

PAPER - V – RURAL SOCIOLOGY

UNIT -I RURAL SOCIOLOGY : Meaning, nature and scope of Rural Sociology, importance of the study of Rural Sociology in India .

UNIT - II RURAL SOCIETY: Characteristics of Rural Society – Rural – Urban Continuum and Rural – Urban Contrast.

UNIT III RURAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND DYNAMICS

1.Caste and social structure in rural India- Dominant caste: Its features, its influence in the village community – Sanskritisation- Jajmani system – changing features of village social structure.

2.VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION: Traditional forms of caste and village community- Panchayati Raj system – recent developments and changes.

UNIT IV RURAL ECONOMY- Occupation, class system in the rural society – Land ownership pattern: Zamindari system, Rayotwari system and Mangalbari system. Land distribution, Land reforms, Land Legislation and its impact on Indian Villages and Indian Economy.

UNIT V RURAL DEVELOPMENT: Community Development Programme- Integrated rural development programme- Jawahar Rozgar Yojana- Adult Education and Functional Literacy Programme. Vocational training – TRYSEM.

Health and Sanitation Programme: their objectives and features. District Rural Development Agency

UNIT VI RURAL PROBLEMS: Poverty and Indebtedness – Child Labour – Unemployment – illiteracy – Migration – Problems of Health and Sanitation their causes and consequences.

UNIT VII RURAL SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS : Characteristics – Functions – Importance – types : Family, Marriage, Policy, Education and Religion and their differences from Urban Social Institutions.

UNIT RURAL SOCIAL NETWORKS: Network meaning, origin, characteristics and perspective. Impact of kinship and clan on rural network pattern – gender differences in rural social network.

Reference Books

Desai,A.R.1969. “ Rural Sociology in India ”, Bombay :Popular Prakashan.

Chitambar,J.B.1973.”Introductory Rural Sociology” New York , John Wiley & Sons.

Beteille, Andre.1974.”Studies in Agrarian Structure”, New Delhi , Oxford University Press.

Nanavati Manilal,B. and Anjaria,J. “The Indian Rural Problems”, Bombay ,Indian Society of Agricultural Economics.

Desai, Vasan. 1986.”Rural Development” 6 Vols. Bombay , Himalaya Publishing House.

**DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
PONDICHERRY UNIVERSITY
M.A.SOCIOLOGY – I Year**

PAPER V – *Rural Sociology*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	TITLE	PAGE NO.
UNIT - I	RURAL SOCIOLOGY	
1.1	NATURE,SCOPE AND IMPORTANCE	1
1.2	IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY OF RURAL SOCIOLOGY IN INDIA	9
UNIT – II	RURAL SOCIETY	
2.1	CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL SOCIETY	11
2.2	RURAL-URBAN SOCIETY-DIFERENTIALS AND CONTINUUM	15
2.3	VILLAGE PATTERNS AND CHARACTERISTICS	21
2.4	EMERGENCE OF VILLAGES	22
2.5	TYPES OF VILLAGES	24
2.6	VILLAGES SETTLEMENT PATTERNS	26
2.7	TYPE AND PATTERN OF DWELLING	28
UNIT –III	RURAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND DYNAMICS	
3.1	CASTE AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE IN RURAL INDIA	30
3.2	DOMINANT CASTE	34
3.3	SANSKRITIZATION	37
3.4	JAJMANI SYSTEM	42
3.5	CHANGING FEATURES OF VILLAGE SOCIAL STRUCTURE	44
3.6	TRADITIONAL CASTE AND VILLAGE COMMUNITY	48
3.7	PANCHAYAT RAJ	57

UNIT – IV	RURAL ECONOMY	
4.1	OCCUPATION, CLASS SYSTEM IN THE RURAL SOCIETY	62
4.2	LAND OWNERSHIP PATTERN	66
4.3	LAND DISTRIBUTION, LAND REFORMS, LAND LEGISLATION AND ITS IMPACT ON INDIAN VILLAGES	69
UNIT – V	RURAL DEVELOPMENT	
5.1	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	75
5.2	INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME	79
5.3	JAWAHAR ROZGAR YOJANA	85
5.4	ADULT EDUCATION	87
5.5	TRYSEM-TRAINING OF RURAL YOUTH FOR SELF-EMPLOYMENT	92
5.6	HEALTH AND SANITATION	96
5.7	DISTRICT RURAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES	106
UNIT – VI	RURAL PROBLEMS	
6.1	POVERTY AND INDEBTEDNESS	108
6.2	CHILD LABOUR	116
6.3	UNEMPLOYMENT	121
6.4	ILLITERACY	125
6.5	MIGRATION	130
6.6	HEALTH AND SANITATION PROBLEMS	134

UNIT – VII	RURAL SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS	
7.1	CHARACTERISTICS AND FUNCTIONS	140
7.2	FAMILY AND MARRIAGE	142
7.3	THE POLITY	153
7.4	RURAL EDUCATION	157
7.5	RURAL RELIGION	163
UNIT – VIII	RURAL SOCIAL NETWORK	
8.1	NETWORK MEANING	
8.2	ORIGIN	
8.3	CHARACTERISTICS AND PERSPECTIVE	
8.4	IMPACT OF KINSHIP AND CLAN ON RURAL NETWORK PATTERN	
8.5	GENDER DIFFERENCES IN RURAL SOCIAL NETWORK	

PAPER - V RURAL SOCIOLOGY
UNIT - VII

RURAL SOCIAL NETWORKS

Social networks have become more visible and prominent in Sociology and other related disciplines in the recent past. Networking, social capital and social support are common terminologies often used and coverage similar ideas. Social network is explained as a structure of relationships linking social actors or the set of actors and the ties among them. The relationships are the basic to human experience and establish connections among individuals with one another. Network theorists claim that the structure of these relationships among actors has important outcomes for individuals and for whole system.

Network: Meaning

Sociologists view social networks as the essence of social structure and connect micro and macro social systems. The power of networks also lies in the transformation of social structure from static categories to active categories. Hence there is a strong link between social networks, social structures and interactions which is the central theme of sociology. Mitchell defines a social network "as a specific set linkages among a defined set of persons with the additional property that the characteristics of these linkages as a whole be used to interpret the social behavior of the person involved". It also refers to the articulation of a social relationship, ascribed or achieved, among individuals, families, households, villages, communities, regions, and so on.

Kinship is an example of an ascribed relationship, while some common examples of an achieved relationship are those that are established in the course of regular interaction in the processes of daily life and living, cultural activities, and so on, such as one household requesting help, support, or advice from another; ties of friendship or choice of individuals to spend leisure time together; and preferences in marriage. A relationship can be *positive* and *negative*. The units of a "social network" can be different, no doubt, such as individuals, families, households, and rural or urban areas, according to the relationship under consideration. But there is a common feature - namely, whatever the type of units we study, a specific dyadic relationship exists or does not exist between the members of any pair of them. Furthermore, if the relationship exists between a pair of units, it is also quite pertinent to ask whether it flows in both directions or only in one direction and, in the latter case, from which direction to the other, because a social relationship is not necessarily symmetric. With the

presence of such pair wise ties, a *social network* should not be equated with *social group*. There are two concepts of a social group: realist and nominalist. According to the realist concept, it is an entity consisting of social actors such as individuals, families, and so on and is set apart from the rest. A social group retains a multidimensional system of somewhat durable contacts or interactions within the group: psychic, emotional, verbal, and behavioral. Thus, there is an element of a feeling of awareness or consciousness shared by its members. Besides, a social group generates its own boundary within which its members obey certain rules, norms, and functional roles toward each other as well as toward its common goal.

However, moving outside the realist concept of social group, a researcher also enjoys the option to impose his or her own definition of the boundary of group membership to identify a group for a study. This is the nominalist concept of a social group. For example, compare the Marxian concept of class. Thus, while a social group can be both realist and nominalist, a social network cannot be a realist one. A social network is a category of actors bound by a process of interaction among themselves and thus a nominalist category. However, a social network or its parts are endowed with the potential of being transformed into a social group in a realist sense, provided there is enough interaction.

Rural communities are unique in the types of social networks, relationships and resources. The development the communities in these aspects will affect crucial facets of social capital and thereby the community participation. Volunteering in rural communities is inherently linked to levels of community attachment, or how residents feel about their community. The more people are connected to their community, they engage in more voluntary activities and work toward local benefit. People are more attached in rural communities and they connect more to local ties.

Networks are very different in rural and urban communities. As the size of the community is smaller, it is possible that the entire community will function in single entity. This feature makes it very different from urban communities. Homogenization despite differences is quite common in villages due to shared values and close proximity. Knowing individuals face to face, multiple relationships, interdependency, the feeling of belongingness etc contribute to the charm of rural community and it's networks. Detailed description of the rural networks will be discussed after understanding the basics of Social Networks.

Origin of social networks

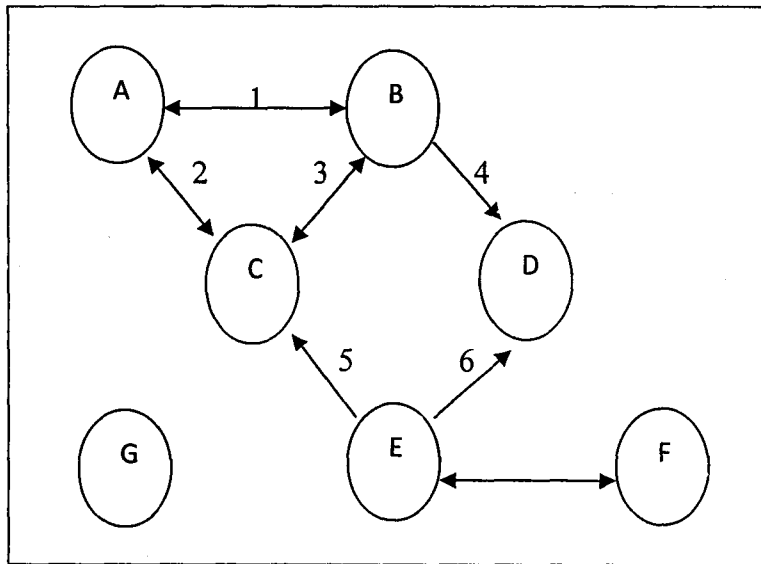
The basis of the structural approach and its consequences on social interactions can be traced to George Simmel (1955). Simmel highlighted the nature of ties within social groups that is central to social behaviour instead of the group by itself. In his effort to explain the change from agrarian to industrial society, he focused on the configurations of social networks and also referred to it as the 'premodern' form of concentric circles and the 'modern' form of intersection of social circles. According to him social networks of the premodern society resembles rural society and its networks which is informal, conservative but does not accommodate new people and new ideas very easily.

The membership in such networks provides a sense of security and solidarity but limited freedom, individuality and diversity. These networks were later termed as 'parochial'. On the other hand, modern society is composed of 'cosmopolitan' networks described by Simmel in intersecting circles. The modern urban society is deputed by an increase in the number of ties but fewer in terms of multiple relationships such as kinship, friends and neighbours and also differs in the nature of relationships and content flow. Individuals in such groups experience more of uncertainty and less support.

Durkheim (1951) also in his work on 'suicide' identified the different types of social structures such as anomie, fatalistic, altruistic and egoistic which influenced the behaviour and life of individuals living in such structures. The significance of social relationship and its continuity is observed in these structures.

In 1930, a psychiatrist, J.L. Moreno (1934) work contributed to a major re-emergence of social network approach into sociology and other social science disciplines. The socio-metric techniques developed helped in tracing relationships among a set of individuals. Moreno attempted to define certain network terms and developed sociogram, a visual technique that became the main analytical tool of sociometry. It enabled the understanding of structure in friendships, leaderships etc. But it had limited applicability in complicated situations.

Fig 1. Representation of Network ties in a Sociogram



The next major development in social networks was in 1970s when Harrison White developed new principles to analyze the network information through matrix algebra and clustering techniques. Hence there was a reemergence of theoretical interest in social networks focusing on 'small worlds' in which people interact in everyday issues parallelly. The seminal work on family by Bott (1957) and Milgrams (1967) work on chains of connection in 'small worlds', Kadushin's (1966) friends and supporters of psychotherapy and Suchan's (1965) and Rogers (1971) work converged on theoretical importance and practical considerations of social networks.

Later further developments revived the interest in social networks and contribution of adequate theoretical and analytical tools. Hence there was a wide interest in the subject and application in various areas of research in several disciplines such as epidemiology, administrative science, communication, political science etc. made an extensive use of this approach. Alongside the development of internet and information revolution and the range of analytical techniques facilitated the progress of social network studies. Network approach is identified more of a perspective or frame that can be used to develop more specific theories.

Characteristics

1. The everyday life of social actors is shaped through consultation, information and resource sharing, suggestions, support and exchange with others in the immediate

environment. This interaction within network has an impact on beliefs, attitudes, behaviour, action and outcome of individuals within the network.

2. Social networks neither completely dictates the individuals nor the individuals are purely related. They instantly interact, act and react to social situations and the networks in their environments indicating interdependency.
3. Networks provide a context within groups, formal organizations and institutions for those who were in it or are served by them, which in turn effects what people do, how they feel and what happens to them.
4. The distinct characteristics of the social network structure, content and functions:
 - a) Structure focuses on the architectural aspects of network ties (Size, density or types of relationships).
 - b) Content taps what flows across the network ties. They are 'channels for transfer of material and non-material resources. That is attitudes and opinions, as well as more tangible experiences and collective memories that are held within networks.
 - c) Networks are also seen in a variety of functions for the individuals and community such as emotional support, instrumental aid, appraisal and monitoring and community development.
5. The impact of network depends on the interaction between three aspects:
 - a) A structural element (size) of a network signifies the potential of influence they can exercised by the network.
 - b) Content transacted can provide an indicator of the direction of that influence and dynamics of the network.
 - c) Function is the outcome consequent on interaction between structure and content.
6. Networks can be in sync or in conflict with one another. Different contexts can circumscribe different sets of networks.
7. The social interactions within networks may be positive or negative, helpful or harmful. They can integrate or isolate individuals in a community and in larger groups can be complementary, contributory or antagonistic to develop new state or community.
8. 'More' number is not necessarily better with regard to social ties. Further 'strong' ties alike are also not necessarily good and 'weak' ties also often act as a bridge to different information and resources. Different ties specialize in different tasks.
9. Networks are generally dynamic and are not static, structures. Maintenance of social ties is important and as well changes in the structure of network or changes in

membership are also inevitable. It changes from time to time based on the situation and need.

10. A network perspective rests on multi-method approaches. Quantitative research is powerful in documenting the structure and the effects of social networks. But only when it is accompanied by qualitative research which describes how and why they operate in a particular way it becomes meaningful in interpreting behaviour.
11. Social demographic characteristics of the ego and ties are potential factors, shaping the boundaries of social networks. Networks may operate differently for different groups.
12. Individuals establish ties under contextual constraints and interact. Hence the formation and dissolution of ties are part of larger cultural or social context and is circumscribed with constraints.

Further, individuals' social networks are influenced by the attitude and mental perception that individuals bring with them.

Key terms and concepts

A set of concepts and terms are embedded in the network approach. It has its own parameters and methodological tools. The most frequently referenced terms are described below.

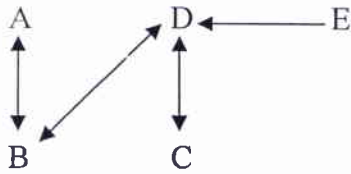
Node:

It refers to the central 'units' that have networks or called social networks. They are also synonymously referred as 'social actors' which refer to individuals, however actors may also be families, organizations, or any other entity that can form or maintain formal or informal relationships.

Ties, links or relationships:

The connection between and among actors are referred to as ties. Ties can be undirected (two people communicate with each other) or directed (i.e., one person sees another as a source of leadership when relationships are directional).

For e.g. a tie sent from B to D is out degree. A tie received from E to D is in-degree. Double headed arrow indicates 'mutual' or reciprocal ties. The connection between two actors or node's is called a dyad. Three actor connections are triads.

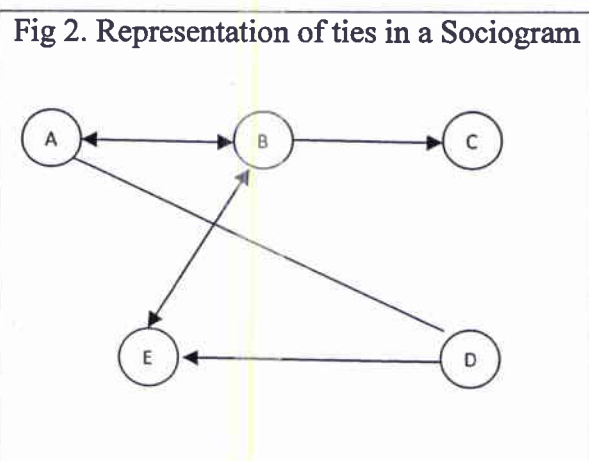


Sub-groups:

When the focus is on a subset of actors and their linkages, it is termed a subgroup in network.

Sociogram:

The pictorial representation of network ties is called a sociogram.



Socio-matrix / adjacency matrix:

Depiction of ties as a set of numbers in a table consisting of ties sent in rows and ties received in columns is called a socio-matrix.

	1	2	3	4	5100
1						
2	1					
3	0	1				
4	0	0	0			
5	1	1	0	1		
100	0	1	1	0	1	

Fig 3. Socio-matrix

Type of tie:

Networks depict the composition of ties through the types such as formal or informal, familial or non-familial, kin or non-kin etc.

Sociometric Star:

In a social network, an actor receiving a relatively high degree or number of ties is considered to be a 'star'.

Isolate:

An ego or node receiving no ties is an isolate.

Network path:

The degree of separation between two actors is network path. Two actors may be directly connected or may be connected through other actors.

Latent ties:

The ties with ego interact in terms of number, structure, or resources on a regular basis are referred as latent ties.

Activated ties:

The number of ties or persons that actors actually contacted for a need or in an active transaction is called as activated ties.

Network 'holes' / network 'bridges':

Holes in the network refer to places in a network structure where social actors are unconnected. These holes have potential to build bridges to connect other sub-groups or cliques, bringing new information to the old group.

Network size:

In a network, the number of social actors constitutes the network size. The size refers to the total members or ties listed in the network.

Network composition:

The varying properties of role relationships in the network are referred as composition. The role relationships commonly used are kin and non-kin. It is measured based on the proportion of kin present in the network. Mean score is used for categorization of network in to low moderate and high level of kin centeredness.

Network dispersion:

It refers to the number of social contexts are sectors like secondary kin, tertiary kin, friends, neighbours, acquaintances or co-workers from which the individual associations are drawn in given networks.

Network homogeneity:

The social and personal characteristics of the network members may be similar or dissimilar to the ego. The degree of similarity between ego and alters in the network is referred as homogeneity. The homogeneity is arrived by the summated values for attributes such as sex, age, caste, marital status, education and employment.

Intimacy:

The ties perceived by the ego to be socially close or emotionally attached is considered to be intimate ties.

Density:

The 'tightness' or 'connectedness' among actors in the network is calculated by the proportion of ties existing in a network divided by possible number of ties that could be sent or received. It shows how well all the members of a network are connected.

Content / functions:

The outcome of the nature of ties in terms of emotional aid or financial aid is termed as content.

Strength:

It measures the intensity of a tie which is measured through closeness, frequency of contact or intimacy with a tie etc.

Multiplexity:

When ties in a social network are linked by more than relationship or serve more than one function they are identified to be multiplex or multi-stranded ties. These ties are expected to be more enduring than those connected by one relationship.

Role multiplexity:

It is defined as a tie linked to the ego with more than one kind of role relationship such as kin and neighbour, neighbour and co-worker, etc.

Support multiplexity:

It is defined as ties extending more than one type of support, also alternatively termed as multidimensional support. Social support network is a series of linkages that link the focal person to the social environment and enable them to tap resources in time of need.

Instrumental support:

Ties that offer material resources or assistance are referred as ties that deliver instrumental support.

Emotional support:

Ties that provide love, caring and nurturing is emotional support.

Appraisal:

The assistance in evaluating a problem or source of and is appraisal.

The networks are characterized and distinguished from one another either by structural or interactional attributes of networks. Network scholars have developed a variety of measures to study network characteristics. Structural attributes refer to indices of the entire set of individuals

that comprise a given network. Size, composition, homogeneity, stability, density and cluster are examples of structural attributes. Whereas interactional attributes refer not to the network as a unit, but rather to the individual relationships of which the network is constructed. Frequency of contact, physical proximity, intimacy, multiplexity and reciprocity are interactional attributes reported often.

Perspectives in social network

It refers to the understanding the perspective and method adopted and future scope of social network research in Sociology. It is characterized by the theoretical starting points, data requirements and methods of data collection. It is based on both quantitative and qualitative tradition.

The complete or full network approach is an approach attempt to describe and analyze whole network system. The local or ego-centered approach identifies the ties connected to particular individual actors. This approach relate to the quantitative tradition.

The social support perspective is more general and theory oriented, often using network mapping but focuses on the overall state of an individual's social relationships and outcomes measures of networks. The most recent approach is the social capital perspective where in networks, trust and reciprocity or solidarity is the major focus. This approach is explained in a similar trend with human capital.

The whole, complete or the full network approach:

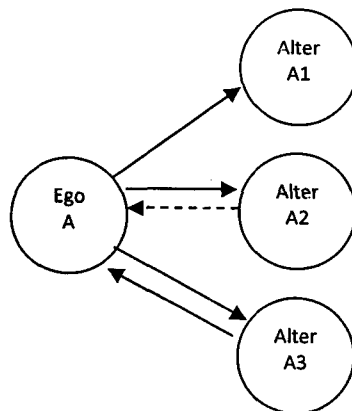
This tradition is considered as the 'purest' approach and maps the overall social network structure. Complete networks are usually defined and feasible only in specific settings such as hospitals, families, business structures, policy making systems etc. The approach elicits the universe of network members through questions to identify the ties and bond that exist among them. The complete network tradition is concerned with the structural properties of networks at a global or whole level. Through this approach the boundaries of the network can be identified.

The local or ego centered approach:

If the previous approach is the complete, this approach is most typical. Data / Information are collected from a set of social actors or nodes who are defined as a sample. The effort centers on gathering information about the network from the standpoint of the social actors situated within it. A sample is identified and each social actor is asked about his or her own ties in the specified network. Each selected ego / actor is typically asked to list other social actors or tie members in response to a name generator technique. It attempts to record all individuals with whom a respondent receives loans, gets guidance, services, etc. (Fig. 4).

The original respondent is called ego or focal respondent while those they name or identify are called alters or network ties. Attribute information can be collected on each tie (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity, attitudes etc.) which can be used to examine the influence of network homogeneity / heterogeneity on structural and context issues.

Fig. 4



The social support approach:

This approach unlike the two described earlier, is based primarily on the social psychological perspective, rather than the structural perspective. Social support is often studied as a resource that is transacted and is reported to have a significant impact during crises and problem solving situations. Social support is seen as resources available with family, friends, organizations and other actors, researchers tend to use a summary integration strategy looking less into network structures. As concern to actors' responses to stressful situations, social support is considered as a social reserve that may either prevent or buffer adverse events that occur in people's lives.

Social networks are composed of social support. The respondents are generally asked whether they have / had enough support in everyday life issues or critical events. It may target either perceived social support or received support. Social support research has documented that perceived support is more important than actual support received. The simplest and most potent indicator is whether they have a single intimate tie in which they can confide.

The social capital tradition:

Ideas of social capital were introduced in 1980s to refer to resources that accumulate to social actors from individuals to nations as a result of networks. Social capital refers to the patterns of quality of relationships in a community. Winter (2000) proposes social capital as 'social relations of mutual benefit characterized by norms of trust and reciprocity. Individuals invest in and use the resources embedded in social networks because they expect returns of some sort. Social capital in the form of trust, social norms of reciprocity, cooperation and participation resides in relationships, not individuals, and therefore shares roots with many aspects of classical sociology and other network traditions. More than other traditions, social capital approach has promoted the idea of civil society.

Social capital tradition adopts a more rational choice approach and suggests that social structure is made up of networks in interaction that is dynamic. Sociologist's familiarity in conceptualizing multilevel, dynamic processes is important to understand social life.

Impact of kinship and clan on rural network pattern

Rural social relations are typically predicted on kinship and multiplex relationships. Hence the communities offer long lasting and more personal relationships as they keep meeting the same people in multiple contexts. It has a greater ability to connect with the people and landscape. As the communities become larger, heterogeneous and diverse the unique features of rural communities are lost or diluted. Consequently people in rural communities have strong ties and reliable social support and higher levels of social capital. The unique feature of rural networks is the trust which directly provides dependable and sustainable support and indirectly fewer incidents of deviance and crime.

Individuals do not live in vacuum but consult and are subtly influenced by significant others such as family, friends, co-workers, employees, acquaintances etc. The individual rural networks are larger and dense by way of role multiplexity. The networks are largely homogeneous due to similar levels of education, occupation and income. The networks are less dispersed and closed. Due to kinship, the network is ascribed and less chances to have achieved position. The network structure is already established and content flow is activated by way of roles, norms, duties, rituals, obligations etc. The networks are also usually reciprocal in nature. The ties are in close proximity, frequently in contact and durable. As a result of the structural condition, support is a readily available gesture. It is the form by which countries like India manage without much formal support in case of crisis such as illness, elderly or sick care, widowhood etc. As the kinship is a strong binding force, many communities like the Gounders in Tiruppur of South India have become entrepreneurs and the city has grown into an industrial centre. Initially the Tiruppur, in South India was a dry agricultural belt but with modernization and changing social conditions, the Kinship links and transactions within the community, has enabled the community in the region to mobilize capital, knowledge and information and economically develop at an individual, group and regional level. The Marwari community in Gujarat and the Nadar community in Tamilnadu also have made major transitions with the help of kinship support. Despite these, kinship network also has certain limitations. As the network structure is closed, fewer accesses to new people, information or nature of support is available; hence over a period of time, the networks become stagnant. But societies are evolving and hence such situation rarely occurs. In a rural study on widowhood, widows become dependable only on a few available ties and have limited support and any change is severely criticized. Individual freedom is severely limited and during such situations, family position in terms of economic status declines sharply. Stigmatization and ostracization is quite high among the group and weak ties rarely become active. Information flow is quick and emergency support reaches quickly but the ties in networks are limited largely to those in the village and have to choose among the available resources.

Gender differences in rural social networks

Gender inequalities almost always favour men, with women often being disadvantaged in control over household assets, divisions of responsibilities in household and in community. Women and men have different resource endowments when pursuing livelihoods strategy which could have an impact on forming social networks and support flow.

To build and maintain a social network is costly in terms of time and other resources. Women have high opportunity cost of time that reduces participation of women in certain social networks. Women join groups that have fewer resources and gender norms in community exclude women from potential social networks. Different networks provide different resources and with different types of social networks, men and women participate differently and accrue different resources. Men tend to be engaged in geographically dispersed networks while women confine to closer ties. Men and women position themselves differently in social networks as providers or receivers.

Even among women, married, older women have a differential networks which are less qualitative as less time is spent on constructing networks. Though women are identified as 'kin keepers' they do not derive maximum benefit. There is a significant difference in the perceived social support of women in rural setting depending on age, familial settings and occupational situation.

There are specific ways in which men and women position themselves in social networks. The geographic particularities take shape in distinct local contexts and contribute to particular ways in which gendered networks operate. The close-knit the families and social networks, greater is the normative pressure on young women to conform to prevailing gender appropriate conservative norms. The potential empowerment of women is undermined through their continued reliance on families and embeddedness in broader cultural system valorizing women's domestic roles. Hence they subscribe to social norms and social conformity. The relations are an asset in times of need but are associated with inequalities. A social relationship is a resource that facilitates access to other resources but also excludes some from such resources. Such inclusion and exclusion takes gender differentiated forms.

Women networks in comparison to men networks have low 'heteroplexity' meaning diversity is limited. Women also do not have time and space to pursue social relations beyond the immediate feasible ties. Women have access to more powerful networks only indirectly through their relationships with men. Women participation in networks provide them with access to some resources but gender norms within networks play a role in producing persistent disadvantages within household, division of labour, one's own sexuality, spatial mobility or labour market.

The social networks are thus important in bringing about various changes in society both at an individual as well as at community level. It relates to social situation or the individual ability to mobilize the required support to manage demanding situations. In Asian conditions rural networks have the potential to convert in to active social capital for the benefit of the community at large. Hence special efforts will enhance community potential and encourage civic participation for the development in terms of economic, health, empowerment and related issues.

References:

- Aruna C. 2014. *Social Support of Rural Widows*. Today Publications, Chennai.
- Bott E. 1957. *Family and Social Networks*. London: Tavistock Publications.
- Coleman J. 1988. Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94 (Suppl.): 95–120.
- Coleman J. 1990. *Foundations of Social Theory*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Fisher B.M., Strauss A.L. 1978. Interactionism. In T Bottmore and R Nisbet (AEds), *History of Sociological Analysis*. New York: Basic Books, Inc.
- Granovetter M. 1973. The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78, 1360-1380.
- Le'vi-Strauss C. 1969. *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Lin N. 2001a. *Social Capital: A Theory of Social Structure and Action*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mitchell J.C. 1969. The concept and use of social networks. In JC Mitchell (Ed), *Social Networks in Urban Situations*, Manchester, England: Manchester University Press.
- Putnam R. 1993. *Making Democracy Work* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Putnam R. 1995. Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy*, 6(1):65–78.
- Putnam R. 2000. *Bowling Alone*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Sarason S.B., Carroll C.F., Maton K., Cohen S., Lorentz E. 1977. *Human Services and Resources Networks: Rationale, Possibilities, and Public Policy*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Wellman B. 1981. Applying network analysis to the study of support. In B Gottlieb (Ed), *Social Networks and Social Support*, Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Wellman, B., Carrington, P. and Hall, A. 1988. Networks as Personal Communities. In B. Wellman and S.D. Berkowitz (Eds.), *Social Structures: A Network Approach*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

UNIT - I**RURAL SOCIOLOGY****LESSON - 1.1**

NATURE, SCOPE AND IMPORTANCE

Sociology is the scientific study of social interaction among members of social groups; of social relationships which are established when the patterns of social interaction are repeated by the concerned members under similar conditions; of social structure which is brought into existence when the identical interactions and relationships are repeated over time and space by persons sharing similar characteristics resulting in fairly stable patterns of structure. They become normative expectations. In this endeavour, sociology as a science provides an understanding of how groups are formed, how they function and how they change. Since social relationships and social groups often are characterised by associative as well as dissociative processes like cooperation and conflict, these processes are a concern of sociology. As a scientific study sociology takes into account social relationships as such, not because they are political or religious.

In compiling a systematically organized body of knowledge about society, sociology, like any other science, uses scientific method to obtain the knowledge. The scientific method involves four major steps:

1. Identification of a research problem worth investigating.
2. Formulation of hypotheses involving two or more variables.
3. Empirical Testing of the relationships hypothesized. This is achieved by observation of social phenomena without any preconceived conclusions and by making inferences from the observations.
4. The fourth step is classification and description of what has been observed and found valid on testing.

Sociology employs a few techniques that are suitable for dealing with social data, unlike laboratory techniques used by chemistry or physics.

The frequently used ones include the case study method, the field survey method, the historical method, comparative method and statistical techniques to validate the findings that stem from the sociological investigations. Sociology looks for the pattern or uniformity in human relationships and attempts to predict such patterns. These uniformities relate to regularity, structure, function and change. A fifth concept viewed relevant for patterns and for prediction is, 'meaning' which social persons infer in interpreting the situation. Individuals act according to such interpretation rather than the objective nature of it.

Rural Sociology as a Special Field

Rural Sociology is the sociology of rural life or the study of human relationships in rural environment. Hence, rural sociology describes the rural family, rural economic organization like the Jaimani system and rural educational system ignoring the same in urban setting.

Scope

Rural Sociology deals primarily with the various forms of association within the spatial framework of the relatively small rural community. In other words, it describes all those functions which make up the associational life of a rural person. Second, this branch of knowledge reckons with the temporal dimension as well. The forces which in the past have given shape to the social phenomena of the present are portrayed with this historical perspective. Bertrand denotes this as the "length" of the scope. Finally it explores the nature of the individual in the specified rural environment - including his needs, drives, motivation and attitudes - thus adding "depth" to rural sociology.

Rural sociology has been increasing in importance at a time when the percentage of farm people in India as in most societies showed a declining trend. Urbanization is practically a universal phenomenon. In India the proportion of rural population in the total population is around 23 per cent compared to 10.85 per cent in 1901. However, greater interest is being bestowed on other occupational groups, often socially and economically

weaker sections, residing in rural areas. The social life of the middle level agrarian groups as well as the lower landless groups in the caste hierarchy is increasingly brought to the centre-stage. The earlier social scenario of Indian society was constructed on the basis of empirical realities prevalent among the twice-born castes. The great tradition provided the broad frame of reference to deduce meaning and assess changes in spite of the fact that various little traditions shaped the life style of the vast majority of Indians.

In the second half of the present century significant shift in power-economic and political - has occurred in India's villages. This is reflected in the changing scope of Rural Sociology. The scope of rural sociology has been enlarged so as to include rural-urban migration and the movement from the city to the suburbs and to the urban fringes beyond suburbs since they have become significant facts of contemporary life in North America, Europe and in the Third world. The rural sociologist has much to contribute to the study of this transformation. As a matter of fact, studies of suburbanization and urban fringe have enriched rural sociology in scope and methodology. When a large industry is established in a rural area, rural sociologists are asked to study its social impact on family life, community solidarity, religion and political equations.

There is also a growing interest in understanding the nature and extent of changes that stem from the contact and communicability of rural resident groups with urban institutions and infrastructure like school or health care centers. Rural people also tend to get employment in small and large urban centres but continue to commute rather than shifting their family and home. As a result of improved transportation links, the farm population is getting integrated with the monetised commercial economy anchored in the city. All these persistent exposures bring about a new orientation and a new world view among the villagers. Often their old beliefs give way to modern knowledge without any direct conflict or challenge. They acquire new values pertaining to family and family size, child labour and education for children along with a common strand of secularization.

Importance of Rural Sociology

The pivotal place of rural society in the entire third world cannot be over-emphasised. A vast majority or even most people in several countries live in rural areas, working on land producing eventually for subsistence and anchored in age-old traditions. Development of these societies lay in the advancement of their rural communities reflected in their quality of life. An understanding of the rural social organisation and its underlying cultural milieu will go a long way in appreciating their life as well as their problems. Since most of these developing societies have set forth planned change as one of the major goals so as to catch up with advanced world, rural sociology will provide a right diagnosis and a basis for planning. Development planning without any reference to their socio-cultural setting is likely to be rejected as irrelevant. A policy to promote planned change in rural communities has to be based on their cultural values, social norms, the patterns of legitimation and the effective channels of communication and influence.

Agricultural practices of the Indian peasant can only be understood in the context of his technology, level of knowledge, legal and social institutions, religion, their way of life and family power structure. His agriculture constituted a body of skills and knowledge transmitted as a social heritage in which he has faith while being sceptic toward innovation. His technology is interwoven with his social and religious systems. Any resistance against change is also religious and social in addition to economic.

In addition to the research role in developing the body of knowledge three professional roles have been highlighted by Bertrand that rural sociologists play in applying their science to everyday problems. First they interpret the findings in order to enable others have a better understanding of rural society, thus playing an educational role. Second, they play the policy role in making definite recommendations with respect to policy decisions. Third, they play the action role and apply their knowledge of

group behaviour and community processes to programmes designed to solve the problems with which the people around them are concerned.

1. The Educational Role: Rural Sociologists offer courses to those who study sociology, other social sciences, agriculture and a host of semi-professional courses. Some rural sociologists have the entire farm and non-farm rural population as their class-room. These extension sociologists work with groups of farmers and farm families in programmes of agricultural and community development, of health and sanitation, of nutrition, of non-conventional energy and so on. They help other extension workers understand some of the social realities that determine the success of their programmes. Rural sociologists also find a place on the teams which offer short-term training to those who are already in regular employment in development divisions.

2. Policy Role: With increasing realisation of the importance of the human side of social change, rural sociologists are also drafted into administrative positions. As administrators, they are often involved in policy making as well as in implementing them. These organizations expect essentially a sociological role from those who have a sociological training. The rural sociologist plays his policy making role by conducting field studies, drawing up findings, and making suitable recommendations on which policy decisions may be based, in addition to presenting the knowledge, current attitudes and the whole gamut of values, beliefs, customs and traditions closely associated with the policy aimed at. They also interpret them so that their significance for planning is made clear.

In India, various provisions of the social welfare measures to cover different types of rural people have been designed on the basis of such field studies. For example, the extended family planning programme, conceived as essentially an educational input, was formulated on sociological premises of rural society. Similarly, primary health centres were established based on community needs and subsequently expanded to cover smaller populations in each block. Similar principles were considered

in formulating policies governing programmes designed to deliver MCH, child nutrition, and agricultural development. Manpower requirements have also been determined accordingly.

3. The Action Role: Rural Sociology can assist in planning programmes for the improvement of local communities by taking note of the human factors involved. Unless the local population including various social groups are motivated there may be less acceptance. If the strategy for development does not take cognizance of the social organisations, the power structure and the leadership pattern as well as the motives behind the traditional forms of behaviour, diffusion of innovations would derail. A paradigm for development needs to be developed on the basis of a sociological understanding of the communities concerned. The group dynamics involving group acceptance and sanctions to enforce conformity need to be addressed in planning for change. Most Indians in the 1960s were subject to the prevailing family size norm. Hence generating small family size norm was incorporated as a vital operational objective of the national family welfare programme.

In many developed societies rural sociologists are invited as specialists for analysis of social relations and to assist in action programmes. However, it may not be a regular feature in many developing countries since there is less appreciation of the human side of technological changes. The administrators may lack a perspective for development and the political leadership may suffer from inadequate commitment and will to achieve the development goals. However, there is a revival of the democratic process set in motion by judicial intervention in this country. There is a growing demand to be responsive to the aspirations and opinions of the common people. Under these circumstances social support for unbiased feedback would be forthcoming.

Development of Rural Sociology

Rural sociology is of very recent origin. Due to various reasons it developed as an organised discipline in the United States of America in

response to problems faced by American rural society. In view of its extensive deterioration, literature describing and analysing various problems came into existence as isolated attempts. They created a condition conducive for the development of rural sociology as a systematic specialisation. The report of the country life commission, published in 1907, was followed by a number of doctoral research works with a clear focus on the rural communities. Another stream of publications dealing with maladjustment of the rural people laid a firm basis for the emergence of rural sociology in U.S.A. Some of the later studies at the Columbia University obtained statistical and historical data for which field-interview techniques were employed making a stride in evolving suitable methodology. "The Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community" was published in 1916 by Galpin of University of Wisconsin. "Rural Sociology" by Gillette became a college text book in the same year. The publication of epoch-making work "A Systematic Source Book in Rural Sociology" in 1930 decisively accelerated the development of rural sociology. The professional journal 'Rural Sociology' was founded in 1935 and Rural Sociological Society of America was established in 1937 providing a stable institutional framework. The consistent decline of rural population in the country and the growing involvement in development programmes in developing societies have shifted their interest to rural societies the world over. This resulted in the rise of comparative studies and a comprehensive rural sociology dealing with various cultural settings. The development funding by the U.N. agencies like FAO and WHO gave a fillip to the application of rural sociology for rural development and an international stature.

The development aspirations in India, crystallised during the freedom movement, were brought to the centre stage on independence. Strategy for rural development was essentially inspired by the extension approach widely practiced in the U.S.A. People's participation was extended to local self-government for which mechanisms for decentralisation of power and resources were articulated. These exercises, along with the involvement of expertise from the West accelerated the rise of Rural Sociology in India.

LESSON - 1.2

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY OF RURAL SOCIOLOGY IN INDIA

India has not only very large rural population but is also predominantly rural with only about 23 per cent of its people living in urban centers even by 1991. Moreover India continues to be a land of agriculture as most of the rural work force is in farming. Agriculture continues to be the chief source of income for a vast majority. Though India has achieved relative self-sufficiency in food with the green revolution initiated in the 1960s, much remains to be done quantitatively and qualitatively so that villagers would do away with poverty and improve the quality of their life. One third live below the poverty line when we are about to enter into the 21st century. A realistic planning for rural development demands an understanding of social organization in different regions with varied cultural patterns ranging from isolated villages with subsistence farming to communities integrated not only with the neighbouring cities but also with the global market by producing and marketing their agricultural produces and commodities by making use of the most advanced technology in transport and communication.

Indian villagers carry a world view which is shaped by a philosophy of life and system of values which are far more conservative and articulated repeatedly within the sacred idiom. Their economic behaviour and the form of economic organization like the Jajmani system characterised by unique principles and concepts need to be intimately understood with the help of the local tradition and ethos as symbols. This unity pervades their social and religious life. Consequently, the mindset of villagers is tailored in accordance with the traditional modes of social organization as well as the inter-woven culture. Their attitudes tend to be conservative, anchored in superstitious beliefs. Any attempt to change them need to reckon with the social context.

Winds of change have been blowing across the Indian countryside. The forces of technology and economy have juxtaposed a modern rational outlook with the sacred order and have accelerated changes in views about man, social order and life goals; emerging values are humanitarian and secular rather than sectarian; they espouse an ideology and ideas upholding the principles of social justice and social welfare. This process of transformation has been systematically nurtured with the support of the constitution and many specific legal measures. Everyone is entitled to get food, shelter, clothing, education and health care; and most people have come together under some umbrella so as to forcefully make the demand for access to such resources. Politicisation of caste is a pervasive trend. Political power is sought to be used even by traditional groups to promote their economic and social standing. Some boundaries are breaking down; some caste divisions are fusing together; the codes of conduct upholding the traditional order are giving way. These new currents, their direction and their impact on society at large are urgent matters which require the attention of rural sociologists in India.

The development goals set forth by Independent India encompass the entire masses. While formulating policies and carrying out programmes in rural communities they should be based on the social organization and processes through which changes are accepted. The process of diffusion of innovations reflects certain patterns. Some sources and channels of communication enjoy credibility or trust of the people for whom measures of change are brought forth. The types of innovators need to be grasped, and the innovators and natural leaders involved in planning for change in the local community.

Media of communication have to incorporate their aspirations and motives, conceiving in their own frame of reference. Rural sociology would thus help weave a strategy ensuring people's participation and hence greater commitment followed by accelerated change.

One of the responses to the stimulus offered by the transformation is revivalism assuming the form of religious fundamentalism unleashing communal violence. There is an urgent need to probe into the dissociative processes which have been interwoven with the dynamics of the political process. A balanced assessment of these trends, including the positive functions of the conflicts afflicting the social fabric, is a crucial role of rural sociology.

Books for Further Reading

1. A. L. Bertrand : Rural Sociology
2. A. R. Desai : Rural Sociology in India

Questions

1. Explain the scope of rural sociology.
2. Examine the importance of rural sociology in India with reference to rural development.
3. Discuss the roles rural sociologists play.

UNIT - II**RURAL SOCIETY****LESSON - 2.1**

CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL SOCIETY

Social organization denotes the expanding, complex 'network of patterned human behaviour within a society'. In this chapter an attempt is made to show how societies are organized and transact social life. With this background one would understand sociologically the many facts and facets presented in the following chapters.

Social organization is essentially a dynamic concept. Even if patterns of human relationships are regular and predictable, they are constantly changing. It is, therefore, necessary to regard social organization both as a condition and as a process. The structure or framework of social action as well as the dynamics, or process, of social action are considered in the following discussions.

Beginning with the term 'society' will enable the understanding of the concept 'social organization' meaningful. To the sociologist, a society is "that group within which men share a total common life". They have a 'we-feeling' and sufficiently organized their relationships for a stable and harmonious living.

Role and Status

Each individual simultaneously plays a variety of roles in society. A person is a woman, a mother, a teacher, a wife and so on. In simple societies there is considerable differentiation of individuals and groups on the basis of sex, age, kinship and knowledge. In complex societies they are far too many. The network of positions, along with the differential participation of groups in the total culture, is termed social differentiation. This is reflected in the social structure.

The position of a person in the social group determines his rights and responsibilities and places him as superior or inferior to other members of the group. A status in general carries with it norms to guide the social relationships of incumbents with others. Social norms are acceptable forms of behaviour in given situations and are required.

Role is the expected behaviour associated with each status. Social roles are interlocked with reciprocal obligations. When these obligations are shared, even if unequal, customary patterns are followed and the social mechanism moves smoothly. In case of dissonance in perceiving the mutual obligations, customary roles are avoided and relationships become strained.

The several statuses occupied by each individual are roughly similar with fairly high level of harmony in them. The inequality, if any, that stems from each status in relation to other statuses ultimately divides the population into layers or strata. Persons in the upper strata enjoy more prestige, wealth and authority. In case core statuses in a society are ascribed based on criteria such as caste or race, whole groups are placed at the same level and any mobility upward or downward is possible for the groups rather than individuals. The whole system of ranking and mobility is denoted as social stratification.

Characteristics of Rural Society

Societies as well as groups within them are composed of people or population. They are ultimately the actors who acquire, transmit and sustain the collective phenomena. To begin with, basic demographic facts about rural people in general and in India would provide a frame of reference for the study of the various rural social structures and processes.

Size

Although Indian population continues to be predominantly rural in residential composition, accounting for three fourths, the large population is distributed in small communities irrespective of the specific patterns of settlement. They are separated by long, varying distances. Roads for transport of people, goods and services are least developed and many forms

of communication are beyond the reach of most of them. Rural areas are sparsely populated with persons who are highly homogeneous. Till recently farming was the chief occupation and main source of income. Since farming was based essentially on use of local resources, these farm communities were relatively self-reliant.

The rural population has a relatively smaller proportion of people in the labour force, though prevalence of child labour would introduce change in the composition. Sex ratio, number of females per 1000 males, has been adverse to females owing to a number of social and cultural factors. However, sex ratio in villages is relatively higher at 939 compared to the urban ratio of 894. Partially, the higher proportion of females who have a lower labour force participation may explain the overall lower force participation.

As for educational attainment, rural people have less formal schooling than urban people, in addition to low literacy. There is also substantial difference across age groups. Literacy rate among both men and women has been rising. National literacy programme has enabled them to read names, but is far less effective in functional terms.

Social Values

Man creates ideas but turns a slave to his ideas. Some of these ideas are acquired from early associations with parents and siblings, later with playmates, kin and neighbours. Some are amenable to replacement at the face of better ones; others are so deeply fixed and internalised that seldom they are questioned. These ideas are shared in groups.

Strong preferences constitute values and the generalised expectations as to what should be done is normative. Salvation in Hindu philosophy of life is a value and trying to ensure it through male progeny is a normative behaviour. At the collective level, a value is an idea held by a group indicating preference in a situation.

Many of the values and norms learned become a part of the subconscious and assume considerable autonomy. In a traditional society like India sacred orientations are pervasive in most spheres of life. Family, clan and community as well as caste are perceived to be ordained by supernatural forces thus introducing religious legitimation of beliefs, customs and traditions. People are not supposed to question them. This invocation is at the root of conservatism.

There are also social sanctions to deal with non-conforming behaviour. Local informal mechanisms of social control have proved to be quite effective in enforcing conformity. Caste boundaries have remained strikingly intact with the willing participation of family in social control. Familism was a guiding force while individual interests were sacrificed.

LESSON – 2.2

RURAL – URBAN DIFFERENTIALS AND CONTINUUM

The personality, culture and the range of man's actions are limited by his geographic, social and cultural environment. All three types of influence come together in the socialization process and account for differential characteristics. These differences and the factors that give rise to them are explored in this section.

Socialization is the process by which the human organism is made into a person. In other words it is the learning process that takes place from birth to death. Through association and interaction with other social beings in the family, school and neighbourhood, the individual acquires the social and cultural traits. A system of rewards and punishments is in operation in every society to ensure conformity to accepted standards. As a result a rural person is the product of rural environment and an urbanite is the product of urban influences.

The Influence of the Geographic Environment

Location, climate, topography and natural resources are the four major aspects of the geographic environment. First, the inhabitants of hot, humid climates and the residents of arctic regions have different physical setting accounting for variations in dress, food, transport and customs. Even within the same general environment, physical setting accounts for rural-urban differences. The rural person usually faces nature in an unmodified form and develops customs, practices and personality traits compatible with his struggle with nature. The urbanite has developed many shields which do not let him face nature with its force. Physical setting sets limits to the options available from which people choose, as vegetarians and non-vegetarians do.

Vagaries of Nature

The farmer has a built-in element of uncertainty in his endeavour due to vagaries of nature like floods and droughts over which he has no control. The farmer is generally a more practical man inclined to take less risk as he has to struggle against and endure the caprices of nature. Consequently he also tends to be more religious and superstitious.

Close Association with Nature

The farmer works and lives in open air in the midst of growing things. He communicates with plants and animals and takes pleasure in watching them grow. The urbanite, in contrast, being in the midst of huge structures and material objects, is in contact with large number of people but has impersonal relationships.

Relative Isolation

Low density of population along with dispersal of farm activities, unlike in an industry, restrict the number of human contacts. His lack of frequent outside social contacts tends to affect his personality and culture. This isolation has two facets. First is the availability of means of communication. All-weather roads and telephones are seldom found in villages. Even the recent spurt in India in the pace of extending telecommunication technology to rural areas has not made them accessible to common man. Second, many services and infrastructures can be supported only by fairly large population centres. The urbanite, for example, chooses from the local hospitals whereas a ruralite has to travel long to reach a Primary Health Centre and as he does not have ready access to it, he uses it less frequently. Consequently the rural person prefers to be more self-reliant than his urban cousin. Similarly country people participate less in educational and social activities.

Social Environment

The groups and individuals with which a person interacts constitute his social environment providing the second major influence in socialization. The number and types of groups into which a person is

integrated have a decisive role in shaping his personality and behaviour. As identity in family, play, neighbourhood and other primary groups is attained, the patterns of behaviour required in them mould the personality. He learns loyalty, respect, sympathy and cooperation which in turn become his basic social needs. Secondary groups extend the social network beyond the primary group and give the individual more freedom.

Predominance of Primary Group Relationships

A person will experience less loneliness, frustration, anxiety or depression, if most of his associations are with intimates who support him in coping with the demands of adaptation to his environment. He will develop a personality which is well-integrated but harmonised with a narrow world. On the other hand, the person who has extensive secondary groups will have broader orientation and outlook.

In spite of expanding contacts, the family continues to dominate the members in rural areas. As all family members get involved in the farming enterprise, family solidarity is common. The rural person's other contacts in the neighbourhood or community are also intimate associations. These ties are highly homogeneous in occupation and culture. Due to the same lifestyle, traditions are reinforced making him conservative. The urban society with sufficient secondary relationships offers him freedom to change.

Social Differentiation

Rural social groups are fewer in number and simpler than urban groups which account for a great deal of difference between rural and urban communities. The city contains a great variety of cultural elements, including a large proportion of migrants, that create social differentiation. Social solidarity is of the organic type in the urban setting. Its integration is based on a division of labour and specialization whereas it is mechanistic based on homogeneity in rural setting.

Social Stratification

Even if the same principles underlie in ranking groups and individuals, there are many differences in the operation of these principles in the two settings. There are generally fewer strata in rural society, whether constituted on ascription or achievement. There are hardly a score of caste entities in each village settlement as against a few times larger in cities. Social disparity is greater in cities than in rural areas. Millionaires and paupers coexist. Another striking feature is that the caste principle is more rigid in rural areas than in urban areas. In Indian rural communities caste relations remain intact when they have been weakened in cities. This again reflects conservatism or the inclination to conserve customs and traditions rather than accepting new ideas and practices.

Social Mobility

The circulation of members from one social division to another is referred to as social mobility. In a short-term perspective or during one's life-time there may be very little mobility in villages while it is substantial in cities. Though Indian rural society is characterised as closed due to all pervasive caste and urban society as open with predominance of class, it is realistic to map them on a continuum. Rural societies do change but slower than urban societies.

The great difference in socialization brought about by varying degrees of social mobility has been examined by many sociologists. With greater mobility comes greater uncertainty even about a career. Hence urbanities patronize various forms of gambling to maximize the opportunity for change. The rural man is less venturesome in most ways than the urban man as he has less aspiration often bordering "wantlessness".

CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

Cultural environment is the third major factor in socialization. Culture patterns establish limits to behavioural options due to social sanctions associated with norms. Each society by its approval of some, indirectly selects the type of personality that will be most successful with its support.

Individuals, however, do not have exactly the same personality. The reason may be that every person participates differentially in his culture. Men and women learn elements related to their gender roles, occupation and caste status. No culture is transmitted in its entirety through each member. In a more complex urban society there are greater differences in personality.

Simplicity

The folk songs, folk dances and other folk expressions are much less complicated than the urban forms. The latter assume sophistication, variety and more nuanced expressions since each form has a potential clientele to patronize. Heterogeneous forms cross-fertilize to release new syntheses.

Social Control

Social order, in rural areas, is maintained chiefly through informal means of social control like gossip by neighbours, ridicule, scolding and social ostracism. Since the contacts are informal and personal, and as they are small and homogeneous, rural communities are able to achieve sufficient pressure through these means. Impersonal law is enforced in city by formal regulatory agencies of police and court to maintain social control.

Wider Cultural Learning

In the absence of narrow specialization in agriculture, farming requires a great variety of knowledge and skills. The farmer has to be good at operation and care of tools, machinery and equipment; he must have knowledge about soils, plants, animals, seasons, rainfall, and about prevention of plant and animal diseases. He should play his role in farm management and marketing. Hence his socialization has considerable width. A city person, in contrast, specializes in the complex division of labour and has a deep understanding of that particular part of culture. In developing societies, it is the urban elite and then the urban people who first get a global orientation reflected in knowledge, opinion, attitudes, values and life opportunities they seek, whereas a ruralite continues with his local or little tradition for long resulting in a cultural lag.

Levels and Quality of Living

Cultural usage is reflected to a considerable extent in the home life use of modern technology such as television set, telephone and washing machine which release users from the pains of labour and drudgery. They determine the level of living and degree of cultural participation. Many of the goods and services at the disposal of the urbanite are not accessible to the ruralite. As the former enjoys increasing leisure, substantial differences are observed in the leisure time activities. This usually breeds a sense of superiority in the city man over his rural deprived.

Rural - Urban Continuum

Early theories tend to conceptualise certain characteristics of rural and urban societies as dichotomous and discrete phenomena. Various criticisms were made against such contrast theories. Impersonal nature of social relationships attributed to urban societies is observed to a lesser degree in large villages; it is not totally absent. The feature varies in different communities to the extent that some rural communities are close to urban centres in the character of interpersonal relationship.

This lacuna was rectified by conceptualising the differences between rural and urban societies in terms of degree on a continuous basis, that is on a continuum or scale. Redfield studied the folk culture of Yucatan by selecting four communities representing the progressively increasing or decreasing extent to which several social and cultural characters are present; the tribal village, the peasant village, the town and the city. He defined this folk-urban continuum. Isolation is a character of tribal villages. A peasant village is relatively less isolated; towns and cities are increasingly less isolated. In contrast there is a more complex division of labour and greater dependence on impersonal institutions of social control when one passes from the folk end to the urban end of the scale.

Very frequently analysts deal with rural and urban societies and the scale according to which progressive variations are measured is referred to as rural-urban continuum.

LESSON - 2.3

VILLAGE PATTERNS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Villages are small communities organised around modes of getting food. Settled agriculture gave birth to permanent settlement beside, or close to the resources like fertile soil and abundant water supply. Their populations are small in size with very limited social differentiation. As for the sociology of knowledge, most of their cultural elements have had their origin in situations wherein people could not cognize the natural forces and many of the beliefs continue to govern their behaviours atleast at the affective level. Social solidarities are achieved by particularistic concepts like kin, from family extending to caste. Segments of castes are interwoven at the local level to organise their daily life by integrating the various segments into the economic and social division of labour.

Rural communities were isolated, self-sufficient and subsistence systems very marginally involved in barter of goods. Modern forces are bringing these villages into the larger network and this process is accelerated by development of transport and communication. Consequently urbanism as a way of life is invading the small 'republics'. Ruralites are getting increasingly urbanized without migrating to urban areas. They utilise urban services for education and health care. However, there is substantial variation in the degree of isolation, urbanization and modernization of the lifestyle. Part of the rural social life and its cultural milieu are products of a distant past. A historical understanding will provide a perspective to the student of rural sociology from which to understand the meaning of his behaviour.

LESSON - 2.4

EMERGENCE OF VILLAGES

Evolution of human social life from nomadic collective life to the settled one manifesting stability is a landmark in the entire human history. Man has spent most of history on earth as a nomad, a wanderer without any settled habitation. This lack of permanent settlement was related to an extremely unproductive level of technology. Men had only crude unpolished stone tools and subsisted by hunting wild animals and gathering edible plants. A hospitable environment and a major technological break-through combined to provide the basis for the first human communities based on food production rather than food-gathering. With the invention of plough, man made his occupation of agriculture as a stable profession and a basic source of assured food supply. Sporadically, population shifts and resettlements did occur.

About 7000 B.C. the wild species of plants (barley, wheat) and animals were found. Domestication of plants and animals, which followed, is an invention and has become part of man's life. The implications of domestication were in fact revolutionary. Other technological advances were added over time which enhanced agricultural production. Fired pottery was made for storage. Weaving was invented and some animals became more useful by providing man with clothing. Wheeled transport was invented only by about 3000 B.C. and was invaluable in transporting people and goods.

These various technological inventions reinforced one another in enabling man to control his environment and exploit the resources fully. This period when man combined refined stone tools with domestication of plants and animals is called Agricultural Revolution. This formed the base for stability of residence and resources.

These earliest farming villages were simple social orders, small and self-contained. They were homogeneous as their technological levels required every individual to work to obtain food. Their major distinctions were those of age and sex, since all had the same occupation, property and wealth. Kinship was very important and the family was the major social unit performing economic, socialization and leadership functions. Religion and art reinforced the values of this small world. Sharing the same experiences, they were primarily knit together.

LESSON - 2.5

TYPES OF VILLAGES

There is considerable variation in the lay out, distribution and internal structure of village communities. Four criteria are employed in classifying them into major categories. They are permanency, settlement, social stratification and social organization.

1. Permanency

This refers to the possible stages in the process of transition from man's nomadic life to settled village life. Accordingly migratory agricultural villages are those where groups of people live only for a short period of time and shift to some other place. Semi-agricultural villages were inhabited for a relatively longer time, possibly a few years, before moving to another site. When human communities stay for generations they are known as permanent agricultural villages.

2. Settlement

Pattern of ecological distribution of residences of social groups is called settlement. In the first type, dwellings are grouped or clustered close to each other and hence are called nucleated villages. Common facilities are usually developed with ease. In the second type, on the other hand, habitats are dispersed as farmers live on their respective farms surrounded by crop fields. In Line villages, homes are in rows on the sides of river or road. Farmsteads may be connected by foot-path or cart track.

3. Social Stratification

Forms and extent of social differentiation, ranking in a stratification system, degree of mobility admitted by the system as well as patterns of ownership of land are the parameters in this classification. Early villages are considered highly homogeneous and thus least stratified. Peasant joint owners, peasant joint tenants, individual owners individual farmer tenants,

employees of a large private owner, or labourers and employees of the state, temple or a chief may predominate in the aggregates.

4. Organization

This reflects the way village communities organise their life in common. Typically co-operative, semi-collective and collective villages have been delineated in rural sociology.

LESSON - 2.6

VILLAGE SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Spatial arrangement, as stated above, of rural communities varies widely. Three spatial types have been reported as predominant forms of settlement.

The Nucleated Agricultural Village Community

This is by far the most common and important in the world. Its major characteristic is that homes of farmers and artisans are clustered together whereas the land cultivated by them is located outside the village at varying distances. Their livestock are often housed along with them or nearby. Irrespective of the variety of shapes, such villages are characterized by a close-knit social organization fostered by residential proximity. In India too, nucleated village is the most common pattern though far more predominant in paddy growing areas.

The Line Village Community

Homes in line villages are in rows, generally on both sides of a common resource like a river or road. Narrow but long stretches of farm land extend behind each house. This pattern unites the social advantages of residential closeness and economic advantages of living on one's land. Southern parts of the United States which have been settled by the French have developed this type of villages. In the state of Kerala in India where small holdings are common settlements have grown particularly along roads.

Scattered Settlement

Northern America offers vast lands for farming by cultivators tens of thousands of acres. The scattered farm-stead arrangement, common in U.S.A., enables effective management of large farms. The dispersed nature of settlement makes community boundaries difficult to draw. As the security concerns receded with effective communication links during the present century, farmers determined to follow intensive agricultural

operations moved to their farms for residence. It is also commonly associated with exploitation of underground water for raising crops. Families living on their farms retain all the livestock and other possessions in the farm.

Cross-Road Settlements

Large holdings is a decisive factor in giving rise to settlements at road junctions or cross-roads. Since the rural segment of the population in the United States has declined to very low levels, well below five per cent, farmers have set up their residences on the roadside bordering their farms to retain some element of community life.

LESSON - 2.7

TYPE AND PATTERN OF DWELLING

A village is a symbol of unity as well as differentiation among the major units. The internal distribution of houses in each area, reflecting a kind of mosaic, tends to promote and sustain solidarity within the smaller groups. A main village has a large cluster of habitation with smaller clusters around but a little away from the main cluster. The smaller units are usually called hamlets. The main village or mother village (Thai Gramam) contains most material and non-material resources within it. Various types of hereditary craftsmen live there and it is a shopping centre too. The village headman and revenue official with land records and village servants are located. The sub-units or hamlets are dependent on the main settlement even for the services like hairdresser and washerman. A hamlet is often composed by clusters of households connected agnatically or a big farmer and his farm servants. The pattern undergoes changes as and when the land-owning family breaks down and holdings are fragmented.

Permanent migration during famines, or preceded by a number of temporary seasonal movements, is not uncommon. A set of families settle in a place and a village grows. Similarly a compact village splits into different habitation areas for better farm management. A village is thus not static but an ever-changing nucleus of habitations. There is great variation in terms of the constituting units: single-caste, multi-caste, single-clan and multi-clan villages. If the families of a caste are also descendants of a single clan village, exogamy is the rule. In multi-clan villages, common in South India, local alliances are frequent.

Caste and Village

The complex social structure of the Indian village is reflected in the clustering and segregation in housing. Families of a given caste or sub-caste live on the sides of a lane or street usually referred by the caste name. Habitation area or street is separated from others by a greater or a lesser

distance depending on the social distance between castes in the social hierarchy. The twice-born castes may live closer to each other whereas the Sudras and other low castes may be divided by some distance or a natural boundary. The traditional untouchable castes are invariably segregated. Their habitation area has even a separate name denoting the caste.

Caste largely governs the layout wherein culturally dominant groups occupy prime places while others live on the fringe of the settlement. As the Indian stratification system is cumulative, the culturally and socially dominant groups also control the economic resources and have greater access to local and regional political power. They live in fairly big houses with adequate open space around enclosed by fencing or walls. They have a granary or a separate room to stack grain bags. The well-to-do have single-purpose rooms.

The very poor live in one-room huts with thatched roofs in which they eat, sleep, cook and entertain guests.

Books for Further Reading

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. Desai, A. R. (1969 | : Rural Sociology in India
Bombay: Popular Prakasham |
| 2. Bertrand, A. L. | : Rural Sociology |
| 3. Chitambar, J. B. | : Introductory Rural Sociology
New York: John Wiley and Sons |

Questions

1. Explain the characteristics of rural society in India.
2. Bring out the cultural differences between rural and urban societies.
3. Describe the rural social environment and its influence on rural people.
4. Explain the village settlement patterns prevalent in India.

UNIT - III

RURAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND DYNAMICS

LESSON - 3.1

CASTE AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE IN RURAL INDIA

The system in which a person's core social status is determined solely by birth is designated as the caste system. Nothing he does enables him to move from the stratum in which he is born to another stratum. While the caste system shares with ethnicity the endogamous marriage to ensure 'proper parentage' and membership in the group, caste in India has developed a system of detailed codes of conduct to regulate one's association with members of other castes to certain types of relationships. These behavioural regulations are endowed with very strong social sanctions against their violation. Ethnic marriage, in contrast, is voluntary.

Castes and their segments called sub-castes are the major units with which the Indian society is constituted. Hence caste is one of the decisive determinants of the resulting stratification and the social structure. These units as social divisions are ascribed varying ranks and are arranged in a hierarchy in the village community. This hierarchy is more or less permanent and hence it is a closed system. Kinship, caste and territorial affinities as well as their interplay determine the social structure of a typical Indian village. The broad divisions and sub-divisions in Indian society are complex tags every one carries. The frequent description of a four-caste system is far from social reality. Regional working of the system is reckoned by the description. There are four varnas as a broad framework, hundreds of castes in each region under each varna, and scores of endogamous sub-castes or Jatis. Each sub-caste consists of a number of clan (Gotra, Kula) entities who marry only outside. Members also identify themselves as descendants of a common ancestor a few generations back. Essentially caste and kin solidarities harmonise whereas territorial affinity is a parallel

mechanism. Individuals along with their families are integrated with a village and the village is subsumed by a region and the nation.

Caste is the most decisive organizing principle in these communities as it governs the organization of kinship and territorial units. They are anchored in the concepts like purity, pollution, karma and dharma and the resulting philosophy of life. Making use of the ritual consideration, caste assigns status at birth and due to the principle of corporate or group ranking the same status is extended to larger kin groups like family and clan. Similarly integration of multiple castes into the village community and major territorial units are subject to principles of caste. A clear understanding of various levels of solidarity would enable the comprehension of the whole system.

Varna

Varna is only a reference category in the Hindu social system. It is not a functioning unit but refers broadly to the ascribed status of different sub-castes or Jatis. It is also used for classification. Several Jatis with similar ascribed status are clustered together and hierarchically ranked. The Brahman, the Kshatriya, and the Vaishya who are considered twice-born constitute the three upper levels. The Shudra at the fourth level includes several artisans and cultivating Jatis who pursue clean and hence non-polluting occupations. Those who follow supposedly polluting occupations are outside the varna scheme. Thus, altogether there are five levels into which a large number of Jatis are classified and clustered.

The system is highly idealized and oversimplified. Besides excluding the former untouchable Jatis, there is no uniform all-India hierarchy in the reality of the social order. In the south there are no indigenous Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. Particularly among the middle level castes, endless contests regarding mutual ritual rank were not uncommon. It is true generally that the higher castes are also the better-off while the lowest are the poorest castes. When one applied economic and political considerations for ranking of castes there would be a different stratification.

Jati

The term Jati is used to denote an endogamous community with a more or less defined ritual status and often some occupation traditionally linked to it. Some Jati clusters have a common name; the actual Jatis are identified by some prefixes or suffixes to the common name. In Tamilnadu the principal divisions of Brahmins are Iyer and Iyengar. They are composed of smaller groups with individual identities. Vellala is a common name for farming communities. Different regional actual Jatis suffix their identity as Vellala Pillai, Vellala Gounder and so on. Each one is endogamous. Outsiders tend to view them as one unit with equal status.

Most villages are composed of one or two such Jatis from broader categories. In one region, it may be Pillais from the agrarian Shudra castes, Gounders in another and Vanniars in the third. Most service castes and artisans have a few families each rendering their services. An examination of the Jajmani system of the village community would provide a picture of the social structure. The village is an arena of cooperation and of conflict. The village community as an entity is manifested by economic, social and ritual unity, while inter-caste conflicts arise frequently.

The village cuts across the boundaries of kin and caste and unites a number of unrelated families within an integrated community made up of a number of castes. It is a definite unit of social structure. Whether it is a village in which a compact settlement is shared or it is a nucleated or a dispersed village community, they have common features. They have a common past and a stable population sharing numerous values. They identify with a territory inhabited by the families and act as one unit, not withstanding the internal divisions. They have physical boundaries and if a person of the village is assaulted by a neighbouring villager, it is perceived as an offense against their whole village. Steps are initiated to tackle this at the community level. Even the long-term migrants used to return to the soil on which they were born since they wanted to die there.

Most Jatis have some occupation or craft linked to them. Their economy is built around agriculture. In addition to supplying food, agriculture continues to be the chief source of earning and making a livelihood. Socially and economically the agricultural castes are the most important while non-agricultural occupations are subsidiary to agriculture. Land is greatly valued. Villages have common assets like grazing land, temple, school, etc. They have common problems too. Being largely caste-structured, the community is integrated in terms of stable patterns which are traditional, and define the interactions between the different caste segments within the village in socio-religious life, economy and village administration. The inter-dependence of Jatis is through the exchange of specialized occupational services. Under a traditional arrangement, artisan and other occupational castes render services to the farmer in their traditional fields of specialization. The agriculturist, in return, gives them a share of their harvest which is fairly stipulated. In respect of several traditional occupations there is a system of attachment to agricultural families. The payment for services is made in kind, cash or both. This system is known in sociological and anthropological literature as Jajmani system. The system entails mutual obligations between families which are transferred to the sons and grandsons.

This socio-religious life covering life-cycle ceremonies like birth, puberty, marriage and death as well as many others and the codified rituals are conceived and organized in such a way that they require participation of various castes at different stages. These roles also permeate the collective social life. A drum beater may be at the lowest level of the hierarchy, but his role constitutes an important element in the annual celebrations for a deity.

A similar integration of various castes into the functional system is observed in the organization of village rituals and village administration.

LESSON - 3.2

DOMINANT CASTE

Rural inequalities in terms of land distribution persist. About one half of Indian cultivators together had only nine per cent of land in 1971 while 3.5 per cent controlled 31 per cent. Fifty one per cent of the holdings were less than one hectare in size. These marginal and small farmers have low grade land. Not very infrequently the economic resources have been controlled by Jatis which are not very high in ritual status. Its implication for the village social structure is discussed in this section.

The caste hierarchy with the Brahman at the top is considered correct only at the ideal level. Some difference is found in reality. In actual day-to-day life, the Brahmans are not always treated as superior or supreme. Jatis which control the economic resources, particularly land, are more assertive. With the emergence of these dominant landowners - the Jats, Rajputs, Reddys, Vokkaligas - a new pattern has emerged in different regions. Dominant caste reflects this reality. The concept of dominant caste also highlights the distribution of power in village India. Srinivas regards it crucial for the understanding of rural social life in most parts of the country. It is essential to study the locally dominant caste and the kind of dominance it enjoys.

Srinivas identified three bases contributing to their dominance: numerical strength, economic power and a fairly high ritual status. Western education and occupations are also facilitators. These elements are usually distributed among different castes in a village; only a caste enjoying most of them can assure decisive dominance. Dominance is expressed in abusing, beating, under-payment and sexual exploitation of other Jatis.

The leaders of dominant castes enjoy many privileges. They settle intra-caste and inter-caste disputes, represent their village in inter-village councils and control local votes. These are the parameters of dominance.

But a critical look is often made by raising the question whether such privileges, power and control are a group phenomenon or it is an instance of a caste having certain dominant individuals. It requires a strong feeling of unity, an articulate leadership and a shared direction for the caste; power should be diffused in the group or in a sizable section. According to this view it would be unrealistic to call it dominant caste if there are pronounced inequalities of prestige, wealth and power in the caste; and if their own weaker segments are exploited by the dominant individuals. Solidarity and concerted action to protect and advance the caste interest are, then, the major criteria. Even if most positions of power are occupied by members of a group, it is not sufficient to qualify for a dominant caste.

Similarly, numerical strength by itself does not enable a caste to assume dominance. Large castes are inclined to develop factions as more than one individual or group from within is likely to seek power and control. In contrast smaller castes reflect greater cohesiveness. The role of economic power as a source of dominance also needs to be examined with caution. It may allow access to political power and both function as a springboard to modern education and occupations. A caste can perpetuate its commanding position in the community power structure. Whether it will serve as a community resource or will lead to economic rivalry and factionalism has to be substantiated. All the questions raised so far are equally applicable to political power. It is common knowledge that cliques within the caste with resources often provide the nucleus around which community factions grow.

There are significant changes in the distribution of resources in the community in the last few decades. As in Sripuram in Tanjore district, land has come into the market. Land holdings controlled traditionally by Brahmans have come into the hands of non-Brahman upper castes due to land reform measures including redistribution among tenants and the landless. This transformation is reflected in the consolidation of other Backward communities throughout India and acquisition of political power culminating at the national level.

Radical ideology challenging the principle of ritual purity is getting diffused. Along with constitutionally supported secularization the new ideology challenges the concepts underlying the ritual hierarchy. The emerging scenario reflects a process of liberating other walks of life from the overbearing regulation by religion. Eventually, even if the ritual hierarchy is not removed, social and economic life may attain greater autonomy and incorporate secular principles leaving the sacred concepts to be applied to situations limited to religious rituals.

Finally, the process of politicisation of caste under the democratic political order has initiated the fusion of smaller Jatis. There is a growing caste solidarity and a fierce competition to promote the economic opportunities for the caste. Common men tend to identify themselves emotionally with those occupying higher positions. Whether this process will convert the individual resources into effective caste resources has to be systematically examined.

LESSON - 3.3

SANSKRITIZATION

Indian social system has been considered by many anthropologists and sociologists to be a hereditary, endogamous group with limited territorial spread, having a traditional occupation, and a particular position in the local hierarchy of castes. The status is ritual based on concepts of blood purity and pollution. Maximum communal relations occur within the caste. It is assumed that a caste group has clear boundaries which are not amenable to change. Several cognate groups resulting from historical fission are scattered over a limited geographical region.

A number of village studies later challenged the basic assumption that caste society is static, admitting no mobility either individual or corporate. This was followed by attempts to delineate the processes of change in the Indian cultural setting and to integrate these concepts into the study of social change in general. Studies focus either on the structural aspect or on the cultural aspect of Indian tradition. Among the sources of change, some are endogenous arising from the functioning of the Indian system itself while others are exogenous or external to the system.

At an early stage the concept Brahmanization was used to describe the process of cultural mobility in the traditional social structure of India. The entire way of life of the top Brahmin caste was assumed to seep down the hierarchy. It was observed later that the customs and traditions of the Brahmin Jatis in different regions of India manifested substantial variations and that changes were taking place with the passage of time. Hence it was found necessary to specify the particular Brahmin caste whose customs are adopted by those down the hierarchy. Further, the models adopted are not always that of Brahmins. It may be the culture of Kshatriyas or of Lingayats. To overcome these problems associated with the concept Brahminization, Srinivas introduced Sanskritization to explain the same process.

A low caste was able to rise to a higher position in the hierarchy. It was achieved by adopting vegetarianism and teetotalism and by Sanskritizing its ritual. Though theoretically forbidden, low castes seem to have adopted the Brahminic way of life frequently. This process had been conceptualised as Sanskritization. Later it was redefined by Srinivas himself as a process by which any group, a low Hindu caste or tribal or other, changes its customs, ritual, ideology, and way of life in the direction of a high, frequently twice-born, caste. Generally these changes are motivated and followed by a claim to a higher position in the caste hierarchy than one assigned by the local community.

This broader usage incorporates imitation of the non-Brahmin upper castes. The Lingayats have been a link through whom several low castes of Karnataka Sanskritized their customs. Moreover, it covers adoption of sacred and secular ideologies expressed in the body of Sanskrit literature. Karma, Dharma, Papa, Maya and Moksha provide a motivation with a life goal. Non-Bharminical castes have adopted values and institutions with reference to women, marriage and kinship. A Brahmin had the obligation to marry his daughter before puberty as a religious duty. Failure to fulfill this duty was a sin. Even a child widow was required to shave her head and deny many of her needs including sex.

Castes low in the order and governed by little traditions have been more liberal in the spheres of marriage and sex. Marriage was frequently after puberty; they permitted divorce and widow remarriage. Less harsh were their sex codes before and in marriage. But the Brahminical codes are applied to their women as a caste Sanskritizes. Conjugal relations were also governed by Sanskritization. With the new orientation, their wives treated their husbands as deities and performed several rites to secure long life to their husbands. By accepting the partilineage of the Brahmins, they imbibe a strong preference to have sons to fulfil a religious necessity. Concomitantly daughters lose their values and privileges.

Since caste is the structural basis of Hindu society, the consequences of sanskritisation need to be examined with reference to this structural

framework. Generally, the higher the status in the caste hierarchy the higher the degree of sanskritization. The lower castes select an upper caste as a reference model and imitate its lifestyle. In spite of a theoretical ban on adoption of Brahminical elements, a more effective barrier to the process of adoption was the attitude of the locally dominant caste or the ruler. A fear of physical force loomed in that case. Though Brahminical customs and rites trickle down, the locally dominant caste was imitated by the rest. And the dominant caste was frequently a non-Brahmin. Occasionally, castes enjoying political and economic power without a commensurate status started sanskritizing so as to seek a higher ritual position. Accordingly there are three axes of power in the caste system, the ritual, the economic and the political ones. Acquisition of power in any one sphere is followed by attempts to acquire power in the other two. The regional dominant castes provide the models for imitation and each one of these models is conceived differently by the locally dominant groups. Moreover, the meaning of each model would also vary from region to region. Yogendra Singh holds that this introduces contradictions in various connotations.

The development of communications under British rule carried sanskritization to areas and communities inaccessible earlier. The spread of literacy among Sudras and exterior castes activated the process of acquiring sanskritic elements contained in the literary tradition. Films popularised epics, Puranas and the lives of saints. Sociological studies have identified the profound effect of television serials on Ramayana and Mahabharata culminating in enhanced communal divide. Likewise, Western political institutions contributed to the promotion of this process. Inclusion of prohibition in the constitution and the ban on organised sacrifice of animals to deities indicate a movement in the same direction at the macro-level. In the ultimate analysis, it is the structural consequences, rather than the intention, of the process of sanskritization that are important. In many instances the attempts made by lower castes to move up in the hierarchy resulted only in a horizontal mobility and fission of more Jatis. There were, however, instances of success wherein dominant

castes ascended to higher positions through royal decrees or formation of autonomous political power.

Yogendra Singh considers the above changes as circulation of dominant groups in Indian history. It occurs through rise and fall of power; conflicts and war and through political strategies. These instances illustrate structural changes not accounted fully by the concept of sanskritization. Essentially cultural adoption does not precede their ascendance. Moreover, since sanskritization does not lead to a real ascendance to a higher caste status or to real power, it has limitations as a concept to analyse the structural changes even in the Indian context.

There is a view that the process of acquiring the sanskritic elements is more complex. Marriott has recorded evidence of 'transmutation', in which sanskritic rites are often added on to non-sanskritic rites without replacing them. Chanana observes spatial variations. Sanskritic influence is not universal to all parts of India. Islamic cultural tradition was initiated in many parts of northern India under royal patronage. Consequently Sikhism emerged in Punjab as a synthesis of both Hindu and Islamic traditions. The rise of Hindu fundamentalism, on the other hand, is a process of reversal of these trends.

Various other interactive processes have also been at work. While Westernization in externals has been extensive, values have been selectively accepted. A revival of Indian values blended with humanitarian values of the West has been a recurring feature. Simultaneously, other revivalist movements aimed at different identities have become very active: Dravidian in South India, tribal in North-East and Muslim in Kashmir. The Dravidian non-Brahmin movement brought about some roll-back of Sanskritization and consolidation of ritually lower groups; accelerated the transfer of economic power to non-Brahmins as well as creation of autonomous political constituencies of the lower castes.

The controversy over structural implications persists. There are scholars of Indian sociology who think that sanskritization denotes changes essentially in the cultural but not in the structural aspects of tradition and society. The other school maintains that if the concept is evaluated in

the framework of reference group it would explain structural changes. A sanskritizing caste thus defines the social situation in which its mobility is to occur and thereafter interacts with members of other castes according to this definition. Lynch is firm in his view that such social action has the intended consequence of a rise in status within the caste hierarchy. It also opens the power and opportunity structure to the members of the sanskritizing caste. Very frequently this process involves protracted periods of conflict and conflict-resolution.

But there is a problem in looking at the process of sanskritization in the reference group perspective. It lies in the fact that even on acquiring upward social mobility, the caste is not admitted into any other caste. Damle concludes that caste is a closed system and inclusion of members into a caste other than those born in it is not normally possible. Moreover, when a ruling group seeks or claims higher status, its claim is supported by economic and political power as a historical process. The mobility so achieved was legitimised by consensus in most cases. However, when some lower caste in a local area or context attempts to sanskritize to seek higher status there arises concerted resistance. Other Jatis traditionally placed on par with the concerned caste are not ready to concede a better status to them. Those who were considered superior in the past continue the same equation and on par with similar status Jatis. For the Jatis who accepted their own inferior status with reference to the Jati seeking higher status now it really does not matter; they also look at the group as a segment of many with equal status. The attempt at mobility is seldom legitimized within the caste system. These realities mean by implication that structural changes may take place when a caste seeking higher status has other structural properties like power. And with growing access to political power that stems from consolidation of lower castes, emerging as a political constituency along with more frequent use of massive and violent mobilisation on their part, will their attempts materialise sooner. Circulation of elites is occurring much faster.

LESSON - 3.4

JAJMANI SYSTEM

The major units of social structure do not function in isolation; they are inter-connected and inter-dependent. It is an arena of substantial co-operation and has traditional mechanisms for social mobilisation often involving the whole community. The village experiences conflict for the resolution of which there are traditionally established mechanisms. There is a unique system in Indian villages which brings out the inter-dependence among their major units. The unity of structure and function are reflected in broad division of labour wherein specialized occupational services are exchanged, in the functioning of village panchayats, and in the dynamics of the factional politics of the village. The pattern of the Jajmani system is not uniform throughout India. The system is also experiencing rapid changes in some parts rather than others. The relationships cover some economic and some social and ritual services. These relationships have three major characteristics; they are between families, they are obligatory and are transferred to succeeding generations. The mode and kind of payment also merits special consideration.

The traditional occupation of the barber is to cut hair and shave. He gets for his services a stipulated quantity of grain from agriculturists after harvests. When the barber renders his services to non-agriculturists, they in turn will render their specialized services to the barber. The potter, the carpenter, the blacksmith and the washerman are involved in such exchange of services. The barber has a role in rituals too. He distributes wedding invitations to kith and kin in and around the village. In the south he acts as a priest, in addition to the caste-priest, at marriage and other significant occasions and helps in giving a ceremonial bath. Periodically visits the farmers for oil-bath. His family women make leaf plates or cut banana leaves for serving food for the guests; and decorate the feet of women. Apart from having their food and carrying home to feed other

family members, they get some cash on these occasions. The farm families also supply food for his family on major festivals like Deepavali.

For ritual occasions, the goldsmith makes ritually significant ornaments, the potter supplies the ritual vessels, and the carpenter makes the marriage post and marriage shed. The Brahman is consulted to calculate auspicious times and astrological predictions. He gets some rice, jaggery, chillies, vegetables, coconut, banana and clarified butter; and monthly gifts in cash and kind for performing rituals and worship at the temple. Such Jajmani relations have been getting weaker with increasing industrialization and urbanization. Many youths have migrated to neighbouring small towns or cities while the old people try to fulfil their obligations by serving the senior members of patron families. Reduction in cash crops and growing needs of the modern times have led to preference to cash payment.

Village Administration

Two kinds of panchayats were common in traditional villages: Jati panchayats and a village panchayat. Jati panchayats dealt with their internal matters. All Jatis were represented in the village panchayat by their elders. The village headman held office on a hereditary basis and was elected by consensus when necessary. A dispute between Jatis or a matter impinging on the prestige of the village would be brought to the attention of the headman. He may call for an assembly or hold personal hearings initially. Social sanctions also followed to render justice and as a kind of warning. Traditional inter-caste relationships were a guide to deliver justice.

Factionalism represents power alignments involving individuals and families. Each faction is built around an individual or group. Often they revolve around lineages and clans. But it is not unusual for divided kin groups or two close kins like brothers leading the factions. Sometimes they are rooted in conflict between two Jatis. However, factionalism tends to divide the whole community vertically. One sub-group from each Jati may align with one faction. Factions continue for generations. The dominant individuals of major factions continue to support their loyal members even when conflicts recede.

LESSON - 3.5

CHANGING FEATURES OF VILLAGE SOCIAL STRUCTURE

What is the relevance of caste or Jati at the present juncture in understanding the social structure of Indian villages? Are they structurally functional units or remain in the realm of cultural ideal? Are the social divisions reciprocally inter-linked through the Jajmani system? What is the nature of link between caste and power today? Taking caste as the status dimension of rural stratification, this section seeks to examine its effects on the dimensions of economy as well as power. Westernization and secularisation along with industrial development closely followed by urbanization have brought about changes in the world-view, attitudes and inter-personal relationships within the rural social system.

Caste Ideology

Caste system enjoyed both legal and religious sanctions in traditional Indian society. Several challenges to the principles of caste arose and took the shape of reform movements right from Buddhism. The system, however, proved its resistance. Some irreversible alterations in the system occurred during the British rule in India. Many legal measures introduced have been successful to a large extent in practically removing the practice of 'Sati'. Their impact has been cumulative and continued after independence. The Indian constitution bars untouchability. The practice is a cognisable offence and in some states like Tamilnadu, Kerala and West Bengal changes are quite perceptible. The religious legitimation of the caste hierarchy, along with the associated concepts like pollution, is openly challenged and the challenge on occasions assumes open violence.

Members of a Jati continue to share a common culture even more voluntarily with less threat of sanctions. The internal organization of Jatis is maintained in broad terms. The boundaries that divide Jatis remain intact as inter-caste marital alliances are a news even now. There is of course, considerable reduction in the severity of sanctions enforced when a young man or woman marries in a different social division with whom such social inter-course is forbidden. Outcasting is not applied; corporal

purishment is confined to certain pockets. Most Jatis have conflict resolving mechanisms at the village and inter-village levels. Non-compliance with the caste adjudication is on the rise. This trend is led by those who subscribe to certain ideology and with political connections outside the village.

As a segmental division of society with a different configuration of culture, Jatis continue to be effective units. There is a growing functional solidarity horizontally in each region. Advancements in transport and communication have enabled this trend. New functions are assumed by caste associations. Vast resources are mobilized to cater to the religious, economic, health and educational needs. Bigger temples are built for clan and Jati deities. Schools, Colleges, hospitals and other infra-structures are nurtured essentially to serve their members. Journals are published. Marriage halls are established. Thus, while relaxing some of the old regulations governing codes of conduct, there is substantial intensification of other roles and assuming a few new functions.

Organic Unity

Economic and service inter-dependence among Jatis presents different shades. Cultivators, artisans as well as service castes have started leaving the land in preference to caste-free modern occupations or for setting up their shops in urban centres and carry on their callings with modified role relations, cash payment on the spot and determined by market forces. When they continue to provide their services right in their villages qualitative changes in Jajmani relationships are quite obvious. At the third level some traditional roles outright declined. The leather workers refuse to remove dead animals and are no more death messengers. In essence, traditional economic relationship based on status is giving place to relationship of a more contractual nature. The village has become a part of a much wider economic system.

Class is dissociating from the caste structure. This is due to Westernization of values, secularization of some facets of rural life, decline of village crafts unable to compete with industrial products and the emergence of caste-free occupations.

The ritual dimension of Jati has suffered substantial erosion in modern times. Jati has gained some strength from the new democratic institutions. For democratic elections Jatis serve as bases of mobilization and as a result Jati solidarity has strong political appeal.

Restrictions on communal relations have been practically dispensed in urban centres. At the local level perceptible changes are seen among castes excepting the former untouchables. Inter-dining between Jati gradations reflect a selective trend. The upper grade families have relaxed the rules of precedence while serving food on occasions like marriage; separation and clustering in wedding feasts are giving way to eating together. Civil and religious disabilities imposed on traditionally inferior Jatis have two faces. The public sphere is getting egalitarian as common wells and temples have been thrown open. In other instances, groups who were reluctant on ritual grounds to share water from a common well have been forced to give up their resistance on the provision of public water taps where all collect water standing in queues. Even in remote villages in Tamilnadu and Kerala, children need not sit separately; it is less common for tea-shops to earmark separate vessels and keep them aside. These changes are the result of vigorous enforcement of law against practices of untouchability.

Power and Caste

Big landowning families and Jatis owning most lands were powerful in the village. Land seldom came into the market but changed hands within the respective Jatis. At present political power is not so closely bound with ownership of land. New bases of power have emerged. As a result power is not the monopoly of any single caste in the village. The regional dominant castes share power with economically weak but numerically large Jatis. The emerging leaders are small owner-cultivators. Political contacts go a long way in the redistribution of power to numerous segments of the village.

The emergence of new loci of power is evident. Panchayat system, parties and political networks reflect the feature of political modernization. While contacts with politicians outside the village are a source of local

political power, they tend to make use of such contacts to promote their resources and ability to distribute patronage in the local community. The new offices in the decentralised dispensation provide new avenues to sustain their patronage. Simultaneously, the ability of the landowners to distribute patronage has weakened and their power and influence over tenants and other dependents also tend to decline under the new economic system. Migration from villages and new occupations outside emboldens the former dependents to raise their independent voice. The new leaders have become, by necessity, contactmen. The feudal lords with personal prestige used to keep aloof; social distance is an obstacle to traditional upper caste leaders. Political roles and activities demand full-time involvement as more specialised political agencies develop. Eventually the political system has gained increasingly more power facilitating a divergence between economic and political power in the village.

Increasing linkage between caste and the political system is characterised as politicization of caste. This is a trend at variance with other modern changes. Jatis have started strengthening their inter-village and regional connections for the purpose of political mobilisation so as to effectively make demands for their 'due share' in the economic opportunities as well as political power. Their activities and demands are open, vocal and rebellious. Caste associations have clearly demarcated levels of territorial affiliation and leadership who organise conferences and processions to demonstrate their strength and the intensity of their sense of deprivation. It is a measure of political clout. This has the effect of reinforcing the solidarity of Jatis. Since numerical strength is a source of political power, Jatis endowed with similar ritual status are fusing together to enhance their power. This unification is in contrast with the process of fission very common during most periods of Indian history.

To sum up, the contemporary Indian society at large is a bundle of contradictions. The village communities have begun to share and reflect these contradictions.

SECTION II

VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION

LESSON - 3. 6

TRADITIONAL CASTE AND VILLAGE COMMUNITY

Traditional Caste

The basic structural unit of village above the family is Jati or sub-caste. Jatis are the effective and functioning units of the social structure. Jatis are endogamous units occupying a specified station in the hierarchy. They invariably have a Jati-linked occupation. Considerations of purity and pollution determine the interaction between different units. Members of a Jati generally share a common culture, the way of life consisting of conventional patterns of thought and behaviour, beliefs, values and rules of conduct transmitted by learning. Jatis have intra-village and inter-village mechanisms of social control and conflict-resolution.

The higher the Jati, the more elaborate and complex are the codes of conduct regarding the maintenance of purity and avoidance of pollution. It is necessary to take note of pollution through food and through personal contact in so far as inter-Jati pollution is concerned. Even a Brahmin can eat fruit brought by a very low Jati provided it is washed in water drawn by a relatively clean Jati. Milk and curds are liquids likely to be mixed with water which is easily polluted, and hence avoided.

While interactions with members of other castes are restricted, they are more frequent and intensive among members of the same caste residing in the village. All of them are invited for wedding and wedding feasts, all join for mourning the death of a member and purificatory feasts after death or the cleansing feast after committing a culturally defined sin or serious social offence. Jatis have devices to monitor the observance of behavioural regulations and to sanction non-conformity.

Most Jatis try to enforce their values and norms for which they have enduring mechanisms at the village as well as inter-village levels. It is the Jati Panchayat which used to oversee and adjudicate the matters internal to the Jati and resolve conflicts among them. If the number of households in a particular Jati was small, they linked up with other neighbouring villages. Families of a particular Jati inhabit a given area or street in the village and this residential clustering and the resulting proximity are additional factors which promote more frequent social contacts and socially close ties.

A village generally has more than one Jati, each consisting of one or more lineage or clan of the given Jati. In the Dravidian South, each Jati inhabiting a village is invariably made up of more than one lineage and clan. The solidarity between this cluster of families expresses itself on ceremonial occasions and in times of calamities and stress. On these occasions they must support each other. Major decisions are made based on mutual consultations among them. Informally this local group of Jati and near kin functions as an effective agency of socialization as well as social control.

Temple owned and managed by these Jatis are not uncommon. Often each clan living in a set of villages has separate deity worshipped regularly and celebrated annually. Similarly Jatis have temples in some major centre or at a place associated with an event in the real or assumed history of the caste. The financial expenditure is met from a common pool to which families living in different villages contribute. Such fund management falls under the jurisdiction of the inter-village Jati Panchayat.

This close identity and loyalty to Jati fostered from childhood and the predominance of members of kin and Jati in their networks orient and socialize them more in their customs and ethos. This is the positive effect of Jati which goes on smoothly. They like to safeguard their unique traditions for which the social mechanism sustained was the panchayat.

Jati Panchayat

The internal matters of a Jati are usually looked after by an informal council of senior men headed by a traditional headman. The governing body of a caste is called the panchayat. They deliberate and decide on common issues. They agree on targets to be fixed for each family, in case they want to mobilise funds. Expenditures are incurred for executing works and accounts are maintained.

At other items, the role of Jati Panchayat becomes more visible. Disputes between their members are usually reported to the caste headman who would in turn send word to the other party to the dispute. On preliminary hearing from both, he would decide whether it needs to be pursued. If he perceives the issue very petty he may advise both or admonish the one who has been found erred by omission or commission. A compromise is also worked out. A serious matter is not adjudicated by individual leaders. The caste headman would send word for other members involved on similar occasions. The panchayat heard not only the disputants but also other witnesses. The proceeding lasts for a few days or even weeks. Social sanctions followed.

Some of the offences dealt with by the panchayat are eating or drinking with members of a caste or sub-caste with whom such social intercourse is forbidden; keeping as concubine a woman of another caste; adultery with a married woman or fornication; refusal to fulfill a promise of marriage; refusing to send a wife to her husband; refusal to maintain a wife; non-payment of debt; petty assaults; breaches of the customs relating to the trade of the caste; encroaching on another's clientele; killing a cow and property disputes.

Many of these offences tried by the Jati panchayat are usually dealt with by the state in its judicial capacity. They are not dealt by trade unions or guilds. Thus a caste, precisely each Jati in a village, was a group with a separate arrangement for meting out justice to its members apart from that of the community as a whole. It enjoyed quasi-sovereignty as caste

council re-tried criminal offences decided by the courts of law. Some castes did not permit the freedom of divorce and remarriage and non-observance of these codes were also punished. The customs of marriage and death rituals vary widely.

A wide range of punishments was meted out. They included out-casting, fines, feasts to castemen, corporal punishment and religious expiration. Fines collected were used for charitable purposes.

Hence castes used to be small and fairly complete social worlds in themselves, though subsisting within the larger community. The caste panchayat functioned as a tribunal for enforcing the moral and economic rules of the group. But due to constitutional measures and major forces of change, caste panchayat has lost its importance though caste has assumed new functions.

During early British rule, the British adjudicated based on the customs and traditions of the respective Jatis. However, a movement was initiated later with two goals. One was to do away with practices not in conformity with humanitarian considerations and the other was to create uniform law throughout the country, 'Sati', child marriage and treatment meted out to the socially depressed groups fall under the first. Social reform movements either initiated some changes or helped the process of consolidation of public opinion in support of legal measures brought forward by the British.

Law, education and new economic opportunities have altered the situation rapidly. The role of family as an instrument of the Jati in enforcing its cultural elements and in extending social sanctions has been weakened. Migration to urban centres, occupational diversification and the consequent liberation from the vigour of the Jajmani system, and inheritance laws that weakened the discretionary powers of those who controlled family property - all strengthened individual freedom, and emboldened deviation from the traditional patterns. The powers of the Jati panchayat have been considerably reduced as adjudication is based on enacted law. Ritual and

kinship obligations are diluted. Courts are approached for justice in defiance of caste panchayats.

Land has come to the market and the traditional monopoly of land owning castes, particularly the upper castes, is drastically altered; eventually caste and class interests cut across. The new middle class is from different castes.

There is a diametrically opposite trend visible on the caste front. The building of roads and railways and introduction of postage and telecommunication as well as printing technology have opened up new vistas to caste, even while promoting secularisation. The modern technology has enabled castes to organize meetings, conferences and processions at the national and state levels. The process of fusion of Jatis enjoying similar status and involved in the same occupation is also in motion. Fusion means larger number and greater political clout. The horizontal solidarity, led by urban elites of the respective Jatis, is primarily an instrument to promote access to political power at higher levels, district, state and even central, and economic resources and opportunities. With increasing territorial integration and shifting priorities, the power of the Jati panchayat at local level is consistently declining.

Village Community

The major units of social structure, family, kin and jati, do not function in isolation. The village is the arena of cooperation. The village is a unit of social structure which cuts across the boundaries of kin and caste uniting a number of unrelated families within an integrated community. The well-entrenched Jajmani system provided a solidarity which used to be highly stable. It incorporated a widely shared division of labour, very closely interwoven and reinforced by ritual and social services which made them highly interdependent and mutually indispensable. The whole structure is constructed on the basis of organizational principles which were ascribed and immutable. The village has its own traditional mechanisms of conflict-resolution, enforcement and social mobilization. The

village has an identity, fixed revenue and forest limits, common property like grazing land and shared resources like wells and tanks, and have places of worship. This section portrays the traditional village panchayats and their functioning and a brief sketch of changes therein.

The Indian village community has been recognised as a unique entity quite different from the settlements in China, Russia and Germany. The villages have been a constituent of larger political units and subject to various forces of change.

Ancient Village

Repeated references are available in ancient writings to village officials. A Gramik was responsible for village administration. The next higher official (Dashi) was in-charge of the administration of ten villages. There were others at higher levels covering twenty, one hundred and one thousand villages. Though responsible to the state for collecting dues from the village, the village official was to look after village defence in co-operation with the body of elders. The administration of justice was primarily the task of bodies at the village level. Appeals against the decisions of the village bodies were decided by the courts of kings in accordance with their customs and practices.

The average village during Buddhist time consisted of about 1000 families. Their dwellings were contiguous. The village was fenced with a gate guarded by men. Village pasture and forest were common property with free rights to families. The cultivated area of the village consisted of individual holdings divided by irrigation channels laid by the community.

Village in South India

Available inscriptions and records show that the institutions in South mark nature and established order by tenth century A.D. There existed several committees for village administration - Annual committee, garden committee, tank committee, gold committee and committee of justice. The list of officials and public servants, quoted by Mathai from 1812 Select Committee Report of the House of Commons, included the headman,

accountant, watchman, boundaryman, superintendent of the tank and water courses, priest and schoolmaster. They were paid in cash or kind or both.

Village Community

The village community system flourished all over India. British parliamentary papers published in 1812 gives a general account of the working of the village community system in different parts of India based on the descriptions of East India Company officers. They were based on possession of common land, on the blending of agriculture and handicrafts, and on an unalterable division of labour. The land was tilled in common and the produce divided among the members. Only the surplus beyond their consumption became a commodity. The individuals like carpenter and teacher were maintained at the expense of the whole community.

The autonomous character of these village communities has impressed many scholars. The jurisdiction of the village authorities extended over all kinds of properties and utilities. The village council looked after the village defence, revenue collection, settling disputes and the central and state governments could reach the people and discharge their functions mainly through these bodies. On the other hand, these representatives had a decisive voice in the village councils.

Why did the village community system come into existence in India? Two factors or circumstances are considered significant. First, the agglomeration of agricultural and manufacturing pursuits in small centres which made them independent organizations for subsistence. The autonomous and self-sufficient character of the village community system as well as the simplicity of its organization maintained the villages as independent units of society. They also contributed to the stability of the system.

The second aspect of stabilization of the village community system was the development of the Indian social structure on the basis of the Jati division of society. This structure provided the internal mechanism of the

village community system and stabilized it socially and ideologically. It was further stabilized by the spiritual sanctions made applicable to the Jati division of society. The doctrine of karma and the theory of reincarnation convinced the people that their position in society in this birth was the consequence of their deeds in the previous birth; their obedience to the ethics of the society by obeying the caste rules would improve their caste position in the next life. As a result, not enough force could generate within the society to challenge the standardised unity. Any attempt to challenge it was effectively curbed by sanctions. An outcaste totally isolated and an individual thrown out of the village community system cannot meet his economic, social and spiritual needs. So long as the village community system dominated Indian life, the caste system played a significant role in Indian social organization.

Being largely caste-structured, the community is integrated in terms of traditional patterns that define the interactions between its segments in the fields of economy, socio-religious life, and village administration. For the services rendered to the agriculturist by other occupational castes they are paid in cash and kind. Socio-religious life requires participation of various castes. Similarly, they are integrated in the organization of village administration and village rituals. A common organized authority of the village provides greater unity, maintains law and order, and seeks to secure observance of village norms. This authority consists of influential and responsible members of different castes living in the village. However, it is not the same kind of village community into which the Panchayat Raj is introduced after independence.

Under the British, Indian village community was subject to several powerful factors of change. Roads, railways, telecommunication, industrial growth, urbanisation and modernisation of values, ideas and ideologies brought about mobility and change in world-view. The monetised economy effectively integrated the villages with urban markets. Above all the state judiciary took over the powers of the village panchayat and village officials were to represent mainly the interests of the state and collect land revenue.

Private property pervades and intermediaries like Zamindars emerge in the rural structure. The class structure consists of land-holders, tenants, sub-tenants, and agricultural labourers. Hence for a proper understanding of the dynamics of rural society, its class structure must be understood. The present rural community is comprised of diversified classes with conflicting interests. The traditional structural institutions and forces into which the new institution of statutory panchayat was introduced would generate different interactions.

In many areas there was pressure of a traditional ruling elite who evidenced vast economic and cultural differences from the new climbers. Some section of peasantry in the villages were in favour of traditional group. When new aspirants wanted to climb, there was no support from political leaders, caste panchayats and peasant associations. Zamindari abolition led to soaring aspirations followed by rising frustrations. The new panchayat system was interjected into the village power structure with civil status, rational democracy and greater interlinkages at the block, district and state levels.

LESSON - 3.7

PANCHAYAT RAJ

Independent India relied for rural development on land reforms, cooperatives, panchayat raj and community development. Panchayat raj is a democratic political apparatus to bring in the rural people into the development process and enhance their collective competence to understand their problems, identify suitable solutions and mobilise resources at their command and carry out the decisions made by them. This local social mechanism is integrated into structures at higher levels for better coordination. This chapter traces the inception of statutory panchayats and proceeds to describe the subsequent development culminating in the essentially three-tier system of local self-government.

India has had a long tradition of management of public affairs by collective bodies called the caste, village and inter-village panchayats. These traditional panchayats were concerned mainly with preserving the group boundaries and enforcing their respective traditions and resolving disputes and conflicts within the traditional framework. Statutory panchayats were conceived to assume the development roles and to reflect the ideas of democracy based on equality of opportunity.

By 1957 every state in India had a Panchayat Act and 73 per cent of villages had statutory panchayats. They were empowered to enforce sanitation laws, to maintain roads and to provide protected water supply. Their activities were monitored by the state officials. This is in conformity with the Directive Principles of the Indian Constitution which required the states to take steps to organise village panchayats to enable them function as units of self-government. The aim was to take democracy to grass-root levels. But the specific context that demanded their introduction was the need to enlist the local communities for people's participation in realising the national development aspirations. Rural development was sought to be accelerated through this forward-looking stable mechanism.

The planning commission adopted the recommendation made by the Balwantrai Mehta committee to form a three-tier system of local self-government within districts: at village, block and district levels. Some states like Mysore took the taluk rather than block at the middle while keeping village and district at other levels. There were wide variations in the structure of the villages and their population size and geographical distribution. In Kerala, where the population density is high, it ranged between 5000 and 10000. To have a similar population, a panchayat in Orissa would extend over a large number of villages and a large geographical area making the institution less effective. Too small a size makes it unviable.

The panchayat is mostly divided into a number of wards and are given representation. Wards are demarcated on the basis of population divided equally. These ward members constitute the panchayat.

Composition

Members of the panchayat are elected on adult franchise. The underprivileged groups like scheduled castes and women get representation either by reservation of seats or by nomination. Elections to panchayats are held by secret ballot. In some states there was a practice of open elections. Initially, the panchayat president was elected indirectly from among the ward members elected. In regions or pockets where the democratic norms have not penetrated the traditional ascribed order, economically or politically powerful people manage to arrive at unanimous elections.

There is a widespread preference to elections at this level free from party politics, so that community interest will be held important and merits of individual candidates will have a sway. Yet, caste and kinship play an important part. A majority of panchayat members are from the locally dominant caste who also own land. In many states in the Northern region these members are from upper castes.

In accordance with the traditions of the Indian village, the elected members are fairly senior in age, are landholders and frequently having younger people to look after cultivation.

The panchayat president is the most important member of the institution responsible for administrative and executive functions. However, most presidents have limited educational attainment, inadequate orientation to the statutory provisions and have had no training.

Panchayat Union/Samiti

Once the village panchayat is constituted, its elected president (Sarpanch) becomes a member of the Panchayat Samiti/Union. The chairperson of the samiti is directly elected or elected from among the samiti members. Some members are coopted. Members of the legislative assembly of the area are ex-officio members.

Real power in the three-tier system is at the samiti level. The samiti president is the key figure in the whole set-up. The Block Development Officer/Commissioner is his executive officer. The samitis consist mostly of members from dominant land-owning castes. Political affiliations are marginal considerations. The samiti president is a source of patronage in terms of subsidy and loans. Hence there would be factions among landlords who try to strengthen their power networks by aligning with political bosses at the district and state levels.

Panchayat has brought about some perceptible changes. It has made the governance accessible to the villager. If the educated members of the lower castes are utilised by the new provisions the traditional concentration of power among dominant castes may be altered. But most of them happen to migrate to urban centres seeking better opportunities.

While the political aim of decentralising power has been realised to a great extent, arousing the community through the leaders for development of the villages has been found to be less successful. Schemes for which 25 per cent contribution from the community is required are executed,

even though they are able to manage without public contribution in the form of material and labour.

Panchayat Raj provides a new forum in which intense competition for power and prestige is enacted. Very few in earlier days set their eyes beyond the village. The cluster of villages in a samiti offer this opportunity for more people, and it serves as a launching pad for political integration upwards. There is also notable political awakening among the villagers. They are increasingly aware of the power of the ballot which they want to exercise independently. The downtrodden castes are also emerging into a distinct constituency. This phenomenon is diagnosed by sociologists as a process of politicisation of castes.

Leadership

A pivotal need for panchayat raj is good leadership recruited from various social groups including artisans and landless. Such diffused leadership is likely to be more representative in character and focus more on community issues. The new leadership that has emerged in agrarian areas is essentially recruited from new land-owning class. This leadership coming from higher income groups is better educated, more rational and has superior material resources. It is also bureaucratic and corruption nexus with officials. Eventually the panchayat institutions are becoming instruments for the advancement of the privileged. They are also inclined to exploit caste sentiments possibly reflecting the politicisation of caste.

Panchayat Raj has also given a fillip to factional struggles for power and effectively interlinking with state politics.

Local enthusiasm is not quite visible and community participation has been declining. The role of panchayats in improving agricultural production has remained marginal.

On the other hand, the panchayat raj institutions have been made dormant in several states as a consequence of the nexus between the political leadership and bureaucracy. What shape the system would have

taken and what impact it would have brought about if it had an unchequered course of functioning? It is very difficult to answer these questions without putting the system to test again.

Books for Further Reading

1. Srinivas, M. N. : Caste in Modern India and Other Essays.
2. Singh, Yogendra : Social Stratification and Change in India.
3. Beteille, Andre (1974) : Caste Class and Power, Oxford University Press.

Questions

1. How does caste influence the social structure of rural communities in India?
2. Discuss the role of dominant castes in rural India?
3. Describe the nature and functioning of the Jajmani system in traditional villages.
4. Examine the changes in the village social structure and the factors associated with them.
5. Discuss the form and functions of village administration.
6. Describe the objectives and achievements of the panchayat raj system.

UNIT - IV
RURAL ECONOMY
LESSON - 4.1

OCCUPATION, CLASS SYSTEM IN THE RURAL SOCIETY

The Productive forces and social relations of production interact with social processes and play a role in shaping the social structure, their attitudes and their values and ideologies. Rural society is decisively agricultural where man depends directly on nature. Land is the basic means of production from which rural people produce farm products using their labour and different techniques of production. These factors determine the level of production. The land relations and the relations of production determine the mode of distribution of agricultural resources among the social groups in the agrarian community. Their integration with the external world has a bearing on the techniques and efficiency in production as well as on the purpose of production and pattern of distribution. They also have a role in the development of social institutions and cultural patterns.

Economy and Social System

Purpose of Production: In a subsistence economic system agricultural production is primarily to meet the subsistence needs of their families and the local community where they exchange for their other needs. This simple economy was transformed into a market economy during the British rule; the agrarian and related activities started aiming at the market and the profit associated. The British government created private property in land in the Zamindari and Ryotwari forms. A ryot had to pay land tax in cash rather than in kind. The rising rent impoverished the tenant and the peasant culminating in debts which forced them to produce increasingly for the market. Planned agriculture interwoven with the needs of the local community, extensively practiced in socialist countries, was tried in India too.

Techniques: Hoe culture relied on manpower while plough culture tapped animals for agricultural operations. The latter enabled the community to produce more with the same man-power. Indian farming continues to remain in this phase. The third phase is associated with the power-driven machinery which facilitated extensive labour-saving, both human and animal, and large-scale farming. The labour productivity and volume of agricultural produces have increased with advances in the agricultural techniques. Although it adds to the material wealth of the rural society, labour demand tends to decline. Specialisation of tasks along with the rising levels of division of labour gives birth to more occupational groups and a more complex system of relations of production. Slavery, feudalism, early capitalism and advanced capitalism represent the different forms in the relations of production once the corresponding technology is accepted. However, the detailed elements of the relations may be tailored by dimensions like caste, race and so on.

In addition to determining the share of various groups associated, the nature of land relations play a decisive role in providing the degree of homogeneity among the people. In the Zamindari area, the society would be composed of groups of zamindars, non-cultivating tenants and sub-tenants, and cultivating tenants, whereas under ryotwari there are grades of peasant proprietors and landless workers. Land relations provide access to different share of material resources as well as non-material resources like education, power and culture. Finally, these relations do not remain static. Extreme forms of inequality in any social structure contain seeds for conflict and prolonged struggle. In tune with the values of equality and human dignity, development of Indian rural people implies not only removal of poverty but a fairly good quality of life irrespective of caste, creed or gender.

Occupation and Class Structure

A student of rural sociology in India must understand the class structure of the society to complement the traditional caste hierarchy. The rural community is comprised of heterogeneous classes with interests that

are in conflict. When caste and class dovetail, a far more unequal structure emerges. But reducing extreme forms of inequality demands not only removal of organized denial of opportunities on birth but also redistribution of economic resources among strata. The fairly stable equilibrium of the past is giving way to a modified structure of social classes in agrarian India. This chapter examines the patterns of distribution set in motion in the economic domain and identifies the continuity and change in the composition of emerging classes accelerated by policies on land redistribution.

Various specific occupational groups are broadly classified into three broad classes based on the two components of ownership of property and income levels. Some objective measures have been employed by scholars whose research in different regions provide the perspective for this analysis.

Land-holders, absentee landlords and the supervisory farmers who are prosperous and who do not cultivate the land constitute class I. Class II is composed of the broadly self-sufficient peasantry or cultivators as well as rural artisans and traders. The last two groups are included here as most of them barely maintain them and are partly based on land. The class III subsumes the remaining occupational groups. They are share croppers, agricultural labourers, service-holders and all others who depend on other members of society to whom they render services.

Evidently the upper caste Hindus fit into upper class in Bengal, Tamilnadu, and most parts of rural India. Lower caste Hindus, other than the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes fall into the middle class leaving the SC and ST and various service castes in the third class of the economic structure. By and large Muslims are distributed in the middle and poor classes. The clear demarcation of caste groups in the society in accordance with their economic positions is further evidenced by the household income. This convergence of caste and class status of groups resulted in cumulative inequality multiplying in magnitude.

Studies have revealed that the peasant mass is characterized by wide heterogeneity and mutual conflict. These various strata of cultivators are highly differentiated in respect of land owned or cultivated, cattle possessed, capital invested, tools and machinery used, techniques of cultivation and amount of family labour or labour hired. Some produce for family consumption while large holders have more surplus for the market. Small cultivators are proverbially in debts.

The most striking difference is in the ownership and cultivation of land reflecting extreme concentration. Nationwide surveys reveal that three-fourths of all rural households own less than five acres of land; they hold about 16 per cent of the total area. One-fourth own larger holdings and keep 83 per cent of land. This is the picture at the last phase of abolition of intermediaries discussed later in this chapter. The ownership of land has remained concentrated. The bulk of the land owned by former zamindars was cultivated by them personally with family and hired labour. In fact they had brought vast lands under family farming on the eve of land reforms by evicting tenants. Deprived of the sources of land rent as leasing-out was prohibited, they started taking more interest in direct cultivation of land. Gradually they emerged into peasant proprietors or capitalist farmers depending on the size of their holdings and other personal and family factors.

LESSON - 4.2

LAND OWNERSHIP PATTERN

The patterns of ownership of land, the basic means of production, generate kinds of relationships among the groups of people who play their roles in the rural economy. The owner and the cultivator are separate entities in some system; and the cultivator is a tenant under terms of conditions of the tenancy. The owner is responsible for making tax payments to the state; he in turn collects rent from the tenant.

Feudal intermediaries such as zamindars, Jagirdars and Inamdars constituted a significant segment and stratum in the rural society before India attained freedom. They were the product of various tenures created by the state. Three broad systems of tenure emerged in India; the Zamindari system; the ryotwari system and the mahalwari system.

Zamindari System

This system prevailed over 40 per cent of the land under cultivation during the British rule. They viewed the land tenure system only from the point of fixing responsibility for the payment of land revenue to the government. Two distinct classes emerged under this system: Owners and cultivators.

In Bengal and the adjacent areas like Assam, permanent settlement was introduced where private landlords were created to whom government granted some but not all rights of private property in land. The new landlords acted as intermediaries between the government and the actual cultivators. This land revenue system came to be known as Zamindari system. Often, in practice, a very large number of intermediaries emerged. This was caused by the sub-tenancy of land. The principal tenants sublet the land taken on lease from zamindars. The sub-tenants did likewise. The number of intermediaries multiplied to as many as fifty according to the Simon Commission Report.

The tenants raised crops with their inputs. The rent was generally determined on the basis of share of the produce, about 50 per cent or more. The share of the government used to be around 10/11 of the rent leaving 1/11 for the zamindari. The amount payable to the state was fixed either permanently (Permanent settlement) or temporarily for a period of 20 years (temporary settlement) to be revised thereafter. With increase in population, the demand for land increased. As a result the rent charged by the zamindars also rose at the cost of cultivators.

Ryotwari System

The cultivator under this system takes land from the state and pays land revenue directly to the state. No intermediary is involved. So long as the peasant pays revenue, he continues to hold the land without eviction. He enjoys the right to sell the land. For his occupancy of state property he pays rent which is periodically revised. This system is found extensively in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Assam, Tamilnadu and Madhya Pradesh. Settlement is made separately with the ryot who is vested with the right to sublet, mortgage or transfer by gift or sale. The ryot is also protected from eviction. Changes have been effected from time to time in the conditions of tenure. Sub-letting, however, led to various forms of exploitation of the tiller leading to land reforms particularly after independence.

Mahalwari System

Land is held under the joint ownership of the entire village community. The members of the community are jointly responsible for the payment of land revenue to the state. Peasants contributed to the pool of revenue on the basis of their respective holdings. This system is prevalent in Punjab, United Provinces and parts of Madhya Pradesh. The fixation of land revenue, its payment and arrangements for cultivation manifest variations. In some areas in U.P. cultivation is done through tenants. Division of the produce raised on land is done with reference to the number of ploughs or wells on the land.

A major consequence arising out of land ownership pattern is that it offers no incentive to the tiller to invest and maximise the production nor has he any resources to invest. In view of uncertainty of tenure under the zamindari system he is neither interested in making improvements on land nor in sustaining the fertility of the soil. In addition to exploitation and uncertainty of tenure, the system of ownership contributed to widening disparities of wealth and income between tillers and owners.

LESSON - 4.3

**LAND DISTRIBUTION, LAND REFORMS, LAND
LEGISLATION AND ITS IMPACT ON INDIAN VILLAGES
AND INDIAN ECONOMY**

Agrarian Structure

Agrarian structure refers to the way in which land is distributed and interpersonal relationships are organized around it and the way land is owned and cultivated with the associated rights and responsibilities of different categories of people. These categories in India are to a great extent organized groups of people, namely the caste groups.

It was marked, before independence, by the presence of feudal intermediaries like zamindars, Jagirdars and Inamdars. They resulted from the various tenures created by the state. The state was in direct relationship with the occupant of the land under the ryotwari tenure. The feudal system resulted in the insecurity of tenure to the cultivator as well as rise in rent imposed by the feudal intermediaries. The consistent growth in population and increasing dependence on land aggravated the problem. Simultaneously, more inequalities in land distribution also arose. With further acquisition of land by feudal landlords, the limited land holdings were subdivided among the heirs which consequently resulted in continuous fragmentation. This is the broad scenario at the time of independence.

The main instrument for the redistribution of wealth, income, status and power has been considered to be land reforms which would also help promote productivity. Abolition of feudal system, tenancy reforms, ceiling on land holdings, and consolidation of holdings are the significant land reform measures implemented in India.

The abolition of zamindari and other tenures resulted in administrative control by the state, as a result of which land revenue was reduced and

the real incomes of other sections went up in the former Hyderabad state. However, in states like U.P. the intermediaries were successful in retaining extensive areas of cultivated land under the guise of home-farms. Tenants were removed from vast tracts so that the land could be legally held. They were given compensation and even their debts were cleared to avoid legal hurdles later. Yet, six million acres were held by large zamindars as unlet home-farms. These ex-feudals are the farmers today exercising phenomenal economic and political power controlling the development policies. They now wield more power than during the British rule.

Tenancy Reform

Adequate care was not taken to assign land to the actual cultivator when the feudal system was abolished. In many states, the settlements were effected with one or the other type of intermediaries who had emerged between the feudal lord and the actual cultivator. The cultivator came under the mercy of the newly legitimised owner in the former feudal areas.

High rate of rent and insecurity were the two major problems associated with tenancy. One fifth to one fourth was accepted as reasonable rent in early fifties. Maharashtra fixed even a lower rent. However, in most parts of the country it remained at 50 - 75 per cent in the absence of an agency to supervise the implementation of the provisions. In the recent decades, effective changes have been brought about. In Tamilnadu where the rent was reduced to 60 per cent was further brought down to 40 per cent about two decades back.

Insecurity of Tenure

Insecurity is sustained by socio-economic factors that govern demand for and supply of land. A cultivator is reluctant to change his occupation and become a hired labourer in any sector. In the rural value system he is likely to lose his status. This is more of a problem in castes among whom land-ownership and cultivation are common. Second, alternative employment opportunities have remained practically few such that they are least motivated to grab them even if available. An immobile Indian peasant

stays on the land where he was born. Rural industrialisation has not made any stride till quite recently. Hence, a tenant cultivator is not ready to take risk and seek remedial measures, antagonising the land-owner in the process. Third, the traditional forces of solidarity within the caste and territorial community constrained deviation from the established equations and norms while informal social control remained powerful enough to check such a possibility.

The Agrarian Reforms Committee had defined a cultivator as one who put in a minimum amount of physical labour and participation in actual agricultural operations. Had this distinction between cultivating owner and non-cultivating owner been enforced seriously many evictions of tenants would have been avoided. The provision of the right to resume land by large owners weakened the security of tenure. Sub-letting of land except in the case of minors, widows and other disabled persons was opposed by the Agrarian Reforms Committee. However, the five year Plans negated this provision and gave room for exploitation by the landlords.

Further the plan did not provide a sufficiently wide definition of the term 'tenant' to include all tillers including share-croppers. As a result of this failure and because of a wide connotation for personal cultivation, a vast number of crop sharers cultivating the home farms of landlords remained outside the purview of the tenancy legislation. They were treated as labourers or partners in cultivation and thus were denied the rights of tenancy.

Finally, the non-cultivating owner as entrepreneur in agriculture was disapproved by the Agrarian Reforms Committee. Such capitalist farming would deprive the cultivators of their rights in land and turn them into mere wage-earners. Eventually it will subject the society to capitalist control in the vital matter of food supply. It would also create the problem of displaced persons thrown out of land. Imposition of ceiling on all large holdings was recommended to preclude the problem. In contradiction, the plan provided for exemption of big farms run largely with hired labour by

entrepreneurs 'to the extent customary among those who cultivated their own land'. And landlordism continued utilising the loophole.

Land Ceiling

The Second Plan recommended ceilings to owned land, including land under permanent and heritable rights, held under personal cultivation - the whole area held by the family including husband, wife, dependent sons, daughters and grand children. Nevertheless, the matter of final decision on these matters was left to the states which resulted in dilution and transfers. There was the provision that where the number of members of a family is larger than five the ceiling of the family holding may be raised to a maximum of six family holdings.

Exemptions given to various types of land like plantations also permitted grounds to escape from the ceiling law. Since the holdings of co-operatives and joint-stock companies were outside the purview of ceiling, some large owners transformed themselves into co-operatives.

Absence of adequate measures to prevent transfers of land was a serious lacuna making all other provisions inoperative. Ceiling as an instrument of redistribution of land has had only a marginal effect except in West Bengal and Kerala. As a result, provisions for continued transfer of land reduced the land available for redistribution. Legislative measures to disregard any transfer or lease made after a given date in order to determine the surplus area proved futile.

Consolidation of Holdings

As the holdings in India were small and were highly fragmented, bringing together scattered pieces of a holding into a compact block would facilitate better operation and would result in higher production and productivity. Consolidation through co-operatives with voluntary participation was tried in Punjab and in Uttar Pradesh before independence. Later the principle was modified to proceed if a majority of the landholders agreed to it. Some amount of compulsion was sought to be introduced after independence.

Political changes during the last two decades mark a transformation in the power structure. In states like Tamilnadu power has been getting more diffused with greater access to the non-Brahmin tenants and scheduled castes who have been agricultural labourers from the Brahmin landlords who constitute a small segment. The forces of democracy have overwhelmed the traditional order and its legitimacy. Political power has proved to be an effective instrument in the enforcement of land reforms. West Bengal and Kerala have creditable achievements due to strong currents of leftist political ideology and rule, that is political mobilisation of the poor. The political currents blowing in some major states like U.P and Bihar are indicative of a kind of consolidation of peasant castes who get more political power. A caution may be necessary at this juncture. During the last few decades, till judicial activism appeared, dependence on polity and bureaucracy proved to be a costly experiment. Whether rural India needs independent social movements cries for an answer.

The element of dynamism introduced by the new class of big peasants and entrepreneurs into the rural economy needs to be considered in the policy review. One of the critical issues is whether to bet on the rural rich for diffusion of new farm technology and for the consequential drip-down and overall rural development. The second issue is the need to put the agrarian scene in perspective in the light of the on-going liberalisation and integration with the global market.

Second, there is inadequate evidence to discount the alternative policy perspective. The new landowners who have small holdings as a result of land reforms have very little at their disposal to be successful peasants. The institutional support does not appear to have reached marginal and small farmers to the extent of relieving them from the clutches of money-lenders. Financial help and support in needed inputs free from corrupt practices would go a long way in enabling them evolve into viable farmers.

Third, the heavy dependence on land by rural people needs to be altered. Expansion of non-agricultural sectors – industrial and services – needs a thrust so as to expand employment opportunities for the ruralites. Overall development should take care of this need, assuming, decline in dependency on land implies a different rural development strategy rather than redistributing rural poverty. With passage of time we may require possibly a lower land ceiling along with an upper ceiling.

Books for Further Reading

1. Desai, Vasant (1986) : Rural Development, Bombay: Himalaya Publishing House.
2. Desai, A. R. (1969) : Rural Sociology in India, Bombay: Popular Prakasham.
3. Gandhigram Trust (1974) : Rural Development.

Questions

1. Describe the systems of land tenure prevalent in India before independence.
2. Assess the impact of land reforms in India.
3. Discuss the process and consequence of sanskritization.
4. Examine the relationship between the traditional Indian social order and Westernization.
5. Examine the role of family in Indian Villages.
6. Discuss the institution of marriage and its bearing on gender relations.
7. Describe the composition and management of a traditional agrarian joint family.

UNIT - V**RURAL DEVELOPMENT****LESSON - 5.1**

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community development has been conceptualised differently at different times: as a movement, an approach, an instrument and as a process. Currently the concept is used to denote the planned activities for the improvement of basic living conditions of the rural communities in less developed countries. These communities are small enough and are characterised by enough solidarity making them viable units for participative development. Community organization reflects the process through which its members come together and are collectively able to identify their community problems, examine alternative solutions and the available resources, decide on the course of action and carry out the decisions made; they gain in this process of marshalling the resources the competence for management of development in their community, in programme planning. This process of organizing the community for local community development is known as community organization.

Utilizing the functional unity of the village for collective action revolving around common needs is a very old phenomenon in India. The development of Mohenjo-daro in the Indus valley civilization is considered a forerunner of intensive development. The village council or village panchayat in each village was a unique institution dealing with routine and new community development programmes. The village council supervised the banking, charities, village disputes, village defence, temple management and public works. During the Muslim and British rule village panchayats lost their vigour gradually. Stoppage of grant from the land revenue to the village fund, taking over by government of activities like repair of roads and tanks, establishment of regular courts depriving the power and prestige of the

village panchayat and new system of land settlement wiped out the solidarity and functions of the village communities.

Industrial Revolution had adverse effects on native handicrafts which was accentuated by taxation policy of the British. Support to handicrafts were withdrawn to promote market for British goods transported by new transport system. The new zamindars failed to extend the benefits of industrial revolution for improvements in agriculture. Growing population due to better medical services brought about sub-division and fragmentation of land holdings. Then followed indebtedness among cultivators and transfer of land to non-cultivators.

Along with the deterioration in the life of rural masses famines appeared. The crying need for some supportive programme gave birth to the notion of rural reconstruction. Famine Commissions and the Royal Commission on Agriculture in 1926 recommended comprehensive measures to improve agriculture, irrigation, education and co-operation. The responsibility to initiate the steps required for improvement was fixed on the government while stressing the need for people's co-operation. The popular ministries in the provinces formulated various measures aimed at land reform and upliftment of living conditions. The scope was widened and pace accelerated after independence.

Community Development Programme

The community development programme was inaugurated in October 1952 with 55 community projects, each project covering about 300 villages. A project area was divided into three development blocks. Each block was divided into about twenty groups, each containing five villages served by a Grama Sevak. One third of the villages was brought under the programme by the end of First Five-Year Plan.

The community development programme is broadly divided into three phases: the National Extension phase, the Intensive community Development Project phase and the Post-Intensive phase. In the first phase, the area is provided services with a limited governmental expenditure. In

the intensive phase, the blocks selected receive more composite and intensive schemes with larger governmental expenditure. It is presumed that a basis for self-perpetuation of the process has been created by the first and second phases and hence financial requirement from outside is reduced. The area is left in the charge of other departments for development.

Construction of roads, culverts, drains, school buildings, wells, tube-wells, tanks and pumpsets for irrigation, agricultural programmes with all in-puts like seeds, soil conservation, etc., and institutional programmes creating youth clubs, women's organizations and so on were the major activities.

Periodic evaluation of the functioning of community development and National Extension Services have been made by individual scholars and committees constituted for the purpose. Taylor observed that the community development-extension programme was operated more as an executive assignment, predominantly based on aid from the government. The basic objective of local self-help groups mobilizing their natural and human resources for local improvement – the initiative of the people – is lacking. The government machinery was relying more on propaganda and quick results rather than help generate voluntary participation and the long-term effect of the community acquiring a development perspective and competence.

Dube found that planning was from top down. The officials were oriented less toward the village people and more toward pleasing their superiors. They had not become change-agents working on the principle of educating and motivating people. The Balwantrao Committee Report, critical of the structural foundation of programme administration, reflected similar sentiments. The village panchayats had not become active participants. Local bodies at higher levels had no interest in work, failed to show durable strength and leadership necessary to provide the motive force to continue the development work. There was a need to create a

representative and democratic institution which would supply the local interest, supervision and care necessary to ensure that expenditure of money conforms with the needs and wishes of the local community, invest it with adequate power and assign finances in order to generate a sustained local initiative. To meet this end the report suggested an elected village panchayat at village level and elected panchayat union council at the block level to execute the community development programme.

The report also noted wide disparity in the distribution of achievements and benefits of the community development projects. Villages easily accessible to workers against non-accessible, cultivators against non-cultivators, and cultivators of larger holdings against small holders benefited more. Regional variations were also evident. Organized activities were confined to agricultural extension benefiting agriculturists. No programmes were initiated for the economic development of small cultivators, artisans and agricultural labourers.

This trend was pregnant with serious political consequences in the context of the increasing awakening among the people. The organizations for rural change were also dominated by the upper sections of the rural population. Persons holding positions in the village institution like co-operatives were regarded as village leaders and the development personnel attempted to work closely with them. Most of the leaders were from the dominant landowning group. This approach reinforced the traditional power structure. The significance of the all-round development of the rural society, particularly of the underprivileged constituting a major segment, has been marginalised.

LESSON - 5.2

INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

In the light of findings that rural development programmes have widened the disparity between the classes, strategies were planned to ensure that the poor and weaker sections share the benefit of development. Specific programmes to reach particular sections of rural society have been implemented by the state and voluntary agencies. Drought Prone Area Development Programme, National Programme for Minimum Needs, Development Programmes for Small Farmers, Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers, the Rural Works Programme, Applied Nutrition Programme and Special programmes for women and children have been formulated and implemented keeping specific groups in mind, who are marginalised in the earlier community development programmes.

The Integrated Rural Development Programme was launched in 1978 to reach target populations specified above, as well as rural artisans and service castes and pointedly focusing on pregnant and lactating women and infants and children below five years of age. A comprehensive objective was to help families living below the poverty line to rise and cross the line by providing them regular employment and assured income. By October 1980, 5011 blocks in the country were covered by the programme.

The Strategy

A scientific approach to problems is needed so as to achieve a change in the world-view pertaining to aspects ranging from sanitation and health to nutrition and family planning. Such a process of communication and education would help fight superstitions, diseases and social injustice. To realise the goal of full employment of labour and physical resources, soil conservation and rational use of water resources were stressed. Food output should be raised through scientific farming; and the health nutritional and educational status of the masses to be raised by deploying a massive cadre of extension workers. Setting up of agro-industrial

complexes was visualised to alleviate under-employment and seasonal unemployment.

Finance

The banks were to prepare schemes which would be viable for financial support. Credit support was sought to be ensured by allocating responsibility for providing such finance among the financial institutions operating in the area. Lead banks were identified in given areas or districts for the purpose. Banks were to extend credit to the poor and enable them cross the poverty line. In this process IRDP plans were integrated with District Credit plans. Banks have entered rural areas, mobilize resources and deploy funds for development. Three fourths of the branches are in rural and semi-urban areas.

A major policy has been ensuring availability of credit to all social classes. The government directed the commercial banks to deploy 40 per cent of credit in priority sectors and 16 per cent for agriculture. Small and marginal farmers should get 50 per cent of lendings to agriculture.

Banks formulated a three-year district plan under the Lead Bank Scheme for the accelerated rural development. Banks have provided finance at concessional rates to the weaker sections of the rural society under special schemes as well as support to primary agricultural credit societies. Regional rural banks have been set up since 1975. Small and marginal farmers received 95 per cent of total advances.

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development was set up in 1982. It provides refinance to banks for all kinds of production and investment credit to agriculture, small-scale industries, handicrafts and other allied economic activities in an integrated manner. The functions are: short-term credit repayable within 18 months to state co-operative banks, regional rural banks and other financial institutions for agricultural operations and marketing of crops; marketing and distribution of agricultural inputs; production and marketing activities of artisans or

small-scale industries; village and cottage industries, handicrafts and other rural crafts.

Under conditions like drought and famine the short-term loans granted to state co-operative banks and regional rural banks by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development can be converted into medium-term loans upto seven years. Long-term loans for 18 - 25 years are lent to land development banks, regional rural banks, state co-operative banks and other scheduled banks for agriculture and rural development as well as to help artisans, small-scale industries, and tiny, cottage and village industries. NABARD also is authorised to invest in any institution involved in agriculture and rural development.

Revised Strategy

As households living below the poverty line are concentrated among the landless labour, small and marginal farmers, rural artisans, scheduled castes and tribes, the strategy was to focus on assisting them with an appropriate package of technology, services and transfer of assets. More direct means to reduce poverty were conceived incorporating some element of welfare into the development assistance.

While increasing agricultural production, the vulnerable groups would be helped to raise income and resources through the development of secondary and tertiary sectors as well. Skill formation and enhancement to promote self-employment and to fit into emerging economic situation for wage employment; provision of credit support of such programmes; marketing for their products to ensure their viability and to insulate from exploitation in the market; providing essential minimum needs; and involving universities, research and technical institutions in preparing projects for self-employment and national rural employment programme form part of the strategy.

Conceiving the household as the unit for economic upliftment, the package of activities aim at involving all the working members, while special focus will be on economic programmes for women. The target groups

identified and the families from these target groups are to be maintained in each village. The household-centered poverty alleviation programme consists of steps not only for the economic betterment of the family but also education of children, health and adoption of small family.

The IRDP is being implemented by a single agency in each district. The agency with adequate autonomy has multi-disciplinary planning team. Ultimately, effective implementation depends on the block organization which is the field agency for implementation. It is exactly at this level the system has got eroded. In many states the local self-government has remained defunct and the functionaries have become instruments of political manipulations. In areas where the Training and Visits Extension Scheme was introduced better linkages were maintained among personnel in various programmes.

Specific assistance is provided under the programme to 3000 families in each block during five years. The product identified in consultation with the beneficiary household must give enough net income to them to keep the family above the poverty line. As for funding, each block gets five lakh rupees in the first year, six lakhs in the second and eight lakhs in the subsequent year.

Tax Concessions for Rural Development

The union government offered incentives to the corporate and co-operative sectors in 1977 - 78 budget for undertaking rural welfare and upliftment activities. They were allowed to deduct from taxable profits expenditure incurred by them on rural development provided they have obtained prior approval of the statutory authority.

Payment to Associations and Institutions

Many industries conveyed that it would be more viable if they were allowed to participate in rural development by associating with or contributing to voluntary agencies doing good work in the field. Such contributions have been exempted from the assessment year 1979 - 80.

Tax Concessions for Small-Scale Industries

All categories of tax-payers are entitled from 1977 to a deduction of 20 per cent of the profits derived from small-scale industries set up in rural areas for ten years from the commencement of manufacturing.

An Assessment

Poor infrastructure, common in rural areas, is a major constraint in implementing the Integrated Rural Development Programme. Access to continuous extension support hinders movement of goods and raw materials and in turn marketing. On the other hand, personnel from development agencies and financial institutions find it difficult to exercise effective supervision on the use of credit and recovery.

The success of the IRDP is intimately connected with the preparation of viable schemes and provision of assured investment credit. Absence of adequate expertise available with the district agency for identification of ventures and formulation of projects remains a critical barrier. There is an over-emphasis on allied agricultural activities like dairy. Proposals for milch animals irrespective of availability of animals, veterinary services, fodder and an assured market for milk have led to misuse of the provisions. There are new vested interests.

Over the years, there has been considerable rise in credit facilities for weaker sections; however, a target-based approach has resulted more in misuse of finance. This has resemblance to family planning targets. Funds are allocated at the year-end, possibly with an intention to rush through. Moreover, the main beneficiaries have been the small and marginal farmers. The landless and rural artisans have benefited the least.

Rural development is a process of economic development and of social change. First of all the desire and competence should be generated over a period of time; it is not like exchange of commodities. There may be considerable success if IRDP strengthens coordination with other agencies. TRYSEM, for example, could provide a major input for self-employment which can be dovetailed with the expertise of the district agency as well

as with the financial resources available with banks. Considerable fund is also available with the National Service Scheme operated by Universities. The volunteers are involved in forming roads to villages independently. Within months the soil is eroded making the expenditure and labour a waste. Their efforts could be incorporated with other road development schemes. By pooling both the resources, roads might be laid for a longer distance or the quality may be enhanced. As a result the fruits of the labour of volunteers will be absorbed into some stable asset or infrastructure rather than being ad-hoc and washed away.

Finally, the Panchayat Raj institutions being revived may go a long way in containing the new vested interests and entail the system more transparent.

LESSON - 5.3

JAWAHAR ROZGAR YOJANA

In the attempt to remove poverty and improve the quality of life of the vulnerable social groups in the rural society, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana is a scheme that brings in the local community in planning and implementation. The scheme succeeds the Food for Work Programme, the National Rural Employment Programme and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee. There is an evolution in the perspective of the scheme. The objective initially was to provide food, then work and now an equal emphasis on productivity in the short-term and long-term.

The primary objective of JRY is generation of additional ~~get~~ful employment for the unemployed and underemployed men and women in the area who live below the poverty line. It also aims at creation of productive community assets for direct and continuing benefits to the poverty groups and for strengthening economic and social infrastructure so as to achieve rapid economic growth and steady rise in income of the rural poor. Finally, it is visualised to improve the overall quality of life of the poor. In addition to preference to scheduled castes and tribes, 30 per cent is reserved for women. The centre and states will contribute on 80:20 basis. Eighty per cent of the funds to be allocated to each district will be distributed to the village panchayats. The remaining 20 per cent may be utilized for works cutting across the panchayats. Foodgrains will be supplied to workers at the subsidised rates.

The resources are to be utilised for the sectoral works of economically productive assets, social forestry work, individual beneficiaries scheme for SC/ST and other works including roads and buildings.

The works at the village level should be selected from a list of approved list, based on the felt-needs of the people and the priorities indicated through the village assembly meetings. They are to be appraised technically

and approved by the officials of the panchayat union. Thus the Gram panchayats are responsible for planning and execution of the scheme. A committee of the village panchayat will supervise and monitor the implementation of the works. At least one representative of the weaker sections will be a member.

Maintenance of Assets

The assets created under the programme are to be taken over by the concerned regular departments. Assets for which no maintenance fund is available are to be kept under the panchayat.

LESSON - 5.4

ADULT EDUCATION

Importance of education for individual and social development is well established. Certain level of education contributes to better living, participation in social organizations, effective leadership and a more liberal world-view resulting in being receptive to new ideas. It is a facilitator of social and economic change. Even acceptance of technological innovations goes well with education. Very low literacy in India prompted the planners and political leaders to incorporate education as a development goal. The out-of-school adult population has been receiving increasing attention since independence, though not with much success.

Adult education aims to remedy the educational deprivation of adult population and to open the windows of learning. Education will enable the learners choose from all the new opportunities offered by the changing environment. Planners, administrators, and change agents view education as a promoter of innovators, who in turn would carry forward the process of diffusion of innovations in the community.

Realising these facts, the country launched a massive adult education programme in October 1978. The National Adult Education Programme lays great emphasis on reaching men and women for their upliftment. The process of imparting reading and writing skills is to be integrated with the functional needs of the deprived groups. Further, the programme was tailored to remove the rural-urban and gender differences in illiteracy with an equal emphasis on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The programme targetted those in 15-35 age group as they are the most productive, and investment on them will have relatively higher benefits for the nation.

Based on the past experiences with similar adult education programmes, it was visualised as part of human resource development with

suitable strategies. The initial literacy programme was to be followed by continuing education so that new literates do not slip into illiteracy again. Functional literacy was also to revolve around a major development programme and combined with action. Finally it was treated as a medium to mobilize and organize the deprived people by orienting them to their rights and privileges. To ensure sustained interest it emphasized the need to make it relevant to the learner's environment and provided for flexibility in duration, time, location and instructional arrangements; and curriculum, teaching and learning materials and methods could be diversified.

As the existing infrastructure is insufficient, various agencies were mobilised for the purpose. Universities, colleges and voluntary organizations were drafted for training, production of teaching aids and evaluation of the impact. At the district and block levels Education officers with supportive staff were placed. Non-governmental organizations working in rural areas became active partners in planning and implementation of programmes at the field level as well as in post-literacy follow-up activities. Later they entered into resource development, training and research. Organization of library services, production of literature for neo-literates and creation of organizations for them became the new features of the programme.

The National Service Scheme in operation in the universities was made a nodal agency. Units at the colleges affiliated to the Universities were coordinated and monitored at University level. Central Board of Workers' Education with its network catered to the industrial sector. Three types of functions were placed at the field level. Each centre was manned by an instructor. A supervisor was assisting about 20 centres in a cluster of villages. A project officer was responsible for the programme at the block level.

Evaluation

The Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, made an evaluation of the programme in Rajasthan. Others followed in Gujarat, Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh. A critical lacuna noted pertains to the background of

Instructors: they are not from the community they served. The apprehension that stems from this finding is that many criteria or features envisaged may not materialise. Training offered to both instructors and supervisors was found inadequate in terms of duration and quality.

The flexible curricula were not integrated with the local cultural environment. As a result the programme discounts the functional component of literacy thus failing to enthuse the learners. Neither there was any concerted attempt to involve the various media of communication in motivating for enrollment and retaining them. The priority accorded to the coverage in terms of number of centres and learners has been at the cost of quality.

Whenever women instructors were involved, the programme succeeded in reaching women. Mostly these centres had exclusively women learners. However, many communities are too small settlements to permit different centres for women and men.

National Literacy Mission

Eighth Plan envisaged that Adult Education Programme would cover four crore illiterates by 1990 and another six crores by 1995. With the launching of the National Literacy Mission in 1988, the targets were raised and strategies recast. While Rural Functional Literacy Programme was given a thrust as a post-literacy teaching-learning process it was reoriented with area specific and time-bound approach to achieve 100 per cent or Total Literacy. Non-governmental organizations are involved on an unprecedented scale. Students, particularly at the university level, have been mobilised. Steps were initiated sufficiently early to utilise the traditional and folk theatre forms for the literacy mission. For the first time television time is devoted to this massive effort.

The post-literacy programme was institutionalised by establishing 32000 Jan Shikshan Nilayams. Introduction of Improved Pace and Content of Learning reduced the duration of learning from 500 to 200 hours of contact. Technology demonstration programmes were initiated in 42

districts to carry the programme to a higher plane. In order to enrich the technical and academic resource support to adult education, a National Institute of Adult Education was founded in January 1991. The Institute would also undertake quality research and evaluation studies.

Area-specific and time-bound mass campaigns for total literacy were launched first in Ernakulam district in Kerala in 1989. Active participation of students and voluntary agencies was its notable feature. Then it was extended to other districts in the state on the basis of earlier experience. Twenty five districts had achieved total literacy while 80 districts in the nation were at different stages of progress in 1992. Three crore illiterates had become literates with the help of 30 lakh volunteers.

Vocational Training

In addition to eradication of illiteracy among those who are between fifteen and 35 years of age and universalization of elementary education the eighth plan placed considerable importance on strengthening of vocational education to cope with the emerging needs in rural and urban settings. One of the factors contributing to school drop-out even at the primary level is lack of relevance to their environment. This has created an attitude among rural parents that education breeds misfits and marginal men and women since the educated fit into neither the agricultural sector nor the others. Education also inculcates unrealistic aspirations without adequate competence. Vocational education was mooted as a way out. Essentially a terminal programme in the formal stream, it provides an orientation to the economic opportunities and certain minimum competence and skills so that they could be absorbed into the economic system at a level which can serve as a launching pad to acquire more practical training. But the vocational programmes were supposed to be supplemented by learning opportunities irrespective of age.

The existing network of Industrial Training Institutes have proved to be quite successful in imparting skills which have relevance to the present needs. Training in carpentry prepares them for automobile body building

in addition to other traditional openings. However, the mushrooming of a large number of such ITI's in the recent past without even basic infrastructure has damaged the credibility of the system. The vocational stream offered in the schools has not been quite a success for want of commitment and motivation on the part of the teachers and the learners for various reasons. But on the whole, the change in approach in curriculum, in methodology of teaching and increased participation of non-governmental organizations have infused a new vitality into the vocational education and adult education in general.

LESSON - 5.5

**TRYSEM - TRAINING OF RURAL YOUTH FOR
SELF-EMPLOYMENT**

Full employment is a step leading to removal of poverty and attainment of desired quality of life. In most third world countries, a shift from agricultural to industrial and service employment is evident in the process of development, planned as well as unplanned. Human resource development is a springboard to occupational mobility. Socialization for self-employment is a far more generative process and sustainable.

Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment is a special programme launched in the country as an integral part of development planning. It is an essential supplement to community development and Integrated Rural Development programmes. It primarily aims at providing rural youth the skills and competence to find self-employment who would in turn generate more employment opportunities. The growing unemployment in the rural society has been pushing rural people, particularly rural youth, to urban centres. The phenomenon of over-urbanisation stems from rural-urban migration followed by great stress on urban services, infrastructure and institutions. Selective migration of educated young men and women also impairs the rural leadership, making it more conservative rather than innovative. The fast and massive growth of urban slums is a direct function of failure of rural economic system. TRYSEM in this sense was conceived to tackle the problems of both rural and urban areas. The science and technology absorbed by the rural youth would help the diffusion of social change, thus reducing cultural and development lag.

The scheme, introduced in the year 1979, aims at training rural youth in the age group of 18-35 so as to help them take up vocations of self-employment. The Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, which initiated the scheme, brought together several central and state agencies, financial institutions and international agencies to deliberate on

the scheme implementation. Based on the outcomes of such seminars twelve research institutions were entrusted with concurrent evaluation of TRYSEM.

The Ministry spelt out the major objective as follows: One, the training will be practical, based on the principle of learning by doing in trades which can lead to self-employment in agricultural and allied sectors, small industries and service sector. Training needs were to be worked out at the state and district levels based on the local resources and development potentials. Forty youths would be trained every year in each block.

Two, Trainees would be selected from small and marginal farmers, landless agricultural labourers, artisans and people below the poverty line with preference to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women. No minimum educational qualification was stipulated. And three, after completion of training, they will be extended appropriate credit support for setting up their enterprises with 90 percent security.

The evaluation studies have found certain lacuna in implementing the programme. The procedure followed for selecting the youths for training entailed some loopholes. Locally influential persons got their wards drafted though they do not qualify the criteria of being weaker. A common observation made by the beneficiaries is that even a majority of the trainers are not equipped nor have the competence to impart training. Such trainers have connections with community leaders and officials at the local level. They make it by pulling wires. They lack commitment but are always busy pleasing their patrons. Tradewise qualified trainers may be involved in different centres by rotation rather than organizing training in numerous centres simultaneously in the same trade, losing the services of competent people in the process. Spreading out programmes throughout the year would facilitate better organization and quality. However, strikingly successful training programmes were also reported by those who received training. Though only a few were able to articulate on infrastructure, they

found it awfully inadequate. Some centres were not even provided with tool-kits.

Centres run under the auspices of private organization like textile mills and other NGOs with a long tradition receive high accolades. Industrial Training Institutes too fare well. They offer a complete institutional environment for learners and are well-equipped. Yet, the recent entrants among them have made a mockery of the objectives. Their trainers were not available full-time. In this light they opine that good training institutions should be developed with necessary infrastructure rather than relying on ad-hoc arrangements.

During the post-training phase, those who have been successful in obtaining financial support are satisfied whereas others portray a gloomy picture. In their view, some provision may be made in the training for maintenance of their machinery. Another suggestion by women trained in cutting and sewing is that the number of trainees in any given trade may be limited so that they will get adequate opportunities in the local community. Invariably, there is an expectation to get work on an assured basis in government programmes including contract work.

Lack of adequate financial assistance from banks as well as cooperatives is a common constraint reported. Hence they would be happy if financial support is extended before they leave the training centre. In spite of directives by the Reserve Bank of India, banks demand sureties. Supply of raw materials entails serious problems. Some feel that tools and instruments provided to them leave some gaps; supplementary requirements may be taken care of.

Grants should be released in time so that programmes can be organized throughout the year without rushing through at the end of the financial year. Releasing funds mainly to exhaust them, breeds malpractices at various levels. Annual allocations may be set apart for each quarter and progress monitored on this basis.

Training needs to be conceived as part of continuing education and followed by refresher courses for upgrading their skills and to keep abreast of time. Moreover, trying to find a market for the products right in the local community or exclusively in villages may not be a judicious approach. After all rural market is well integrated with the urban market; villagers buy urban goods; likewise rural craftsmen may cater to the urban consumers.

LESSON - 5.6

HEALTH AND SANITATION

Good health is a basic social value. It is a value of immense importance for individual and social well-being. Health is considered to be boundless wealth even in poor societies. Poor health takes a heavy toll in work, productivity, earnings as well as cost of treatment. Advances in medical science including nutrition and sanitation have reduced to a remarkable extent the losses caused by diseases. However, there are large groups of people in developing societies suffering from preventable diseases. Although health care and practice is institutionalized considerably, facilities for treating diseases vary considerably in rural and urban communities. This variation stems partly from the way people perceive health, sickness and health care. The structural and functional aspects of health care in the rural setting are described in the first part of this chapter. The second part underlines the pivotal role of health education.

Health in Rural Setting

Most rural people believe that some force is associated with every disease. Their attitudes and practices are funneled through these beliefs. Even while the sacred orientation is not decisive, their health behaviour is still considerably influenced by sacred notions. Acceptance of modern medical care is not based on any change in their knowledge on causation. Microbial theory is out of their cultural ethos, although the traditional native medical practitioners used to prescribe a course of herbal medication lasting for 48 days. These practitioners were stubborn not to reveal their diagnosis and prescription. Eventually, they had a different concept of causation and of remedy. If small pox was caused by the anger of goddess Mariamman, the proper remedy is to seek redressal by appeasing the deity with a series of ritual behaviour. Health socialization through oral traditions has been transmitting this cultural complex effectively.

Another feature of health socialization is accounting for ill-health with faulting the family and individual, omission or commission related to sacred phenomena and hence immutable and incurable. Social taboos are imposed on people afflicted with certain diseases. The sick person carries a stigma. Quick fatality in diseases like cholera, plague and small pox reinforced their sacred notions and an attitude of fatality.

Most societies had well-developed native systems of medicine accessible to all at the most for a token cost. During the British rule these systems were relegated under the onslaught of Allopathic system which enjoyed superiority derived from the benefits of modern methods of scientific diagnosis and treatment. The cure was instant. Patronage came from missionaries and the state machinery for some time. There existed a difference between care needed and care received, because not all persons needing medical care received it. The definition would also vary. A person may believe that he is very healthy when actually in serious need of medical care. This scenario is quite obvious among rural populations.

Unmet medical needs are usually greater in rural than in urban areas and higher among females than among males. The need for medical attention increases as age of the population increases. Economically and socially weaker social groups suffer many chronic diseases silently. In rural communities many of the factors of deprivation converge. In India, unlike in highly urbanized societies, there is no inadequate population to support work for a physician, though they may not have economic means to pay for it.

Most of the reasons identified by health surveys for unmet medical needs are socio-economic though unavailability of doctors may be a vital one in some communities. Expense, distance and lack of time are the most reported reasons. Therefore, in planning programmes to prevent neglect of health, attention must be given to both the cost of medical care and social, cultural and psychological issues involved. Few Indian villagers know even today the purpose of spraying DDT. Hence there is a critical need to educate

the people on the basics of health and health care, particularly those social groups who neglect health. For a vast majority of them paid health care is not accessible.

Availability of Hospital Services

The hospital or health centre has become an essential element in health care in rural areas too. Distance from a hospital is among the major problems for ruralites as most hospitals are in urban centres. Ways of making hospital services available to them has remained a prime concern in health care policies. Primary Health Centres were conceived as an answer to the health problems afflicting the spatially scattered and relatively isolated rural communities. To start with one PHC was established in each community development block consisting about one lakh population.

Availability of Health Services

In a society suffering from many a communicable disease, deprived of potable and protected water for drinking and domestic uses, unaware of the concept of sanitation and lacking even basic medical attention for maternity and child care, the services of a public health department are a valuable aid in the health care, of the rural population. Since public health activities emphasize prevention, and prevention is more economical than treatment, the failure of any country to extend this service will be at the cost of a fair quality of life.

Cost as a Deterrent to Health Care

Many rural people do not seek medical care when it is needed because it is too expensive. In their scheme of income and management of family finance, the cost of health care is beyond their means.

To sum up, low value for health care, high cost and distance in association with little transport connecting them with centres where hospitals are located serve as major deterrents. Various public health programmes were in isolation from each other. The recipient population came in contact with several programme personnel with whom they had established relationships, leaving often a credibility gap. Many policy

formulations based on systematic health surveys since the 1940s have aimed at an integrated approach to rural health problems.

The Indian Scenario

One of the indicators of health status is the prevailing death rate. Thirty one deaths occurred in a thousand population in an year around 1931 and 132 new-born babies died before completing one year. As a result, the life expectancy was low. While about 100 million suffered from malaria annually, of whom two million died every year. Of two and a half million active cases of tuberculosis, every fifth died in an year. The common fatal infectious diseases were cholera, small pox and plague. In some areas about 2.5 per cent had leprosy. The infectious, fatal diseases recurrently assumed epidemic proportion wiping out whole villages. In view of poverty among a significant proportion, undernutrition was common, leading to deficiency diseases resulting in death.

Disease and death are experienced differently by segments of population. Children and women in the reproductive age were highly vulnerable groups in the community. Forty per cent of all deaths were among children under 10 years of age, and half of them among infants in their first year of life. Frequently pregnancies and child bearing seriously impair the health of mothers in addition to high mortality among them.

The Health Survey and Development Committee in 1946 identified major causes for low health status.

1. Lack of proper medical care both curative and preventive.
2. Lack of hygienic environment conducive to healthful living including lack of safe water supply, sanitation and absence of proper removal of human waste.
3. Low resistance or immunity against diseases due to inadequate diet and poor nutrition.
4. Lack of general as well as health education, and
5. Lack of proper housing depriving them of ventilation and light.

Efforts were made during plan periods to enhance health care by integration of hospital services with the public health programme and making them health centres. Provision of essential or primary health care as close as possible to ensure maximum access to the community, became the core of health policy. Primary Health Centres at the block level and secondary units at the taluk and district levels with rising levels of specialized services were conceived in the policy framework. Patients who need attention at the latter would be referred by the Primary Health Centre. The functions envisaged for primary health care were provision of personal health services with a special focus on mothers and children, school health, control of communicable diseases, water supply, sanitary improvements, family planning and health education to the public. They would be equipped with mobile dispensaries.

Special provisions were made for the control of malaria, tuberculosis, venereal diseases and a few others. Institutional bases was expanded by establishing more hospitals, health centres and units for control of specified diseases like malaria. There was a quantum jump in maternity centres to 10,000 by 1966.

The impact has been a dramatic reduction in the incidence of many infectious diseases. India is free from small pox, free from plague and cholera, and malaria is reported only in pockets. However, the fight against the chronic diseases of tuberculosis and leprosy has been intensified only during the past decade.

Immunization has gained social acceptance. Institutional natal care has made a decisive contribution to this change. Indirectly the small family norm would have added the value of children born already, leading to acceptance of immunization as a means to provide safety to life.

The Second Health Survey and Development Committee reviewed the progress made and suggested some major steps for accelerating the tempo of activities. Replacing special health personnel with multi-purpose health workers was a landmark in the development of rural care. Each worker

would have training to tackle all the health problems in a set of villages. Repeated contacts and greater commitment would result in better utilization of the services. Besides raising the infrastructural facilities so as to have one bed per 1000 population, emphasis was also placed on remedial measures to prevent the outbreak of epidemics.

Maternal and child health were accorded priority and spanning the services right from anti-natal through natal, post-natal, infant and child welfare. One midwife for every 5000 population in rural areas with adequate supportive staff like public health nurses was made the goal. Importance was also attached to school health and feeding programmes. Health education was to be developed as an essential component keeping the total health as the focus. Training programmes for medical and para-medical staff were recommended in order to equip them for the new roles interwoven with communication and education of people. Promotion of and extending the indigenous systems of medicine was advocated.

By the time the Srivastava Committee in 1973 reviewed the progress made, substantial changes had taken place. Drastic reduction in mortality rate was brought about essentially through control of communicable and infectious diseases. Yet chronic diseases lagged behind. Declining mortality in association with fairly high fertility brought in its wake enormous rise in the population growth rate. The Pilot health projects set up in different parts of the country had developed reorganized programmes and methodology of work to reach the masses. Active involvement of local people through their leaders and with modest training proved successful. The Srivastava Committee took note of the experiments as alternative models in health care delivery. Accordingly workers would be selected from within the local community and trained to be effectively linked with the health services, reorienting medical education in tune with the new goals and reorienting the single-purpose workers for the role of multi-purpose health workers through in-service training.

Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation

Some of the conditions influencing health status are community factors. They need to be solved at the collective level and with community participation. Provision of safe water for drinking and other domestic uses for all families and maintaining the environment clean are critical components of public health. In countries where water supplies and waste disposal have been effective, diseases like cholera, typhoid fever and dysentery have practically disappeared. Various attempts including deep bore-wells are highly inadequate in meeting the water needs of Indian villages.

In respect of sanitation, community latrines of various types constructed in villages have aggravated the problem instead of reducing it. It leads to concentration of human waste without effective disposal. These places become a source of nuisance and breeding centres because of uncovered faecal matter. The low-cost sanitary latrine did not succeed for want of adequate water.

Health Education

Health education is the cornerstone for public health programmes in the long-range. People need to have new knowledge of health and health care so that they would develop new modes of behaviour tailored to achieve positive health. The World Health Organization declared health as physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely absence of illness or infirmity. Others active in health care identify five stages involved in prevention of diseases. Along with rehabilitation of persons who had experienced considerable damage, prevention of disabilities from occurring and early diagnosis and prompt treatment of illness, two positive aspects are recommended. One, specific protection against the infection of specific diseases by accepting immunization so as to enhance acquired immunity. Two, health promotion involving a lifestyle including food habits and diet pattern. Among the most important aspects of health education are personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, prevention of communicable

diseases, nutrition, physical exercise, marriage guidance, pre-natal and post-natal care and maternity and child health.

The Central Health Education Bureau was established in 1957 and a scheme was approved in 1959 by Government of India for setting up of State Health Education Bureau. These bodies provide training, produce and distribute educational aids. Health education is now integrated in all the curricula prescribed for undergraduate courses in medicine, nursing and paramedical courses, and into their in-service training.

Possibly in the aftermath of green revolution and attainment of national food sufficiency, the focus was shifted to the quality of food with the objective of improving the quality of life. Infants, children, and pregnant and lactating women were identified as specially vulnerable to under-nutrition and malnutrition. Protein deficiency was the most common element manifesting in many deficiency diseases and stunted growth and mental retardation with irreversible consequences. Supplements were supplied to pregnant women and stress on related nutrition education became an essential component of maternal and child health programmes. Increasingly these activities were integrated with immunization and school health.

International Year of the Child and the periodic reports of the UNICEF and WHO have helped focus the attention of the public and the governments alike on the high rate of infant mortality. They underlined the need to bring it down in the overall interests of development. A healthy child grows into a healthy adult and contributes to improved productivity and help reduce the pressure on the national health services. The global target of reducing infant mortality rate to 50 per thousand live births by the turn of the century is unlikely to be achieved in India. The present IMR is around 120. An optimism is shared by some organizations based on the policies and programmes launched already and the availability of both technology and expertise to improve health and nutrition delivery system.

Over the years, many programmes have been launched for the development of child health. One which has shown great promise is the Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) programme. Started in 1975, it seeks to provide a range of services to children below six years of age, pregnant women and lactating mothers. The services include essential components of health, nutrition, pre-school education and non-formal education delivered by a local village woman (Anganwadi worker) trained specially for this job. Evaluations by the Central Technical Committee have brought out progressive improvement in the delivery and utilization of nutrition and health services through ICDS. Decline in prevalence of malnutrition among pre-school children, infant mortality rate, maternal mortality rate, neonatal mortality rate as well as birth rate has been recorded.

Child malnutrition is not usually visible, not always caused by lack of food and does not always mean that a child is hungry, according to UNICEF. Its most common symptoms are low energy, slow growth and reduced resistance which are invisible. A moderately malnourished child in a rural community spends less energy in running and walking. This energy saving happens at the time when play and environmental stimulation are vital for the physical and mental development.

The Child lives from one minor illness to another. This is the heart of the problem. Infections cause malnutrition by sapping the body's energy, by reducing the body's absorption of food, by draining away nutrients through vomiting and diarrhoea, and by depressing the appetite so that the child does not want to eat. They are ten times more likely to die from an infection.

This redefinition of the child health problem set the stage for the revolution in child survival and development. Simple low-cost techniques have been commended by UNICEF and are now available empowering parents to reduce the frequency and severity of assaults on their children's growth. In India intensive campaigns have been carried out to popularise

them. The techniques are oral rehydration therapy, promotion and retention of breast-feeding, immunization and regular growth monitoring. International organizations have provided an impetus to these programmes. Several non-governmental organizations have joined these missions. All media of communication are very effectively utilised in disseminating the messages.

LESSON - 5.7

DISTRICT RURAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES (DRDAs)

Overall rural development has to be a two-pronged approach in the sectors of agriculture and agro-industries so that reliance on land could be reduced while promoting employment opportunities. The Government of India's scheme for the development of small-scale industries in rural areas is to provide more employment and improve the quality of life. The District Rural Development Agencies have been established in 384 districts to monitor and co-ordinate the working of various rural development programmes. It is like a single window to make concerted efforts to provide a package of support to existing as well as prospective entrepreneurs. They help for setting up new projects as well as for expanding existing enterprises. Since the manpower includes technical, economic and extension personnel, entrepreneurs are provided with complete guidance in selecting suitable projects, appropriate technology and required inputs.

Traditional rural avocations like poultry, carpentry and bee-keeping have been retained as thrust areas. For tapping locally available forest and mineral resources, small and medium-sized manufacturing units may be thought of.

Books for Further Reading

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. Desai, A. R. (1969) | : Rural Sociology in India. Bombay: Popular Prakasham. |
| 2. Gandhigram Trust (1974) | : Rural Development. |
| 3. Desai, Vasant (1986) | : Rural Development Vol. I. Bombay, Himalaya Publishing House. |
| 4. Government of India | : TRYSEM. |

Questions

1. Discuss the special features of the Integrated Rural Development Programme.
2. Discuss the social and economic context in which Jawahar Rozgar Yojana was formulated and its impact.
3. Examine the objectives of adult education, functional literacy and continuing education programmes and their inter-linkage.
4. Analyse the relevance and impact of vocational training and TRYSEM.
5. Portray the health and sanitation programmes and their social relevance.

UNIT - VI**RURAL PROBLEMS****LESSON - 6.1**

POVERTY AND INDEBTEDNESS

Rural problems, like social problems in general, are conditions or behaviour patterns that are considered undesirable by a considerable section of a society. They also recognize that corrective measures are necessary to cope with and reduce the scope of these problems. Accordingly, there should be a subjective perception as undesirable of an objective condition. If drinking alcohol is viewed normal, then there is no social problem of alcoholism. Social problems do not lend themselves for easy diagnosis as the causative factors are many. Solutions to social problems are very complex as many agencies, right from family to larger society, need to participate in the endeavour.

The emergence of the concept 'welfare state' brought about a thorough reorientation in the attitudes and views of people toward the social problems afflicting groups and individuals. The members of a society suffering poverty are not considered deserving to suffer the problem as they are the products of society and there is a social context which gives rise to problems. Solutions are sought in the society and its groups.

Some social problems are commonly found in urban areas while others occur usually in rural communities. There are problems concentrated in some groups, classes or castes since their position in society and access to resources are different from those of other groups. Blacks in U.S.A. suffer more poverty and more frequently than the whites. The Scheduled Castes experience it more than others due to limited access to economic resources like land and social resources like education. Their disabilities were legitimised by caste ideology and institutionalised by the polity. The whole of third world is characterized by a vicious circle of rural poverty,

unemployment and indebtedness. Poor human resource is also the product of illiteracy, and poor health and sanitation. The present and the next chapters deal with these problems.

Poverty is both an individual and a social problem. The Philadelphia Chapter declares that poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere. Gillin and Gillin define poverty as a condition in which a person does not maintain a scale of living to provide for his physical and mental efficiency; he is not able to function according to the standards of his society. This may be because of inadequate income or unwise expenditure. Further the state of insufficient supply of required things affects not only an individual but also those dependent on him for health and vigour. Hence it is a social deprivation that stems from maldistribution of limited resources.

As a result of comparative studies on poverty in different cultures, poverty is classified into two types. The first type is absolute poverty which entails failure to get minimum subsistence provisions needed to maintain health and working capacity. For long these needs were treated as the basic needs of food, shelter and clothing. However, the concept of minimum or basic needs has been redefined to include education and health care. In the light of fundamental reorientation with reference to development it has been further revised. Mere economic growth measured in terms of per capita income and gross national product are considered inadequate. Any development should reflect in improvement in the quality of life of the population. Longer life expectancy, higher literacy and better nutritional status are but a few indicators of the quality of life. This perspective is in consonance with the welfare goals of governance.

Many modern societies have become affluent. Everyone may get food and other necessities but some feel quite inadequate about the equality or degree of resources accessible to them. Not being able to have a television or a private automobile one perceives himself poor. This perception stems from a comparison with those who possess them. The feeling of deprivation

of this kind is called relative poverty. The scale of poverty line may not be quite applicable to this situation.

Sometimes the society views some members or groups as poor while the poor themselves may not feel poor. Prolonged poverty, belief in fatalism or perceived inability to look beyond their present lot would account for not realising their poverty. The planning commission in India adopted a simple measure for definition of poverty. Assuming that a daily intake of 2400 calories per capita in rural areas and 2100 in urban areas, the corresponding monthly consumption expenditure was computed: Rs. 65 and Rs. 75 during 1980 - 85. The figure is revised based on price index. To supplement this, a household having total assets of less than Rs. 5500 in 1984 was defined as poor.

Effect of Poverty

Besides starvation, malnourishment and death from persistent exposure to poverty, they also tend to get tired, feeble and suffer brain damage particularly during childhood. A set of deficiency diseases are closely associated with poverty. Class conflicts arise even in defining welfare. Income distribution evidences high disparity, the lowest 20 per cent getting five per cent while the highest 20 per cent cornering 41 per cent.

The impact of poverty is also reflected in the housing standards. More than the limited space, the multiple use of the single, ill-ventilated room which gives rise to other associated problems of ill-health, lack of privacy and an environment not conducive for children's studies contribute to their low school performance. Already the poor attend schools with more discipline problems, less skilled as well as less committed teachers, and lower achievement scores. Children from poor families, further, get less educational support at home and have poorer study conditions, so that families pass on their disadvantages even though they want their children to go for higher education. Income of parents and their education are powerful factors bearing on the life-opportunities the children get. The poor

are also concentrated in low-paid, dead-end jobs with little scope for occupational mobility which too are unstable.

Who constitute the poor? Children below 15, elderly, chronically sick, those who are busy caring for their numerous children and fatherless households being headed by the disadvantaged mothers.

The environment of poverty implies vulnerability to disease and reduced learning ability: Lack of education conserves superstitions and curtails the scope for self-employment. Low skills, low productivity and low income form a self-sustaining package.

The foregoing description of the consequences and conditions associated with poverty attribute poverty to social structure, a structure that perpetuates poverty by regulating the access to societal resources. Only when the poor reach a threshold level with assured income, they would embrace higher aspirations and seek to join the mainstream. The key to the fight against poverty lies in structural changes. But concentration of political power and command over resources in the hands of the ruling groups may not permit the structural reforms to materialise easily. Interventions by the state in the form of employment guarantee scheme, food for work, TRYSEM and so on were aimed at pushing the poor to the threshold level from where they would take-off.

Culture of Poverty

Galbraith observed that the world's poor live in rural areas and eke out a living from the land. There is little margin for error or risk, and so they accept their lot. Their religions reinforce this outlook by encouraging them to accommodate to conditions on earth and look to a better after-life. In this sense they do not lack resources. But their fatalism and other weaknesses make it unlikely that they will rise up from poverty. Oscar Lewis proposed in 1959 the thesis of the culture of poverty based on his studies of Mexican and Puerto Rican families residing in the urban slums. The poor were substantially alienated from the rest of the society such that they had to develop ways of coping with a hopeless life situation.

distinct from the ways of the rest – A way of life, a sub-culture, that is different from mainstream socio-cultural milieu handed on from generation to generation along family lines. Whenever it occurs, its practitioners exhibit remarkable similarity in the structure of their families, interpersonal relations, in spending habits, in their value systems and in their time-orientation.

It represents an effort to cope with a sense of hopelessness and despair. It arises from the realization of the improbability of achieving success in terms of the prevailing values and goals of the larger society. Once the culture of poverty has come into existence it tends to perpetuate itself. The families are not psychologically ready to take advantage of changing conditions. People in a culture of poverty save little, produce little wealth and receive little in return. Chronic unemployment and underemployment, low wages, lack of property, lack of savings, absence of food reserves in the home and chronic shortage of cash imprison the family and the individual in a vicious circle. The family makes frequent purchases of small quantities of food at higher prices.

For a time there was a debate on whether poverty is a cultural or a structural phenomenon. Later it was realised that structure and culture, though independent conceptually, are interdependent and interactive. Poverty is a product of structural as well as cultural forces and hence policy interventions need not always be exclusively structural or cultural.

Persisting Poverty in India

The inequity of the land tenure system and a heavy taxation of the cultivators resulted in the permanent poverty of the rural people in India under the British rule. Fighting poverty was underscored in development planning after independence. Direct assault on poverty was accepted in the early sixties as generalised economic growth did not benefit the very poor constantly increasing in number. Serious attempts to define and measure poverty revealed extensive incidence, about a half of the population in India living below the poverty line. Further, what is alarming is that a

considerable proportion of them live far below the poverty line suffering severe destitution or destitution. Added to this, in terms of absolute numbers, the number of persons living below the poverty line in rural areas has gone up from 245 million in 1973 to 256 million in 1978.

The problem is compounded further by insufficient collective access to resources for the rural households, in addition to unequal distribution of community resources. To keep pace with the technological upgradation set in motion by the process of liberalisation, priority has to be accorded to human resource development.

Serious regional variations are also observed. In Orissa the poor constituted 66 per cent as against 15 per cent in Punjab. The disparity is bound to widen as the former is attaining a lower socio-economic growth than the latter. The poor also continued for long as powerless and occupying the lowest social position in the social stratification system. The convergence of disabilities and deprivations brought into existence bonded labour, miserably low wages, indebtedness and exploitation. Hence, the strategy to fight poverty has to reckon with these special features. The integrated rural development programme and a score of others have been in operation while the percentage of poor has risen. The major problem lies in lack of commitment and ineffective implementation wasting the national resources in the process. The changes in the recent past in the distribution of political power and the consolidation of the scheduled castes and other backward classes appears to offer a new dimension to the implementation of programmes not only for poverty alleviation but also for positive gains of development and improvement in the quality of life of the masses. However, even if the political change proves to be a necessary condition for the socio-economic transformation, it may not be sufficient as corruption is a deep-rooted malice which knows no political hues.

Causes of Rural Poverty

The statement 'the rich get richer and the poor get children' is pregnant with vital clues to poverty. The steady growth of population and the growing

demand for land in association with inheritance laws have brought about fragmentation of holdings. The poor experience higher mortality, particularly infant and child mortality which sustained the preference to have a large number of children. By and large lower income groups tend to have larger families.

Growth Factor

Considering the lack of development and continuous high growth in population since the 'Great Divide' in 1921, the growth and rate of growth achieved even after independence has been dismal. It may be partly due to slackness in implementation of schemes and partly due to centralisation and vested interests in conditions of near monopoly, even after such conditions have served their purpose at the early stages of planned development. The system failed to generate adequate employment opportunities.

Asset Distribution

The way in which assets are held and utilised makes a great deal of difference to the economic processes. The abolition of intermediaries in the agrarian sector means intensive use of productive resources owing to self-interest and the motivation to maximise the production. Ineffective measures for redistribution of land-ownership also curbed the initiative. On the other hand, uneconomic holdings brought about contentment with poverty and semi-poverty. Pragmatic policies are in need.

Regional disparities in growth, fairly immobile population, failure to enforce minimum wages and a price policy governing agricultural produces not conducive to capital formation are other factors associated with development far below the desired levels.

Rural Indebtedness

The rural poor get inadequate employment, earn low wages and save little. They have very little assets to rely upon to tide over even seasonal starvation. This situation has all the requirements to breed indebtedness. Any debt from a potential or actual employer implies different shades of

bondage including low wages and high interest. While poverty may lay the foundation for debt-trap, debt reinforces and sustains poverty. The adage 'The Indian farmer is born in debts, lives in debts and dies in debts' has greater relevance to the rural landless.

All rural households in 1971 had a debt burden of Rs. 3848 crores. The cultivator households who formed 72 per cent of rural households carried 88 per cent of the total debt. Agricultural labourers and artisans shared 4.7 per cent and 1.4 per cent. Forty six per cent of cultivators, 36 per cent of agricultural labourers, 39 per cent of artisans and 32 per cent of non-cultivators were indebted. The higher the asset, the greater the debt. The average debt of rural households was Rs. 500 ranging from 180 to 1050 and the highest among cultivators (Rs. 605). The classification of debt according to sources reveals limited share of institutional credit, though increased from 17 per cent in 1961 to 29 per cent in 1971. About two-thirds of institutional credit came from co-operatives. But the landless and artisans received only 4.5 per cent from institutions.

Purpose

The pattern of expenditure out of the debt may be often mixed. Hence it is a convention to take the major purpose for which a household borrows from outside into account. Capital and current expenditure on farm and non-farm business are the most common productive purposes for which rural households borrow. The share of production expenditure in the total debt increased substantially from 38 per cent in 1962 to 50 per cent in 1971; among cultivators it rose from 40 to 54 per cent. Debt related to household expenditure declined from 49 to 38 per cent. The debt for repayment of old debts and litigation declined. The debt for production purposes among artisans and agricultural labourers was 23 per cent and eight per cent in 1971.

LESSON 6.2

CHILD LABOUR

The Declaration of the Rights of the child states: "Mankind owes to the child the best it has to give The child shall enjoy special protection and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation".

This declaration marks a basic departure from earlier views on child labour. The status of childhood gets associated with a set of rights ensuring special protection with parental emotional and resource support rather than child abuse, low wages and so forth. Children are entitled to resources that enable them to learn and develop; child labour be eliminated rather than improving their working conditions. The shift from perceiving education as a right to education enforced as a duty is a milestone in the history of the relationship between children and the state. Compulsory primary education is the policy instrument by which the modern state seeks to remove children from the labour force. By extension the state stands as the guardian of children, protecting them against parents as well as potential employers.

In Agriculture

In folk cultures and peasant communities children had specific tasks. Older children were helping in looking after younger children. They were keeping watch on the crops and frightening away birds and beasts. For the children of cultivators, artisans and craftsmen, education in their family occupation commenced early. They started contributing to the family income.

Their work, however, was not arduous though time-consuming. Their elders did activities involving heavier labour, children could in fact combine recreation with their limited work roles. Often work was not separated from home at this stage. The negative aspects of children's work was brought into prominence by the Industrial Revolution as work was dissociated from play and education as well as from home. The pauper children working in the cotton factories were housed in overcrowded and insanitary dormitories and worked for even 15 hours a day for paltry wages with improper ventilation. France, Germany and Belgium manifested all these conditions during the early days of their industrialisation.

In India during the feudal period child labour was employed primarily to tend the livestock. But wherever codes of caste system were elaborately developed deprivations of these children took various forms including bonded labour in some areas. In a predominantly agricultural economy like India, the task of estimating the actual number of children engaged in agricultural work is difficult. But a large force of child workers is involved in agricultural operations. The child population in 1981 was 255 million of whom 16.25 million were engaged in employment as against 10.7 million in 1971. About 79 per cent were working as cultivators (36 per cent) or agricultural labourers (43%) at both points of time.

Agricultural labour enquiries revealed that in agriculture, in the family circle, children are given jobs suited to their age such as taking part in gathering fuel, tending of crops, looking after cattle, etc. Children are also involved in agricultural operations as part of the family units employed. A child has to labour on account of a loan taken by parents. Majority of bonded labourers began their life in such bondage as children. Bonded labour in lieu of payment of debt is common among scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Children of the debtor look after the cattle of the master while the women folk work as domestic servants. But in spite of such services by the entire family, only the interest on the loan is remitted in their accounts. Hence the cycle continues. In a landless family a boy may start working as a bonded labourer or otherwise from the age of about

eight. Fortunately, in regions where Backward classes movements have taken roots along with socio-economic development, bonded labour has fast disappeared.

In Plantations

The number of children living on the Assam tea gardens in 1877 was 46,500 out of a labour population of 1,57,000. The number consistently rose to reach 4,49,000 in 1932. The per cent of children to the total also went up from 30 to 42. On an average, about 15 per cent are children among plantation labour. Almost from the beginning, the policy of plantations has been to recruit families rather than individuals. Immigration has been a constant source of supply of child labour, besides those born in or around tea gardens. State supervision was brought in as early as 1929 to enforce the minimum age 10 to begin with and 16 later.

Plantation industries in India other than Assam remained free from state supervision and a large number of children in employment were even 5 or 6 years old. They worked practically for 9 hours as adults in parts of northern India whereas it was 8 hours in the South. Children received one third to one half of adult wages.

In almost all the tea gardens children were assigned lighter jobs such as weeding, plucking, manuring and watering.

As a result of industrialisation and urbanization, work has become labour - it is repetitive, mechanical, physically arduous and has to be done as an obligation. Labour of this kind is often injurious to a child's development and in some extreme circumstances exploitative. Large scale incidence of child labour also followed. The relevant age group is 5-14.

About one third of the total number of child workers in the world during 1975 were in India.

In developing countries, the problems of child labour in both rural and urban areas is chiefly one of poverty and unemployment. These conditions are a result of underdevelopment and unequal distribution of

land and other production assets. The Committee on Child Labour (1979) estimated that about one half of India's population subsisted below the poverty line. Parents under economic compulsions want their children to care for themselves as early as possible or to become a source of income to the family. Another growing factor is alcoholism, of father causing misery to the entire family. Men spend their earnings on liquor and even stake claim over the wages of women forcing children to drop out to supplement for family subsistence.

Many employers prefer to engage children as they work for a lower wage than adults. This in turn increases unemployment and reduces wages for adults forcing them to put their children to work to meet the subsistence needs. When children are substituted with low wages for adults, there is widespread decline in family income.

Commercialization of agriculture, increase in costs of outputs and emergence of new agrarian classes have led to disparity in holdings and surplus of labour.

It has a social dimension too. Child labour comes from scheduled castes/tribes and other backward classes. They lack child-related aspirations like education. Their parents perceive only some options and send their children for work. According to ILO, 26 per cent children in developing countries work due to this reason. In many remote villages schooling facilities are scarce or poor or inaccessible. Further, there may be temporary withdrawal or drop-out during peak agricultural seasons. High incidence of educated unemployment dampens the faith in the utility of education.

Finally, persistence of child labour is due to lack of enforcement of legislation regulating child labour. Only the recent intervention by the Supreme Court has accelerated the momentum in the reduction of child labour. This proves that the polity failed to tackle the problem so far. In a democratic society one of the most critical factors is active public interest in the matter. Organised pressure of concerned citizens is a powerful

stimulant to child labour reform. A socially concerned press has been the key to mobilising public opinion against the exploitation of working children. Private channels of television in Tamilnadu have dramatically succeeded recently in raising public awareness of the problem.

Voluntary groups have always played a vital role in enacting effective laws and advocating enforcement mechanisms. Determined watchdog groups investigate the abuses at the work place and official dereliction of duty in containing those abuses. They have started taking issues to the courts of justice.

Ultimately, governments are responsible for protecting child workers and for ensuring the observance of the rights and welfare of children. Today's world economic trends imply that the quality of a nation's human capital will be the most important one. Adequate education for all is the spring-board to launch human resource development.

The fundamental problem is a lack of political will. Judicial intervention has set in motion a process that is bound to gain momentum with the involvement of media and voluntary groups so as to release poor children from the burden of work that obstructs their access to education and achievement.

LESSON - 6.3

UNEMPLOYMENT

Most societies have members who are willing to work but do not find work. But unemployment is a decisive component in the vicious circle associated with poverty. Established social mechanisms are in place in several developed countries to tide over the phase of unemployment without seriously impairing one's social identity. Those who have not been successful in seeking work in developing countries may have the family institution to rely upon, but it amounts to sharing poverty in households which struggle for subsistence. This section provides a broad picture of the types of unemployment, causes and effects of unemployment and measures for reducing its incidence.

Unemployment is the state of being without work by the able-bodied persons at the current wage levels which is involuntary. It excludes those who cannot work for various reasons and those who are idle by choice. Though child labour is pervasive in India, the focus here excludes them. About 52 per cent of male workers were self-employed in agriculture and 12 per cent in non-agricultural pursuits in 1978, casual labourers accounted for 26 per cent. The self-employed and casual labourers among women were 61 and 36 per cent.

Some analysts employed the number of days in a week that a person gets employment. Accordingly, those who work for 5-6 days a week have full employment, 3-4 days under-employment and under 3 days suffer unemployment. Others adopt the categories of usual, weekly and daily unemployment.

In the seventies, there was a marginal decline in rural unemployment rates, both daily and weekly. The decline, however, was confined to females whereas males experienced a rise in both categories - from 6.84 to 7.12 in daily status and from 3.03 to 3.57 in weekly status.

There is a heavy pressure of population on land in most parts of the country. The green revolution appeared for some time to provide more employment as well as full employment. But this trend has not been maintained. The slack agricultural season frequently extends from three to six months unless there is a drastic change in the number of crops raised in a year or in the cropping pattern. To the extent farming becomes intensive and dependent on assured irrigation, there is greater scope for fuller utilisation of the labour force. But it is likely that technological advancement offsets such a possibility to become a firm trend.

Chronic unemployment and underemployment lead to low levels of wage and productivity. Intervention measures have to generate more purchasing power and improved levels of living. The poorer households experience higher incidence of unemployment than the better off households and the worst sufferers are agricultural labour households.

Seasonal Unemployment

In the rural economy seasonal unemployment is so common that it makes the workers migrate to other places in search of employment in spite of facing hardships and privations of uncertain existence at the new place every year. In addition to recurring seasonal unemployment, droughts too force workers to move. In regions where new industries are set up, land is diverted for other uses causing a reduction in demand for labour, unless new skills are acquired. Another phenomenon which may be transitory is unwillingness to work for more than three or four days a week in areas where the wages so earned are adequate for subsistence. Lack of aspirations to save and to create assets possibly underlies the state of 'wantlessness'.

Causes of Unemployment

In countries like India where the forces of development have been unleashed to bear upon mortality, population growth has been accelerated. It stems mainly from a sharp decline in death rate and a stable or a marginally declining birth rate. Not many countries are able to adapt the development mechanism to cope with the rising population growth. Rapid

growth of population has the effect of more unemployment. Right from the British regime, traditional crafts and rural industries have degenerated displacing many from these sectors. The growth of modern agriculture-based and non-agricultural industries likely to create more employment has been negligible.

Ill-health contributes to the problem directly and indirectly. Fourteen per cent of population was recorded sick perennially suffering from chronic diseases like tuberculosis, leprosy and malnutrition. They breed fatalism and lack of aspirations. The younger generations increasingly tend to look toward non-agricultural employment and are mentally not prepared to do agricultural work.

Effects of Unemployment

Lock-out and unemployment in the formal sector have very serious consequences at times – suicide, forcing women in the house-hold to immoral traffic and withdrawal from social relationships. They act upon the health in a perceptible way and on the morale and social life of the individual, family and on the community in a very subtle way.

Unemployed have little or insufficient resources to maintain their health and the health of family members. Meagre food and food devoid of required nutrients such as protein and calcium reduce the resistance or immunity against diseases and hence they become sick more frequently. Their inability to pay for even minimum medical care is obvious. Poor health care in conjunction with poor nutrition status reduces the general health status.

Personally the unemployed person suffers from lack of social and mental health as well. Unemployment weakens his ambitions, blunts his endeavour, saps his self-respect and damages his self-image, shatters hopes and generates guilt that he is failing to provide care and support to his family. New entrants become disillusioned, delinquents and anti-social elements.

Due to perceived loss of status he tends to isolate from the existing contacts. His emotional maladjustment and lack of resources affect his

family in many ways. Besides poor standards and quality of life, other members are forced to take up work of any kind abruptly without preparation and for meagre wages. Child labour and educational drop-out are problems of growing concern in the light of rights of children. These compound into community problems necessitating more welfare expenditure.

Measures of Remedy

India is possibly a society with all conceivable policies, programmes, infrastructure and budgetary provisions, but with limited impact. The existing schemes for rural development can be strengthened by making them more transparent. The current process of liberalisation would help remove some of the impediments to development whereas, revival of Panchayat Raj institutions with the constitutional support extended now will remove many others.

Effective control over child labour has been made possible by the intervention of the judiciary. Eradication of child labour needs to be interwoven with compulsory primary education and noon meal scheme or integrated child welfare programme. A welfare scheme like free food is given a development edge when it is tied to school enrollment which will help achieve long-term development goals.

The health services available to rural communities from Primary Health Centres and the Community Health Workers are quite adequate if monitored effectively. The referral scheme for specialised medical care when needed has remained a poor link in the whole scheme.

Vocational education needs to be made dynamic and responsive to the changing needs of industries. Some others need to be pruned so that they become realistic rather than aiming at making entrepreneurs overnight.

Voluntary agencies have of late fallen in line with 'mainstream corruption'. The measures intended to remove this hurdle deserve to be extended to the voluntary agencies working in various fields supposedly for rural development.

LESSON - 6.4

ILLITERACY

The Present Scenario

India is the world's largest producer of child labourers and of illiterates. Of the 85 million children in the 6 - 14 age group, fewer than a half attend school. Of every ten children who are enrolled in the first grade, only four complete four years of schooling. This is not sufficient for achieving and retaining literacy so that they do not relapse into illiteracy. Resolution of child labour depends on the extent to which India is able to counter the long-established traditions of sending children out to work and is able to get children into the school. On the other hand, programmes like adult literacy can be viewed only as temporary measures to correct the mistakes of the past. It is foolish to go on committing mistakes to be followed by corrective measures.

Article 45 of the constitution of India stipulates that "that State shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of the constitution for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years". After half a century as against ten years, what is the state of affairs with regard to literacy?

Enrollment

India allocates less of its national resources to primary education than most other low-income nations. Outlays on elementary education declined from 56 per cent in the First Plan to 36 per cent in the Sixth Plan out of the total outlays on education. In spite of literacy rate climbing from 5.4 per cent in 1901 to 42.9 per cent in 1991, the absolute number of illiterates has also grown consistently. Between 1961 and 1981 about five million unschooled children joined the ranks of illiterates every year. The illiterate Indians in 1991 swelled to 482 million rising consistently from 223 millions in 1901.

What is worrying is the revelation that the rate of growth of overall literacy rate has slowed down during the decade 1981-91. Given the policy of no compulsory elementary education, India will have not less than 50 per cent of the world's illiterate population. The American political scientist Weiner states that the "politics of doing nothing" prevails in India. He commends that compulsory education is the method most likely to effect macro-level changes and ensure durable results. India's policies toward children in education and employment are shaped chiefly not by economic backwardness and mass poverty but by the belief systems of those in positions of authority and influence: officials, educators, trade unionists, social activists, academic researchers and middle-class Indians. Many continue to view the world through the lens of caste, old notions about the purpose of education, and who should gain access to it, continue to colour their views. The bifurcation that one type of education should cater to the needs of children who work with hands and quite another to the children destined to work with their minds, lies behind India's failure to enforce compulsory education and make adult literacy a success.

Retention

School drop-out is an equally important problem that needs to be tackled by an integrated approach. Of every hundred children enrolled in primary schools only 38 complete the fifth grade. Among the low-income countries, only Bangladesh has a poorer record in retaining children in schools till they achieve and retain literacy. Findings abound about the reasons. Some are related to the families while others are related to the schools besides personal factors. The school should be a place providing incentives and motivations for learning. Very poor physical environment and lack of learning materials and educational aids make the schooling a drudgery which also appears to have no relevance to their environment. Operation Blackboard continues to be on the agenda while children elsewhere have personal computers. The stone-age methods of teaching and evaluation need to be reviewed keeping abreast of the knowledge explosion and upgradation of syllabus.

Parental support

Family support is another critical aspect of education. Lack of timely support or inadequate assistance on the part of the family creates terrors in the minds of children in expectation of punishment at school. In spite of elaborate debates and deliberations as well as reports of expert committees, the burden of school-bag and home-work persist. The illiterate or semi-literate parents have no personal resources nor time to be of help in the home studies of their children. Many get out of school much against the wishes of their parents.

As a result of these forces, though the enrollment in 1982 rose to 84 per cent (66 per cent for girls and 99 per cent for boys) for 6 - 11 age group the dropout rate has remained about 50 per cent since 1951. State-wise explorations into the literacy growth have concluded that in regions where male literacy has reached very high levels, female literacy catches up in no time and without substantial additional community support. The inference is that hereafter the critical challenge is going to be retention of children in school rather than school enrollment. The Education Commission (1964) suggested an educational strategy based on a realisation that a very large percentage of children leave school due to reasons related to the unsatisfactory system of schooling, apart from cultural and socio-economic factors.

The parents are not convinced that the education imparted is suitable, or that it would result in the betterment of the prospects of their children's future. The schools are sometimes just not functioning and teachers are not taking any interest in teaching. The school atmosphere, particularly in states which lag in the development process is not conducive to children's participation. Sometimes children from the traditionally oppressed groups feel demeaned. Rigidities regarding school timings and vacations are also associated with drop-out, when it is not possible for children of agricultural households to assist their families. At times when they cannot do without their assistance they are permanently withdrawn from the school. Findings of educational research also support this conclusion. Twenty four per cent

of working children in Bombay left school because they were not able to cope with the requirements of schooling. In the city of Bangalore 22 per cent children were working because the school did not interest them.

The educational strategy has to include measures necessary for increasing the participation of girls who have to stay at home to look after the younger siblings or other domestic chores. Girls constitute a large segment of out-of-school children. Provision of child care centres and positive incentives such as school uniforms and free textbooks along with noon meal have brought about decisive changes in school retention in states like Tamilnadu.

Compulsory Education

Practically all the developed nations and many less developed ones have compulsory education policies with legal backing. Myron Weiner has found a significant relationship between legally enforced education and the banning of child labour and the former preceding the latter. While commending compulsory education for India, he observes that there has never been any serious effort to make elementary education compulsory. In states which have enacted laws, they are mere enabling legislation, permitting but not requiring local authorities to compel school attendance. There are no enumeration registers, no enforcement agents, no procedures are laid for issuing warnings to parents, and no penalties for parents who keep their children out of school (6-11 years).

One argument is that owing to endemic mass poverty, the Indian state has a duty not to compel schooling since poor parents need the income of their children. It implies, then, that compulsory education can be introduced only when basic necessities are assured for all and mass poverty has ceased to dominate the Indian social reality.

Historical analysis demonstrates that in the already developed societies in Europe as well as in Japan, compulsory schooling had actually preceded the industrial revolution and economic development. More recently quite a few developing countries with per capita incomes comparable to India's

have significantly improved their school attendance and literacy rate. People's Republic of China has been able to achieve 73 per cent literacy and 100 per cent attendance in the 6 - 11 age group within a span of 40 years after liberation. Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Kenya have achieved universal enrollment.

Right within India, the industrially undeveloped state of Kerala has got all children aged 6 - 11 and 88 per cent of those who are 11 - 14 years to school. In 1975, 82 per cent of all children who entered primary school in Kerala completed the fifth grade compared with 26 per cent for India. Hence India can do it if there is a will.

Non-formal Education

This stream occupies an important place in the overall development strategy to move toward better quality of life. Education has to be viewed as a life-long process with new learning opportunities to cope with new demands of life. Some studies have revealed that 79 per cent of children employed on wage and 66 per cent self-employed in Bombay want to pursue education without disturbing this work.

Opportunities should also be provided for those who have basic education to avail continuing education. Schools, colleges, rural development institutions may focus on the real needs and problems and offer training on solving them. These programmes would go a long way in retaining literacy through applications.

Literacy programmes, thus help remove illiteracy and help improve the skills and competence, ultimately upgrading the quality of human resources with which social and economic development can be achieved fast. Compulsory primary education, supplemented by non-formal and continuing education, has the potential to remove child labour, enable the wages to rise to levels sufficient for reasonable quality of life, and reduce the incidence of unemployment and underemployment. The vicious circle of poverty will be broken.

LESSON - 6.5

MIGRATION

Population movement from one settlement to another human settlement has been a universal phenomenon. Modernization has accelerated larger volumes of migration in most societies. The third world is witnessing a kind of rural exodus landing in urban centres. Such migration is an outcome of many other social problems afflicting the rural communities such as unemployment, low wages, poverty and poor health and sanitation. Migration which is invariably selective by sex, age, education, etc., also brings in its wake consequences to the village as well as to the city. Inter-village seasonal migration continues unabated.

Effects on Places of Origin

Migrants leaving rural areas are not generally replaced by other migrants, rural or urban. This loss of people and their contributions affect the ratio of dependency, employment, productivity and potential for innovation or acceptance of change. Basically, villages are impoverished and so are driven away to urban centres. Level of human capital is low and human resources development is poor. The age and sex structure of the out-migrants accentuates the problem. There will be fewer adults and adolescents in each household. As young persons dominate among the rural out-migrants, the income of the remaining workers must support more persons.

Agricultural production declines after substantial number of persons have left. When men do not return to perform the tilling and other farm activities which other members do not perform, productivity tends to fall; fewer men at ploughing time causes planting delays resulting in reduction of yields. In Zambia, Columbia and elsewhere, women have been forced to quit farming as they could not find men to perform some essential tasks. Others modify their farming practices so that they need not hire labour frequently. Part of the holding is left fallow since the families find it difficult to manage. As an alternative to hiring seasonal labour they also rely on kin. Old parents of men who have migrated to urban centres tend to lend

a helping hand. The old people find themselves wanted in these households in turn.

Rural-urban migration in less developed countries is usually individual rather than family migration which is more likely to be selective. Those with education, skills and aspirations are the most likely to leave a village. Consequently the village loses potential for innovation. Those left-behind tend to be inclined to conserving the traditions. This further handicaps efforts to introduce new production techniques. This handicap may be partially offset as returnees bring back new ideas. Short-distance adult migrants in India on their return to their villages have played a role in accelerating the diffusion of new agricultural technology and concepts. As the migrants used to earn more and save more, they come back with better economic resources to enhance farm investments. However, those returnees who have not sustained their interest in farming and those who migrated before socializing in farming are not able to facilitate adoption of agricultural innovations.

Economic Roles of Women

Male migration produces economic changes for the women left behind, more work being the outstanding change. Increase in farm responsibilities undertaken by wives is documented in many countries. Poorer women who receive negligible migrant remittance assume more pronounced tasks. It is not uncommon for women shouldering the dual role burden, to ask their children to absorb household responsibilities. It reduces the time they are able to devote to school and home studies. Women who assume responsibility for managing their family farm, face handicaps if they want to increase productivity. Institutional regulations and cultural stereotypes come in the way. Extension and credit agencies do not choose to work with them.

Flow of Funds

Remittance made by migrants constitute a fairly large share of the family income at the place of origin. It ranges between one fourth to one half of the migrant's earnings in Pakistan, Mexico and Nepal. International migrants in fact make much larger contributions when they send money

back to purchase land or housing plots, or building houses as is common in the state of Kerala.

Support for education of children goes up in societies where international migration takes place on a large scale. More community resources are created or the quality is improved with huge remittances. Better schools are promoted which benefit other families too. Even those households receiving uncertain remittances are motivated to purchase consumer goods which stimulates trade. Yet consumerism tends to distort the priorities.

Social Effects

The evidences show that migration widens socio-economic inequalities. The better off migrate more frequently and send back substantial remittances. The fewer among the poor struggle and their remittance is minimal. Greater social and political inequality follow the economic inequality. This also raises relative deprivation. Poor households tend to feel poorer. Cost of goods and services rises exorbitantly and beyond the reach of non-migrant families.

Remittances are used to provide better education not only for their children but also for siblings. Provision of education is perceived as an effective means of equipping children to effectively utilise the life-opportunities. However, the school curricula may be tailored to suit the aspirations of the elite rather than the farm-oriented.

Another significant effect is the rise in households headed by women when their men are away. Women assume responsibility for many decisions for which they have not been socialized as these domains were previously reserved exclusively for men. If poverty-driven out-migration is followed by meagre earnings at the new place, support for child-development suffers. In case of frequent short-distance moves, particularly seasonal moves during peak agricultural seasons, there is a tendency for the whole family to shift for a few weeks or months. Such mobility alters the child's perception of itself and its place in the world resulting in unsuccessful socialization. In societies where concerted efforts are being made to raise

literacy level, the attempt at universal school enrollment of children suffers a setback. Enrollment is made a difficult proposition and retaining children who are already on the rolls tend to withdraw even temporarily. Their families need to be motivated to bring them back to school.

Sex selective educational support leaves an imbalance in the ratio of young women and men in the marriage market. The predominantly male segment trained in urban educational institutions followed by urban employment is coveted by other rural families. The relative prospects strengthen the demand for more dowry. Many farm communities and artisans in Southern India used to give gifts to the bride during various life-cycle ceremonies in the past. The proportion paying formal dowry as well as the quantum are on the rise. It has become one of the major factors contributing to rural indebtedness.

The situation of the old people in villages presents a pathetic spectacle. In certain regions like the southern districts of Tamilnadu, rural out-migration has reached high levels. The old parents may be getting a minimum material support by periodical remittances from outside. However, a substantial decline in their social and psychological well-being is documented. Single-member households constituted by widows far outnumber such households of widowers. The widowed as well as the still married senior citizens are denied emotional support they long for. The tradition of distant kin substituting for the non-resident close kin in caring for the old is practically passing out. These little communities are too small to claim for institutional support for the old dependents. The reality is a vacuum created by the withdrawal of family and kin support and the absence of support from the society at large.

In the short run, migration propelled by lack of rural development and the selective pattern of migration commonly noticed tend to affect the household, the women as well as children. The quality of support for child development is a major casualty. The old are left uncared for and the traditional kin solidarity is no more relevant to alleviate the problem of aging.

LESSON - 6.6

HEALTH AND SANITATION PROBLEMS

The concept of health and disease have social contexts and hence these definitions tend to vary from society to society and with passage of time in the same society. The modern era in human history marks a decisive departure in the health and health care perspective and in the allocation of responsibilities for health care. A modern state has the duty to provide health care to all. Intensive international cooperative action has set entirely new trends in combating communicable diseases and in promoting positive health.

The World Health Organization defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of illness or infirmity. Several factors contribute to good health from this perspective: Housing and environment including sanitation; pure drinking water and nutrition; health awareness and attitudes; family income as well as quality of health care services and their accessibility. These factors have a decisive bearing on mortality, fertility and the quality of population.

Poor health affects efficiency and productivity, aspirations and values, and the cultural milieu. Health status of individuals and communities are determined by a series of social and economic conditions which are interconnected. A few indicators of health status are very evident; infant mortality, child mortality, maternal mortality and general mortality. The number of annual deaths for a 1000 population used to be very high around 45 - before modern medical sciences dramatically controlled the diseases such as cholera which spread from person to person. Developed nations succeeded in reducing the death rate long before the less developed countries initiated the process. Rural communities in general experience higher rates of mortality.

The nation has a creditable record in reducing mortality to a low level of about 9 in 1991 from around 45 during the early part of this century. Infant mortality is high even today, as 120 of every 1000 new born babies die before completing one year. Most of the premature deaths are caused by cough, various fevers, digestive disorders and illnesses affecting the circulatory system. Many of them are preventable by improving the environment and by modifying behaviour patterns. Poor environment and wrong practices are closely associated with poverty and related factors concentrated in rural areas.

Causes for Poor Health

On account of illiteracy or marginal education, rural people are socialized to believe that diseases, fatal epidemic diseases particularly, are caused by supernatural forces. In their world-view these associated forces need to be appeased to get out of illness. On the other hand a population which knows the causation by microorganisms will try to cope with diseases with suitable practices to overcome the bacteria or virus that cause them. They are more receptive to measures aimed at preventing the infection rather than curing when it occurs. Various immunisation programmes have succeeded in preventing diseases which used to be the major killers. India today is totally free from small pox and plague while many others like malaria are under effective control. Therefore, the dissemination of knowledge and healthy practices among the rural people is a fundamental requirement in combating diseases and improving health.

Causative organisms are transmitted by housefly, mosquito and many other carriers. Some diseases spread through food and water while others spread by air. Most water-borne diseases are amenable to control if every one drinks protected water, water free from bacteria and other pollutants. Hence supply of protected and safe water for drinking and other domestic uses forms an essential link in the infrastructure for health promotion. Similarly the breeding places of flies and mosquitoes should be eliminated from the community by proper disposal of unclean water as well as garbages.

Vaccines are specific substances which provide immunity or protection from specified diseases. By completing the full schedule of immunization, children are enabled to be free from the diseases. In spite of extensive campaigns, rural children do not enjoy immunity since many do not complete all the doses in time. Health education needs to be incorporated into the various streams of education and literacy. Immunity saves a person from contracting a disease apart from conserving resources.

Institutionalised health care has a close association with successful immunisation. Wherever families utilise the services of hospitals and nursing homes during child birth, immunization schedules prescribed by medical personnel is keenly followed. The integrated child health programmes have made great strides in covering the rural masses all over the country. The integrated approach has also made inroads into fertility behaviour accelerating the acceptance of small family norm.

Disabilities

According to a survey conducted by the national sample survey two per cent of persons in India have physical disabilities. The visual, hearing, speech and locomotor disabilities are more pronounced in rural than in urban areas due to the syndrome of poverty, under-nourishment and non-availability of health care. About one tenth of the physically disabled have more than one of the four listed above. The incidence rate of visual disability is the highest in Tamilnadu (92 per 1,00,000 population). Females suffer more frequently and among those over 60 years the rate is 422. Children of 0-4 age come next.

The main cause of visual disability is cataract and corneal opacity followed by glaucoma. Proper medical attention to injuries and eye hemorrhage would have saved most of them from the damage.

The prevalence rate for hearing and speech disability together is 570 in the rural areas and it is more among males. The highest prevalence rate is in Tamilnadu among the states. About one third of them have been disabled from birth. Paralysis of limb or body, deformity, amputation and

dysfunction of the joints are the conditions associated with these disabilities for which atleast one out of ten did not seek medical care. Polio, a preventable disease, causes 30 per cent of the paralysis and 40 per cent of limb deformity. Injury and burns are other causes. Leprosy is a major cause for deformity as well as amputation.

The nation-wide polio vaccination programme is a case as to how any concerted and coordinated effort on the part of the state organs, voluntary agencies and media of communication would bear fruits in a very short period of time.

Nutritional Deficiency and Diseases

The food that we eat is decided partly by the natural environment and partly by the cultural practices. Our daily food should supply major nutrients like protein, carbohydrate, iron, calcium and all forms of vitamins as well as minor nutrients like zinc. We need nutrients for energy, growth and maintenance. Insufficient supply leads to stunted growth and mental retardation. Proper food and nutrition help fight against the constant threat of diseases. To fulfil these requirements everyone has to include in food cereals, pulses, green leafy and other vegetables, fruits, milk, sugar, ghee and a few others. Consumption of fruits is pathetically inadequate, about seven per cent of the requirement. Next in order are milk, vegetables, sugar oil and meat in terms of gap between the requirement and consumption.

Repeated nutritional surveys demonstrate that three out of ten living in rural areas are suffering from either caloric or protein deficiency. These surveys and World Development Reports by the World Bank show that the per capita daily supply of calories is about 2100 as against 2700 required. In many European countries the supply ranges from 3535 to 3656.

The averages do not, however, reveal everything. Malnutrition is very unevenly distributed across various socio-economic groups. Those who live below the poverty line may not receive even one half of the requirement. Other vulnerable groups are slum-dwellers, children, pregnant women and nursing mothers seriously affected by under nourishment. Consequently

they sustain irreversible damages. Diseases caused by undernourishment are generally called deficiency diseases.

The usual food among the rural poor contains very little oilseeds and pulses thus depriving them of protein. Fruits and vegetables, and milk and milk products are a luxury. Villagers produce them for urban markets but seldom consume. Low birth weight, high infant mortality, anaemia and liver diseases are highly prevalent.

The objective of health for all by 2000 A.D. will not be achieved in India. Health care services are concentrated in urban centres. The cost of health care has phenomenally gone up thus making them inaccessible to the masses. Lack of support to the traditional systems of medicine has also caused havoc. Modern diagnosis has to be incorporated into these alternative systems.

When one compares the cost of treating a disease with the cost involved in preventive public health services there is not much difference. If we add the other social and economic costs of illness - inefficiency, absenteeism, low productivity and deficiency diseases which are chronic - it is more economical for any society to exercise the option of public health than the individual based curative choice. Effective health care delivery system should reach or be accessible to the small village communities and their poor constitutes a vital component in the strategy for rural development.

Books for Further Reading

1. Nanavati, Manilal, B. and Anjaria, J : The Indian Rural Problems: Bombay; Indian Society of Agricultural Economics.
2. Desai, Vasant (1986) : Rural Development.
3. Madan, G. R. (1993) : Indian Social Problems Vol. I & II: New Delhi: Allied Publishers.

Questions

1. What accounts for rural poverty?
2. Discuss poverty as a social problem.
3. Describe the nature, extent and consequences of rural unemployment.
4. Is child labour a necessary evil? Justify your view.
5. Examine the relationship among child labour, low wages and unemployment among adults
6. Examine the social aspects of rural illiteracy.
7. Evaluate the measures adopted to enroll and retain children in school.
8. Why do villagers migrate to urban areas?
9. What are the consequences of large-scale rural-urban migration?
10. Discuss the major health and sanitation problems prevalent in rural India.
11. Explain the sociology of nutritional deficiency.

UNIT - VII**RURAL SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS****LESSON - 7.1**

CHARACTERISTICS AND FUNCTIONS

Human societies are different from animal societies mainly because human societies are shaped by culture. Culture is learnt and once internalized culture constitutes the man-made environment exercising its influence over individuals and groups. Culture includes knowledge, belief, morals, customs and law, and many other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. These constituents of culture are organised around particular human societal needs. Marriage and family, for example, are social mechanisms to ensure fulfilment of sexual needs and procreation of children necessary for population replacement. Institutions are systems of social relationships for meeting the needs on a stable basis. The needs around which institutions centre are derived from biological functions and from the prevailing culture. An institution is expressed through specific organizations and groups. Kinship groups like family, lineage and clan serve as instruments to enforce certain notions and regulate relationships accordingly.

While associations are groups of people united by common interests institutions are procedures laid down and commonly shared for realising the interests. As established forms of procedures characteristic of group activity institutions serve as the machinery through which human society organizes and executes the activities many of which are required to satisfy human needs. They are sanctioned, systematised and established by the authority of communities.

Characteristics

Institutions are sustained by collective activities repetitive of forms of social relationships. Hence they are essentially social in nature. They are

transmitted through the process of socialization and hence are enduring and invoke sentiments toward their conservation.

They are universal. Though the specific forms tend to vary across cultures, institutions are found in all societies; folk, peasant and urban. Whether nuclear or joint, small or large people live in families. Their universality possibly emanates from the fact that they are organised around individual and societal needs which are universal.

As sets of standardised norms or generalised expectations, institutions function as controlling mechanisms. By regulating the social behaviour of members they enable a stable social order. Though manifested in concrete behaviour, institutions are constituted with abstract concepts. These abstract phenomena are shared and communicated to succeeding generations through written or oral symbols.

Functions

In addition to the dual functions of satisfying needs and regulating human behaviour, institutions act as ready reckoners with fairly well defined action pertinent to specific situations in social life. Further, individual members are assigned roles and statuses without much ambiguity enabling the process of appropriate socialization. By virtue of orienting members to shared and complementary values and roles, institutions bring about integration among groups as well as institutions themselves.

LESSON - 7.2

FAMILY AND MARRIAGE

A family comes into being when a couple is married in ways approved or sanctioned by the society. It gains in size with the birth of each child and decreases in size from the time the first child leaves on marriage followed by other children. Eventually one and then the other of the spouses die and the family cycle has come to an end. This group assumes many variations and performs various roles fulfilling multiple needs of its members in some cultures. The members in a family are related by blood or marriage and occasionally by adoption too.

Larger units, usually associated with peasant societies and farm communities, are called joint families or extended families. A joint family is a group of people who generally live under one roof, eat from a common kitchen and hold property in common. They participate in common worship and are related to each other as members of a kindred. It has, then, greater generation depth than other families, that is, members belong to three or more generations as ego, sons and grand children. They are characterised by mutual rights and obligations.

Functions of the Family

In pre-industrial societies, the family serves a variety of functions. It is the basic economic unit of production and consumption; it socializes the young; it is the centre of political power; it enforces norms and laws; and it is the source of religious beliefs. In industrial societies, the family surrenders some of these functions to the economic system, the school, the political system, the legal system, and organized religion. But it does retain certain basic functions.

Regulation of Sexual Conduct

In all societies sexual behaviour is linked to marriage from which lines of descent, inheritance, and kinship relationship are specified. Pre-marital

and marital sexuality is regulated in ways suitable to their environment. In some small societies where population replacement is difficult a young man and a young woman have to live together to prove their fertility. If the woman does not conceive within the stipulated time, both of them will be paired with different persons. Marriage follows conception.

Reproduction

One of the functions of the family is to ensure the survival of the society through reproduction to occur. Rules of legitimacy assign children to parents with the responsibility to care for and socialize them. Thus the biological fact of reproduction gains a social meaning. In traditional rural societies, more children are born and married couples spend a larger proportion of their lives raising children. Reproduction is less rational and less planned. High death rate and limited needs for their life make high birth rate desirable.

Assignment of Status

Another function of the family is to assign newborn children to a position in the social structure. Children are socially recognized as members of their parents' caste group, clan and lineage as well as religion. Eventually they receive support from them.

Protection and Emotional Support

Humans differ from other animals in that children are unable to survive apart from adults for several years. Because of their extended dependence, the family served the important function of caring for young children with food, shelter, clothing, care when sick and protect from external harm. They also look after the elderly and the infirm. The family provides intimate relationships and emotional support.

Socialization

Parents transmit the culture of their society to their children and make them fully socialized to be integrated into several statuses in the society. Parents mould their children by giving them emotional support and by rewarding and punishing for their behaviour.

The Economic Function

The family is also a unit of economic production and consumption. In pre-industrial societies the family is self-sufficient in many respects. The division of labour among family members is clean though informal.

Indian Rural Family

The family in rural India shapes the individual with its values and serves as an instrument to enforce community norms. Often the interest of the family takes precedence over the individual growth and opportunities. In most communities in India descent is traced in the father's line, known as patrilineal descent. But several tribal and non-tribal groups are matrilineal tracing lineage in the mother's line. There is also considerable variation in the pattern of residence after marriage. Predominantly, the wife moves to live in her husband's father's house and hence the family type is patrilocal. The Khasi tribes are matrilineal whereas the Nayers have moved from matrilineal to patrilineal or neo-local patterns. In several fields men are the effective decision-makers and major management functions are vested in them. This male dominant structure, patriarchy, is the norm in a sizable part of Indian society. Put together, the family is patrilineal.

India is often described in sociology as a country of joint families. At a given point of time most families are nuclear, but most nuclear families grow into joint families and break up later into nuclear units. A typical joint family is a larger group composed of three or more generations. This family may live together as a household and jointly carry out economic pursuits. A form of jointness is maintained where nuclear families live and work separately but without formal division of ancestral property and members congregating on occasions of marriage, death and important ceremonial occasions. They also tend to share mutual economic and social obligations. This phenomenon is conceptualised as joint family sentiment.

With greater homogeneity, and being based on peasant household, the rural family is also characterized by greater discipline and interdependence, dominance of family interest, authority of the father or other senior male

members and joint participation of members in several activities. The rural family is far more homogeneous in terms of occupation and world-view and hence is stable, functioning in an integrated manner. The second essential characteristic is that most families are based on the peasant household. There is very little occupational differentiation as all its members are engaged in agriculture. Since they hold property in common and co-operate with one another in their family enterprise spending most of their time together, the homogeneity is reinforced.

Due to common farm activities and management by senior male member, there is a close observation and monitoring which results in relatively greater discipline in enforcing local community and family norms. Dominance of family interest is the consequence of their lifestyle and socialization which strengthens the emotional solidarity. Family solidarity is appreciated as a virtue even by those who do not practice. Individual preferences are subject to family interests, fame and name. This phenomenon is often called familism as against individualism noticed in urban families.

Authority of the father or other male seniors stems from the preceding characteristics. The head of the rural family assumes powers which enable him to effectively distribute work, coordinate and control their daily life. In view of the predominance of the oral tradition and by virtue of better competence and wisdom gained over time the seniors train the youngsters for future agricultural work as well as social life. This expanded role of socialization provides the seniors added authority.

Familism and its Impact on Rural Society

Sorokin and Zimmerman, along with their associates, examined the association between family on the one hand and social and political institutions on the other in subsistence agrarian societies. They identified the centrality of family in those societies in its influence on the whole social organization. All other social institutions and relationships are

modelled according to the patterns of rural family relationships. This familism is the outstanding and fundamental trait of such a society.

The stamp of familism is expressed in a number of characteristics. Practically everyone marries and marries at an early age. Family as a unit assumes social responsibilities. The individual is accorded the status enjoyed by his family. The normative system, values and religious doctrines have been supporting the family units and stability, thus providing multiple sources of legitimacy for the joint family. Power structure and leadership pattern reflect the patrilineal authority of the family. Family ownership, production and consumption are the traits of the economic structure. Ancestor worship is a cult of family which includes ceremonies aimed at the security and prosperity of the family.

The urban family members are oriented in different ways. The urban centre provides diverse opportunities for education, employment and independent income. Their economic interests are not integrated with the interests of the whole family. They tend to manifest not only reduced homogeneity but also diffused and individual interests slackening the family discipline, familism as well as the authority of the senior men. Hence the urban family is less authoritarian, less interdependent and less co-operative. It is no more a single productive unit administered by the family head. Extra-familial institutions cater to educational, recreational and other needs of its members.

Occupational diversity and separate income provide motivation for individual prospects while legal provisions and better awareness of them strengthen the demand for partitioning of property. The individual increasingly breaks away from family restrictions.

Impact of Modernization

The rise and development of modern industries, in association with growing urbanization, initiated several changes in the social organization. The rural economy has been integrated with the capitalist market economy, undermining the subsistence agrarian economy. Modern transport and

Communication facilities promoted their contact with urban areas bringing new ideas and values to villages. The rural society started losing the familistic world-view and the family is subject to pressure from other social institutions. Rural family is initiated into a process wherein it absorbs urban traits. Rural-urban migration is a widespread phenomenon. Rural households tend to become smaller, live jointly for a shorter span of time though property may be held in common. The products of modern industry reach out to rural people and many rural artisans move into cities seeking better prospects. The traditional Jajmani system loses its economic solidarity precipitating an overall disintegration of the system.

The establishment of schools, dispensaries and administrative and judicial machinery reduced the functions of the family as a school and as a provider of health care. The rule of custom is being replaced by the rule of law enacted by the state. The anchorage of the family is shifted from consanguinity to conjugality or both are blended. Many of its economic, political, educational, medical, social and cultural functions are shared with other agencies or lost. Family is relatively a specialised group today.

However, a few comparative studies on Indian family have added a new perspective. Even when most rural families are nuclear, there is a continuing bond, a sense of mutual obligation, among those very closely related by blood. They tend to extend economic support when one of them is in crisis, besides sharing a sense of oneness. This sentiment of jointness is a significant quality that distinguishes Indian family from the Western family.

Marriage

The family comes into being as a result of marriage, and it is also continued through marriage. Thus, marriage has important implications for the family as well as for the network of kinship. For an understanding of both family and kinship, a consideration of marriage is essential.

Mate Selection

All societies have rules that define a pool of eligible marital partners for an individual. There are groups into which a person can and cannot marry. Rules of endogamy require that people marry within certain defined groups and categories. In India socially approved marital unions can take place generally within the tribe or the Jati. But there are exceptions. Hypergamous marriage allows alliance of a lower Jati woman to a higher Jati man. This practice was prevalent in Kerala involving Nayar women and Namboothiri men. Conversely, in hypogamous alliances, an upper Jati woman can enter into an alliance with a man of a lower Jati.

Exogamy determines the categories among whom marriage alliances cannot take place. Hindus cannot marry within their clan (Kulam or gotra) because it is believed to have a common ancestor denoting blood relationship. Those who offer rice (Pinda) to the deceased and those who are assumed to share the particles of the same body constitute *Sapinda*. Alliance between them is also prohibited. In the context of marital unions seven generations in the direct male line and five generations in the mother's line constitute sapinda. According to the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 marriage between two persons related within five generations on the father's side and three generations on the mother's side are not permitted to marry. Nevertheless local custom permits such alliances. The enforcement of the rules of exogamy is strict even now. Incest taboo is considered a very serious violation.

Arranged Marriages

According to the custom, older members of the family arrange marriages of younger members. Marriage is also considered a union between families for political, economic or social purposes. Arranged marriages involve calculations and negotiations. Where people of preferred categories are to marry the process is less cumbersome. Cross-cousin and uncle-niece marriages are preferred alliances in South India. Where marriages are outside the kin group several factors are considered including matching of horoscopes of the girl and the boy.

The economics of marriage also varies from region to region and among tribes and castes. Among some tribes, the bride's parents are compensated for the loss of the girl with the payment of bride-price. This may be in cash or in kind, or both in cash and kind. In Chotanagpur, the Uranon take a gift of clothes for the bride and her relatives, whereas the Ho and the Munda offer an agreed number of cattle. Among many South Indian castes a ritual gift of Rs. 5.25 is paid as bride-price.

In some groups it was customary to offer gifts both to the bride and the bridegroom. A bride traditionally was gifted with jewels, utensils and many other utilities. These women would continue to get gifts at various life-cycle ceremonies for their children from their parents. The obligations are inherited by her male siblings on the death of her parents. Many farm communities in South which were free from dowry have adopted this from the traditional trading communities.

After independence dowry has assumed gigantic proportions. It is now demanded and bargained over, and is not given voluntarily. This tragic development is led by the new rich, government servants and professionals who happen to be the elite sections of the society whose life-styles become models to other groups.

Hindu orthodoxy does not approve divorce. However, the customary law of several jatis does recognize divorce. Those permitting it are mostly non-twice-born jatis. Major regional dominant castes do not approve of it; some of them have imposed restrictions only in the recent past. Divorce, when permitted, may be obtained by mutual consent and often with the pronouncement by the Jati or village panchayat. Unilateral divorce is allowed in some regions and communities. In Manipur, a Khaniaba man can divorce his wife at will, without having to assign any reasons.

Abandonment or desertion of his wife by the husband results in divorce among the Rajput Gujaratis of Khandesh. Divorce by deeds may be obtained generally through the intervention of traditional panchayats in all parts of India. Separation too has not been uncommon. When the spouses

reach a stage of serious incompatibility the wife would go back to her parental home and refuse to join her husband. Separation in Southern states is often facilitated by very short marriage distance. The demand from the wife to leave the joint household and set up an independent one used to be a major cause of separation in the past.

The customary law of most communities does not allow remarriage of widows and divorced women. A Hindu male could have full ceremonial marriages as many times as he liked, but a woman could be so married only once. Marriage is sacred for Hindus, but in effect this bond is applicable more in case of women.

Inheritance and succession among Hindus are governed by three different sets of laws. The Mitakshara law is the most widely prevalent one. A male child acquires at birth, rights in the ancestral property of the joint family. According to the Dayabhag law practiced in the eastern part, the inherent rights of the male child in ancestral property is absent. Under both, the position of women is one of dependence or limited to a life interest without full ownership. The Marumakkattayam law, applicable to matrilineal communities in the south, prescribed inheritance and succession in the female line, with shares to both daughters and sons. Many tribals continue the practice of their customary law.

The Hindu Succession Act of 1956 incorporated the right of women to inherit equally with men, as absolute owners. Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh have during the last decade brought about Bills giving absolute equality in inheritance. Though the judicial process is expensive and time-consuming there is a growing tendency to seek legal remedies when legal inheritance is denied.

Kinship

Traditional societies are kin-based while friendship assumes significance in modern societies essentially due to spatial dispersal of kin members. Kinship denotes the recognition of relatives either through a blood relationship or through marriage. The blood relationships are known

in sociology as consanguine while marriage relationships are called affines. On the whole, relatives have a special status. Elaborate rules provide appropriate standards of behaviour towards them which cover protection, affection, care and concern, familiarity and avoidance, respect and obedience. Kinship has important political, economic and social roles. In traditional village communities kinship still retains its centrality. Kinship ties have an important supportive or corrective role.

Gender Relations

There is ambiguity on the nature of women and their status in the Indian cultural milieu. Some sacred texts give them an exalted status as Mother Goddess and are revered and worshipped. On the other hand she is believed to be fragile and fickle, sensuous, impure and thoughtless in action. Because of her inconsistent character she has to be kept under control. Of these two contradictory images, the negative profile has been absorbed into stereotypes. Being allegedly the inferior sex, women are supposed to be deprived of some privileges and rights that men enjoy.

This ideology of subordination invaded the world-view and ethos of Indian society. Their sexuality is controlled more strictly since their defilement brings disgrace both to the family in which they are born and the one into which they are married. The norm of getting girls married before the onset of puberty is intended to preserve their purity.

Though there are constraints on women's movements, women at the lower strata have to take up work to meet their family expenses. Women in small and marginal holdings work as unpaid family labour. Task segregation on gender basis is confined to a few activities on land or in family craft. It is also believed that women's resources need regulation and control. In practice both farm and non-farm women have had some independent earning, saved a part and spent for the family. Studies by Mencher show that women earn less but contribute more for family maintenance in paddy growing areas of Tamilnadu. The property brought by women at the upper and middle strata are often used to support family

projects and of late to tide over family crises. In the patriarchal system, authority within the family is vested in the males. Women's presence in the decision-making process is not conspicuously visible though they have their own domains of household management and child care. Otherwise they pull strings from behind. There are female headed households but when children grow up, the eldest among them takes over the headship of the household.

On the whole, women have more freedom to the extent the family and the caste are governed by the little traditions. But their participation in community affairs is distinctly marginal.

LESSON - 7.3

THE POLITY

Early traditions of anthropology and sociology had assumed that simple societies did not have a system of law or political component of social organization. Consequently inadequate attention was paid to this aspect of the rural life. The attention they received during the freedom struggle has forced social scientists to have a second look at the political institution of the villages even during the distant past. The political management of the rural society is viewed from three perspectives in this chapter: the government machinery, the political parties and political behaviour which has been dynamic.

In contrast to political inertness attributed to rural people, the agrarian masses have participated in the political upheavals and movements in a number of countries. Their routine political behaviour might have been quite invisible due to internal management of most affairs without state interference. Due to non-interference and constrained by lack of transport and communication the issues were regional rather than national and the scale of mobilisation of people for action far smaller. In the 19th century, large sections of peasantry joined the revolt against the British. The arrival of Gandhi on the Indian political horizon brought about a transformation that was unprecedented. There was growing involvement of the rural people in a series of political movements like Non-Co-operation Movement of 1919 - 24, Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-34 and Quit India Movement. Since then peasant organizations launched a number of struggles which also manifested communal conflicts. Farmers have their platforms right upto the national level. No political party today has the courage to exclude the rural sector from its political game.

Millions of peasants were active players in the Russian and French Revolutions. Chinese followed. Large sections of Indonesian and Burmese peasantry took part in political struggles leading to national independence.

Critical social force for resistance movements against the Nazis came from peasant masses in France, Yugoslavia, Poland and Hungary. The third world is witnessing considerable political awakening reflected in peasant political parties and their participation in government.

Indian Scenario

Adult suffrage and political democracy have given a fillip to the transformation of rural India. The process of development has brought the rural elite in close contact with the urban world. The rising aspirations have made rural exodus a common feature and the migrants act as bridge. This has culminated in the integration of the rural communities into the main stream.

The regular government machinery functioning in the rural areas and the personnel implementing various development programmes in the fields of agriculture, health and industry provide a stable link with the outside world. This is a departure from the traditional pattern of village administration carried on by the village panchayat described in unit II. The village panchayat settled disputes and looked after sanitation and other common concerns. This autonomy has gradually eroded since the advent of the British rule. Revenue, judicial and police functionaries posted by the state from outside supplanted the traditional panchayat. Regular and development administration was passed on to the machinery created for the purpose. Even local development had to be granted and executed by the formal agencies.

Independent India retained the British pattern of administration. In spite of Community Development Projects and National Extension Services as instruments of change, the machinery failed to project the local needs and aspirations. To make the system responsive to and representative of the people the Panchayat Raj institutions have been set-up. However before the new system of governance developed roots it was marginalised in many states by dissolving the concerned elected bodies. The recent legislative measures give them a statutory status.

The new statutory panchayat is sought to be made more representative in composition by reserving positions for the weaker sections. The thrust is on development roles rather than judicial. For overall development, specific schemes have been in operation for the benefit of the landless, and other weaker sections including pre-school children vulnerable to high mortality.

The political parties are a vital conduit to carry the message of social reformation and the right to live a decent life. These parties represent different constituencies like the down-trodden, backward communities, tenants and so forth. The aspirations of these social groups are systematically raised in the attempt to mobilise and consolidate these constituencies and to retain them. The rural masses have contributed to the political changes by voting out parties and governments exercising the power of the ballot – the power of the silent masses. In view of the demographic importance – three out of four live in villages – the rural area has become the major political arena.

Another major development is the growing linkage between caste and polity, that is politicization of caste. While caste is shedding some of the traditional functions and communal relations are getting secular, new functions are also assumed. Utilising the modern transport and printing technology formal caste associations have been formed, conducting annual conferences even at the national level. Hospitals, schools, colleges and marriage halls are promoted by these bodies. They run journals. Voting along caste line is getting increasingly pronounced. Mobilisation of whole castes to achieve political ends has led to fusion of two or more sub-castes traditionally enjoying comparable status. Through such horizontal mobilisation the caste elites seek to get greater access to political power on the one hand, and enhance economic opportunities for castemen utilising political power on the other.

A significant transformation in consequence is the shift of power from the ritually twice-born castes to numerically larger farming communities.

Evidences to this effect have been compiled from various regions of the country. The rise of regional dominant castes on the political horizon is an index of this process. In some regions the transition in the power structure has been relatively peaceful while in other areas frequent communal conflict, often bloody, reflects the intense power struggle along with class struggle.

Notable changes in the political behaviour, particularly voting behaviour, are witnessed. Some decades back, the cultivating tenants in the zamindari tracts wanted better terms. Subsequently they demanded the abolition of landlords and transfer of land to the cultivators. A growing alignment of these segments with political parties and the increasing acceptance of class ideology challenge the traditional order. Peasant movements have succeeded in generating class consciousness. They hold conferences, processions and demonstrations. Political parties have farmers' wings and enter into alignments with farmers' organizations to mobilise votes.

Finally, the rural people have demonstrated that they vote on their free will. A tenant, an artisan and a landless agricultural worker would have voted in accordance with directions of the landowner in most villages even in the sixties of the present century. Money power also played a key role in influencing the voting pattern. A remote villager may not be able to articulate the parameters of his political judgment but he votes in support of a political party at the national level, supports another at the state level and votes in favour of a candidate based on personal merits at the village and block levels. He uses his discretion keeping the system vibrant.

The foregoing discussion brings out the fact that rural polity has been dynamic and anchored in its own priorities. Further it reflects the changing ideology as well as alignments in the social drama that is unfolding at present.

LESSON - 7.4

RURAL EDUCATION

The quality of population is determined by the quality of food and nutrition, health-care services, environment and education. The development process in modern times is measured with parameters of quality of life. This overall development is set in motion and propelled by education and its quality. A less developed nation like India with its masses of rural poor has to plan for universal and quality education not only for the elite but also accessible to all. Improvement has to break the vicious circle that underlies the poverty syndrome. After providing a historical sketch, this chapter examines the problems confronting the educational system in carrying forward to realise the national goal of rural development.

Value of Education

An educated person has several means to keep himself informed of the developments in the world - he gets himself educated continuously. Education as a social attribute liberates individuals and societies from the burden of beasts. Even a villager has to feel himself a part of the world community. Education enables this psychological integration by establishing relationships with diverse kinds of social ties beyond the local territorial community and the regional boundaries of kinship and caste. A person so integrated is able to better adapt himself to the changing and expanding needs and is able to overcome several deprivations suffered by illiterate and semi-literate persons.

Likewise, he is able to convert many objects available in the environment into resources. Self-sufficient village communities are a phenomenon of the past. A modern national economy, including its rural component, is interwoven with world economy. The commodities reach the world market directly or indirectly. Not only the farm produces but also agro-industrial products are produced keeping an eye on the export potentials. Consequently, world price movement of commodities finally

determines the volume and the price of products in production centres. The quality requirements need to be met. Such dynamics have made education of the masses a crying need of the day.

The traditional villager was socialized into the sacred principles and sectarian orientations. His mind-set needs to be revised; revised through education and internalisation of secular and humanitarian values. He should realise his freedom, his rights so that he seeks to attain them. Modern education can never be substituted for.

Democracy is based on decentralization of power. To be effective citizens, and to have a say in the process of policy formulation, and to have a critical assessment of the political measures every citizen needs to be educated. The village is no more 'The little republic'. The state intervenes the villages with its various arms. A villager has to deal with several forms of administrative machinery. It is indispensable for the ruralites to know the programmes, the procedures and the powers granted to the machinery and to the recipients.

There is an explosion of knowledge and many tend to characterize the present as information age. There is also technology explosion. To be a meaningful participant in the emerging culture complex, to create new art and to appreciate new art one has to stand on the pedestal of education.

Dignity of labour does not imply that man should be yoked to the burdens of beast. Man alone seeks work, but work need not mean toiling. Every human being deserves to get leisure and meaningful ways of recreation. Rural people should know about and absorb modern technology and techniques so that they enjoy the fruits of modernization. Education must train the rural poor to acquire modern skills.

Traditional Education

Education was an informal process of socialization by which the younger members were imparted the knowledge and skills relating to their traditional callings covering agriculture, crafts and services. Members of

the farm family were trained under the guidance of family elders and workers, right on their family farm. They learned by doing the tasks. It had direct relevance to the occupational demands. Anticipatory socialization – preparing for a particular occupational role in the division of labour – was possible because occupation was associated with caste. Family, neighbours and kin members oriented them to appropriate social behaviour with reference to various groups and strata from early childhood. Most forms of behaviour were learnt by observing others in given situations. Most relationships reflected stability repeated time and again. The growing youth received moral education largely from the same agencies supplemented by the religious institution and cultural activities. The religious and secular functions, festivals and celebrations organized by the family, kith and kin, the caste and the village community provided ample and repeated opportunities to observe, practise and internalize the patterns of behaviour.

The concept of the divine origin of the world and the creator determining all phenomena and happenings was a running fabric all along. Hence, the world-view inculcated by education was essentially religious. It taught a pantheon of gods and spirits behind all phenomena. The disease small pox was the result of the wrath of goddess Mariamman or Balia Kaka who should be propitiated with proper rituals. Natural forces and calamities were explained in a similar perspective. To remove gaps or cognitive contradictions mythology was compiled which dealt with the superhuman feats of God-kings. All these underline the importance of a transition from mythological to scientific frame of mind.

The social education was also tailored to uphold the precedence of family, caste and village community over the individual and his needs. It exhorted the members to subordinate themselves to the joint family and other entities. The authoritarian spirit of leadership was cultivated. The traditional education served the social order then prevailing and sustained the relevant institutions. It was imparted orally rather than relying on written matter. Specialised centres and agencies did not exist.

Modern Education

The British rule sowed the seed for the rise of modern society in India. Spread of modern education is a component of that broad process. The new education which is also formal is essentially secular and open to all. However, the spread of modern education in reality was very slow and confined to the better-off urban people who were trained to man the administrative machinery. The Indians were introduced to the liberal, democratic and rationalist ideas of the modern west. Education was not extended by the British to the rural India. Hardly 14 per cent of Indians were literate at the time of independence.

Education in Independent India

The constitution of India incorporated the aspirations of human rights and visualized total literacy. Free and compulsory primary education was elevated as a duty of the state. Education was also conceived as a catalyst and instrument to realise other development goals – a society free from diseases, poverty and unemployment. Literacy was conceived as a stepping stone to acquire further education. Adult literacy, adult education, continuing education, functional education and finally the total literacy programme are the various attempts to promote literacy followed by relevant education.

Let us address two basic issues which are complementary. One is school enrollment and the second is school drop-out. As a result of priority accorded to formal education, schools have been opened in all rural areas. Whether there are buildings or not, the very fact of having a school accessible to the poor with even a single teacher is considered a powerful change agent. In Tamilnadu, for example, a child need not walk beyond a kilometer to complete five years of schooling. The enrollment for the country has risen to 85 per cent but uneven across strata.

The child who has been brought to school has to be kept in school or brought back to school if withdrawn even temporarily during peak agricultural season. More than a half admitted to school do not complete

primary education for reasons associated with family, school or the child. For children from socially and economically weaker sections incentives have been instituted. Free books and notebooks are meant to remove a basic disability of these children in coping with the system of education. A free meal at noon is intended to offset, even partially, the loss of income from child labour for the family and to ensure a minimum nutritional level. In most states segregation of child on caste basis has been removed.

A third critical problem arises out of the first two. How to reach the out-of-school adults who are not literates? Even the regular schools have limited number of children in each class. Various attempts at bringing the adult illiterate since independence has borne limited fruits. India today has the largest adult illiterate population in the world. Even while their percentage has been declining, the absolute number has been rising owing to consistent population growth. Considering the practical difficulties, the total literacy programme has been restricted to the 11 - 35 age group. A vast network of animators with financial incentives have been at work at the times convenient to the learners who have to return from work. A second phase has been visualised to follow with a view to retain literacy acquired during the first phase. Greater flexibility in the contents and methods have been provided so as to make them relevant to their daily life.

These various measures would in the long run remove the obstacles to open access to education. All strata will thus be enabled to compete for better opportunities. This will go a long way in the attempt to create a society free from basic inequalities and exploitation which were institutionalized during the past.

The Quality of Education

After planning for educational development in independent India for fifty years, many classes are conducted under trees, in thatched sheds and in insanitary conditions. Operation blackboard continues to be on the agenda as we keep on planting trees on the same spot. A teacher has to

engage two or three classes simultaneously. For various reasons the teaching community is losing the commitment to the mission of education. The quality of teacher - education is declining.

The educational technology - laboratories, teaching aids remain at the pre-modern stage. Rote memory is the index of learning as the examination system has not been reformed.

LESSON - 7.5

RURAL RELIGION

Hinduism is often characterised as a way of life. Similarly rural religion is felt in every walk of rural social life. Religion legitimises several forms of human behaviour in addition to providing them meaning. Hence, an understanding of the institution of religion helps understand the philosophy of life translated into the institutional complexes. This chapter traces the reasons for the study of religion, its nature and the three aspects.

Sociologists observe that rural people in most parts of the world tend to be more religious than their urban cousins. The dependence of agriculture on the uncertainties of nature like rains coupled with the predominance of traditional orientation reinforced by conventional agencies of socialization makes them seek explanations to many phenomena including rains with supernatural forces. They believe in ghosts, animistic forces and in magic which are rooted in the pre-modern stages of social development.

The second reason as to why we study religion practiced by rural people lies in the outlook of the rural people which bears the overwhelming stamp of religion. Their knowledge, emotions and practical life are governed by religious beliefs and principles. Social relationships are woven with sacred creation of the mighty force. Marriage is elevated to a sacred position and their marital behaviour, procreation and various life-cycle stages are clothed in ritual concepts. Their economic organization like the Jajmani system, caste hierarchy built upon the concept of ritual purity, their education - all are governed by religious norms. Again, religious conceptions occupy a considerably large space of arts, sculpture, painting and architecture. The conceptions of health and disease, the medicine and cosmic view are fused with superstitions.

Inter-personal and inter-group relationships are governed by dogmas as repeatedly interpreted by religious leaders. Rights and duties as well as justice are closely interwoven with the locally adapted religious notions.

Provides World-View

The first major aspect of rural religion is the provision of a world view through which they visualize the whole universe. The ingredients include magical conceptions, the spirits, animistic objects, dead ancestors and mythology. In their vision, there are worlds of ancestors, spirits, gods and of celestial forces. There are deities responsible for fertility, epidemics, fire and floods.

A Body of Practices

The imposing practices fall into three groups: prayers, sacrifices and rituals. The individual has to offer prayer to family deity at home. On many occasions members of the family join in the prayer. Every clan worships an exclusive deity and most castes do so in the temple for caste deity. In some parts each street has a god for whom there are special religious festivals, particularly during Navarathiri. Villages invariably have one or more common temples. Prayers are offered to the river goddess in case the village is situated on a river and to the forest deity. In addition to these little tradition gods, people also worship at temples housing gods of the great tradition. They are located in small towns and major villages.

Sacrifices abound among rural people. Religion prescribes several kinds of sacrificial acts. They range from sprinkling drops of water and offering grains in front of deities to animal sacrifice. Sacrifices are meant to propitiate the powers and win their favour.

Most facets of life have been ritualized; conceptions like purity are given expression in the rituals of daily life. Rituals are the means by which people try to sustain the respective purity levels. Different sets of rituals were prescribed for different caste groups so as to maintain their distinct boundaries and positions in the hierarchy. Rituals are associated with most of the life activities. A ritual has to be performed whenever an individual or family or even the community initiates an activity. On getting rains, designated families were expected to commence ploughing and sowing ceremonially before others did so. A new residential premises has to be