a village Panchayat, a village Nyay Panchayat, Panchayat of different castes and certain voluntary groups of different social, religious and political organizations.
- **Religion and religious organization:** Religion is an important unit of the village social structure. Worship of the supernatural power and deities form an important part of village life. Villages have their own gods and goddesses. Social functions are also mostly based on religion. Religion plays a veritable agency of social control in the countryside. Rural people are mostly god-fearing. This fear motivates them to lead a pious life. Therefore, religion exercises social control over the villagers through customs, traditions and conventions. In rural India, fairs and festivals are organized on a large scale in the name of religion.

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- **Economic system:** In village society different castes have different occupations and functions. In other words their economic activities are determined by their social conditions. For example the social group or the caste known as '*dhobi*' are responsible for washing clothes only; no one from other caste can take up the profession of washing clothes. This system is still stringently followed in villages though it is not the same in the urban areas.
- **Political life:** In rural India, the political behaviour of every individual is mostly governed by religious considerations. Mostly the political leaders launch their election campaigns from the religious places in the villages. Politicians seek the cooperation of the religious leaders to win elections and the religious leaders extend their cooperation on certain conditions keeping their interests in view.

2.3 RURAL-URBAN DIFFERENCES AND CONTINUUM

The rural and urban areas are very difficult to demarcate. Both have their own typical lifestyles. The major differences between rural and urban society are as follows:

1. Difference in Social Way of Thinking

Some differences which are distinctly observed in the urban and rural society are as follows:

- In the urban areas, people take more interest in politics. They like to participate more in politics and other such related events.
- Religious ideas and thinking is more deep and strong in rural areas than in urban areas. The rural people base their thinking on faith while religion in cities is based on reason.
- The urban people have scientific knowledge, tools and techniques at their disposal to counter any calamity or natural catastrophe. But in case of the rural people, they accept natural calamity as wrath of god. This kind of thinking is developed due to the superstitious attitude of the village people.
- The outlook of urban people is more wide and open. In the words of Ross, 'The city is cosmopolitan whereas the country is nationalistic and patriotic'. In this way, the rural people are more progressive than urban people.
- Urban people are not genuine. They may cover up and present themselves as someone who they are not. In the words of Bogardus, 'Rural people are frank, open, and genuine; they scorn the artificiality of many phases of city life'.

2. Difference in Social Organization

Social organization is the main aspect which brings out the difference in the rural and urban set up. Major differences are seen in the following aspects:

- **Family system:** In urban areas, the families are not as close-knit as they are in villages. The urban life style witnesses the nuclear family set up while the rural areas have joint family set up where all members of the family, like father, mother along with their married son and his children, live together as one unit. This type of set up is practically non-existent in towns and cities today. Family ties in rural areas is much stronger in comparison to urban families.

Check Your Progress

1. What is a rural society?
2. What are the three elements provided by community sentiment?

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- **Marriage:** There are a number of differences found in rural and urban societies with respect to marriage as well. In urban areas, there is more freedom in choosing a life partner, while in rural areas such freedom is not allowed. In urban areas, divorce cases are much higher than in villages.
- **Condition of women:** In urban areas women command a good position in society as they are educated. In villages woman have low social status as they are mostly uneducated.
- **Sense of belongingness:** In towns and cities, because of the cosmopolitan culture there is no sense of belongingness among the people. But in rural areas there is a 'we-feeling' in the people.
- **Inequality:** In towns we do not find any concept such as inequality on the basis of caste, but in rural areas a lot of class inequality is practiced. People believe in the caste system which causes disparity among them. Urban people on the other hand do not believe in this inequality as the society is more open.

3. Difference in Social Interactions

The social interactions of people in rural and urban areas are different from each other in many aspects. The points of distinction are as follows:

- The relationships in villages are among a smaller group of people, so they are more direct and personal. Whereas, in cities and towns relationships are numerous and also indirect and impersonal.
- In towns and cities, we find different people trained specifically for different jobs. This brings about more cooperation among town people than in villages.
- In villages the conflict or differences among people is direct. In urban areas this may not be the case because people are not so close to each other. Their interaction with each other is artificial and not personalized. The cases of conflict are direct in case of rural community but not in urban context.
- Urban areas show a high sense of competition compared to rural areas. They are more technologically aware and advanced, so they have more information and are competitive in nature.
- Towns show a higher speed of assimilation because they have a wider variety of cultural differences. People from different areas and places come together and stay in towns so there is a higher sense of assimilation as compared to villages.
- Town people show high level of tolerance as compared to village people. The rural people live in their own setting throughout their lives while in cities a wide cultural difference is observed which makes people more tolerant towards each other.

4. Difference in Financial Capacity

Urban and rural community contrast with each other on a number of aspects, especially on economic matters. This is because the most important factor which affects the lifestyle of people is money. The aspects in which we find a marked difference are as follows:

- Since the earning capacity is low in villages, the standard of living is also low. The standard of living is higher in urban areas as modern amenities are readily available.
- The source of income in villages is mainly agriculture or for some it may be animal or poultry business. In cities, the sources of income are from industries or

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factories. More so, there is a wide variety of jobs in cities that help urban people to earn more in comparison to people residing in villages.

5. Difference in Mobility

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Life in villages is slow and laid back in comparison to cities. In cities there is higher movement or mobility as compared to villages. In the words of Sorokin and Zimmerman, 'The rural community is similar to calm water in a pail and the urban community to boiling water in kettle. Stability is the typical trait for the rural one, mobility is typical for the other.'

6. Difference in Cultural Life

Cultural life shows marked differences in urban and rural lifestyle. Following are the differences:

- Culture in villages is an amalgamation of traditions and customs. People in villages follow these customs whole-heartedly. On the other hand, in cities and towns customs and traditions are not so sincerely followed or practiced. The reason for this is that in towns and cities, people are from different areas and therefore have varied culture and traditions.
- The culture in villages is of static nature whereas the culture in urban areas change constantly. The city people have more exposure to new and latest happenings, so their cultural ties do not remain static and rigid.

2.3.1 Urban Influence on Rural Life

The fast development and progress in the present times has had a strong influence not only on urban but rural life as well. This influence is visible by the new 'mall culture'. All latest brands which hitherto were not available in India are now easily available in big shopping malls. This consumerist attitude is fast spreading from big metropolitan cities to small towns, and from there to villages as well. This strong influence is visible in the style of dressing up, 'brand consciousness' and use of latest fashionable things and gadgets. It is a common sight to find the younger generation crowding at junk food or international food chains. The areas around metropolitans are under very strong influence of this new culture. Let us now discuss the city or urban influence and its effect on rural life. These are as follows:

- **Change in family organization:** Earlier, rural families used to be joint families. Elders were the ones who ruled the roost. They took all the major decisions and the family obeyed all these without questioning them.

  All the relatives of the family from the paternal side cooperated with each other. The decision of marriage was always taken by the elders of the family. But now-a-days the situation has changed drastically. Today, the interference of elders is not liked by youngsters. They want to be independent and responsible for their own life and actions, and do not want anybody to instruct them. The youngsters decide whatever course of action they want to take for themselves, whether it is right or wrong. They are much influenced by the urban culture which is free and unrestrained.

  Young women, also want to copy their counterparts from cities. They copy the latest fashion in clothes, cosmetics, gadgets like mobile phones and so on. All this is having a strong negative influence on the family system. They also want to assert their own freedom and likings.

  In the process, individuals are becoming self-centred. The tendency to non-cooperation is fast taking toll over the simple ways of life of rural people.

- **Change in social life:** In earlier times, it was a common trend that work or profession was governed by the caste of the person. The person whose father followed a certain profession or business also followed the same. It was taken as the acceptable trend that was generally followed by all.

  With the influence of urban culture, the old traditions and the usual way of life has changed. Youngsters are taking up new professions according to their capabilities and opportunities available. This is not according to the old customs or traditions but due to the urban influence and modern outlook.

  With modernization and urbanization has come a new era of tolerance. Old traditions are slowly being replaced with new liberal thoughts due to the new system of education and job opportunities. Urban and modern influence have made people broad minded and modern in their outlook and thinking.

- **Reduced influence of panchayats:** With the urban influence in rural areas, it is found that the way the village panchayats exerted their influence on the rural people is now no longer the same. As people are getting influenced by the modern developments and thinking, village panchayats are losing their hold on common people.

- **Change in the style of living:** The urban culture has its influence on the lifestyle of rural people. The villagers are greatly influenced by the latest trends in fashion. The food items also are of the urban style. Items such as aerated drinks, coffee, and cigarettes, which were not liked or consumed by villagers earlier, have now become popular amongst them. Modern gadgets like mobile phones and televisions are also increasingly being used in the rural areas.

  The utensils of earlier times which were mostly earthen have now been replaced with glass, steel, and other metals. Traditional dishes which were cooked on the *chulhas*, are now being replaced with fast instant food like instant noodles and burgers, a favourite of rural children. In short, all the culture of urban areas are being now increasingly followed by the rural people.

- **Change in the modes of entertainment or recreations:** In the earlier times, one found limited modes of entertainment in the villages, but today things have totally changed. Television is a common electronic item seen in almost every household. The villages also have cybercafés which keeps them in touch with the rest of the world. Mobile phones seem to have contracted the whole world into these gadgets. Newspapers and magazines have become a common feature in villages.

- **Social interaction:** Mostly in villages, people had a primary group in which their interaction was very intimate. But due to changing times and spread of urban culture, interactions within the group is becoming limited.

- **Rural migration:** Migration between rural and urban areas has led to a connection between these two ends. People move from rural areas to urban for work. This movement between rural and urban areas has brought both these ends close to each other.

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This movement or mobility has been instrumental in bringing urban influence in rural areas. The rural people who work in cities are working at very low profile jobs. They are mostly working as labourers, salesmen, or running small shacks. But whatever the type of job or work, they are exposed to urban lifestyle and grandeur which lures them towards urban lifestyle. Some rural people even shift to towns where they work and visit their native places once or twice a month. Some do not go back to their villages at all as they find village life backward and slow paced. Working in cities is seen as a matter of pride and high social prestige.

In some cases, the process of urbanization has some negative influence as well. Wherever an industry is set up in a village area, it needs to be evacuated. This causes the native villagers to get uprooted from their own land.

It is also observed that the areas which are close to metropolitan cities have a great influence of the urban culture. People from rural areas who come to cities for work carry back a lot of information to their counterparts in the villages. This creates a hankering among them to come to cities and experience visiting places like cinema halls, parks, and shopping malls. Influenced by all these, others also start moving to the cities away from rural setting.

- **Role of transport:** Rural and urban areas are the two ends of a continuum—a stage of transition from one end to another. While the rural setting deals with a natural habitat and environment, the urban setting is more to do with development and progress. The two may be contrasted yet have a common link. While the rural areas are still in an underdeveloped stage, the cities are more developed and advanced.

People from rural areas move towards bigger places in search of work. A major role in this is played by transport and the different means of communication. It has helped to bridge the gap between the rural and urban areas. It has brought new awareness among the rural people.

Economy of the villages has also got a boost due to a rise in transportation. Rural areas are mostly agricultural areas, but the marketing of the produce is a problem for the rural people. With good transportation facilities, they can easily get their produce to the cities to sell. Similarly, big companies like Reliance come to the doorstep of rural people in areas like Himachal Pradesh, the biggest producer of apples. Reliance picks up the crop from the orchards itself saving the village people the expenses of packing, transportation, etc.

Similarly, flower cultivation in Himachal Pradesh has got a boost due to good transportation facilities. Flowers are perishable and needs to be transported quickly. Therefore, good transport system is needed to boost this business as well.

Transportation provides a good opportunity for work and employment to villagers and to people who may not be academically qualified. This gives them a financial independence. When people from rural areas start moving out, they learn more and start looking for ways to improve themselves. This helps them to progress and raise their standard of living.

All the above factors show how the rural areas have been influenced by the urban culture. The modernization has helped the people from rural areas to move out and explore the whole world. The increase in modes of transport and communication has made life easier and faster.

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2.3.2 Folkways and Urban Continuum

According to Reuter and Hart (1933), 'The folkways are simple habits of action common to the members of the group; they are the ways of the folks that are somewhat standardised and have some degree of traditional sanction for their persistence'. MacIver and Page (1949) defined it as: 'The folkways are the recognized or accepted ways of behaving in the society.'

In simple terms, folkways are the customary, normal and habitual ways of a group to meet certain needs or solving day-to-day problems. Sumner writes in his book *Folkways* that folkways are the product of the 'frequent repetition of petty acts, often by great numbers acting in concert, or at least acting in the same way when face to face with the same need'. They are unconscious, spontaneous and uncoordinated adjustments of an individual to his environment. Folkways include innumerable ways of behaviour that have evolved about social living. They are the customs and usages which have been passed from generations and to which new elements are added according to the changing needs. As said by G.A. Lundberg, 'folkways designate those uniformities in the behaviour of a group which develop relatively spontaneous and even unconsciously in adopting common life conditions and which become established through repetition and general recurrence.' Folkways differ from customs; in that the former are of a more general and wider character than customs and cover all those modes of behaviour or spontaneous usages which are not included in the term 'customs'. Thus, for example, shaking hands, eating four meals a day, dividing responsibilities so that the husband is the supporter of the family and the wife is a dependant, not killing the holy cow, or taking drinks after dinner are examples of folkways rather than of customs. However, the difference between folkways and custom is largely a matter of degree.

Variety of folkways: Folkways are numerous, their number is infinite. The folkways of eating are interesting. The Hindu Brahmins do not eat meat. The Bengalis prefer rice to bread. The Jains do not take garlic and onion. Horse meat is eaten in continental Europe, but not in the United States. In regard to the manner or style of consuming food, the folkways also make an interesting reading. People from Madras eat rice with their hands in a peculiar way while those in Uttar Pradesh prefer to have it with spoon. The Brahmins eat food in the kitchen while other castes may prefer to have their food outside. Similarly, ideas about marriage, death, sex, worship, birth, kinship, dress and art show a wide variety of folkways.

Changing character of folkways: Folkways are not static but change with changing social conditions. As said by Sumner, they are like products of natural forces 'which men unconsciously set in operation, or they are like the instinctive ways of animals, which are developed out of experience, which reach a final form of maximum adaptation to an interest, which are handed down by tradition and admit of no exception or variation yet change to meet new conditions'. So folkways undergo comparatively continuous and rapid change. Folkways connected with the beliefs and practices regarding family, property and marriage resist change more than those connected with the economic functions of a group. An individual starts an innovation, others finding the innovation better than the old one accept and follow it. When accepted and followed by many individuals of the group, it spreads exerting pressure on every member within the group to adopt or conform to it. When adopted by all, it becomes a folkway. If you ask an individual why he behaves in a particular way, his reply would be that he is following others' ways or that this is the accepted way of behaviour. As in the case of folksong or folktale, similarly in the case of folkway it is difficult to trace its origin or originator.

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During the course of time, the folkway undergoes numerous changes that it is almost impossible to credit any single individual with its origination. Folkways are not the result of any deliberate planning or conscious design, though some of them may be so, but arise unconsciously and automatically in society.

The primary forms of human association are far older than the secondary. The family, band, class, tribe and small village long antedate urban society, with its masses of people divided into many special interest groups. The very early forms of human society and culture, however, can only be inferred. Earliest men apparently lived in relatively small bands, which formed the basis of family and blood ties. Their economy consisted of seed and roof material gathering, hunting and fishing. At that time social organization must have been very rudimentary. Today, two-thirds to three-fourths of the world's people live in 'what may be called folk or peasant' societies. Their cultures is intermediate between that of the band or tribe and urban patterns. Folk culture has much in common with tribal culture, solidarity of family life, place of religion, forms of moral control, and simple social order, generally.

Mores

Sumner applied the term *mores* to those folkways which are considered by the group to be of great significance and, therefore, rather indispensable to its welfare. He writes, 'I mean by mores the popular usages and traditions when they include a judgement that they are conducive to societal welfare, and when they exert coercion on the individual to conform to them although they are not co-ordinated by any authority'. *Mores* is a Latin word for customs and just as customs cannot be violated by any individual, so also *mores* cannot be violated without incurring severe punishment. *Mores* are in fact the folkways considered as regulators of behaviour. They express the group sense of what is fitting best, right and conducive to social welfare. They imply a valuable judgement about the folkways.

Distinction between Folkways and Mores

A distinction can be made between *mores* and folkways. Sumner says when the folkways take on a philosophy of right living and a life policy of welfare, they transform to *mores*. Thus, when the folkways have added to them, conceptions of right and wrong and group welfare, they are converted into *mores*. While if an individual disobeys any folkways, he/she cannot violate the *mores* because it represents group standards. Although it may be sometimes difficult to differentiate between *mores* and folkways, there being a few border-line cases, the line dividing them is clear and definite. Folkways may or may not be conducive to societal welfare but *mores* are always so. The *mores* represent the living character of the group or community. They are always considered right by the group that shares them.

Variety of mores: From the above analysis, it is clear that *mores* determine our conceptions of what is proper or improper; right or wrong. *Mores* are not the result of deliberate design or, conscious planning. Nor are they universally alike. Chance and accident play greater role in their creation. The westerners take off the hat to show respect, the Hindus touch feet of elders as a mark of respect. One group prohibits the marriage of its members with outsiders, another allows it. One group does not condemn polygamy, another condemns it. One group condemns the remarriage of widows, another recommends it. One group has a strict sex code, another does not have any. Thus, we come across great variations in the *mores* as we move from one group to another.

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Changing character of mores: *Mores* can make something appear right at one time and wrong at another. Not long ago slavery was allowed and was sanctioned by church and state, but today this is condemned; some time ago polygamy was in the *mores* but today for a woman to have two husbands at the same time is hardly conceivable. Similarly, try to perceive and compare the range of approved activities of women of three generations with that of today. At the beginning of the century it would have been prohibited for an Indian woman to work in office but today, it is allowed. One may also compare the present attire of women with that of the costumes worn by women of only a few decades ago.

Mores can make anything appear right or correct. The power of *mores* is so strong that according to Sumner there is nothing which the *mores* cannot make right. The *mores* in the United States made slavery a punishable practice hundred years ago. The *mores* in Nazi Germany condemned democracy. The *mores* made it right for the Eskimos to kill their old people. In ancient Sparta, infanticide was an established custom. It follows, therefore, that all our moral or ethical ideas are relative to time and place and that there is universal or absolute system of *mores*.

Importance of Mores

Mores play a significant role in society. MacIver enumerates the following functions of *mores*:

- They determine much of an individual's behaviour. *Mores* both compel and forbid behaviour. They are effective instruments of social control.
- They identify an individual with the group. By following the *mores*, the individual identifies with his/her group.
- They are guardians of solidarity. The *mores* hold the members of a group together.

Urban Continuum

Urban communities differ from folk communities both in their structure and in their culture. The simplest summary of the differences between the two types of social organization is that they tend to be opposites; whereas the folk community is homogeneous, the urban is heterogeneous. City and village are two distinct communities. According to MacIver, 'the difference between two varying ways of life, the urban and rural way of life, represents in a very revealing way'. One of the widely prevalent social contrasts is the contrast of the social environment. It also permits us to distinguish between two types of community organizations. The city is an environment created by society, in which for the purpose of community living, many aspects of natural environment are modified or entirely eliminated. Under rural conditions, social attitudes and social institutions present characteristic differences from those developed within the city. There is a sharp difference between the city and village life, though with the expansion of urban influence on the villages this difference is becoming more and more a matter of degree. However, in spite of the recent trends of urbanization, the villages still retain many of their traditional features and present a sharp contrast with the urban life.

- **Force of traditional mores:** In rural community, the force of traditional *mores* and bonds of family solidarity are more dominant than in the urban ones. The village family is generally patriarchal in nature in which the status of the individual is the status of his family. There is less individual questioning and rebellion. The family determines as to where and when a family member should marry and so

on. Not only marriage but also religion, recreation, occupation are determined by family traditions. In the words of Biesanz and Biesanz, 'In the rural, community custom is king, the folkways and *mores* control most of behaviour'.

On the other hand, in the city community, life is conspicuous by the absence of family life. Social control becomes the activity of specialized agencies. Family control is less. Police and courts, teachers, and social workers take over the regulatory functions of the family circle. If a person violates family marriage customs, he/she is not boycotted by the urban community.

- **Primary contacts:** A village community is marked by immediate contacts between its members. We find members in a village community helping each other and sharing the joy and sorrows of each other. In the village everybody knows each other. There is greater 'we feeling' in the village than in the urban community. In city life, on the other hand, it is not so. The inhabitants of a city hardly know each other. Sometimes they do not even know their next door neighbours. There is an atmosphere of indifference and callousness in a city. In the city, one can escape the oppressive control of any primary group when one wishes by simply disappearing into the sea of strangers.
- **Simplicity and uniformity:** Life in a village community is simple and uniform. There are few ambitious men and fewer excitements. The villagers lead a uniform life of tilling land and rearing animals. The poor turning rich overnight or the rich being reduced to beggary in a day are cases unknown in the village. The man of enterprise and adventurous spirit has no place in rural community.
- **Specialization:** Another contrast between village and urban community is concerning the modes of production. In the village as a rule, only a predominant type of occupation, i.e., agriculture prevails. The city, on the other hand, is the place for all, the semi-skilled worker, the skilled, and so on. It is a heterogeneous group of people engaged in various pursuits. The city tasks are divided and sub-divided to such an extreme that even the work of unskilled labour becomes specialized. The condition of competition has greater velocity in the town than in the villages.
- **Proper placing of all:** In the city, individuals are rated more in terms of accomplishments than one is rated in the rural community. The city shifts and segregates 'all of its members according to their ability and finds a fit place to each specialization' which is also seen in the physical structure of the city. Distinctive areas are marked for different activities. Chandigarh, the capital of Punjab has been divided into different sectors, each sector with marked peculiarities. In the Western world, specialization of areas is followed more than it is done in India.
- **Position of women:** Specialization in the city has also influenced the life of women. The city offers more and more opportunities to women. If the social life had remained predominantly a village life, women would have been the drudges in the household; Industrialization and specialization have brought women to offices and factories which has altered their outlook and habits and liberated them from the exclusiveness of domesticity.
- **Contrast of qualities:** City community evokes in man the qualities which stand in sharp contrast with those demanded by rural community. The village calls for persistence, a more stern and slogged fidelity to the way of life. Villagers are in

constant contact with nature and considers nature a friend and an enemy as well. Villagers are superstitious and religious. Whereas, cities require alertness and quick responses to changing situations. City dwellers are more tolerant in matters of religious beliefs, modes of life, tastes and opinions. In a rural community, the rural codes are fixed and strict. Any violation of these, leads to bitter estrangements and sometimes to personal tragedies. The absence of a common mode of occupation and lack of belongingness makes city dwellers self-centred and detached. They leave one city to live in another without the feeling of any loss. On the other hand, countrymen when uprooted from their villages feel lost and unhappy.

2.4 INSTITUTION OF FAMILY

The rural family structure is very close-knit. All members interact and bond with each other, whether it is a joint or a nuclear family. Most of the families in villages today have a joint set up where all the brothers and their respective families stay in the same house sharing a common kitchen. However, with modernization and with the youth moving out for work, changes have taken place. Despite nuclear families being formed, the connection between parents and children, husband and wife, and among children too are much stronger than is seen in the urban areas. The reason for this could be that all are associated with a common occupation—agriculture. This gives them apple opportunity to spend time together. All of them together work on a piece of land, which is commonly shared by the whole family; the elders share their experiences with the younger generations; the control of the land usually remains with the eldest member and everyone shares the same aspirations, values and beliefs. The mutual dependence brings about more closeness and affection. There is a collective consciousness rather than an individualistic attitude. The rural household always thinks of a family as one single unit and not individual members.

With modernization and spread of education, there is more awareness, among people. Members are moving out in search of greener pastures, and the central control of the family is diminishing. The members are becoming less dependent on each other. Yet, familial ties remain strong, a lot stronger than is seen in the urban areas. The institution called family continues to remain strong. Changes are taking place with the young generation moving to the cities and not wanting to return to the villages due to poor facilities and lack of job opportunities. The financial independence of the youngsters is making them less attached to the family. Yet, the family, as an institution is not falling apart or crumbling.

2.4.1 Caste System

In India, mostly before Independence, the caste system had very strong roots. It was very rigid in the rural areas and dominated their social structure. The ownership of land was totally decided on the basis of caste. But by 1950, a lot of changes were witnessed. Some castes, which were earlier very strong and enjoyed high status, gradually lost their importance. Similarly, some castes which had been dominated, came up, acquiring economic and even political powers as well as importance. Though the rural people still consider their caste as important, in the present situation, owing to economic freedom, a lot of changes have taken place. People are changing their own attitude towards the over-authoritarian influence of caste. A. R. Desai, Yogendra Singh, Andra Bateilli, B. R. Chauhan and other scholars have also spoken of these slow changes in the caste system; the disappearance of the caste divide and emergence of the class divide instead.

Check Your Progress

3. Differentiate between the rural and urban areas with regard to their religious ideas and thinking.
4. How have the urban areas influenced the working of Panchayats in the rural areas?
5. What are folkways?
6. What are mores according to Sumner?

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Caste system earlier was evident by the debt pattern of villagers. In the past, one caste comprised people who mostly gave loans or credit and the other caste predominantly comprised the poor creditors. This was a hereditary pattern and went on for years. R.K Nehru also spoke of the pattern of indebtedness and credit and their links with the castes in villages.

Major change is sweeping over the habitat pattern too. Earlier, the area in which houses were built depended upon the caste of the person. The type of house built also strongly depended on the caste that one belonged to. However, in present times, all these factors are determined by the economic status of a person and not the caste. One reason, which has brought about this change is the mobility—social, economic and occupational. Youngsters have moved to towns in search of education and job opportunities. Also, the new generation does not think it necessary to carry on the family occupation, which is usually based on caste. They prefer to work in the cities and take up jobs based on their educational qualifications and not their caste.

Education has led to a lot of changes. The once financially strong castes have now lost their financial superiority and the castes which were economically weak have now become financially strong and more stable.

Caste played a major role earlier in the attitude of rural people, especially towards education of girls. But today, with education, this attitude has changed for the better. People from the most backward castes are now sending their daughters to schools, colleges and universities to get better education.

In rural areas, religious freedom used to be greatly determined by caste. Earlier, some castes were not allowed to enter temples or participate in auspicious occasions. But today, all castes are allowed to enter temples.

Caste, however, continues to play a crucial role in political events. People still seem to vote for or reject candidates according to their castes. However, change is taking place slowly but steadily there too. People generally vote for candidates based on their performance and capabilities, while earlier, leadership was totally influenced by caste. In the present times, people are less bothered about caste. They focus more on the changes taking place at the central level and accordingly, make their choice.

The *jajmani* system has slowly died. There are new laws in place, which have affected the old and traditional caste systems prevalent in villages. Inter-caste relations have changed for the better and become more amiable. Inter-caste marriages which were taboo earlier are now becoming common.

Some major structural and peripheral changes influencing the rural caste system are as follows:

- Modernization and Sanskritization
- Education without Sanskrit–the monopoly of higher caste
- Proletarianism
- Hegemony of the higher castes
- Increased hostility
- Shift in sources of power

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1. Modernization and Sanskritization

We will discuss both the above concepts individually. Let us first discuss modernization. Modernization means the inclusion of modern trends and ways into the presently existing system of life. This has affected each and every aspect of social life.

One major event we witness in this context is the fact that, some older or traditional occupations are now being rejected altogether because of its low-level or status in society. Some castes have totally given up their traditional occupation because it was considered lower or impure. People have taken up jobs or work which is more paying and of a high profile with reference to modern trends of society.

Modernization being a vast term takes into itself the major aspects of life. It includes education, lifestyle, dressing up, modern career options, politics, power, and prestige along with other aspects of life.

K.L Sharma, while observing the effect of modernization on the caste occupation mentions that the upper castes always had a monopoly or total control over good income, power and prestige. He said that it was always the high caste people who got the best jobs. They were the ones who exercised all the power and prestige in society. High income was always associated with high castes.

Sanskritization is the concept introduced by M.N. Srinivas in the 1960s. He used it as a process of social change and mobility. He has described Sanskritization as a social change within the caste system. Sanskrization means when a low caste imitates and apes the customs of a high caste to prove itself to be of a higher caste. They do so by selecting some of their own traditional styles of having and copying the trends of high class people.

In villages of Jammu and Kashmir the *kumhar* caste has totally given up making earthen utensils, etc. The youngsters hate the profession followed by their forefathers and have rejected it outright. They have taken up other means of survival. They do not even consider following their traditional occupation because according to them it is low. Similarly, in some parts of Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh, the *chamars* have given up their traditional occupation of shoe-making, removal and skinning of dead animals. This again is because they thought it to be 'impure' and polluted.

According to Srinivas the concept of modernization in India started with the coming of British in India. He states that it was because of Britishers that India became more modern and advanced in their thinking and outlook towards life. The number of convent schools which were set up at that time brought Indians up to a certain international standard which was much ahead of the standard present at that time

Sociological thinkers like Durkheim, Weber, and Marx also have major ideas on modernization. Durkheim says that the main characteristic of modernization is differentiation. He strongly supports that with more differentiation there will be more modernity and cohesiveness in society.

Karl Marx states that modernization means commoditization. Commoditisation means that all the things in modern society are reduced to the status of a commodity (these include every items of literature, arts, etc). Just like we have product manufactured in factories which are called commodities, similarly cultural things are also called commodities. Marx Weber on the other hand feels that modernization means rationality. A person will be said to be modern if he follows a rational approach in life.

2. Education without Sanskrit — The Monopoly of Higher Caste

While on one hand we found the concept of sanskritization—where a lower caste wanted to be like a higher caste by following its customs and traditions—we come across another tradition called as desanskritization. This is when higher class people interact with lower caste people. Today, jats, rajputs, and even brahmins do not hesitate in touching an untouchable. This change in attitude is due to the education and modern outlook.

Education: The Monopoly of Higher Caste

It has been observed that the major reason or factor which changed the status is education. It is education which brings about a new awareness among people. Education makes a person aware of his rights and privileges. In most societies it has been seen that the higher castes have always had a control over higher education, i.e high class people are more educated than the low class people.

Higher education is the factor which determines a higher standard of living and higher profile jobs. The higher castes were the ones who mostly availed these opportunities. K.L. Sharma is of the view that it is college and university education that extends the horizon of occupational possibilities by providing the formal qualifications for superior occupational possibilities which is in turn are required for superior occupations and superiority to those who achieve it.

With the higher education there, immediately arose a clear class distinction. The people with higher education made a special or higher place for themselves which was above the level of ordinary people. Since the higher castes were the ones availing this benefit they have made a special status and higher place for themselves.

3. Proletariasm

There is a major change in rural society, today. Earlier, the *zamindari* system being very strong made the *zamindar* hold a very high position and status in society. The *zamindar* was looked up to with respect and great honour since he had the land, and made others work for him. But today, things are changing. The low caste is aware of the worth of education and also has ventured out of the control of the *zamindar* or the *jagirdar*. They refuse to go in for manual and petty work and even lower class jobs. The Rajputs and other higher castes are also seen doing manual work, so they have themselves willingly come into the category of the proletarian.

4. Hegemony of Higher Castes

It is noticed in the country that in spite of the opportunities of development provided to the lower castes, the upper castes still have a strong hold in society. This is because they own larger portions of the land which is a very important criterion in India which is an agricultural-based country.

Ian Breman who has done extensive study on peasants and migrants belonging to Surat (in Gujarat) and its surrounding areas talks, ands tells of a peculiar feature of this place. He tells that the *kanvi patidars* have occupied a higher status in the field of agriculture. They are the ones who own larger portions of land. The *halpatis* earlier called *dublas* have been reduced to very small portions of land. The fact is that the *halpatis* were once the important group of agriculturists who have now been reduced to mere proletarian status.

5. Increased Hostility

V.S. Naipaul observes, 'People everywhere have ideas now of who they are and what they owe themselves. The process quickened with the economic development that came after independence; what was hidden in 1962, or not easy to see and was perhaps only in a state of becoming, has become clearer. The liberation of spirit that has come to India could not come as release alone. In India, with its layer below layer of distress and cruelty it had to come as disturbance. It had to come as rage and revolt. India is now a country of million little mutinies'.

After having been subjugated for so many years, the lower castes have now started retaliating against the oppression. They are up in arms against the higher castes who have hitherto tortured them. This new awakening among the lower castes can be seen in the form of strikes or even violence at times to show their anger.

6. Shift in the Sources of Power

In the earlier times it was believed that larger the size of land owned by a person, more was the power that he exercised. This is why the *zamindar* or *jagirdar* were the people of unquestioned authority and power. But today, the situation is quite changed. It is not the land possessed by a person but the power he has that determines his status. This power one gets from his position in the Gram Panchayat, Vidhan Sabha, or the Parliament. At rural level it is the Gram Panchayat which rests all the power of the village. So this position is a powerful and influential one. A person who is in a government job also commands that authority or respect. His position in government service assumes him respect and prestige.

There is a clear change not only in villages but also in bigger areas like towns or cities. The shift in power has a very clear and evident appearance at all levels of social organization.

Andre Beteille who did lot of research in Tanjore says, 'With the introduction of adult franchise and of village councils, land ownership, the traditional status has ceased to be the only basis of power in the village. The strength of organized members has now become more important than it ever was'.

The above fact is very evident in society all around us where we find the power of the traditional *zamindar* or similar system decreasing while the strength of organized leadership becoming more visible and noticeable. This is changing the pattern of rural social stratification. This is like forming the water tight compartments of castes more permeable.

2.4.2 Religion

In rural areas, religion may be analysed on the basis of the following characteristics:

- **Religion as a belief:** When we speak of religion as a belief, the discussion centres around all the beliefs including witchcraft, worship of ancestors, magic, being possessed by spirits and so on. All these beliefs or ideals are associated with a group, religion or sect. These beliefs are common and strongly adhered to by all those who are members of the group/sect or follow that religion.
- **Religion as a practice:** Religion as a practice includes all the different practices and activities associated with different religions. These include the religious prayers, sacrifices, and all the rituals associated with that particular religion.

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- **Religion as an institution:** Religious beliefs affect the society in general. In fact, it is a form of strong social control and integration. It influences the behaviour of the people and ensures a strong bond of social unity by promoting a community of thought.

All these religious forces were very strong during the pre-Independence time. People in villages are much more influenced by religion than their urban counterparts. One of the main reasons for this was the fact that India is basically an agricultural country. Crops depend on rains and other natural factors. It is believed that all these are controlled by nature gods, like Indra (god of rain), etc. So rural people firmly believed a good crop depended upon the mercy of gods.

Along with agriculture, each aspect of rural life is interwoven with religious influence. All rituals from birth to death are associated with religion. Rural life is strongly dominated by all these traditions. A set of rituals is associated with each caste in villages. All members of the rural castes or groups follow all the customs set by the religious priests and do not defy any ritual. This also shows a strong social honesty to the traditional customary ways of rural rules.

Temples were very important places in villages. These were the seats of all religious worship. Not only did temples provide education, they were also venues for cultural activities and social functions in villages. They were the seats of social and political meetings as well.

Temples housed the village deities. The gods and goddesses were worshipped there. The temple priest carried out the religious prayer every day and was also responsible for the cleanliness of the temple complex. The temple had a strong hold on all the affairs of the village. But with time, the total authoritarian control of religion and temples started to diminish.

Villagers now do not limit themselves to the dominating influence of religion. With the popularity of social media, the world is becoming a small place, and more secular ideas are being propagated. The age-old orthodox traditions are now being challenged and done away with. Whenever there are clashes between the old orthodox ways and new ideas, they are settled with the help of a democratic outlook. Though religion holds an important place in not only rural but also urban lives, the advances in science and technology cannot be ignored. These have to be incorporated, otherwise India will lag behind in scientific progress.

2.4.3 Agrarian Class Structure

The rural society in India can be divided into four main classes. According to A. R. Desai (1959) the proportions of the four main groups are as follows:

- **Group 1(Landowners):** This group forms 22 per cent of the total group.
- **Group 2 (Tenants):** This group forms 27 per cent of the total.
- **Group 3 (agricultural labourers):** This group forms 31 per cent of the total.
- **Group 4 (non-agriculturists):** This group forms 20 per cent of the total.

The marginal cultivators form a huge majority (almost 60 per cent) and have less than two hectares of land. The small cultivators have two to five hectares of land and form 16 per cent of the total. The medium cultivators with 5 to 10 hectares of land form 6 per cent of the total. The big cultivators with over ten hectares of land have 18 per cent of total ownership. In villages, each family has less than 1 acre (or 0.4 hectare) of

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land. Food crops are sown on 75 per cent of land. The farmers sell almost about 35 per cent of their total produce. The farmers in villagers mostly sell almost 65 per cent of their commodities in the village, to the local traders.

The marketing of these products is mostly done by intermediaries, who buy from rural farmers and sell in the markets or *mandis*. The intermediaries play with the lives of farmers as they are the ones who dispose of the produce and they are the ones who have the money. Sometimes they exploit the illiterate farmers and give them very little money for their produce. But with education, situations and conditions are improving for the rural people.

The agrarian relationship in villages may be put into three main categories, according to Daniel Thorner (1956):

(i) Maalik or the agricultural landlord
(ii) Kisan or the working peasant (also tenants)
(iii) Mazdoor or the agricultural labourer

The *maliks* own the land, and therefore, they get their income from the share of crops grown on their land. They may get cash or kind from the tenants who work on their fields. They may have managers to take care of the fields and the labourers or may themselves take care of their fields. *Maliks*/landlords may be of two types:

(i) The type who are generally not present on the fields themselves.
(ii) The type who are themselves physically present in the fields.

The *Kisans* are the farmers who work on fields. They differ from the *maliks* on the basis of land owned by them. The *Kisans* themselves, along with other members of the family work on the fields. Their incomes are so poor sometimes that they have to work as agricultural labourers.

Mazdoors are the landless people who work on other peoples' lands. They are paid either in cash or in kind. Sometimes, when there is no work in their own village they migrate to other villages or cities to work. They may work as agricultural labourers or labourers at construction or industrial sites.

According to Daniel Thorner, the rural agrarian social structure should be defined on the basis of the following three criteria:

- Income from land (rent, wages, own cultivation, etc.)
- Type or nature of right (i.e. ownership, tenancy or no right at all)
- Extent of field work done (total work, partial work, no work at all, work for others, etc.)

According to D. N. Dhanagare, another model of classification also exists. He divided the rural society into four classes:

- **Landlords:** They get their income from land ownership i.e. rent from tenants or growing own crops.
- **Rich peasants:** These are the small landowners, who have enough land to take care of their own families and they cultivate their own land themselves. These are the rich tenants who have good land holdings and have to pay very little money to landlords.
- **Middle peasants:** They have land of medium size and are tenants who have good land holding but pay high rent to landlords.

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- **Poor peasants:** This group comprises landowners with very little land, insufficient to support their own family. Tenants with very small land holdings, landless labourers and sharecroppers are also part of this class.

The first two classes—landlords and rich peasants—are financially most well off, and often exploit the poor landless labourers.

However, the formation of co-operative societies and credit societies in villages has surely undermined the authoritarian control of the *maliks* but not entirely. The labourers still lead a pathetic life.

The glaring gap between the landowners and workers is an ever widening one. The *maliks* or landlords have all the money and power, and private traders flourish successfully. Though a number of land reforms have been undertaken, the condition of the poor remains more or less the same. The economic disparity between classes create all the more problems. The productive resources and financial power rest with the landlords. This uneven distribution has to be done away with before any progress can be achieved in the rural areas.

The deplorable condition of landless agricultural labourers needs perusal. They form the backbone of the rural social structure. Despite working day and night for the country they receive inadequate payment. The wages they get are meagre. Earlier, an average agricultural labourer would get something like ₹ 30–60 per day. The effective working days for labourers came to only about 200 days because of climatic vagaries. On the days that they are unemployed they have no money at all, and are forced to go hunting for work. Their annual income is hardly above 10,000 per year, which is why they fall below the poverty line.

The Agricultural Labour Enquiry dealt with only their economic problems. But their social issues owing to their position, as the majority belonged to the SC, ST or OBC group, did not get solved. While the efforts of the Government, through their reservation policies, have reduced discrimination against them but there has not been any drastic change or improvement in their condition or status.

2.4.4 Agrarian Aspect of Rural Sociology

India is an agricultural country. In spite of the fact that farmers contribute to the major economy of the country, they are the ones who have suffered the most. Agriculture provides the country its economy, but at the same time other means have also developed. Today, agriculture still remains the major contributor to the economy of the country. The importance of agriculture is evident by the following points:

1. Agriculture is the Source of National Income

Since India is an agriculture based economy, most of the income of the country depends on it. History tells that India has faced many wars and invasions. But rulers have always taken care of agriculture. This was because the main economy came from agriculture. Rulers took good care of the fields, but the fieldsmen, who actually worked on these fields, always suffered. Agriculture being a totally weather dependent activity, has always been very unpredictable and uncertain. The farmers have been suffering since times immemorial.

Today also, the government takes all major steps to protect the farms and provide subsidies to farmers to make their lives easy and more comfortable.

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2. Power Provided by Land

The big landholders have been ruling the society for a long time. They are the ones who had all the power and status because of their high land holdings. The owner of land is respected while the labourer is looked down upon. He is the one who does not have anything and is the mere beggar at the doorsteps of the zamindar or landlord.

The Zamindari system has been abolished but still one who owns land is respected and treated as powerful.

3. Land Assures a High Status

In India, land ownership is a big factor which determines the status of a person. A person possessing a large area of land is respected and is considered to have a high status. He is considered rich because land is a sure means of earning an income. The most profitable asset, a person can have, is land. This is because it not only assures income to a person in the form of agricultural returns but also its value increases with time without any effort. When marriages take place, the possession of land by the groom's family is taken as a big deciding factor for prospective matches. The parents of the girl feel secure if they marry their daughter to a person who has a good amount to property, as it assures security for their daughters.

4. Agriculture Influences Lifestyle

Agriculture is the major source of income in India. It not only determines the economic position of a person, but also the lifestyle. People who have good agricultural background have a good lifestyle as well. The festivals as well as cultural functions, all revolve around agricultural activities. The way the villagers live, the food they eat, and way they dress, all is dependent on their agricultural income. Each season in India is marked with a festival and that too is associated with activities related to agriculture. Therefore, one can easily say that agriculture has a major influence on the lifestyle of a person.

5. Stratification in Rural Areas

In rural areas, stratification or categorization takes place with the help of the possession of land. Land is not divided equally among the village people. This is what brings about a major disparity and also stratification. In the villages one finds different types of land ownership. There are both large land holders and small land holders. Also, one finds the labourers who work on the farms of others. This inequality brings about a stratification or formation of different categories in rural areas.

Land ownership is based on the criterion of hereditary. Whatever land that one owns is what has been inherited from the forefathers. This disparity or inequality still continues making the stratification all the more evident and conspicuous.

2.5 VILLAGE STUDIES AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

Charles Metcaffe wrote,

> The village communities are little Republics, having nearly everything they [may] want within themselves, and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolutions succeeds to revolutions; Hindus, Pathans, Moguls, Marathas, Sikhs, English, are all masters in turn; but the village communities remain the same. In

Check Your Progress

7. State any one characteristic of a rural family.
8. Why did Daniel Thorner reject the often-described classification of cultivators in rural areas?
9. How has Daniel Thorner analysed the agrarian social structure?

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times of troubles they arm and fortify themselves; a hostile army passes through the country; the village communities collect their cattle within their walls, and lets the enemy pass unprovoked. If plunder and devastation be directed against themselves, and the force employed be irresistible, they return and resume their occupations. If a country remains for a (number) of years (in) the scene of continued pillage and massacre, (thereby leaving the) so that the villages (uninhabited), the scattered villagers nevertheless return whenever the power of peace(ful) possession revives. A generation may pass, but the succeeding generation will return. The sons will take the places of their fathers, the same site for the village, the same position for the houses, the same lands will be re-occupied by the descendents of those who were driven out when the village was depopulated; and it is not a trifling matter that will drive them out, for they will often maintain their post through times of disturbance and convulsion, and acquire strength sufficient to resist pillage and oppression with success.

The union of the village communities, each one forming a separate little state in itself has contributed more than for any other cause to the preservation of social structure of the people of India through all revolutions and changes which they have suffered. It is in a high degree conducive to their happiness and to the enjoyment of a great position of freedom and independence...

From the above quote, it is clear that the village was the only unit that was stable in spite of problems and troubles. It has been stable because of the agrarian's aspect that led to a stabilizing factor in villages. The villages were autonomous in their functioning.

Dr. K. P. Jayaswal, in his pre-eminent study, *Hindu Polity*, wrote that 'national life and activities in the earliest times on record were expressed through popular assemblies and institution'. These gatherings were called *Samitis*, meaning 'meeting together'.

The *Atharvaveda* has a mention of the same as is found in *Prithvi Sukta* (56). It says, 'In the villages and forests of the lands, in the various meetings and assemblies to discuss problems, I should always, O Mother [E]arth, speak for your good, for your interests.'

2.5.1 Sociology in the Ancient Indian Village

The villages in the ancient times were mainly of two types. According to Valmiki's Ramayana, there were two types of villages: the *ghosh* (small villages) and the *gram* (big villages). The officials of both these villages were called *ghosh mahattar* and *gram mahattar* respectively. According to the Ramayana, there was another official named *gramani*, who took care of the smooth functioning of the rural affairs. The *ghosh* and the *gram* are also mentioned in the Mahabharata. As discussed earlier, *ghosh* was small-sized while *gram* was a village of larger size. The *ghosh* which were mostly situated close to the forests were the dwelling places of cow-herds.

Manu speaks of the village official as *gramik*. He wrote that any problem regarding the administration of villages had to be reported to the *gramik*. The *gramik* was to report to his higher authority known as *dashvi* (*dashvi* was in charge of 10 villages). *Dashvi* had to report to his higher officials known as *vishanti* (*vishanti* was in charge of 20 villages). The *vishanti* was to report to the next authority referred to as the *shati* or *shat-gramadhipati* who was in charge of hundred villages. But this was not all, there was another official above the *shati* called the *sahasra-gramadhipati* (*sahasra-gramadhipati* was responsible for a thousand villages).

This is how the village community functioned, with each level of administrator having a higher authority to control him. The government functioned in an effective manner with each official doing his work honestly and sincerely.

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The Gramani

The *gramani* was definitely appointed by the King. However, he had to act according to the wishes of the villagers and his own clansmen. The *gramani* had to strictly follow the advice of the village elders called *gram varidhas*, who were chosen by the village assembly. The village officials had to strictly abide by the instructions of the *gram varidhas* who were mostly the most experienced and learned. He was supposed to follow the advice of the elders and if ever he did something wrong or unsuitable, he was corrected by the elders.

Functions of the Gramani

The *gramani* was the connecting thread between the government and the common people. He was the representative of the common people and would voice their problems and issues to higher authorities. He took care of the interests of the common people. He looked after the welfare of common folks and also thought of taking all the benefits from the King.

His first and foremost duty was to look after the defence of the village, like the volunteers and guardsmen. He headed and guided them. The second duty which he performed was to find out the dues of the state and keep accounts of the same. All the important papers dealing with important issues like revenue, or other legal documents were kept in his custody. He was the overall in charge of the functioning of the village. All legal disputes which were not very serious were also handled by him.

2.5.2 Indian Villages during the Buddhist Era

All through the Buddhist texts which date back to the 5th century BC, one gets a reference of agricultural systems and the village communities which were self-governing. The books explain in detail the arrangements of villages, towns, and forts. Also mentioned in these books are the *Gama, Niguma, Kula,* and *Nagarka*.

The *Jatakas* (Buddhist Scriptures) tell us that the number of families living in villages were upto 1,000. The houses in villages were quite close to each other, they were so close that if there was a fire in one house, it would soon spread throughout the whole village. The structure of the village has been described well. It is mentioned that each village had a gate called the *gram-dwara*. Beyond the gate was the orchard in which grew beautiful flowers that made the place beautiful. Beyond the orchard was the *gram-kshetra* which was the cultivated area of the village. Fences were put all around the area to protect the crops from being destroyed by animals. There were field men who were employed to protect the crops from animals, birds and pests. The *gram-kshetra* was extended when needed. This was done by clearing out the forest land and converting it into arable land which was fit for cultivation.

Beyond the arable land was the village pasture. This was common for all the villagers. The cattle of the King and common people grazed in this area, as all had equal right over it.

In the *Jataka Tales* we get a reference of *gopalakas*, (meaning, 'the protector of flocks') who were the village officials. Their task was to take care of the flocks during the day and in the evening hand them over to their owners by counting their heads. They would leave the flocks in their respective stables.

The cultivated area of the village consisted of individual holdings. The demarcation of these areas was done in a very well-planned manner. Probably there was a cooperative

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irrigation system and the water channels divided the land. Rhys David observed that the irrigation channels were laid out by the people of the community. Its channels formed the boundaries of the individual holding. The headman was in charge of the water supply.

2.5.3 Village System in Mauryan Period

Kautilya, in his *Arthashastra* mentioned that village boundaries should be demarcated by rivers, hill, forest ditches, tank, bunds, and trees of various kinds. He also mentioned that the villages should be situated at a distance of one or two *krosha*, (1 *krosha* = 2 miles) so that villagers could help the members of the other villages in case of a need. Ten villages together formed *samgrahana*, 200 villages together formed the *karnatika*. The *dronamukha* was formed by 400 villages. The higher group above this was the *mahagrama*, formed of 800 villages together. The *mahagrama* was the place of administration and termed as the *sthaimjar*. The *sthaimjar* was the centre of trade and business of all the neighbourhood villages.

Administrative Staff of Villages

Villages had their own system of administration. They had some officials who were given specific duties. They were as follows:

- The Headman with the *Adhyaksha*
- The Accountant with the *Samkhayaka*
- Village official with the *Sthanikas* of different grades
- Veterinary doctors with *Anikasta*
- Village couriers with *Jamgha Karika*
- Officer for sanitation with *Chikitsaka* of village
- House trainer with *Ashwa-Damak*

During Chandragupta's rule, the villages were categorized into three types based on their areas. The largest or biggest ones were called *jyeshtha*. The middle ones the *madhyama*, and the smaller ones were the *kanishtha*.

The other categorizations based on state revenue are:

- **Gramagras:** These were the ordinary villages which paid usual revenues.
- **Pariharak villages:** These villages were revenue free. These were those villages which were given to priests or teachers, who could collect taxes or revenue which was utilized for education, and for spreading *dharma*. These villages did not pay taxes as the money collected was used for public welfare.
- **Ayudhuja villages:** These villages were also revenue free. They were the ones which trained soldiers for army at the time of war. They were not to pay any taxes or revenue but rather train soldiers for war as and when the need arose.
- Villages which paid taxes in kind, like agricultural produce, animals, forest products, gold, silver, pearls and corals. The other items which were given were minerals extracted from the earth or in the form of labour provided when such a need arose in the kingdom.

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2.5.4 Administration in Villages in India during the Beginning of the 19th Century

According to the famous Select Committee Fifth Report of 1812, Dr Mathai gave the list of officers and public servants in a Madras village. It was in the following pattern:

- **Headman:** He was in charge of general superintendence, collection of village revenue, in charge of police work, and settlement of village disputes.
- **Accountants:** He was in charge of cultivation account and maintenance of registers of allied affairs.
- **Watchman:** These were of two types, the superior and the inferior. The first one had to get information of crimes and to escort and protect persons travelling from one village to another. The activities of the inferior one were confined to the village and included, among others, guarding the crops and assisting in measuring them.
- **Boundary man:** He was responsible for prescribing the limits of the village and giving evidences in cases of disputes.
- **Superintendent of the tank and water courses:** He was responsible for distribution of irrigation water.
- **Priest:** He was responsible for the performance of village rituals.
- **Schoolmaster:** His responsibility was to teach the village children to read and write 'on the sand'.

2.5.5 Significance of Village Studies

Following are the reasons that make study of villages important:

- India lives in villages and the villages are the centers of Indian culture. It is basically a country of villages. In the first census of 1951, after independence, the rural population had a sharp shift towards urban life reducing the per- centage of rural people to 82.7. According to 1991 census three-fourth of India's population (74.3%) lives in villages. This is the reason why villages are the centers of Indian culture. It is very important to know these villages to be able to know what India actually is.
- Poverty can be removed when agriculture is improved. India is not only a country of villages but its economy is also mainly agriculture. Study of villages can help to formulate various programmes for village improvement and poverty eradication.
- Solution of rural problems can bring about change in the rural society. Through village studies, we can come to know about the problems that village societies face. This knowledge can help the government solve the problems. If after independence, the rural society is changing then it is due to the various studies of the villages. Once the problems of rural life are solved the face of the country also changes. It is here that Rural Sociology can play an important part.
- Country and its society can be reconstructed only through rural reconstruction. Rural studies provide us with the knowledge of the rural society and its problems. It also helps us to solve these problems and in the process help to reconstruct the rural society.
- Village community has to be studied in totality in the interest of democratic decentralization. India can improve economically and politically only when decentralization of economic and political powers take place. Rural study helps to formulate programmes to do so.

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2.5.6 Some Village Studies in India

Many village studies have been conducted over the years. Famous sociologists, like M.N. Srinivas, S.C. Dube and A.R. Desai has been responsible for many village studies in India. Some of their studies have been discussed in this section.

Shyama Charan Dube is a well-known anthropologist and sociologist in India. His application of the structural-functional approach for studying the Indian village community brought him great respect and reputation. S.C. Dube's *Indian Village* is a traditional account of Shamirpet. Shamirpet is located in the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh. Dube has written about the details of the village and concludes that despite being more than a dozen castes in the village, it still displayed integration. His study of Shamirpet provides description of social, economic and ritual structure, family level living, etc. The village had a population of 2,494 including 340 Muslims and 19 ethnic groups belonging to Hindus. The field data was collected from historical, geographical, political and sociological perspectives on different aspects of social, economic and religious practices of village in India.

According to his study, S.C Dube identified six factors that contributed to the differentiation in status of the village community of Shamirpet. They were religion and caste, landownership, wealth, position in the government service and village organization, age and distinctive personality traits. He found that it was difficult for the villagers to claim a higher ritual status. Dube pointed out the manner in which the caste panchayat of the lower castes worked as unions to secure employment and strengthen the bargaining power with the land owning dominant castes.

His work provides a reasonably adequate introduction to the historical, geographical and political setting as well as the social, economic and religious practices of a village in India.

According to Dubey, no village in India is completely autonomous and independent, for it is always one unit in a wider social system and is a part of an organized political society. An individual is not the member of a village community alone; he also belongs to a caste, religious group or tribe which has a wider territorial spread and comprises several villages.

Based on his research, S. C. Dube gave certain indicators of the concept of social development. They are discussed as follows:

- Social development is a shift in emphasis from the individual to larger collectivities, including the poor who constitute the majority.
- It is a modification in the strategies of planning and implementation to take account of the interface between economic and cultural objectives.
- The concept is a redefinition of social goals in terms of the satisfaction of human needs and improvements in the quality of life.
- The formation of indicators to evaluate social progress and to assess emerging social trends.
- The setting up of monitoring mechanisms to ensure that growth level is sustainable and at no point exceeds the outer limits.
- The anticipation of growth-related and other problems and preparedness to handle them quickly and also effectively.
- The idea of social development is understood as a creation of ethos in which it is possible to question and rethink the appropriateness and adequacy of existing social formations and to work towards their restructuring.

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Dube on Indian Society

Dube wrote about contemporary Indian society in his book *Indian Society*, which was published in 1990. In the book, Dube drew upon different sources to write about Indian society of the past and present. According to Dube, present Indian society has different contradictions that seem to be mystifying. It is a society of enormous depravations, but it also has some islands of prosperity. It is a culture embedded in spirituality, yet, at the same time, the ruling classes, have set standards of brazen consumption that seem almost unethical.

Through his various studies on Indian society, Dube concluded that Indian society is both continuous and changing. Dube believes that the reason for change must be sought in an array of factors. So far state compulsion has been instrumental in bringing about little social and cultural change in the village community. The factors of utility, convenience and availability have played a critical role in bringing several new elements into the life of the community. In the family milieu, changed conditions and changing attitudes of the people have brought about some important variations. With the changing economy, in place of their traditional occupations, people have started accepting other vocations. Family bonds have been under stress and are not as strong or cohesive as they used to be. There are several reasons for the erosion of kinship: modern education, new occupations, geographical mobility, impact of mass media, and so on. Another important change has been greater freedom of choice in marriage, especially for men. Dube states that the influence of the city has brought about adjustment and modification in several spheres, but the need of balancing different extremes in the organization of the community has so far prevented any drastic structural change in Indian village communities.

Looking at the country broadly, Dube suggests three trends in Indian society. These are:

- The regional culture, founded on the traditions, customs and life-ways of the culture area.
- The national culture, consisting of some pan-Indian characteristics inspired by the national renaissance, cemented by the struggle against British colonialism as well as by social and economic reform and sustained by the will to find a rightful place in the community of countries; the components in this group being partly revivalists and partly conscious innovations.
- Taking on characteristics and components from western technology and culture. Traditional social institutions and culture, traditions and life-ways continue to be idealized. The belief is that these began long ago and people salvation lies in following these traditions, which are divinely ordained.

Another Sociologist who has actively studied Indian villages is M.N. Srinivas. He was Professor of Sociology at Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda and University of Delhi; and Senior Fellow, Sociology Unit at Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore; and J.R.D. Tata Visiting Professor, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore.

He was involved in extensive field study of the Coorgs between 1940-42. In his study, he describes the concept of functional unity by explaining the interaction in ritual context of different castes of Coorgs, mainly Brahmins (priests), Kaniyas (astrologers and magicians) and Bannas and Panikas (low castes). Srinivas studies on caste and religion (1952, 1959, 1962, and 1966) highlighted not only their structural-functional aspects, but also the dynamics of the caste system in rural setting. He proposed conceptual tools

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like 'dominant caste', 'sanskritization- westernization' and 'secularization' to understand the realities of inter-caste relations and also to explain their dynamics.

Srinivas conducted small regional studies rather than the construction of grand theories. In this context, field work plays an important role to understand the nativity of the rural Indian society. He is best known for his work on religion, village community, caste and social change He was influenced by Radcliffe-Brown's notion of structure, who was his teacher at Oxford.

He studied Indian society as a 'totality', a study which would integrate the various groups in its interrelationship, whether tribes, peasants or various cults and sects. Writings of Srinivas are based on intensive field work in South India in general and Coorgs and Rampura in particular.

Srinivas conducted the study of Rampura – a Mysore village – which gave him the concept of 'dominant caste'. In *The Remem- bered Village*(1976), Srinivas discusses social and economic changes, which have taken place in Rampura. He says:

> Technological change occupied a prominent place in the life of the people of Rampura soon after independence. Technological change, of course, went hand in hand with economic, political and cultural changes.

The main aim of Srinivas has been to understand Indian society. He believed that Indian society is essentially a caste society. He studied religion, family, caste and village in India extensively. Srinivas though talks about economic and technological devel- opment, all through his works he also appeals for change in caste, religion and family. He discusses westernization and modernization as viable paradigms of changes.

From his studies, Srinivas also concluded that the social world of the woman was restricted to household and kinship group. Whereas, the men inhabited a more heterogeneous world. In the Telangana village, Dube observed that women were not allowed to participate in activities held in public spaces. He said that the villagers considered walking with eyes downcast by the women respectable. The rules of patriarchy were clearly laid out. After caste gender was the most important factor that governed the division of labour in the village. Masculine and feminine pursuits were clearly distinguished.

Rural Sociology in India (1969) by A.R. Desai is a very interesting work in the field of rural sociology. Desai has provided an interesting introduction to rural sociology in India in its first part. The remaining 16 parts contain village studies done by different an- thropologists and sociologists. The book has a comprehensive narration and analysis in the domain of historical aspects of village life, Indian village com- munity, rural stratification, agrarian unrest, land reforms, rural industries and institutions, Panchayati Raj, Bhoodan and Gramdan movements, village social change, village studies and theories of agrar- ian development.

A.R. Desai was deeply influenced by the Marxist school of thought which he used to understand the diverse aspects of Indian social reality. In 1969, Desai edited a volume on *Rural Sociology in India*, which was a major turning point and pacesetter in the field of agrarian studies. He also published an anthology in 1979 that included studies on peasant struggles, which had also been carried out by historians and social scientists of diverse orientations. Some of his other important works include *The Social Background of Indian Nationalism* (1948); *Slums and Urbanization of India* (1970, 1972); *State and Society in India* (1975), *India's Path of Development* (1984), and so on.

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Desai closely examined the theories of Marx and Engels, as well as Trotsky, and tried to use the Marxist framework to comprehend the different aspects of the complex Indian social reality. In India, Desai is considered to be one of the forerunners in introducing the modern Marxist method to empirical investigations involving bibliographical and field research. Thus, his primary contribution to Indian sociology was his stress on the Marxist approach and his use of the dialectical method to study Indian society. Desai stated that the Marxist method helped one to raise pertinent questions, conduct researches in the correct direction, articulate adequate hypotheses, evolve proper concepts, adopt and combine suitable research techniques and locate the central tendencies of transformation with its major implications.

Desai's analysis of Indian society was radically different from other Indian sociologists. Desai rejected any interpretations of tradition with reference to religion, rituals and festivities. As a doctrinaire Marxist, for Desai, tradition was basically a secular phenomenon that originates and develops in social institutions like the family and the village. Desai also does not find the origin of tradition in western culture. He believed that the emerging contradictions in the Indian process of social transformation arose primarily from the linkages between the capitalist bourgeoisie, the rural petty-bourgeoisie as well as a state apparatus that was drawn from similar social roots. As a Marxist thinker, property relations was the most vital relationship in his analysis of society, as well as the nature of society that he strived for. However, for Desai this approach did not 'demand a crude reducing of every phenomenon to economic factors. It does not deny the autonomy, or prevalence of distinct institutional and normative features peculiar to a particular society'.

Moreover, in his studies of nationalism, analysis of rural social structure, the nature of economic and social policies of change in India and the structure of the state and society, Desai tried to expose the contradictions and anomalies in policies and process of change resulting from the capitalistic – bourgeoisie interlocking of interest in Indian society. According to Desai, the polarization of class interests, especially of the bourgeoisie in India, is the foundation of modern society in India. It is thus inherent in the class contradictions and the logic of its dialectics. This class contradiction has been thoroughly examined by Desai in several of his writings.

Desai applied market methods in his treatment of Indian social structure and its processes. In his books introduction to *Rural Sociology in India* Desai suggests that he makes explicit use of the historical–systematic and Marxist methods of analysis for the understanding of rural society and its problems. He also refers to the contribution of a few American sociologists who contributed to the systematic methodology for the study of the rural and urban phenomena. The central thrust of his analysis of agrarian society was to suggest how the state transformed the agrarian structure from pre-capitalist to capitalist relationships. This occurred as a result of state intervention through various legislations and developmental programmes. As he stated, 'the overall thrust of the agrarian policy of the rulers has been to eliminate parasitic, absentee intermediaries in the form of various categories of zamindars and absentee landlords and to create in their place classes of agricultural capitalists, rich farmers and viable middle proprietors directly linked to the state'. Desai believes that the consequence of these policies is that sharp differentiations have taken place among the peasant class, and the condition of small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers has deteriorated.

Quite close to the studies of Dube, Srinivas and Marriott, is the edited work of D.N. Majumdar, *Rural Profiles*. It includes contribu- tors belonging to the disciplines of sociology and social anthropology. F.G. Bailey's (1957) study of two villages in Odisha

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brings out the problem of caste and class formation. Bailey employs structural-functional method and analyses the rural life in the context of changing agrarian structure.

D.N. Majumdar (1958), in the study of Mohana, a village in Uttar Pradesh, considers village as a concept, a way of life. Majumdar believes that a village as a whole, is an integrated way of living, thinking, and feeling. He found that an Indian village has a special kind of communication system characterised by caste relation.

Majumdar observed in Mohana that the high castes and the lower castes share a similar pattern of life. He felt that there was a kind of consciousness of homogeneity, interdependence, and also a sense of security that was born out of living together and sharing opportunities and crisis.

Another sociologist, G.S. Ghurye (1960) made a new experiment in his village study of Loni or Lonikand. Ghurye argues that the village is interwoven by pervasive role of religion. He has described the structure of the village community, its social organization and the changes brought in it during a period in the field of bio-social life of the people. The vil- lage pattern of living is brought through a description of representative families. In fact, Lonikand is a study unfolding social and cultural change that took place during a long period of 100 years.

Andre Beteille's study of Sripuram is yet another village study which has acclaimed a high reputation in rural sociology. It is an in- tensive study of a multi-caste village in south India. Quite like Ghurye's Lonikand, Sripuram is a study of transformation.

One of the most prominent Marxist sociologists of India, Akshay Ramanlal Desai was born in Nadiad, Gujarat in 1915. His early years were shaped by the ideas of his father Ramanlal Vasantlal Desai, who was a well-known litterateur of the time. As a student, the younger Desai was an active part of the student movements in Baroda, Surat and Bombay. Desai attended the University of Bombay and worked on his doctoral thesis under the guidance of the sociologist G.S. Ghurye. He obtained his PhD in 1946 and married Neera Desai in 1947. Neera Desai was an academic who is considered a pioneer in the field of women studies in India. In the 1960s, Desai developed the field of political sociology in India.

Village studies have become very popular in social anthropology and sociology.

2.6 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- A rural society is a society which is thinly populated. Agriculture is the main occupation of villagers. People living in rural societies lead a very simple life with simple traditions and culture surrounded by a natural environment.
- There is homogeneity in their professions, ways of living, dress and traditions. In such societies, the rate of change is very slow as there is lack of facilities like transportation, technology and communication.
- Community sentiment may be defined as the feeling of unity among the members of a community. In absence of such a unity, no group can claim to be a 'community'.
- Family is the basic unit of Indian social structure. It has an important place in the rural society. Apart from performing various basic and important tasks, the family is also involved in socialization, social control and performs various economic activities.

Check Your Progress

10. What are Samitis?
11. According to Valmiki's Ramayan what are the two types of villages?
12. Who was the connecting thread between the government and the common people?
13. How were the villages categorized during Chandragupta's rule?

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- Internal organizations govern and determine the social and individual life of the rural people in India. Normally all villages have Panchayats, head of which is elected with the consent of all the adult members of the village.
- In rural India, the political behaviour of every individual is mostly governed by religious considerations.
- Religious ideas and thinking is more deep and strong in rural areas than in urban areas. The rural people base their thinking on faith while religion in cities is based on reason.
- The relationships in villages are among a smaller group of people, so they are more direct and personal. Whereas, in cities and towns relationships are numerous and also indirect and impersonal.
- Life in villages is slow and laid back in comparison to cities.
- The fast development and progress in the present times has had a strong influence not only on urban but rural life as well.
- Migration between rural and urban areas has led to a connection between these two ends. People move from rural areas to urban for work.
- Family ties and family system are much stronger in rural areas than in urban. This means that the functions performed by families is steadily decreasing.
- The culture in villages is of static nature. It is not as fine as city culture which is changing constantly.
- In earlier times, it was a common trend that work or profession was governed by the caste of the person. The person whose father followed a certain profession or business also followed the same. Present youngsters are taking up new professions according to their capabilities and opportunities available.
- The folkways can be described as the recognized ways of behaviour and acting in society which arise automatically within a group to meet the problems of social living.
- Sumner applied the term *mores* to those folkways who are considered by the group to be of great significance and, therefore, rather indispensable to its welfare.
- Family plays a decisive role in the material and cultural life of villages and in moulding the psychological characteristics of the rural collectivity.
- The village was the only unit that was stable in spite of problems and troubles. These were stable because of the agrarian's aspect that led to a stabilizing factor in villages. The villages were autonomous in their functioning.
- According to Valmiki's Ramayana, there were two types of villages. The *ghosh* (small villages) and the *gram* (big villages).
- All through the Buddhist texts which date back to the 5th century BC, one gets a reference of agricultural systems and the village communities which were self-governing.
- During Chandragupta's rule, the villages were categorized into three types depending on their areas. The largest or biggest ones were called *jyeshtha*. The middle ones the *madhyama*, and the smaller ones were the *kanishtha*.
- Poverty can be removed when agriculture is improved. India is not only a country of villages but its economy is also mainly agriculture. Study of villages can help to formulate various programmes for village improvement and poverty eradication.

- Solution of rural problems can bring about change in the rural society. Through village studies, we can come to know about the problems that village societies face.
- Village community has to be studied in totality in the interest of democratic decentralization. India can improve economically and politically only when decentralization of economic and political powers take place. Rural study helps to formulate programmes to do so.

2.7 KEY TERMS

- **Rural society:** A rural society is a society which is thinly populated and the main emphasis of which is agriculture.
- **Little Community:** Little Community is a group of people inhabiting a definite locality bound together by the feeling of oneness.
- **Community sentiment:** Community sentiment may be defined as the feeling of unity among the members of a community consequent upon common life.
- **Folkways:** The folkways can be described as the recognized ways of behaviour and acting in society which arise automatically within a group to meet the problems of social living.
- **Mores:** Mores to those folkways who are considered by the group to be of great significance and, therefore, rather indispensable to its welfare.

2.8 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. A rural society is a society which is thinly populated and the main emphasis of which is agriculture. The people living in such societies lead a very simple life with simple traditions and culture surrounded by a natural environment.
2. Community sentiment provides the following three elements:
   - We-feeling
   - Role feeling
   - Sense of dependency
3. Religious ideas and thinking is more deep and strong in rural areas than urban. The rural people base their thinking on faith while the religion in cities is more based on reason.
4. With the urban influence in other areas, it is found that the way the village panchayats exerted an influence on the rural areas is now no longer there. As people are more influenced by the modern developments and thinking, village panchayats are losing their strong hold on the common people like earlier times.
5. The folkways can be described as the recognized ways of behaviour and acting in society which arise automatically within a group to meet the problems of social living.
6. Sumner applied the term *mores* to those folkways who are considered by the group to be of great significance and, therefore, rather indispensable to its welfare.

7. One characteristic of the rural family is that it is generally agriculture-oriented, i.e., a very large majority of its members are engaged in the agricultural occupation.
8. Daniel Thorner rejected the often-described classification of cultivators in rural areas in three categories: landlords, tenants, and labourers. This was on the ground that one and the same man can belong simultaneously to all three of the above mentioned categories.
9. Daniel Thorner has analysed agrarian social structure on the basis of three criteria, viz., (a) income obtained from the soil (i.e., rent, own cultivation, or wages), (b) the nature of rights (i.e., ownership, tenancy, sharecropping and no rights at all), and (c) the extent of fieldwork actually performed (i.e., doing no work, doing partial work, doing total work, and doing work for others).
10. Dr. K. P. Jayaswal, in his pre-eminent study, *Hindu Polity*, wrote that 'national life and activities in the earliest times on record were expressed through popular assemblies and institution'. These gatherings were called *Samitis*, meaning 'meeting together'.
11. According to Valmiki's Ramayana, there were two types of villages. The *ghash* (small villages) and the *gram* (big villages).
12. The *gramani* was the connecting thread between the government and the common people.
13. During Chandragupta's rule, the villages were categorized into three types depending on their areas. The largest or biggest ones were called *jyeshtha*. The middle ones the *madhyama*, and the smaller ones were the *kanishtha*.

2.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. State the role played by the urban areas in influencing the rural areas.
2. State the importance of *mores*.
3. How can rural religion be studied?
4. Which three aspects govern the study of Rural Religion?
5. What do you understand by rituals?
6. What are the types of peasants?
7. How does the ancient sociology describe villages?
8. List the functions of the *gramani*.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Describe the rural society and also discuss its features.
2. Critically analyse the rural-urban differences and continuum.
3. What are the differences between rural and urban areas with respect to social interactions?
4. Evaluate the institution of family, caste system, religion and economy.
5. Discuss the various features of village studies.
6. Write a note on the Indian villages of the Buddhist era.

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2.10 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 RURAL POWER STRUCTURE

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Structure

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 3.4.5 Rural Industrialization and Change in Rural Leadership
 3.4.6 New Emerging Patterns of Rural Leadership
3.5 Summary
3.6 Key Terms
3.7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
3.8 Questions and Exercises
3.9 Further Reading

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In developing countries like India, where majority of the population live in rural areas and are dependent on agriculture for its livelihood and where problems like poverty, unemployment, social and economic inequality exist more pronouncedly in the countryside, the role of public development administration in rural transformation is vital. In India, rural transformation has been one of the most spectacular features during the post-independence period. The process generally implies a change for the overall betterment of rural conditions.

Each country has its own social and political traditions, which are typical to it. Similarly, India too has its own unique system of government. The organization of political system took place over a large period of time to reach its present shape and structure. The rural power structure came into being with the discovery of village panchayats. The word 'panchayat' has its base in the Hindi word *panch* which means five, so panchayat was a council of five members. Panchayat is referred to as the most basic form of government in which the village people are involved. Villages in India have had a village council or association from the very beginning. Mostly the village elders formed the panchayat. *Manu Smriti* has a mention of *gram sangha*. In Chanakya's *Arthashastra* too there is a mention of *gram sangha*. This unit will introduce you to the traditional rural power structure, the concept of dominant caste and Panchayati Raj and the changing patterns of rural leadership.

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outstanding personal abilities, wealth, specialised training or experience. Alternatively, the term elitism could be used to describe a situation in which power is in fact concentrated in the hands of an elite, whether rightly or not. The elite theory of Pareto (1848–1923) is contained in his principal affirmation that 'history is a graveyard of aristocracies'.

- **Pluralist theory of power:** The concept became popular in the context of community power debates in the 1950s and 1960s and continued till 1970s and 1980s in America and was expressed in the writings of Floyd Hunter, Robert Dahl, and Palsy. According to pluralists, power is an ability to influence policy outcome. Dahl responded that there are many different elites involved, who have to work both in contention and in compromise with one another.
- **Five bases of power:** The five bases of power were proposed by the social psychologists French and Raven, in a now-classic study (1959). They developed a scheme of five categories of power which reflected the different bases or resources that power holders rely upon. Two additional bases (informational and connectional) were later added.

  (i) **Coercive power:** Coercive power means the application of negative influences on employees. It might refer to the ability to demote or to withhold other rewards. It's the desire for valued rewards or the fear of having them withheld that ensures the obedience of those under power. Coercive power tends to be the least effective form of power as it builds resentment and resistance within the targets of coercive power. For example, a government employs coercive power when it threatens military actions against another government; but it must have some ability to carry out that threat or the other government must believe that it has the capacity to carry out the threat.

  (ii) **Legitimate power:** Legitimate power refers to power of an individual because of the relative position and duties of the holder of the position within an organization. Legitimate power is formal authority delegated to the holder of the position like supervisor–subordinate relationship, where the supervisor (say in the military) is of a higher rank (legitimately more powerful). However, that supervisor in that same relationship may or may not have referent power, if the subordinate does not respect his authority.

  (iii) **Referent power:** Referent power means the power or ability of the individuals to persuade and influence others. It is based on the charisma and interpersonal skills of the power holder. Here the person under power desires to identify with these personal qualities, and gains satisfaction from being an accepted follower. Nationalism, patriotism, celebrities, mass leaders and widely-respected people are examples of referent power in effect.

  (iv) **Expert power:** Expert power is an individual's power deriving from the skills or expertise of the person and the organization's needs for those skills and expertise. Unlike others, this type of power is usually highly specific and limited to the particular area in which the expert is trained and qualified. For example, a personal assistant who has lower status in the organisation may also possess a degree of high expert power because they have extensive knowledge of how the business operates such as knowing where everything is located or are able to deal with difficult situations.

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  (v) **Reward power:** Reward power depends upon the ability of the power wielder to confer valued material rewards. It refers to the degree to which an individual can give others a reward of some kind such as benefits, time off, desired gifts, promotions or increase in pay or responsibility for example a child is given a prize for earning better grades.

3.2.1 Power Structure in Rural India

Who holds power in the villages? What was the traditional power structure and what is the new power structure that has emerged? The power-holders may be classified into four groups:

- Power based on the ownership and control of land
- Power based on caste
- Power based on majority strength
- Power based on the positions they hold e.g. in panchayats dimension

In the traditional power system, the main dimensions of power system was the zamindari system, the caste system, and the village panchayat. The villagers referred their social, economic and other problems either to the zamindar or to their caste leader or to the village panchayat. In a state like Rajasthan, traditional power structure was feudalistic.

- In other states also, zamindari was hereditary. The jagirdari and zamindari systems were in fact land revenue systems. The kings granted lands to their favourite men like ministers, courtiers and military commanders, etc.
- The jagirs were bigger estates than the zamindaris. A jagirdar was in-between the tiller and the state but behaved like the owner of the land while dealing with the peasants. He collected revenue from peasants for himself and also to look after the military force which he maintained. The zamindars were big landlords but possessed no title.
- The jagirdars levied number of taxes and took a great portion of the produce as land revenue. They discouraged reforms and so- cial awakening.
- Zamindars were those who were assigned land by the feudal chiefs. They had to pay tribute to the ruler. The zamindar in turn rented their land to the landless peasants whom they exploited in every respect. Thus, ownership of land and their economic status were the fundamental sources of power for the jagirdars and zamindars in a village.
- The caste leaders had social status in a village. As the caste councils were very powerful, they could even ostracize defaulters from the caste. The leaders had great power over the members. The village panchayats, which were informal organizations, consisted of village elders from amongst all the major castes in the village. The panchayat met whenever issues involving the interests of the village had to be decided.
- Due to introduction of land reforms after independence, the jagirdari and zamindari systems were abol- ished. This eventually led to the weakening of the traditional power structure and helped to create a new power structure instead. Elected persons with political backing be- came leaders in place of hereditary caste leaders. Individual merit and not caste or class became an important factor in leadership.

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- Yogendra Singh (1961) in his study of changing power structure in Uttar Pradesh villages concluded that the power system has a tendency to incline in favour of the groups which fulfill the economic expectations of the people in the village. Some studies in Haryana and Rajasthan villages conducted in the 1970s and the 1980s showed that linkages with politicians and officials has been instrumental in strengthening the privileged position of the upper classes in rural stratification.
- Andre Beteille noted in his study that power has become independent of class to a greater ex- tent than in the past. Ownership of land is no longer the decisive factor in acquiring power. A.R. Hiraman (1977) has pointed out that the distribu-tion of power and authority in the village does not show any correlation with landholding or caste.

  Iqbal Narain and P.C. Mathur's study in Rajasthan (1969) concluded that the upper class continues to have a monopoly of leadership but new leadership of younger age group has also emerged at the village level.

3.2.2 Dominant Caste and the Emergence of Elites

Sociologist, M. N. Srinivas, wrote an essay on the social system of a Mysore village in which he used the term 'dominant caste'.

Srinivas worked on this concept further and arrived at conclusions on the basis of his study of Rampura village, in 1948. In the report he prepared in 1955, he defined 'dominate caste' as follows:

The concept of dominant caste, which has emerged in recent sociological research is important in this connection. A caste is dominant when it wields economic or political power and occupies a fairly high position in hierarchy (even in the traditional system, a caste which acquired economic and political power did succeed in improving its ritual status).

According to Srinivas, all Indian villages had a dominant caste; it is a predominant concept. He spoke of the Gounder, Padayachi and Mudaliar castes of Tamil Nadu, the Nairs of Kerala, the Marathas of Maharashtra, the Patidars of Gujarat, the Reddy and Kamma groups of Andhra Pradesh, etc. In the northern parts of India as well there are the Jats, Ahirs, Giyars and Rajputs, which are dominant castes. According to Srinivas, the traditional superior castes were able to dominate because of their high numbers and Western education. Their acquired knowledge pushed them ahead of other castes because of the modernization and development they got acquainted with.

Srinivas further reinforced the fact that 'strength in numbers' was an important factor which made a caste dominant in a particular area, even more so with the introduction of adult suffrage. The leaders of the dominant castes turned out to be of great help to the political parties in securing votes. But the traditional forms of dominance have not entirely disappeared and nor has dominance shifted fully to the numerically strongest caste. There is no doubt, however, that there has been a shift, which has been characterized by inter-group tensions. However, what is true and rather significant is the fact that in several parts of the country, there are certain castes which are authoritatively overriding.

According to Srinivas, the characteristic of a dominant caste are as follows:

- It has power, both economic and political.
- It is placed high in the caste hierarchy.
- It wields strength in terms of numbers.

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In 1966, he reviewed his earlier definition, as follows: 'For a caste to be dominant, it should own a sizable amount of the arable land locally available, have strength of numbers, and occupy a high place in the local hierarchy. When a caste has all the attributes of dominance, it may be said to enjoy a decisive dominance.'

Let us discuss all the above points in detail:

- **Economic and political power:** The power possessed by a caste depended on the land owned by it. This is because, with more land in its possession, the agricultural produce of that caste increases. With the increase in size of land, the irrigation facilities also improved and advanced. This, in turn, had a positive effect on the produce. With more property to look after, the owners of large tracts of lands, were in a position to employ labourers to work on their fields. So, the workers on their fields ended up being subservient to the landowners. Also, since these land owners used better agricultural techniques in terms of manure, fertilizers, modern implements and irrigation facilities, the yield was high and there was a marked improvement in the overall situation of the village.

According to Yogendra Singh (1994), dominant castes prevail in most south Indian villages. This is due to higher land ownership. The dominant castes of south India are Brahmins and Vokkaligas. The Havik Brahmins of Toltagadde in the Maland area of Mysore, are a dominant caste just like the Smartha Brahmins of Kumbapettai village of Tanjore (Tamil Nadu). The dominant caste of village Rampura is Vokkaliga.

Yogendra Singh further emphasized that the above castes were taken to be dominant because of their high economic status due to high land holding. For instance, the Brahmins of Toltagadde had the complete ownership of all the cash crops of the area. Similarly, the Kumbapettai Brahmins owned almost the entire land in the village. In Uttar Pradesh also the situation is similar with the Rajputs in the eastern part owning 82 per cent of the land. The Vaghela Rajputs of Cassandra village in Gujarat have total control of all the land in the village. Clearly these castes are the dominant ones because of the high land ownership.

People belonging to the dominant castes have better education because of which they have stronger control over the other villagers. As a result, they have more control in the Panchayati Raj. This further increases their economic and political power.

- **High rank in caste hierarchy:** The castes, which occupy the top rungs of the hierarchy always enjoy a status of dominance. The Brahmins and Rajputs have always enjoyed more importance, respect and a higher status because they sit on the top rungs of the caste ladder. They are the ones called upon to play the most important roles in all significant events, especially religious functions and ceremonies. The Rajputs have always been the biggest land owners in villages, and therefore, they have been seen as the feudal lords.

However, in recent times, the absolute power of the Brahmins and Rajputs has become less. There are reservations for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward classes and women as well. This has resulted in a significant shift in the concentration of power. The numerically strong, traditional scheduled castes who had been marginalized till recently have now gained power. They have taken advantage of new educational and reservation policies and have grabbed job opportunities too. Therefore, today a higher status in the

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hierarchy is not a necessary condition for being a dominant caste. The new reservation policies have helped the castes which were once lagging behind, to enjoy the status of dominant castes.

- **Numerical strength:** In the past, the number of members in a caste did not really play a role in its being a dominant caste. With time, however, numbers have become an important criterion. The reason for this is that during elections the vote bank plays a crucial part. The deciding factor for any candidate in elections is the number of votes cast in his favour. People of a caste usually vote for the candidate belonging to their caste. Not only the village but also other people of the same caste from different villages unite and vote for the person belonging to their caste.

  The members of the leading/main caste of one village enjoy dominance because of their networking with other important people. These castes have an influence on other regionally dominant castes. They all combine to form a strong powerful group and increase their political consolidation as well.

- **Land ownership:** According to Srinivas, land ownership is another very important factor, which makes a caste a dominant caste. He said, 'Landownership confers not only power but prestige, so much so that, individuals who have made good in any walk of life tend to invest in land. If land ownership is not always an indispensable passport to high rank, it certainly facilitates upwards mobility'.

Criticism

The concept of 'dominant caste' as given by Srinivas received some criticism too. It is said that the concept of dominant caste was derived from African studies on dominant class. This was widely criticized by social anthropologists.

In the years between 1950 and 1960, rural society witnessed lot of changes in terms of academic development. Education was the main steering power behind all progressive changes.

The criticism to the concept was mainly the following:

- **'Dominant caste' exists only in traditional villages:** In the ancient past, a dominant caste was the one which had all the power. This was mainly because they possessed large tracts of land. Also, some castes, such as the Brahmins and Rajputs were showered with gifts by feudal lords as well as by the British in the form of land. This gradually made them the strongest of the castes.

  However, once land reforms were introduced, and once there was land ceiling and abolishment of the Zamindari and Jagirdari systems, the situation changed drastically. Land ownership ceased to be the main criterion for caste dominance. Instead, political power became the important reason or cause for becoming a dominant caste. According to Andre Beteille:

  The powerful families in the past were the big landowning families. These included the principal Brahmin families, and among the non- Brahmin families, the Marathas. Today, the political power wielder in the village or outside is not as closely tied to ownership of land as in the past. New bases of power have emerged which are, to some extent, independent of both caste and class. Perhaps most important among these is the strength of numerical support.

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Similar was the observation of D. N. Majumdar, who carried out a study of Mohana Village in Uttar Pradesh, in 1958. He found that earlier the Brahmins and Thakurs formed the dominant castes, but with changes in land ownership, the power shifted. Abolition of the Zamindari system changed the situation totally. The concept of 'dominant caste' now remains limited to only areas like the tribal villages where economic power still lies with the handful of dominant groups. Since these areas have not really been affected by political changes or modernization, they can claim to be following the traditional system of 'dominant castes'.

3.3 PANCHAYATI RAJ

Panchayati Raj is the name given to the old term 'village panchayat' or 'District Board'. Village panchayat is the name given to rural self-government. Panchayati Raj basically acts as a connecting link between rural people and the state. Panchayat comes from the Hindi word *panch* meaning 'five'. So panchayat means a 'council of five'. Panchayat is referred to as the most basic or grass root level of government. Villages in India had a kind of village council or association of the residents. Mostly the village's elders formed the panchayat.

Panchayati Raj discusses the decentralization of democratic power and the group of people who hold the power in this system, and the effect of the programme which are undertaken by the Panchayati Raj. All these aspects are explained in this section.

3.3.1 Village Panchayat in Ancient India

Village panchayats are the most important pillars of the political structure of India. The Vedic period shows us the presence of these panchayats. E. B. Havel, the great historian shares, 'The political organization of the Aryan tribes was a democracy, based on the organization of the village.' In a community, members from various villages were generally federated for purposes of mutual protection under the rule of a Raja or a King, sometimes elected or sometimes hereditary, were vested with supreme authority and were responsible to subject Aryan common law and tradition.

The old village panchayat used to perform judicial functions and was also responsible for the collection of taxes, public work and maintaining internal security. But with the coming of the British in India, this freedom of villages was usurped. The power became totally centralized. By the middle of the 19th century, these ancient village governments had almost completely disappeared.

Vedic India was definitely agriculture based, nonetheless, the rural administration was very well organized. The headman of the village and the assembly formed the core of administration unit. The *sabha* and *samiti* were the popular village assemblies. Even during the Mauryan period the provincial's administration was well developed. This was observed and rebounded by Professor Dikshitar in his book *The Mauryan Polity*. With lord Ripon came a revolution in the field of local self-government. On 18 May 1882 the Ripon Resolution of local self-government was passed. This Resolution was passed with the objective to mobilize administration in villages and towns. This Resolution was to be an instrument of political and popular education. He intended to give internal autonomy to all local bodies. This created a two tier system with district boards and sub-district boards, based on sub-division or Tehsil. The sub-division was maximum in its area. District Board was taken as the unit of rural local government. Ripon, however,

Check Your Progress

1. How does social science define power?
2. Who propounded the concept of 'dominant caste'?
3. List the characteristics of a dominant caste as specified by M. N. Srinivas.

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faced a lot of resistance to implement it fully and so it remained ineffective for a long time. The Royal Commission on Decentralization (1907) reported that very negligible development took place in 25 years after the Ripon Resolution was passed. When the causes of failure were analysed, it was recommended that the panchayat would be re-established as the vehicle of village government. The Commission insisted on active village councils but the in trial attempts met with failures. The census of 1911 in U.P and Bombay revealed that no system of village panchayat existed.

The 20 August 1917 declaration of the British government promised gradual development of self-governing bodies. The Montfort Report of July 1918, was an exercise in self-realization. The Report repeated the recommendation of the decentralization commission with great force. The local bodies needed to have nominated members not more than one-fourth of the total.

3.3.2 Recent Development of Panchayati Raj

During the ancient and medieval periods, the village panchayats were well-developed organizations but by the end of the medieval period, they had completely died out. It was during the British rule that steps were taken to revive the panchayat system.

Due to the sustained efforts of the Indian National Congress in 1919, under the Government of India Act, when different ministries were formed, various provinces passed the Village Panchayat Acts.

During the British period, major rural activities were carried out by the *gram* panchayats. But these were not very successful because the area under the panchayat was huge and funds given to them were very limited. Because of this reason the *gram* panchayats could not become a link between the rural people and the district bounds.

The expected progress in this area was not very spectacular. The Act of 1935 established provincial autonomy and provided more opportunities for development of local institutions but the village bodies remained weak and ineffective. The only work they did was to settle petty quarrels and nothing more than this.

Gandhian Influence

Mahatma Gandhi on 2 May 1931 wrote in *Young India* and expressed his anger at the activities of some panchayats. By then, the village panchayats had become the main place of the village upliftment programmes. The duty of these organizations was to look after the rural education, rural health and general cleanliness of villages. Gandhi mobilized the panchayat by non-official agencies under his constructive programmes. These bodies became the indispensable parts of the national independence movement.

3.3.3 Post-Independence Era

India had a weak system of rural government. The Constitution of India (vide Article 4) directed the state to establish village panchayats and develop as units of self-government. Attempts were made to establish panchayats, so legislations were passed concerning this issue. By the end of the First Five Year Plan, there were 1,23,670 panchayats in India, covering more than half of the total number of villages. The government hoped to cover all the villages in the Second Five Year Plan. However, the Plan did not report much progress. The experiences of the Five Year Plans were not very encouraging as serious flaws were revealed. In order to remove these defects, fundamental changes were required.

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So keeping all these in mind the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee was formed. This Committee recommended democratic decentralization.

3.3.4 Balwant Rai Mehta Committee

The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee found that when the Community Development Programmes (CDPs) came to the *gram* panchayat level, they were not considered programmes of the village people but the government. It was seen that if the rural people did not participate in these programmes, they would not be successful. It was suggested by the Committee that the villages should be given the power to analyse their own problems and needs. Then based on this, plans for improvement should be implemented.

The eminent members of the B. R. Mehta Committee were Dr S. D. Sharma, Phool Singh Thakur and B. G. Ras and later G. Ramchandran was also taken as a member. The findings of the Committee were based on their visit to 58 blocks in 13 states. The discussions with dignitaries took place and several recommendations were drawn. The most important one was the establishment of three tier system of democratic decentralization for administration.

The three tiers would be formed by the panchayat, block and *zila* level. Block was recommended as the basic unit. It would look after the planning and organization and also it would neither be too large nor too small. The next tier would be the panchayat *samiti*. This would form the middle tier. The next or third tier would be at district level. This would be the *zila parishad*. This would replace the district, though initially it was thought that this system would not be successful, but soon it was seen as a very revolutionary and successful step.

The Panchayati Raj was formed on the basis of the recommendations of the Mehta Committee. The objectives of the Panchayati Raj were as follows:

- To represent the felt needs of the village community
- To provide power to the non-officials for the development of village communities
- To give the power of implementation or execution to the people

Therefore, the Panchayati Raj made the village development programmes. The system of Panchayati Raj was first of all implemented in Rajasthan. It was on 2 October 1959, that the Panchayati Raj was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister in Nagaur in Rajasthan. Other states also took steps to start implementing the universal pattern in India soon.

The members of all the three tiers of the Panchayati Raj interacted with each other. The working of the three levels was taken care of by the non-government officials. These officials took guidance from the officials to implement programmes. But soon problems cropped up since the members of *gram sabha* were mostly illiterate and so they could not exercise any power. Again the problem remained as it was, hence in order to find solution to this problem another committee was formed called the Ashok Mehta Committee.

3.3.5 Ashok Mehta Committee

Ashok Mehta, an economist was made the head of this Committee. He analysed the loopholes of the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee recommendations. In 1977, Ashok Mehta Committee recommended a fundamental change in the Panchayati Raj system. It was

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suggested that the Panchayati Raj should not only be taken as an implementing agency but a political institution.

In order to implement this change, it was necessary that an amendment in the Constitution should be done. It took more than 10 years to make this change in the form of 64th Constitutional Amendment Bill which was, however defeated in the Rajya Sabha. It was in 1992, that the 73rd Amendment Bill was passed in the Parliament. This Bill incorporated the recommendation of the Ashok Mehta Committee.

3.3.6 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act

The Panchayati Raj of the present day differs from the Balwant Rai pattern in two ways. First, the Panchayati Raj was a political institution and not just an implementing body. So, according to the 73rd Amendment Act, political parties were allowed to enter the panchayats. The members were be elected by the political parties.

Second, the present day Panchayati Raj is not merely an implementing body but a decision-making body. The Panchayati Raj takes care of the governance of villages by itself.

Also, the other important aspect of the Panchayati Raj system is that it has given power to women and the weaker section of the village. Women are given a fixed quota for their representation in the Panchayati Raj. The Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) extends a fixed membership to the women and to the weaker sections of villages.

The present Panchayati Raj is constituted under the Constitution and is adopted by all the states. The features of the Act are:

- Panchayats will be political in nature and part of a totally decentralized structure.
- The *gram sabha* will be the life-line or backbone of the Panchayati Raj. The members of this *sabha* would be the voters of the village.
- There will be direct distinctions in all the three tiers: (a) *gram* panchayat at village level (b) panchayati *samiti* at intermediate level, and (iii) *zila parishad* at district level.
- Women will be given a reservation of one-third of the total seats at all levels. Out of this, one-third again shall be reserved for women from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes.
- Each Panchayati Raj will have a term of 5 years. If the panchayat is dissolved by the state, fresh elections will have to be conducted.
- Election to local bodies shall be conducted regularly.
- There would be a separate election commission and finance commission for the PRIs in each state.
- It would be obligatory for the centre to provide funds for the PRIs so that they function properly. Also PRIs would have their own fund raising capacity to generate money for their own smooth functioning.
- Some states like Rajasthan, Haryana and Odisha have debarred some candidates having more than two children.
- Some states like Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Karnataka have the provision for *nyaya* panchayat to settle disputes at these three levels.

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Drawbacks of the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act

As studied earlier, the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act came into force in 1993. It was then that different states amended their laws. Some drawbacks have been pointed out, which are discussed as follows:

- **Illiteracy of women:** The 73rd amendment gives a lot of reservation to women. But the problem is that female literacy rate in India is very low. Due to this reason, the power rests with their male counterparts. These elected women function only according to the dictate of the men, so the whole purpose of women empowerment is lost.
- **Benefit not reaching the needy:** The Act was passed keeping in mind the weaker sections of the society. But the development schemes which were only meant for the weaker sections, benefits the higher layers as well. The higher and more influential or so-called creamy layers are the ones who avail all the schemes while the actual needy people are neglected.
- **Non-availability of women:** Looking at the socio-economic situation of the rural society, one can easily find shortage of women who are capable of handling the responsibilities of the Panchayati Raj. It becomes very difficult to find women who are actually qualified to take up the responsibilities. So in this case, either we have inadequate women members or less qualified women as members of these committees.
- **Corrupt leadership:** In India nothing happens without bribing the officials. In this case the money or funds for various schemes goes into the hands of bureaucrats and not the actual people who need help and other areas of development.

3.3.7 Structure and Functions of the Panchayati Raj Institutions

Structure

In order to meet the objectives of the Panchayati Raj, it was suggested that it should have a structure which would enable the smooth working at the village level. The suggestions regarding the structure of Panchayati Raj were as follows:

- The constitution of Panchayati Raj bodies would be simple so that it could be easily understood by the people.
- The election procedure too would be simple and inexpensive.
- The structure would be broadly based so that maximum number of village people would be associated with the functioning of the Panchayati Raj.
- The membership should neither be too small nor too large. This is because the smaller bodies remain insignificant while large bodies become over dominating.
- The institution should have well-defined area of work and no overlapping should exist.
- There should be a link between each tier of the system. This would ensure that objectives are successfully achieved.
- Political parties should not interfere too much in the functioning of the panchayat.
- The structure of all the Panchayati Raj institutions should be such that it should enable the growth of healthy local leadership.

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Functions

The section which deals with the structure of Panchayati Raj explains that powers are given to each tier so that it can carry out its work smoothly. Along with the powers, each tier has its share of functions or duties to perform. The idea behind the whole system is democratic decentralization. According to the Amendment Act, the elected members of the Panchayati Raj are given freedom to carry out their own decisions but definitely within the framework of the Act.

Some important functions of the Panchayati Raj are as follows:

- Agricultural development and irrigation facilities
- Land reforms
- Eradication of poverty
- Dairy farming, poultry, piggery and fish rearing
- Rural housing
- Provision of safe drinking water
- Social forestry, fodder and fuel
- Primary education, adult education and informal training
- Building of roads and buildings
- Setting up of markets and fairs
- Child and women development
- Welfare of weaker section, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes

Along with the above functions, the other special provisions are:

- Enforcement of prohibition
- Protection of land
- Minor forest produce
- Water resources
- Village markets
- Development

3.3.8 Local Self-Government

Local Self-government means to take care of one's own problems and issues by the local bodies themselves. These local bodies are those which are formed by the people who elect these representatives. This form of government is a strong and effective form of democracy. It gives power to the common masses to choose their own leaders who are from among them. This is effective so that these people who are elected are from among the common people and are well acquainted with their problems.

This form of government is not uncommon in India. During the Vedic period, the *gram samiti* and *gram sabha* were the political structures that took care of the functioning of the village. The *gramani* took care of the overall affairs of the village, he was the headman.

Even during the Mauryan period, *gramas* (villages), *nigams* (small towns) and *bhojkas* were present. The local self-government enjoyed full autonomy as they were free to make their own decisions.

The local self-government existed in the British period but it was limited to the Presidency towns like Bombay. It was in 1687, that the Court of Directors ordered the formation of a corporation in Madras. This corporation was constituted by both British and Indian members. The corporation was given power to impose taxes for the building of guildhall, schools, jail and also providing salary to the corporation members. But this step was not successful as people refused to pay taxes. It was according to the Charter Act of 1793 that municipal institutions became included legally in the Municipality.

After the coming of Lord Ripon as the Viceroy of India, the institution of local self-government got a great boost. The main improvement was that the process of nominating members to the Board was replaced by the election method. All this happened in 1882. Because of these revolutionary steps taken by Lord Ripon he is rightfully called the 'Father of Urban Local Government'.

After the local self-government institutions were formed in urban areas, on similar lines were formed the government for the rural areas. It was in 1992 that Panchayati Raj Institutions were formed in the country. According to the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution, Panchayati Raj Institutions got constitutional status. From 1996 onwards, it was adopted in the tribal states of Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Maharashtra. This Act introduced the Panchayati Raj in all states.

However, according to the 74th Amendment of the Constitution which was adopted in 1992, the uniform form of structure of Municipal Corporation, Municipal Councils and Nagar Panchayats has been adopted. In the rural areas, the form of local self-government is the Panchayati Raj Institution which has been discussed in detail in the previous sections.

3.4 CHANGING LEADERSHIP

It is rightly said 'India lives in its villages'. More than 70 per cent of the population live in rural areas. Hence, there is more pressure on land, with reference to employment. At present over fifty per cent of the people in rural areas live below the poverty line.

In developing countries like India, where majority of the population live in rural areas and are dependent on agriculture for its livelihood and where problems like poverty, unemployment, social and economic inequality exist more pronouncedly in the countryside, the role of public development administration in rural transformation is vital. In India, rural transformation has been one of the most spectacular features during the post-independence period. The process generally implies a change for the overall betterment of rural conditions.

Rural leadership creates a very strong link between the policy makers, government administration and the society, as well as the rural masses. Many researches aimed at identifying new and emerging leadership trends in the rural Indian society. Sociologists have examined the impact and influence of a few selected social, educational and cultural developments in the area of rural leadership.

There are several projects and programmes being operated by the government to evaluate the effect of leadership training programmes in many Indian states. With the help of state governments, and the department of Panchayati Raj, the attitude of the village people towards women leadership is changing. These programmes seek to design and evaluate additional negotiation training modules to further empower women leadership and equip new leaders by strengthening their work efficiency.

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Check Your Progress

4. Fill in the blanks.
   (i) Panchayati Raj basically acts as a connecting link between _____ and the _____.
   (ii) On _____ the Ripon Resolution of local self-government was passed.
5. Who were the members of the B. R. Mehta Committee?
6. What was the fundamental change recommended by the Ashok Mehta Committee?

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The key objectives of these programmes are limited to:

- Improving the process and quality of decision-making
- Efficiency in implementation of public programmes at the village level, including the quality and quantity of public goods provided and villagers' reported satisfaction with public programmes
- Creating a good image of women as leaders
- Better provision of goods preferred specifically by women
- Intervention at ground level

Development is an overall outcome of multiple factors, promoting and encouraging change. It is, therefore, affected by the overall situation which exists wherever development is sought. In fact, if viewed with a broad (and perhaps more realistic) perspective, development administration does not include only those institutions which are working directly for it, rather Regulatory Administration, Management for Infrastructure Institution and Agriculture Administration are also integral parts of it. Relatively, the authoritative functioning of the *Patwari* and the police, have been relatively less successful in the field of electrification, transportation and communication, mutual trust and distrust relationship between the co-operative agriculture and administration functionaries (the VEW and the cooperative societies) and the people themselves are a matter of concern in the field of development administration. During the 1950s and 1960s, development administration was influenced by the early theoretical approaches to development. Administration believed that:

- Development was desirable
- Development could be planned, directed, and controlled by public agencies
- Poverty could be eliminated by improving the quality of public goods and services
- Obstacles to development could be overcome

Development and administration were primarily viewed as economic, with little concern for equitable distribution of social benefits.

Today, development administration is less bound to western approaches of development. The focus is an indigenous development that is sustainable and that meets the basic needs of the people. During the British rule in India, the system of administration was involved in keeping up with the needs of the rulers. However, it did not consider the needs of development administration, with the results that it could not be established as an agent of socio-economic change. With the advent of independence, when the nature and size of bureaucracy underwent a noticeable turn, the massive onus of development was so far convened merely with non-development duties like maintaining law and order or collecting revenues from the people. While viewing the problem from this angle, one wonders whether a colonial system of administration, which came into existence for the purpose of carrying out non-development work, was capable of shouldering the responsibility of organizing and executing various programmes connected with development of rural leadership and projects by imbibing the spirit of democratic values and mobilization.

3.4.1 Change in Castes, Ethnic Group and Major Occupation

One of the important elements of the Indian social structure is the caste system. This system has put restrictions on inter caste marriages and performances of religious sacraments and deeds have been defined in terms of the caste system. One of the

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important features of the caste system in traditional India has been its close association with occupation. Occupations have been categorized as pure and impure and these have been hierarchically grouped.

The information on castes, ethnic groups and major occupations reveals that an overwhelming majority belonging to different castes is associated with agricultural activities which occupy a predominant place in the agrarian economy of the region where the last study was carried out.

As a result of the Green Revolution in the area, the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Other Backward Castes (OBC) work no more for their landowner masters on payment in kind. This is due to the introduction of the Green Revolution as the traditional Jajmani system is declining in these areas.

Respondents who are not involved in agricultural practices are thereby concerned with service, carpentry, tailoring, and their numbers are few. The joint family system has been a very common feature in the rural society of India. In recent decades, the phenomena of modernization and urbanization have brought out many changes in the social scene. The rapid growth of population has put unbearable strain on the agricultural sector which is the main source of sustenance for the rural masses. In turn, it disintegrates the joint family system.

3.4.2 State Intervention and Rural Transformation

Rural development has acquired special significance in countries of the Third World. The developing countries have been facing the task of transforming a traditional society with low levels of literacy, political experience and production. These countries have implemented various developmental plans and strategies to restructure and transform the traditional social structure, in conformity with particular politico-economic goals. India, after independence, has launched vast programmes of planned changes encompassing social, economic and political processes. Among the programmes of rural research-construction, the Community Development and Panchayati Raj Institutions have achieved special impetus.

The main focus of many researchers was to see the extent to which the state as an institution has been able to influence and alter the traditional social structure of the village community and has led to the emergence of a new pattern of economic and political relationship among different groups in the society. For socio-economic upliftment of Indian villages, the union and state governments have launched a number of programmes and projects since 1947. Since independence, the states in India have played a vital role in the process of rural transformation.

In this respect, various Community Development Programmes were launched in India in 1952. The blocks came to be established as units of development administration. The national extension service was established soon thereafter, with a view to reinforce the administrative services to tackle the problems of development and growth. A research for alternative programmes of rural development was then launched. The ever growing need for more food from rapidly growing population introduced the adaptation of intensive Agricultural Development Programmes, high yielding variety programmes and multiple cropping programmes for increasing the production of food grains.

A large number of programmes were introduced in the fourth Five Year Plan (1966-67), which includes adaptation of the target group programmes like Small Farmer Development Agency, Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labours Development Agency

and Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas. Besides, certain areas of development programmes like tribal area development programmes, whole village development programmes, have also been launched.

3.4.3 Panchayati Raj and Other Programmes in Rural Areas

With the introduction of Panchayati Raj and other programmes of rural reconstruction, both, social and political structure in contemporary India, are passing through a period of transition. Simultaneously, other trends like representation of elected people in various organizations, rising pressure for the distribution of economic benefits and facilities, close interaction between processes of economic and political development and emergence of a new class of power elites in the society have led to a shift in the rural social structure. These have greatly influenced the entire process of change. This is to identify the agricultural work and to try to understand the nature and extent of social change.

Developmental programmes have been assigned to Panchayati Raj institutions. Since these institutions consist of elected members, decisions regarding developmental schemes and allocation of funds are taken democratically. The amount of resources being channelled through these institutions in the recent years is enormous. There is intense competition among various groups and individuals to extract maximum resource allocation after having been elected. Elections of these bodies have also been contested quite intensely with a view to get control over them. Factionalism, personnel bickering and rivalries have been reported on the basis of castes, class and class based loyalties.

The recent 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution have been welcomed as it focuses on the political structure, rural leadership and process of rural India, their significance for the vulnerable and weaker sections of the rural society and their participation in the operation of this structure. Women being one of these vulnerable sections in the local government process have come under considerable scrutiny.

Facilities for all methods of family planning are available on a wider scale and at all levels of the health centres and hospitals of rural areas. Apart from sterilization, non-terminal methods like intrauterine device (IUD) and oral pills are popularized, since a large number of young couples are giving preference to these methods (Sixth Five Year plan, 1981-376).

Though, apparently, only developmental role has been assigned to the Panchayati Raj, but its social consequences have been such that one cannot afford to ignore their analysis. It is thus to examine as to what extent, the process of development has been able to transform the traditional social structure, including the transfer of leadership. Since both the processes, namely, development and political awakening, are simultaneously operating, they are of crucial importance to analyse the social background of those groups and individuals that have been associated with these procedures.

3.4.4 Abolition of Zamindari System in India: A Passage for Vital Change

Indian agriculture, at the time of independence, was predominantly feudal in character. Before independence, the system of land tenure in the district was based on Zamindari system, which had given zamindars the judicial right to landownership. Zamindars, who were mostly from the upper castes were the lone owners of the land. All others were their tenants, holding the right to cultivate and paying rent to the zamindars. After

independence, the Zamindari Abolition Act abolished the right of intermediate level of the village land and gave proprietary right to the actual tiller of the land. The abolition of Zamindari system, however, was not very successful in terms of abolishing the huge differences in the ownership of land amongst the land-owning and non-land-owning castes. The abolition of the Zamindari system and the subsequent land reforms were no doubt radical steps to transform the traditional social structure, but they could not bring much change in the existing situation. The enforcement of land reforms legislation enacted by the state government after independence resulted in the distribution of land among landless Harijans and weaker sections of the society. It played a vital role for bringing in changes in rural leadership traditions. The nature of landownership and social relations dependent on it has undergone substantial changes during the last sixty years.

3.4.5 Rural Industrialization and Change in Rural Leadership

Industrialization has played a significant role in the development of rural areas in India. The concept of rural industrialization is a process of development of an area and also of participation by the ruralites working in harmony with the area's factors and agents of growth of industries. The village and the small scale industries consist of traditional village industries like Khadi, handlooms, CERI culture, handicrafts, modern small scale industries and power looms. While traditional industries are generally artisan-based, they are mostly located in the rural areas and provide part-time employment.

Rural industrialization cannot be regarded as a strategic substitute for other critically missing elements of the development process. It cannot replace the need for various kinds of agrarian institutional reforms, in favour of the rural poor and it cannot offset the implication of an impact of unsatisfactory performance in main sectors of the economy.

In recent economic literature and economic thinking, industrialization has been considered as a key to rapid economic development. It offers the prospect of a growing availability of manufactured goods, increased employment opportunities, improved balance of payment position and greater efficiency and modernization throughout the economy. Industrialization is characterized by technological innovation and improvement in technical skills that leads to higher productivity. Rural industries provide additional employment opportunities, raise production and improve economic conditions in rural areas. They are labour intensive. They provide additional employment to men and women. They ensure decentralization of economic power at the hands of few specific classes of the rural society and the elimination of monopolistic exploitation of the weaker sections of the society.

3.4.6 New Emerging Patterns of Rural Leadership

The study of leadership has acquired considerable theoretical and methodological sophistication in comparison with the times when it was thought that leaders were born with particular traits and attributes. Now, leadership is viewed in the social and cultural context, in which it appears. To put it rightly, leadership is regarded as a function of the group of situation. Many significant contributions towards the emergence and strengthening of this trend have come from the fields of sociology and anthropology.

Leadership, which is made up of multi variant factors, while aiming to accomplish the group or community goals, has become an important element within the social system in which it is operating. Changes within a system naturally demands a change in structural elements like leadership. Leadership is an important function of a community's social structure in terms of controlling and influencing the behaviour of others in a community.

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In the changing social structure, from the traditional to the modern order, leadership is also prone to change.

Rural leadership plays an important role in moulding the social, political and economic life of a village community. Change within the system will naturally necessitate a change in the structural elements of leadership. In the international concept, the role of leadership in community involvement in action programmes is also a responsible dynamic aspect of the community. As the social relationship depends upon the type of structure of a village, hence it is related to the village social structure.

Social structure has been considered as an arrangement of the relation of parts to the whole, in an ordered way to represent the distributive pattern over the network of inter-personal relationship. Leadership, therefore, depends upon the type of social structure of the community. In a changing village structure, the leadership may constitute a traditional modern continuum.

For a better study of the problem, it will be appropriate to make an analysis of the existing knowledge available on leadership. Rose and Henry, while revealing researches on leadership have drawn attention to three theories of leadership: (i) Trait or the great men theory (ii) leadership as a function of the group (iii) leadership as a function of the situation, in which the group is placed. For proper understanding of the subject, it has been considered important to consider all three aspects of leadership. Since a group consists of individual members, individual personality traits make different contributions by each member of the group.

It cannot be denied that to perform the function of leadership, an individual must exhibit, as part of the personality and character, some qualities which distinguish him/her from other members of the group. However, leadership is regarded as a desired activity and it has been also considered as a relation between an individual and a group, built around some common interests and behaviour as directed or determined by the leader.

Leaders occupy a special status in the group. They are considered to be a central figure by all group members who find in them qualities which can help members of the group to achieve the desired goals. Leadership aims at maintaining integration and continuity of the group structure. The problem highlighted by this study are:

- Leadership is the property of the group
- As the group structure changes, leadership would also change

In the traditional village social structure, there are certain aspects which may be considered as important for leadership, viz., sex, age, inheritance and caste. Due to the patriarchal society, leadership in north-Indian villages has been the privilege of males only. In a joint family setting, the head of the family occupies an established position, by virtue of being senior in age and more experienced than other members of the family. In addition, the headman of the village typified the hereditary character of power which flowed from the father to the son.

Role of Caste and Occupation in Rural Leadership

Caste and occupation in traditional Indian villages are close to each other. Thus, caste and occupation stratification in the village structure provided for leadership position, is occupied mostly by those who enjoy a higher rank in the caste and occupational hierarchies. However, in north Indian villages, leadership based on religion and clientele system, has also been considered traditional in nature. Leadership plays an important role in forming political classes.

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Politics has intervened in traditional leadership. It is the caste system, which made available to the leadership structure, an ideological base for political mobilization, providing it with both, a segmental organization and an identifiable system on which support could be crystallized. This leadership was forced to make concession to local opinion, articulate potential competition on traditional lines and in turn, organize castes for economic and political purposes. The aspects of caste consist of caste councils, arbitration procedures and so on. There is the integration aspect in which the caste system not only determines the individuals' social status on the basis of the group into which he is born, but also differentiates and assigns occupational and economic rules. It thus gives a place to every individual from the highest to the lowest and makes place for a high degree of identification and integration.

The powerful elites of different castes are dominant figures in the politics of village Panchayat and political parties. Political leaders are the mainstream of agrarian lobbies and other pressure groups, like the traditional village Panchayat, caste association, peasant organization and so on. If a social structure is based on caste, political parties cannot ignore this social reality. Leadership has become an unavoidable fact of human beings. Everyone is involved in some way or the other in some kind of political system. Even in the rural society today, leadership plays a vital role in forming various pressure groups and peasant unions.

Caste in India has been employed as a factor for achieving political power. The contexts of leadership in India are determined by the caste structure. Political parties cannot ignore this social context. Since leadership protects caste intersection, caste factors in leadership have been solidified, irrespective of the fact that there are growing confrontations and competitive roles. Leadership has become a reflection of caste and religion loyalties. The role of caste is not confined to elections alone; it is extended to the actual operation of the state apparatus. The penetration of caste into leadership has turned the state apparatus biased who are in favour of some certain castes and against others. The role of caste in Indian leadership has distorted the processes of secularization in the country.

Caste is employed to play an ideological role in leadership to legitimate capitalistic exploitation. The democratic political process in India is linked with the building of capitalism, and the conflicts generated by the capitalistic path of development are diverted towards caste confrontation. Caste is projected as a reality of Indian society by the ideologues of capitalism and the exploited peasants and workers are divided through caste conflicts. The tyranny of the rich peasants over their landless agricultural labourers is defended as a caste phenomenon. Landowners belonging to the upper and middle castes employ the state apparatus to extract surplus value by oppressing landless agricultural labourers and exploitative agrarian relations are defended with the help of state functionaries. The basic activity of social exploitation is undertaken by the rural rich, by means of caste factors in leadership.

Group Dynamics and Factors of Rural Leadership

Group dynamics, a division of social psychology, attempts to study and explore the manner in which psychological groups are formed, their structure and functions. Practically speaking, it is seen as a method of developing/arriving at a consensus between individuals as well as groups with regard to key subjects, matters and procedures. In certain villages, it has been observed that village leaders are absent. However, there do exist heads of small groups or factions, on the basis of caste, kinship and inter-village connections.

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While researching on village leaders in an Indian village, Mr Oscar Lewis (1954: 3-6) discovered that instead of leaders of villages, there exist leaders of factions. In his own words, 'leadership in the village of Rampur is limited to faction leadership and is primarily of a protective and defensive nature, in which each faction or combination of factions defends family interests.'

Organized on the basis of caste, each of these factions carried the names of their respective leaders. The Jats stood out because of the power and dominance they wielded, especially in the political matters of the villages. Not only were the lower castes economically dependent on them, they lacked the numerical strength to act as independent factions. They were not involved in forming political groups or temporary factions in order to fight court cases (even though there were some cases involving power politics). Over and above the struggles amongst factions, these factions were based mainly on relationships, and to conduct significant functions—social, economic and ceremonial. The relationships between factions of Jats as well as non-Jats, extended beyond village boundaries.

Social organization continues to be based on caste and kinship. There is no trace of the 'community' in the true sense of the word, that is, a united and cohesive unit. While there is no concept of leadership, village wise, the idea of progressive, productive and beneficial leadership in the interest of the public is now slowly starting to take roots.

The benefit was that the leadership was spread instead of being focussed. Therefore, it was possible for the village-level workers to approach the faction leader for progressive work in the village. If the existence of these factions was acknowledged and then ignored, they would only spread and proliferate instead of getting eliminated. Therefore, all constructive schemes or projects in such villages, should be routed through the faction leaders, instead of the headmen or village *Pradhans*. Leadership organized on the basis of factions provided a closer representation of people than is plausible in the more sophisticated and monolithic type of political democracy of certain western countries, based on delegated authorities. Keeping this in mind, it is essential to work on the present organization of factions, and achieve a sense of wider community zones. However, it there do exist villages where Panchayats are functioning efficiently and with success.

As a consequence of the two World Wars, urbanization and industrialization, the traditional village social order has undergone many changes. The joint family social system is being replaced by nuclear units and as a result younger generations are assuming more responsibilities. The spread of women education has given more opportunities to women to take up important positions in the village social life. The caste system now tends to shift to the class system as a result of better and newer occupational opportunities.

Political freedom further hastened the process of change. Every individual now has certain fundamental rights, such as freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of association and opportunities to his economic position, irrespective of age, sex, caste and creed. In this respect, the pattern of rural leadership is changing.

The Community Development Programmes launched in October 1952 further accelerated the process of change. These programmes which are a part of the process of modernization taking place in Indian villages, have had their influence of institutions like the cooperative society, the Panchayat and the village school, besides helping to improve agricultural production. The programmes aimed at stimulating local efforts, initiative and leadership among the village community. This leadership is to be developed through democratic methods, based on group consensus in decision-making, without any limitation of age, caste, sex or class and open to achievement. A favourable attitude to

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the extent of participation in village development activities will also determine the modern orientation of a leader. The means that preferred the leader to induce in community participation for development activities are also a measure of the traditional modern dimensions of leadership.

Although as a result of development, factors like economy, land reforms, irrigation facilities, electricity, improved communication and mass media, the traditional village social structure is undergoing a change, a modern social order has yet to emerge. Till the time the Indian village is traditional, leadership would continue to be on the traditional pattern. However, since modernism, leadership too would move in the direction of modernity. Traditional and modern leadership is not mutually exclusive of age, sex, caste or class. Irrespective of whether a leader achieves his leadership position through heredity or achievement, the extent he desires to change the village social structure from traditional to modern order will be an important measure of modern leadership.

With reference to rural leadership and its emerging patterns, voluntary organizations have an important role. Voluntary organizations are autonomous and flexible. They are initiated by a group of like-minded people to change and transform the socio-economic life of people, especially the weaker sections. The essential feature of voluntary organization is initiated not only to solve problems but to prevent the occurrence of problems.

A voluntary organization includes a wide range of activities like construction and maintenance of educational institutions, hospitals, inns, roads, providing jobs to the needy and various economic development programmes and community services. It has an administrative structure and a duly constituted managing committee. It has definite aims and objects and programmes for the fulfilment of these. It is an organization initiated and governed by its own members on democratic principles without any external control.

There are various voluntary organizations whose main functions have been to provide relief as well as help when the local people get affected by flood, fires, epidemic, cyclones, earthquakes and other natural calamities. In this respect, it is the responsibility of the leader of such an organization to get resources from the state and central government. Nav Yuvak Mangal Dal and Ramlila Samiti, as voluntary organizations, are functioning to bring about rural transformation.

Efforts are also made to introduce elements of integrated rural development of concerned communities at local levels. During colonial India, the agrarian structure was headed by a class of intermediate level who oppressed and exploited the mass of peasantry. There was neither security of tenancy nor alternative livelihood. Therefore, peasants showed their powerful urges in the form of movements to transform the agrarian structure. Later on, they were organized by political parties and people like Baba Ramchandra and Swami Sahajanand. They took interest in rural leadership and rural development. After the Green Revolution, when the Indian agrarian society entered a phase of rapid capitalistic transformation of agriculture, the peasant movement, led by rich peasants was mainly launched for either infrastructural facilities or monetary demands, or for support prices of agricultural products. The other major area of peasant organization leadership demanded lowering down of the cost of production. This required subsidized rates of canal irrigation, electricity, fertilizers and so on.

It is observed that rural leadership is of great significance in the transformation of social, political and economic lives of rural people. It is an important function of community and social structure, in terms of controlling and influencing the growth behaviour of others in a community. While changing the social structure, leadership is also prone to

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change. Leadership depends on the types of social structures of the village community. The significance of social structure is an important factor to determine the acceptability of the village people to social change and development. In a traditional village social society, certain aspects such as sex, caste and inheritance have special significance. Social rank is conferred on the basis of age, physical strength, occupation or income. In Indian villages, leaders are found in various contexts such as caste, faction lineage and territorial groups. The institutions perpetuating the social life of the village community altered the pattern of social interaction to a great extent. This resulted in changing the role structure of members of the community. The relations got patterned on the basis of new roles. In the light of the above a shift in the role structure of the leader, as a result of change in other elements of the community social system, would alter the pattern of leadership within that system.

3.5 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- H. D. Lasswell and A. Kaplan stated that, 'The concept of power is perhaps the most fundamental in the whole of political science: the political process is the shaping, dissolution and exercise of power.'
- The power-holders may be classified in four groups: (a) those who have power based on the ownership and control of land, (b) those who have power based on their caste, (c) those who have power based on numerical strength, and (d) those who have power because of the positions they hold, e.g., in panchayats.
- It is true that benefits of development and progress have generally gone to the upper castes and classes in the village, but there have been visible changes in the standard of living, conditions of housing, health and sanitation of most villagers in the country.
- The concept of 'dominant caste' was propounded by M. N. Srinivas. It appeared for the first time in his essay on the social system of a Mysore village.
- M. N. Srinivas specified the following three characteristics of a dominant caste:
  - o A caste dominates when it wields economic and political power.
  - o It has a high rank in caste hierarchy.
  - o It has numerical strength.
- The concept of 'dominant caste', it is argued, has emerged out of the African studies on dominant class. When Srinivas put forward the concept of dominant caste, it was seriously commented upon by sociologists and social anthropologists.
- Panchayati Raj is the name given to the old term 'village panchayat' or 'District Board'. Village panchayat is the name given to rural self-government. Panchayati Raj basically acts as a connecting link between rural people and the state.
- With lord Ripon came a revolution in the field of local self-government. On 18 May 1882, the Ripon Resolution of local self-government was passed. This Resolution was passed with the objectives to mobilize administration in villages and towns.
- In 1977, Ashok Mehta Committee recommended a fundamental change in the Panchayati Raj system. It was suggested that the Panchayati Raj should not only be taken as an implementing agency but a political institution.

Check Your Progress

7. Between which institutions does rural leadership create a link?
8. What is the significance of the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution?
9. What is the essential feature of voluntary organizations?

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- The reservation of one-third women along with Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has provided women with a great morale boost.
- The 73rd amendment provided special provisions to not only women but also the weaker sections, i.e., Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Preventions of Atrocities on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Act is a big step in this direction.
- Local Self Government means to take care of one's own problems and issues by the local bodies themselves. These local bodies are those which are formed by the people who elect these representatives.
- Rural leadership creates a very strong link between the policy makers, government administration and the society, as well as the rural masses. Many researches were aimed at identifying new and emerging leadership trends in the rural Indian society.
- Rural development has acquired special significance in countries of the Third World. The developing countries have been facing the task of transforming a traditional society with low levels of literacy, political experience and production.
- The recent 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution have been welcomed as it focuses on the political structure, rural leadership and process of rural India, their significance for the vulnerable and weaker sections of the rural society and their participation in the operation of this structure.
- In recent economic literature and economic thinking, industrialization has been considered as a key to rapid economic development. It offers the prospect of a growing availability of manufactured goods, increased employment opportunities, improved balance of payment position and greater efficiency and modernization throughout the economy.
- Rural leadership plays an important role in moulding the social, political and economic life of a village community. Change within the system will naturally necessitate a change in the structural elements of leadership.
- The essential feature of voluntary organization is initiated not only to solve problems but to prevent the occurrence of problems.
- It is observed that rural leadership is of great significance in the transformation of social, political and economic lives of rural people. It is an important function of community and social structure, in terms of controlling and influencing the growth behaviour of others in a community.

3.6 KEY TERMS

- **Dominant caste:** A caste is dominant when wields economic or political power and occupies a fairly high position in hierarchy (even in the traditional system of a caste which acquired economic and political power did succeed in improving its ritual status.
- **Local self-government:** Local Self-Government means to take care of one's own problems and issues by the local bodies themselves.

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3.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Power in its most general sense denotes (a) the ability (exercised or not) to produce a certain occurrence or (b) the influence exerted by man or group, through whatever means, over the conduct of others in intended ways.
2. The concept of 'dominant caste' was propounded by M. N. Srinivas. It appeared for the first time in his essay on the social system of a Mysore village.
3. M. N. Srinivas specified the following three characteristics of a dominant caste:
   - A caste dominates when it wields economic and political power.
   - It has a high rank in caste hierarchy.
   - It has numerical strength.
4. (i) Rural people; state

   (ii) 18 May 1882
5. The eminent members of the B. R. Mehta Committee were Dr S. D. Sharma, Phool Singh Thakur and B. G Ras and later G Ranchandran was also taken as a member.
6. Ashok Mehta Committee recommended a change in the Panchayati Raj system. It was suggested that the Panchayati Raj should not only be taken as an implementing agency but a political institution.
7. Rural leadership creates a very strong link between the policy makers, government administration and the society, as well as the rural masses.
8. The 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution have been welcomed as it focuses on the political structure, rural leadership and process of rural India, their significance for the vulnerable and weaker sections of the rural society and their participation in the operation of this structure.
9. The essential feature of voluntary organization is initiated not only to solve problems but to prevent the occurrence of problems.

3.8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What is power?
2. What are the different types of power?
3. How have land reforms in villages been introduced?
4. How does M. N. Srinivas define a 'dominant caste'?
5. Enumerate the features of dominant caste.
6. Why was the concept of dominant caste criticized?
7. What do you mean by *sabha* and *samiti*?
8. What is Panchayati Raj?
9. Write a short note on the role of caste and occupation on rural leadership.

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Long-Answer Questions

1. Evaluate the traditional rural power structure.
2. Discuss M. N. Srinivas' theory of dominant caste.
3. Critically analyse the concept of Panchayati Raj Institutions and the provisions made by it.
4. List the functions of the Panchayati Raj Institutions.
5. Describe the changing patterns of rural leadership.
6. Assess the new emerging patterns of rural leadership.
7. State the reasons that have led to a shift in the rural social structure.
8. Write a note on rural leadership.

3.9 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 4 RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Structure

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4.0 INTRODUCTION

'Development' can be defined as 'the capacity of a state to increase its human resource with the aim of achieving higher outcome of production for the satisfaction of the basic needs of majority of its citizens and empowering them to make demands on the government'.

Rural development implies both the economic betterment of people as well as greater social transformation. In order to provide the rural people with better prospects for economic development, increased participation of people in the rural development programmes, decentralization of planning, better enforcement of land reforms and greater access to credit are needed. There are initiatives taken by the government for bridging the urban-rural divide by upgrading the standard of living of people in rural areas. This unit discusses the various aspects of rural development such as social transformation, development of rural India, history of rural development in India, the approaches to rural development and the land reforms.

4.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Evaluate the social transformation and development of rural India
- Discuss the history of rural development in India

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- Assess the challenges of transformation in the contemporary rural society
- Analyse the approaches to rural development
- Discuss the various land reforms implemented in India during the British rule

4.2 SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL INDIA

The oldest texts related to Indian history are the Vedas: the *Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Atharva Veda*, and *Yajur Veda*. The *Rig Veda* is the oldest out of these four. In it are references of villages. It is mentioned in the Rig Veda that the family is the smallest unit of social structure.

The head of a village was *gramini*. Many families together formed a village. Many villages together formed a *vish*. Many such *vish*'s together formed a *jana*. Many *jana*'s together formed the Nation Village, which was the smallest unit of the social and political structure in ancient India.

According to the Mahabharata, a village was the basic structure in the political organization of society. The head of the village, the *gramini*, took care of the safety and security of the villages within the radius of two miles. Ten villages together had a separate leader called the *dash gramini*. All these ten villages that formed the group had cordial relations with each other and functioned under the guidance of the *dash gramini*. Two groups of ten villages formed the larger group, the head of which was called *vinshatik*. The groups were formed by even higher number of villages coming together. A group of hundred villages was administered by the leader called the *shat gramini*. A group of thousand villages was administered by the leader called *adhipati*. This is how the social administration took place in a village during the Mahabharata period, as depicted in *Manusmriti*.

We find a reference of the village not only in the Mahabharata, but also in other ancient texts following it. According to *Manusmriti*, we get the classification of a village, town and city. Manu, the creator of *Manusmriti*, states that the village was the smallest unit of administration.

A group of ten villages was administered by the leader called *dashi*. A group of 20 villages (i.e., two groups of 10) was led by the *vinishi*. Similarly, the group of hundred villages was governed by the *snatesh*. Finally, a group of thousand villages was governed by the *sahastresh*.

Present Day Village

A village is the smallest unit of the social structure. It is the lowest rung which holds the foundations of the entire framework of the political as well as social systems. Just like the olden days, today too, villagers work in union with each other. They have their own leaders called *mukhiya* or *sarpanch*, who take care of all the working of the village. The present day village has transformed in many ways, let us consider some of them in the subsequent sections.

4.2.1 Changing Rural Caste Stratification

Even though the caste system has a strong influence on the people of India, with the spread of education, its effect has diminished. Now, caste does not determine a person's position in the society. People are lot more open to changes and the society as a whole has become a more flexible.

According to A. R. Desai, new forces, both economic and political, are responsible for the unequal distribution of wealth/prosperity among castes. He believed that caste also influenced the consumption pattern of a village as well as the distribution of work, manner of dressing, choices made and the eating habits of villagers. All these, in turn, affected the productivity and systems of the village.

It is not just the consumption pattern that gets influenced but also the pattern of indebtedness that is governed by the caste system. S. S. Nehru believed that credit, indebtedness and caste were all very closely related. Specific castes chiefly comprise members who have been debtors forever; it is almost as if it was a tradition to be in debt. Similarly, certain castes consist of hereditary creditors.

The patterns in which people settle down are also determined by the caste they belong to. While the superior castes, such as the Brahmins and Rajputs reside in close proximity, the families belonging to the inferior castes, such as the untouchables or Shudras and the tribals live far away from the main part of the village, in the peripheries. The houses of the castes comprising traders and peasants are centrally located.

However, such patterns were very distinctive in the past, not today. These patterns have all changed with modernization. K. L. Sharma is of the opinion that a new caste is emerging in villages today. These are new status groups that have overtaken the traditional upper and middle castes. Social mobility in the caste system is not unknown. With each new macro-economic and political movement the caste system gets affected, for example, the vanishing of the Jajmani system is one of the repercussions. Many new jobs and vocations have emerged. New groups have become dominant, and untouchability / pollution purity principles are almost non-existent now.

The past 60 years have seen India undergoing many positive changes, such as:

- **Structural changes:** These alterations occur in the structure of the caste system and have extensive impact on the caste system of the rural areas. For instance, with the abolishment of the Zamindari and Jagirdari systems and the development of the Panchayati Raj, adult franchise (right to vote) and establishment of co-operations, the quality of village life has taken a giant leap forward.
- **Peripheral changes:** These changes have swept the rural landscape in the form of new schools, roads, public health centres, means of communication, mobility as well as migration. Such recent developments have played a key role in weakening the caste system.

4.2.2 History of Rural Development in India

Let us look at the history of rural development in India.

• Early Development

The British era witnessed, no direct governmental attempts improve the pathetic conditions of the rural areas. The cooperative societies and policies and laws of the agricultural department, as well as the Royal Commission on Agriculture, which were aimed at improving agriculture and the living conditions of the rural folk. At the beginning of the 1930s, many provinces and native states had special departments meant for developing rural areas in Bombay, Central Provinces, Mysore, United Provinces, Bengal

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as well as Baroda. Generally speaking, the schemes introduced in all these places were meant for the improvement of methods of agriculture as well as the facilities for sanitation, education and medical care. But these programmes were implemented better in Punjab and Madras.

- **The Punjab Experiment**

Introduced by F. L. Brayne, this was popularly called the Gurgaon Project. The objective of the project was to motivate the villagers and make them work towards a better tomorrow by giving up their outdated ways; by sharing with them the benefits of advancements in technology; by convincing them that it is possible to fight weather conditions, disease and poverty. The main goals of the programme were:

- o To increase agricultural production
- o To reduce waste
- o To improve the quality of life of rural folk
- o To raise the status of women

While the programme was successful during 1925 to 1933, because of Brayne's presence in the district, it began to fail after he left.

- **The Firka Programme**

Launched in Madras (now Chennai), in 1946, the objective of the Firka Development Programme was to resolve issues and problems related to rural areas. Development of water supply and communication, creation of panchayats, establishment of cooperatives in every village and ensuring proper sanitation, in the rural areas was the short-term plan. In the long run, the plan was to achieve self-sufficiency by improving agriculture, irrigation and livestock and also by developing khadi and cottage industries. The year 1953–54 witnessed a merger of this scheme into the National Extension Scheme.

- **Gandhi's Contribution**

(a) **AVIA:** Gandhi was particularly interested in the rural development programme. The work of *sevagram*, which started in 1933, could be said to be the start of his concern for rural development. His encouragement to the All-India Spinners Association in 1920 and again in 1925, the All-India Village Industries Association (AVIA) and similar organizations proved his keen interest. The objective of the AVIA was as follows:

- o It endeavoured to check wastage and to convert waste materials to useful products.
- o It worked towards conservation of the resources available to villagers.
- o It attempted to make profitable use of the free/leisure time by introducing work that would help to improve the income/earning of the villagers.

(b) **Gram swaraj:** Gandhi's wished to encourage self-rule. He dreamt of establishing a *gram swaraj* or village based on self-rule. He planned to implement this method through the following elements:

- o Village autonomy
- o Identification with villagers
- o Self-purification

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- o Self-example and self-reliance
- o Development of cottage industries
- o Basic education
- o Production for village consumption

He aimed to establish a society wherein all individuals would have equal opportunities to obtain education, and develop economically as well as socially.

(c) **Sarvodaya:** This is yet another programme that Gandhi was associated with. *Sarvodaya* stands for the overall well-being of one and all. It is based on the concept that the only forces capable of binding together the society are, love and cooperation. The purpose of *sarvodaya* included the following:

- o To offer full and integral employment to each member of the society
- o To make sure each member of the society receives the basic/substantial provisions crucial for his well-being, and for the development of his personality
- o Each individual should also be allowed to contribute to the welfare of the society
- o To promote and nurture self-sufficiency
- o To make sure that the methods of production embraced should prescribe to the idea of respect for life

Trained workers known as *sanchalaks* carried out the activities of sarvodaya in the villages. The activities took care of education, agriculture, village/cottage industries, health, social factories and general welfare. It focused on ensuring the inculcation of practices of self-help and extension of the *Sarvodaya* programme.

- **Role of Tagore**

Rabindranath Tagore's Sriniketan Programme was launched in 1922. His determination to elevate villages was an outcome of his concern at the rate and manner in which the nation was degenerating culturally. Therefore, he wished to bring the villages back to life by regenerating them culturally. Improvement of agriculture, raising of health standards, establishment of demonstration centres, and organization of youth activities and literacy programmes for the villagers were part of this programme.

- **Role of YMCA**

In 1920, a rural development programme was introduced by the YMCA at Marthandam (Madras), under the supervision of Spencer Hatch. The programmed aimed to work towards the development of a progressive life for the people, which was prosperous in and complete in every aspect, spiritual, mental, physical, social and economic. The basis of the programme was the need to fulfill self needs. The broad-based and comprehensive activities included a demonstration centre and the training sessions for workers. The India Village Service, began operating under the supervision and charge of Dr W. H. Wiser, in 1946 in U.P. They believed that the villagers were capable of resolving their issues and also take relevant actions if they are given some support.

The Forerunners

There were many drawbacks in all these projects. The majority were quite limited area-wise. Also, not all facets of rural issues were handled by these projects. For instance, these small programmes could not do much to help the physically challenged or those in distress. These projects were incompetent in handling major issues, such as land reforms,

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offering of irrigation facilities and the passing of wide-ranging social legislation essential for effective dealing of the issues in the rural areas. However, it cannot be denied that these experiments in rural welfare laid the foundation for the community development programme in the country, which was launched on 2 October, 1952.

Sarvodaya

The literal meaning of the term '*sarvodaya*' is 'the rise or welfare of all'. It consists of two Sanskrit words, *sarva* and *udaya*, meaning 'all rise' respectively. Mahatma Gandhi was the first to use the term as the title of a booklet in Gujarati, wherein he summarized John Ruskin's well known work 'Unto this Last'. With time, the term came to represent a way of life or an ideology founded on truth and non-violence as advocated and demonstrated by Gandhi himself in his life. Acharya Vinoba Bhave, made considerable contributions to *sarvodaya*, theoretically as well as practically, through his Bhoodan movement in particular. Currently, *sarvodaya* reflects a philosophy of life, a scheme of action which covers all facets of life—social, economic as well as political. Its objective is to completely transform the existing social structure by quietly doing constructive social work mainly at the village level. The work is aimed at launching a peaceful revolution and establishing a social order based on justice.

Historical Aspect

- **Hinduism:** The origin of *Sarvodaya* can be traced back to the spiritual tradition of ancient India. Depiction of heroes as epitomes of various virtues is very common in Hindu mythology, for instance, Raja Harischandra, Lord Rama, Muni Vasishtha and King Yudhisthira. Their characters have inspired many. Even Mahatma Gandhi has admitted the deep influence that a play on the extraordinarily honest and truthful Raja Harishchandra, had on his childhood. He was so inspired by the manner in which Raj Harishchandra followed the truth despite the ordeals he had to suffer in doing so, that he upheld the ideal of truth and non-violence, all his life.. are an odd as India herself.' Vasishtha Muni was an epitome of peace and the Upanishads promoted unity
- **Jainism and Buddhism:** Both Mahavira and Gautama Buddha promoted nonviolence and compassion. They expected both these qualities to be great principles of life.
- **Islam:** In India, Islam arrived quite late and preached peace and brotherhood. The term 'Islam' originates from *salam* meaning peace. Several Hindu and Muslim saints of Medieval India worshipped and promoted piety, gentleness, charity and spiritual brotherhood of man.
- **Christianity:** Pure Christianity supported non-violence, love and service to the poor and the oppressed. Therefore, in general, the culture of India was characterized by receptiveness, tolerance, as well as an accommodative attitude.

4.2.3 Challenges of Transformation in the Contemporary Rural Society

R. K. Mukherjee, author of *The Dynamics of Rural Society*, mentions in his book that 'the objective behind the present study is to examine the dynamics of a rural society and to show that the dynamics of a society cannot be revealed without an analysis of its economic structure.' In his own words, he explains as follows:

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The hypothesis will be tested in two stages. Firstly, only the economic sphere of a society will be taken into consideration and it will be shown how without an analysis of the economic structure it is not possible to have a true understanding of the character of its economy, which undoubtedly plays a basic role in the social development of any people. Secondly, in the social ideological sphere of a society it will be shown what an important effect the economic structure has on the social organization of the people. In this way, the present study will endeavour to prove that even while accepting schematic formulation of human society as obeying these sets of laws, viz., economic, social and ideological, an examination of the economic structure of a society is basic to its proper understanding.

He chose the rural areas of Bengal in the British era due to two reasons:

- Rural Bengal was a true representative of an egalitarian society, free and classless society, comprising of people who were not differentiated or hardly differentiated.
- The social structure of rural Bengal was considered to be based on the caste system.

Egalitarian Society and Economic Structure

The Indian village is referred to as egalitarian society because it is dependent on agriculture. Not only that, the methods used in agriculture are also old and outdated. But sociologist R. K. Mukherjee, feels this is an illusion. He draws our attention to the fact that in the rural areas of Bengal, there was a notable range of incomes in various social classes, coming from various sources. As a result, the rural society could neither be called egalitarian, nor was it static.

Based on the per capita income data, Mukherjee found out the number of households and percentage of total households in rural Bengal. The households were not a dense group of related economic positions, with the income being the most basic measure. Even though the incomes extended over a wide dimension, the bulk of the people was limited to a small range. From the studies, R. K. Mukherjee concluded that unequal distribution of wealth/income resulted in the possibility of severe disparity within the society, despite the average income of the people being quite low and the total range being rather narrow. Mukherjee highlighted the existence of well-defined income hierarchies in rural Bengal. According to him, the basis for determining the economic structure should not merely classify people into intangible statistical categories of different 'elements' of a society. It should reflect how socially significant the economic hierarchy is.

Economic criterion: Mukherjee was of the opinion that a person residing in the rural area would be (i) one who lives in a particular village / occupies a specific territory (ii) one who belongs to a specific caste or community; or (iii) family or household occupation. There is considerable difference in the incomes of villagers. The classification of villages can be done on the basis of:

- Villages
- Caste and religious groups
- Household occupation

The villagers of Bengal can be classified broadly as Hindus, Muslims and others.

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They can also be categorized into occupational groups as follows:

- Landholders
- Supervisory farmers
- Cultivators
- Sharecroppers
- Agricultural labourers
- Artisans
- Traders
- Service holders, etc. including ill-defined lowly occupations on the basis of household

The three class state by Mukherjee are:

Class 1: Landholders and supervisory farmers: Comprising merely four per cent of the total households, the income of this class is almost one and a half times more than the overall average. This class comprised those who possessed land, such as the landholders and supervisory farmers who were not active participants in agriculture but became rich form what they obtained from their land.

Class 2: Cultivators, artisans and traders: This class consists of almost half of the total households and its income is slightly more than the general average. This class was made up mainly of self-sufficient and self-cultivating farmers who had proprietary rights on land, and also traders and artisans.

Class 3: Sharecroppers, agricultural labourers, service holders, and others: The third class is made up of more than half of the total households but has an income of less than the general average. Those belonging to this class, that is, sharecroppers and agricultural labourers had either no land of their own or very little land. Non-agricultural occupational groups were also part of this class.

As per this analysis, the economic structure of rural Bengal was represented by the aforementioned three classes, which were defined according to their relationship with socio-economic units.

Classes and production-relations: Mukherjee believed that 'The cooperation of an economy is the total manifestation of the inter-relationship of composition of the economic structure [and] should be the total representation of the different types of production relations, which the people have entered into in course of their economic activities.'

An examination of the roles of the three classes in particular, reveals the production-relations of Bengal's agricultural economy.

Mukherjee concluded that the economy of rural Bengal could not operate without being dependant on the following two production-relations in the society:

- Relation between the classes I and III (owner and not owner of the means of production (land) and as user supplier of labour, respectively)
- Class II as owner of the means of population and user of own labour

Class II and the production-relation in pre-British period: Prior to the arrival of the British in India, community system existed in the village units, which held land communally. Each household survived on subsistence production on the land allotted to them. That was an era when the primary occupation of the villagers was agriculture, although carpenters, oil pressets, weavers, potters and goldsmiths also contributed their bit.

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There were autonomous communities with their jurisdiction stretched to cover not just houses and temples but tanks, forests, wastelands, agricultural lands, streets, bazaars and burning grounds. The village council handled the village security, settled conflicts/ disputes, arranged/conducted public utility work, played the role of trustee for minors and collected the government revenues and made payments to the central treasury.

It was possible for kings to impose taxes. However, these could be realized only if the village councils consented to collect them. In ancient India, a person's control over land was more by way of possession than ownership. The land was employed for subsistence production rather than in the form of property for making profit.

It was not possible to dispose any tract of land within a village without seeking permission from the village council. The land, which was meant only for possession was used by the rural households for subsistence farming. This system made it easy for an individual to become a 'self-possessing' and 'self-working' farmer. No external market existed for the agricultural produce. There was not change in this situation even in the era of the Muslims. Therefore, throughout the pre-British time, land grants implied predominantly the confirmation of right to land revenue. They did not result in establishment of private property right in land or the advancement of landlordism. The second class was more predominant in the economic structure. Once the British established the idea of private property the landlords started treating crops as commodities.

Emergence of the class I and III: There was transformation in the production-relation in rural Bengal during the British era. This caused classes I and III to emerge as a result of the introduction of private property right over land. During the British era the production relations dependent on the permanent zamindari settlement, which was introduced by the East India Company in 1793.

Function of the economic structure: During the British reign, the rural trend changed due to the following reasons:

- Policies of British merchants
- Industrial capital, which led to production being equipped to tackle the demands of the market

From the mid-1800s, railways and steamers were introduced in India. Their main purpose was to bring raw materials for the British industrialists from the remotest areas of the country. The aim was to circulate British-manufactured products into the smallest of villages. This led to crops beginning to possess a monetary value and ending up as commodities. Without the relationship between a supervisory farmer and an agricultural labourer, there emerged the landholder-cum-sharecropper relationship. This ensured employment all year round.

The rural economy in Bengal under the British was more like a disintegrating system. An analysis of the economic structure of the society was essential to understand this regressive feature of the rural economy. R. K. Mukherjee's study of the economic structure of the society revealed that the agricultural crisis was a result of the colonial system that was forced on India. The reign of the landowners who behaved like parasites only added to the miserable situation because their profit motive was satisfied as they had enough labourers to cultivate their land for them. No step was taken or investment made to improve the situation of the hardworking peasants.

Social Organization and Economic Structure

Did the caste system grow in rural areas during British India or did it slowly begin to get diluted? Mukherjee analysed the caste and economic structure of rural Bengal to try and answer the following:

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Caste and economic structure in pre-British days: The primary characteristics of any caste are:

- Common hereditary occupation
- Endogamy
- Commensurability

The extraordinary feature of the Indian caste system is that in the fourfold *Varna dharma* are hierarchies of *jatis*, that is, occupational classes/groups that are set apart by sub-caste rules. The increasing social division of labour in the Aryan society resulted in further differentiation in the Varna structure, which led to the creation of many *jatis*. This *jati* division was not restricted only to the Aryans but covered the society as a whole. R. K. Mukherjee believed that this laid the social foundation for the Indian village community system. This is because it provided the society with a division of labour, which could not be altered. Therefore, this system continued to be the most important economic institution of Indian society. When the new forces arose in the society, and when the British began to rule, it was finally destroyed.

The caste system, therefore, provided economic stability. The system itself established on the basis of Hindu philosophy and religion, in particular the doctrine of *karma*, or the theory of reincarnation. According to the doctrine of *karma* and theory of reincarnation, the position that people got in society was the outcome of their deeds in their previous birth/ life. Their deed and adherence to social ethics ensure them a better caste position in their next birth/life. In fact, extreme piousness and good deeds can even deliver individuals from the cycle of birth and rebirth.

The caste system was very significant in the life of the Indian villager. At the same time, it changed a self-developed society into one that never changes. Since the society was founded on economics, the caste system flourished and its retention was doubly ensured by the existence of social divisions or *jatis* and village communities on the basis of relationships with different groups. The *Varna dharma* was representative of the inconformity of class-relations with the social demands of the time, whereas the *jati dharma* was the basis of the economic structure of the Indian society.

Caste hierarchy and economic structure in Bengal under the reign of the British: East India Company's policies during its reign caused several issues in the Indian society. The British created a rift between the two largest communities in India, the Hindus and the Muslims. Brahmanism rose in importance, thus reviving the caste system. By establishing clearly defined land tenures across the country, with the common objective of launching the idea of private property in land and with the aim of creating landlords out of the previous revenue farms in the areas, was covered by the long-lasting Zamindari settlement of land in Bengal. This only heightened the orthodoxy and gave recognition to the caste system. The hierarchy of caste that existed inside the Hindu community, the upper and lower castes and the scheduled castes, corresponds with the first, second and third classes of the pre-British structure mentioned earlier. Caste hierarchies existed among Muslims as well.

Caste system among the Hindus and the social order: The caste system was revived and got renewed with the strong support of the ruler for Brahmanism. It became stable with its structure getting a strong foothold in the newly evolved economic structure. With the prevalence of Brahmanism, the supposed Scheduled castes and tribes attempted to climb up the social ladder through acculturation, that is, by aping their

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ways or borrowing their traits. Clearly, the caste system was not destroyed due to loss of economic foundation but also due to the wealth distinction. Under normal circumstances, in an economy of commodity production, this should have gone beyond social distinctions based on birth qualification. Instead, it resulted in further intensifying the institution of caste in the society.

This was because crops had been transformed into commodities, which altered the relation between the worker and landlord.

Muslim community and the social order: Examples of acculturation exist in the Muslim community too. Islam does not promote caste barriers. But the wealthy Sayyed Muslims adopted the dowry system in marriage to replace the *mehar* custom, or bride price, which used to ensure the security of the bride. Even among Muslism there was a 'persistence and elaboration of the functional castes' according to R. K. Mukherjee. There are two conventional divisions among Muslims:

Class 1- The noble *Ashraf* class, which included all undisputed descendants of foreigners and those who converted from the higher Hindu castes.

Class 2- The class of commoners, *Ajlaf*, which included the majority of the Sikhs and the various functional groups. Panchayats managed the affairs of these functional groups. They had a great deal of control similar to the managing body of a Hindu caste. Therefore, Mukherjee's studies revealed that even though there was no caste system in Islam, many Muslims of upper India, and parts of India, amongst the functional groups that make up the lower strata of the community, did follow the practice. The other Indian Muslims did not recognize caste but were more particular about their matrimonial alliances than other Muslims of the world.

Destructive role of the social order: O'Malley believed that the caste system has helped to save the Hindu social order from collapsing or falling apart, in the past. It has had a stabilizing influence, which of course has political importance today at a time of communist menace. Those who believe that the social hierarchy is something divine are unfamiliar with class conflicts. They are of the opinion that equality is not just the opposite of experience an impossible phenomenon as each individual's status is predecided by his deeds of the past life/birth. Many people in India are in support of the caste system as they feel it protects the society against revolutionary attacks.

Mukherjee also agreed to O'Malley's view that the dynamics of a society can be examined only by studying its economic structure, which is essential to understand its social institutions in a proper manner.

Changing Scenes in the Villages

Alterations are occurring in the human community all over. Change is indispensable; it is the law of nature. Wherever life exists, change will also take place.

Therefore, it is natural for changes to take place in the human community. The village communities are not as dynamic as the communities in the urban areas. However, this does not indicate that the peasants have no mobility at all. The village communities, are also altering despite the rate of change being slow. An analysis of the history of rural communities in any part of India can help verify this fact.

Importance of the study of this change: By examining the factors and patterns of change in the rural community we can gain an insight into the development of welfare work in the rural areas. To influence development in the villages, be it social, economic or political, it is essential to bring about change. But before doing so, it is important to

understand the impact of certain changes on the rural communities, and then decide on the method of bringing about the change.

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Factors of Change

The factors that bring about changes in rural life are many. Let us look at some of the important ones.

- **Social factors:** Social factors have a major impact on the rural setting. The prevalence of social practices affect the social situation. Practices like sati, child marriage, widow remarriage and inter-caste marriages affect the social structure and behaviour. They also have a direct impact on women. Similarly, the caste system and the *jajmani* custom also have an impact on social systems. The religious customs and traditions of an area affect its social setting as well. Any change, however small or unobservable it may be, has an impact on the social structure. If the panchayat has a strong hold on the area, not many changes can take place, but if the panchayat is weak, there is bound to be liquidation in the overall social structure.
- **Economic factors**: Rural areas are mostly affected by agriculture as that is the main occupation. Gradually, over time, this has also undergone changes. People have moved out of their own villages to cities in search of work. Along with agriculture, business has also changed. This is because of social mobility. The village people are also becoming aware of the changing economic avenues. Traditional shops are being replaced by modern shops. Changes have been seen in the choice of food and clothes too. The youngsters who have moved out to the cities bring back new awareness and encouragement to the rural folk, and at times, share even bad practices. In such areas factories are set up in which the rural people work.

  With factories and mines being set up in rural areas, men and women (irrespective of the caste they belong to) end up working together. Such opportunities also lead to marriages taking place out of caste.
- **Cultural factors**: Culture includes the way of thinking, ideologies, values and beliefs of a particular group of people belonging to the same community. Changes in culture are visible in all communities be it Hindus, Muslim, Sikhs or others. Wherever there is a close interaction between two cultures, there is always a chance of one influencing the other. Some inter-culture marriages also result in changes in the respective cultures. Similarly, interactions have an impact over each other and correspondingly bring about changes in each other's ways.

  Westernization has also had a great impact on the thinking and behaviour of youngsters. They have started following the western outlook, which is more materialistic. This has changed the caring and responsible nature of Indian children to an individualistic, irresponsible and materialistic one. All the above have brought about a change in the rural relationships, family traditions and customs.
- **Political factors**: Political factors have a great impact on rural social change as well. There were many political differences between the local people and the British government. This variance in political thought brought about a number of alterations in the rural setting. Differences between Hindu and Muslim communities emerged due to political changes or ideologies, which affected the urban and rural people alike. The political changes travel from the cities to the villages as well and bring about a political awakening.

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- **Technological factors**: Improvement in science and technology along with various discoveries and inventions have changed the lives of the common people in the rural areas. The invention of the radio alone is said to have resulted in almost 150 key changes in social life. Things like new machinery for grinding wheat and tractors have made life much easier for rural peasants and their families. With the coming of electricity, the quality of life of villagers has improved. Solar lights and other inventions have changed the conditions of living of rural folk for the better. The growing popularity of the Internet and mobile phones have brought to the rural folk better connectivity and more awareness about the world. They are more knowledgeable and aware today than they were a decade back.
- **Natural factors:** The flora and fauna of any place is used or consumed by people residing in that particular place or habitat. Villages in the mountains, near rivers and in the deserts prosper as a result of the natural elements that the mountains, rivers and deserts have to offer. Similarly, the handicrafts and cottage industries which develop in an area are directly influenced by and are dependent on the natural resources available there. Therefore, rural community is affected by the weather conditions, vegetation and animals of that area. Whenever there is a change in any one of these, the life of the rural community also changes.

Methods of Rural Change

There are different methods, which bring about changes in the rural community. According to Sims and other important sociologists the following methods affect rural change:

- **Method of reasoning**: This technique includes reasoning with the rural people in an effort to bring about change in their rural ways. This is a helpful technique because villagers tend to get convinced about a change. However, the fact remains that it is the villagers themselves who have to bring about the change. Unless and until they do something to bring about that change, no action will take place. Merely making suggestions to one another will not result in transformation in their lives or living conditions. Words have to be translated into action.
- **Demonstrative method**: This technique is far superior to the reasoning method because one always learns better by setting an example. If a new agricultural implement has to be introduced to a village, it is better to use and show how it works practically on the farms and fields of the simple farmers. Only when they see how it works and understand its benefits will they be willing to start using it for themselves as well.
- **Compulsory method**: This technique, as is evident from the name, employs compulsory methods of change. These are rules or laws enforced by the government. It is mandatory for everyone to follow these. Some changes are welcome by people while others are not. If people have a choice they may accept a change if they wish to. But if changes are imposed by the government with the help of the judiciary then they have to be accepted. In India, for example, untouchability is an offence. Anybody who practices it is liable to be punished. This has improved the attitude of rural people. Though an internal change would be possible only when the mental outlook changes, but laws do make a difference.
- **Social pressure method**: This method is quite effective in villages because the society is rather close knit. In order to control or improve the behaviour of individuals, this method is very useful. If people are threatened with social boycott or something as serious, they immediately bring about desirable change in their

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behaviour. But this method brings about only an external change and that too out of fear of being disowned. It does not really bring about a true internal change or transformation in attitude or mind-set.

- **Contact method:** It is a common observation that people change according to the external environment, that is, due to the contact with the external environment/situation. Such changes are seen when rural people come in contact with their urban counterparts. They immediately pick up the mannerisms of the urban people and start behaving like them. They try to ape their ways of dressing up, and their customs and practices. Also undergo change with urbanization. When people from different cultures come in touch with each other, an impact on their behaviour is visible. When youngsters establish contact with their counterparts from the West, they begin to copy their style and fashion statements. A similar change is seen in rural children when they go to colleges in the cities—their whole demeanour changes.
- **Educational method**: Education is the most important force that brings about social change. It develops the personality of a child and prepares him for a good future. It empowers him to face all the struggles of life. Parents provide their children with the best of education and facilities so that they develop into complete human beings. In rural areas, education for children has brought about political awareness too. Youngsters are now better equipped to understand various events which could improve not only their social and economic status but that of the country as a whole. They are in a position to themselves bring about changes by taking up jobs in administration and other departments so that they can be instrumental in making changes happen.

While the above methods are definitely effective, they do suffer from individual drawbacks. Therefore, instead of using only one method it is advisable to use more than one so as to bring about desirable changes in the rural structure, for its betterment.

Spheres of Rural Change

The spheres of rural change are:

- **Change in the caste system:** The rural caste system has undergone several changes. During the British time, many changes were seen—economic policies and land laws were changed, due to which people belonging to certain typical professions changed or gave up their traditional occupations. For example, the Brahmins took to farming and other agricultural activities. The people belonging to the lower or untouchable castes started working as agricultural labourers. Brahmins always commanded respect and occupied a position of authority, but with time their importance lessened. A rich man, even if he belonged to one of the lower castes, came to be respected, sometimes even more than a poor Brahmin. The government policies also improved the situation of lower castes.

  The power of the Panchayats is also gradually waning. Earlier they had absolute power, but now they do not have an autocratic hold. While villages still stick to old traditions, in the cities the concept of untouchability is practically non-existent today. Even though parents want their children to marry within their own caste, they are not totally against inter-caste marriages. One could say that the caste system is gradually making its way out of Indian society. However, a common observation is that casteism is propagated by politicians who want to divide the society for their vested benefits. They encourage differences among castes so as to be able to gather votes from one caste. Also, political parties want to give tickets to castes that hold a majority so that they are able to win elections.

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- **Change in Jajmani system:** The Jajmani system was a very common practice in the past. With changes in social freedom, the system is gradually losing strength. This is because of the guidelines of the government, which give an equal status to all the citizens of India. The backward classes are also being empowered and brought at par with other castes. They have gradually acquired self-respect and no longer serve those belonging to the higher castes. This way, the gap between the high and low castes is narrowing.

  Another reason for the weakening of the jajmani system is that money is now being used more for services in villages. This has diluted the system. Yet another reason why the system is weak is that the panchayats are steadily losing out on their absolute power. Occupations being picked up by people today are not based upon caste but rather the competence of a person. This has had a detrimental effect on the jajmani system as well.
- **Change in family**: The family system in older times was mostly a joint set-up. With changes in other avenues, a visible change is noticed in the family setting as well. The joint family had group interests—all members had common interests and the group feeling was very strong. But with the increase in nuclear families, family control has reduced. Control of the elders in the family is becoming less but not altogether missing. Education of women folk has also changed the rural social system. They are aware of their social, economic and political rights now. Not only has this improved their social position/standing, it has made them better equipped to provide guidance to their children as well.
- **Health and medical facilities:** The health situation is improving in the rural areas. There are hospitals in rural areas and doctors and other medical workers take care of sick people in almost all villages. The Government has taken steps to take care of rural folk by providing free vaccinations and medicines. With social workers also going from door to door spreading awareness, the overall health of women has improved tremendously. Child mortality has become less. Deaths during childbirth have also reduced considerably.
- **Education**: New schools have opened and enrolment in schools has gone up considerably. As a result, more villagers are now literate. States have provided various facilities in villages like free and compulsory education. In the past, many children had to travel long distances to cities and towns to get education but with the opening of schools in villages itself it is easier for rural children to access good education. In some rural areas, there are agriculture colleges, degree colleges and other rural institutes as well.
- **Change in the economic field:** Social mobility has changed the rural situation. The economic situation has improved. New tools and implements have started being used in rural areas, especially in the field of agriculture. There has been an improvement in the overall economic situation of villages. New cooperative societies have opened which have empowered the rural people. The condition of farmers has improved because of the advancement in technology. The farmers have begun selling their own produce directly to the buyers instead of going through middlemen who used to fleece them. This has further improved their economic position. Opening of grain banks, cooperative credit societies and cooperative banks has

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improved the economic condition of the villagers. They are less dependent on creditors and indebtedness has reduced considerably.

- **Changes in political field:** In villages, the panchayats have a very strong hold over the political setup. With more people becoming literate, and due to the popularity of the radio, television and newspapers, rural people have become more politically aware. They have strong political beliefs. Political differences and conflicts are not uncommon in the villages. While this has offered a new power of expression, it has also given rise to a feeling of individualism.

4.3 APPROACHES TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Globalization is a social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become in- creasingly aware that they are receding (Malcolm Waters, 1995:3). Thus, in the process of globalization, physical distance and obstacle have be-come less important in communication and exchange in social (which includes political and economic) and cultural matters.

Considering the transition of the global world, the Indian traditional family patterns cannot remain untouched by the wave of economic and social change in the structure of the global family. Efforts have been made to observe and analyse these changes in Indian families, like use of luxury commodities, change in the status of female in family, changes in use of means of communication, celebration of traditional festival/functions, education of the children and way of living in family. In the era of globalization, large number of female members of the middle class family is going out to work in comparison to the last few decades. Obviously traditional pattern of the society cannot remain unaltered. Theoreticians also failed to prove authentically that family life was much harmonious a few centuries ago, because they do not have data on the subject. Globalization has affected every part of the social system, including traditional values, shopping patterns, entertainment, media, eating habits, educational pattern, etc. Indian families are adopting western trends despite opposition from several fundamentalist elements.

4.3.1 Effect of Globalization on Indian Society

Some people think that globalization is a dangerous virus that has infected many aspects of life, such as economy, politics, and social-cultural. It strongly attacks the strength of body, especially family life. Globalization, therefore, is refused, denied, or rejected by many people. Meanwhile, some people argue that globalization is a way that helps people to reach great joy of life. Family, as a former institution of life, has many advantages from the so-called globalization. It is true to say that globalization actually has both negative and positive effects. In the 20th century, both family and population have changed in India. India is experiencing several changes, such as demographic transition, industrialization and urbanization, skill development, social mobility, legal and so on. The effects of globalization are very significant and far reaching. The former concept refers to free flow of labour and capital across international borders, and the latter refers to spread of globalization through local cultures. Globalization is an emerging union of economies and societies around the globe and it is a complex process that affects many aspects of social life in societies like quick growth, reduction in rate of poverty, introduction of Internet and many more. The spread of hepatitis swine flu, AIDS and other similar life threatening diseases are the other aspects of the globalization.

Check Your Progress

1. What are structural changes?
2. State the purpose of the Punjab experiment.
3. How have the villages prospered in the field of economy?

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Globalization is a term used to describe the patterns in which the countries are interconnecting, both economically and culturally. This process is a combination of economic, technological, socio-cultural and political forces.

Sometimes, the term globalization is used for economic globalization references, that is, integration of national economies into the international economies through trade and business with foreign countries, foreign direct investment, capital flow, migration of human beings, and the exchange and spread of technology. These processes of change have both functions and dysfunctions. Among the positive developments are: opening of demographic window (due to declining birth rate, lower life expectancy in old age, and progression of baby boom children); improvement in literacy rate; rapid expansion of education at all levels; greater flow of labour, capital and technology across international borders with emigrants sending a significant part of remittances; increased productivity of service and industrial sectors; infrastructure development; promotion of tourism; new opportunities abroad due to ageing of industrialized economies; empowerment of women; and new ideas of equality and justice. Among the dysfunctions are: environmental degradation; increasing marginalization among the agricultural labourers and artisans; rising disparities; religious and community bigotry promoted by leaders, media and market; trafficking of women and children; a large number of cases of female foeticide; violence against female; and at the root of many other dysfunctions, an idea that all the emergent problems of the country are due to historic perspective.

4.3.2 Effect of Modernization

Modernization is a multi-faceted process involving:

- At the *psychological* level, it involves a change in the norms, values, attitudes and orientation of the people.
- At the *intellectual* level, it involves a tremendous expansion of man's knowledge about his environment and the diffusion of this knowledge throughout society through increased literacy and mass communication.
- At the *demographic* level, it implies improvement in the standards of living and progress towards the mobility of people and urbanization.
- At the *social* level, it has a tendency to replace the focus of individual's loyalty to family and other primary groups to voluntarily organized secondary associations.
- At the *economic* level, it involves the growth of market agriculture, improvement in commerce, development of industrialization and widening of the economic activity.

Thus, modernization is regarded as 'comprehensive phenomenon which brings about radical changes in the field of economic development, mainly in the direction of industrialization and material advancement, changes in the nature and content of the political systems and also changes in the nature and psychological spheres of life'.

Modernization necessarily results in modernity. In other words, the concept of modernization refers to the case of transformation as occurred in the European countries in particular in the modern period and then recurred in other countries of the world in recent times.

If development is viewed as a process, meaning, thereby, change with growth, it is a concept related very closely to modernization. It is, therefore, not surprising that 'development' and 'modernization' are more or less, interchangeable. Daniel Lerner defines the term 'modernization' as a 'systematic' process involving complementary

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changes in the demographic, economic, political, communication and cultural sectors of a society. Rostow and Ward say that modernization 'involves a marked increase in geographic and social mobility, a spread of secular, scientific and technical education, a transition from ascribed to achieved status, an increase in material standards of living, and many related and subsidiary phenomena. Modernization, therefore, is an onward phenomena, a forward movement or what Joseph and Nancy Jabbra hold, a movement towards an 'economic diversification within an advanced industrial technology; heightened social mobility and the movement towards impersonal and rationalised social relationships; a concentration of the population in cities and in more comprehensive social units generally; and mobilisation of persons en masse through popular education, organization and communication'.

Modernization is a goal to be achieved by the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, for they are not modern. Development, in the context of these countries, means development in all fields of life; it is a development towards modernization. Development, in the context of underdeveloped or developing countries, means the transformation of society from traditionality to modernity, from crude ways of doing things to sophisticated ways.

Development, when seen in its economic dimension, is associated with the maximization of outputs. Any nation, including the developed or the developing, has to view its agenda of development in the contexts of social, cultural, political, demographic, educational, institutional milieu. So, in economic terms, development would be a process when an economy is transformed from one whose rate of growth of per capita income is small or negative to one in which a self-sustained rate of increase of per capita income is a permanent long-run feature. The theorists of this approach believe that agricultural land is a fixed factor and that labour would increase with the relative increase of population. This is so because the number of people and the natural resources are in balance with each other; any change in any of the two would lead to economic crisis, small or big.

Social systems of the world may be said to be of three varieties.

1. **Primitive social systems:** This category includes highly backward social systems of the world where customs and rituals still carry the authority with them; authority remains where it has been and serious effort is made in the direction of political mobilization, socialization and recruitment.
2. **Backward social systems:** Here primitive political norms and values are dominant. The high offices of the state are shared by the men of the same family or tribe or by the elites who enjoy a sort of charismatic hold over the destinies of their simple and innocent people. Urbanization may have a start; the rate of literacy may increase slowly; industrialization may be inching upward and mass media channels expanding; but many of the goals identified with political modernization like democracy, stability, structural differentiation, achievement patterns and national integration seem to be, as Huntington says, beyond realization as ever.
3. **Developing social systems:** The countries falling in this category show a dichotomy of tradition and modernity that may be visualized most clearly in those parts of the world where people have lived under the colonial hold of some European power. A cross-cultural phenomenon developed there as the masters imposed their political culture successfully over the social and political structures of the countries under their colonial domination. It is found that during the days of freedom struggles, these traditional attitudes and influences

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tended to be submerged in the unity maintained by the common goal of national independence. Once independence was achieved, the traditional pressures reasserted themselves usually becoming the basis for interest groups and political parties. What is peculiarly striking about the political modernization of the countries belonging to this category is that in some of the cases, apart from a movement towards competitiveness and democracy, there have also occurred a shift in the reverse direction as is evident in the form of setting up an autocratic military rule or one-party powerful rule'. It is also found that national integration, instead of being within the possibility of achievement, is disrupted by ethnic conflicts and civil wars.

Characteristics of Modernization

Modernization is a process of change. It entails social change; it involves change in the society to make it better. New knowledge is an important part of modernization. So is the new confidence of the individual. Development of science and technology has produced a vast amount of valuable knowledge. Nature is no longer a mystery. Man has come to know a lot about it. The more the knowledge, the more confident man is, vis-a-vis, Nature. In the modern society, man is in possession of a lot of information through expansion of education and mass media.

Modernization is a global phenomenon. It would permeate different parts of the world sooner or later. It entered the West quite early–around the 16th century. It visited Latin America, Asia and Africa much later. Even in Africa and Asia, all parts of the continent have not been exposed to modernization at the same time. The impact of modernization would depend upon its timing and degree–when a territory gets modernized and to what extent.

Modernization is not only universal in its scope, it is also inevitable. It would march on, though not in the same pace to all places. No society can close its windows to the wind of modern ideas for all time to come. Modernization is irresistible; its march cannot be permanently resisted.

The impact of modernization may be briefly described as follows:

- Western institutions like banking system, public administration, military organization, modern medicine, law, etc., have been introduced.
- Western education has broadened the outlook of the people who have become conscious of their rights and freedom. New val- ues, secular spirit and the ideologies of individualism, equality and justice has assumed great importance.
- Acceptance of scientific innovations has helped to raise the standard of living and has provided material welfare for the people.
- Many reform movements have been responsible in making several traditional beliefs and practices dysfunctional. Society has adopted many new customs, institutions and social practices.
- Modernization of technology, agriculture, entrepreneurship and industry is leading to the economic well-being of the country.
- The hierarchy of political values has been restructured. The authority and domination of feudals and zamindars has been demolished.
- Modernization has brought about structural changes in social institutions like marriage, family and caste which has created new forms of relations in social life, religion, etc.

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- The introduction of the modern means of communication, such as railway and bus travel, postal service, air and sea travel, press, and ra- dio and television have affected the lives of people in various ways.
- There is rise in the feeling of nationalism.
- Emergence of the middle class has changed the dominant values of society.
- India is becoming progressively democratized. Everybody is equal before the law and everyone enjoys equal rights and privileges. Panchayati Raj system has been introduced as a basis for democratic decentralization. It is a device to transmit democracy from parliament to village panchayat.

The rural development programmes include:

- Special schemes of non- agricultural pursuits like afforestation, minor irrigation, soil and water conservation, road building, embankments etc;
- Area development, schemes such as Drought prone Area programme (DPAP), Command Area Development Programme(CADP) etc;
- Employment oriented schemes such as Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM), National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) etc;
- Education and welfare oriented schemes like Composite Programme for Women and Pre-School Children (CPWPC), Integrated Child Development Service etc.
- The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) launched in 1980 all over the country continued to be a major poverty alleviation programme till 1999. It covered a wide range of activities such as minor irrigation, diary development animal husbandry, petty industries etc.
- A considerable amount of resources was spent through IRDP and Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) for rural development. Two other rural development programmes such as Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) and Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojan a (SGSY) have been launched from April, 1999. Further the 73rd amendment of the Panchayati Raj has envisaged decentralisation of the execution of all types of development activities with the active participation of the people. Now we are witnessing a social and economic transformation in rural India, although the pattern and syndrome of rural transformation varies from region to region.

The scenario of transition in rural society suggests that the process of planned development has resulted in rural transformation in different parts of the country. The rigidity of caste system, the barriers which the caste system had in the past, is in the process of disintegration. Restrictions relating to commensality are losing ground and inter caste marriage is going on.

Check Your Progress

4. State the effect of globalization on India.
5. What is modernization?

4.4 LAND REFORMS

India is basically an agricultural country. The revenue mostly comes from land, e.g.- crops. Land is the natural resource of people, especially in India where most of the activities revolve around the land.

Land includes the characteristic qualities of the Earth. Land exhibits physical form of a variety of range including hills, mountains, plains, forests and so on. All these

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different land forms are characteristic of different areas and are greatly affected by different climatic influences. Land quality differs in different areas. However, in reality, land is a tool of status and respect in the society and life of an individual.

In ancient India, the land was jointly owned by the community. There were mostly villages and the land belonged to those who resided in these villages. This system prevailed till the coming of the colonial power but after the Britishers came to India, this system was altered. The British regime introduced a new revenue system, thus changing the old existing pattern of life. They removed the community right over property of the village lands. They created two forms of property. These are as follows:

- Landlords
- Individual peasant proprietor

Landlords were the persons who were given land and they were the owners of that land. These changes brought in a lot of new changes in the social and political system of the country. The community ownership was changed to private ownership. Individuals became owners of the land. Land became private property. *Jagirdars* also emerged who were a kind of intermediary between the government and the tenants.

A. R. Desai observes,

> It was Lord Cornwallis who, during his term of office, created the first group of landlords in India by introducing the Permanent Land Settlement for Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa in 1793. These landlords were created out of the tax farmers in the provinces who had been appointed by the political predecessors of the British rulers to collect revenue from these provinces on a commission basis. The Permanent Land Settlement converted these revenue collectors into too many landlords. Under the terms of the settlement, they had, henceforth, to make a fixed payment to the Government of the East India Company.

4.4.1 Land Tenure System

Land holdings all over the world are quite variable. People possess land as landlords or may be giving the land on rent. Earlier, India too had a very different ownership pattern, but with the introduction of the Permanent Land Settlement scheme, lot of changes took place. Similar to the Western system of ownership, India too established the system of individual ownership. The community ownership changed to individual ownership of different types.

The Main Factor of Promotion: Land

Land is definitely the main factor which adds to the economy of any country. It is the main point or factor which amounts to a country's success in not only ownership but also as a capital. Land by itself is a source of income and is also necessary for farming and increasing productivity. Land improves and increases production in the vast functions of technology and development.

Tenants and Proprietorship of Peasants

India is a country having agriculture as its main occupation. Land plays the most important role in the Indian society. Not only India, all over the world, people live by the earnings collected from land and its produce. We can say that almost three-fifth of the world population survives on agriculture. But, most of the peasants who work on fields do not actually own them. They either work as labourers or as tenants on the land of others.

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Sometimes when the land is hired by them, they pay part of the produce to the landowners as rent for using the land. A fixed amount is to be given to the landowners, or sometimes they work as bonded labourers for landowners, sometimes they provide both personal service as well as a part of the produce to the landowner. Such people are called 'tenants'.

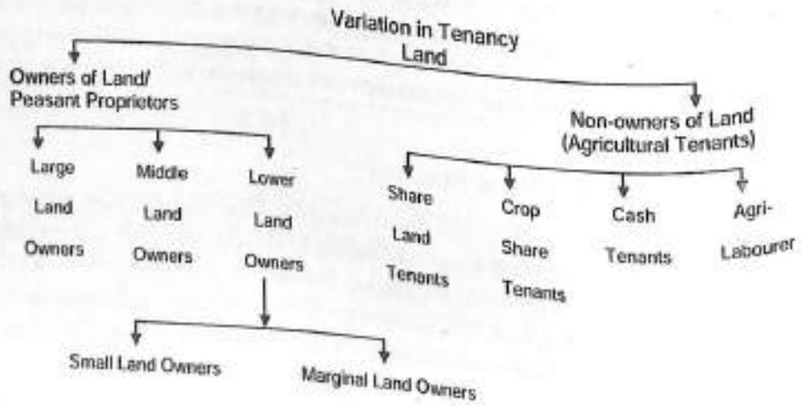
Tenancy gives the peasant an experience of the fieldwork. This provides him with the knowledge and skill so that when he himself becomes the landowner, he would have all the necessary information and knowledge needed for the work. But, many times the tenants are never able to become landlords.

With the establishment of the Permanent Land Settlement System in 1793, when the British passed this rule, there was a sudden increase in tenancy. The Zamindari system emerged with the rich zamindars or landlords holding the land and poor peasants working as labourers or tenants for them. The zamindar became an intermediary between the government officials and the tenants. They started oppressing the tenants by using their own powers. The condition of the tenants was very bad and pathetic.

The landowners, who were the peasant proprietors were also living in very deplorable conditions. They were divided into three categories—upper landowners, middle landowners, and the lower strata landowners. All the different categories irrespective of being high or low suffered greatly during the British period. Few peasants who owned larger areas of land became rich landlords while others were reduced to the status of mere tenants. There are various kinds of tenants, they are:

- **Cash tenants:** These tenants are those who pay a fixed cash rent for the use of land. They grow crops on the landlord's land and pay money as rent for the same.
- **Share-cash tenants:** These tenants are those who pay rent to the landlords partly in the form of cash and partly in the form of kind (crops) that they grow.
- **Crop-share tenants:** These tenants give only a share of crop as the payment of rent for tenancy. They do not pay any cash for this.
- **Croppers:** These tenants give a share of crop as payment of rent. They are more like labourers on the field of the landowners.
- **Other tenants:** This category may include those who work as labourers for the landlords for a fixed number of years.

In some areas of Jammu, the Gaddi tribe is seen to occupy the field of landowners in the villages. Over the years, they have started asserting their own authority on the land which they were using as tenants. In some cases, the land has legally been transferred to these Gaddis who were actually mere tenants.



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The above categorization is based on the extensive study in this area done by Breman, K. L. Sharma, and Beteille who studied different parts of the country.

Andre Beteille worked in the village Sripuram (Tamil Nadu). He studied the landowners, tenants, and labourers of the village to find the pattern of tenancy. He found that the agricultural population is divided into two classes of farmers:

- Owners of land
- Non-owners of land

He observed that most of the people of Sripuram village were non-owners of land. They worked for others.

Similarly, Jan Breman, who worked in the district of Surat in Gujarat also studied different areas. He closely studied and observed the patterns in the Bardoli, Palsana and Valod talukas of Surat district. He found three major categories of peasants:

- Marginal and small farmers (having land less than 5 acres)
- Middle farmers (having land between 5.15 acres and 15 acres)
- Large farmers (having land over 15 acres)

Lakshmi Narayan, Tyagi, and Sharma also studied the pattern of tenancy all over the country. They identified four kinds of tenancies in different parts of the country. These are as follows:

- Crop-sharing tenants
- Paying cash-rent tenants
- Paying fixed product or kind tenants
- Unspecified tenants (other than the above categories)

Along with the above mentioned categories given by different sociologists, we also must take into account A. R. Desai's classification. Desai has based his analysis on Marxian approach. He has formulated three categories, namely:

- **Upper class landowners:** These landowners are the ones having large pieces of land.
- **Middle class landowners:** These are the landowners who have land which is neither too big nor too small. These are the ones having medium or intermediate farms.
- **Lower strata landowners:** These are the marginal and the small farmers. These landowners possess the smallest areas of land.

India has witnessed a lot of changes in its social structure and land ownership. Earlier, the land belonged equally to all the members of a community. There was no individual owner as such. It was during the British period that the term ownership underwent changes. Land was owned by the landlords and the poor became tenants on the land of the rich landlords. The number of small peasants or marginal peasants increased. This increased the number of tenants and also the trend of ownership.

Along with this the other aspect worth noting is the relationship between the landowner and the tenant. Another category was the landowner and agricultural labourer. Actually the relationship between landowners and tenants is of three types:

- Landowner and tenant
- Landowner and agricultural labourer
- Tenant and agricultural labourer

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Today, nobody really bothers about the labourers. They are merely the landless peasants dependent on the landowners, mostly exploited and tortured by the zamindars who exist even today.

Andre Beteille has done a close study of the relationship between landlords and tenants, he found that sharecropping is another common feature. The landless labourers constitute almost one-third of the total population. They refer to the landowners as *malik* who are not only the owners of land but also of the labourers as well.

4.4.2 Land Reforms after Independence

One major aspect of the British colonialism was the introduction of the Zamindari and Jagirdari system. They created this system for the smooth functioning of the society in official works. But this system increased the disparity between the rich and the poor. The zamidars were the ones who owned the major part of the land.

Political leaders like Vinoba Bhave also worked for the upliftment of the poor by propagating that land belonged to God and that all had the right to occupy it equally. Keeping all these factors in mind, the government decided to abolish the Zamindari and Jagirdari system. Hence, by the abolition of Jagirdari/Zamindari System Act of 1950, these systems were abolished. The purpose of this was to remove all the intermediaries and land should be well and equally distributed. Land reforms have the following objectives:

- To redistribute land in such a way that a socialistic pattern emerged in society. This way the inequalities or discrepancy in ownership would be reduced.
- 'Land Ceiling' would be enforced so that land would be taken away from the ones who had surplus and would be given to the marginal or landless peasants. This way a uniform system would be created.
- Also, the tenancy would be made legal with the ceiling limit. The people who were working as tenants on the lands of others would be legalized.
- All the tenancy arrangements with the village panchayats would be registered.
- A relationship between ceiling and tenancy would be established.

Although the abolition of Zamindari and Jagirdari system was easy and done effectively but land ceiling was a very difficult task to accomplish. The rich farmers did not agree to give up their lands so easily. The purpose was to reduce inequalities of land distribution but the target could not be achieved.

According to P. C. Joshi, there are three approaches to study land reforms:

- **The Gandhian Approach or Movement:** This movement involved the landlords giving away part of their surplus land. This movement was also propagated by Vinoba Bhave and was called *gramdan*. Initially, the Movement got a good response but later people did not really participate actively in it. So this movement gradually turned into a failure.
- **Radical Nationalistic Approach:** This approach also did not work satisfactory.
- **The Marxist Approach:** This approach takes into consideration the peasant movements and other similar activities which may not be within the legal framework and action.

However, land reforms were required to be implemented so as to reduce the differences in class. A seminar was organized by the Centre for Agrarian Studies in 1991. In that, it was suggested by T. Haque that in order to develop a socialistic society, India would have to enforce the land reforms in all states with immediate effect. He

said, 'There is role of land reform as an engine of socio-economic transformation and rural development, and outlined the need for a re-examination of the direction in land reform in the light of the New Economic Policy'.

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Most states have enforced different land reforms in order to bring about uniformity. This would bring a socialistic order in the country.

Some Common Aspects of Land Reforms

Land reforms were adopted immediately after the adoption of the Constitution. These measures are as follows:

1. Abolition of Intermediaries

Four major types of tenancy systems were prevalent in the country before independence. These were:

(a) **Ryotwari:** This type of tenancy was introduced by the British in Madras in the year 1772. After sometime this system spread to Bombay Presidency. According to this system, every registered holder of land was recognised as the proprietor of that land. He could himself transfer that land to somebody, he had the right to sell it or give it as a gift to somebody. The registered holder could even mortgage it to whomever he wanted. He could not be removed from his land till he kept paying the revenue. This system was good since the cultivator was in direct contact with the government. He took care of the land as well as irrigation facilities of the property. But along with this, the system gave rise to a large number of landless peasants. They worked on the fields and were dominated by the proprietor of land. This system was, however abolished by the land reforms.

(b) **Mahalwari:** This system involves the pattern where land is jointly held or owned by co-sharers. This body was treated as 'jointly and severally liable for the land revenue'. This system was introduced during the British rule. It was first started in Agra and later it spread to Punjab.

This system too was abolished when the land reforms were introduced.

(c) **Zamindari:** The system of Zamindari was commonly observed in the states of Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Bombay Presidency and Tamil Nadu. This system involved all the power resting with the landlord. The zamindar was the owner of the village land. He employed labourers or the landless peasants to work for him and he collected tax from them. The peasant or worker could be thrown out of the land by the landlord or zamindar. The poor were exploited greatly by the landlords. This system too was abolished on account of the land reforms.

(d) **Jagirdari:** The system of Jagirdari was prevalent in the princely states of Rajasthan. Jagirs were actually the pieces of land granted or handed over to some military commanders, ministers and courtiers. Jagirs even included money paid for the maintenance of the army which these jagirdars were obliged to maintain. However, the landless labourers who worked for the jagirdars were a greatly exploited lot. The jagirdars had the power to impose taxes on the peasants and workers who had to pay the revenue in order to pay for the expenses of the royal family. The jagirdars were a group of people who did not work but simply lived off others.

In February 1952, the Rajasthan Jagir Abolition Act was introduced and this was implemented in 1954. Through this Act, the Jagirdari system came to an end in Rajasthan, and also other parts of the country.

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The land reform brought about the abolition of various types of tenancy systems that existed in India. The different reforms were as follows:

- The landlords such as zamindars and jagirdars disappeared or became extinct.
- Exploitation of tillers became less as the intermediary system was abolished.
- With the transfer of land to tillers, inequalities reduced in land distribution.
- When the intermediary system was abolished, land condition and production improved.
- The former zamindars and jagirdars who were not doing anything and only depended on others, i.e., the tillers, became a little more productive by working hard and took to other occupations.
- The rents which were received from the land, gave additional revenue to the state. Since the intermediaries had been abolished, so the revenue directly went to the state government. This money was utilised for general rural development.

2. Land Ceiling

Land ceiling is a concept based on social justice. It is based on the idea that land should be distributed equally among all people. Based on this, it was decided to take away the surplus land from some and give it to the landless or the poor.

Today also, one observes that a small number of people have large areas of land in their possession while most of them have small. However, when the land ceiling was imposed the following points were kept in mind:

- Land is the source of income in India. As India is an agriculture based country, land plays a vital role in the economy. Therefore, land should be given to the marginal farmers, small farmers, and even landless farmers who need some land to earn their living. But of course land would be taken away from the people who have surplus.
- Land ceiling is applicable to all kinds of land: (i) fallow, (ii) uncultivable, (iii) cultivable, and (iv) irrigated.

Ceiling on Irrigated and Two Crops a Year Land

It was decided that a peasant who had 18 acres of land and grew two crops a year would not have to give up any land. But, if his land was more than 18 acres, then he had to give it up as surplus.

Assured Irrigation and One Crop Land

Peasants having 27 acres of land (almost) and growing one crop a year would not come under the ceiling law. A person possessing land more than 27 acres would be considered as surplus and would have to be given up to the government.

Ceiling of Land upto 54 Acres

In some areas, the owners of the holdings processed different types of land, then the total holdings of land often the beat categories into lowest categories would be upto 54 acres.

However, the land ceiling rules are different for different states. Like the ceiling limit for irrigated land in Andhra Pradesh is 10–18 acres. It is 12.4 acres in West Bengal, 17.9 acres in Haryana, and 10.13 acres in Karnataka.

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The Land Ceiling Acts also depend on the family size which is an important factor in determining the landholding. A family of five members, i.e., husband, wife and three dependent children is taken as a unit. If the husband and wife have separate lands under their names, then both would have the right in property within the ceilings in proportion to the value of land held by each before the application of ceiling. Also, each major child would be treated as a separate unit when applying for ceiling.

3. Land Possession as a Factor for Social Power

According to Morley Mohan Lal, 'The ownership of land reflects social class and class relations, as they represent an array of legal, contractual, or customary arrangements whereby people engaged in cultivation gain access to productive opportunities linked with land and thereby income.'

From the above quote, it is clear that possession of land is definitely a big and major criterion for social power. A person who has land, is considered to be a powerful man. According to Walter Fernandes, 'An aspect that needs to be borne in mind in order to understand this apparent contradiction is that land is not merely a source of cultivation or of buildings, as it is made out to be in most legislation. Its ownership pattern in an agrarian economy is a sign of a person's social status.'

4. Legitimization of Tenancy in the Ceiling Limit

Mostly in India, land is simply passed on from one generation to the next without any proper documentation. This should be avoided and proper papers and legal documents should be provided so as to carry out the registration of tenancy arrangements with the village panchayats.

5. Land as Private Property

The Permanent Land Settlement Act was introduced in 1793 by Lord Cornwallis in Bihar, Orissa, and Bengal. This Act was important because it was for the first time that land would be owned on individual basis. Earlier, the land was always considered as a common property of the community.

Failure of Land Reforms

India is an agriculture based country. All major activities around the year are governed by this fact. Relationships among people belonging to different strata or class are affected by the same. Seventy per cent of the Indians live on agriculture, and there exists different varieties of farmers like the big farmers, sharecroppers, and agricultural labourers. All have their interest in the fields. The land reforms, which were framed keeping in mind the inequalities of land distribution, have not really turned out to be successful. The failure can be summarized as:

• Increasing Land Inequalities

The main idea behind land reforms was to remove inequality of peasants. It was to establish equality among the different categories of peasants. But this objective has not been achieved because of the fact that it is difficult to compare land ownership definitions about various categories. It is further clear that the land relations too were not very cordial.

In 1961, the number of land holdings was 64 million and the landless rural households were around 19 million. While in comparison, in 1971 the percentage of small farmers had risen to 18.9 from 9 per cent. This shows a large discrepancy in the landholdings. In

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1981, it was found that the percentage of marginal and small farmers was 56.5 per cent and 12.2 per cent respectively.

According to Walter Fernandes,

> By 1981 the percentage of marginal and small farmers was 56.5 and 12.2 per cent respectively. The semi-medium farmers were 14 per cent, the medium farmers 9.1 per cent and big farmers 2.4 per cent. According to the estimates of the planning commission in the mid-1980s, two-thirds of the rural households were made up of small and marginal farmers the estimated surplus over the ceiling was 5.36 million hectares but only 2.10 million hectares had been taken over till the mid-1980s and 1.29 million distributed.

The data collected by the Reserve Bank of India survey, show that, 'the poorest 10 per cent owned only 0.4 per cent of the total assets in the rural areas and 0.1 per cent in the urban areas. On the other hand, the top 10 per cent owned 49.5 per cent of the rural assets and 58.7 per cent of the urban assets. The trend continued till the late 1980s (Government of India, 1988) and is also in tune today.'

It is noted that the land reforms have not been able to reduce the inequalities of land distribution or in other words it could be that the land reforms were not taken and implemented seriously by the state government.

- **Preferential Treatment to Farmers by the State Government**

N. C. Saxena has analysed the situation closely by saying that the land reforms have turned out to be a failure because the big farmers are able to influence the state machinery. This results in the state giving a preferential treatment to big farmers, letting the small farmers suffer like always.

- **Big Farmers Group the Land of the Marginal Farmers**

The big farmers have longer patches of land to their disposal. The small and marginal farmers have small patches of land. It is difficult to carry out agricultural activities in these small land pieces because of the cost involved. Therefore, the advantage of land ceiling goes to the big farmers.

- **Surplus Land is Uncultivated**

As a result of land ceiling, the big farmers give up their excess land. Mostly the land which they give is barren and of little economic or agricultural use. As a result of this the land reform turns out to be useless.

- **Benami Land**

The land ceiling transactions find a lot of fraudulent cases. It is seen that the excess land which a person has is given to some *'benami'* (renamed) individuals. This also turns out to be a major problem towards land reform legislations.

- **Lack of Political Will**

Mostly in such cases, we find that if political interest is there, it is easier to sort out such issues. Initially, when the Land Ceiling Act was introduced, the zamindars and jagirdars opposed it much. They tried very hard to prevent it from being implemented and were to an extent responsible for its non-implementation. It is observed that the Bihar Acquisition of Surplus Act of 1961 and the subsequent amendments could not correct the earlier deficiencies of the Land Reforms Act due to no political assistance. Rather it is reported that the big land owners of Bihar are constantly increasing their landholdings quite opposite to the requirement of the land reform legislation.

Check Your Progress

6. Name the two forms of proprietors initiated by the Britishers.
7. How did Vinoba Bhave contribute to the upliftment of the poor?

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4.5 LAND TENURE SYSTEMS UNDER THE BRITISH RULE

After the Battle of Plassey, the English East India Company was granted *diwani* rights for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1765. The major concern now faced by the East India Company's administration in India was regarding the manner in which to collect revenue so as to extract maximum profit. Two distinct though not unrelated schools of thought emerged in the Indian administration of the East India Company. On the one hand, the Cornwallis system, with its epicentre in Bengal, and based on the Permanent Settlement was introduced with the anticipation that the title of law and private property rights would liberate individual venture from the chains of custom and tradition, and would bring in modernization to the economy and society. On the other hand, Thomas Munro in Madras, and his disciples in western and northern India, such as Mountstuart Elphinstone, John Malcolm and Charles Metcalfe, went on to introduce his Ryotwari Settlement, with the intention of preserving India's village communities. This school of thought respected the Indian tradition and experience and thought that land reforms had to be modified to suit the Indian context. So, Munro introduced the Ryotwari Settlement.

Though the manner in which land revenue was collected was different in both the Permanent Settlement and the Ryotwari Settlement, the ultimate aim of both the systems was to consolidate the Company's position by expanding its revenue base, where land taxes would be collected directly from the peasants by the British officers. Both systems were based on the same fundamental principles of centralized sovereignty and inviolability of private property that was to be protected by British laws. Thomas Munro represents authoritative paternalism, which remained the main ideology of the early British Empire in India. What is significant to understand is that imperial authoritarianism could only function well in collaboration with the local elites of the Indian rural society, like the zamindars in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. In fact, these local elites were empowered under the new land revenue settlements introduced by the British, which sought to protect the private property of the elites. Hence, we have to analyse the various layers of controls over the cultivator, who was exploited not just by the alien colonial rulers, but also by the native Indian elite.

4.5.1 Permanent Settlement

Bengal, the land known for its vast history is also famous for the Permanent Settlement, which is again a historic act in the history of India. Bengal was the first considerable province to come under the British administration. Zamindars and revenue farmers more or less, were very famous in the territory of Bengal and they were used by the Britishers to interact with the locals. The British administration attributed a proprietary interest for the first time to them. In the case of revenue-farmers, there were no well-established rules of inheritance. But the British administration definitely made their position hereditary by recognizing them as proprietors. This was passed as an Act in the year 1793. The Act was famous by the name of Permanent Settlement. The Act was especially passed for the state of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. Through the Permanent Settlement Act, the British declared that all landlords, zamindars, and *talukadars* have to pay some amount of rent to the government. The amount of rent was fixed permanently by the government itself. The zamindars were elevated to the rank of landlords over the land in respect of which he was merely responsible for revenue collection. This was one of the ways through which the British rule established a permanent position in India. In Bengal, the Permanent Settlement created royal zamindars who strengthened the hold of British rule in India.

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History of Permanent Settlement in Bengal

It was in the year 1784 that Pitt's India Bill became a law which placed the administration of the Company under the control of the Crown, and thus compelled some reforms. The Directors of the Company felt that they must put their house in order. They selected a nobleman of high character and broad sympathies to succeed Warren Hasting, and in their letter of 12 April 1786 they gave the new Governor General, Lord Cornwallis, full instructions for his guidance.

In this memorable letter the Directors expressed their disapprobation of the frequent changes in the revenue system of Bengal and their desire to pursue any one system under watchful superintendence. They condemned the endeavours which had been made to continually increase the land tax, and to exile zamindars in favour of farmers, *Sazawals* and *Amins*, who had no permanent interest in the well-being of the cultivators. They expressed their opinion that the most likely means of avoiding defalcations would be to introduce Permanent Settlement of the land revenue, estimated on responsible principles, for the due payment of which the hereditary tenure of the possessor would be the best and the only necessary security. They directed that the settlement should be made in all practicable instances with the zamindars and they declared that 'a moderate *jumma* or assessment, regularly and punctually collected, unites the consideration of our interests with the happiness of the natives and security of the landholders more rationally than any imperfect collection of any exaggerated *jumma* to be enforced with severity and vexation'. While they intended the settlement to be ultimately made permanent, they desired that the first settlement should be concluded for ten year only. The man who was chosen to give effect to this new scheme was none other than Lord Cornwallis who was worthy of his task.

On his arrival in India, Lord Cornwallis found it impossible to conclude a ten years settlement without some further inquiry into the question of usages, tenures and rents, and he vigorously prosecuted these inquiries. After all inquiries and investigations, in November 1791 an amended and complete Code of Regulation was passed by the government for a settlement of ten years and the settlement was concluded in every district of Bengal in 1793. The whole amount of land revenue obtained from the Bengal, Bihar and Orissa for the year 1790–91 was Rs 26,800,989. The amount was nearly double of the assessment of Jaffer Khan and Suja Khan. Lord Cornwallis issued a proclamation on the 22 March 1793, announcing the permanency of the settlement.

Permanent Settlement and the Condition of Bengal

The Permanent Settlement Act of the British nation is the only Act during their reign which protected the economic welfare of the Indian people. This Act, like in other civilized countries, allowed its people to benefit from their own industries, instead of letting their industries paralyse due to uncertainty and increasing state demand. Agriculture was mainly extended in Bengal in the last hundred years and the land tax, which was fixed at 90 per cent of the rental, in 1793, has now come to be proportionate to approx. 28 per cent of the rental of landlords and new taxes have been added, amounting to 61.4 per cent on the for the purpose of building and maintaining roads and public works.

Since the late 18th century, Bengal has not witnessed a famine or any serious loss of lives. Therefore, Lord Cornwallis's Permanent Settlement of 1793 was probably the best and the most effective British measure ever implemented in Bengal.

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Features of the Permanent Settlement in Bengal

On the examination of the Permanent Settlement Act in Bengal, it became evident that the British administration made the zamindars the proprietors, instead of recognizing them as mere revenue-collecting agencies. Thereafter, the government had strictly limited claims from them. The significant features of the Permanent Settlement were as follows:

- The total amount of revenue was fixed for each locality.
- The amount was to be fixed in perpetuity and was unalterable.
- The zamindars were to retain one-eleventh of the total revenue.
- Zamindars were given virtually free power to evict the occupiers who fail to pay the rent.
- The zamindars who collected the land revenue were made the owner of the land.
- The zamindars had to pay a fixed amount of revenue to the Company. It could neither be increased nor decreased later on.
- It was decided that the government would have a claim to the 10/11 of the gross revenue, the balance being kept by the zamindars. The government assured the zamindars that except the land revenue, they would not have to pay any other gift or tax to the government.
- In case any zamindar failed to pay the fixed amount of the revenue, the government had the right to confiscate some part of his land holding to recover the amount due.
- The farmer or the ryots were made the tenants of the zamindars.
- The zamindars were deprived of their judicial and administrative powers.
- The government assured the zamindars that it would not interfere with their traditions.

Achievements of Permanent Settlement

The immediate achievements of the Permanent Settlement in Bengal were as follows:

- The security of the interests of zamindars increased.
- There was an assurance of fixed revenue as far as the government was concerned.
- The revenue that the zamindars were to pay to the government was fixed in perpetuity and the zamindar was left practically free to levy rent at the will of his ryots and the landholders.
- The zamindars were permitted to appropriate to their own use the difference between the sum which they paid to the government and the rent they use to realize from the land.
- They were moreover encouraged to exert themselves to reclaim cultivable waste land for cultivation.

All these achievements helped the zamindars to emerge as a very powerful class in society by concentrating immense bargaining power in their hands as well as in their relation with the land. The Permanent Settlement not only benefited the zamindars but the entire agricultural community. The entire peasant population shared the benefit and became more prosperous and resourceful on the account of this measure. It afforded protection to agriculture which was virtually the only means of the nation's subsistence.

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In Bengal, the Permanent Settlement precluded the state from increasing the annual economic drain of wealth out of the country. It saved the nation from fatal and disastrous famines.

Failure of the Permanent Settlement

The settlement was developed on the previous system but it suffered from many serious drawbacks and hence failed. It was difficult for the then landlords to collect much money from their tenants or ryots. The Company had fixed exorbitant rates of land revenue. Also, the settlement ignored all the rights of tenants and small proprietors whose land became the private property of the zamindars. Thus, in many cases, the lands of the landlords were sold due to non-payment of fixed amount of land revenue to the Company.

Effects of Permanent Settlement

The Mughals had created a class of hereditary revenue collectors called zamindars. These were the link between the Mughal equivalent of the District Officer and the peasantry. Their income was derived from the difference between what the government expected them to recover and the amount they could extract from the peasants. They clearly filled the role of arbitrators whose living depended on reaching a compromise bearable by all parties concerned. Unfortunately, the British Parliament that passed the Pitt's India Act of 1784 comprised landed gentry, whose ignorance of Indian conditions led them to assume that zamindars were Indian replicas of them. The first Governor-General of India under the Pitt's Act was Cornwallis, who himself was a great landlord. The result of these circumstances was felt in 1789. The British decided to create a new class of landlords in their new possession of Bengal by turning the zamindars from being the revenue-collectors into being landlords. In 1793, this arrangement was made permanent in Bengal and this Permanent Settlement, as it is called, laid the foundation of one type of revenue policy in India. It was extended to other areas, though on the basis of recurrent settlements. It created a large class of landowners loyal to the British but with few exceptions, oppressive towards their tenants and frequently absent in the bargain. Economically, the British were the losers in the permanently settled areas because crop prices rose over the years while the revenue remained fixed, the zamindars extracted greatly increased rents from their tenants and became very rich, and both the peasantry and their British rulers were poorer in consequences.

4.5.2 Ryotwari Settlement

Not long after Cornwallis introduced the Permanent Settlement in Bengal, the question of extending it to other territories, acquired by Company from time to time, presented itself. The capture of Baramahal and Dindigul from Tipu Sultan in the Third Mysore War and the cession of the northern Circars in 1794 as a *jagir* brought the issue to the fore. In 1799, Tanjore and Coimbatore and in 1801 Malabar and the territory of the Nawab of Arcot had been annexed to Madras Presidency. Among the first officials to be associated with land revenue settlement in these areas were Alexander Read and Lionel Place. Thomas Munro was one of Read's assistants. In 1800, he was transferred from Kanara to the Deccan districts ceded by the Nizam of Hyderabad.

While these officials were busy sorting out the complex revenue affairs under their charge, Lord Wellesley, the Governor General, issued a peremptory order to the Madras government to introduce the Bengal System of Permanent Settlement in its

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newly acquired dominion. The directive was not well received, for as Munro and his assistants gained in experience, they became extremely critical of the Bengal system. Moreover, they were able to sell their new ideas to the local administration. In particular, William Bentinck, the Governor of Madras, was attracted by what they were doing and ruled that further progress with the Zamindari settlement be stayed. Later in the year 1808, permission was accorded to experiment with village panchayat, apart from the Ryotwari Settlement.

The Ryotwari Settlement had a staunch champion in Munro. As a result of the earlier experiences in Tanjore, Hodgson, who was then powerful in the Madras Board of Revenue was keen on the village panchayats. In 1808–1809, the Ryotwari experiment was tried in most of the districts. The settlement was just like the Permanent Settlement of Bengal. The Ryotwari Settlement in the Deccan also followed similar patterns of collecting revenue from the agricultural land by the landlords. Under the Ryotwari Settlement, the revenue not only consist of rents but also certain land taxes. The land revenue under this settlement was directly imposed on the cultivators, the actual owner of the land. There was not a single involvement of any middleman in between the landowner and the government. While describing the Ryotwari Settlement in the Deccan, John Stuart Mill in his report in the 1857 stated that:

> Under the Ryotwari System every registered holder of land is recognized as its proprietor, and pays direct to Government. He is at liberty to sublet his property, or to transfer it by gift, sale, or mortgage. He cannot be ejected by Government so long as he pays the fixed assessment, and has the option annually of increasing or diminishing his holding, or of entirely abandoning it. In unfavourable seasons remissions of assessment are granted for entire or partial loss of produce. The assessment is fixed in money, and does not vary from year to year, in those cases where water is drawn from a Government source of irrigation to convert dry land into wet, or into two-crop land, when an extra rent is paid to Government for the water so appropriated; nor is any addition made to the assessment for the improvements effected at the Ryot's own expense. The Ryot under this system was virtually a proprietor on a simple and perfect title, and has all the benefits of a perpetual lease without its responsibilities, in as much as he can at any time throw up his lands, but cannot be ejected so long as he pays his dues; he receives assistance in difficult seasons, and is irresponsible for the payment of his neighbours. . . The annual settlements under Ryotwari were often misunderstood, and it has necessary to explain that they were rendered necessary by the right accorded to the Ryot of diminishing or extending his cultivation from year to year. Their object was to determine how much of the assessment due on his holding the Ryot shall pay, and not to reassess the land. In these cases where no change occurs in the Ryots holding a fresh Potta or lease is not issued, and such parties are in no way affected by the Annual Settlement, which they are not required to attend.

Features of Ryotwari Settlement

According to this settlement, there was individual ownership of land and each landlord was responsible for the payment of the land revenue to the government. The rate of land revenue could be changed from time to time and the land was classified according to its productive capacity.

Initially, the Ryotwari Settlement was only a part of Madras Presidency where Sir Thomas Munro was the Governor General. But soon after the settlement extended to several other parts of Deccan India such as Mumbai. In both the areas, a significant social upheaval was being caused by the Ryotwari Settlement, which undermined the

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authority of the village headmen and thus caused a status revolution in the villages of Maharashtra and Madras. In Madras, by 1818, the suppression of landed aristocrats, the poligars, the establishment of judicial courts and the improvement of the revenue system had been ensured. However, in the bargain they had claimed a heavy toll. As soon as Munro became the Governor General in May 1820, the system was declared generally operative in all parts of the Madras Presidency, barring areas already under the permanent settlement. As to the latter, every opportunity was taken of getting back, on account of lapses or by means of purchase, the zamindari mootahs and such other tenures as existed, with the view to introducing the new system therein.

The central characteristic of Munro's system was that the government demand on land was now permanently fixed and each cultivator could take or reject the field he was offered if he thought its rent to be excessive. Munro reduced the assessment from roughly half to one third of the estimated produce; even so, in many cases the latter represented the entire economic rent and was thus by definition oppressive.

Two other factors also get associated with this settlement. First, the cultivator had to pay a fixed sum of money irrespective of the actual yield or the prevalent price; second, the rent was not calculated through local bodies. According to a rough estimate, by 1928–1929 around 52 per cent of the cultivable land in the Deccan parts of India came under the protection of Ryotwari Settlement.

A common feature of Ryotwari Settlement was the over-assessment and the primary aim of the Company's government was to increase the revenue income. The results were arrears of payment, mounting debt, increasing land sale and dispossession. Contrary to received wisdom, modern research had established that the effect of these changes were less spectacular than once imagined, and had significant *regional variations*, as the land transfer could not fundamentally alter the structure of landholdings everywhere. Due to this settlement, the agrarian society thus proved to be more resilient than once thought to be. But the group and classes that survived had substantially different rights, obligations and powers. These changes and grievances generating from them were amply reflected in the series of agrarian disturbances that marked the first century of British rule in India.

Benefits to the Government and Peasants from Ryotwari Settlement

The government got the following benefits from the Ryotwari settlement:

- The settlement was not permanent but for a fixed tenure, normally for 30 years; therefore in case of the increased production, the government could also increase the land revenue unlike in Permanent Settlement.
- The government collected land revenue mainly in cash, therefore, in case of price rise the government also benefitted.
- The government had control over non-occupied and other community land unlike in Permanent Settlement.

Benefits to the Peasant

- The peasants were treated as the owner of the land. They could sell or give their land on contract.
- They were saved from any intermediaries.

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Effects of Ryotwari Settlement

Among several periodic settlements, the Ryotwari Settlement is one of the most important settlements which affected the economy of India. This system was introduced by Sir Thomas Munro in setting British administrative arrangements in Madras after the conquest of Mysore and the Carnatic. In essence, it was aimed at eliminating the middleman, making an agreed settlement with each cultivator and thus ensuring his undisturbed occupancy of his holding over the thirty year period of settlement provided he paid his dues. This seemed fair indeed compared with the oppressions of the Zamindari system but there were major flaws. In the first place, over-assessment was common and the ryots under pressure to keep his land usually agreed to dues he could not hope to pay which was half the net value of the crop. At the same time, though middlemen did not exist, the zeal of the government officials in extracting the exact revenue from the peasants resulted in a sort of detached inhumanity in times of agricultural crisis that defeated the object of this type of settlement, i.e., the establishment of links between the ryot and the government on the basis of fairness.

With time, some of these defects were remedied by more sensible assessments and more understanding administration of revenue demands. One change, however, was irreversible. The new settlement replaced the cohesive village community traditional to Hindu culture with a group of individual cultivators dealing independently with their rules.

4.5.3 Mahalwari Settlement

The word 'Mahal' means village. Under Mahalwari system, the settlement was made with 'Mahal' instead of an individual peasant. The immediate credit for the formation of the system goes to Holt Mackenzie, Secretary to the Government in the Territorial Department. He personally made a local investigation into the nature of land tenures in the ceded and conquered provinces; prepared a general survey of their revenue history; studied the silent features in the development of the Court's policy and drew from all his researches a principle of settlement, which he recommended to the approval of government in July, 1819. The system got legal sanction in 1822, however, it developed only in 1833–1834.

Under the Mahalwari Settlement, the village land was held jointly by the village communities, and members of which were jointly and severally responsible for the payment of land revenue. Under the settlement, the village common or *Shamlat* was the property of the village community as a whole. Similarly, the waste land also belonged to the village community and it was free to rent it out and divide the rents among the members of the community or partition it to bring it under cultivation without any leave of the government. The system was the product of Muslim tradition and development.

A certain sum was assessed as land revenue for the whole village for which the whole bodies of co-sharers were jointly and severally responsible. The village *lambardar* collected revenue for which he received *panchortra*, i.e., 5 per cent as commission.

The settlement was first introduced in Agra and Oudh and later on in Punjab and some parts of Central Provinces. In Central India, the settlement got more popularity. There was more village unity in the parts of Central India. Therefore, to generate revenue from a community was an easy task from these areas.

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Features of Mahalwari Settlement in Central India

Some of the common features of the Mahalwari system are as follows:

- Land revenue settlement was made with *Mahal* or *gram*. Local zamindars or *Lambardar* was responsible, on behalf of all peasants, for the payment of land revenue.
- Initially, in 1833, two-third of net produce was fixed as land revenue but later it was reduced to one-half of net produce.
- The peasant had to deposit the revenue to the zamindars. The percentage, which each peasant had to pay, was same but the quantity varied.
- The peasant was free to sell or mortgage their land.
- The settlement was made for thirty years and in some places for twenty years.

Benefits to the Government

The government also hugely benefitted from Mahalwari system. It got the following benefits:

- Collection of land revenue from one person instead of all the peasants of the village, was easier and cheaper for the government.
- The system was already prevailing in some areas; therefore the government had no problem in implementing it.
- The government was assured of its income for the next 20–30 years.

Effects on Peasants

The peasants, on the other hand, had very little to cheer. They could take solace from the fact that they were saved from a possible corrupt revenue officials of the government and that they had better control over their land. But they had to face some real difficulties, which were as follows:

- High rate of taxation, which was fifty per cent of the net produce
- The idea of net produce was very vague
- The zamindars and the *lambardars* were present to exploit the peasants
- The moneylenders, by clever means captured the mortgage land

Effect of Mahalwari Settlement in Central Province

The effects of Mahalwari settlement in central province were as follows:

- Due to high land revenue demand from the government, large areas of the land began to pass into the hands of moneylenders and merchants, who ousted the old cultivating proprietors or reduced them to tenants at will.
- There was an impoverishment and widespread dispossessions among the cultivating communities of Central India, which led to the development of uprising.

Effects of Mahalwari Settlement

This settlement was used to settle the revenue administration of the land areas acquired by the British, i.e., Delhi, the United Provinces and the Punjab. These had already existing vigorous village communities, whose merits were recognised by the British administrators charged with the task of settlement. Thus, the principle underlying this

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system was to deal with the village or group of villages called 'mahals', through negotiation with the village elders, who then became responsible for collection of revenue as assessed during the survey operation. The idea was a good one and initially worked better than the other settlements. Unfortunately, it happened to coincide with the introduction at too rapid a pace of the British legal system. Litigation over land became a popular rural gambling sport, and much of the solidarity of the village community evaporated when appeal to such courts replaced the traditional authority of village elders. Hence, the main justification of the settlement—maintenance of the village community—was partially defeated by the means adopted to attain it.

Thus, all these periodic settlements created a great economic imbalance in India. In one form of settlement, it was decided that a certain amount of the produce from the land would have to be paid by the zamindars to the state as land revenue. But the zamindars were at liberty to charge any rent from the tenants—the peasant farmers. With the population growth, the demand for food and raw materials increased. That led to an automatic increase in the demand for land. As the demand for land increased, the price of land or rent per acre shot up automatically. So, the landowners gained at the expense of the farmers.

Before the introduction of the periodic settlements in India, the representatives of the British rulers collected as much land revenue as they could. In fact, the drain of wealth of Indian economy was much higher. But with the establishment of several settlements in India, the share of British government in the agriculture produces declined. But this new arrangement did not bring any benefit to the peasantry. Rather, they were exploited by the landlords who were given a free hand to collect rent from the farmers. The zamindars started collecting as much rent as possible but, at the same time, they paid a fixed portion of the same to the government as land revenue. So, the zamindars were the gainers.

The settlements benefited only the landlords who acted mainly as rent–seeking and rent collecting agents of the foreign rulers. They exploited the farmers and the economy of India mercilessly. The zamindars had the right of not only enhancing rent at their discretion but they also could force some farmers and agricultural workers to supply labour services free of cost if they were unable to pay rent within the stipulated time or in the required amounts. Besides, the Indian economy was also exploited in various other ways both legally and illegally. Loans were offered to the farmers at exorbitant rates of interest. In case the farmers were unable to repay the loan amount, the land was seized by the zamindars. As a result of this, there were economic disparities between the Indian masses. The zamindars became richer and richer and the farmers were converted into landless labourers with poor economic condition.

The rent charged varied from one-third to one-half of the agricultural output. Most zamindars stayed in urban areas and were absentee landlords. They could not collect the revenue themselves. They appointed some people for the job. These people again appointed their agents or sub-agents for the revenue collection.

No doubt the revenue of the British increased year after year due to several periodic settlements in India. But, at the same time, the volume of agricultural produce as also their prices continued to increase. The net result was that land revenue as a proportion of the total agriculture produce tended to decline. The landlords took advantage of the development. They had their till filled in from larger output and higher prices by demanding higher and higher rents. In fact, the major portion of the increased output was taken away by the landlords, leaving only a small portion of the same with the

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farmers. The amount left with the farmers was not even sufficient to enable them to make a living, with a minimum quantity of food intake. They were just able to eke out what is called a subsistence existence. They could not generate sufficient marketable surplus after paying rent and after consuming a minimum amount. Thus, commercialization of agriculture could not be thought of in such a situation. Many farmers were unable to pay such high rents. Being rack rented, they were forced to abandon cultivation altogether and join the agricultural labour force. Thus, the periodic settlements granted private ownership of land and automatically increased the land-hunger of the landlords. It created economic disparity in the Indian society. The rich became richer and the poor became poorer.

4.5.4 Bhoodan Movement

Vinoba Bhave was a political and socialist reformist in his economic theory. He was in favour of state control over all useful industries for the benefit of humanity. He believed that under socialism all were entitled to get their share of the national income and thus there should be no question of exploitation. He often said that all land belonged to God. For him, socialism stood for the ideal of social transformation by purification of means through the spirit of love and human unity. He was against all forms of exploitation and called for their moral disapproval. He believed that the individual exploiter must be approached with love. For him, once the exploiters were convinced to shed their selfishness, everything would become easy. He laid great emphasis on interpersonal and international relationships along with respect for the dignity of the individual and worth of human personality. His aim was to establish a classless society by changing the hearts of the people. Humanism was the basic principle of Acharya Vinoba Bhave's economic theory.

The Bhoodan and Gramdan movement placed Vinoba in the international scene. His contribution to the marginalized groups of the society in the area of land reforms was quite significant. The Third Annual Sarvodaya Conference was held at Shivarampali, a village few miles away from Hyderabad. Certain instances forced Vinoba to leave the community centre otherwise called the 'ashram' at Pavnar. Vinoba decided to walk a 300-miles stretch to Hyderabad. With this determination, Vinoba propagated the values of ahimsa or non-violence. During this period, Telangana was a troubled area and witnessed communist rebellion.

On 11 April 1951, Vinoba decided to visit the communist infested areas in Telangana. His motive was to spread the message of non-violence and peace. He immediately handled the matter portraying great sensitivity. Vinoba observed that the village people were afraid of the police and the communists at large. Further, the entire village was divided on class lines. On 18 April 1951, Vinoba entered the Nalgonda district to observe the communist situations. Out of the 700 supporters of Vinoba Bhave, two-thirds were landless peasants. Following this, Vinoba went to the Harijan colony to study the situations there. He was successful in pacifying the Harijans and during discussions the people in the concerned region demanded for 8 acres of land for 40 families. With Vinoba Bhave's expanding popularity, this movement later came to be known as Gramdan or Village Gift. This movement was a part of the Sarvodaya Society towards a new socio and political order, which was soon acknowledged outside India. Vinoba demanded 50 acres of land for the landless labourers from the entire country. It was a political mass movement and continued till 1957. The main part of the village was to be donated by not less than 75 per cent of the villagers. The objective of this claim was to surrender

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the occupancy of land in favour of the entire village. However, later this idea did not materialize much in the non-tribal areas. The movement underwent various drawbacks. Other aspects of the movement included ***sampatidan*** implying wealth gift, ***shramdan*** implying labour gift, ***jeevandan*** implying lifelong commitment to fellow workers, ***shanti sena*** implying peace army and ***sahdandan*** implying agricultural operations. These aspects of the movement gained much popularity. The movement directly affected people's attitude towards fellow workers. Despite all its limitations, the movement led by Vinoba Bhave gained quick momentum.

4.6 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- The oldest texts related to Indian history are the Vedas: the *Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Atharva Veda,* and *Yajur Veda.* The *Rig Veda* is the oldest out of these four.
- A village is the smallest unit of the social structure. It is the lowest rung which holds the foundations of the entire framework of the political as well as social systems.
- A. R. Desai referring to the empirical data of Gujarat as given by S. M. Shah states that new economic and political forces have undermined the homogenous functional basis of old castes and also the distribution of prosperity among them.
- Peripheral changes include the establishment of new schools, construction of roads, public health centres, communication means, mobility, and migration.
- Sanskritization is a concept introduced by M. N. Srinivas in the 1960s. He used it as a process of social change and mobility.
- According to Srinivas, the concept of modernization in India started with the coming of British in India. He states that it was because of the British that India became more modern and advanced in their thinking and outlook towards life.
- It has been observed that the major reason or factor which changed the status of people is education. It is education which brings about a new awareness among people. Education makes a person aware of his rights and privileges.
- The Punjab experiment, generally known as the Gurgaon Project, was initiated by F. L. Brayne. He said that the purpose was to 'jerk the villager out of his old groove, convince him that improvement is possible and kill his fatalism by demonstrating that climate, disease and poverty can be successfully fought; further to laugh him out of his unhealthy and uneconomic customs.'
- The term *sarvodaya* literally means 'the rise or welfare of all'. It comprises two Sanskrit component words, *sarva* and *udaya*, which means 'all rise' respectively.
- From about the middle of the 19th century railways and steamer ways were introduced in India with the main object of bringing the raw materials for the British industrialists from the remotest corners of the country and with the aim of circulating British manufactures into even the smallest village.
- Sociologists have developed several concepts to study social change in India. These are development, modernization, urbanization, westernization, universalization, social development, globalization, great and little traditions.

Check Your Progress

8. State the significance of the Permanent Land Settlement Act.
9. What were the benefits to peasants from the Ryotwari Settlement?

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- India is basically an agricultural country. The revenue mostly comes from land, e.g., crops. Land is the natural resource of people, especially in India where most of the activities revolve around the land.
- The British regime introduced a new revenue system, thus changing the old existing pattern of life. They removed the community right over property of the village lands.
- Political leaders like Vinoba Bhave also worked for the upliftment of the poor by propagating that land belonged to God and that all had the right to occupy it equally.
- The Permanent Land Settlement Act was introduced in 1793 by Lord Cornwallis in Bihar, Orissa, and Bengal. This Act was important because it was for the first time that land would be owned on individual basis.
- It is noted that the land reforms have not been able to reduce the inequalities of land distribution or in other words it could be that the land reforms were not taken and implemented seriously by the state government.
- Bengal, the land known for its vast history is also famous for the Permanent Settlement, which is again a historic act in the history of India. Bengal was the first considerable province to come under the British administration.
- Under the Mahalwari Settlement, the village land was held jointly by the village communities, and members of which were jointly and severally responsible for the payment of land revenue.
- Vinoba Bhave was a political and socialist reformist in his economic theory. He was in favour of state control over all useful industries for the benefit of humanity.

4.7 KEY TERMS

- **Commoditization:** Commoditization is defined as a process where objects and goods that have economic value are transformed into simple commodities in the market.
- **Sarvodaya:** The term *sarvodaya* literally means 'the rise or welfare of all'.
- **Transformation:** Transformation has been defined as 'the action of changing in form, shape, or appearance, metamorphosis, a complete change in characters, conditions, etc.'

4.8 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Structural changes refer to the changes related to structures which have a far-reaching impact on the rural caste system. This relates to the abolition of the Zamindari system and Jagirdari system and new developments like the introduction of Panchayati Raj, adult franchise (right to vote), establishment of co-operations, etc.
2. The Punjab experiment, generally known as the Gurgaon Project, was initiated by F. L. Brayne. He said that the purpose was to 'jerk the villager out of his old groove, convince him that improvement is possible and kill his fatalism by demonstrating that climate, disease and poverty can be successfully fought; further to laugh him out of his unhealthy and uneconomic customs.'

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3. The standard of living is rising in the villages, creating a demand for new things, for which new shops are being opened. The use of new tools is increasing in the agricultural field. The production has increased with the help of new tools, good quality seeds and modern methods of farming.
4. Globalization has affected every part of the social system, including traditional values, shopping patterns, entertainment, media, eating habits, educational pattern, etc. Indian families are adopting western trends despite opposition from several fundamentalist elements.
5. Modernization is a process of change. It entails social change; it involves change in the society to make it better.
6. The Britishers created two forms of proprietors. These are as follows:
   - Landlords
   - Individual peasant proprietor
7. Political leaders like Vinoba Bhave also worked for the upliftment of the poor by propagating that land belonged to God and that all had the right to occupy it equally.
8. The Permanent Land Settlement Act was introduced in 1793 by Lord Cornwallis in Bihar, Orissa, and Bengal. This Act was important because it was for the first time that land would be owned on individual basis.
9. The benefits to peasants from the Ryotwari Settlement include the following:
   - The peasants were treated as the owner of the land. They could sell or give their land on contract.
   - They were saved from any intermediaries.

4.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. How have the ancient texts described the Indian villages?
2. What are the major structural and peripheral changes influencing the rural caste system?
3. State the contributions made by Tagore in the field of rural development.
4. What is the effect of globalization on the Indian family?
5. List the various kinds of tenants.
6. On what concept is the land ceiling based?
7. List the features of the Permanent Settlement in Bengal.
8. What are the effects of Mahalwari Settlement?
9. Write a note on Bhave's Bhoodan Movement.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Evaluate the social transformation and rural development of rural India.
2. Discuss the history of rural development in India.
3. Assess the challenges of transformation in the contemporary rural society.
4. Critically analyse the approaches to rural development.

5. Discuss the various land reforms implemented in India during the British rule.
6. State the reasons for the failure of land reforms.
7. Discuss the methods of rural change.

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4.10 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 5 FIVE YEAR PLANS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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5.0 INTRODUCTION

The Planning Commission was set up in March 1950 by a Resolution of the Government of India which defined the scope of its work in the following terms:

> The Constitution of India has guaranteed certain Fundamental Rights to the citizens of India and enunciated certain Directive Principles of State Policy, in particular, that the State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of the national life, and shall direct its policy towards securing, among other things:

- That the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood
- That the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good
- That the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment

The fulfilment of the Five Year Plan calls for nation-wide co-operation in the tasks of development between the central government and the states, the states and the local authorities, with voluntary social service agencies engaged in constructive work, between the administration and the people as well as among the people themselves. Although several programmes included in the Plan are already under way, it is important that, through sacrifice borne equally by all citizens, the effort and resources of the entire nation should be mobilised in support of the Plan so that, during the coming years, the

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tempo of development can be greatly increased and the Plan becomes a focus of intense activity and a field of common endeavour throughout the country.

The Department of Rural Development is implementing a number of programmes in rural areas through the state governments for poverty reduction, employment generation, rural infrastructure habitant development, provision of basic minimum services and so on. In this unit, you will acquainted with the Five Year Plans and the various rural development programmes implemented by the government.

5.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Discuss the rural and social development programmes under the Five Year Plans
- Explain the various rural development programmes like IRDP, SGSY and PMRY
- Assess the aim and objectives of rural development programmes like SGSY and MGNREGA
- Enumerate the features of programmes such as CDP, EAS and SHGs

5.2 OVERVIEW OF RURAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN FIVE YEAR PLANS

Planning is a commitment to resolute action. Through economic and social planning, national governments make adjustments to new socio-economic and political realities. According to Ram Ahuja (1999, 447), social planning aims at: (i) change in social organization, and (ii) community welfare. For example, improving educational facilities, increasing employment opportunities, doing away with evil social practices and many more. For a plan to be successful, there should be few conditions. For example: (i) The plan must stem from the people themselves, (ii) People's participation is extremely necessary, (iii) initiative for implementing the plan is to be taken not by the planners but by the activists in different walks of life, (iv) priorities have to be decided in advance, and (v) arbitration in decision-making must be by a person who has technical knowledge and is a trained professional because he has the capability of visualizing alternative solutions.

Indian planning was advocated by M. Visvesvaraya in the 1940s. The Indian National Congress appointed a National Planning Committee on the eve of the Second World War (1938–39) to frame an all-India plan. However, it was the Bombay Plan, also known as the Tata Birla Plan, which made the people planning-conscious in India. The Government of India set up in 1943 a committee of the Viceroy's Council, known as the Reconstruction Committee of Council (RCC), which was assisted by Provincial Policy Committees to bring out plans for reconstruction. In 1944, the Department of Planning and Development was also created. However at this stage, government plans were not concerned with definite economic targets. They were mainly concerned with issues like raising the standard of living, increasing purchasing power of the people, stabilizing agricultural prices, developing industries, removing wealth disparities and raising the standard of backward classes. There was no resource budget and no priorities. Thus, it

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could be mentioned that, induced social change and development was not possible in pre-independence India. This was due to several factors, such as:

- No priorities for development were determined through adequate planning.
- No adequate statistics were prepared regarding the need of production, national income, etc.
- Limited foreign exchange was available for development purposes.
- Private entrepreneurs were reluctant to invest huge amounts in industrial development because of the government's policies.
- There was no facility for getting raw materials, machineries and capital goods from abroad.
- No serious efforts were made to check the growth of population.
- Planning mechanism was not possible in the absence of proper co-ordination among the provincial and the central committees.
- Inflation had increased owing to world wars.
- Administrative machinery was developed mainly with a view to discharging policing function of the state. Bureaucrats were not trained to take interest in development schemes (Ahuja 1999, 447–48).

As stated by Uma Kapila (2011, 81), achieving higher living standards for the Indian people was seen to be a major goal after Independence. A great deal of thought and discussion in planning for independence focused on the need for rapid economic growth and raising the living standards. Nehru and Gandhi had, indeed, differed on what economic policy should be, but the two leaders agreed on the centrality of economic developmental goals as a top priority after independence. After India gained independence, the newly formed government appointed a Planning Commission in 1950 to coordinate all state and central plans. The Commission was to look into the following factors:

- Determine priorities
- Plan balanced utilization of country's resources
- Make an assessment of the material, capital and human resources of the country
- Assess the progress achieved from time to time and recommend readjustment
- Identify factors which retard economic development (Ahuja 1999, 448)

The development campaign in the country in every sector is carried out through the Five Year Plans which are prepared by the Planning Commission. The Commission not only lays out the broader plans but also meticulously monitors the execution of those plans and makes efforts so that both the centre and the states work with proper coordination. From the 1950s till date, the Planning Commission has so far prepared eleven Five Year Plans focusing on different objectives. The 12th Five Year Plan of the Government of India (2012–17) is under drafting. As found from the Planning Commission of India sources, the different objectives and focus areas of the Five Year Plans along with the sociological appraisal is being discussed in this section.

1. The First Five Year Plan (1951–55)

The primary objective of the First Five Year Plan was to improve the standard of living of the people. The sectors targeted during this period included: industrial sector, energy, irrigation, transport, communications, land rehabilitation, social services, development of

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agriculture and so on. The government during this period had taken serious steps to rehabilitate the landless people who were depending solely on agriculture. Agriculture was considered as one of the important areas for development. There was an evolution of good irrigation system. The government also made significant efforts to improve transport and communication networks, like posts and telegraphs, railways, roads, civil aviation and so on. Adequate attention was also given to the industrial sector while simultaneously taking measures for the advancement of the small-scale industries. This was significant since the society and economy in India in post-independence period was very fragile and the poverty situation was grave along with inadequate infrastructure.

2. The Second Five Year Plan (1956–61)

By the second plan, Indian economy had reached a comparatively stable position. In this period, industries got more importance and the focus was primarily on heavy industries. The government encouraged manufacturing of industrial goods in the country. This was done primarily to develop the public sector and make it economically viable. The second Five Year Plan functioned on the basis of 'Mahalanobis model', following the name of P. C. Mahalanobis. His model addressed different issues concerning the economic development in the country. This period was socio-economically very significant because it had started a serious journey on the path of industrial development. As many as five steel plants including the plants at Durgapur, Jamshedpur and Bhilai were established. The 'Atomic Energy Commission' came into existence during this period and also the 'Tata Institute of Fundamental Research' that gave a boost to scientific research. During this period, the living standard of people was improved and several land-reform measures were also introduced.

3. The Third Five Year Plan (1961–66)

Unlike the previous plan, this plan gave utmost importance to agriculture to improve agricultural productivity in the country. This was to make India a self-sufficient country in agricultural production to reduce dependence on other countries for food products. The High Yield Varieties of seeds were introduced in agriculture in the country to enhance productivity, named as the 'Green Revolution'. The States played a significant role and were given more importance. The education sector got a boost with different primary schools opening in the rural areas. Various bodies were also formed to develop the secondary level education in the country. Literacy was in a bad state during post-independence period and therefore such a step during this plan period was very significant in this context. Besides, to promote democratic environment, Panchayat level elections were also commenced with the introduction of institutions like Panchayats and Zilla Parishads. This period also emphasized the minimization of the unemployment situation in the country. From sociological point of view, this plan period was very significant because it tried to address some important socio-economic problems like hunger, illiteracy, unemployment and so on. However, following the Sino-India war during this period, there was increase in the prices of different commodities leading to high-level inflation.

4. The Fourth Five Year Plan (1969–74)

This period was also a stepping stone for the socio-economic development of India. The war situation in 1962 and again in 1965 had made the country's situation worse. Famine and draught situation had made economic condition of the country critical. Therefore, without giving much attention to several long-term objectives, the government tried to

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take measures to overcome the crisis situation of the time. However, as mentioned earlier, Green Revolution brought self-sufficiency in food production with increase in rice, wheat and other agricultural products. However, this period also witnessed a situation where the gap between the rural and urban areas was created and rather widened. So there was a change in the socio-economic structure of the society.

5. The Fifth Five Year Plan (1974–79)

With the world economy in a troublesome condition and inflation souring high due to increase in food and oil prices, the Fifth Five Year Plan gave priority to the sectors like food and energy. The prime targets in this period were: to reduce the discrepancy between the economic development at the regional, national and international level; improve the agricultural condition in the country through the implementation of land reform laws; improve self-employment opportunities through well-integrated programmes; to reduce unemployment situation in both urban and rural areas; develop the small scale and cottage industries. Nonetheless, due to the improvement in infrastructural facilities, food grain production during this period was improved significantly.

6. The Sixth Five Year Plan (1980–85)

The Sixth Five Year Plan was to some extent an exit from the *Nehruvian* model. It brought a lot of changes right from improving tourism in the country to developing Information Technology. The transport and communication sector witnessed some improvement. The National Highways were also built during this plan. Construction of better roads enhanced the traffic system in the country. Reforms were introduced for the first time in the economy with the government going ahead with the economic liberalization policies. Along with it, for the first time, 'Family Planning' was implemented in the country during this plan period. This helped creating awareness among people about the problems of population explosion and introduced the small family norm. However, many of the political leaders were opposed to the reforms introduced by the government, due to which the economic growth was affected.

7. The Seventh Five Year Plan (1985–89)

This period followed the developmental path of the preceding period which had set the development vehicle by increasing the production in the agricultural and industrial sectors. The seventh plan could focus on industrial development. It emphasized the introduction and application of modern technology, development of the people belonging to all the sections of society and improvement of the weaker sections, development of agriculture, reduction of poverty and so on. Adequate care was taken to establish harmony in all the sectors and bring overall development in the economy. From the sociological point of view, significant measures were also taken to spread education in the country with special emphasis on women literacy. Serious steps were taken to promote social justice and removal of the oppression of the weak. Along with it several anti-poverty measures were also taken. There was improvement in the productivity of the small and large-scale farmers.

8. The Eighth Five Year Plan (1992–97)

This was the first plan after India adopted the economic reforms and liberalization in 1991. The basic targets of the Eighth Five Year Plan were modernization of the industrial sector by focusing on the technological development, rise in the employment level,

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reduction of poverty situation and self-reliance on domestic resources. The objectives of this plan included: prioritizing specific sectors that required immediate investment for generating full-scale employment, promoting social welfare measures like improved healthcare, sanitation, communication system and provision for extensive education facilities to eradicate the menace of illiteracy, checking the growth of population through mass awareness programmes, encouraging growth and diversification of the agricultural sector, achieving self-reliance in food grain production and producing surpluses for increasing exports, developing scientific and technological capabilities, giving emphasis on the private initiatives in the development of industrial sector in the country, creating opportunities for people to get involved in different developmental activities by building mass institutions. One of the achievements during this plan was the rise in employment level. By this time India was self-sufficient in food grain production and there was subsequent reduction of poverty.

9. The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997–2002)

The Ninth Five Year Plan was proposed with the main objective of attaining speedy industrialization, human development, full-scale employment generation, reduction of poverty and so on. Besides, the plan also tried to prioritize agricultural sector and emphasize on the development of rural areas, generate adequate employment for the vast labour force in the country and reduce poverty, to ensure food and nutritional security among the people, to provide for the basic infrastructural facilities like education for all, safe drinking water, primary healthcare, proper transport and energy supply, to check population growth, to promote women empowerment for ensuring gender equality and to create a liberalized, market friendly atmosphere to facilitate private investments. During this period, the service sector showed faster growth rate.

10. The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002–07)

This plan had the objective of transforming Indian economy into a fast growing economy in the world having the target of 10 per cent annual economic growth. More particularly, the plan period wanted to make India a more investor-friendly economy, encourage involvement of the private sector, development of infrastructure, mobilize and optimize all financial resources. One of the most important steps during this period was that schooling was made compulsory for children.

11. The Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007–12)

The Indian economy was in a much better position during the beginning of the eleventh plan than it was few years ago. The plan has several aims to meet with the socio-economic problems that the country is undergoing. To eradicate the unemployment situation in the country, the plan period has set the target of creating 70 million new jobs and reducing educated unemployment to below 5 per cent. For the education sector, the plan objectives have been set to reduce the dropout rates of children from elementary schools by 20 per cent, increase literacy rate for persons of age 7 years or more to 85 per cent and minimize the gender gap in literacy to 10 percentage points. The plan has also the target of raising sex ratio which gradually is becoming worse day by day in some states. It also has set the objective of ensuring that at least 33 per cent of the direct and indirect beneficiaries of all government-funded schemes are women. So, the eleventh Five Year Plan has some socio-economic targets which if implemented carefully shall bring an inclusive development in the country.

Check Your Progress

1. According to Ram Ahuja what does social planning aim at?
2. What was the primary objective of the first Five Year Plan and what were the sectors targeted?
3. On what basis did the second Five Year Plan function?
4. What was the focal point of the seventh Five Year plan?

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5.3 RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

The Department of Rural Development is implementing a number of programmes in rural areas through the state governments for poverty reduction, employment generation, rural infrastructure habitant development, provision of basic minimum services and so on.

Keeping in view the fact that rural roads are vital to economic growth and measures for poverty alleviation in the village, the government has launched a 100 per cent Centrally Sponsored Scheme called the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY). The Programme seeks to provide connectivity to all unconnected habitations in the rural areas with a population of more than 500 persons through good all-weather roads. In respect to the Hill States (North-East, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand) and the Desert Areas, the objective would be to connect habitations with a population of 250 persons and above. Let us now discuss the various rural development programmes.

5.3.1 Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)

The objective of the Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) is to bring the assisted poor families (Swarozgaris) above the poverty line by ensuring appreciable sustained level of income over a period of time. This objective is to be achieved by inter alia organizing the rural poor into Self Help Groups (SHGs) through the process of social mobilization, their training and capacity building and provision of income generating assets. The SHG approach helps the poor to build their self-confidence through community action. Interactions in group meetings and collective decision-making enables them in identification and prioritization of their needs and resources. This process would ultimately lead to the strengthening and socio-economic empowerment of the rural poor as well as improve their collective bargaining power. The poverty line varies from state to state. As per the latest (1999-2000) estimates of the Planning Commission, the poverty line in terms of per capita consumption expenditure per month in the rural areas varies from ₹ 262.94 in Andhra Pradesh to ₹ 367.45 in Himachal Pradesh. Para

SGSY lays stress on the cluster approach. What this means is that instead of funding diverse activities, each block should concentrate on a few select activities (key activities) and attend to all aspects of these activities, so that the Swarozgaris can draw sustainable incomes from their investments. These key activities should preferably be taken up in clusters so that the backward and forward linkages can be effectively established. This would facilitate not only monitoring but more importantly provision of various services required by the Swarozgaris.

Selection of Key Activities

The success of SGSY will therefore depend, to start with, on the choice of activities. The key element is that the choice of activity should be based on the local resources, the aptitude as well as the skill of the people. It is also necessary that the products have ready market.

The choice of key activities should not be an arbitrary or an ad hoc decision but should be a carefully thought out process. The Block SGSY committee has a very important role to play in it. For identifying the key activities that can be taken up, the committee should ensure that this selection takes place through a participative process.

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For selection of key activities, a profile of the poor families, as reflected in the BPL census should be analysed. There will be poor families with assets, such as land. Efforts should be made to see that those having a minimum extent of land are enabled to cross the poverty line by making additional investment on their lands, such as wells or other irrigation facilities, pump sets and so on. The experience over the years as well as evaluation studies have shown that investments on land based activities have resulted in generation of income on a more sustainable basis. The Block SGSY committee should therefore, analyse the potential for farm activities on priority. Care must be taken to see that they also have access to short term credit and other inputs required in the farm sector to supplement the efforts under the scheme. The next priority may be given to those who have an inherent skill. These would primarily be the rural artisans who form a significant segment of the rural society. Under the SGSY, rural artisans should be covered in a significant manner. Another category would be the unemployed educated youth. A number of them would have been trained under the erstwhile Training Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM) Programme. An inventory may be taken of such people to find out which activities are best suited for the area. Generally, the people who are asset-less and skill-less are poorest of poor and are left out under the programme. Such category of people may require small doses of multiple credit over a period of time coupled with emphasis on awareness creation, training and capacity building. The activities which are easier to handle and product is easily marketable could be identified for such category of people to ensure sustainable income, so that, they do not fall into debt trap.

The Block SGSY Committee may also look at the potential link plans prepared by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) as well as any other survey carried out by various banks and industrial/technical organizations. The local khadi and village industry officials as well as the district manager of District Industry Centre may also be consulted.

The Block SGSY Committee must interact with as many *sarpanches* as possible and also discuss with groups of the rural poor such as the landless labour, the educated unemployed, those rural poor with lands, the artisan groups and many others. Where self-help groups are in position, they should also be consulted. In their discussions, the Committee should explore various opportunities that are available (provided credit, technology, skill up gradation and marketing are assured) to enable the poor to cross the poverty line. While conducting this dialogue, the Block SGSY committee should be equipped with information relating to the performance of various activities in the village whether such activities are taken up under government programmes or otherwise. The Committee should use that knowledge to supplement the traditional knowledge of the poor households and to facilitate the identification of suitable activities. In this process, the traditional wisdom of the poor families acquires value and the Block Committee builds upon the traditional knowledge of the poor families with its knowledge base. It must be ensured that the consultation process is genuine and not perfunctory in nature.

In so far as on-farm activities are concerned, provision of irrigation facilities continues to be important. These facilities can be provided either in the form of open dug wells or bore/tube wells or through lift irrigation or check dams. In other words, the nature of source is not important for providing irrigation facilities under SGSY. Effort may be made to bring in as much of the land of the rural poor as possible under irrigation so that they can have sustainable incomes. Minor irrigation investment will include cost of well, lifting device and land development—a composite investment. Working capital requirement can also be considered but would not be eligible for subsidy.

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Minor irrigation projects may be group oriented or individual oriented. It is preferable to adopt as far as possible, a project approach under minor irrigation instead of spreading the investment in a scattered manner. Minor irrigation can also be the basis for activity clusters or formation of SHGs.

As regards the non-farm activities, care must be taken to identify only those activities which result in the production of goods/services that have a ready market.

Based on this consultation process, the committee may identify about 8-10 activities, which they may rank in the order of preference. This list should then be placed before the general body of the Panchayat Samiti (Block Panchayat). The Panchayat Samiti should be asked to give its recommendations. The list of selected key activities, along with the recommendations of the Panchayat Samiti, should then be forwarded by the Block Development Officer (BDO) to the District SGSY Committee for consideration. Before sending the list to the District SGSY Committee, the Block Committee should prepare a brief project report, keeping in view the guidelines.

The District SGSY Committee will receive the block-wise proposals and will vet them. The Committee will select about ten activities per block. However, focus should be on 4-5 Key activities which are identified for training and micro-enterprise development in a cluster approach for larger number of groups. In the process, scope for other potential activities should not be excluded. In doing so, the District SGSY Committee will ensure that the infrastructure already available in the district—in terms of production, service, training facilities as well as market—are utilized and that the choice of activity does not require a new effort in all directions: production as well as marketing. In other words, at least some of the key elements of the economic chain of the selected activity should be present and it is only the missing link that needs to be provided. Second, in choosing the activities, the district level committee will also ensure that *Swarozgaris* taking up the activity can realize appreciable incremental income sustained over a period of time which will help them to effectively cross the poverty line. District Rural Development Agency's (DRDAs) may ensure that the anticipated income as stipulated in the project is realized during the project period in order to enable the Swarozgaris to cross the poverty line. Generally, one time assistance/credit injection might not help the Swarozgaris to cross the poverty line. Therefore, multiple dose of credit would be necessary which should be ensured through continuous monitoring and follow up. The Committee will ensure that the views of line departments are taken into consideration so that the line departments have a commitment to the key activity being taken up in the respective blocks and provide required services to the Swarozgaris.

The District SGSY Committee should scrutinize the proposals for each key activity separately in consultation with the concerned experts including the line department officials. In fixing the unit costs for the farm sector, the costs fixed by the regional committees of NABARD should be taken into consideration. With regard to the loans for various purposes falling under ISB sector of SGSY, the responsibility of fixing the unit cost and other techno-economic parameters is of the Committee.

It must be noted that identification of activities is critical for the success of the SGSY. It is therefore necessary that it should be done in a careful manner. Care should however be taken that the market is either readily available or there is a potential for market creation for the products. This may require engaging the services of professionals in the field for market research and survey. A detailed timetable may be drawn up by each DRDA for each Block and the schedule publicized so that everyone is aware of the selection of key activities.

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The District SGSY Committee is empowered to add or delete any activity in the list of selected key activities with due justification. Any of the selected activities can be replaced by a new one, if the scope of the former has been exhausted. The procedure for replacement will be the same as it is for making the original list of key activities. However, the number of selected key activities should not ordinarily exceed ten. The DRDAs shall prepare a directory of selected key activities in the district, which will be consolidated at the state level for preparation of directory of selected key activities.

Preparation of Project Reports

For each key activity, there should be a project report indicating various elements such as training, credit, technology, infrastructure and marketing. The project report should indicate how many people could be covered economically in a block under a key activity. The tendency to provide finance to a large number of similar units must be avoided so as to prevent creation of excess capacity.

The project report should also include the balancing infrastructure that needs to be provided and the costs involved. The district level committee should ensure that it is well within the limits of the money that is likely to be available under SGSY infrastructure. Care should be taken to avoid any attempt to create infrastructure for line departments without concomitant benefit to Swarozgaris. The test of SGSY will be in additional incomes accrued to Swarozgaris, the additional infrastructure being only an enabling factor. The project report should specifically include a chapter on the levels of investment required at individual Swarozgari's level or by a group. The economics for group lending should be shown distinctly from that of individual lending. The project report shall be prepared for each activity and for each block separately. The project report should indicate that whether the key activity selected is for an individual or group or both. The economics should also be clearly spelt out for each of these. The economics should indicate the details of investment required, the details of returns, the repayment schedule and the net income accruable to the Swarozgari.

The Committee should undertake the entire exercise in a careful manner and not as a routine exercise. All expenses relating to this exercise will be borne by the DRDA from its administrative expenses, which are provided for separately under the head 'DRDA Administration'.

The line departments have an important role to play in the entire exercise, for they will be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of respective sectoral activities. SGSY would need a very close collaboration between the implementing agencies and the line departments. Presently, this is lacking or at least is not taking place in the desired extent. This collaboration must start with the identification of key activities and preparation of project reports. The line departments will be responsible for planning and creation of the infrastructure required for making the key activities successful. In addition, once the bank has sanctioned the loan, the line departments must ensure that all facilities including technical guidance are provided to the Swarozgaris. The line departments may also verify whether the Swarozgaris have the necessary skill requirement and take steps to train them. The line departments should also satisfy themselves about the quality of training that is being imparted. They should assist the DRDAs in ensuring that the Swarozgaris are duly trained in appropriate institutions. It shall be their responsibility to monitor the progress and whether Swarozgaris are able to derive the expected levels of income. In other words, the line departments must recognize that promotion of self-employment in their sector is as much their responsibility as that

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of DRDAs/Panchayati Raj Institution/Banks and it should be an integral part of their day-to-day functioning.

On approval by the District SGSY Committee, the list of selected key activities as well as the project report of each key activity in respect of each block should be placed before the governing body of the DRDA. Where no DRDA exists, it should be placed before the Zila Parishad. On approval, it should be circulated to the BDO and all the banks in the concerned blocks as well as the concerned line departments. All the banks in the district would be expected to follow the model set out in the respective project reports. Under any circumstances, under-financing of the key activity should not be allowed. This should be reviewed in the Block SGSY Committee constantly.

The major share of SGSY assistance will be for the key activities. A minimum of 75 per cent, both by number and funding, will be for the key activities identified in the block both as group assistance and individual assistance. However, assistance is not prohibited for other activities. There may be stray instances where a Swarozgari may like to take up an activity by himself/herself and where the nature of activity is such that its economic return is assured. SGSY allows such activities but subject to a limit of 25 per cent of the total number and funding of Swarozgaris in any given year. It must be noted that this is only an enabling provision for exceptional cases and it is expected that the funding of key activities will be the norm. Therefore, the figure of 25 per cent is only the upper limit and should not be the norm.

5.3.2 Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)

The Study

The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was launched in 1978-79 in order to deal with the dimensions of rural poverty in the country. The programme covered small and marginal farmers, agricultural workers, landless labourers, rural craftsmen, artisans and virtually all the families of about 5 persons with an annual income level below 3500. The main aim of IRDP was to raise the levels of the Below Poverty Line (BPL) families in the rural areas above the poverty line on a lasting basis by giving them income generating assets and access to credit and other inputs. The programme was to be implemented by District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) with the assistance from block level machinery. The scheme for Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) was launched in 1982 as a part of IRDP. Both in terms of the volume of aggregate investment planned and the number of families to be benefitted, the IRDP was the largest programme of the Sixth Five Year Plan for the alleviation of poverty in rural areas. Keeping this in view, at the instance of Ministry of Rural Reconstruction, the Programme Evaluation Organization (PEO) decided to undertake an All India Evaluation Study of this programme during 1983-84. The study report was brought out in May 1985.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the evaluation study were as under:

- To study the process of assistance including planning, formulation, advance action/ preparatory steps and the procedure laid down and generally followed at the state, district, block, village and beneficiary levels in relation to:
  - o needs and aspirations of target families
  - o appropriateness of schemes

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- To study the organizational and administrative infrastructure
- To study the economic infrastructure and selection of economically viable schemes
- To study the existing credit infrastructure and flow of credit for financing economic activities
- To study the post-acquisition aspects including utilization and maintenance of assets, supply of inputs, marketing linkage
- To study the impact of the programme on the target families

Sample Size/Criteria for Sample Selection

Sixteen states conforming to 7 district area categories: (i) Tribal areas (Madhya Pradesh and Orissa), (ii) Agriculturally developed areas (Haryana, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab), (iii) Agriculturally less developed areas (Eastern U.P and Maharashtra), (iv) Hill Areas (Jammu and Kashmir, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu), (v) Desert Areas (Rajasthan), (vi) Areas with good administrative structure for local level planning and implementation (Gujarat, Kerala and Karnataka) and (vii) Areas with poor administrative structure (Bihar, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh) were selected for the study. The study was designed to be conducted at 4 levels districts, block, village/cluster and beneficiary. In all 33 districts, 66 blocks, 132 villages/clusters and 2640 beneficiaries were selected. Though 2640 beneficiaries were proposed to be selected for the study, only 1170 beneficiaries could become available for selection.

Reference Period

The secondary data were collected for the period 1979-83. The field work was conducted in the period 1983-84.

Main Findings

The main findings of the programme are:

- The Ministry of Rural Development had recommended the setting up of District Rural Development Agency/Society (DRDA) for planning, project formulation, and implementation of IRDP. Guidelines were issued to states for this purpose. In course of the evaluation study, no uniform pattern was found regarding organizational set up at the State Headquarters for the administration and execution of IRDP. The strong administrative setup recommended by the Ministry of Rural Development had not come into existence in most of the states except Gujarat and Rajasthan and to some extent Andhra Pradesh.
- In most of the DRDAs, neither the resource surveys could be taken up nor the perspective plans were prepared as prescribed under the guidelines due to the lack of requisite planning. Due to reluctance on the part of officials in the absence of adequate perquisites and training, a large number of posts of the 3 Assistant Project Officer were lying vacant and there were other administrative problems.
- A few states were also not ready to share the burden of even 50 per cent of the cost of development due to paucity of resources.
- Most of the states had constituted state level Coordination Committees for the supervision and coordination of the programmes. However, there was lack of coordination at the district and block level. In fact the block level machinery was found to be quite weak for providing an appropriate and integrated delivery system

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due to multiplicity of other sectoral programme being administered by 'line' departments.

- 18 out of 33 districts had reported an inadequacy of infrastructure for providing benefit schemes/assets to the selected beneficiaries.
- More than half of the states covered under the study had not attempted to prepare the five year perspective plan for the respective districts in spite of the emphasis in the guidelines.
- In the five year perspective plan developed by DRDAs, too much emphasis was laid on the responsibility of the banks for the provision of credit facilities and the technical extension aspects. Supply of inputs, marketing and other infrastructural support needed for successful implementation of the programme had not been spelt out adequately.
- Proper guidelines were not followed for the action plans/cluster plans for the blocks or even to cover the low income group families at the first instance by most of the states.
- The number of families actually assisted exceeded the target by 14.42 per cent. Of the families actually assisted, 22.5 per cent belonged to SCs and 9.2 per cent belonged to STs. 81 per cent of the beneficiaries actually assisted were covered in the primary sector schemes, 8 per cent in the secondary sector and 11 per cent through tertiary sector schemes.
- It is revealed that initially the state governments did not make any attempt to prepare a shelf of bankable schemes suitable for their different areas. In many areas, the functionaries at the DRDA and the block levels were not very familiar with the details of the schemes covered under guidelines. Functionaries in many areas had not worked out the income generating 4 potentialities of specific schemes. Provision of one-time benefit of milch animal alone did not help the beneficiaries to cross the poverty line. There were complaints regarding veterinary support in terms of necessary supply of medicines and timely medical attention to the animals.
- There were no follow-ups regarding maintenance of the assets delivered to the beneficiaries. In the areas where cluster approach had not been adopted Milk Producers' Cooperative Societies for the beneficiaries of the milch cattle had also not been organized. Most of the beneficiaries were not aware of the facility of an insurance cover against the risk of the death of the animals/birds.
- The development of activities in the secondary sector had not been encouraging except for a few very popular activities organized by voluntary agencies and Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB). As a result of the setting up of artisan complexes with the help of National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) funds, a group endeavour for arrangement for supply of raw materials and marketing products became quite successful. The group endeavour also minimized the individual risk and assured regular income to beneficiaries in terms of wages.
- The various functionaries felt that the cost of schemes, their economics and the loans and subsidies available under the rules were unrealistic due to price rise. Due to this about 29 per cent beneficiaries were forced to borrow additional funds from the money lenders/or other sources.
- During the period 1980-83, the amount of subsidy and credit per beneficiary came to ₹ 704 and ₹ 1,572, respectively. It was observed that per capita investment

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was the lowest in hill areas (₹ 1,555) followed by agriculturally less developed areas (₹ 2,166) and tribal areas (₹ 2,399).

- The data collected for the study showed that out of the total amount of loans advanced to the IRDP beneficiaries during the period 1980-81 to 1982-83 in the selected districts share of Regional Rural Banks was less than 6 per cent. The share of commercial banks, however, accounted for 67 per cent and the cooperative banks accounted for 27 per cent of the total loans.
- In some areas, it was reported that the subsidy amount was not adjusted immediately after providing assets to the beneficiaries with the result that the beneficiaries had to pay interest even on the subsidy portion of the cost of the assets. A few bank branches were also reported to be insisting on security from the beneficiaries even for loans upto ₹ 1000. A large number of loan applications were rejected on flimsy grounds. In a few cases, the banks even refused to assign the reasons for the rejection of applications.
- The percentage of overdues generally varied from 50 to 60, which meant that besides the adjustment of the subsidy no instalment of the loans had been repaid.
- The Ministry of Rural Development had prescribed certain pro forma to monitor the progress of implementation of the IRDP on monthly, quarterly and annual basis. It was observed that based on information supplied by the state governments monthly progress report on IRDP were being prepared by the Ministry of Rural Development.
- The involvement of banks in the selection of beneficiaries or in the preparation of project profiles in many states was nil. Only government polytechnics were utilized for providing training under TRYSEM. Of those covered under TRYSEM for the period 1980-83, 31 per cent belonged to the SC/STs and 24 per cent were women.
- The other important deficiencies observed from the field evaluation with regard to the implementation of the TRYSEM programme were: (i) Improper selection of trainees without base line surveys, (ii) Undue concentration of a few vocations while selecting the trainees, (iii) lack of aptitude on the part of the trainees, (iv) minimum involvement of district centres, (v) poor infrastructural support to enable the trainees to follow up the pursuits in which they had attained necessary skills under the Programme, (vi) lack of coordination amongst the district industries centre, banks and training institutions, and (vii) lack of follow up of the trained youth.
- It was found that about 25.8 per cent sample beneficiary households had an annual income exceeding ₹ 3,500 at the time of their selection. As per the norms of the Ministry of Rural Development, these households did not qualify for the benefits provided under the IRDP.
- The identification of about 42 per cent sample households had been done through household surveys and 49 per cent had to approach some functionary to get the benefits. The remaining 9 per cent were not motivated by any official/non-official agency.
- Only 26 per cent of the total sample households were selected in the open Gram Sabha meeting as laid down under the guidelines of the Ministry of Rural Development. 71 per cent of the sample households were selected by BDO/Block level officials and VLWs/VDOs. The selection of beneficiaries above the

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prescribed income level could perhaps have been averted if the selection had been made in the open meetings of the Gram Sabha as per the guidelines.

- Only 65 per cent of the sample households were selected as beneficiaries of the IRDP within one month of their identification.
- It was observed that the delivery of benefits assets to nearly 83 per cent of the sample beneficiaries was made within a period of one month of the sanction. The rest had to wait for obtaining the benefit assets for a period of three months or more. The main reason for the delay of more than one month mentioned by the beneficiaries were owing to cumbersome procedure followed by the authorities, lack of support from bank officials and non-availability of beneficial assets in the local areas/markets.
- About 75 per cent of the selected beneficiaries were provided with beneficial schemes pertaining to activities in the primary sector, 8 per cent for secondary sector and 17 per cent for tertiary sector. Thus, the diversification of beneficial schemes in secondary and territory scheme was not noticeable to the extent envisaged.
- More than 96 per cent of the sample households felt that the benefits provided to them were according to their needs and aspirations and considered the schemes to be suitable in view of their talents and financial position of their families.
- Only about 70 per cent of the sample households had received the financial assistance only upto an amount of ₹ 3,000.
- Over 24 per cent sample households were sanctioned loans at the rate of 4 per cent in Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) and the rest were required to pay the normal rate of interest prescribed by beneficiaries/financing agencies.
- As regards the loan repayment, 62 per cent of the beneficiaries had repaid the loans in monthly instalments, 17 per cent in 6 monthly instalments and 21 per cent in yearly instalments. About 73 per cent of the beneficiaries were satisfied with the terms and conditions of the loan assistance provided to them, whereas 26 per cent were critical and dissatisfied with the terms of loans due to a number of reasons.
- Till the completion of field work of the study, 28 per cent households had repaid their loans to the extent of 80 to 100 per cent.
- 82 per cent of the sample households had made repayments out of income derived by them from the benefit schemes given to them under IRDP. The remaining 18 per cent had to manage for the repayment from some other sources
- About 90 per cent of the selected beneficiaries felt that they had benefited from the IRDP. About 9.5 per cent reported that they had not benefited. About 90.7 per cent of the beneficiaries informed that as a result of the IRDP, their family employment had increased. Another 8.9 per cent of the households reported that there had been no change in the employment position due to IRDP.
- About 88 per cent of the household reported increase in their income as a result of their coverage in the IRDP while 10.6 per cent did not feel any material change. About 37 per cent reported some increase in their family assets after their coverage. However, about 63 per cent did not see any increase in their family assets position. While 77 per cent felt increase in their consumption level, 23 per cent of the household did not see any change in their consumption level. While 64 per cent of

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the sample households felt that their overall status in the village society had been elevated as a result of their coverage under IRDP, 36 per cent observed contrary to that.

- While 48 per cent of the selected household did not report having faced any problem in obtaining the benefit schemes. The remaining 52 per cent reported to have faced some problems in getting the benefit schemes owing to a number of reasons.
- Quantum of subsidy per unit of benefit scheme was the lowest for the secondary sector and the highest for the primary sector.
- The increase in employment of households covered under the tertiary sector schemes was the highest followed by primary sector schemes and secondary sector schemes, respectively. The highest increase in income of the sample households was in subsidiary occupation followed by tertiary sector schemes, animal husbandry schemes, secondary sector and agricultural schemes.
- The highest incremental income was observed under tertiary sector schemes in areas with good administration, infrastructure followed by agriculturally developed areas. The lowest incremental income under the tertiary sector was observed in desert and tribal areas. In case of primary sector, the incremental income was highest in case of schemes under subsidiary occupations followed by animal husbandry and agricultural schemes.

Major Suggestions

The major suggestions made are as follows:

- The state governments should build up a strong and well equipped organizational set up at their headquarters for implementing this programme in effective manner at the earliest. Efforts should also be made to remove the structural weaknesses in its administrative set up.
- State governments should transfer key officials such as project officer, assistant project officer of DRDA only in exceptional cases and the frequent transfer of such key officials should be avoided.
- Regular training courses should be organized on the pattern arranged by the state governments in the 1960s for community development project officers, BDOs, extension officers and village level workers. The existing training institutions should also be suitably strengthened to cater to the requirements of the IRDP.
- For the implementation of the IRDP, the BDOs should be made answerable to the project officers. The BDO in turn should have control over the block team of the technical staff placed under the respective 'line' departments.
- Efforts should be taken for consolidating and pooling the funds available for sectoral development with the funds allocated to the DRDA for effecting implementation of the programme.
- Highest priority should be given to the formulation of perspective plan for each block based on the survey of resources, development potential as well as constraints of each area and the existing institutions and the ongoing activities in the area. A single planning team of technical experts should be set up under the DRDA which may be assigned the task of drawing up an integrated development plan for the block/district with due consideration to the local and regional priorities and financial and material resources available in the areas.

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- It may be worthwhile organizing training farms somewhat on the model adopted in Kerala where a farm had been established with the assistance of DRDA to train people in dairying and poultry. There is also an urgent need for streamlining the procedure for the settlement and reimbursement of insurance claim.
- To ensure development of activities in the secondary sector, there is a need to develop the capacity of the beneficiaries to acquire skills in respect of the activities for which they are to be employed. Intensive activities with adequate forward and backward linkage should also be encouraged.
- Suitable steps should be devised to improve the final participation of cooperative banks in the IRDP.
- The introduction of suitable checks and procedure to eliminate malpractices, such as making beneficiaries to pay interest on the subsidy portion of the cost of the asset.
- The pattern followed by Gujarat and Rajasthan in regard to verification of assets and also for studying the impact of the programme in terms of resultant increase in the income of the beneficiaries may be adopted by the other state governments.
- Steps should be taken to strengthen and streamline the monitoring arrangements at the state, district and block levels.
- Ministry of Rural Development may consider undertaking an in depth review of the existing training arrangements and of the syllabus prescribed by various training institutions. The Ministry may also examine the feasibility of establishing training-cum-demonstration-cum-production centre in each cluster of village with the assistance of Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB) and other related institutions, which may not only provide equipment and raw materials, but also on the job training to the youth till they develop sufficient confidence to manage their own ventures.
- It should be ensured that the resources are more controlled in areas inhabited by the poorest of the poor and programmes should not have the thin spread over wide areas as had been the pattern observed in the course of the study.
- In future the physical targets regarding the coverage of beneficiaries under IRDP should be fixed with due consideration to the level of development and economic conditions prevailing in different areas.
- Ministry of Rural Development should take steps to impress upon the state governments the need to cover maximum number of IRDP beneficiaries under the tertiary and secondary sector schemes and also the schemes under the subsidiary occupation, like fishing and sericulture. The animal husbandry schemes should be provided only in areas where basic infrastructure facilities including marketing support are available.
- There is a need for a comprehensive review of the viability of on-going schemes specific to the areas including their integration with the local level plans of the district and the blocks so as to make them more suitable for catering to the needs and conditions of different areas. It is necessary not only for ensuring that the schemes devised are specific but also for enhancing the productivity and returns from the investments undertaken for the purpose.
- Considering the general price rise since the adoption of the norm of poverty line, the escalated value of annual income of ₹ 3500 would have been higher even during 1981-82. The ceiling therefore, needs to be revised.

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5.3.3 Community Development Programme (CDP)

Community Development is the method and Rural Extension the agency through which the Five Year Plan seeks to initiate a process of transformation of the social and economic life of the villages. The Plan provides ₹ 90 crores for community projects and proposes the establishment over a period of about ten years of a network of extension workers throughout the country.

For some three decades, rural development work has been undertaken by different branches of the administration in the states. Until a few years ago, the expenditure on development was meagre and rural development work was thought of largely in terms of particular items of improvement in village life and in agricultural practice, and special attention was given, for instance, to the number of wells sunk or repaired, for the supply of irrigation or drinking water, the supply of seeds or fertilisers, or the number of manure pits dug and starting of rural credit societies. These are essential items in any rural programme, but there was no coordinated approach to village life as a whole.

If one goes back to the study of the efforts made before World War II in individual provinces and states and considers the experience gained in later years in Sevagram in Madhya Pradesh, in the Firka Development scheme in Madras, in the Sarvodaya centres in Mumbai, in Etawah and Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh and other centres which are perhaps less well known, certain broad conclusions emerge. These are:

- When different departments of the government approach the villagers, each from the aspect of its own work, the effect on the villagers is apt to be confusing and no permanent impression is created. The peasant's life is not cut into segments in the way the Government's activities are apt to be; the approach to the villager has, therefore, to be a coordinated one and has to comprehend his whole life. Such an approach has to be made, not through a multiplicity of departmental officials, but through an agent common at least to the principal departments engaged in rural work, whom it is now customary to describe as the village level worker.
- Programmes which have been built on the cooperation of the people have more chances of abiding success than those which are forced down on them.
- While the official machinery has to guide and assist, the principal responsibility for improving their own condition must rest with the people themselves. Unless they feel that a programme is theirs and value it as a practical contribution to their own welfare, no substantial results will be gained.
- Programmes largely dependent on expenditure by the government, in which the elements of self-help and mutual cooperation on the part of villagers are present only in a nominal degree are short lived. The essential idea should be the reduction of chronic unemployment which is a feature of rural life—through the practice of scientific agriculture and cottage and small-scale industries.
- Advice and precept are of no avail unless they are backed by practical aids—supplies of seed and fertiliser, finance and technical guidance for solving the farmer's immediate problems.
- Whatever the measures of the effort which the government wishes to make, the best results will be gained if the programmes are pursued intensively, and practically every agriculturist family has its own contribution to make through a village organization.

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- The approach to the villagers would be in terms of his own experience and problems, conceived on the pattern of simplicity, avoiding elaborate techniques and equipment until he is ready for them.
- There has to be a dominant purpose round which the enthusiasm of the people can be aroused and sustained, a purpose which can draw forth from the people and those who assist them on behalf of the government, the will to work as well as a sense of urgency. The aim should be to create in the rural population a burning desire for a higher standard of living—a will to live better.

These lessons from the experience of the past have been brought together in the conception and concrete formulation of the Community Development Programme, which has been launched during 1952. While the concept is not a new one, progress has in the past been hampered by insufficiency of available funds.

Size of the Unit

For each community project, as at present planned, there will be approximately 300 villages with a total area of about 450 to 500 square miles, a cultivated area of about 1,50,000 acres and a population of about 2,00,000. The project area is conceived as being divided into 3 Development Blocks, each consisting of about 100 villages and a population of about 60,000 to 70,000. The development block is, in turn, divided into groups of 5 villages each, each group being the field of operation for a village level worker.

Location of Units

The initial programme has been started with approximately 55 projects of rural development located in selected areas in the several states of India. A certain degree of flexibility is allowed in the actual allotment of projects. Thus, while many are complete projects of about 300 villages each, some are also independent development blocks of about 100 villages each, depending upon the needs and conditions of the particular areas chosen for development.

As increased agricultural production is the most urgent objective, one of the basic criteria in the selection of this first set of project areas has been the existence of irrigation facilities or assured rainfall. In assessing irrigation facilities and the possibilities of development, irrigation from river valley projects, from tube wells, as well as from minor irrigation works, have been taken into account. In States like West Bengal and Punjab, with a large population of displaced persons, the selection of project areas aims also at helping the resettlement of these persons. Seven areas have been selected on the ground of their being inhabited predominantly by Scheduled Tribes. In every field of activity, whether social or economic, urban and rural development are complementary, for neither towns nor villages can advance alone. Where the existing urban facilities are inadequate or where large numbers of displaced persons have to be rehabilitated, the intention is that the urban development should take the form of new townships. Six such projects have been proposed to be taken up under the current programme.

Under such rural-CMW-urban development, new towns will come into existence to serve as centres which will draw sustenance from the surrounding countryside and, in return, carry to it new amenities and the spirit of a developing and changing economy. The creation of new centres of small-scale industrial production, closely coordinated with rural development, is fundamental to national development, for in no other way can the present occupational imbalance between agriculture and industry, between village

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and town, be corrected. With the development of power resources and of communications and the growth of basic industries, the scope for establishing such centres will steadily increase and, as the economy develops, this programme will gain in importance. During the first few years, however, it is inevitable that by far the greatest stress in community development, as indeed in national planning, should be on rural areas. The intensive development of agriculture, the extension of irrigation, rural electrification and the revival of village industries, wherever possible, with the help of improved techniques, accompanied by land reform and a revitalized cooperative movement, are programmes closely related to one another, and together calculated to change the face of the rural economy.

Main Lines of Activity

The main lines of activity which will be undertaken in a community project, can be briefly divided into the following:

- Agriculture and related matters
- Irrigation
- Communications
- Education
- Health
- Supplementary employment
- Housing
- Training
- Social welfare

1. Agriculture and Related Matters

The programme includes reclamation of available virgin and waste land; provision of commercial fertilizers and improved seeds; the promotion of fruit and vegetable cultivation, of improved agricultural technique and land utilization; supply of technical information, improved agricultural implements, improved marketing and credit facilities, provision of soil surveys and prevention of soil erosion, encouragement of the use of natural and compost manures and improvement of livestock, the principal emphasis here being on the establishment of key villages for breeding pedigree stock and the provision of veterinary aid, as well as artificial insemination centres. For attaining this objective, agricultural extension service will be provided at the rate of one agricultural extension worker for every 5 villages.

One of the important functions of the agricultural extension worker will be to encourage the growth of a healthy cooperative movement. The aim will be to see that there is at least one multi-purpose society in every village or group of villages on which practically every agriculturist family is represented.

It is expected 'that the cooperative principle, in its infinitely varying forms, will be capable of adaptation for finding a solution to all problems of rural life.' Multi-purpose societies will therefore have to be used for practically every development activity in the community project area, including the encouragement of rural arts and crafts.

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2. Irrigation

The programme visualises provision of water for agriculture through minor irrigation works, e.g., tanks, canals, surface wells and tube wells, the intention being that at least half of the agricultural land, if possible, be served with irrigation facilities.

3. Communication

The road system on the country side is to be so developed as to link every village within the project area upto a maximum distance of half a mile from the village, the latter distance being connected by feeder roads through voluntary labour of the villagers themselves, only the main roads being provided for and maintained by the state or other public agencies.

4. Education

It has been realized that the full development of a community cannot be achieved without a strong educational base, similar for men and women. The community projects have been planned to provide for social education, expansion and improvement of primary and secondary education and its gradual conversion to basic type, provision of educational facilities for working children and promotion of youth welfare. Vocational and technical training will be emphasised in all the stages of the educational programme. Training facilities will be provided for imparting improved techniques to existing artisans and technicians, both in urban and rural areas. Training centres which already exist in any area, will be strengthened and developed, and new ones established to meet the requirements of the project area.

5. Health

The Health Organization of the project area will consist of 3 primary health units in the development blocks and a secondary health unit equipped with a hospital and a mobile dispensary at the headquarters of the project area and serving the area as a whole. It would aim at the improvement of environmental hygiene, including provision and protection of water supply; proper disposal of human and animal wastes; control of epidemic diseases such as malaria, cholera, small-pox, tuberculosis. Provision of medical aid along with appropriate preventive measures, and education of the population in hygienic living and in improved nutrition.

6. Supplementary Employment

The unemployed and the under-employed persons in the village community will be provided with gainful employment to such extent as is possible, by the development of cottage and small-scale industries, construction of brick kilns and saw mills and encouragement of employment through participation in the tertiary sector of the economy.

7. Housing

Apart from the provision of housing for community projects personnel, steps will be taken, wherever possible, to provide demonstration and training in improved techniques and designs for rural housing. In congested villages, action in the direction of development of new sites, opening of village parks and playgrounds and assistance in the supply of building materials, may also be necessary.

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8. Training

The training of village level workers, project supervisors and other personnel for the Community Development Programme will be carried out in 30 training centres which have been set up with the assistance of the Ford Foundation of America. Each training centre will have facilities for about 70 trainees. Each centre will have double training staff so that the trainees can be divided into two groups. One group will be getting practical and supervisory work experience, while the other group will be utilizing the centres' facilities for lectures, demonstrations and discussions. In view of the great demand on the training centres to turn out people quickly for the opening of new projects, the training period will, in the first instance, be limited to six months. In addition to the training of village level workers and supervisors, the agricultural extension service workers in the project areas will take steps for the training of the agriculturists, panches and village leaders.

9. Social Welfare

There will be provision for audio-visual aid for instruction and recreation, for organizations of community entertainment, sports activities and Melas.

Organization

- **Centre:** For the implementation of the Community Development Programme as indicated above, the Central Organization will consist of a Central Committee (the Planning Commission has been designated as the Central Committee) to lay down the broad policies and provide general supervision, and an administrator of Community Projects under the Central Committee. The administrator will be responsible for planning, directing and co-ordinating the Community Projects throughout India under the general supervision of the Central Committee and in consultation with appropriate authorities in the various states. He will be assisted by a highly qualified executive staff to advise him on administration, finance, personnel, community planning and other matters.
- **State:** At the state level, there will be a State Development Committee or a similar body consisting of the chief minister and such other ministers as he may consider necessary. There will also be a State Development Commissioner or a similar official who will act as the secretary to the State Development Committee and will be responsible for directing community projects in the state. Where the work justifies it, there may, in addition, be a Deputy Development Commissioner specifically in charge of community projects.
- **District:** At the district level, there will be, wherever necessary, a District Development Officer responsible for the Community Development Programme in the district. This officer will have the status of an additional collector and will operate under the directions of the development commissioner. He will be advised by a District Development Board consisting of the officers of the various departments concerned with community development, with the collector as chairman and the District Development Officer as executive secretary.
- **Project:** At the project level, each individual project unit (consisting of a full project or one or more development blocks where there is not a full project) will be in charge of a Project Executive Officer. In the selection of Project Executive Officers, special regard will be paid to experience, general outlook, understanding of the needs and methods of community development, capacity for leadership and ability to secure both official and non-official co-operation. Each Project Executive Officer in charge of a full project, will have on his staff approximately 125 supervisors and village level workers, who will be responsible for the successful operation of all activities at the project level.

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This organizational pattern will be adapted to suit local conditions and needs as may be deemed necessary by the administrator and the respective state governments.

People's Participation—The Crux of the Programme

While on the subject of organization, it is necessary to stress the importance of ensuring, right from the start, the people's participation, not merely in the execution of the Community Development Project but also in its planning. This in fact is the very essence of the programme.

The Community Development Programme aims at the establishment of a suitable organ to ensure participation of the villagers at the planning stage. It contains provisions for the setting up of a Project Advisory Committee. It is intended that the Project Advisory Committee should be as representative as possible of all the non-official elements within the project area. In securing participation of the villagers in the execution of the programme, the Community Projects Organization will avail of all non-official local voluntary organizations and especially the Bharat Sevak Samaj, which is likely to be set up in the project area on the lines indicated in the pamphlet recently circulated by the Planning Commission.

Villager's Contribution to the Programme

The pattern of the project, as drawn up, includes major items of works normally implemented through government agencies. This is bound to involve higher expenditure through elaborate administrative staff, middlemen's fees and possibly in certain cases, questionable practices. If the people are to be trained to be the builders of the future, the works have to be entrusted, even at certain risks, to the people themselves through their representative agencies, the governmental organization furnishing the technical assistance and the essential finance. It is intended that a qualifying scale of voluntary contribution, either in the form of money or of labour, should be laid down and this contribution will be a condition precedent to development schemes being undertaken under the Community Development Programme.

In all these cases, contributions may be in the form, either of voluntary labour or of cash. In respect of backward areas and areas predominantly populated by Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes it may not be possible for the villagers to make any financial contribution. In these areas, the villagers should be asked to contribute by way of labour effort required for executing the works programme under various heads. The agency of the Bharat Sevak Samaj is hoped to become a major avenue for the organization of the voluntary effort on the part of the villagers.

Finance

The estimated expenditure on a basic type of a rural community project, i.e., a project without the provision for an urban unit, is ₹ 65 lakh over a period of 3 years. Of this amount, about ₹ 5.8-47 lakhs will be the expenditure, and ₹ 6-53 lakh swill be dollar expenditure.

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In order to enable expansion of the programme in future years, the Central Committee felt that some reduction in the estimated cost of a rural community project, basic type, should be made and, after examination of the question, has now decided that oil community projects should be operated on the basis of a reduced total of ₹ 45 lakh per project. So far as the existing projects are concerned, this would mean that the area of operations under each project on a population basis of two lakh per project should be so revised or adjusted as to conform to the new expenditure pattern.

The Community Development Programme imposes financial obligations on the centre as well as on the state governments. Broadly, the proportions which have been fixed are 75 per cent for the centre and 25 per cent for the state in respect of non-recurring expenditure, and 50 per cent each for centre and states in respect of recurring expenditure. This applies to 'grants-in-aid'. Loan amount is totally found by the centre. After the three-year period, the Community Project areas are intended to become development blocks on the lines recommended for adoption in Chapter VI of the Grow More Food Enquiry Committee's Report. It is expected that in so far as the Community Project areas are concerned, the expenses of such development blocks will be borne entirely by state governments after the third year. The expenditure, mostly recurring, is likely to be about ₹ 3 lakh per project.

Supporting Projects

The Community Development Programme is related to and supported in part by most of the other projects under the Indo-American Technical Cooperation Programme. The fertiliser required by the Community Development Programmes will be acquired and distributed in accordance with the Operational Agreement No. I which deals with the 'Project for Acquisition and Distribution of Fertilizer'. Similarly, the iron and steel needed for farm implements and tools will be acquired and distributed in accordance with the 'Project for the Acquisition and Distribution of Iron and Steel for Agricultural purposes'. The tube wells to be constructed in the project areas will be allocated from the 'Project for Ground Water Irrigation'. Information and services with respect to soils and fertilizer application will be made available from the 'Project for distribution of soil fertility and fertiliser use'. Assistance in Malaria control in the project areas will be forthcoming from the 'Project for malaria control planned under the Technical Cooperation Programme'. The training, of Village Level Workers and Project Supervisors will be carried out under the 'Village Workers Training Programme'.

Evaluation

A systematic evaluation of the methods and results of the Community Development Programme will, no doubt, make a significant contribution by pointing out those methods which are proving effective, and those which are not; and furnishing an insight into the impact of the Community Development Programme upon the economy and culture of India. In order that it may be useful to those administering the Community Development Projects and serve as a basis for informed public opinion regarding the programme, the evaluation work is being arranged to be conducted by the Planning Commission in close cooperation with the Ford Foundation and the Technical Cooperation Administration.

National Extension Service

In setting out our proposals on the subject of administration of district development programmes, we have already attempted to analyse the organizational features of

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extension work in the district. The entire subject has been carefully reviewed recently by the Grow More Food Enquiry Committee. After examining the results of the campaign for increased food production, which has been in progress for several years, the Committee states the problem which extension workers have to meet in the following words:

> No plan can have any chance of success unless the millions of small farmers in the country accept its objective, share in its making, regard it as their own, and are prepared to make the sacrifices necessary for implementing it. The integrated production programme has failed to arouse enthusiasm for the reasons we have given. The food problem is a much wider one than mere elimination of food imports. It is the problem of bringing about such a large expansion of agricultural production as will assure to an increasing population progressively rising levels of nutrition. In other words, the campaign for food production should be conceived as part of a plan for the most efficient use of land resources by the application of modern scientific research and the evolution of a diversified economy. In its turn, agricultural improvement is an integral part of the much wider problem of raising the level of rural life. The economic aspects of village life cannot be detached from the broader social aspects; and agricultural improvement is inextricably linked up with a whole set of social problems. The lesson to be derived from the working of the G. M. F. programmes thus confirms the experience of States and private agencies engaged in village development. It is that all aspects of rural life are interrelated and that no lasting results can be achieved if individual aspects of it are dealt with in isolation. This does not mean that particular problems should not be given prominence but the plans for them should form parts of, and be integrated with, those for achieving the wider aims. It is only by placing this ideal—of bringing about an appreciable improvement in the standards of rural life and making it fuller and richer—before the country and ensuring that the energies of the entire administrative machinery of the States and the best nonofficial leadership are directed to plans for its realisation that we can awaken mass enthusiasm and enlist the active interest and support of the millions of families living in the countryside in the immense task of bettering their own condition.

This analysis led to the Committee to propose the establishment of a national extension organization for intensive rural work which could reach every farmer and assist in the coordinated development of rural life as a whole. The detailed proposals of the Committee on the organization of the extension network at various levels have been described earlier. The programme envisaged by the Committee, for which the necessary provision has been made in the plan, is that the central government should assist state governments in establishing extension organizations so as to bring their entire area under extensive development within a period of about ten years. During the period of the plan, about 1,20,000 villages are to be brought within the operations of the extension, that is, nearly one-fourth of the rural population. The central and the various state governments are expected in the near future to frame detailed programmes for reorganizing the existing extension services, arranging for further recruitment and preparing training programmes.

In drawing up these programmes, the central and state governments will have to examine the necessity for providing the basic training in agriculture and animal husbandry to the village level workers and the various supervisory subject matter specialists. Where existing facilities are inadequate, steps will have to be taken to augment them with a view to ensuring an adequate supply of extension workers for each major linguistic region. There is little doubt that the implementation of these proposals can give a new and powerful momentum to all rural work and, in particular, to the programme for increased agricultural production.

The organization of extension services with the object of securing increased production and raising the standard of village life is a new undertaking. Extension is a

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continuous process designed to make the rural people aware of their problems, and indicating to them ways and means by which they can solve them. It thus involves not only education of the rural people in determining their problems and the methods of solving them, but also inspiring them towards positive action in doing so. It is, therefore, of the highest importance that for this task, personnel of the right type should be obtained who will take to their work with zeal and enthusiasm. The qualities required are not only the ability to acquire knowledge but also dedication to the task of serving the rural people and the development of a will to find solutions for their problems. People from village surroundings with experience of practical farming are likely to prove of special value as extension workers.

The training of extension workers requires the closest attention and must be related to the services that they will have to perform. They have to understand rural problems, the psychology of the farmer, and owner's solutions to his various difficulties. They have to try and find out the felt needs of the people, and the solutions that they offer must be demonstrated by acting in close cooperation with the farmers. They should be able to discover leadership and stimulate it to action. Their success will depend on the extent to which they gain the confidence of the farmers. Their duties have thus to be educative and demonstrative. Their training will thus have many facets. Periods spent in gaining a thorough training will be a good investment. If the period of extension training is to be shortened, so as to be able to cover a larger area than may be otherwise possible, care should be taken to see that it is preceded by adequate opportunities for basic training in all aspects of rural development. Their conditions of service should also be such as are calculated to keep up their zeal and enthusiasm and ensure the continuous maintenance of high standards of performance. There should be considerable scope for promotion for men who start at the bottom. In order to develop the true extension approach much might be gained if all extension workers, whether graduates or field level workers, were to start at the field level and only those who proved their worth, would receive promotions to higher positions. A fair proportion of these positions should also be open to village workers who display the necessary qualities of leadership and ability. For this purpose, courses should be provided at different levels to enable the promising extension workers who start at the field level to reach positions of greater responsibility

It is important to secure that the extension service retains its character of continued utility to the rural areas which they serve. This factor should, therefore, be particularly borne in mind in judging the work of officials who mans this service. Local opinion on the extent to which an extension worker has made himself useful should be an important criterion in assessing his ability.

The confidence of the villager is gained with difficulty and lost easily. It is, therefore, of the essence of extension that the initial start is made with items whose usefulness to the cultivator in increasing agricultural production has been well established. It is only after sufficient confidence is gained that comparatively untried measures can be put forward, and even these should be held out as experiments until the people have found the answer for themselves.

The immediate effect of the first impact of an extension organization is to increase the demands of the cultivator for credit, supplies and implements. The satisfaction of these demands is a necessary consequence of extension activities and they will succeed to the extent this responsibility is handled efficiently. Extension activities will be adversely affected if arrangements cannot be made for supplying the needs which they generate.

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Finally, it may be pointed out that extension workers have to be supported effectively by research workers to whom they can bring their problems and whose results they carry to the people. Special arrangements are, therefore, needed to ensure the closest cooperation between extension and research.

5.3.4 Employees Assurance Scheme (EAS)

A very large chunk of the country's rural population is employed in the agricultural sector which is precarious by its very nature. Being a seasonal activity, the agriculture sector is not in a position to offer employment for a full year. Hence, as a welfare measure for the rural poor, the central government introduced the Employment Assurance Scheme. The primary objective of the Employees Assurance Scheme (EAS) is creation of additional wage employment opportunities during the period of acute shortage of wage employment through manual work for the rural poor living below the poverty line. The secondary objective is the creation of durable community, social and economic assets for sustained employment and development. The Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) was launched on 2 October 1993 for implementation in selected blocks. Over the years, the Scheme was extended to all the blocks of the country. At present, all the districts of the country are covered under the Scheme.

Initially when the Scheme was launched way back in 1993-94, the central allocation of ₹ 600 crore was made under it. The following year i.e. in 1994-95, the provision was doubled to ₹ 1,200 crore. In 1995-96, the allocation was further raised to ₹ 1,700 crore. Since then more and more funds have been allocated for the Scheme. In 1999-2000, a massive allocation of ₹ 2,040 crore was provided for EAS. In the year 2000-2001, an amount of the order of ₹ 1,300 crore had been earmarked for the purpose. The year-wise allocation of funds have not increased proportionate to its expansion/coverage of blocks/districts.

EAS envisaged that to provide employment during the period of acute shortage of wage employment to those who are living below the poverty line and are in need of it and are seeking employment. However, to provide assured employment to all the needy persons living below poverty line in rural areas was to be achieved through a combination of plan and non-plan schemes of all other departments/ministries of the Government of India and state/Union Territory (UT) governments as well as EAS.

It was felt that since the funds provided under EAS are limited, these should be distributed among the states and the UTs in some rational manner so that the needy areas where the problem of labour exodus was endemic and agricultural production was low, were not left out.

Based on the experience of five years of implementation of the EAS, the programme has been restructured from the current financial year. While the basic parameters of the scheme have been retained, the demand driven nature of the Scheme has been changed to allocation basis and it was decided to distribute the funds among the States/UTs on the basis of poverty ratio w.e.f. 1 April 1999.

This change was recommended by the group of ministers in its meeting held on 19 December 1998, and decided that from 1 April 1999, the Scheme would evolve a specific allocation of each state. It was also decided that EAS would continue as the single wage employment Programme to be implemented at the district/block level throughout the country. The funds would be provided to the States/UTs on allocation basis and also to the districts on an index of agriculture backwardness evolved at the

Check Your Progress

5. On what does the success of Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) depend?
6. When and why was the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) launched?
7. How can the main lines of activity which will be undertaken in a community project be classified?

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centre. Under the project, 70 per cent of the funds flowing to the districts would be allocated to the *Block Samitis* and 30 per cent reserved at district level to be utilized in areas of distress. The selection of works would be decided by Zilla Parishads after consultation with MPs of that area. Funds would flow to DRDA/Zilla Parishad and would be lapsed if not utilized with the permission to carry forward only 15 per cent as opening balance in the following year.

The Cabinet, in its meeting held on 16 March 1999, approved the recommendations of the Group of Ministers and directed the Ministry of Rural Development to finalize the Scheme, in consultation with Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance. Accordingly, an Inter-Ministerial Committee was constituted under the Chairmanship of Professor S. R. Hashim, Member of the Planning Commission, which gave its Report in June 1999. Based on this, the Scheme was finalized in a meeting on 12 July 1999. In finalizing the Scheme, the announcements made by the finance minister, in his Budget speech, were also taken into consideration. Based on this decision, the detailed revised guidelines were prepared and finalized and circulated on 9 November 1999. Some of the important features of the revised EAS guidelines are as follows:

- The Employment Assurance Scheme will be the single wage employment. It will continue to be implemented universally in all the rural Panchayat*Samitis* of the country. The central assistance would now be allocated to the states/Union Territories on the basis of proportion of rural poor in a state to the total rural poor in the country. From the state allocation, funds to the districts are provided based on an index of backwardness. Two indicators are used for working out the index of backwardness, namely, the proportion of SC/ST population of the district and the inverse of agricultural production per agricultural worker. Equal weightage is given to both these indicators.
- Of the total allocation, 70 per cent of central funds released to the districts would be allocated to the Panchayat*Samitis* and the remaining 30 per cent will be reserved at the district level, to be utilized in the area of distress. Zilla Parishads would be the implementation authority for the funds released to both Zilla Parishads and Panchayat*Samitis*. Zilla Parishads would have the overall responsibility for finalization of work, coordination among the other line departments and implementation of the work in the rural areas. The watershed projects earlier being implemented under EAS have now been taken out of EAS and integrated into a single combined Watershed Development Programme.
- During 1999-2000, Central allocation for the Scheme was ₹ 2,040 crore, which was released in two instalments. The central allocation during 2000-2001 is ₹ 1,300 crore. It does not include watershed works and construction of rural roads. For these two activities, funds have been provided separately. The Scheme has proved to be very useful for the rural poor and that explains why there is a demand from states and Union Territories for enhancing funds under the Scheme.

5.3.5 Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a legal guarantee that people can use to secure their entitlement of wage employment. It holds the government responsible for making this employment available to the people. It is a legal instrument in the hands of the poor based on the demand of the workers.

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The rights-based design of (MGNREGA) has a genesis in the preceding wage employment programmes. Almost all the rights related features of MGNREGA are inherited from previous wage employment programme. The rights based framework was inherited from Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Act 1977. Under MGNREGA, apart from guaranteeing 100 days of wage employment, the Panchayati Raj Institutions have been vested with the responsibility of planning, implementation and monitoring of activities taken up under the scheme. MGNREGA made the demand factor a conscious strategy as a right to obtain employment. Financial obligations both of the centre and the state are part of the legal framework. The MGNREGA guidelines also detail operational and administrative modalities of implementation seeking to address the limitations of the earlier wage employment programmes, placing greater emphasis, for example on planning processes, and Management Information System (MIS) for improving data management.

However, since the conditions for implementing the rights-based processes of the Act were not necessarily universally or equally present, the implementation of the schemes under the Act, immediately with its notification, became the testing and training ground.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) with its legal framework and rights-based approach was notified on 5 September 2005. It aims at enhancing livelihood security by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The Act covered 200 districts in its first phase, on 2 February 2006, and was extended to all the rural districts of the country in phases.

During the FY 2012-13 upto 31 December, the scheme has provided employment to around 4.16 crore households through about 70 lakh works with more than 141 crore person days of employment.

The women workforce participation under the Scheme has surpassed the statutory minimum requirement of 33 per cent and the trends indicate an increase in the participation rate at the national level. Since inception, every year women participation has been around 48 per cent.

MGNREGA is the first ever law, internationally, that guarantees wage employment at an unprecedented scale. The primary objective of the Act is meeting demand for wage employment in rural areas. The works permitted under the Act address causes of chronic poverty like drought, deforestation and soil erosion, so that the employment generation is sustainable. The Act is also a significant vehicle for strengthening decentralization and deepening processes of democracy by giving a pivotal role to local governance bodies, that is, the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

The key achievements of the programme in the last six years of its implementation are:

- Since its inception in 2006, around $ 1,29,000 crore have been disbursed directly as wage payments to rural households.
- 1348 crore person-days of employment has been generated.
- On an average, five crore households have been provided with employment every year since 2008.
- Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have accounted for 51 per cent of the total person-days generated.
- Women have accounted for 47 per cent of the total person-days generated. This is well above the mandatory 33 per cent as required by the Act. As is evident,

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when the women earn, the family gets its benefit. When family is benefitted, the society develops.

- Since the beginning of the programme, 146 lakh works have been taken up under the Act.
- Average wage per person-day has gone up by 81 per cent since the Scheme's inception, with state level variation. The notified wage today varies from a minimum of $ 122 in Bihar and Jharkhand to $ 191 in Haryana.

Salient Features of the Act

Salient features of the Act are:

- **Rights based framework:** For adult members of a rural household willing to do unskilled manual work.
- **Time bound guarantee:** 15 days for provision of employment, else unemployment allowance to be paid.
- **Limit of working days:** Upto 100 days in a financial year per household, depending on the actual demand.
- **Labour intensive works:** 60:40 wage and material ratio for permissible works at the Gram Panchayat; no contractors/machinery.
- **Decentralized planning:**
  - Gram Sabha's to recommend works
  - At least 50 per cent of works by Gram Panchayats for execution
  - Principal role of PRIs in planning, implementation and monitoring
- **Work site facilities:** Crèche, drinking water, first aid and shade provided at worksites
- **Women empowerment:** At least one-third of beneficiaries should be women
- **Transparency and accountability:** Proactive disclosure through wall writings, citizen information boards and MIS and Social Audits
- **Funding:** 100 per cent cost towards unskilled wages and 75 per cent towards skilled, semi-skilled and material is borne by central government and 25 per cent of skilled, semi-skilled and material costs is contributed by states. In addition 6 per cent administrative expenses are borne by the centre for effective implementation of the Act.

Outcomes of programme implementation in the year 2012-13 (upto 31 December 2012) are as follows:

- **Employment generated:** In 2012-13, 4.16 crore households were provided employment and 141 crore person-days of employment were generated.
- **Increasing outreach to the poor and marginalized:** Self targeting in nature, the programme had high work participation from marginalized groups like SC/ST (38 per cent), Women (53 per cent)
- **Strengthening natural resource base:** In 2012-13, 70 lakh works were undertaken, of which 60 per cent for water conservation, 12 per cent for the provision of irrigation facility on land owned by SC/ST/BPL and IAY beneficiaries, 17 per cent for rural connectivity and 8 per cent for land development.

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- **Financial inclusion of the poor:** With a view to universalize the system of wage payments through institutional accounts, it has been recommended to all states to disburse wages through Post Offices and Bank Accounts. Around 8.54 crore bank and post office accounts of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA workers have been reported on MGNREGA soft for disbursement of wages.

Recent Initiatives to Strengthen MGNREGA

Over the last few years, based on reports from the field and research inputs on implementation issues and challenges, the Ministry has taken initiatives to strengthen the programme implementation at grass root level.

The Fourth edition of MGNREGA Operational Guidelines, 2013 was released on 2 February 2013. The revised guidelines have attempted to meet important implementation challenges viz. accurate capturing of demand for the Scheme, delays in wage payment, issues of transparency and accountability.

Some new initiatives taken under MGNREGA are:

(a) Ensuring Durable and Quality Assets

(i) As a result of various deliberations, focused discussions with experts and based on the recommendations of Dr Mihir Shah Committee, the list of permissible works under MGNREGA was expanded in May 2012 to:

- Strengthen the synergy between MGNREGA and rural livelihoods, particularly agriculture, and create durable quality assets
- Respond to the demands of states for greater location-specific flexibility in permissible works
- Help improve the health and ecological situation in rural India, with particular focus on sanitation

(ii) The contribution from MGNREGA for construction of individual toilets under Total Sanitation Campaign, now renamed as Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan, has been increased to $ 4500 from $ 1200.

(b) Measures to Ensure Transparency and Accountability

(i) **Appointment of Ombudsman at district level for expeditious redressal of grievances on implementation of MGNREGA:** Transparency and accountability are the cardinal principles underlying the implementation of MGNREGA. In order to realize an effective redressal of the grievances of the people, all the states have been directed to establish office of Ombudsman, which will, as an independent authority, expeditiously redress the grievances in regard to the implementation of the Scheme. Seven States have appointed Ombudsman in all the districts. These are Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland, Sikkim and West Bengal. Five States have not appointed Ombudsman in any of the districts. States which are yet to appoint Ombudsman are Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Jammu and Kashmir, Mizoram and Uttar Pradesh. The number of districts in other states where Ombudsman is functional are: (Total number of districts in the State mentioned within brackets) Andhra Pradesh: 20(23), Assam: 22(27), Bihar: 13(38), Chhattisgarh: 13(27), Haryana: 7(21), Himachal Pradesh: 10(12), Jharkhand: 7 (24), Karnataka: 26(30), Maharashtra: 29(33), Meghalaya: 1(7), Orissa: 24(30), Punjab: 5(22), Rajasthan: 20(33), Tamil Nadu: 11(31), Tripura: 3(9) and Uttarakhand: 11(13). The data also reflects that in Sikkim one Ombudsman

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is appointed for all the four districts and in West Bengal six Ombudsmen are appointed for all the 18 districts in the state.

(ii) **Social audits:** Section 17 of the MGNREG Act requires that Gram Sabha's shall monitor the execution of works within the Gram Panchayat (GP). The Gram Sabha shall conduct regular social audits of all projects taken up under the scheme within the GP. Social Audit is not only a management tool but also a platform for public and primary stakeholders of MGNREGA to scrutinize the resources (both financial and non-financial) used for development initiatives. The MGNREGA Audit of Schemes Rules 2011 clearly provides that Social Audit Unit shall facilitate conduct of Social Audit of the works taken up under the Act in every GP at least once every six months in the manner prescribed under the rules.

(iii) **Grievance redressal:** Standard Operating Procedures formulated: To effectively address issues of concern on implementation of MGNREGS and leakages in the Scheme, the Ministry has formulated the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) under Section 27(2) of MGNREGA for redressing complaints. This was realized during September 2012. The new mechanism delineates procedures for managing various types of complaints that will streamline the redressal procedures.

(iv) **CAG audit:** Performance audit of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), is in progress and detailed report is expected soon.

(v) **CA audit at GP level:** The objective is to make certification of MGNREGA accounts at the GP level by chartered accountants compulsory over time, starting with 10 per cent GPs in the identified highest spending district in each State in 2012-13.

Effective Monitoring of MGNREGA

Recently MGNREGA Sameeksha, the first comprehensive anthology of over 130 major independent evaluation studies on the MGNREGA was published. MGNREGA Sameeksha provides an objective summary of both, the positive impacts of the Scheme as well as its constraints.

(a) The Ministry is also in the process of setting up a concurrent evaluation office (CEO), a system by which the schemes of the Ministry of Rural Development including MGNREGA will be evaluated in real time during implementation to identify weaknesses in structure and execution, and enable the Government to insert mid-course correctives. Concurrent evaluation would mark a change from the present method of annual studies undertaken to evaluate schemes.

(b) The Vigilance and Monitoring Committees (V&MCs) are constituted at state as well as district level to function as important instrument for effective monitoring of implementation of the programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development. One of the major objectives of the V&MCs is to provide a crucial role to the Members of Parliament and elected representatives in monitoring of implementation of the Rural Development Programmes so that the schemes are executed in an effective manner and the benefits reach the poor in full measure.

After the constitution of the XV Lok Sabha, the Ministry of Rural Development issued guidelines for reconstituting state and district level V&MCs. It is imperative that the meetings of the Vigilance and Monitoring Committees (V&MCs) are held regularly in accordance with the guidelines.

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MGNREGA, UIDAI and Direct Benefit Transfers

The Ministry has strongly supported the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) to improve programme efficiency, streamline processes as well as place information in public domain

- **e-FMS:** An electronic Fund Management System (e-FMS) has been implemented to reduce delay in payment of wages to workers employed under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. e-FMS has been implemented in Karnataka, Odisha, Gujarat, Tripura and Rajasthan, for crediting wages electronically into workers' Banks/P.O. accounts leveraging core banking solution of banks and Sanchay Post Solution of Department of Posts. e-FMS will capture real time transactions, eliminate delays and leakages apart from parking of funds at various levels held by different stakeholders.
- **e-MMS:** Electronic Muster Management System (e-MMS) has been introduced using mobile based application to capture worksite attendance. Mobile based application is piloted in Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The e-MMS uses Mobile based technology to capture attendance of labour and measurements of work done thereby enabling information flow directly from worksite to the website.
- **Aadhar:** Ministry is in process of operationalizing Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) in identified 51 (46 districts under MGNREGA) districts from 1 June 2013 onwards. DBT will be implemented through e-FMS and subsequently through Aadhaar Enabled Bridge (APB) once the MGNREGA beneficiary has an Aadhaar number, which is seeded in the programme database (MGNREGA).

5.3.6 Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP)

India has the largest concentration of tribal people anywhere in the world except perhaps in Africa. The tribals are children of nature and their lifestyle is conditioned by the eco system. India with a variety of ecosystems, presents a varied tribal population throughout its length and breadth. The areas inhabited by the tribal constitute a significant part of the under developed areas of the country. The tribals live mostly in isolated villages or hamlets. A smaller portion of their population has now settled in permanent villages as well as in towns and cities. On the whole, as per rough estimates, the prominent tribal areas constitute about 15 per cent of the total geographical area of the country. Scheduled Tribes, Schedules Castes and de notified tribes constitute the weakest section of India's poverty. Traditionally, tribal people of India have been outside the purview of the Hindu caste system. Tribal communities interacted with the non tribal caste and Hindu communities but largely remained separate from the social structure.

Tribal Development Perspective

Since independence, particularly with the inception of Five Years Plans, concern for tribal development has always been high on the government's agenda. The credit for this goes to both the framers of the Constitution and to our first Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who not only took a great deal of interest in tribal development, but also gave long term guidelines in this regard. He strongly believed that no development activity in the tribal areas should take place at the cost of tribal heritage. This is abundantly evident form his views on tribal development:

- People should develop along lines of their own genius and we would avoid imposing anything on them.

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- Tribal right in land forest should be protected.
- We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development.
- We should not over administer these areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes. We should rather work through and not in rivalry to their own social and cultural institutions.
- We should judge result not by statistics or amount of money spent on them, but by quality of human lie that is evolved.

No doubt, in keeping with these broad guidelines and the provisions of the Constitution, a number of special schemes and programmes, including the Integrated Rural Development programme (IRDP) and Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP) were launched to develop the tribal regions of the country. Nevertheless, it may be emphasized that the implementation strategies and polices adopted many a time have been such as were conducive to find a solution to a particular problem. And in the process of solving that problem, a new policy emerged. This in itself is not problematic. What, however, at times causes serious aberration is the independent style of functioning and of interpreting the facts by people at the helm of affairs. Often the bureaucrats, the planners, the politicians and of course, the academicians have their own way of looking at things and interpreting the facts.

The government continues its efforts for the welfare and development of Scheduled Tribes, who constitute eight per cent of the total population of the country. Of these, 1.8 million belong to the Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs).

The objective of the Tenth Plan and Annual Plan 2006-07 is to empower the Scheduled Tribes through a three-pronged strategy of social empowerment, economic empowerment and social justice. During the Tenth Five-Year Plan, an amount of ₹ 5,754 crore was approved as plan outlay and for Annual Plan 2006-07, ₹ 1,760.19 crore has been proposed.

The Tribal Sub-Plan strategy adopted during the Fifth Plan is being implemented by the centre as well as the state governments through various schemes. In addition to Special Central Assistance to the Tribal Sub-Plan, grants are also being provided to the state governments to implement specific schemes for the welfare and development of Scheduled Tribes.

The National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation has been set up to give focused attention to the economic development of tribals.

Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA)

The geographical area of ITDA, Parlakhemundi extends over an area of 3574.41 Sq. Km covering 5 Blocks namely Gumma, Rayagada, Nuagada, R.Udayagiri and Mohana of Gajapati District. The total population of the ITDA area is 2,88,468. Of this, 1,96,068 belongs to ST, 12,589 SC and 79,811 OC. Among tribals, the Saora community constitutes the largest group in this ITDA area and Lanjia Saora are considered most primitive in this area.

Evolution of a Suitable Strategy for Development

The British Government followed a policy of Laissez faire in the matter of tribal development. At first the tribal areas were administered according to the special laws

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such as the Ganjam and Visakhapatnam Act, 1839. Later all these areas were declared as 'Scheduled Districts' and their administration was conducted in accordance with Scheduled District Act, 1874. In the Government of India Act, 1919 these areas were removed with different degrees of exclusion such as 'wholly excluded Areas' and 'Areas of Modified Exclusion' which were changed in the Government of India Act, 1935 as 'Excluded areas' and 'Partially excluded areas'. The tribal tracts of Orissa were declared as 'Partially excluded'.

The philosophy of welfare state which emerged with independence has cast a heavy responsibility on government with regard to protection and advancement of Scheduled Tribes. The first phase of development with a specially evolved strategy was the introduction of Multipurpose Tribal Development projects in selected areas of tribal concentration in the Second Year Plan. Encouraged by the response from tribals, the tribal development was taken up by carving out of T.D Blocks in the 3rd plan, which also continued in the 4th plan period. The programme of development of T.D Block was basically the same as that of the C.D Blocks. But the schematic provision was more than double in the T.D Blocks vis-à-vis C.D Blocks. These development efforts through Blocks resulted in diffusion of activities and in increasing the gulf between tribals and non-tribals, indicating the need for more concerted and concentrated efforts. The experience thus gained resulted in starting of Tribal Development Agencies in areas of more backwardness during the 5th plan period.

A serious effort was made at the commencement of the 5th plan for an integrated development approach in planning for tribals in Blocks with tribal concentration of 50 per cent and more which was naked as tribal sub-plan. They were constituted into viable ITDPs. Accordingly, the ITDA, Parlakhemundi was constituted.

During Medium Term Plan starting from 1978 pockets with minimum population of 10,000 having more than 50 per cent tribals living in contiguous areas were taken up for intensive development under 'Modified Area Development Approach'. Similarly, micro-projects were formed in isolated pockets for development of primitive tribes. Accordingly, the LSDA at Seranga and SDA, at Chandragiri were constituted.

The 6th plan document envisaged a major breakthrough in the field of tribal development. The strategy for tribal development as evolved during the 5th plan had two objectives, i.e. area development and economic upliftment of individual tribal beneficiaries as against the main thrust on area development till launching of the 5th plan. These 2 objectives were further revolutionized during the 6th plan in favour of development of critical infrastructure and bringing out 50 per cent of tribal families above the poverty line through family oriented income generating schemes.

Tribal Studies in Himachal Pradesh

The Tribal Studies and Research at Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla has always been a priority. Though modest yet a formal effort began with the setting up of Institute of Tribal Studies (ITS) at the Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla vide University's Executive Council's Resolution No. 10, on 31 January 1994. The aims, objectives and the structure of the ITS were approved by the Executive Council in its meeting held on 12 April 1994 vide item no. 41. Its actual functioning started from the academic session 1995-96.

With the meagre financial resources at its disposal, the ITS has been actively involved in teaching (offering PG Diploma in Tribal Studies) and research (conducted 14

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research studies). It also organized a national seminar, exhibition on Tribal Society and Culture, and brought out a book entitled *Tribal Development in Himachal Pradesh: Appraisal and Alternatives*.

With the changing needs of the Tribal people and society, the proposed Institute of Tribal Studies and Research (ITSR) continues with its following mission.

The Mission

The mission was:

- To pursue scientific and independent research for the creation of data base and evolving strategies for research, monitoring and evaluation of the development policies and programmes
- To train people for capacity building and human resource development, carry on action research with field outreach and extension services for the overall social, economic, political and cultural development in the Scheduled Tribes Areas of Himachal Pradesh

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the ITSR are as follows:

1. Promotion of Research for Data Base

- To plan and conduct Bench Mark Surveys right from the village level to build up a strong baseline primary data bank about the social (including education and health with special reference to women and children), demographic, economic, political and cultural profile of the Scheduled Tribes areas and Scheduled Tribes
- To identify and study social, cultural, economic, political, demographic, ecological and environmental related problems, needs of the people and emerging tribal issues in inter-disciplinary perspective
- Identification of physical resource base (both renewable and non-renewable), agriculture and horticulture potential and human resources, up-dating of knowledge through periodic surveys for the formulation of policies, programmes and strategies for sustainable agriculture, horticulture and overall economic development of the tribal areas
- To explore and develop market networks for the tribal areas for the marketing of agriculture, horticulture and other cash crops for boosting tribal economy
- To identify the existing employment avenues and human resource potentials in the tribal areas for the formulation of employment generating policies and programmes for the optimum utilization of existing skills and promotion of new skills and talents through training programmes
- To explore the emerging issues like tribal rights over land, forests and their management; educational and health infra-structure development with the participation of the state as well as people for the promotion of social harmony, development with sustainability.

2. Human Resource Development and Promotion of Extension Work

- To strengthen the teaching programme through organization of orientation and training programmes in the use of modern technology for the production and reproduction of social and economic life of the tribal people

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- To develop literature based on the traditional as well as modern knowledge for the benefit of the officials working at different levels in the tribal areas
- Involving tribal people and leaders at different levels to understand the existing ground realities by making available to them research findings
- Providing research based latest information, knowledge, strategies to the government machinery, top executives, middle level managers and various other functionaries involved in the formulation of policies and programmes for tribal development
- To educate and sensitize the youth about the available opportunities, the new avenues of employment, the areas of knowledge to pursue and so on for their growth and development

3. Consultation and Collaboration

- To develop partnership with national and international funding agencies for carrying out joint research projects for the development and growth of the tribal areas
- To hold seminars, conferences, symposia and public lectures for the dissemination and sharing of knowledge accrued through research projects the ITSR proposes
- To propose to bring out publications in the form of reports, monographs, news bulletin and journal
- To act as a nodal agency to provide consultative services in research and development activities to the various stakeholders

There are a large number of agencies working in the tribal areas in an independent manner and huge resources of the government and other funding agencies are spent. The ITSR would try to involve all such agencies and coordinate development activities on sharing basis for the optimum utilization of the resources.

The Activities and Performance of ITDS

The Institute of Tribal Development Studies at the Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla has been in operation since 1995-96 and heading towards the realization of its goals. The source of its funding has been the state government that provided a very small amount of annual grant-in-aid under the Plan Budget 'Part II, Development' of the Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla till 2002-03. However, from the year 2003-04 the state government has clubbed the budgetary provision with the Non-Plan budget of the Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla without the provision of any extra/additional grant-in-aid for the ITDS' research and teaching programme. Due to which the activities of the Institute of Tribal Studies have been severely affected. Despite having very meagre funding, the ITDS has been able to accomplish, as per the details below, more than what it could be expected.

Teaching Programme and Course of Study

The ITDS offers one year Post-graduate Diploma in Tribal Studies that covers tribal History, Society, Economy and Culture with a focus on the Tribes and Tribal areas of Himachal Pradesh (since 1997-98). Under this programme, every year ten students are admitted. Every student besides appearing in the theory paper also works on the field project dealing with some aspects of the life and society of the Tribes.

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Research Programme

1. **Consultative research undertaken by the institute:** The Institute was associated with the World Bank's DPEP Programme and conducted a study 'Social Assessment Study of DPEP Districts of Himachal Pradesh'. These districts included: (i) Lahaul-spiti; (ii) Chamba including Pangi and Brahmaur (iii) Kullu including outer Seraj; and Sirmaur and backward regions like Shilai and areas touching Jaunsar Babar.

   Four Reports based on the above study were submitted to the World Bank and the Ministry of HRD, New Delhi as well as Government of Himachal Pradesh, Shimla.

2. **Research studies funded by the institute and completed:**
   - Impact of tribal Development on tribal Economy of Pradesh: An Appraisal.
   - Development and Marketing of Handicrafts of Tribal Areas of Himachal Pradesh: A Case Study of Kinnaur.
   - Impact of formal and Non-formal Education on Life and Culture of Tribal People of Himachal Pradesh.
   - A Study of the patterns of Customary Legal Systems with Special Reference to the Eco-educational Levels in Tribes: A Case Study of Lahaul and Spiti Tribes.
   - Social Development, Reproductive Health and Fertility Behaviour: A Case study of Kinnauri Women.
   - A Comparative Study of Folk-Literature of the Tribal people of Brahmaur, Kullu and Kangra.
   - Tribal Family Structure and its Dynamics: A Case Study of Kinnauras of Himachal Pradesh.
   - Impact of Modern Political Developmental processes on Traditional Social Structure of Swangla Tribe.
   - A Critical Study of Folk Music of Gaddis.

3. **National seminar:** Organized National Seminar on the theme 'Tribal Development in Himachal Pradesh: Appraisal and Alternatives' 29-29 June 1996. Professor B. K. Roy Burman presented the Keynote address. The participants included eminent personalities from the Tribal Areas of Himachal Pradesh like late Shri T. S. Negi, former Speaker of Himachal Pradesh State Assembly and Member of different Tribal Commissions and Committees. There were 37 presentations by academicians, NGOs and bureaucrats.

4. **Exhibition on tribal society and culture:** An Exhibition on 'Tribal Society, Art & Culture' was organized that included display of sketches, paintings, and other works of art and architecture, pertaining to the tribal areas of Himachal Pradesh.

5. **Publication:** A Book entitled *Tribal Development in Himachal Pradesh: Appraisal and Alternatives* edited by S. K. Gupta and others, New Delhi: Indus Publications, 1998

5.3.7 Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY)

The Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY) was launched on 2 October 1993 to assist less educated and poor unemployed youth in setting up micro level self-employment

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ventures. Initially, the PMRY was implemented only in the urban areas of the country. Since 1994-95, it is being implemented in both urban and rural areas. The target of the Yojana for 2007-08 is setting up 2.75 lakh units thus generating an estimated 4.125 lakh additional employment opportunities.

An educated (up to VIII standard) unemployed person living in any part of the country is eligible under the Scheme and can apply for assistance to the general manager, DIC in the district to which he belongs. In cases where the applicant belongs to the cities of Kolkata, Chennai and Mumbai, the application has to be filed directly with the office of the director of industries and in the office of the deputy commissioner of the respective zones in case of Delhi.

The Task Force Committees set up at district level or the Task Force constituted under the Scheme at Sub-divisional level/block level, have been entrusted with the job of scrutinizing the applications and interviewing the applicants. The names of applicants approved by Task Force Committee are sponsored by District Industries Centres (DICs) to the concerned bank branches for sanction of loans.

In addition to sponsoring of applications by Task Force Committees(s), bank branches themselves may also receive applications directly from the eligible persons under the Scheme. However, such applications should be sent to sponsoring agencies with their observations on the viability and bankability of the projects. The sponsoring agencies would then formally sponsor such applications back to the bank branches for sanction of loan.

Contingency Funds for Scheme Administration

Funds for contingency at the rate of ₹ 250 per case sanctioned, under the Scheme, are released to the concerned states/UTs from 1996-97 onwards. The contingency funds are meant for utilization towards meeting expenditure in administering and supervising PMRY at the DIC level, which includes, inter-alia, publicity, organization of workshops, motivational and familiarization programmes for eligible youth.

In order to provide greater flexibility to the states/UTs in utilization of contingency funds, the expenditure norms have been modified to include expenditure on training equipment/models, trainer's fees, training course materials, hiring of transport and strengthening the existing infrastructure.

Project Profiles

Project Profiles have been prepared for guidance of entrepreneurs in selecting the viable projects and Training and Trainers Manuals have been developed by the Ministry through Rural Development and Self Employment Training Institute (RUDSETI), Karnataka.

Assistance from States/UTs

State/UT Governments may provide necessary infrastructure support like provision of industrial sites, shops and water supply on preferential basis to the entrepreneurs availing benefit under the Yojana. The provision of sites and sheds at concessional rate to service ventures in urban areas will be essential for their success. Priority in electric connections and general tax concessions/incentives may also be provided to the beneficiaries.

Monitoring and Guidance for PMRY

The district, being a well-established geographical unit for many state/central promotional programmes, is the basic unit for implementation of the Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana.

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In all the districts, District Industries Centre (DIC) is the implementing agency except in the metropolitan cities of Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai where the Directorate of Industries is the implementing agency under the Scheme. In Delhi, the applications are received in the office of the deputy commissioner of the respective zones. The field agencies, in consultation with the banks of the respective areas, are responsible for formulation of self-employment plans, their implementation and monitoring under the overall guidance of the District PMRY Committee. These agencies are required to formulate location specific plans of action based on realistic demand assessment for various activities.

Monitoring and Guidance at District Level

The Yojana is being monitored and guided at district level by the District PMRY Committee under the chairmanship of district collector/deputy commissioner. The Committee is required to meet at least once in a month and send monthly progress report in the prescribed pro forma to the directorate of industries of the concerned state/UT.

Monitoring and Guidance at State/UT Level

The monitoring and guidance for the Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana at state/ UT level is undertaken by the State/UT PMRY Committee under the chairmanship of the chief secretary.

Monitoring and Guidance at Government of India Level

The Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana is being monitored at the central government level by the High Powered Committee on PMRY under the chairmanship of the secretary (MSME). The last review meeting was held on 16 July 2007, besides subsequent review(s) by the secretary (MSME) in different states during the period.

Cumulative status of progress under PMRY during X plan and 2007-08

The details of applications sanctioned for financial assistance and loans disbursed and credit flow under PMRY during X Plan and for the year 2007- 08 (up to September 2007) are given in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Details of Targets, Applications Received, Cases Sanctioned/Disbursed: PMRY

(As reported by RBI)

Year	Target (No.)	Applications Received (No.)	Cases Sanctioned		Cases Disbursed	
			No.	Amount (Rs. crore)	No.	Amount (Rs. crore)
2002-03	220000	414001	228031	1497	190521	1198
2003-04	220000	436679	264012	1679	219444	1368
2004-05	250000	491324	298003	1923	248264	1543
2005-06	250000	498751	318095	2055	273066	1701
2006-07*	255000	494257	313791	2036	261236	1632
Total	**1195000**	**2335012**	**1421932**	**9190**	**1192531**	**7442**
2007-08 (up to Sept. 2007)	275000	182664	82118	393	47061	224

*Provisional

Budgetary Assistance

The central government assists the entrepreneurs through capital subsidy and provides funds to states for entrepreneurial development and contingencies. The details of budget

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allocations and expenditure incurred under the Scheme during X Plan and during the year 2007-08 are given in Table 5.2

Table 5.2 Budget Allocation and Funds Released: PMRY

(₹ crore)

Year	Budget Allocation	Funds Released		
		For Subsidy	For EDPs	Total
2002-03	169.00	152.55	15.55	168.10
2003-04	169.00	147.63	20.20	167.83
2004-05	218.90	190.48	27.69	218.17
2005-06	273.46	251.36	21.11	272.47
2006-07	252.60	228.82	19.69	248.51
Total	**1082.96**	**970.84**	**104.24**	**1075.08**
2007-08*	320.00	265.60	29.40	295.00

*Up to December 2007

Evaluation Studies of PMRY

Three rounds of evaluation (first round conducted in 1996-97 for the programme years 1993-94 and 1994-95, second round conducted in 2000-01 for the programme years 1995-96 to 1997-98 and the third round conducted during 2005-06 for the programme years 1998-99 to 2001-02) of the PMRY have been undertaken by the Institute of Applied Manpower Research (IAMR), New Delhi. A comparative position of some of the important findings of these three rounds of evaluation indicates:

- The share of SC/STs as well as OBCs in the Scheme has steadily improved. The proportion of SC/STs improved from about 12 per cent in the first round to 13 per cent in the second and further to 21 per cent in the third round. Similar improvement has also been observed in respect of the share of OBCs. However, there has not been much improvement in the share of women beneficiaries under the Scheme.
- The average amount of loan disbursed has been increasing. It was ₹ 57,000 in the second round and ₹ 64,000 in the third round.
- The employment generation was higher in the first round at 2.5 per unit. In the second and third rounds, it is found to be around 1.95 per functioning unit.
- The proportion of rural beneficiaries has come down from 49.9 per cent in the second round to 39.1 per cent in the third round.
- Assets have been created in 89.7 per cent of the cases where loans were disbursed.
- About 36.4 per cent of the beneficiaries were repaying the loan instalment on time.
- The average rate of recovery of loans was 29 per cent in the second round. It improved somewhat at 38 per cent in the third round.

Initiatives Taken for Strengthening PMRY

Based on the recommendations of the group (June 2006) constituted under the chairmanship of the adviser (VSE), Planning Commission to review the design and implementation of the Yojana, some important components, viz. enhancement in the

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family income ceiling, project cost, subsidy, training cost reimbursement, have been revised in the guidelines of the PMRY with effect from 2007-08.

In the quarterly schedule fixed for the year 2007-08, applications to the extent of 125 per cent of the target are targeted to be sponsored by the end of the third quarter (100 per cent by the end of the second quarter), so that loans could be sanctioned in 90 per cent of the sponsored cases by the end of the third quarter (100 per cent by the end of 4th quarter). The quarterly schedule further prescribes that loans would be disbursed in 75 per cent cases by the end of the third quarter and the loan disbursement of the entire target of 100 per cent cases would be achieved by the end of 4th quarter. The RBI has also issued instructions to all implementing banks reiterating the above decision of the government.

To improve the success rate of eligible applicants, a new concept of pre-motivational campaign has been introduced w.e.f. 2007-08. Under this programme, state/ UTs are allowed reimbursement of cost of counselling and guiding the applicants at the rate of ₹ 200 per applicant, for 125 per cent of the allocated target. Besides, a number of operational guidelines have been issued to make this Yojana more effective which inter alia include:

- Seminars to be held at the level of each district for creating awareness of PMRY in the area in the form of pre-selection motivational campaign. A resolution is to be adopted by each and every Gram Panchayat for giving wide publicity and spreading awareness about the Scheme in their respective jurisdictions.
- All the members of the Task Force Committee would be collectively responsible for selection of beneficiaries. This would ensure that the bank manager alone is not held responsible for the non-performing assets if any that could arise out of the loans extended under PMRY to the beneficiaries.
- No collateral shall be insisted for PMRY loans upto ₹ 5 lakh.
- SC/ST and beneficiaries from minority communities should be targeted in such a manner that they are benefited, at least, in proportion to their population in each district/state.
- Of the total target for each state/UT, women beneficiaries should constitute at least 30 per cent.
- Preference may be given to develop clusters specializing in specific products at the time of selection of PMRY beneficiaries.
- According to the findings of the evaluation studies of PMRY, the ratio of applications received to the targets was low owing to inadequate publicity of the scheme. As such aggressive publicity campaigns have been asked to be undertaken through media like radio, television, cinema slides and distribution of pamphlets, in addition to pre-selection motivational campaigns.

5.3.8 Self-Help Groups (SHGs)

The state government had taken a policy decision to set up Self-Help Groups (SHGs) as a major poverty alleviation initiative with a view to ensuring a robust economic growth that would be labour intensive and equitable combined with development of the social sectors specially directed towards the poor. Various programmes administered by different departments of the central and the state government, SHG Bank Linkage programme initiated by NABARD and the social intermediation programme followed by NGOs have accelerated the process of organizing the poor, particularly women into Self-help

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groups. In West Bengal, more than 1,00,000 self-help groups have been formed by different organizations (both government and non-government) with Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY-SHG based programme implemented by Rural Development Department) contributing formation of about 55,699 SHGs.

Although we have about 20 programme operating in Self-help group mode, it has been felt that optimum use of these resources available under these programmes are not being made at the district level and SHGs are being formed programme-wise without any specific assessment of employment potential or requirement of the area on the whole. Very recently, the state government has taken initiative for convergence of SHG based programmes at grass roots level by formation of Federation of SHGs at different levels for augmentation of livelihood opportunities of SHG members and for extending outreach of basic services to the poor people specially women members. The detailed guidelines for convergence and the model for the federation of SHGs are annexed.

Self Help Groups (SHGs) could be defined as the organised forum of people which is planned, shaped and structured by the people themselves to attain present/pre-identified goals and purposes. These groups are the agents of social change and catalysts for the entire empowerment and development process in a community. It is proved that the most sustainable groups in a society are the grassroots level community organizations which believe in empowerment, decentralization, and participation. Even though these groups are small in size, their advocacy power is high through their federated structure within the locality and also in the region. Many SHGs come together on one platform at local, regional, and district levels, which enables the groups to gather strength not only to influence the legislature but also to mobilize public opinion in favour of gaining adequate space and opportunities for the community members to respond to various complex issues concerning their livelihoods. SHGs are identified as socially viable community organizations having democratic values, relevant developmental orientation and oriented towards attaining individuals'/groups' own sustainability. In the current development scenario the effective functioning of these grassroots organizations become almost inevitable and rather challenging too.

Community-based self-help institutions are being promoted at the village level to take responsibilities for a variety of development activities, which include management of natural resources, employment generation, and human resource development. Most government programmes emphasize adoption of participatory approaches envisaging participation of village communities through these institutions. Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) involved in rural development activities are also largely operating through Self Help Groups (SHGs). In some instances, SHGs have emerged without direct assistance from government or non-government organizations and have taken responsibility of the overall development in the area.

Functions of SHGs

SHGs being the facilitators of social development, they have undertaken multidimensional activities including:

- Development of perspectives at local level
- Identification and organization of developmental activities
- Ensuring effective participation in the development activities
- Documentation and dissemination of success and failure in development

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- Engaging in networking/collaboration and linkage with developmental institutes
- Promoting people's organizations; not only as a 'project' but also as a process
- Capacity building
- Leadership development, participatory research and analysis
- Participatory monitoring and evaluation
- Access to information
- Improving livelihood
- Advocacy

Need for SHG Formation

Reports indicate that self-help programmes often in the form of savings and credit or micro credit schemes have succeeded in changing the lives of poor women in enhancing their incomes and increasing their self-esteem. Therefore, it is appropriate and necessary to promote such empowered groups in the present situation. The various grounds for SHG formation are:

- As women are an important part of the community, it is necessary to build and enhance their capabilities to manage community projects.
- SHGs have been instrumental in empowering women by enabling them to work together as a collective agency.
- The participation of women in such groups is serving as an incubator for community leadership.
- SHGs have played valuable roles in reducing the vulnerability of the poor through asset creation, income and consumption smoothing, provision of emergency assistance, and empowering and emboldening women by giving them more control over assets and increasing their self-esteem and knowledge (Zaman, 2001).

Above all, individually, a person tends to be insecure but group membership reduces the insecurity, makes him/her a more reliable borrower and provides access to community assets. Thus, the formation of a group would ensure best participation and the approach towards poverty alleviation should be 'self-help'. This brings out the need for organizing them into groups by which they get the benefit of collective perception, collective decision making and collective implementation of programmes for common benefit. This collective effort results from the balance between the driving forces that push for change and restraining forces that act against change. In order to bring change, the balance of these forces must be altered so that the equilibrium moves.

SHGs act as appropriate people's institutions that provide the poor with the space and support necessary to take effective steps towards greater control of their lives in private and in society. These community based groups are not static institutions but grow on the resources and management skills of its members and their increasing confidence to get involved in issues and programmes that require their involvement in the public and private spheres.

Genealogy of Policy and Emergence of Self-Help Approach

The premise is that poverty can be effectively tackled with the help of thrift and micro credit programmes. It was partly because of the perceived success of the Grameen Bank, that many development practitioners and development agencies started to see

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micro credit as a powerful tool to address poverty. Micro credit facilities, it was thought, would help poor people to overcome financial crises without the help of moneylenders. The bank or the financing agency would give much cheaper loans than the local moneylenders. Collateral is often not required, but there is a group which takes the responsibility for repayment, and which assesses the credit worthiness of the person who takes out the loan. There is a lot of faith in the 'thrift-cum-micro-credit-through-women's-groups' model of development. Many NGOs, international development agencies, as well as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are great supporters and promoters of the model. In 1997, an international Micro Credit Summit was held in Washington, which attracted participants from all over the world, and included a number of prominent participants. For many, micro credit, especially if organized through women's self-help groups, if not a panacea, seems to hold a great promise.

The 1990s saw a proliferation of women SHGs across India, particularly in the southern states. These groups were designed not only as a strategy for poverty alleviation, but also to increase women's access to resources and their power in household decision-making. Savings and credit groups are poor women's substitute for formal banking, and a potential distribution channel for banking services. However, women's savings groups themselves are micro-enterprises and like any other business their survival depends on their ability to satisfy the needs of the customers. Lending services in the SHGs offer fast, convenient and informal service, repayments are flexible and they are willing to lend for consumption and productive purposes.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh has taken up the theme of women's empowerment as one of the strategies to tackle socio-economic poverty. Self Help through savings has been taken up as a mass movement by women—a path chosen by them to shape their destiny. The development agenda of the state in the last few years, of placing the people, especially women, in the forefront has enabled the formation of a large number of Self Help Groups (SHGs) throughout the state. The majority of the women in these SHGS save one rupee a day, which is a significant percentage of their meagre incomes.

The state government is consciously making an effort to assist SHGs by providing Revolving Funds/Matching Grants under various programmes. In 1999, all the separate programmes were clustered together in the Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), but DWCRA (Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas) as a term and as a separate programme does still exist, in Andhra Pradesh. DWCRA differs from the other IRDP type of programmes in two important ways. First, the main unit of development in DWCRA is not an individual or household, but a group of women. Groups usually consist of 10-20 women (this group approach is now also used in the SGSY programme). Second, the emphasis is not only on economic activities, but also on social issues such as family welfare, child care and literacy.

Initially, DWCRA started in a few districts in Andhra Pradesh only, but gradually more districts were added. However, it is only in the last seven years or so that DWCRA has really started to capture the imagination in Andhra Pradesh and that the number of groups started to rise dramatically. It is claimed that at present there are approximately 4.50,000 DWCRA groups in Andhra Pradesh. This would mean that there are around 6 million women who are members of DWCRA groups. Assuming that around 70 per cent of the women live in rural areas, this would mean that approximately 20 per cent of them are involved in DWCRA, a figure that more or less corresponds with the proportion of poor people. Apart from DWCRA groups, there are several other women's SHGs.

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Many NGOs have set up self-help groups. Recently the District Poverty Initiative Programme (DPIP, funded by the World Bank) has also started to set up women's SHGs. These SHGs are also thrift and credit groups. Andhra Pradesh is very much in the forefront in India, and indeed, in the world with regard to women's self-help groups. More than 40 per cent of the SHGs that exist in India are in Andhra Pradesh and about 20 per cent of all the women's SHGs that exist in the world belong to Andhra Pradesh.

Each month the whole group saves a particular amount. This money is deposited in a bank account and can be used for giving loans to group members. After some time, if the groups function well, additional loans can be given. These can be organized through the DRDA (District Rural Development Agency) in the case of DWCRA, through NABARD in the case of NGO supported SHGs, or through the Community Investment Fund in the case of DPIP groups. In recent years, commercial banks have also become involved. In principle, this borrowing is only possible when the group has performed well in its saving activities. The reason to focus particularly on women in these thrift and micro credit activities is the observation and/or assumption:

- That women are more concerned with the needs of the various household members
- That they are better at repaying loans than men
- That the credit and savings activities can help them become more active participants in social life (they have to learn how to maintain an accounts book; they have to deal with bank managers, etc.)
- That these women's groups can be an entry point for various other activities

5.4 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Planning is a commitment to resolute action. Through economic and social planning, national governments make adjustments to new socio-economic and political realities.
- According to Ram Ahuja (1999, 447), social planning aims at: (i) change in social organization, and (ii) community welfare.
- The Government of India set up in 1943 a committee of the Viceroy's Council, known as the Reconstruction Committee of Council (RCC), which was assisted by Provincial Policy Committees to bring out plans for reconstruction. In 1944, the Department of Planning and Development was also created.
- The development campaign in the country in every sector is carried out through the Five Year Plans which are prepared by the Planning Commission.
- The primary objective of the first Five Year Plan was to improve the standard of living of the people. The sectors targeted during this period included: industrial sector, energy, irrigation, transport, communications, land rehabilitation, social services, development of agriculture, etc.
- With the world economy in a troublesome condition and inflation souring high due to increase in food and oil prices, the fifth Five Year Plan gave priority to the sectors like food and energy.
- The seventh plan could focus on industrial development. It emphasized the introduction and application of modern technology, development of the people

Check Your Progress

8. State the primary objective of the Employees Assurance Scheme (EAS).
9. When was the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) notified?
10. What is the objective of the Tenth Plan and Annual Plan 2006-07?
11. What are Self-Help groups?
12. Which unit is the basic unit for implementation of the Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana?

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belonging to all the sections of society and improvement of the weaker sections, development of agriculture, reduction of poverty, etc.

- The Indian economy was in a much better position during the beginning of the eleventh plan than it was few years ago. The plan has several aims to meet with the socio-economic problems that the country is undergoing.
- The Department of Rural Development is implementing a number of programmes in rural areas through the state governments for poverty reduction, employment generation, rural infrastructure habitant development, provision of basic minimum services and so on.
- The objective of the Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) is to bring the assisted poor families (Swarozgaries) above the poverty line by ensuring appreciable sustained level of income over a period of time.
- The District SGSY Committee should scrutinize the proposals for each key activity separately in consultation with the concerned experts including the line department officials.
- The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was launched in 1978-79 in order to deal with the dimensions of rural poverty in the country. The programme covered small and marginal farmers, agricultural workers and landless labourers and rural craftsmen and artisans and virtually all the families of about 5 persons with an annual income level below 3500.
- Ministry of Rural Development should take steps to impress upon the state governments the need to cover maximum number of IRDP beneficiaries under the tertiary and secondary sector schemes and also the schemes under the subsidiary occupation, like fishing and sericulture.
- Community Development is the method and Rural Extension the agency through which the Five Year Plan seeks to initiate a process of transformation of the social and economic life of the villages.
- It has been realized that the full development of a community cannot be achieved without a strong educational base, similar for men and women.
- The Community Development Programme is related to and supported in part by most of the other projects under the Indo-American Technical Cooperation Programme.
- The primary objective of the Employees Assurance Scheme (EAS) is creation of additional wage employment opportunities during the period of acute shortage of wage employment through manual work for the rural poor living below the poverty line.
- The Rights-based design of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has a genesis in the preceding wage employment programmes.
- India has the largest concentration of tribal people anywhere in the world except perhaps in Africa.
- The British Government followed a policy of Laissez faire in matter of tribal development. At first the tribal areas were administered according to the special laws such as the Ganjam and Visakhapatnam Act, 1839.

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- The state government had taken a policy decision to set up Self-Help Groups (SHGs) as a major poverty alleviation initiative with a view to ensuring a robust economic growth that would be labour intensive and equitable combined with development of the social sectors specially directed towards the poor.
- The state government is consciously making an effort to assist SHGs by providing Revolving Funds/Matching Grants under various programmes.
- The Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY) was launched on 2 October 1993 to assist less educated and poor unemployed youth in setting up micro level self-employment ventures.
- The district, being a well-established geographical unit for many state/central promotional programmes, is the basic unit for implementation of the Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana.
- To improve the success rate of eligible applicants, a new concept of pre-motivational campaign has been introduced w.e.f. 2007-08. Under this programme, state/ UTs are allowed reimbursement of cost of counselling and guiding the applicants at the rate of ₹ 200 per applicant, for 125 per cent of the allocated target.
- According to the findings of the evaluation studies of PMRY, the ratio of applications received to the targets was low owing to inadequate publicity of the scheme. As such aggressive publicity campaigns have been asked to be undertaken through media like radio, television, cinema slides and distribution of pamphlets, in addition to pre-selection motivational campaigns.

5.5 KEY TERMS

- **Swarozgaris:** Swarozgaris are the assisted poor families.
- **Self Help Groups (SHGs):** Self Help Groups could be defined as the organised forum of people which is planned, shaped and structured by the people themselves to attain present/pre-identified goals and purposes.

5.6 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. According to Ram Ahuja (1999, 447), social planning aims at: (i) change in social organization, and (ii) community welfare.
2. The primary objective of the first Five Year Plan was to improve the standard of living of the people. The sectors targeted during this period included: industrial sector, energy, irrigation, transport, communications, land rehabilitation, social services, development of agriculture, etc.
3. The second Five Year Plan functioned on the basis of 'Mahalanobis model', following the name of P. C. Mahalanobis.
4. The seventh plan could focus on industrial development. It emphasized the introduction and application of modern technology, development of the people belonging to all the sections of society and improvement of the weaker sections, development of agriculture, reduction of poverty, etc.

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5. The success of SGSY will depend on the choice of activities. The key element is that the choice of activity should be based on the local resources, the aptitude as well as the skill of the people. It is also necessary that the products have ready market.
6. The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was launched in 1978-79 in order to deal with the dimensions of rural poverty in the country. The programme covered small and marginal farmers, agricultural workers and landless labourers and rural craftsmen and artisans and virtually all the families of about 5 persons with an annual income level below 3500.
7. The main lines of activity which will be undertaken in a community project, can be briefly divided into the following:
   - Agriculture and related matters
   - Irrigation
   - Communications
   - Education
   - Health
   - Supplementary employment
   - Housing
   - Training
   - Social welfare
8. The primary objective of the Employees Assurance Scheme (EAS) is creation of additional wage employment opportunities during the period of acute shortage of wage employment through manual work for the rural poor living below the poverty line.
9. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) with its legal framework and rights-based approach was notified on 5 September 2005.
10. The objective of the Tenth Plan and Annual Plan 2006-07 is for empowering Scheduled Tribes through a three-pronged strategy of social empowerment, economic empowerment and social justice.
11. Self Help Groups (SHGs) could be defined as the organized forum of people which is planned, shaped and structured by the people themselves to attain present/ pre-identified goals and purposes.
12. The district, being a well-established geographical unit for many state/central promotional programmes, is the basic unit for implementation of the Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana.

5.7 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Why was induced social change and development not possible in pre-independence India?
2. What are the conditions required for the success of a plan?
3. Provide the historical basis of planning in India.

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4. Give the reasons why development and social change could not be induced in pre-independence India.
5. List the basic targets of the eighth Five Year Plan.
6. Write a short note on the eleventh Five Year Plan.
7. What are the functions of the District SGSY Committee?
8. State the aim of the Community Development Programme.
9. List the functions of Self Help Groups.
10. For what purpose are the project profiles prepared?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Evaluate the rural and social development programmes in the Five Year Programmes.
2. What are SHGs and how are they helping the rural women?
3. Trace the genealogy of policy and emergence of self-help approach.
4. Enumerate the important features of the revised EAS guidelines.
5. Write an account on various Five Year Plans of the Government.
6. 'The Department of Rural Development is implementing a number of programmes in rural areas through the state governments for poverty reduction, employment generation, rural infrastructure habitant development and provision of basic minimum services.' With regard to this statement, explain the following programmes in detail:
   i. Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)
   ii. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)
   iii. Employees Assurance Scheme (EAS)
   iv. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)
   v. Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP)

5.8 FURTHER READING

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