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**Syllabus of Sociology M.A. IV<sup>th</sup> Semester for the examination to held in the year May 2020, 2021, 2022(NON- CBCS)**

**Course No. : SOC-C-403**

**Total : Rural Society & Development in India**

**Credits : 6**

**Maximum Marks : 100**

**Duration of examination 2½ hrs.**

**a ) Semester examination ( External ) : 80**

**b) Semester assessment ( Internal ) : 20**

**OBJECTIVE :**

To develop greater understanding of the rural society and the interaction of rural people. Attempt will be made to understand the rural development issues and the various developmental programmes prevalent in Indian society.

**UNIT - I      Understanding Rural Sociology :**

Origin and Scope of Rural Sociology ;

Conceptualizing Peasants and Genesis of Peasant Studies;

Theoretical and Methodological issues on Village Studies in India.

**UNIT - II      Dynamics of Agrarian Social Structure :**

Characteristic of Agrarian Society - Caste, class & Power Structure; Agrarian Movements in India - Moplah, Tebhaga, Telangana, Naxalbari Movements, New Farmers Movements-BKU & Shetkari.

**UNIT - III      Rural Development Issues :**

Concept, Indicators and Paradigm of Rural Development; Strategies, Planning & Implementations of Rural Development (based on Katar Singh); Understanding Social Inclusion in Rural Development.

**UNIT - IV      Rural Development Programmes :**

Community Development Programme:

Land Reform initiatives;

Panchayati Raj Institutions ;

Cooperatives & Self-Help Groups (SHG's);

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act Experiment ;Economic Liberalization & Social Transformation.

### **Note For Paper Setting :**

The question paper will consist of three section A.B.C. viz.

**Section A** will consist of eight long answer type question, two from each unit with internal choice. Each question will be of 12 marks. The candidates will be required to answer four questions. one from each unit. Total weightage will be of  $12 \times 4 = 48$  marks

**Section B** will consist of Eight short answer type question-two from each unit with internal choice. Each question will be of 6 marks. The candidate will be required to answer four questions, one from each unit. Total weightage will be of  $6 \times 4 = 24$  marks.

**Section C** will consist of eight object type question of one mark each. The candidate will have to answer all the eight question. Total weightage will be of  $1 \times 8 = 8$  marks

### **Prescribed Readings:**

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25. Saxena Ashish and Shivrama Rao 2005 '*Efficacy of Multimedia Technology in Indigenous Knowledge Management Convention Journal of Lucknow Management Association (IIM Lucknow) Vol 1 No 1, pp 248-258*
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32. Surjeet H.S 1992 *Land Reforms in India Promises and Performance*, Delhi: National Book Center

# ***Directorate of Distance Education***

**UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU  
JAMMU**



## **STUDY MATERIAL**

***For***

**M.A. SOCIOLOGY**

**SEMESTER - IV<sup>th</sup>**

**Course Title : Rural Society & Development in India**

**Unit : I-IV**

**Course No. : SOC-C-403**

**Lesson No. 1-19**

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## RURAL SOCIETY & DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

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**STRUCTURE**

- 1.1 Introduction (Rural Sociology)
- 1.2 Origin and development of Rural Sociology : US and India
- 1.3 Nature and Scope of Rural Sociology
- 1.4 Subject Matter of Rural Sociology
- 1.5 Conclusion

**1.0 OBJECTIVES :**

The main focus of the chapter is

- to conceptualize Rural Sociology.
- to understand the scope of Rural Sociology
- to equip with its nature and subject matter.

**1.1 RURAL SOCIOLOGY (INTRODUCTION)**

Rural sociology is a field of sociology associated with the study of social life in non-metropolitan areas. It is the scientific study of social arrangements and behaviour amongst people distanced from points of concentrated population or economic activity. Rural sociology is the scientific study of rural society. It involves a systematic study of rural society, its institutions, activities, interactions and social change. It not only deals with the social relationships of man in a rural environment but also takes urban surroundings into consideration for a comparative study. Rural sociology is a holistic study of rural social setting. It provides us with valuable knowledge about the rural social phenomena and social phenomena and social problems which helps us in understanding rural society and

making prescriptions for its all round progress and prosperity.

Rural sociology became prominent during the late industrial revolution in France, Ireland, Prussia, Scandinavia, and the US. It has been observed that as urban incomes and quality of life rose, a social gap appeared between urban and rural dwellers. It can be said that whichever advanced societies we see today, whether United States or French, they all originate from the village society. The general process is that rural society turns into a town society, then shifts to city, mega city and the metropolitan community. However, the systematic origin of rural sociology dates back to 19th century.

According to A.R. Desai rural sociology should be make a systematic, scientific and comprehensive study of the rural social organization of its structure, function and objective tendencies of development and on the basis of such a study to discover the laws of its development. Generally, when the feudal society took to capitalism, it gave rise to the systematic study of rural sociology emphasizing the impact of industrialism and capitalism on rural economy and the subsequent need for studying rural society.

## **1.2 ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL SOCIOLOGY: US AND INDIA**

Rural sociology is a new branch of sociology with studies being carried out from 19th century. The period of 1890-1920 in America saw the rural societies facing many socio-economic problems which attracted the attention of the intelligentsia thus establishing study of rural society as an academic discipline. The appointment of Country life Commission by Theodore Roosevelt was an important landmark in the history of rural sociology. It has been argued that the Second World War caused heavy destruction and damage to human society which needed immediate reconstruction. As a result rural sociology got an impetus in USA. The main concern of rural sociology came to be the understanding and diagnosing of the social and economic problems of farmers. More emphasis was placed on issues such as the internal structures of community life and the changing composition of rural populations than on their relationships with land or the social aspects of agricultural production. The prominent scholars engaged in rural sociology during this period were- Sir Henry Maine, Etton, Stemann, Baden Powell, Slater and Pallock etc.

It was since about the middle of the nineteenth century that more systematic observations on the history of the origin and transformation of rural society have been

advanced the impact of the capitalist industrial civilization upon the rural economy and social structure, in various parts of the world, forced the attention of scholars to the study of the trends of rural social development. Research in the subject of the origin and the nature of village communities which were undergoing transformation was launched.

Olufsen, Maurer, Maine, Hexthausen, Gierke, Elton, Stemann, Innes, Coulanges, Nasse, Laveleye, Baden Powell, Ashley, Pollock, Maitland, Lewinski, Seebohm, Gomme, Guiraud, Jubainville, Slater, Vinogradoff, Meitzon and others are some of the outstanding scholars who have thrown light on rural society from various angles.

Subsequently eminent scholars professors and others interested in the phenomena of the rural life have published in various countries enormous material dealing with its various aspects.

#### **As an organized Discipline in the U.S.A.**

However, rural sociology as an organized discipline consciously developed, is of very recent origin. Due to historical reasons it has originated in the U.S.A. and slowly tends to draw attention elsewhere as its importance is being realised. During what is called “Exploiter period” of American society (1890-1920), a period when the American rural society witnessed allround decay, a considerable literature, describing and analysing the problems arising out of its growing crisis, came into existence. This literature, however, did not explore, locate, and formulate the fundamental laws governing the development of rural society. It created the prerequisites for the birth of the science of rural society but did not still create that science. However, the beginnings of rural sociology may be traced to those “streams” of publications.

The first valuable work on the subject was the Report on the Countrylife Commission appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1907. A number of Doctorate theses based on the study of the rural community comprised further significant literature dealing with problems of rural life and providing, revealing information thereon. Finally a group of rural church and school studies made by individuals interested in an investigation of maladjustments in rural life constituted the third “stream” of publications. This literature served as the basis for creating the science of rural sociology in the U.S.A.

The Countrylife Commission, under the chairmanship of dean Bailey, the eminent scholar of rural problems, circulated 5,00,000 questionnaires to farmers and leaders of rural life

and received nearly 1,00,000 replies. The Commission, on the basis of this investigation, published a report in which they attempt to analyse and diagnose the defects and deformities of rural society. "This report actually provided what might be called a charter for Rural Sociology".

"An American Town," "Quaker Hill" and "A Hoosier Village", of which James Michel Williams, Warren H. Wilson and Newell L. Sims were respectively authors, represented further studies of the American rural community. These studies were based on statistical and historical data and field-interview techniques and were submitted as research documents at the Columbia University between 1906 and 1912. Dr. Warren Wilson, along with others interested in the process of rural life, carried on a number of rural church studies. These studies, together with some rural school studies and "The Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community" by Dr. C.J. Galpin based on an investigation into rural life made by him at the Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Wisconsin in 1915, comprised additional literature germane to rural sociology until 1916.

"Rural Sociology" by Prof. John M. Gillette published in 1916 served as the first college text book on the subject. Subsequently, a number of writers devoted themselves to the study of rural life and published valuable works which also enriched the literature on the subject. The publication of "A Systematic Source Book in Rural Sociology" in 1930 recognised as an "Epoch-making" work contributed decisively to accelerate the advance of rural sociology.

Later on, other intellectuals also focussed their attention on the subject and helped its further development.

Sorokin, Zimmerman, Galpin, Taylor, Kolb, Brunner, Sims, Dwight Sanderson, Landis, Redfield and Smith are some of the outstanding social thinkers in the U.S.A. whose intellectual labour resulted in a phenomenal advance of the new science of rural sociology.

The founding of the journal "Rural Sociology" in 1935 (at present a monthly) and the establishment of "Rural Sociological Society of America" in 1937 were further landmarks in the history of its growth.

In the U.S.A., rural sociology, through a new science and still in a state of immaturity, is commanding wider and wider interest among social thinkers to-day. More than eight hundred professors and research workers are engaged in developing that science in that

country.

In other countries also, increasing attention is being paid to study and systematise this branch of study.

The various studies organized by the League of Nations and embodied in a number of monographs, together with the recent studies made by such organizations as UNO, UNESCO, FAO and others, have also contributed to the rapid advance of rural sociology.

Such is the history of the genesis and growth of rural sociology, the youngest amongst all sciences. It has started taking roots and is slowly but securely spreading itself in various parts of the world including India which needs it the most in view of its very large rural population with innumerable complex problems.

In India, the beginning of the study of rural society goes back to Sir Henry S. Maine. Maine brought out, among others, two significant books, viz., *Ancient Law* (1861) and *Ancient Society* (1877). Maine, though wrote about Indian villages and designated it as a republic, he had his own bias which was Euro-centric in its cognition and value terms. Dumont has criticised Maine for his European bias in analysing Indian rural society. Dumont observes: "Sir Henry Maine hardly ever looked at the Indian village in itself, but only as a counter part to Tunic, Slavonic or other institutions. India was to him little more than the historical repository of veritable phenomena of ancient usage and ancient juridical thought."

Actually, the British administrators-turned ethnographers and anthropologists considered the village community as an autonomous sociological isolate. This is, particularly, reflected in the writings of Charles Metcalfe and other British administrators in India besides Henry Maine. Despite some of these weaknesses the fact remains that Maine made a beginning of a systematic study of rural life. It is he who for the first time theorised that kinship was the mainstay of India's rural society. However, the systematic growth of rural sociology started in India after the promulgation of Constitution of India and the implementation of Community Development Programmes. It was argued that when the British anthropologists consolidated their colonial empire in South Africa and India, why social anthropology could not be helpful in nation-building in the wake of development programmes. This gave rise to a number of rural studies.

Even, during the days of British East India Company, there were efforts made by sociologists and social anthropologists to find out the patterns of land tenure, customary laws and the functioning of peasants and artisans. For instance, Ramakrishna Mukherjee (1957) informed by scrutinising the source material on the nature of the village community from British Administrative Report of the Punjab (1852) and Marx's commentary on the Indian village community that there were discussions on the village communities.

Also, during the British period, researches or enquiries were made on the affairs of rural life. The recurrent famines in India provoked several studies. The report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture became a monumental work dealing with the problems faced by the countryside. A number of economists had begun studying village communities. Slater started the idea of economic survey of villagers as part of the activities of the University of Madras in 1916. These villages were resurveyed in 1936 and 1961.

All this is good but when did rural sociology emerge in its modern form? The ICSSR - an apex body of social scientists that carried out a survey of researches done in India for a period of 10 years, the first report taking into consideration the preceding 10 years, came out in 1970. In the first volume entitled *A Survey of Research in Sociology and Social Anthropology* (Vol.I), the sub-discipline of rural sociology is discussed under the chapter 'Rural Studies'. The following report for the period 1969-1979 also analyses the development that took place in rural sociology under the heading 'Rural Studies'. The question is Why does trend report not mention the chapter titled as 'Rural Sociology' instead of 'Rural Studies' There is some ambiguity. It appears that sociologists suffer from the obsession of including rural sociology as a part of sociology. What is rural sociology is for sociologists only rural studies. The fact of the matter is that the rural studies included in both the volumes fall within the domain of rural sociology. This omission on the part of ICSSR has made the status of rural sociology quite vulnerable.

Rural sociology, in its own right and merit, occupies a qualified status. It has its subject matter, its scientific nature and above all methods and tools. By its nature it is interdisciplinary and draws freely from the sister disciplines of economics, political science, sociology and social anthropology A.R.Desai has readily done a pioneering work in the field of Rural Sociology by editing *Rural Sociology in India*. The edited work was first published in 1969 and by now has gone into more than half a dozen editions.

A.R.Desai before defining rural sociology and delineating its scope rightly raises certain questions: Is rural sociology a distinct science or is it merely an application of the general principles of sociology? Should rural sociology restrict its scope merely to the life processes of rural society or should it also include as an integral part a study of rural and urban social life, comparative as well as in their mutual interconnection and interaction and further, include as its central concept, what Zimmerman describes as, “the mechanism and effects of urbanisation and ruralisation upon a population”?

Desai interrogates further: Should rural sociology only provide scientific knowledge about rural societies and laws governing its development or should it also serve as a guide and suggest practical programmes of reform or reconstruction of that society in the economic, social and cultural fields?

Many more questions could be raised about the definitions and status of rural sociology in social sciences. Controversies are enough. Sociologists and social anthropologists have defined rural sociology in various ways. For instance, J. B. Chitambar defines rural sociology as below:

What are the phenomena rural sociology studies?.. They are the phenomena resulting from rural man’s reciprocal interaction with other rural people- behavior relationships not within the individual but between individuals. Rural sociological phenomena are not individuals but the interactions and interrelationships between individuals.

The arguments put forward by Chitambar is that the interactions and interrelationship in the urban and rural segments are not the same as both segments differ in their physical, social and cultural environments. It is this environmental differentiation which distinguishes rural sociology from urban sociology.

P.C.Deb has discussed the theme and subject matter of rural sociology. His definition runs as below:

It can be stated that rural sociology is that branch of sociology which studies relationships of human beings living in villages of rural areas. In other words, rural sociology studies rural society. Just as in any other society, in rural society, specific kinds of social relationships are in existence. Major social institutions exist both in urban

and rural society but they are always identical. Because of the noticeable difference in the nature of villages social institutions from those of urban areas, and because a majority of the population in developing countries lives in rural areas, rural sociology is gradually being given the status of an independent discipline.

Some of the foreign sociologists have also defined rural sociology. For instance, Chapin F. Stuart defines it as ....a study of rural population, rural social organisation and the rural social process operating in rural society.

According to Senderson:

Rural sociology is the sociology of life in the rural environment.

Perhaps the definition of rural sociology given by A.R.Desai is more closer to Indian situation. He observes:

Rural sociology or the science of the laws of development of rural society in general has come into being only in recent times. The basic task of rural sociology is to discover the laws of development to rural society..... The prime objective of the rural sociology is to make scientific, systematic and comprehensive study of the rural social organisation, of its structure, function, and objective tendencies of development and on the basis of such studies to discover the laws of its development.

The catalogue of definitions of rural sociology could be enhanced. There are variations in the definitions. But, notwithstanding the variations, it is argued by all the scholars that rural sociology is in no case an arm-chair discipline. By studying the rural life scientifically, rural sociologists should construct theoretical formulations which can be successfully applied for improving the life-style of the rural society are not appropriate for the betterment of rural life, rural sociology has no right to exist. It is because of this shared understanding that rural sociology is basically a social science for the development of rural society. Some of the points shared by most of the rural sociologists, economists and social anthropologists are as under:

1. Social life all over the world is divided into two division: (i) rural division, and (ii) urban division. Though, there is interaction between the two division, each division has its identifiable traits.
2. It is further agreed that the social life in rural division is condition by the rural

environment- physical ,social and cultural. Rural life has a historicity, composition and interaction. This specificity and individuality makes the rural division highly distinct.

3. All the scholars share the view the prime objective of rural sociology should be to make a scientific, systematic and comprehensive study of the rural social organisation of its structure, functions and objective tendencies of development and on the basis of such a study to discover the law of its development.
4. It is agreed that in the developing parts of the world, such as Latin America, Africa and Asia, a new significance of rural sociology has emerge. All the developing countries are engaged in the task of nation-building. Such an objective invariably includes the development of the people at the grass root who are closer to the soil.

Some basic characteristics features of Rural Sociology are :

**1. Rural Sociology is multi-dimensional :**

Rural Sociology is not uni-demensional but it is multi-dimensional as it has orientation to sociology and social anthropology. It has different traditions in US, Europe and Asia. Rural Sociology in Asia is more sociology and social anthropology than rural sociology. It draws subject matter, scientific nature and methodology from both sociology and social anthropology.

**2. Rural Sociology is inter disciplinary :**

Rural sociology is interdisciplinary in its design and functioning. It draws freely from the sister disciplines of economics, political science, sociology and social anthropology.

**3. It studies interactions and interaction systems:**

Rural sociology deals with the study of interations and interaction systems. When this perspective is applied to the analysis of rural society it becomes rural sociology.

**4. It studies small places:**

Rural sociology is the study of small places, such as villages and tribal habitations. The

empirical abstractions made out of the little or small places help to construct theoretical constructions: The studies made by Levi-strauss, Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, Boas and Bourdieu elaborately show that theories of repute have come out of the studies of grassroot people--people living in highlands, forests and small villages.

### **1.3 NATURE AND SCOPE OF RURAL SOCIOLOGY**

Rural sociology is the sister discipline of sociology or, in other words, sociology is the big brother of rural sociology. In our country rural sociology is treated as a part of sociology, quite like, social demography, urbanisation, industrialisation or sociology of social stratification. The trend report sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) indicate that for the social sciences sociology, social anthropology and rural sociology stand at par. As a matter of fact, the social scientists in country have agreed to put sociology as a part only of the broader domain of sociology and social anthropology. Thus viewed, the nature of rural sociology, in fact, is the nature of sociology.

#### **Nature of Rural Sociology**

Sociology is considered as a social science. Though, there are debates on the nature of sociology in international social science. By and large, sociology is a science. There are scholars like C.Wright Mills, Peter Berger and others who consider sociology as an 'imagination' - only as an art. The debate is not new. It starts from the period when social science parted their company with philosophy. In its earlier period, sociology was considered as positivistic science. At a later stage, it was realised that sociology could not be like any natural science because of its subject matter. Without entering into the debatable nature of sociology it could be observed that the nature of sociology is scientific. Pierre Bourdieu, in one of his discourses, observes that: Sociology seems to me to have all the properties that define as science..... All sociologists worthy of the name agree on a common heritage of concepts, methods and verification procedures.

What characterises a science is that it has certain concepts, methods and verifications. Sociology as certain theoretical formulations, it has logic of enquiry and above all it is subjected to verification. Despite this common agreement on the scientific nature of sociology

it must be agreed that sociology is a diversified discipline. It is because of this nature that it is being divided into different realms. It studies different aspects of human society, such as demography, education, family, caste, tribe, village and a number of other segments of a society. Essentially, however, despite having a large number of 'specialities' it continues to remain a social science. Some of the reasons advanced for sociology being a science are as under:

### 1. *Empiricism*

Biology or physics had laboratory for precise experiments, measurement and verification. To some extent, the empirical method, i.e., fieldwork in sociology provides opportunity for experimentation, observation and verification. The research material available in the body of sociology clearly shows that many of its theoretical formulations have emerged out of the data generated from field work.

### 2. *Accumulated Facts*

Science grows on the data accumulated from the field. Robert Merton very rightly observes that a sociologist stands on the shoulders of other sociologists. Whatever Talcott Parsons or for that matter, Marx, Durkheim or Weber did, was carried forward by the next generations.

### 3. *Objectivity*

The another characteristic of science is its objectivity. It means the willingness and ability to see things as they really are-to study facts in a given field of investigation as they exist without personal bias, prejudices or feelings as to their desirability or undesirability. Personal values and desires are not involved in a scientific endeavour.

The objective nature of science is difficult to be applied in social sciences. The status of researcher in empirical investigation has been debatable in sociology and social anthropology right from the 18th century. Pareto argued that when subjectivity and objectivity coincide it becomes objectivity. Max Weber, however, did not agree to this hypothesis. He said that in any activity the role of actor is decisive. He gave due place to subjectivity. In one of his recent works Bourdieu has taken up the issue of subjectivity and objectivity. Bourdieu takes up issues of epistemology and

methodology for wider scrutiny. He says that subjectivity is important so that individual has his own consciousness but beyond that there is an objective social reality also. He observes:

There is, therefore, more to social life than the subjective consciousness of the actors who move within it and produce it. There is, if you like, an objective social reality beyond the immediate interactional sphere and the self-conscious awareness of individuals.

What goes on in sociology about objectivity is that there should be a healthy negotiation between the subjective consciousness and the objective reality. The social scientist, therefore, in his research endeavour, should make a fine combination of his subjectivity, objective reality and the prevailing ideology.

#### **4. *Precision and Accuracy***

Science is also characterised by accurate and precise observations. “When scientific observations are made it is extremely important that these describe situations or persons as they actually do exist at the time of observation- this is accuracy.”

#### **5. *Methodology***

Science must have a valid methodology. It should be valid in sense that other scientists could also employ the same method and reach to their findings. Such a rigorous methodology can yield dependable theoretical constructs.

#### **6. *Reciprocity in Theory and Empirical Research***

Theory in science is constructed out of the experiments made in the laboratory. But approach to laboratory is through the media of theoretical constructs and hypotheses. Generally, in scientific research, we move from theory to empiricism or from empiricism to theory. In any case there is both-way interaction between theory and empirical research. There is a healthy interaction in the domain of science between laboratory investigation and theoretical formulation. C. Wright Mills very emphatically observed that theory without data is empty, but data without theory are blind. Almost all the social anthropologists including the rural

sociologists have done hard fieldwork, Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown and others have done tremendous fieldwork before constructing their theories.

Rural sociology precisely is a specialised field of sociology and social anthropology. Its nature is scientific as it borrows heavily from these social sciences. Those who have conducted rural studies in the fieldwork. Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown and others have done tremendous field work before constructing their theories.

Rural sociology precisely is a specialised field of sociology and social anthropology. Its nature is scientific as it borrows heavily from the social sciences. Those who have conducted rural studies in the field of caste, family, agrarian relations and land reforms have undergone field work in the villages. Whatever theoretical constructs which we have in the field of rural sociology have grown out of the intensive fieldwork done by social scientists.

### **Add Scope of Rural Sociology**

As in the case of every young science, especially of a young social science, a great controversy has taken place over the question of the definition and scope of rural sociology among scholars engaged in the endeavour to develop it.

Is rural sociology a distinct science or is it merely an application of the general principles of sociology (or the science of society as a whole) to the sphere of rural phenomena? Should rural sociology restrict its scope merely to the life processes of rural society or should it also include as an integral part, a study of rural and urban social life.

Further, should rural sociology only provide scientific knowledge about rural society and laws governing its development or should it also serve as a guide and suggest practical programmes of reform or re-construction of that society in the economic, social or cultural fields? In short, should rural sociology merely give an objective authentic composite picture of the changing rural life in all its multifold and multiform aspects or also function as an ideological instrument to remould it according to a social purpose and a practical plan?

These are some of the principal problems over which extensive controversy is at present raging among sociologists. Such a disagreement among social scientists is not a characteristic peculiar to the field of rural sociology. Even regarding sociology in general,

neither a clear, universally accepted definition nor a unanimous view of the scope of its study have as yet emerged among sociologists. The sub-domains of the single concretely whole domain of social life are so intermingled, interacting and even overlapping, that it is difficult to isolate one of them, study it and evolve a distinct science disclosing the laws of its structure and its evolution. Hence it is that disputes take place among social thinkers regarding the method and approach to be adopted to evolve a social science.

In spite of wide divergence of views among rural sociologists regarding the definition, scope, and objective of rural sociology and also about the emphasis to be laid on this or that factor of the rural society as the point of departure of its study, there also exists a number of basic agreements among them.

All of them hold the view that social life in rural setting exhibits characteristics and tendencies which are peculiar to it, which constitute its specificness and which, therefore, sharply distinguish it from social life in urban setting.

All of them unanimously declare that the prime objective of rural sociology should be to make a scientific, systematic and comprehensive study of the rural social organization, of its structure, functions and objective tendencies of development, and on the basis of such a study, to discover the law of its development. Since every science, social or natural, has for its aim the discovery of the hitherto hidden law of development of a domain of nature or society, the basic task of rural sociology, they unanimously declare, is to discover the law of development of rural society.

#### **1.4 SUBJECT MATTER OF RURAL SOCIOLOGY**

The subject matter of rural sociology has never been static. In the earlier days of its development, during 18th and 19th centuries, it studied the society of aboriginals and primitive people. The colonial countries of south and central Africa along with India were the target countries for the study of primitive people. The British Raj along with its anthropologists approached these countries for discovering new markets and spreading Christianity. The British administrators turned to the study of primitive people.

In our country we have administrators-turned sociologist and Anthropologists who studied the primitive people and the indigenous institutions of village, caste and culture. The initial subject matter of study for social anthropology and in this

respect rural sociology was the life of village people and the forest dwellers. In fact, rural sociology remained restricted to the small places of the type of villages or clusters of neighborhood. Henry Mainie, the British administrator, was perhaps the first person to study an Indian village. He characterised an Indian village as republic in itself. Theoretically, such a kind of portrait of village life can be criticised vehemently. Yogendra Singh (1986) provides a critique to such an understanding of village life because here Mainie's emphasis was "on showing how each of these social entities (villages) affirmed the principles of segmentation and autonomy rather than being parts of an organic whole". Despite the criticism made on the republic character of village India, the fact remains that each village is self-sufficient and independent. At a later stage, Ghandhiji also observed that our villages were self-reliant and had their local rule.

Thus, the subject matter of rural sociology during the colonial period in India remained confined to the study of hill and forest people-the tribals, the village and a few of the traditional institutions such as family and caste which were pervasive in the small places. Soon after independence there was a sudden shift and emphasis in the subject matter of rural sociology. It was unhistorical for India to prepare a constitutional agenda for the development of villages. The Constitution also laid emphasis on the development of Panchayati Raj. It was in the year 1950 that the Constitution of India was promulgated. And then came in 1952 the five year plans and subsequently the community development and extension programmes. Now, in the real sense, the idiom of our development became the development of village. The government policy, thus implemented, created the need for the study of village life. With this context historically created in village development, there came a flood of village studies by the middle of 1950 to the end of 1960. The subject matter of rural sociology, thus, consisted of the study of tribal people, caste and village communities.

M.N.Srinivas (1955), in his edited work, *India's Villages* makes the point that in the context of development planning it was necessary to provide a portrait to the layman about the social life lived by village people. The subject matter of rural sociology, according to Srinivas, consisted to the unity of village, caste and other village institutions. The contributors to this work argued that the Indian village

had a traditional unity. The village who lived in a restricted area at some distance from other similar groups, with extremely poor roads between them, a majority of them were engaged in agricultural activities. They closely depended upon each other-economically and otherwise. They shared a vast body of common experience and this fostered what is called as the unity of the village. It was the dominant caste in the village which supported and maintained the total village system.

However, the development programme and the forces of technology, industrialization, urbanisation, market, and a host of other factors brought about tremendous change in the community. This provided a new set of subject matter to the body of rural sociology. Land reforms, land ceiling, land tenure, and above all agrarian relations constituted new issues for intensive study. The process of democratisation, along with the emphasis on Panchayati Raj, created a new awakening among the people. Agricultural capitalism, as is manifest in green revolution, provided a new stratification pattern to the fest in green revolution, provided a new stratification pattern to the village society. The village peasantry witnessed widening social differentiation in the form of big or kulak farmers, small farmers, marginal farmers and landless laborers. The peasant struggles became more than frequent. There emerged rural leadership and rural conflicts. All these areas constituted a new discourse on subject matter of rural sociology.

## **1.5 CONCLUSION**

Beyond the new subject matter, rural sociology has begun to study the role of village people at the state and national level politics. There is a distinct village lobby working in national politics. The village politics is yet another theme forming part of rural sociology.

To conclude this section subject matter of rural sociology, one could put down the following themes as the substantial areas for the study of rural sociology:

1. Rural sociology consists of the study of tribal, forest and village people. It provides a discourse on the study of the social life of these people.
2. Rural sociology is concerned with the problems and structure related to land and agriculture. In other words, it dwells heavily on themes related to agrarian

relations.

3. Village development programmes have been new additions to the subject matter of rural sociology. The objective of these programmes, on one hand, is to improve the life-standard of the people and, on the other hand, make them participants in the task of nation-building.
4. Rural sociology also studies the stratification pattern which has emerged from the working of developmental programmes.
5. It also analyses the impact of technology on the rural life.
6. And finally, the subject matter of rural sociology also includes environmental decay and erosion of ecology.

### **1.6 CHECK YOURSELF**

Q1 Define Rural Sociology and its origin?

Q2 Define Rural Sociology and give its nature and scope?

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**Structure**

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Definition of Peasants
- 2.3 Concept of Peasant Society
- 2.4 Understanding peasant society in Indian Context
- 2.5 Conclusion
- 1.6 References

**2.0 : OBJECTIVES**

The main thrust of the unit is to make you understand

- The meaning and definition of Peasants.
- Holistic understanding of Peasant Society.
- Differentiation among Indian Peasantry.
- Political manifestation of Peasantry.

**2.1 : INTRODUCTION**

Society is a collectivity of different categories of people. The collectivity are identified on the basis of their economic background, environment in which they are living, on the basis of their specific origin and others. Thus collectivity is marked by specific traits which the groups of people normally shares.

We know that the broad division of society is rural or urban society. The rural in a broader terms includes folk peoples like tribes and peasants whereas urban society is marked by elite peoples. Here our basic concern is the peasants so let us focus upon these categories of people especially in terms of their specific culture, customs and traditions. Firstly, let us understand the definition of peasants.

## **2.2 : DEFINITION OF PEASANTS**

The first systematic attempt to define the concept of peasant came from Kroeber (1948). To him “Peasant constitute part societies with part cultures.” They are definitely rural-yet live in relation to market towns. When he wrote these lines, Kroeber was thinking primarily of European peasantry. With some exceptions, almost all anthropologists subscribe to Kroeber’s part societies-part cultures definition of peasants, but differ a little bit.

Firth (1950) finds that the term peasant has primarily an economic referent and said that the primary means of livelihood of peasant is cultivation of the soil. He also included other small scale producers, such as fishermen and craftsmen as peasants and pointed out that “they are of the same social class as the agriculturists and often members of the same families. He also identified the emphasis on agriculture and whether the self-sufficiency among peasants is implicit or explicit in many writings and argued stressing occupation and cultural content obscures the really important diagnostic criteria.

Redfield (1953) felt that the word ‘peasant’ points to a human type... it required the city to bring it into existence. There were no peasants before the first cities. The larger society of which peasants are a part is urban society. He also speaks of Great and Little Traditions to distinguish the cultures of the elite and peasants. He further said that peasants are considered to have at least common characteristic following agriculture as a livelihood and way of life not as a business. Those who use land as capital commodity are not peasants but farmers. Redfield also mentioned peasants; small producers for their own consumption.

Foster (1953) described the peasant society as a half society, a part of a larger social unit, which is vertically and horizontally structured. Among the anthropologists, Foster for the first time recognized the horizontal and vertical

division of peasant society. To him, peasants are primarily agriculturists and the criteria to study them must be structural and relational rather than remaining occupational.

Raymond Firth (1951) defines peasantry as a system of small producers, with a simple technology and equipment, often relying primarily for their subsistence on what they themselves produce.

Faller (1961) viewed them as a society in which the primary constituents units are Semi-autonomous local communities with Semi-autonomous cultures. The Semi-autonomous sphere may be broken down further into economic, political and cultural dimensions.

Chayanov (1966) understood peasants by focusing on the pure family farm. He claims that the family is equipped with means of production, uses its labour power to cultivate the soil and receive a certain amount of goods, as the result of a year's work.

Karl Marx (1850) talks of the peasantry as the small holding of peasants that form a vast mass, whose members live in a similar condition without entering into manifold relations with one another. Their mode of production isolates them from one another, instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse. According to him, "Peasantry is a class, i.e., a social entity based on a community of economic interests, shaped by conflict with other classes, expressed in typical pattern of cognition and political consciousness and capable of united political action on a national level."

Finally, Teodar Shanin (1966) defines them as – those consisting of small agricultural producers who with the help of simple equipment and labour of their families produce mainly for their own consumption and fulfil obligations of the holders of political and economic power. Although his understanding is more closer to Chayanov, except that Chayanov's peasant do not have surplus stock, but Shanin's peasants have some surplus quantum, to fulfil their obligations to the holders of economic and political power.

### **2.3 : CONCEPT OF PEASANT SOCIETY :**

The above definitions by various social scientists emphasizes the various

dimensions of understanding peasants. Few definitions talk on the cultural dimension, some on the economic dimension and some on the political manifestation of the peasantry.

Though rural sociology as a discipline emerged in the United States but they focused more on sociology of farming as an occupation rather than on peasants as a social entity. The systematic study of peasantry originated in Central and Eastern Europe. The growth of interest in peasant societies has coincided with new developments in anthropology. However, the existence of peasantry as a realistic concept can be claimed for both empirical and conceptual reasons.

In the framework of thought which accepts both the brief of sociology as 'a generalizing science' and the existence of peasantry as a specific, worldwide type of social structure, we can discern four major conceptual traditions which have influenced academics. They are

- (i) **The Marxist class theory** :- The Marxist tradition of class analysis has approached peasantry in terms of power relationships, i.e. as the suppressed and exploited producers of pre-capitalist society (Marx and Engels 1950). Contemporary peasantry appears as a leftover of an earlier social formation, its characteristics reinforced by remaining at the bottom of the social power structure.
- (ii) **The 'specific economy' typology** :- It has viewed peasant social structure as being determined by a specific type of economy, the crux of which lies in the way a family farm operates. This approach was first made explicit by Vasil Chakov (1881) and fully developed by Chayanov (1925).
- (iii) **The ethnographic cultural tradition** :- It stems from European ethnography and from traditional western anthropology. It tends to approach peasants as the representatives of an earlier national tradition, preserved as a 'cultural lag' by the inertia typical of peasant societies.
- (iv) **Durkheimian tradition** :- This tradition, originating from Durkheim, has followed a complex path. The basic dualism accepted by Durkheim and his generation. (Tonnies, Maine etc.) divides societies into the 'traditional and

‘modern’ or ‘organic’, based upon a division of labour and necessary interaction of the units. Kroeber later placed peasant societies in an intermediate position as ‘part societies with part cultures’—partly open segments in a town-centered society (Kroeber, 1948).

Shanin (1971) delimits peasant societies by establishing a general type with four basic facets. To him, the general type of peasantry would include —

- (a) **The peasant family farm as the basic unit of multidimensional social organization** :– The family provides the labour on the farm and the farm provides for the consumption needs of the family and the payment of its duties to the holder of political and economic power. The economic action is closely interwoven with family relations, and the motive of profit maximization in money terms seldom appears in its explicit form. The self-perpetuating family farm operates as the major unit of peasant property, socialization, sociability and welfare, with the individual property, socialization, sociability and welfare, with the individual tending to submit to a formalized family—role behaviour.
- (b) **Land husbandry as the main means of livelihood directly providing the major part of the consumption needs** :– Traditional farming includes a specific combination of tasks on a relatively low level of specialization and family-based vocational training.
- (c) **Specific traditional culture related to the way of life of small communities**:– Specific cultural features of peasants marked by traditional and conformist attitudes, i.e. the justification of individual action in terms of past experience and the will of the community.
- (d) **The underdog position, the domination of peasantry by outsiders** :– Peasant’s as a rule, have been kept at arms length from the social sources of power. Their political subjection interlinks with cultural subordinations and with their economic exploitation through tax, rent, interest.

With the above frameworks in mind, let us try to understand the peasantry as overviewed historically and in academic discussions. To be specific, the peasantry

has been traditionally treated as homogenous category with respect to class. The discussion on the peasantry as a class started during the last century with its characteristics and political potentialities among the Marxian and non-Marxian social scientists. Thus one set of scholars considered the peasantry as a homogenous category with respect to its structure and stratification. Another group of scholars questioned the prevailing misconception in terms of stratification with respect to certain criteria, differentiating the various classes of peasantry.

Let us now look into the works of social scientist falling in the different categories. The first systematic attempt to define the concept of peasant came from Kroeber (1948) who treated them as a homogenous class category and said “Peasant constitute part societies with part culture”. Apart from him, social anthropologists like Redfield (1953), Foster (1953) and others subscribed to the notion that the peasantry forms a class in terms of homogeneity of their class interest. An advance over his conception came from Chayanov, an economist who analysed it in detail. Chayanov (1966) contributed a theory of peasant behaviour at the level of the individual family farm. He traced the natural history of the family and stressed the demographic differentiation in contrast to the Marxist concept of class differentiation of the peasantry. More closer to Chayanov, Theodar Shanin (1966) takes a more or less similar stand on the peasant family farm. The glaring difference between the concepts of Chayanov and Shanin is that Chayanov’s peasants do not have surplus stock, but Shanin’s peasants have some surplus quantum, to fulfil their obligations to the holders of economic and political power.

Later, Marx (1850) talks of the peasantry as the small holding peasants that form a vast mass, whose members live in similar condition without entering into manifold relations with one another. Their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse. Since, the small holding peasants lack inter-communication and on identity, they are described by Marx as a sack of potatoes in a sack form – an idiotic class since they are unable to represent themselves, and represent barbarism in the midst of civilization.

Thus the contribution of various scholars on the concept of the “peasantry as a class” highlighted the homogenous class characteristics of the peasantry. The anthropologists in general had the European peasant in mind, when they expressed

their views and Chayanov and Marx took the Russian and French peasantry respectively when they talked of peasantry as a class. They never tried to differentiate the classes within the peasantry.

The first systematic attempt to differentiate the classes within peasantry came from Lenin, who recognized the heterogeneous class characteristic of peasantry. Lenin (1920) talks of six different agrarian classes in terms of ownership of the means of production and labour exploitation. Those are agricultural proletariat, semi-proletariat, small peasantry, middle peasantry and big land owners.

Mao (1933) differentiated the peasantry in terms of ownership by means of production and exploitation in the form of wage labour, usury rent and market forces. He talks of five different agrarian class— the landlord, the rich peasant, the middle peasant, the poor peasant and the workers.

Barrington Moore (1966), tried to look at the class of peasantry in terms of superordination and subordination. Similarly Eric Wolf (1955) tried to concretise the ingredients necessary to identify the class of peasantry in a clear manner. According to him, the peasants are a subordinate, ruled exploited class and their surplus is being appropriated through rent, usury and market forces. In his book 'Types of Latin American Peasantry' (1955) he says that land is a critical variable for understanding the peasantry. Later in another book entitled 'Peasants (1966)' he remarked. "Peasants are rural cultivators, whose surpluses are transferred to a dominant group of rulers." Here, he introduced the concept of exploitation to differentiate peasantry. Later, he defined 'peasants' in his book entitled 'Peasant wars in the Twentieth Century (1971) as a population that are essentially involved in cultivation and make autonomous decisions regarding the process of cultivation.

A break through in the conception of peasantry came from Landsberger (1974) when he tried to look at it in terms of socio-economic and political dimensions. He remarked that there is a landed upper class which is recognized legally and the classes below it are subordinate socially, economically and politically. According to him, the class of peasantry is a subordinate one and occupies a lower position in all the three dimensions.

The above discussion revealed the economic class characteristics of peasant

and does not speak about its transformation into a political class. But Lenin's and Mao's analysis of class served as the basis for the analysis of the political potentialities of various classes of peasantry. Their analysis serve as powerful tools to differentiate the agrarian classes and to identify the class of peasantry as a whole. So as long as the class of peasantry remained confined to their economic interests, it will remain a class in itself. Increasing awareness of their plight leads them to acquire political characteristic in order to register their protest against the exploiting superordinating ruling class. In view of that the economic (class in itself) class gets transformed into a political class and obtains the characteristic of a (class for itself.)

Regarding the political dimension of class, the peasantry, in history has many times acted politically as class-like social entity. It had assumed great importance especially during the early and later part of the current century. The revolutionary potentialities of the peasantry had been revealed in the following revolutions : Mexican revolution of 1910, The Russian revolution of 1905 and 1917, the Chinese revolution from 1921 onwards, Cuban revolution of 1958, Algerian revolution of 1954 etc.

Several Scholars Frantz Fanon, Lenin (1920), Mao (1927) Hamza Alavi (1965), Eric Wolf (1971) had recognized the revolutionary potentialities of the class of peasantry. Thus the analysis of peasantry as a political class reveals the revolutionary potentialities and relative militancy of the classes within the peasantry. In other words, the class in itself, the economic class, transform to the class for itself when it become aware of their class consciousness.

#### **2.4 : UNDERSTANDING PEASANT SOCIETY IN INDIAN CONTEXT :-**

Indian peasantry as elsewhere is not a homogenous category. There are different types of peasants and the criteria taken for the heterogeneity of peasantry are also varied.

Using Indian vernacular terms, Daniel Thorner (1956) analyzed the agrarian classes in India. He has exhaustively studied the nature of Indian agriculture and used the following three criteria to differentiate the agrarian classes :- (i) Income obtained from the soil (ii) Nature of rights over land (iii) Extent of field work performed. On the basis of these criteria, he identified the existence of three

principal categories of agrarian classes in India, they are Malik, Kisans and Mazdoors. Thorner says, the Malik derived income primarily from property rights on soil. They can be absentee landowners and rich landowners. Similarly Kisans are working peasants with property rights on the land but their actual right are inferior to those of Maliks. There categories are small land owners and substantial tenants. Finally, the Mazdoors are earning their livelihood primarily from working on others plot. It includes—poor peasant, sharecroppers and landless labourers.

Thus Thorner’s three major categories defined are based on the relation of production or means of production and in a sense represent a strictly Marxian model of agrarian classes.

Usha Patnaik (1976) suggested the criterion termed as labour ‘exploitation (‘E’ crieterion) and also the magnitude of land and has classified the Indian peasantry into five principal categories—

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Magnitude of Land</b>
Poor	1.60 acres or less
Middle	Between 1.61 and 9.80 acres
Lower Middle	Between 1.61 and 4.60 acres
Upper Middle	Between 4.60 and 9.80 acres
Rich Capitalist and Landlords	9.81 acres and above

Dalip S. Swamy (1986) in his work on “Differentiation of Peasantry” in India talks of the characteristic features of four classes of peasantry, i.e., the landlords, poor peasants, small peasants and the well-to-do peasants, in terms of the means of production such as land, machinery, cattles etc.

Shiva Kumar (1978) differentiated the classes of peasantry in terms of two criteria i.e., ownership or non-ownership of means of production. He took the land as the critical variable to differentiate the classes of peasantry. He discussed the five classes of peasantry. The big peasants (own 10 acres of land and cultivate with the help of hired labour); The medium peasants (those who rely on hired labour or cultivation on about 5-10 acres of land); the petty peasants (owning land

between 2-5 acres and rely on household labour for cultivation); The landless peasants; and the landlords (who own land but do not cultivate).

Ashok Rudra (1988) discusses agrarian classes in terms of class contradiction and relations of production. He divided class into— Big landowners and agricultural labourers.

K.L. Sharma (1997) classified agrarian class on the basis of resources like utilization of loans, repayment capacity, tenancy, ownership of asset and credit from bank. Thus he find 5 types of peasant group—owner cultivator; largely owner-cultivator; largely tenant-cultivator; tenant-cultivator and total poor peasant.

Apart from the economic dimension of analyzing peasantry, the Indian situation of peasantry is also marked by its political manifestation. It is visible historically even during British Period. The tribal peasants like Kole (1831); Santhal (1885); Birsa Munda (1895) during the 19th century rose in revolt against their prime exploiters i.e., the Britishers. Similarly in the later phase, under the leadership of Gandhi, the prominent peasant movements were Champaran (1971); Kheda (1918) and Bardoli (1928). Apart from these basic movements, the religio-political dimension was highlighted in Moplah rebellion (1921), class characteristic was found in Tebhaga Movement (1946-47), Telangana revolt (1946-51), The Naxalbari movement and others.

## **2.5 : CONCLUSION**

In this unit we tried to understand cultural, economic and political referrendum of peasants. In general peasants were understood as a category of people using simple equipments and using their own family labour for cultivation. They are the people who are conservative, subordinated and attached to land. Further the peasant society was analyzed on the Mauxian and non-Marxian lines. Criteria's like right over land, land use, exploitation, ownership of means of production etc. were considered for showing hetrogenity among peasantry.

## **2.6 : REFERENCE**

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**Ask Yourself**

Q Give meaning and definition of Peasants.

Q Explain the concept of peasant society.

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**Structure**

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Peasantology's History
- 3.3 Agenda's and Achievements of Peasant Studies in 1970
- 3.4 Trends of development of Peasantry : The Historical Context
- 3.5 Conclusion
- 3.6 Further Readings

**3.0 : OBJECTIVES**

The major objectives of the unit is to—

- Trace the genesis of peasantry.
- Have Cross-cultural understanding peasantry.
- Locate Major issues of peasant studies.
- Study Dynamics of peasant society.

**3.1 : INTRODUCTION**

As we know that the civilizational project of the world is not uniform so the formation of categories of society also varies in time and place. Even the prioritization and conceptualization of the terms in social science is also different. Thus one has to trace the genesis of peasantry historically and also to analyse the various studies conducted in this direction.

Even in the rapidly expanding world, the character, livelihood and fate of massive majorities in the world's poorest and potentially most explosive areas have come to be seen as one of the most crucial issues.

To be precise, even rural sociology in United States have also not focussed much on the peasantry. The systematic study of peasantry originated in Central and Eastern Europe because in those societies a rapidly 'Westernizing' intelligentsia was faced by a large peasantry. The issue of the peasantry became closely entangled with, and impelled forward by, the ideologies of modernization and by the rediscovery of the national self by people suppressed by the Russian, Austrian, German and Turkish Empires. Subsequently, political leaders, social scientists and scores of amateur ethnographers turned their attention to the peasants (Shanin 1971).

### **3.2 : PEASANTOLOGY'S HISTORY**

The genesis of peasantry has to be evolved by digging the history and civilization of different societies. One has to interpret its genesis by tracing the significance of peasant studies in the different era.

As given by Shanin (1971, 4), in the pre-industrial world the literate attitude of peasants combined hostility with silence. It seems that they had also to be dehumanized in the consciousness of those who ruled, administered and wrote. Even Medieval writings are full of kings and wars, of philosophy and poetry, of laws and astrology. They are mostly silent about peasants.

Regarding the connotation of peasants, the *Declinatio Rustica* of the 13th century defined the six interpretations of the word peasant as—villain, rustic, devil, robber, brigand and looter and in the plural—wretches, beggars, liars, rogues, trash and infidels. In 18th century, English a peasant meant a brute and an illiterate. While the verb 'to peasant' was used to mean to subjugate and to enslave.

Modernity and capitalism came to Europe with the triple revolution of industrialization, of citizenship within a nation-state, and of the spread of a secular, Mathematical bound science. In its most fundamental self-image this was a world without peasants. Peasants were treated as an anachronism and therefore as an irrelevance. However, the way the peasants were approached in scholarly endeavour differed deeply, at least in the three global regions. They are

**Ist global region :** The popular and scholarly consciousness of the industrial West was dominated by the historiography cum- typology dividing the social world into ‘modern’ and ‘backward’. On such an intellectual map the actual peasant disappeared even more effectively than in the olden days under “the remainders of the past”. When at the turn of the century rural sociology emerged as a subdiscipline, it focussed on farming as an occupation, disregarding peasants as social entity.

**IInd global region :** The polar opposite of the west were the colonies and ‘orient’. Their life seems to be trickled more slowly, the hand of the state to have been heavier than modern science. The fact that very often 9/10th of the population was peasant mattered little to the local literate.

**IIIrd global region :** It was the Eastern and Central Europe, where studies of peasantry as such blossomed at the turn of the century. In those countries a highly sophisticated ‘intelligentsia’, politically committed to nationalism, faced massive peasantries. Policies and Ideologies turned attention to the peasant majorities as the major object, the possible carrier or the main bottle-neck of the necessary advance. By the eve of the First World War and later, the intellectual’s political attempts to look at and to activate peasantries were being increasingly matched by the peasants own efforts to establish viable political movements in defence of their own interest in Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Russia etc. East European in much of its rural experience produced some inspired writing about peasants and the rural scene like Marx, Weber, Sombert, Kantsky, Buchner and David. It was Denmark which became for a time the prime sample of an autonomous and successful rural cooperative movement and of self-generated innovations by peasant smallholders.

The world war followed by rapid decolonization changed the global map and its power balance. The growing gap of wealth and power, came eventually to be theorized by new images and models which were well represented by the simultaneity of appearance of Myrdal’s concept of ‘Cumulation of advancement and backwardness and Paul Baran’s the political economy of backwardness. The developing societies became synonymous with dependence. Social scientists, politicians and planners were made to turn their attention from the purely economic

indices to the particularities of the social structure of the 'developing societies'. A majority there were peasants. Further the Right and Left, scholars, politicians and revolutionaries were turning their attention towards peasant and peasant societies. A virtual explosion of peasant studies in the late 1960's was much part of a new political situation as a major conceptual refocusing which reached its symbolic peak in the 1968.

With this background, a new theoretical armoury was rapidly set up consisting of some of the old and partly forgotten text by Znaniecki, Marx, Lenin, Sorokin, Kroeber and others. The works of Chayanov (Theory of Peasant Economy 1966) and Marx (Grundrisse, 1964) were highlighted. A number of integrative works by Wolf, Shanin and Galeski established basic parameter of contemporary peasant studies. Defining peasants became a matter of major significance and in offering study in the field.

The continuous debate of three decades and a variety of applications within social planning made the field of peasant studies gather extensive evidence and grow in sophistication. It resulted into revivatism of old orthodoxies which made peasant disappear and treated them as a new key to all things, unrelated to broader society.

### **3.3 : AGENDA'S AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF PEASANT STUDIES IN 1970'S**

The initial agenda of the peasant studies of the late 1960's and 1970's addressed four major puzzles, the very recognition of which was dependent on both the re-emergence of peasantry in the public eye and the way in which the concept and the field of studies were being constructed. The issues emerged were

- (i) The issue of peasantry non-disappearance.
- (ii) The issue of particularities of peasant response to market economies and to agricultural state policies.
- (iii) The issue of peasantry's evident power to bend the policies of the state and the dictates of the market.
- (iv) The issues of social reproduction and functioning of peasantry as a particular system within which many contemporary human live.

Thus extensive work on peasant family forms a social and economic entities was central to the 1960's / 1970's agendas of peasant studies. The flexible use of family labour explained much of the explicable in peasantry's survival and its competitive capacities in relation to larger and better equipped production units. Increasing attention was given to family strategies of combination in the use of family labour, especially to the peasant-workers phenomenon. Even cases of the 'peasantization' of African tribal economies were also considered.

Particularities of peasant market and marketing networks vis-a-vis impersonal market relations were looked at a new. So was the political economy of rural patronage. Ecological and social particularities of agricultural husbandry compared to manufacturing, and of peasant characteristic choices compared to those made by farmers with high capital investment, were also increasingly recognized.

The drawing of attention to the removal of 'obstacles to progress' gave the initial inducement and impetus to contemporary studies of peasant culture. From descriptive studies of 'folk culture', interest has moved to policy advice concerning resistances to development and to matters of political mobilization. The scholars shaped new analytical concepts such as the, 'peasant view of a bad life.' Sympathetic response to the peasant culture of survival and resistance found its own language when J.Scott spoke of the 'moral economy of the peasant'.

Further, Mao's victory in China and its aftermath underlay an extensive effort aiming to grasp the particularities of peasant's revolutionary wars in the 20th century. Leaving this apart the outsider-insider relations of peasants were studied also in their broader sense, i.e., that of policies by governments and international bodies towards peasantries. These studies closely followed the turns and twists of ideological fashion : The Land Reform advocated as the solution to rural poverty in the 1960's, the Communal Development Programmes, the Green Revolution hopes of technological end to all problems.

Further advances of peasant studies in the 1980s linked to the broadening of their focus and the expanding impact of the insights gained. Peasants were being put increasingly in the context of broader analysis of social structure, national and international. Much of the 1980s work advocated the topics established in the 1970s.

Peasant households, i.e., family-based units of production and management, remained the major focus of peasant studies. Further, the place of women in peasant economies was explored a new. Parallely, the 'embedment' of peasants in the larger structures of power and exchange was ever assumed by those who studied contemporary peasantry.

The economic impact of the state increasingly became focus attention through the recognition of the exceptional significance of state institutions and personnel in the rural areas where peasantry plays a major role. The better understanding of flexibility of responses, combinations of 'economic' and 'non-economic', multiple system and resistance to external pressures reflected also in new studies of localities in which peasant dwell.

A conceptual gap has also been filled between the analysis of the peasantries of the Third World and the phenomena of the highly capitalized family farmers of the 'First' world and the collectivized ruralities of the 'second' one. Contemporary peasant studies have offered not only a yardstick of otherness but also the up-to-date process of defining and studying peasants as a sociological concept. The focus of peasant studies will most likely to expand, reflecting the increasing interdependence within the global society as well as the internal logic of an analytical paradigm.

### **3.4 : TRENDS OF DEVELOPMENT OF PEASANTRY : THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

The peasantry manifests itself not only as a distinctive social groups, but as a dominant pattern of social life which defines a stage in the development of human society. According to Fei, in describing the Chinese society peasantry is a way of living.

The 'societies of small producers' show distinctive cultural patterns the features of which persist at least partly among the peasantry of industrializing societies. It is analyzed that 'small producers' society falls historically in the intermediate period between tribal-nomadic and industrializing societies.

The peasant backbone in the 'small producers society' dissolves under the influence of the rise of a market and term centred money economy and consequent industrialization. An analysis of the appearance and development of an economic surplus and of capital formation is needed to understand this process.

The producing and trading town introduces social patterns alien to the old world of small producers. In it, impersonal, warfare-like, profit centred market relations underlie human relations. Accumulation of anonymons capital determines economic growth. The pursuit of profit, efficiency and individual achievement provides the care of the social value system.

The development of the peasant sector of a town centred society can be understood through three parallel patterns of spontaneous development for the countryside. They are -

- (i) Competition from large-scale, capital-intensive, mechanized agriculture gradually destroys the small farms. Agriculture, fully taken over by industrial methods of production and becomes 'merely a branch of industry (Lenin, 5th edn. Vol. 6)
- (ii) A town centred society makes for the development of the peasants into a professional stratum of farmers. The poorer villagers are increasingly sucked in from the countryside by the expanding urban areas.

This pattern-transformation of the peasantry into a cohesive, increasingly narrow and professionalize occupation group of farmers can be clearly seen in most part of North-Western Europe. Although becoming even more tied to industrial society, farming still retains some of its peculiar elements.

- (iii) The third pattern of development appears mainly in the so-called underdeveloped societies and is characterized by cumulative pauperization of the peasantry. A population explosion, developing market relations and the industrial competition with traditional peasant handicrafts break up the cyclical equilibrium of society. A relatively slow industrialization is able neither to drain the countryside of its excess labour nor to provide sufficient capital accumulation. The potential surplus is swept away by growing consumption needs.

- (iv) As distinct from the three spontaneous trends of development, the increasing strength of the modern state and the wish of the revolutionary elites to tackle the problem of development within the framework of socialist, collectivistic thinking made for the appearance of state organized collectivization of agriculture.

### **3.5 : CONCLUSION**

By going through the above discussions we have got the following framework regarding the genesis of peasantry—concept of peasantry has to be analyzed through cross-cultural analysis of global history. We find that the pre-industrial world did not recognize the peasantry in a healthy way, whereas in the industrial era, the industrial west were considering them to be backward, whereas the colonial countries were not in a position to recognize peasantry because 9/10th of population belongs to that category. However, it was the European nation which was emphasizing on the relevance of peasant studies. Further, the agendas of peasant studies in 1960's and 1970's were—the peasantry disappearance, response of peasants to market economies and also the power of peasant to bend the state policies.

### **3.6 : FURTHER READINGS**

Shanin, T. 1990; *Defining Peasants*, Basil Blackwell, U.K.

Shanin, T. 1971; *Peasants and Peasant Societies*, Penguin Books Harmondsworth.

Wolf E, 1966, *Peasants*, Prentice Hall, Englewood.

#### **Ask Yourself**

- Q Define the main agenda's and achievements of Peasant studies.
- Q Historically explain trends of development of peasantry.

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**Structure**

3.3.0 Objectives

3.3.1 Introduction

3.3.2 Assumptions and Meaning of Peasantry

3.3.3 Peasant Society : A Sociological Analysis

3.3.4 Peasantry as a Process

3.3.5 Conclusion

3.3.6 Further Readings

**3.3.0 : OBJECTIVES**

The main thrust of the unit is to make you understand :

- Various assumptions about peasantry.
- Sociological interpretation of peasantry.
- Dynamic aspect of peasantry.

**3.3.1 : INTRODUCTION**

In the previous units we analyzed the different interpretations of peasantry. Here we will focus especially on the social attributes of peasants and peasant society.

As we know that the conceptualization of peasant has been done in different time and space, so it is very difficult to know the exact analysis. In this situation, the

only thing to be done is to have a generalization about the concept and to delimit the boundaries of analysis. Keeping the constraints in mind, let us have a projection about the Peasants as a social entity.

To Shanin, the existence of peasantry as a real and not purely semantic concept can be claimed for both empirical and conceptual reasons. Firstly, it is sufficient to read concurrently a sequence of peasant studies originating in different countries and to deduce something generic about it. However, we should not forget that a sociological generalization does not imply a claim of homogeneity, or an attempt at uniformity. In Max Weber's words : "The Science of Sociology seeks to formulate type, concepts and generalized uniformities of empirical process. But before going to the exact task, let us try to understand the meanings attached to peasantry in general.

### **3.3.2 : ASSUMPTIONS AND MEANINGS ABOUT PEASANTRY AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON**

To Shanin, there are three fundamental ways to approach contemporary peasantry as a social phenomenon. Firstly, to assume that we do not encounter in it a distinguishable set of related characteristics, which can be analytically treated as a type of social structure. It would therefore, be a notion of no conceptual significance, just a word, possibly a linguistic reminder of a historical past. Consequently there could also be no place for a theory concerning peasant's particularities.

Secondly, to assume that peasants differ consistently from non-peasant in ways which are socially significant, but that this diversity can and should be fully explicated within the existing body of general theory, by extending its application.

Thirdly, one can assume that peasant distinctiveness exists, as well as that conceptual particularity must follow from it i.e. the most effective way to analyze peasants is to establish and use to that purpose discrete theoretical structures. This would mean consideration of peasant economies with the help of a peasant economics as a distinct section of the discipline of Economics and a similar procedure for some other dimensions of social structure and action.

One can present the suggested three fundamental categories of approach graphically as shown in the table below :

**Categories of Analysis of Contemporary Peasantry**

Characteristic	Approach 1	Approach 2	Approach 3
Distinctiveness of Peasants	No (-)	Yes (+)	Yes (+)
Theoretical Distinctiveness of Peasantry	No (-)	No (-)	Yes (+)

If we analyze the different works, they can be placed in different approaches. For example Lenin’s work on ‘The Development of Capitalism in Russia (1899) and Mc Namara’s attempt of using peasants can be placed in approach 1. Kantsky’s “The Agrarian question (1899) and Schultz’s analysis, though intermediary in between approach 1 and 2, but for analytical understanding can be placed in Approach 2. Finally, the “Theory of Peasant Economy” by Chayanov can fall in category 3.

**3.3.3 : PEASANT SOCIETY : A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**

T. Shanin has tried to delimit peasant societies by establishing a general type with four basic facets. These facets may be sufficient for an analysis of specific aspects of peasant social life. The general type proposed by Shanin would include—

1. The peasant family farm as the basic unit of multi-dimensional social organization. The family, and nearly only the family, provides the labour on the farm. The farm, and nearly only the farm, provides for the consumption needs of the family and the payment of its duties to the holder of political and economic power. Family membership is based on total participation in the life of the family-farm. The division of labour is family based and ascribed. The self-perpetuating family farm operates as the major unit of peasant property, status, socialization, sociability and

welfare, with the individual tending to submit to formalized family-role behaviour. Here the head of the family organizes production as the patriarchal manager of family property rather than as owner.

2. Land husbandry as the main means of livelihood directly providing the major part of the consumption needs. Traditional farming includes a specific combination of tasks on a relatively low level of specialization.
3. Specific traditional culture related to the way of life of small communities. To use Redfield's expression, the peasants form a psycho-physiological race i.e. they display a specific cognitive paradigm.
4. The 'underdog' position; the domination of peasantry by outsiders. Peasants, as a rule, have been kept at arm's length from the social sources of power. Political organization, educational superiority, and mastery of the means of suppression and communication give to powerful outsiders an almost unchallenged hold over the village communities. Political subjection interlinks with economic exploitation and cultural subordination.

The social structure of peasantry is reflected in a number of characteristics specific to its political life. 'Vertical Segments' are most important in the political sociology of such societies and the outsider/insider division in such segments may prove politically much more meaningful than national socio-economic stratification. According to E. Wolf (1966), the critical significance of the above conditions in which peasantry (usually under the influence of specific external catalyst groups) unites, or is united, into a political force which sweeps the countryside, shaking societies and regimes.

#### **3.3.4 : PEASANTRY AS A PROCESS**

A sociologist has to explore the general pattern of change giving the dynamicity of peasant society. Comprehensive discussion of the dynamics of peasant societies would have to include non-structural changes. In such processes quantitative changes and changes in personnel leave the basic pattern of social interaction and interdependence essentially intact. For example, the cycle of nature and family life form an important part of peasant social existence, and seem to be reflected in patterns of social mobility in

which changes in the position of family units involved do not lead to change in the character of the social structure and may even support its stability.

The attention of analysts was understandably focused on structural change. Such changes in peasantry usually have been determined by the impact of non-peasant sections of society, a situation which can be explained both by the character of the peasant social structure and by the very fact of peasant domination by powerful outsiders. The spread of industrialization, urbanization, market economy and mass media, etc. play their role in the gradual disintegration of its members into new and nationwide network of social interaction. Delineation and classification of the major factors of structural changes based on the four-facet typology suggested above, can be explained as—

- (i) **Spread of market relations** : The spread of market relations, the advent of a money economy and new technology, gradually transforming the peasant family farm into an enterprise of a capitalist nature. Increase in exchange, introduction of planning of farm production in generalized terms of money and profit, and the growing importance of capital formation in agriculture lead to the integration of farms into an all-embracing national capitalist economy and to the ‘individualization’ of their members. Introduction to specific ‘cash crop’ or ‘wage labour’ is an important stage in such development. The spread of market relations may lead to proletarianization of peasantry and growth of agricultural estates. At times, however, the major processes of concentration and accumulation of capital taking place in terms seem to influence agriculture through marketing goods and capital.
- (ii) **Division of labour** : Some division of labour has existed in every peasant community and was generally made rigid by tradition, reaching its climax and sanctification in the Indian Caste. The rapid increase in division of labour interrelated with the spread of a market economy, has led to rapid development in professional specialization in the villages. Peasantry as a specific social class and a way of life develops into farming as an occupation.
- (iii) **Acculturation** : The acculturation process starts with the process disintegration

of traditional and specific peasant cultures under the impact of mass communication. The mass-media, the national educational system, military service and the temporary migration of labour, all exercise powerful influence by spreading new cultural patterns into the countryside. Improvement in means of communication and increasing geographical mobility facilitate and gradually establish a town-village continuum.

- (iv) **Radical Political Change** : With the advent of political change by non-peasant power holders and occasionally by a successful peasant revolution may lead to some basic changes in the structure of peasant society. Two major instance of such changes are agricultural reform and collectivization.

Thus there is little doubt that the major pattern of change in the contemporary world lead it away from encompassing typical peasant social structure. Yet to discard peasantry as a Social group and a Specific social structure remains manifestly wrong. Even in our ‘dynamic’ times we live not in the future but in a present rooted in the past, and that is where our future is shaped.

### 3.3.5 : CONCLUSION

In this unit we see, how the peasantry was visualized historically as a social entity. Initially it started with social distinctiveness and later moved to theoretical distinctiveness too. Further, the social understanding of peasantry is seen through Shanin’s characteristic like—peasant family farm, importance of land husbandry, specific traditional culture and underdog position. Finally the dynamicity of peasantry was seen in turning process.

### 3.3.6 : FURTHER READING

Shanin, T. 1990 : Defining Peasants Basil Blackwell, U.K.

#### Ask Yourself

Q Define Peasantry as a social phenomenon.

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**THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL  
ISSUES ON VILLAGE STUDIES IN INDIA**

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**4.0 Structure**

- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 Introduction
- 4.3 Village studies and their significance
- 4.4 The study of Indian village communities
- 4.5 Conclusion
- 4.6 Ask Yourself
- 4.7 References

**4.1 Objectives**

The main objectives of this lesson is to equip student with

- Importance of village studies
- Different village communities

**4.2 Introduction**

The present section consists of four selections. Professors Srinivas, Dube, Atal and Ramakrishna Mukherjee in their articles have highlighted the need for methodical, scientific and extensive study of Agrarian India which is comprised of nearly five lacs of villages, experiencing transformation under the impact of directed social change ushered in by the Government since Independence.

Professor Srinivas rightly warns against “the unstated but none the less real and

deep seated assumptions” among the educated people including scholars “that what is written is true, and the older a manuscript, the more true its contents”. He strongly urges scholars to realise that Indology is not merely a study of India’s past based on uncritical acceptance of the “vast body of written literature, sacred as well as secular as true”. According to him empirical study of the present society would help to give a new meaning even to some of the elementary but key concepts like Varna, Caste, Joint Family and Hinduism. This may lead to the overhauling of the present notions of historical epochs of Indian Society, Professor Srinivas strongly pleads for scientific, empirical village studies to correct the “book view” and “upper-caste view” of many phenomenon of Indian Society.

Professor Dube in his study justifies the changed focus of Social Anthropologists from tribal studies to the village studies. He examines the criticism levelled against the type of village studies undertaken by Social Anthropologists. While admitting the validity of some of the points, he strongly makes out a case for such studies. He acknowledges the need for a clear conceptual framework for studying both the structural matrix of the village community and the change it is experiencing. He proposes certain interesting steps to evolve a methodology of study. He also points out the areas of the study. According to Professor Dube, a systematic study of village communities “will provide the requisite background data from which more purposeful planning can emerge”.

Professor Atal enumerates the eight factors which have facilitated the inclusion of a new dimension in the form of rural study in Anthropology. He briefly reviews the rural studies made by Social Anthropologists and points out how they have helped to expand the horizon of an understanding of village social life. He further indicates how these studies have helped to generate certain concepts which are proving valuable as tools for fruitful explorations in rural social structure.

Professor Ramkrishna Mukherjee’s approach to Rural Studies is qualitatively different from the earlier three scholars. In his article, he provides an historical evolution of village studies in India. He draws attention to the forces and factors which led to the study of villages. Professor Ramkrishna Mukherjee while made by economists as well as Sociologists/Social Anthropologists have not taken into consideration the economic and class matrix while conducting the village studies.

He strongly feels that this mechanical exclusion of one or the other aspect of social reality and dichotomising of social world of village life has created a peculiar distortion in our comprehension of rural social structure and rural social change,

According to professor Mukerjee "the two streams of village studies carrying the imprint of economists or social Anthropologists/Sociologists, respectively must meet at relevant sites". He raises a very significant point for controversy. Are the two streams not meeting because they have different presuppositions about the social world?

These four selections from four distinguished scholars are presented to stimulate further discussions on the various methodological issues involved in Rural Studies. (Author)

#### **4.4 VILLAGE STUDIES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE**

A VAST BODY of written literature, sacred as well as secular, is available to the student of Indian social institutions, and the existence of the literature has exercised a decisive influence on the analysis of Indian Sociological problems. For instance, references to caste and kin relations in literature have been treated as historical data and conditions obtaining today have been compared and contrasted with conditions alleged to prevail in historical times. The law books (Dharma Sutras and Dharma Shastras) have been assumed to refer to laws which were actually in force among the people and it has not been asked whether the laws did not refer to merely what a particular lawyer considered desirable or good. Even for the major lawyers it is not known when exactly they lived, it being not uncommon for one scholar's estimate to differ from another by as much as three centuries. This is especially so in the case of the earlier lawyers Dr. J.P. Desai writes, "A further difficulty in the development of Hindu Law is the lack of agreement among scholars regarding the dates of various works ... There is no agreement regarding the time sequence (of the various authors) Buhler considers Gautama as the earliest Dharmasastrakar and Apastamba as the latest, while Jayaswal reverses the order, considering Apastamba as the earliest and Gautama as the latest Dharmasastrakar." (Punishment and Penance in Manusmritit, Journal of the University of Bombay, XV, part I July 1946, p.42) The provenance of a lawyer, and the sanction behind the rules enunciated by him are frequently far from clear if not unknown.

It is pertinent to mention in this connection that there is among our educated people, an unstated but none-the-less real and deep-seated assumption that what is written is true, and the older a manuscript, the more true its contents. Learning is almost synonymous with

pouring over palm leafmss. This bias is favour of almost synonymous with pouring over palm leafmss. This bias in favour of literary material is most clearly seen in the syllabuses of Indo logical studies in our universities. Indology has come to be regarded as knowledge about India's past. Any suggestion that Indology should include the study of tribes and villages which are in existence today would be regarded as too absurd to merit consideration. Caste in the Vedas and in Manu ought not to be. Such a separation between the past and present is not healthy.

The observation of social behavior is everywhere a difficult undertaking and in certain respects observing one's own society is far more difficult than observing an alien society. In the case of Indians, there is the additional difficulty that ideas which are carried over from literary material and from the caste to which one belongs by birth, vitiate the observation of field-behaviour. An example of such a failure to understanding the factual situation is provided by the way in which the idea of Varna has vitiated the understanding of caste. According to the Varna scheme, there are only four castes and a few other groups, while actually there are, in each linguistic area, several hundred castes, each of which is a homogeneous group, with a common culture, occupation or occupations and practising endogamy and commensality. The castes of a local area form a hierarchy. There are several features of this hierarchy which run counter to the hierarchy as it is conceptualised in the idea of Varna. Firstly, in the Varna scheme the four all-India castes occupy definite and immutable places, while, in caste at the existential level, the only definite thing is that all the local castes form a hierarchy. Everything else is far from certain. For one thing, the hierarchy is characterised by uncertainty, especially in the middle region which spans an enormous structural gulf. Each caste tries to argue that it occupies a higher place than the one allotted to it by its neighbours. This arguability has an important function because it makes possible mobility, and castes are mobile over a period of time. There is occasional leap-frog-castes are mobile over a period of time. There is occasional leap-frogging inside the system, a caste jumping over its neighbours to achieve a high position. Another important point is that the hierarchy is local, carrying from one small local area to another, if not from one village to another. Two groups bearing the same name and living in the same linguistic region often occupy different positions in their respective local hierarchy region often occupy different positions in their respective local hierarchies and differ from each other in some customs and rites. The Kolis of Gujarat are a case in point.

It is clear that the idea of Vama is far too rigid and simple to cover the immensely complex facts of caste. But the idea of Varna helps to make the facts of caste in one region, intelligible all over India by providing a conceptual frame that is simple, clear-cut, stable and which, it is imagined, holds good everywhere. And it helps mobility too, for ambitious castes find it less difficult to take on high-sounding Sanskrit names with the name of one of the Vamas as a suffix, than to take on the name of local higher caste. But all this is lost sight of because varna is treated as describing caste accurately and fully. This would not have happened if we Indians had not taken it for granted that the idea of Varna derived from literary material, adequately explained the facts of the caste system. The only cure for this literary bias lies in doing field-research. The field-worker, confronted by the bewildering variety and complexity of facts as they actually are is forced to relate what he sees to what he has assumed it to be, and the lack of correspondence between the two, results in his attempting to reassess the written material.

In every part of India only a few castes at the top enjoyed a literary tradition while the bulk of the people did not. Under British rule the top castes supplied the 'intelligentsia' which acted as the link between the top castes and the new masters and the bulk of the people. And the new intelligentsia saw the social reality through the written literature, regarding the deviations from the latter as aberrations. This group also perpetuated an upper caste view of the Hindu social system on the new masters and through them, to the outside world. Conditions prevalent among the upper castes were generalized to include all Hindus. For instance women are treated much more severely among the higher castes than among the lower, but this distinction was ignored by the early reformers. They talked about the plight of the Hindu widow, the absence of divorce, the harshness of the sex code towards her and so on but on all these matters the institutions of the lower differ in important respects from those of the higher castes. The point I am trying to make is that the observation of Hindu social life has been and still is, vitiated by the book-view and the upper caste-view. A sociological study of Indian social life would yield interesting results.

An emphasis on religious behaviour as such, as distinguished from what is written in the religious books and the opinions of the upper castes, would have provided us with a view of Hinduism substantially different from that of the philosophers, Sanskritists and reformers. I shall try to explain what I mean by an example. In the SW Miller of 1948, I

went along with the elders of Ram pur a village to the temple of the deity Basava to watch them consult the deity about rain. The priest performed Puja, chanting Mantras, in Sanskrit, and then the elders began to ask the deity to let them know whether it was going to rain or not in the new few days. I was expecting them to behave as I have seen devotees behave in the temple of the upper castes, viz., stand with bowed head and folded palms, shut eyes, and utter words showing great respect, for and treat of, and dependence upon, the deity. I was completely taken back to find them using words which they used to an equal, and a somewhat unreasonable equal at that. They became angry, shouted at the deity, taunted him, and went so far as to say that they considered even the government more worthy of confidence than him. And they were deadly serious all the time. Nothing could have been further from an urban Hindu's ideas of what the proper relationship was between man and god.

It is frequently said by apologists and reformers that Hinduism is not a proselytizing religion like Christianity and Islam. This again is not strictly true. Besides the Buddhists and Jains, the Lingayats, who began as a militant reformist sect in the South in the twelfth century, A.D., secured in the early days of their history. The Lingayats are a well-organized sect, and they have monasteries scattered all over the Kamataka, In south Mysore, for instance, the monasteries have a following not only among Lingayats but among a number of middle-range non-Brahminical castes with whom they are in continuous contact, and over whose life they exercise some kind of direction. The head of each monastery collects a levy from each of his followers through a hierarchy of agents. It is important to note that this is not confined to the Lingayats though great theologian and reformer, Sri Rarnanujacharya, have a monastery at Melkote, about 26 miles from Mysore City, and the monastery has a following among the people in the surrounding towns and villages. Thus, both Brahmin and non-Brahmin sects have deeply influenced the people at large through organizations which have existed for hundreds of years. Still one frequently reads in books on Hindu religion and philosophy that Hinduism is unique in that it is not a proselytizing religion. It is true that Hindus do not try to convert Christians or Muslims, but in a sense conversion is going on all the time within Hinduism. The lower castes and tribal people have been undergoing Sanskritization all the time, and sects, Brahminical and non-Brahminical, and Vaishnavite and Shaivite, have actively sought converts. Persecution for religious view and practices has not been unknown.

The studies of village communities which are currently being carried out in the different parts of the country provide the future historian with a vast body of facts about rural social life, facts collected not by travellers in a hurry, but by men who are trained to observe keenly and accurately. These studies constitute therefore valuable contributions to the social, political, economic and religious history of our country. Their value is further enhanced when it is realized that the changes which are being ushered in Independent and Plan-conscious India herald a complete revolution in our social life. It is true that in historic times India has been subject to invasions by diverse peoples including the Mughals and British and that British rule inaugurated changes the fulfillment of which we are observing now, but the break with the past was never as complete and through-going as it is today. We have, at the most, another ten years in to record facts about a type of society which is changing fundamentally and with great rapidity.

Historians have stated that a knowledge of that past is helpful in the understanding of the present if not in forecasting the future. It is not, however, realized that through understanding of the present frequently sheds light on the past. To put it in other words the intimate knowledge which results from the intensive field-survey of extant social institutions does enable us to interpret better data about past social institutions. Historical data are neither as accurate nor as rich and detailed as the data collected by field-anthropologists and the study of certain existing processes increases our understanding of similar processes in the past. It is necessary to add here that great caution has to be exercised in such a task, for otherwise history will be twisted out of all recognition. But once the need for extreme caution is recognized, there is no doubt that our knowledge of the working of historical processes will be enhanced by this method. The universities are the proper organizations to conduct this research, and the government can help by giving money to the establishment of teaching and research posts in social anthropology and sociology. Too much stress on utilitarian will defeat itself, and will further lower intellectual standards.

#### **4.4 THE STUDY OF INDIAN VILLAGE COMMUNITIES**

In the last decade there has been a noticeable shift in the orientation and the focus of interest of social anthropology in India. Anthropologists are no longer concerned primarily or even mainly with the study of tribal cultures; in increasing numbers they are now operating nearer home in village communities where they have discovered challenging possibilities of theoretical and applied social science research. This is a very welcome trend indeed, and

augurs well for the future of social research in the country.

This development is not without its critics and detractors. There are those who criticize the utility of village studies, as also that of much else in anthropology, on the ground that such studies, howsoever intimate and intensive, do not add in any appreciable measure to our knowledge of the socio-cultural systems of the country, nor even to the understanding of the processes and trends of the society at large. An extreme view goes to the extent of questioning their validity as diagnostic or even illustrative case studies. It must be conceded immediately that the village communities studied so far and those being studied currently, do not approach anywhere near a statistically acceptable sample for the country as a whole. But such critics appear to ignore certain essential characteristics of anthropological research. What we lose by not working on an extensive and statistically adequate sample, we more than compensate by acquiring depth and coverage of overt and covert norms in our analyses. Survey research of the extensive type does yield certain data that conform to the rigid tests of validity and reliability but its coverage must of necessity be limited. In its very nature it cannot explore the depths and covert aspects of behaviour which the anthropologist can in his study of single communities. To attempt the study-task of such magnitude we could only look upon it as an ideal for the distant future involving an enormous investment of men and money. Even if the money were to be found, investment of men and money. Even if the money were to be found, we simply do not have the trained personnel to undertake the adventure. The intensification of such research must be phased carefully. We would not lose much by waiting to go on the job on a massive scale only after we have evolved a clearer and more coherent theoretical frame of reference. In the meantime anthropologists can remain unrepentant advocates of single village studies, in the same way as there are devoted students or family and kinship, for the village as a culture-bearing unit does mirror certain significant aspects of the region and the nation. Empirically derived meaningful concepts and hypotheses for more extensive survey research can emerge only from such investigations. In order to avoid a mechanical and overly schematic approach to the study of regional similarities and differences in the country, it is most desirable to continue with the anthropological tradition of single village studies. With the increase in the volume of such studies order would eventually emerge out of the apparent anarchy that prevails today.

A more valid criticism of the present trend is that some anthropologists have tended to

ignore basic sociological realities by viewing the village as a biotic community, although in essence it is a synthesized community. Because of their theoretical and methodological orientation towards tribal studies some anthropologists indeed have tried to study village communities in a biotic frame of reference regarding it as an isolate; in consequence the unity of the village has been emphasized more than its extensions. It must be admitted that any efforts to understand the village without reference to its extensions in time and space in the social, cultural, and ideological contexts are bound to be partial and incomplete, and it is necessary to evolve an approach that would take account of the historical and regional determinants that shape and condition the culture of a village. Here too most of the fears of our critics are somewhat imaginary; the two major studies of Indian village communities published within hard covers to-date contain unmistakable evidence of the anthropologists' awareness of the problem and have sought to study single village in the background of the wider universe of Indian civilization.

A third criticism voiced by more discriminating social scientists points out certain inherent weakness in our initial approach in this direction. Our studies are often modelled on similar studies done elsewhere in the world, and lack a coherent frame of reference relevant to the structure and organization of Indian Society. While our descriptive categories are satisfactory, our analytical categories leave much to be desired. On the whole the organization of such research on an India-wide basis lacks planning, and we have not evinced enough interest in evolving or rigidly defining the criteria on which we select village for community study. It should be conceded that the critics have a point of unmistakable validity here. We can explain our position by suggesting that initial efforts in any new direction are necessarily exploratory in nature or by emphasizing that our need for facts is so great that almost any type of study should be welcome; but these and such other explanations would not constitute a justification of our position. That we have lacked theoretical sophistication we should admit. With humility and critical self evaluation we should proceed to chalk out the lines of their action.

The concepts of Great and Little Traditions, Sanskritization, and universalization and parochialization offer us a good starting point, and from here we should build step by step a series of hypotheses and concepts that would ultimately lead to meaningful generalization regarding the structure and process of Indian Society.

The structural-functional and themal approaches provide us with more or less satisfactory

conceptual tools for the study of village communities. A little more critical examination of the complexities introduced into such studies by the fact of their belonging to the complex web of the Indic civilization would yield of the required refinements and correctives. The study of change in village communities, significant as it is both in its theoretical and applied aspects, needs a more rigorous framework. To ensure comparability of data it is necessary to evolve certain common categories of investigation, processing and analysis covering this broad area of research.

Redfield's folk-urban continuum provides one such conceptual framework. Analyses of Indian materials within this frame or reference, however, have pointed out some of its shortcomings. The fabric of contemporary Indian Society is the result of so many divergent patterns of inter-action between local, regional, and classical cultural influences, that the folk-urban continuum concept cannot cover them all adequately. Redfield himself has been among the first to recognize this inadequacy and to suggest an alternative approach. The concept of Great Little Traditions, to which a reference has been made earlier, provides approach for the study not only of the structure and integration of Indian Society but also for the analysis of change as a broad historical process. Srinivas' useful and much-discussed concept of Sanskritization, although it is independent of and was developed before Redfield's formulation, fits well into this conceptual scheme. Similarly, Marriott's Universalization and Parochialization concepts are refinements within the same general theme.

While the broad framework provided by these concepts is simple and attractive, operationally they are not without inherent contradictions and difficulties. There is apparently no precise definition of Great or Little Traditions. To define the Great Tradition as the corpus of beliefs, rituals, and social patterns embodied in the sacred canonical literature does not take us very far. Even the clarification that it often emanates from the little traditions of the little communities and is abstracted and synthesized by the urban Literati does not help our understanding very substantially. It is difficult to reduce the inviolable central core of the more or less static ideas of Great Tradition to a list of traits and complexes; nor is it easy to classify them, with an degree of precision, as universals, alternatives, and specialities. The concept must also allow for a wide nebulous area covering ideas and institutions that are not accounted for by the sacred or near-sacred texts. This only adds to our difficulties in using the concept as an analytical tool. Where there are more than one Great or near-

Great Traditions, each with its canonical texts and ethical codes, the situation becomes all the more confusing. In such a situation we have no criteria for determining the elements which could be said to be basic to the Great Tradition. Scriptures and sacred texts themselves often illustrate certain aspects of evolution and change in society and there is by no means unanimity among them. When conflicting ideal patterns are laid down by the sacred texts, and there is no universality in the acceptance of one in preference to the others, the efforts to find the Great Tradition would be fruitless. It may also be added that the Great Tradition-Little Tradition frame of reference does not allow proper scope for the consideration of the role and significance of regional, western, and emergent national traditions, each of which is powerful in its own way. Some of these considerations would apply also to Srinivas' concept of Sanskritization. In our study of Indian village communities therefore, it may be useful to consider the contextual classical and local tradition as well as the regional (culture-area), western (ideological-technological) and emergent national (nativistic-reinterpretational-adaptive) traditions.

The urgency with which the study of the changing village scene in India is being pressed in the wake of the national development programme should not seduce us into adopting short-cuts of questionable validity for the study of cultural change. It is doubtful if the plethora of spurious and superficial writings emerging from such efforts would provide any meaningful leads to the community development planners and administrators. A good study of change invariably follows a good structural-functional-thematic study of a society and together these need sustained work by trained social scientists. Promise of quick results by adoption of shortcuts would not be anything more or better than anthropological quackery. For a little immediate gain we shall only be discrediting the profession in the eyes of the discerning planner. Our time-consuming methods may arouse some impatience in those who subsidize our research, but our ultimate results are bound to be of constructive help to them.

It is hoped that the observation made above will not be constructed as a plea for letting the anthropologists pursue their own pleasures. Nor is there any denial of the urgency and importance of the study of change. Its critical significance is evident.

Earlier it has been suggested that we need to evolve a clear conceptual framework for the study of change, and that it is necessary to have some agreement on the broad categories covering data collection, processing, and analysis to ensure the comparability

of the materials.

To place the study of change in one particular community in the proper perspective, it will be necessary to relate its change to the wider national, regional, and local area developments. An historical survey of the major trends would prepare the ground for the characterization of change, and would help in determining its cumulative, concentrated, or sporadic nature. In this context it would be useful to examine also the involvement of the community in this process, and to determine the areas most or least affected by the trends. Concepts of change and its conscious formation too would merit a serious examination

As the second step in such research it would be essential to discover and identify the reference groups, and the agents and carriers of change. Who provides the model for change? And who are its promoters? It would be most useful to construct a typology of the agents and carriers of change as individuals and groups, and to examine the sponsor-recipient relationships in all their ramifications. The motivations of the intimate field for investigation. It would only be logical to extend the research also to the techniques of effecting change by analyzing the communication channels and appeals that are employed for the purpose.

The dynamics of change can be studied in the context of the kinds of changes that are taking place in the community. It would be necessary to distinguish between planned and unplanned change, and to assess the relative importance of both. This study would also involve the examination of the mechanics of the change, and a microscopic analysis of the selectively in and sequence of change. This would entail a study of the patterns of change in reference to their spread within and outside the community. In the cultural context the logic of the acceptance or rejection of particular items will have to be examined; the sequence of change, both in its ramifying and non-ramifying aspects, will have to be closely watched and analyzed.

Finally, the community attitudes and reactions to change will have to be given an adequate coverage. This would necessitate research into valuation of change, associated aspirations and fears, and assignment of responsibility for change. The attitudes to change will have to be studied in reference to moves to facilitate, block or reverse change. Such analysis, it is hoped, would help us in making justifiable predictions regarding prospects for further change.

The numerous calls to social engineering, while adding to the general recognition of the utility of anthropology and sociology in development planning, have tended to confuse the role of the anthropologist. Our role should be viewed essentially as one of the analyst, and not that of the therapist. The temptations to the student of village India to assume the mantle of an action engineer will be many, but it is doubtful if we are cut out for such a role by our orientation, training, and experience. What the enlightened administrator expects of us is not so much of glib advice, but substantial additions to the existing knowledge of the village communities to enable him to formulate informed policies. Good base-line studies of village culture and social organization, followed by penetrating enquiries into the directions and content of change claim top priority on our time and research energy. To aid the administrator further, within this general framework we can undertake more focussed investigations in areas which have a direct bearing on day-to-day action programmes. Serious analytical studies in the field of group dynamics, leadership and decision-making, communication and cultural factors governing acceptance or rejection of the externally induced programmes of change will have to be taken in hand without delay. Those of us who are oriented to the finer points of methodology) could make a valuable contribution by introducing refinements in evaluation techniques. The more action minded could participate in the training programmes for the extension agents, and in the formulation of pilot action-research for the extension agents, and in the formulation of pilot action-research projects. The need for independent evaluation of the state-sponsored development projects, preferably without requiring financial support from the government, cannot be over-emphasized, and we need a great deal of illustrative as well as diagnostic case material. To these, it is hoped, we shall not turn with proper equipment of theory and methodology.

#### **4.5 CONCLUSION**

There can be no doubt that village studies in this country have a future. Our teething troubles over, we have now to devote ourselves to the tasks of developing a proper conceptual frame of reference testing our methodological tools, formulating clear hypotheses and the going into the field for a spell of good solid field-work. In doing this we shall not only satisfy our over-developed sense of curiosity and make valuable theoretical advances, but shall contribute our bit towards understanding the complex factors involved in the problem of the emotional integration of India and will provide the requisite background data from which more purposeful planning can emerge.

#### **4.6 ASK YOURSELF**

Q. Explain village studies and their importance.

#### **4.7 REFERENCES**

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**5.0 STRUCTURE**

- 5.1 Objective
- 5.2 Introduction
- 5.3 What is Rural
- 5.4 Determinants of Rural Social Formation
- 5.5 Conclusion.
- 5.6 Further Readings

**5.1 OBJECTIVE**

The main thrust of the unit is to

- Acquaint you with idea of rural society
- Equip you with determinants of agrarian society
- Acquaint you with factors contributing to formation of agrarian society

**5.2 INTRODUCTION:**

When a sociologist approaches rural life he is concerned with the human relationships taking place among the village people. It would not be wrong to say that no other discipline focuses attention primarily on human relationships. It is here that sociology differs from all other sciences. In other words, the sociologist interests himself in human relationships simply because they are social in nature and not because they are related to economic, political, religious and other types of activities.

The social relationship which take place in what we call rural society are

manifested in family, caste, class, economy, i.e., agriculture, politics, religion, etc. These social relationships are found in production relations, party politics and other institutions. Surely, family, caste and class are not found only in villages. These are also found in urban communities including the metropolitan cities. But, the operation of family, caste and class that we find in village communities is characteristically different from urban communities. For instance, inter-caste marriage in villages immediately gets contempt from the community. However, in urban life, such an affair largely goes unnoticed. What we want to argue is that several of the social institutions that we find in rural communities are specific to the communities so far their functioning or operation is concerned. It is with this locality approach that rural society is analysed in this chapter. In other words, we critically look at the web of social relationships found in the village communities from sociological perspective. The rural social relationships found in social institutions becomes the focus of our analysis.

### **5.3 WHAT IS RURAL?**

We, very often, talk about the term ‘rural’ without having any scientific definition in mind. The presumption is that everyone understands the meaning of the term. In a broader way, it could be said that a village is one which people call a village. But this, however, does not provide us any precise meaning of rural. However, in formal records, there has always been a need to define ‘rural’ in specific connotation. All over the world, the governments have defined ‘rural’ in statutory terms. For instance, the US Bureau of the Census, defines rural community on the basis of population size, incorporation and density. Though, such an arbitrary definition of rural community may be subjected to criticism, it serves that purpose of the government. In our country also similar effort has been made. For purpose of government functioning, the term ‘rural’ is defined in terms of revenue. On population size, for the Indian government, the village means a revenue village. It might include one big village or a cluster of small villages. However, for Census Commission, a village is that which is identified by its name having definite boundaries. The Census of India has defined a village as under:

The basic unit for rural areas is the revenue village which has definite surveyed boundaries. The revenue village may comprise several hemlets but the entire village has been treated as

one unit for presentation of census data. In unsurveyed areas, like villages within forest areas, each habitation area with locally recognized boundaries within each forest range officer's beat, was treated as one unit.

India has large number of villages. It is because of this that the country is proverbially called as the 'nation of villages'. According to 1991 census India had 5,58,088 villages. The number of cities and towns in the same census Year was 3,018. In terms of population size, out of India's total population, 74.3 per cent people reside in villages, the remaining 25.7 per cent being urban dwellers. Earlier, in the 1901 Census, 89.2 per cent resided in villages and remaining in cities.

#### **5.4 DETERMINANTS OF RURAL SOCIAL FORMATION: GEOGRAPHIC ENVIRONMENT**

Rural Sociologists have argued that rural social life or rural way of life is the result of the interplay of a few factors. There have determined the social formation of village life. Whether caste, kin, clan, polity or economy, all these have been determined by a set of factors which are specific to the village habitation. We would discuss the sociological characteristics of Indian's rural life within the frame of these determinants. The are as under:

##### **1. Geographic Environment**

Geography is the study of location, climate, topography and natural resources. These aspects of geography vary from place to place and region to region. The topography of the states of Punjab, Maharashtra and Gujarat, for example, is such that it is suitable for cultivation and irrigation facilities. On the other hand, the topography of hilly regions, such as the states of north-east, is difficult and is not conducive for cultivation. It is, therefore, the strength and weakness of geography which determines the way of life of the communities inhabiting a particular geography. It is in this context that we look at the way of life of the rural people.

##### **(a) Physical Setting**

Location has a vital influence on the structural and cultural differences that are found in a rural society. In the case of India's rural physical setting one could easily observe that the village location which is in the plains and valleys is prone to take easy cultivation. On the

other hand, where the physical setting is uncomfortable, neither there are industries nor any cultivation. Life found in such communities revolves round home industries, crafts and arts.

**(b) Climate**

Rural people are basically agriculturists. It is because a substantial part of their income is drawn from agriculture. And we all know agriculture depends on climate. The peasant in the village is dependent on the vicissitudes of weather. His personality has an in-built element of uncertainty. He must expect, upon occasion, to see much of his year's work wiped out by a cloudburst, a hailstorm, or a plague of grasshoppers. He knows that sometimes it will rain when he needs sunshine, whereas at other times the sun will shine day-in and day-out until it burns up his crops. The peasant is no stranger to late freezes and early frosts. And, in areas of relatively high technology, he attempts to protect his tender plants and fruits with pots and fire.

**(c) Topography**

The peasant is always in close contact with his land. It is the land which survives him. Historically, for India's peasant land is the hope and glory of the rural people.

**(d) Natural resources**

Since the rural life is much dependent on natural resources, it is interesting to look at the social formations resulting from natural resources. These resources include water and irrigation, fisheries, forest and mineral wealth. These resources are potential forces to give a specific way of life to the rural people. The villages which have a river and stream system to construct small or major dams provide a new way of life to the inhabitants. It is found that the villages which have tank and canal irrigation tend to prosper in agriculture income. The villages having irrigation facilities normally develop a way of life, which is characterised by capitalism and sophisticated technology. In our country, the villages inhabited within the network of canal irrigation facilities have got most of the facilities of modern life. Villages in Punjab, Karnataka, Tamilnadu and Maharashtra have developed a higher level of rural life. These villages are facilitated by the amenities of electricity, adequate water supply and a moderate system of education.

Mineral wealth and forestry are also strong determinants of the way of rural life. If the forests are rich, a substantial part of rural economy tends to depend on forest wood and forest produce. Similarly, the mineral wealth also affects the life-style of the people. Recently, the mining of copper and marble has given a boost to the social life of the people.

#### **(e) Isolation**

One of the most obvious features of rural life is its low density of population. Although, this factor in itself does not constitute a geographic influence, it is included here because the nature of agriculture forces, a low, man-to-land ratio. Agriculture requires invariably low density percentage in the villages. This has greater ramification on rural life. The density of population affects production and distribution and also generates social reactions which greatly influence the total life of society. The density of population further affects the level of standard of the people.

The official data (India, 1975) show that the population density of the country has gone up from 216 in 1981 to 267 in 1991. There are no data officially available for density of population at rural level, however, it is found that out of the total population of the country 74.3 percent people live in villages as against 25.7 percent in urban areas.

The people at the rural level relatively live in isolation. Surely, the present development in transportation has relatively improved the rural isolation. In the succeeding development plans new roads have been constructed and transport facilities are made available. Despite the modernising inroads made in the isolated villages, the fact is that there are a large number of villages that continue even today to live in isolation.

The isolation of the rural habitations tends to affect the personality and culture of the village people. Actually, the relative isolation of India's villages has two facts. The first concerns the availability of means of communication. Until recently, the great distances between rural habitations, especially in hilly regions, and unfriendly geographic environment, has made it impractical to introduce good roads and telephonic service. And, although, these facilities are now available in some areas, a large number of ruralities are deprived of these.

## **SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT**

Social anthropologists have elaborately worked among the tribals. We have enough data about the life of the tribals living in India.

What is reported in the villages is the clan and kinship which determine the way of life of the people. If we look to the general life-styles of the village people, it would be obvious that there is predominance of primary groups in the villages. The individual villager's life is moulded by the patterns of behaviour required in his family, kin, clan and fellow-neighborhood. It is here that the villager learns loyalty, devotion, sympathy, respect and cooperation.

### **(a) Predominance of primary group contacts**

The importance of primary groups in the village community assumes vital significance in the patterns of interaction. It is quite interesting to know that in village India the individual is identified by his belonging to a particular village. Primarily, the individual identifies himself with his village. Second, his identification refers to his kin, clan and caste. Class is no mark of identification for a villager.

### **(b) Social differentiation**

There is not much social differentiation in the village. The collective life of the people revolves round the agricultural calendar. Activities like sowing, weeding, harvesting and marketing engage most of the people all through the year. Most of the cultural activities of the village people, therefore, run parallel to agriculture calendar. The degree of social differentiation in these villages is, thus, greatly minimised.

### **(c) Social stratification**

Although, the principles of caste and class are the same for both rural and urban life, they are the part of same civilisation. There are a great many differences in the operation of these principles in the two communities. There are generally fewer strata or classes in rural society. The landholdings are more or less the same with little variation. The class differentiation in the villages, therefore, is not conspicuous. Secondly, generally speaking, social streams are greater in cities than in rural areas. In rural community, if there are sky-scrappers, there are slums also. In rural communities, it is exceptional to find

persons owning large holdings. What is common in the village is that the rural classes tend to be intermediate, or middle classes. In other words, the stratification in village life does not assume any extreme.

#### **(d) Migration and social mobility**

The way of the life of rural people is partly also shaped by the processes of migration and mobility. Mobility tends to circulate people within a given strata or from one social strata to another. The village people who were said to be immobile have now taken to different occupations. The caste-bound occupations have been replaced by secular occupations. Even the concept of 'purity and pollution' with respect to occupations has undergone change.

Migration has also become common with the village people. There was a time when the villager did not leave his village for earning a livelihood. With the narrowing of available land for cultivation and population pressure on land, the rate of migration has increased. When the migrants return from their place of work to the place of origin, they bring with them the traits of urban culture. Both in-migration and out-migration in village India have landed the people to a transitional stage. Consequently, this has brought about a characteristic change in the process of socialisation.

### **CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT**

In the earlier section we have discussed the influence of social environment on the formation of rural society in India. Even the development of personality of the individuals in the rural society has been discussed. The cultural environment is little different from social environment. The basis for differentiation, however, is that only individuals are cultural bearers. Thus, a distinction can be made between those socialization factors that exist purely because of differences in the composition of society and those that come about because of differences in actual orientation. As a matter of fact culture patterns establish definite limits to the behavior-norms or expected behavior patterns. In this way each society indirectly selects the type of personality that will be most successful in it.

It is important in this context to realise that in spite of the uniform influence of culture, no two persons have exactly the same personality, even through, they may live in teh same society. The reason for this phenomenon lies in the fact that every person participates

differently in his culture. Despite certain universal features that exert a more or less uniform influence, each person has a certain areas of experience which are unique to him, because no culture is ever transmitted in its entirety. The more complex the society, the greater are the chance for personality differences. With these facts in mind, we may examine some of the different cultural differences in rural areas.

**(a) Simplicity of cultural expressions**

Village society is a simple society. It is simple because it is closer to nature. The people are bound up with the agricultural routine. Their festivals, fairs, folk-songs and folk-tales have all resemblance to their agriculture. All over the world the folk-literature pertaining to rural life is very rich. In India, the rural folk-literature is the treasure house of village traditions and culture. The folk-songs of Alha-Udal and the Pandwani of Chhatisgarh region of Madhya Pradesh are indicators of the village traditions and culture. The simple nature of village folks gets manifestations in folk-literature.

**(b) Social control**

In rural India, the police force which exercises control over the people lives far apart from the villages site. Control in the village society is exercised by informal methods. Thus, neighbourhood gossip and other devices come into play when a member of a rural society violates a code. When the less violent means of control do not suffice, law courts are said to give more serious punishment. It is the rural public opinion which sets the society in order.

**(c) Rural knowledge and skills**

In the present context of rural society, when agriculture has become capitalistic, farming requires a great variety of knowledge and skills, and the successful farmer must be a jack-of-all trades. Not only he must understand the operation and care of machinery and equipment, but also have some knowledge of the requirements of soils, plants and animals and the prevention of plant and animal diseases. He must be an expert in farm management and marketing. These requirements make the farmer closely acquainted with many aspects of material culture.

#### **(d) Levels and standards of living**

Cultural usage is reflected to a large extent in the home. The absence or presence of certain items, such as cycle, motor cycle, electricity, irrigation, engine, tractor, thresher and motor lorry, determines both the level of living and the degree of participation in the culture. Anthropologists and rural sociologists who have conducted rural studies in the field of standard of living pointed out two things. The first is that rural areas enjoy a lower of living. Most of the villagers, who are found below the poverty line, live a sub-standard life. The second is the different emphasis on cultural items as a result of different needs or values.

#### **5.5 CONCLUSION**

The level of life found in the village is determined by the structure of rural society. It must be stressed that in a larger way rural social structure is largely influenced by geographical and physical environments. Though, much change has come in the modification of natural environment, but much requires to be done of the unfriendly rural environment. Lack of irrigation facilities, power supply, undulating topography and above all lack of cultivable land have not much influenced the specific characteristics of rural life. Despite the development done in rural India it is not difficult indeed to identify a member belonging to rural society.

#### **5.6 CRITERIA TO CLASSIFY VILLAGE AGGREGATES**

Environment sociologists have advanced a number of criteria to classify village community are:

- (1) The village aggregates have been classified according to the types which evolved during the period of transition from man's nomadic existence to settled village life. Thus villages have been divided into three groups :(a) migratory agricultural villages where the people live in fixed abodes only for a few months. (b) the semi-permanent agricultural villagers where the population besides a few years and then migrates due to exhaustion of the soil and (c) the permanent agricultural villages where the settled human aggregates live for generations and even centuries.
- (2) Villages have been clarified in nucleated villages and dispersed villages .we will discuss it further.

- (3) Villages are also classified according to social differentiation, stratification, mobility and land ownership viz. (a) composed of peasant joint owners. (b) Composed of peasant joint tenants. (c) Composed of farmers (mostly individual owners) and some tenants and laborers. (d) Composed of individual farmer tenants (e) composed of employees of the state, the church, the city or public and owners .

## **5.7 TYPES OF RURAL SETTLEMENT**

The inhabitants of a village may be farmers or traders or artisans or scholars or priests; and village can be classified according to the occupations of the majority of its habitants. Villagers may, moreover, belong to the single tribes, or may differ from one another in caste or religious persuasion ; and this may give is another means of classification of types but one of the most useful and objectives means is finished by the physical form taken by the village . From this point of view, the following differences orders can be distinguished in India. Each type has a fairly wide range of variations, so that instances may not be rare when it becomes difficult to determine if a particular example should be placed in once category of another.

### **These order are:**

- (1) Shapeless Cluster or agglomerate with streets not forming an integral part of the design. These may be of the (i) massive or (ii) dispersed type, in which the village is reckoned, to consist of an assemblage of discrete clusters of comparative small size. It may be noted here that in villages belonging to this order there may be tortuous or irregular roads; but this grows according to local requirements, not as part of the original design.
- (2) Linear Cluster or assemblage with a regular open space or straight street provided between parallel rows of houses.
- (3) Square or Rectangular Cluster or agglomerate with straight streets running parallel or at right angles to one another.
- (4) Villages formed of Isolated Homesteads, a number of which are treated together as a mauza for convenience of collection of rent or taxes.

Various factors are involved in the origin and character of a rural settlement. Wherever possible, these have to be taken into account during classification. Thus, an example of Shapeless Cluster may be enclosed by a protective stone wall or wooden palisade for purposes of defence. If it lies on the top of a narrow ridge in a mountainous country it may take on an elongated form. But, after comparison with a number of other examples in the same neighbourhood, the proper course might be to regard it as belonging to the first instead of the second order. The same thing may happen when a village of the first order is built on a levee in a flooded district. Linear Clusters may, again, grow in size as population increases and parallel streets may be added or streets even set at right angles to the old streets so that, eventually, a square form results which may appear like a shapeless cluster from a distance. But the presence of open streets as an integral part of the design and the occurrence of simpler linear forms in the same neighbourhood when the settlement is of small size should help us in regarding the square as genetically related to the linear and unrelated to the massive cluster which may be accident approximate to a square.

Parallelisms may also occur on account of a variety of geographical and other reasons. Thus, houses and farms may be isolated on high hills or deserts, or in the midst of jungles as well as in shallow islands thrown up in an estuary as a river discharges its heavy load of silt.

In the high Himalayan Range, where people live with their flocks which also help them in transporting merchandise between India and Tibet (formerly), villages tend to be clustered and sometimes there is a summer and winter encampment, each of which remains unoccupied for some months in the year. But when the same people settle down nearer the northern plains of India and begin to cultivate potato for the market, their isolated houses are set in the midst of fields which need constant attention or watching.

Settlement formed of isolated farmhouses or homesteads are thus found in various parts of India irregularly. These areas include portions of the western Malwa plateau, where they occur in association with dispersed clusters, in portions of the Western Ghats stretching from Satara towards the Kerala highlands and some portions of the high Himalayan Mountains both in Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh. In the flooded districts of eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar we find isolates which are seasonally unoccupied in the islands thrown up in the midst of braided streams. There is no uniformity of tradition among these isolated homesteads. They seem to have grown according to the exigencies of local

circumstance.

When we come to the three major orders of Shapeless Cluster and Clusters of the Linear and Square types marked by straight streets, these are confined to clearly defined contiguous expanses of land. This can hardly be due to geography, as within the areas occupied by these types, climate, soil and agricultural practices have a fairly wide range of variability and settlement types seem to have more to do with tradition than either geography or agriculture.

On an examination of the distribution map, one notices that much of the Gangetic plain, Rajasthan, the Malwa plateau and portions of Maharashtra are characterized by shapeless clusters. In Western Rajasthan, in the districts of Jaisalmar and Barmer, these occur along with villages of the dispersed type. Dispersed clusters by themselves occur over a long stretch of the Western Ghats from Thana to Kolhapur and also in portions of Kerala. The same types, namely, shapeless cluster and dispersed cluster, occur also in eastern Uttar Pradesh, portions of Madhya Pradesh and the Himalayan or sub-Himalayan districts in the north of Bihar and practically over the whole of the Brahmaputra valley. Manipur and Mizo District also have examples of the clustered type.

When we come to the linear type, the best examples are observed in the coastal districts of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. This extends westward into a large portion of the Telugu-speaking area of the former princely state of Hyderabad. Gujarat also shows the same type in large villages, and even smaller ones are formed of parallel rows separated by broad streets. This is true of Kutch and Saurashtra as well as of districts stretching from the south of Rajasthan to Surat.

The square development of the linear, if we may call it so, extends over a solid portion of Madras State including both the dry Rayalaseema districts as well as the prosperous agricultural districts of the coastal plain.

There is an interesting feature noticeable in coastal Orissa and northern coastal Andhra. The houses tend to be contiguous and laid in an unbroken line, adjacent ones quite often sharing a common wall between themselves. As one proceeds southwards to Madras the arrangements remain the same, but the houses become separate. A change is also noticed in the thatches and in the placement of the courtyard.

## **5.8 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter we find that settlement is marked by patterning of houses and which also decides the nature of villages. Normally we have shapeless cluster, linear cluster square cluster and isolated homesteads as the popular types of settlement in various parts of India. It is found that region, climate and other geographic conditions plays an important role in deciding the settlement pattern.

## **5.9 FOUR MAIN PATTERNS OF FAMILY ORGANIZATION**

Prof. Rivers has distinguished four types of institutions which have been designated by the term family, viz., the clan, the matrilineal joint family, the patrilineal joint family and the individual family composed of only parents and minor children.

According to one group of sociologists, these four types reveal four main stages of the evolution of the family form corresponding to four stages in the evolution of society. The first type corresponds to the hunting and food gathering stage of social evolution; the second to the phase of hoe agriculture and the beginnings of domestication of animals; the third-a classic type-to the phase of agricultural economy based on the plough and domestication of animals, and, finally, the fourth type to the modern industrial capitalist phase of human existence. As a result of the growth of market economy in the agrarian area and of the impact of urban socio-economic forces on the rural society, the last type is increasingly becoming predominant today.

The Indian rural society provides a great laboratory to test this view, since it includes within its fold the relics of the clan as well as matrilineal and patrilineal family types and the recent individual family group also. A methodical study of the structure of functions of these various family types and their correlation with the stages of civilization to which they correspond will throw a floodlight on the history of Indian humanity and will enable Indian historians to evolve a correct sequence of the developmental phases of the Indian society.

## **5.10 CHARACTERISTICS OF PATRIARCHAL JOINT FAMILY**

In almost all fully developed agrarian societies depending on plough agriculture, Patriarchal joint family has been found to be the predominate family form in rural areas. Outstanding rural sociologists have made a close study of the characteristics of this type of family. They have observed the basic structural, psycho-social, and functional features of

this type of the rural family which distinguish it sharply from the urban family. They are as under:

(1) **Greater Homogeneity:** The rural family is far more homogeneous, stable, integrated and organically functioning than the urban family. The ties binding the members of the former, for instance the husband and the wife, parents and children, are stronger and last longer than those in the case of the urban family.

A glance at the Indian countryside will collaborate this view. The Indian village still remains a cluster of joint families though, due to a number of historico-economic causes, the joint family has been exhibiting a tendency of slow but steady disintegration.

The rural family is composed not only of the members of the family but also frequently includes distant relations which hardly happens in the dovecotes of the urban society.

(2) **Based on Peasant Household:** Another essential characteristics of the rural family is that it is generally based on the peasant household. All its members are engaged in the agricultural occupation. Work is distributed among them mainly on lines of age and sex distinctions. "The Community house, common land and common economic functions along with the common kinship bond create the peasant household."

Since the members of the rural family form a single economic unit and constantly cooperate with one another in agricultural operations, since they hold property in common usually managed by the eldest member of the family, since also they spend most of their time together, the psychological traits they develop are very similar.

(3) **Greater Discipline and Interdependence:** The rural family is characterized by greater discipline among its members than the urban family. Further, since there is considerably less state or public provision for meeting the educational, cultural, or social needs of the people in the rural area than in the urban family attempts also to satisfy these needs of its members. It thus serves as a school, a recreation centre, as well as a maternity or a non-maternity hospital.

(4) **Dominancy of Family Ego:** The interdependence of the members of the rural family and the dependence of its individual member on it are, therefore, far greater than in the case of the urban family. This welds its members into a homogeneous, compact, egoistic unit, strengthens emotions of solidarity and co-operation among them and fills them with

family pride. They develop more collectivist family consciousness and less individualistic emotion.

In a rural society, a family is discredited if any of its individual members perpetrates an infamous act. Similarly the glory of his or her achievement also accrues to the family from which he or she springs.

The urban family in contrast to the rural family, is less authoritarian of the family even at the cost of their lives.

(5) **Authority of the Father:** Since the rural family is a more integrated and disciplined unit than the urban family, the head of the rural family exercises almost absolute power over its members. It is he who distributes the work of the peasant household among the family members on lines of sex and age differences; arranges marriages of sons, daughters, nephews and nieces; administers the joint family property according to his wisdom; and trains the youngsters for future agricultural work and social life. All initiative and final authority are vested in him. In fact “the head of the family has had the rights and authority to be the ruler, the priest, the teacher, the educator and the manager of the family.”

Thus, the family, through its head, subordinates its individual members to itself. The latter are completely submerged in the family; hence they hardly develop any individuality or personality.

Such a family type can only be a nursery for the growth of family collectivism but not of individuality.

The urban family in contrast to the rural family is less authoritarian but also less cooperative. This is due to a variety of reasons. First, it is not a single productive unit administered by the family head since its adult members are mostly engaged in occupations unconnected with, and outside the home. Further, educational, recreational and a number of other needs of its members are satisfied by extra-family institutions like school, club, and others. Property of its earning members, too, tends to be individual, since it is derived out of extra-family occupations. In the sphere of marriage also, its members are increasingly exhibiting independence and marry persons of their own choice.

(6) **Closer participation in Various Activities:-** One striking feature of the rural family lies in the fact that its members, being engaged in work connected with the peasant household,

spend practically the whole day together. In contrast to this, the members of the urban family engaged in different occupations or being educated outside home, spend only a small portion of the day together, even their recreational centres such as clubs and others lie outside the home. Hence the home becomes only a temporary night shed for the members of the urban family.

### **Changing Rural Family: Its trend**

Rural society has been increasingly urbanised in modern times. In proportion to its urbanization it exhibits the characteristics of urban society. The rural family more and more develops centrifugal tendencies. Its economic homogeneity based upon a single cumulative economic activity of its members declines. Joint family property tends to be disrupted since its individual adult members being to demand its partitioning. Being increasingly engaged in different occupations, they earn independent separate incomes which they retain as their own. They live less and less together and spend only a fraction of the day in association. They begin to seek extra-familial central like clubs, hotels, unions, associations, cafeteria, which are also slowly growing in and around rural areas. All this results in the growth of individualistic psychology among them which weakens family emotion and egoism so vital for the vigorous functioning of a homogeneous family.

The individual hitherto submerged in, and subordinated to, the family tends to become atomistic. He more and more breaks away from the family restrictions. He develops his own initiative and independence. This inevitable results in the weakening of the family authority, family ties, and the family itself.

### **5.11 FAMILISM AS A BASIS OF RURAL SOCIETY:-**

According to the views of such eminent sociologists as Sorokin, Zimmerman and others, the social and political organization of all agrarian societies during their subsistence stages bears the fundamental traits of rural family, the basic unit of rural society. These traits they characterize as familism.

“Since the family has been the basic social institution of the rural social world, it is natural to expect that the whole social organization of agricultural aggregates has been stamped by the characteristics of the rural family. In other words all the other social institutions and fundamental social relationships have been permeated by, and modeled according to, the

patterns of rural family relationships. Familism is the term used to designate this type of social organization. . . . . Familism is the outstanding fundamental trait in the gestalt of such a society.

These sociologists enumerate a number of important characteristics of such societies bearing the stamp of familism. They are as under:

- 1) **Marriage Earlier and its Higher Rate:** The members of these rural societies marry at an earlier age than those of urban societies. Further, the rate of marriage in the former is higher than that in the latter.
- 2) **Family, unit of Social Responsibility:** Since family is the unit of rural society, it is the family collective that pays the taxes and discharges social responsibilities. The individual is also appraised according to the status of the family to which he or she belongs.
- 3) **Family, Basis of Norms of Society:** Further, ethical codes, religious doctrines, social conceptions and legal norms governing rural societies have always condemned anything which would weaken the stability of the family. They have preached implicit obedience to parents on the part of sons and daughters and to husband on the part of wife.
- 4) **Family, its Impress in Political Form:** The political organizations of those rural societies have been also based on the conception on which rural family rests. Their political ideology has conceived the relation between the ruler and the ruled as that between the head of the family and its members, i.e., paternalistic. "King, monarch, ruler, lord have been viewed as an enlarged type of family patriarch. . . . .the predominant type of political organization in the rural community is represented by the institution of the village elder, the head, elected by the peasants as the family elder is either openly or tacitly elected by the family members. The whole character of the village chief's authority and administration is a mere replica of the paterfamilia's authority and administration.
- 5) **Co-operative rather than Contractual Relations:** The relations between the members of the rural society are basically co-operative in contrast to those between the members of the urban society which are preponderating contractual. This

difference, according to the view of the outstanding sociologist, is the result of the difference between the rural and urban families. "In a rural family the solidarity of its members is organic and spontaneous. . . . It springs up of itself-Naturally as a result of close co-living, co-working, co-acting, co-feeling and co-believing. Any contractual relationship between its members would be out of place and contradictory to the whole tone of family. . . .it is no surprising, then, that purely contractual relationships have been but little developed in feministic societies". The members of the urban family on the other hand have separate interests as well as individualistic psychologies. They have more or less lost collective family feeling. The urban society bears this characteristic of the urban family. Spontaneous co-operation and solidarity-feeling are found to be appreciably less among the urban people than among the rural people.

- 6) **Family, Unit of Production, Consumption and Exchange:** The economic structure of the rural society also bears the traits of the rural family. It is based on family ownership. The production and consumption are familistic. The market is less developed. Exchange has more the characteristics of simple barter than of full-fledged monetary transactions. The entire code of laws regulations the economic relationships within such a society bears the stamp of familism. In contrast to this, the urban economy is predominantly a commodity economy and therefore the economic and hence the general social relations between the members of the urban society are competitive and contractual.
- 7) **Dominance of Family Cult and Ancestor worship:** The ideology and the culture of rural society also exhibit traits of familism. The cult of family donates. Religious and other ceremonies have for their object the security and property of the family. Ancestor worship is almost universally prevalent. Even the relationships between its gods and goddesses are familistic, they being related to one another as father, mother, brother, sister, etc.
- 8) **Dominance of Tradition:** as a result of all these factors rural society is marked with much less mobility than urban society. Tradition severely govern its life process. It undergoes change with extreme slowness.

## 5.12 RURAL FAMILY IN INDIA, ITS TRENDS

Untill the impact of the Industrial Revolution and the competitive market economy, familism was the heart of village communities. Subsistence agrarian economies and rural societies based on them were familistic through and through. However, the rise and development of modern industries steadily undermined subsidence agrarian economy and brought the rural economy within the orbit of capitalist market economy. This transformation together with the growing pressure of various urban forces brought about the increasing disintegration of the old rural family. The rural society, too, more and more lost its familistic traits.

In India, due to lack of sufficient industrial development, the forces of urban society have not penetrated rural society to the same extent as in the U.S.A., Great Britain and other industrially advanced countries. The rural family consequently retains its specific traits to a far greater extent in India. Urban industrial development affects the rural family in many ways. It creates new occupations such as those of factory and workship workers, of clerks, typists, and others. The members of the rural family develop a desire to take to those occupations, demand their share in the joint family property and migrate to towns and cities. This process undermines the joint family based on a common occupation of its members and joint family properly, income and expenditure.

Modern industries produce a number of articles cheaply and on a mass scale. They reach out to the village population who purchase them. Thus the peasant family which was formerly producing cloth and other necessities with primitive techniques more and more ceases to produce them now. Thus it loses a number of its economic functions with the result that the scope of the collective labour of its members narrow down.

Capitalist economic development transforms the social and political environments of a people also. In India, British capitalism transformed the socio-economic structure of the Indian society and, further, established a centralized State. This resulted in a number of consequences. Private and State agencies increasingly established schools, dispensaries and administrative and judicial machinery in the village. The rural family which served as the school for its members no longer functioned as such, since its members now began to receive education outside the family. Also not the grandfather or the grandmother, the

embodiment of traditional medical knowledge, but the doctor appointed by an agency unconnected with family, now increasingly treated the members of the family. Caste and panchayat councils were deprived of their functions as guardians of law and dispensers of justice. The customary law was replaced by the new law of the centralized state which operated through its administrative and judicial organs. The process progressed in proportion as the urbanization of the country, advanced.

The historical tendency of the rural family is towards its increasing disintegration and loss of functions. The more this tendency grows, the more the family ego and solidarity feeling cradled in and nourished by the collective labour and life of its members weaken and atomistic individualistic psychological traits develop among them.

During the last hundred and fifty years, the traditional joint family and the familistic rural framework have been undergoing a qualitative transformation. The basis of rural family relationships is shifting from that of status to that of contract. The rule of custom is being replaced by the rule of law. The family is being transformed from a unit of production to a unit of consumption. The cementing bond of the family is being changed from consanguinity of conjugality. Further, the family is ceasing to become an omnibus social agency, it being shorn of most of its economic, political, educational, medical, religious and other social and cultural functions. Instead, it is becoming a specialized and affectional small association. From a massive joint family composed of members belonging to a number of generations, the family is increasingly shaping as a tiny unit composed of husband, wife and unmarried children. Familism too, is gradually dropping off. The rural society is acquiring quite a new gestalt.

A systematic study of the rural family from many angles has never been so necessary as at present in India. Its methodical, intensive and extensive study will provide proper direction for evolving a programme of appropriate measures to realise grand objectives that are embodied in the Constitution of the Indian Union. Rural sociologists in India require to launch a very comprehensive campaign of study to locate the laws of the transformations of one of the most classic familistic civilizations that has emerged in the history of humanity.

### **5.13 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY OF RURAL RELIGION**

A thorough study of rural religion and its significant role in determining the life processes of the rural society should form an essential part of the study of that society.

**The following are the principal reasons for this:**

1. It has been observed by sociologists all over the world that rural people have a greater predisposition to religion than what the urban people have. The dependence of agriculture—the basic form of production in the countryside—on the hitherto unmastered forces of nature like rains and the near absence of scientific culture, which provides a correct understanding of the natural and social worlds, among the rural people are two main reasons for the greater degree of religiosity among them. Traditional religion composed of the crudest conceptions of the world holds their mind in its grip. Animism, magic polytheism, ghost beliefs and other forms of primitive religion, are rampant among the rural people to a far greater extent than among the urban people.
2. The religious outlook of the rural people overwhelmingly dominates their intellectual, emotional and practical life. It is difficult to locate any aspect of their life which is not permeated with and coloured by religion. Their family life, caste life, general social life, economic and even recreational life, are more or less governed by a religious approach and religious norms. Religious conceptions also largely dominate their ethical standards; the form and content of their arts like painting, sculpture, architecture, folk songs and others; as also their social and economic festivals.  
  
This is specially true of societies based on subsistence economies of the pre-capitalist epoch when religion was almost completely fused with social life and when even the then existing secular scientific knowledge of main-physiology, medicine, astronomy, mathematics, agronomy, mechanics, sociology, ethics, etc. — was clothed in religious garb and was the monopoly of the priestly caste.
3. In societies based on subsistence economies, the leadership of the village life in all domains was provided by the priestly group, in India the Brahmins. Mores, which this group laid down for the individual behavior as well as for social control, were determined by the traditional religious concepts. Hence the life of the village aggregate in all spheres was moulded in the spirit of religious ideas and dogmas and was controlled by religious institutions and leaders.
4. A new development took place in modern times in India after the advent of the

British rule. The social, economic and political life of the village, as stated elsewhere, experienced a progressive transformation. The development and spread by capitalist economic forms led to the disintegration of the subsistence economy of the autarchic village. Further, a new and secular centralized state took over the administration of the village from the village panchayat and caste councils whose outlook was essentially religious and who were generally guided by religious conceptions and criteria even in secular matters.

In the new economic and political environment, new norms, basically non-religious and secular and derived out of a liberal democratic philosophy, emerged and began increasingly to supersede the authoritarian religious norms which for ages had governed even the secular life of the village population. The village people for the first time in history felt the impact of secular, and democratic and equalitarian ideas on their consciousness. A new ferment began to spread among them which has been steadily affecting their life and outlook hitherto coloured with religion. Also new secular institutions and associations, new secular leadership and social control, began to emerge within the rural society.

This has resulted in a slow but steady decline in the hegemony and control of the leaders of religion over the life of the rural population.

It must be noted that, even then, religion still continues to exercise a powerful hold over the mind of the rural people and determines their behavior in a number of secular fields. However, as a result of the operation of such material and ideological forces as modern means of transport like buses and railways and democratic secular ideas, as the rural masses, the historical tendency, though admittedly very slow, is towards a dereligionizing of increasing sectors of seculars life of the rural people as also of their attitude towards purely secular matters.

The contemporary rural society in India has become a battle ground of struggle between the forces of religious orthodoxy and authoritarian social conceptions on the one hand and those of secular democratic advance on the other. It is essential for the student of Indian rural society to follow this conflict. Crude forms of religion comprising animism, magic, polytheism, mythology ghost beliefs and others, which exercise sway over the mind of the rural population, should be distinguished from the refined and subtle types of religion and religious philosophy, which are prevalent in cities among the urban intelligentsia. These

refined and subtle religions and religious philosophies have been elaborated by great idealistic thinkers out of daring philosophical speculations on basic problems of life such as the problems of the nature of ultimate reality, the genesis of human knowledge and others, which markedly distinguish them from the native religious beliefs generated in the rural atmosphere.

While rural religion tends to be crude and concrete in form, urbanized religion has tended to be abstract. While the rural population worships and falls prostrate before a multitude of gods and goddesses derived out of their animistic conception of the universe, the cultured educated section of the urban humanity subscribes to the idealists view of the universe and discusses such categories as the nature of Brahman, Free Will and others.

Further, even critical rationalism and philosophical materialism as minority philosophical currents flourish in urban centres.

The rural sociologist needs to distinguish between the crude, almost static, rural religion and the refined and highly abstract urbanized religion which soars in the stratosphere to of speculative thought and grapples with ontological, epistemological and other basic problems of philosophy. Further, he should also note that rationalist and materialist philosophical thought currents found in the urban society are almost absent in the rural area.

The roots of rural religion lie principally in the great, almost abysmal, ignorance and resultant fear of the forces of environment prevailing among the rural people. Refined urban religion, even if based on the erroneous idealistic interpretation of the world, is not born of mere fear. This distinction regarding the psychological roots of rural and urban religions is important.

#### **5.14THREE ASPECTS OF RURAL RELIGION:-**

The rural religion should be studied in its following three important aspects:-

1. Rural religion as providing a specific world outlook, a specific view of the universe;
2. Rural religion as prescribing a body of religious practices to the rural people; and
3. Rural religion as an institutional complex.

Each of these three vital aspects of the rural religion needs a few observations.

### **AS A WORLD OUTLOOK**

The world outlook provided by the rural religion includes such ingredients as (a) magical conceptions, (b) animism, (c) the conception of a bizarre world peopled by spirits, (d) the conception of a posthumous world of dead ancestors who have to be worshipped, and (e) mythology.

The most striking feature of the rural religion is its dynamic conception of the universe, i.e., the conception of the universe as a theatre of the interplay of conscious freely acting elements. The rural religion unfolds such worlds as Pitru Lok, Pret Lok, Dev Lok, and Vaikunth Dham, i.e., the worlds of dead ancestors, disembodied spirits, gods and goddesses, as also the celestial world. It also, in addition, conjures up worlds peopled by such deities as those of fertility, various epidemics, rivers and forests. In fact, the rural religion sees spirits practically behind all phenomena and creates a phantasmagoria of numerous uncanny worlds of spirits.

Such a world outlook is fundamentally born of the profound ignorance of the forces of nature and of the nature of man. Ignorance breeds fear and these two are the interrelated twin sources of the world outlook fashioned by the crude rural religion.

Since the world outlook, consciously or unconsciously, largely determines the social, ethical and other views of the individual and the social aggregate as well as their behavior, its study forms an indispensable part of the study of the rural society.

### **AS A BODY OF PRACTICES**

The body of religious practices prescribed by the rural religion is imposing. These practices may be divided into the following three groups:

**(A) Prayers:** The individual is enjoined to offer prayer to various deities at home as well as outside the home. At home he is required to pray to the family god or goddess. The prayers are offered by the members of the family at the family altar. Every caste generally worships a special deity and maintains, if possible, caste temples where the deity is installed. All members of the caste are exhorted to regularly offer prayers to the deity, a god or a goddess.

Further, every street or locality in the village has its own deity, generally Goddess Moholla Mata to whom the people residing in the locality have to offer prayers, specially during the Navaratra religious festival.

There is also the village temple in which the village god is installed. Community prayers have to be offered to him.

Further, prayers are offered also to the river goddess if the village is situated on a river, to the forest deity and to other deities of the locality.

The prayer and worship aspect of the rural religion deserves a careful study because, in recent times, sections of the Hindus-the depressed classes-who were denied the right of temple entry, organized a number of struggles to secure that right. The issue of the right to enter public temples and worship and offer prayers to deities became even a political issue.

**(B) Sacrifices:** The rural religion prescribes a variety of sacrificial acts to its adherents, which range from the sprinkling of some drops of water and scattering of leaves or grains in front of various deities to the offering of animal and, though rarely, even of human sacrifices to them.

The rural religion is composed of various sub-religions and each sub-religion prescribes to its followers a particular set of sacrificial acts.

Sacrifices are offered to a variety of god and goddesses. There are the food god (Annadevata), the gods of different disease (Baliakaka and others), the rain god, the river goddess, and a plethora of others. Sacrifices are offered to propitiate them and thereby disarm their wrath or win their favour.

A sociological analysis of sacrifices is valuable for comprehending the conceptions of the rural people of the cause of diseases, floods and other devastating phenomena. It can also provide a clue to their social habits assist the rural sociologist to grasp how various castes practising different kinds of sacrificial acts, thereby, develop a hierarchic conception of the caste series. Such a study can further help him to explain certain psychological and cultural traits of different social groups. And finally it may aid him in tracing the past-history of Indian society, social, economic and cultural, of which the concept and practice of sacrifice were an organic outgrowth. Sacrifices to particular deities have a specific character

and hence presupposed a specific concept of each deity. Those deities were born in the field of human consciousness at a certain stage in the socio-economic development of society. Mythology, in fact, is the history of society in terms of symbolism and since society changes, the pantheon of gods and goddesses too changes.

The rural society has at present become the amphitheater of the struggle between the conservative and the reformist religious tendencies and movements. The conservative social groups strive to preserve old religious practices while the reformist social groups are characterizing those practices as irrational and mentally deadening. They counsel a rational approach to problems of life. A study of sacrifices becomes essential if one were to properly understand this struggle, particularly because they play a very significant role in the life of the rural people. The culture of the rural people is predominantly religious and sacrifices also form the theme of the rural folklore which constitutes the major part of their culture.

**(C) Rituals:** One of the significant features of the life of the rural people is its meticulous domination, even in details, by rituals. The conception of purity had been elaborated in the past Indian society to such an extent that it became a veritable principle. Rituals are the religious means by which the purity of the individual and the social life becomes guaranteed. The inherited rural religion prescribes a complex pattern of behavior for the individual as well as for various social groups in all spheres of life, complex because rituals are associated with their numerous significant and even insignificant activities. Particular sets of rituals are dictated to a particular caste or sub-caste groups so much so that distinct difference in the respective rituals which those social groups and sub-groups follow enable one to distinguish them from one another. Social condemnation and even the threat of ex-communication provide sanction for the strict enforcement of rituals among their members.

Rituals are associated with most of the life activities of the rural people. A ritual is prescribed whenever the individual or the social group initiates an activity even though the activity may be, like food-taking, repeated in future. Before an individual Brahmin starts consuming the food in the dish, he is required to draw a magic circle round the dish and apportion some grains of cooked rice to the god or gods. There are rituals prescribed for a number of such ordinary mundane and secular activities. There are the bath ritual, the occupational ritual, the ritual to be performed when a person occupies a residential premises. There are separate rituals when the farmer begins sowing the harvesting. All landmarks in the process of agricultural production have been associated with specific rituals.

Rituals have been prescribed for auspicious days and also for the start of a new season. When a child for the first time goes to the school, there is also ritual to be performed.

In fact, the life of the rural human is a succession of rituals corresponding to a succession of activities he is engaged in from morning to night, from month to month and year to year, almost from birth to death. Even the dead person is not to be left alone. Specific rituals have to be performed in the posthumous period for some days.

In fact, we may remark that it is very difficult to locate in the Hindu society where religious observances end and secular practices begin.

### **AS AN INSTITUTIONAL COMPLEX**

The Hindu religion, which a preponderant section of the rural population subscribes to, is a conglomeration of numerous sub-religions and religious cults.

A number of these sub-religions and religious cults have been institutionalized. Corresponding to these institutionalized sub-religions and religious cults there exists a number of religious organizations.

Some of these religious organizations function on a national scale, some on the provincial and others on the local basis. They maintain Maths, Ashrams and temples where their adherents flock to worship and to pray to various deities as also to listen to religious discourses.

These religious bodies own property, often substantial. They maintain a permanent staff of priests and preachers who spread the doctrines of their respective sub-religions and religious cults among the people.

Thus we have in the country such religious organizations as those headed by Shankaracharya, descendants of Ramanuj, Vallabha, Sahajanand and others, all differing again in subtle points of philosophy and rituals.

Some of the sub-religions and religious cults have not been institutionalized. Their protagonists and preachers have not been integrated into regular organizations.

The absence of state religions has been one striking characteristic of religion in India. This is in contrast to Christianity and Islam which became state religions in a number of countries of Europe and Asia. Religion in India was considered the concern of the community

and not of the state. The religious organization was always distinct and separate from the state though a Hindu or a Muslim king might favor and support his respective religion.

In Europe, as history records, it was otherwise. There existed, in the Middle Ages, Catholic and subsequently Catholic and Protestant states. Till Kamal Pasha separated the state from religion, Turkey was a theocratic Muslim State.

Hence we do not find in Indian history such struggles as that between the Pope, the head of the organized international Catholic religion, striving to maintain a system of Catholic states and Henry VIII who rebelled against Catholicism and transformed the English state into a Protestant one.

One significant feature of the life of Indian society in the past lay in the fact that great democratic mass movements took the form of religious movements took the form of religious movements led by outstanding religious leaders popularly known as Bhaktas (Sants). Since religion was a community and not a state matter in India these movements were not directed against the state (in contrast to Protestantism in Europe) but aimed at winning over the people to their programmes and, through their initiative and action, bringing about the reform of society.

The popular democratic character of those Bhakti movements is evidenced by the fact that they generally stood for democratization of the Hindu society (liquidation of castes or caste inequalities) and for equal access to God and religious culture by all, including women, without the intermediary of the priestly Brahmin caste. Further the Bhaktas developed the vernaculars or the languages, which the common people knew and spoke, and themselves created a vast literature in those languages. Thus they also brought culture to the common people.

It must, however, be noted that a Hindu, a Buddhist or a Muslim king would often utilise his state power and state resources for the extensions of the particular religion he subscribed to. The state, however, had not a Hindu or a Muslim character. Religion was not a department of the state.

We will next refer to the group of men exclusively devoted to religion. This group can be divided into two categories, priests who have a fixed domicile and sanyasis who travel from place to place.

There are various kinds of priests. There are family priests who serve the religious needs of the family; the caste and sub-caste priests who cater to the needs of various castes and sub-castes; and the village priest who looks after the village temple and meets the religious requirements of the village community as a whole.

These priestly groups exercise a powerful influence over the life of the rural people, both religious and secular, since secular life processes are coloured by religion and before being undertaken, require to be hallowed by religion through rituals. Religion is even now largely interwoven in the texture of the secular life of the rural people.

The historical tendency, however, is towards a decline of the domination of the secular life of the rural people by the priestly group.

There are, in our country, in addition to priests, a large number of roving religious men (Sanyasis) who mostly tour in the rural area. Some of them are preachers of the religious cults to which they belong. Others are just holy men who hallow the village by their visit and deign to taste the hospitality of the villagers for a while.

#### **5.15 CASTE SYSTEM, ITS UNIQUE SIGNIFICANCE:**

A very peculiar type of social grouping which is found in India is the caste grouping. A student of the Indian society, who fails to closely and carefully study this variety of social grouping, will miss the very essence of that society. In India, caste largely determines the function, the status, the available opportunities as well as the handicaps for an individual. Caste differences even determine the differences in modes of domestic and social life, types of houses and cultural pattern of the people which are found in the rural area. Even land ownership exists frequently on caste lines. Due to a number of reasons, administrative functions have also been often divided according to caste, especially in the rural area. Caste has, further, determined the pattern of the complicated religious and secular culture of the people. It has fixed the psychology of the various social groups and has evolved such minutely graded levels of social distance and superior-inferior relationships that the social structure looks like a gigantic hierarchic pyramid with a mass of untouchables as its base and a small stratum of elite, the Brahmins, almost equally unapproachable, at its apex. The Hindu society is composed of hundreds of distinct self-contained caste worlds piled one over the other.

The increasing spread of the modern means of communication, the introduction of the British system of administration and laws, and the growth of modern capitalist competitive economy which shattered the subsistence economy of the self-sufficient village community, undermined more and more the functional basis of caste. However, the transformation of self-contained rigid castes into modern mobile classes has taken place in a peculiar manner. Certain castes have been monopolising the position of the privileged upper classes of modern society. Certain castes have been losing previous status and functions and slowly submerging into the lowest class groups of modern society. This development has created a peculiar social structure in modern India with the result that, within the existing Indian society, class struggles have been often assuming the form of caste-struggles. The student of rural society is here confronted with one of the most complex types of social transformation in the socio-economic as well as in the ideological spheres. The caste system composed of caste groups in a state of increasing decay and undergoing a transformation into modern classes in a confused way and offering stubborn resistance to it, presents the epic spectacle of a social Cyclops writhing in violent death agonies.

One of the most urgent tasks before the student of rural society in India is to evolve an approach which will be able to appraise the social and cultural processes of that society within the matrix of caste structure.

Failure to develop such a perspective has, in spite of an immense accumulation of economic and other factual data, obstructed the elaboration of a living composite picture of rural society.

## **5.16 CASTE AND ECONOMIC LIFE**

The economic life of rural society should be studied in context of caste, in its interrelation and interaction with caste.

- (1) **Production:** In the field of production the rural sociologist should study the extent to which functional and propertied groups correspond to castes.

Such a study, for instance, as that of Bhuvil has revealed how far the new economic and political forces have undermined the homogeneous functional basis of old castes and also the distribution of property among them. It will thereby disclose the degree of disintegration and alteration of the status, privileges, and social and

political significance of various castes. Secondly, it will enable us to comprehend the attitude of the Hindu as well as the Indian Mahomedans too, who are affected by the caste phenomena, towards the hierarchically graded caste structure of society as well as their reaction to the process of change which it is experiencing

Such a study, for instance, as that of Bhuvil has revealed how in some parts of the Central Gujarat, the Rajputs who owned land are declining in their social and economic status being increasingly supplanted by the Patidars.

- (2) **Consumption:** In the field of consumption the rural sociologist requires to study how castes greatly mould the pattern of consumption of respective caste groups. For instance, caste appreciable fixes the food and dress habits or the choice of utensils and other articles of its members. This caste-determined mode of consumption reacts on and influences production. The pure economic theory of consumption would be misleading and result into incorrect conclusions unless its modification due to the intervention of the caste institution is taken into account.
- (3) **Indebtedness:** The rural indebtedness, a striking feature of rural economic life, also requires to be studied in context of caste. Dr. R. K. Nehru has vividly pointed out in his exploratory study of a few villages what close relation exists between caste and indebtedness and credit in the rural area. Certain castes are predominantly composed of members who are almost hereditary debtors; some others of those who are mainly creditors. The rural sociologist should study the social and economic milieu and find out why it is so.
- (4) **Habitat:** Caste also largely determines the type of houses its members reside in, their housing habits and the choice of village area where these houses are located. The village is generally divided into areas, each inhabited by the members of a particular caste. Further, even when some members of a caste cease to pursue the caste-determined vocation, they generally continue to reside in the same area and socially interact with other members of their caste.
- (5) **Mobility:** Another significant problem which requires to be studied is the correlation between caste and economic mobility of the rural people. As a result of the operation of the forces of economic evolution of Indian society, a slow but

steady and constant inter-change of functions among various castes has been taking place. Members of a caste gradually cease to perform the caste-determined function and take to occupations which other caste groups are engaged in. Further, for the same reason some castes slide down the economic ladder while some castes go up the ladder. Since these changes have an effect on the development of the rural economy and its nature, their specific study is necessary.

### **CASTE AND JOINT FAMILY LIFE**

The study of the rural society should include the study of how caste and joint family – its two dominant social institutions – influence the social life of the rural individual and the rural aggregate. They are powerful forces determining their social activities and thereby play a big role in moulding their psychology and ideology. As observed elsewhere, a caste in the rural area is generally a cluster of joint families. Hence, the caste moulds the nature of the life of those families.

### **CASTE AND POLITICAL LIFE**

Caste influences the political life to a greater extent in the rural area than in the urban centres. This is because caste consciousness is stronger among the rural people than among the urban people. Choice or rejection of candidates as well as the nature of propaganda in political elections are determined by caste considerations more in villages than in towns and cities. Caste ego is stronger among the rural people and hence exerts a powerful influence in shaping the political life of the rural aggregate. In contrast to this, extra-caste considerations considerable influence political prejudices and predilections of the urban population.

### **JOINT FAMILY, CASTE, AND VILLAGE COMMUNITY, THEIR INTERRELATIONSHIP**

Joint family, caste and village community were the basic social institutions of the pre-British Indian rural society. It is the task of the rural sociologist to study the relations between them.

The process of dissolution of those institutions, however slow, commenced, as previously stated, with the impact of British contact after the conquest of India. It must be noted that the autarchic village had been the socio-economic unit of Indian

society during the period of agrarian civilization based on a subsistence economy which intervened between the food gathering phase of social existence and the modern phase of competitive nation-scale capitalistic civil society founded on national economy and mobile classes. One unique feature of social evolution in India was that primitive food gathering tribal society was not historically succeeded by a society based on a slave mode of production as in Greece and Rome or by a society based on a feudal mode of production with serf labour which developed in the Western Europe during the Middle Ages. Slavery or serfdom was never the basis of social production in the long history of Indian society through the phenomenon of slavery might have crept in here and there. Due to complex ecological and socio-historical reasons, primitive collection tribal society seems to have been superseded in India by a unique type of society which persisted for a remarkably long period. It began to disintegrate only after the contact with the capitalist west in modern times.

Extensive historical research dealing with the most remote periods of past history of the Indian people together with the utmost exercise of the power of historical inference guided by a scientific theory of social development, are needed to trace the causes of the genesis of village communities in India. It is necessary to locate the peculiar ecological and socio-historical factors which brought about the emergence of a unique type of social structure based on those autarchic and collectively land possessing village communities in India. Thereafter, it is necessary to probe into the problem whether caste arose as a socio-economic institution adapted to the exigencies of such a social formation.

## **SPECIFICITIES OF CASTE IN RURAL SOCIETY**

It has a functional role in maintaining the village social system. Some of the special functions performed by the caste in villages are described below:

### ***(1) Phases of life***

The individual life-style passes through birth, betrothal, marriage and death. On all these occasions there is a definite role of caste. Whatever may be the secular status of a Brahmin, his presence is obligatory to officiate at the fulfillment of rituals on major phases of life.

## ***(2) Exogamy and endogamy***

One cannot marry with his sister, nor can he marry with any of his agnates. Marriage within the gotra or clan is prohibited. This rule of exogamy is observed strictly in village society. However, the urban society can in some situation overlook it. Sometimes there is practice of village exogamy also. The tribals consider it to be their loss of status if a person marries within his village.

## ***(3) Occupational interdependence***

Caste society is essentially based on an elaborate division of labour. Actually, the village economy a few years back depended on the jajmani system. Each caste has had its occupational specialisation. The Darji, Nai, Dhobi, Kumbhar and Chamar are some of the occupational castes. These castes gave their services to their jajmans (clients) on exchange basis. The rewards generally consisted of kind payment. On the whole, the caste economy promotes occupational interdependence.

## ***(4) Caste associations***

Rural society has got its caste associations much strengthened despite its weakening power. We have enough research material to indicate that caste associations have become stronger in village India today. It is possible that in urban communities caste associations might have become a little weaker, but in rural India many of the political decisions are made by caste associations.

## ***(5) Caste is the mirror of rural society***

It is the caste settlement in terms of its power that a particular village is identified in a region. For instance, S. C. Dube in his book *India's Changing Villages* talks about a Rajput Village. It means that in a particular village the Rajputs wield power. They maintain the village system. Similarly, we have Jat villages, Brahmin villages and tribal villages. In such villages other castes are also found but they are only subordinate castes. In such a situation the structure of a village is known by the caste groups inhabiting it. It is, therefore, that we call caste as the mirror of a village.

## ***(6) Dominant caste***

M.N. Srinivas has given the concept of dominant caste. This is a caste which has a

numerical strength in the village; it owns major portion of village land and takes major decisions which maintain the village system. It is the dominant caste which rules over the village. The concept of dominant caste very clearly shows that there are few castes which exercise their hold on the village. Besides Srinivas there are a few other sociologists like Andre Beteille, who informed that despite changes in villages the dominant castes occupy a pivotal status in rural society.

#### ***(7) Hierarchical relations***

Social interactions in the village are guided by caste status. Caste, in fact, is a system of hierarchical relations, it is a pyramid of hierarchy, where at the top is Brahmin, followed by Rajput and Bania.

#### ***(8) Caste and economic life***

A.R.Desai has very strongly argued that the village economy should also be studied from the point of view of caste. It is the caste which mainly determines the economic life of the people. Despite diversification in village economy, even today traditional occupations determined the wealth status of the people. The caste has a role in production relations.

#### ***(9) Mobility***

Economic mobility of a person or cluster of families is also determined by the caste. Change in a village is relative to the village castes. There are some castes that have given away their traditional occupations while at the same time there are castes that very rigidly follow their traditional occupations. In any study of rural society occupational mobility and social mobility have to be analysed in the context of caste belongingness.

#### ***(10) Caste and joint family***

A.R. Desai emphatically argues that there is a co-relation between caste and joint family system. Actually it is the caste structure which determines the nature of family – joint or nuclear – in the village. It is observed all over village India that a caste in the rural society is essentially a cluster of joint families. Resultantly, the caste moulds the nature of the life of the members of family.

### **5.17 CHANGING RURAL CASTE STRATIFICATION**

Significant changes have taken place in the caste system as a form of rural social

stratification over the past fifty years. These changes can be conceptualised into two forces: (1) structural changes, and (2) peripheral changes. Structural changes have far reaching impact on the rural caste system. These changes include the abolition of zamindari and jagirdari systems, introduction of Panchayati Raj, adult franchise, cooperatives, etc. The peripheral changes comprise establishment of modern schools, construction of roads, public health centres, communication links and migration. We shall now enumerate and discuss some of the major structural and peripheral changes influencing the rural caste system.

### ***(1) Modernisation and Sanskritisation***

Modernisation is a very complex term. It is to carry out either the traditional occupations or the secular occupations. But the choice of the new occupations or the secular occupations and the rejection of the old ones is much pragmatic and selective. “There are castes which have discarded traditional occupations because they were considered ‘impure’ or ‘unclean’ or ‘lower’, that is, because of the stigma about the polluting nature of their traditional occupations.”

K.L Sharma, while analysing the impact of modernisation on the caste occupations, says that the upper castes have a mere monopoly over the more income, prestige and power providing occupations and avenues.

Modernisation, in fact, is a very comprehensive concept and includes education, politics, power, style of life and a large number of other aspects of life.

The village caste system has received phenomenal change in its structure due to the process of sanskritisation. The change brought by this process is a positional change. In this change there is horizontal mobility in the caste structure. Sanskritisation, as a process of social change or mobility, was introduced by M.N. Srinivas in sixties. It is a social change within the caste system. It means imitation of the customs and practices of the higher castes by the lower castes. Castes which sanskritise their pantheon and rituals try to improve their social status by rejecting some of their traditional styles of life and by imitating the cultural styles of the upper castes.

### ***(2) De-Sanskritisation***

Yet another change witnessed in the rural caste system is the working of the process of de-sanskritisation. K.L. Sharma, who has intimate experience of working in the villages of

Rajasthan, informs that some of the higher castes are giving up their sanskritic values in order to have interaction with the lower castes. For instance, the Rajputs, Jats and Brahmins now do not hesitate to touch the untouchables. Occasionally, the Jats would not mind to share smoking with the lower castes. This kind of change is characterised by Sharma as de-sanskritisation.

### ***(3) Values of Achievement***

The national idioms of democracy, socialism and secularism have influenced the importance of rituals in the rural life. Actually, the value of achievement orientation is increasingly being accepted by the higher castes. As a result of this value orientation, the traditional rules of food and water taboos are very openly violated. Commensality has become a common thing on occasions of marriage and other celebrations. One can find the lower castes mixing with the higher castes in election and political meetings.

### ***(4) Proletarianism***

This kind of structural change is found among the higher castes of rural society. In the process of social change and particularly the opportunities of development given to the lower castes, the higher castes find their status withdrawal. The zamindars of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, jagirdars of Rajasthan and darbars of Gujarat are obliged to take to manual labour and lower jobs. Such a kind of process has reduced the status of higher castes to that of proletariat. In the villages one can find the Rajputs doing manual work.

### ***(5) Shift in the Sources of Power.***

An interesting change is observed in the village caste system. In the past, the status of a person was overwhelmingly determined by the size of land owned by him. Generally, the idiom was: larger the size of land owned by a person, higher was his status. Today new sources of status in the village have emerged. These statuses have their origin in the possession of positions of power. A position in Gram Panchayat, Assembly or Parliament also gives status to a man. Likewise, the status gained by holding a position in the government service also gives some prestige and power. Thus, the power structure associated with different castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes, though have lesser portions of land, occupy higher status.

**Andre Beteille has data from Tanjore to substantiate this observation:**

With the introduction of adult franchise and of village councils, land-ownership and traditional status have ceased to be the only bases of power in the village. The strength of organised members has now become more important than it ever was.

**5.18 MODE OF PRODUCTION TENANCY LAND LABOUR & AGRARIAN RELATIONS**

Agrarian structure is understood to mean the institutional framework of agriculture. This institutional framework relates to the distribution, control and use of land. In other words, it is related to land tenure, forms of agricultural employment, social organizations trade unions, credit or advisory services etc. of agriculture. It also includes the infrastructure of agriculture viz., the roads, railways, and irrigation schemes etc. However, in sociology we are interested in the social aspects of the agrarian structure i.e. agrarian social structures. Agrarian social structure, according to a Thorner, denotes the interrelationships obtaining among the groups engaged in agricultural operations. It is the sum total of the ways in which each group operates in relation to other groups. We are also interested in examining the relationship between the institutional framework and the social structure obtaining here. We can examine these aspects in terms of the continuity and change in the class relations and organization of production of agriculture.

In the class perspective, we classify population on the basis of their position in the social organization of production. The manner in which the population of the agrarian society is related to the organization of production of the agriculture determine their class position. In other words, we look for patterns of alignments among people engaged in major production activities (usually based on land) in the agrarian sector of the economy.

Agrarian society is understood to mean a peasant society by many scholars. According to Redfield 'peasant society and culture is a kind of arrangement of humanity, with some similarities all over the world'. Hence, some important general features in the following words: "The peasantry consists of small agricultural producers who with the help of simple equipment and the labour of their families, produce mainly for their own consumption and for the fulfillment of obligations to the holders of political and economic power."

If the production in peasant societies is simple and small, one might ask the question:

does peasantry form a class? This question has become a central concern to many of the social scientists interested in studies in the agrarian societies. According to Karl Marx peasantry does not constitute a class. Their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse. Based on his observations of the French peasantry on the event of the rise of Bonaparte, Marx pointed out that in the organization of production of the peasantry there is little scope for division of labour, application of science, introduction of new talents etc. "Each individual family", Marx writes, "is almost self-sufficient; it itself directly produces the major part of the consumption and thus acquires its means of life more through exchange with nature than in intercourse with society. . . . thus the great mass of the society is formed by simple addition of homologous magnitudes, such as potatoes in a sack form-a sack of potatoes." To him class can be formed when a group of people live under common economic conditions, have a common economic interest against others and have the subjective consciousness to put them in a hostile opposition against other classes. Among the peasantry, there is only a local inter-connection. They lack economic interest against other classes. There is no political organization among them. "They are consequently incapable of enforcing their class in their own name, whether through a parliament or through a convention. They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented." Contrary to Marx's proposition, however, peasantry participated in the great revolutionary upheavals in various parts of the globe, especially in that of Russia and China. Social scientists like Eric Wolf, Shanin etc. have noted the revolutionary roles of the peasantry. However, please note here that while talking about peasantry, Marx referred to the French peasantry in the mid-nineteenth century.

In India, peasantry has always been a part of broad historical processes. Their position in the organization of production has altered tremendously in these historical processes. Hence, in examining the agrarian class relations in India, we should begin with the nature of organization of production in agriculture and the broad historical processes that have affected the organization of production in Indian agriculture.

## **MODES OF PRODUCTION**

Mode of production is the dominance of a particular mechanism of economic production in a particular era or in a particular type of society. In simple words, each era is marked by a dominant mechanism of producing economic resources called the modes of production.

Mode of production in agrarian society is cultivation of land through simple tools and techniques. Further, the important capital for agrarian system is land.

### **Tenancy Land:-**

#### **Land Tenure System**

Land is held all over the world under different tenure situations. Holding of land depends on different reasons. Ownership or exclusive control by an individual is not the only concept under which land is held and used. If we look from Indian point of view, ownership of land is a western idea. As discussed above, in our country, ownership of land, before the permanent Land Settlement, always rested with the community. However, in western world, individual ownership of land was recognized both by the state and the community.

#### **Land as a Factor of Production**

Theoretically speaking, notwithstanding India or any other country, land is viewed as a traditional economic factor of production including labour and capital. In this broad classification, land is defined to include all natural properties but to exclude invested capital. Capital is unrealistic: same capital is so firmly blended with land that it is impossible to separate the two. The important fact to bear in mind is that no factor is productive alone, each requires some or the others in order to be productive.

#### **Peasant Proprietor and Tenants**

It is the land which constitutes the major source of livelihood for the village people. But all the peasants who live in villages do not own their individual land. According to one estimate nearly three-fifths of world people derive their livelihood from agriculture. Out of this, most do not own land on which they live and work. The reality is that many of the peasants purchase rights of cultivation and occupancy from others. In return, from hired rights in land, these people pay the landowners or their intermediaries a share of the produce, a fixed amount of the produce or personal service or some combinations of these. Those people are the tenants. It is said that throughout the world tenants and their families probably constitute as many as two-fifths of the population engaged in agriculture.

## **Emergence of Tenants during the British Period**

A tenant is one who cultivates the land on certain conditions. Most of the agriculturists in our country are tenants. The emergence of tenant goes back to the British period when in 1793 the Permanent Land Settlement was made. The zamindari system which emerged from land settlement was an intermediary system. The system created the class of tenants who suffered from operation at the hands of the zamindars. It was a historical emergence found for the first time in Indian agrarian history. In the native states, also known as princely states, the jagirdar worked as an intermediary between the tenant and the central princely rule. In these states Jagirdar was the counterpart of zamindar. The status of tenant in pre-independent India was highly deplorable. A.R. Desai very aptly sketches the oppressive condition of tenants during this period:

In course of time, a series of intermediaries developed between the zamindar and the cultivating tenant, whose condition, thereby, increasingly deteriorated. The Bengal Tenancy Acts of 1859 and 1885 aimed at ameliorating the position of the tenant. However, the legislation did not accomplish much. The mass of tenants continued to live in an increasingly worsening condition.

Desai very sympathetically traces the conditions of the peasant proprietors in India. The peasant proprietors were actually the landowners. Their condition also worsened during the British period. The landowners were sub-divided into upper landowners, middle landowners or peasant proprietors, quiet like the tenants, suffered considerably during the colonial period. The observation made by A.K. Desai run as below :

As a result of the operation of factors like heavy land tax, small holdings, fragmentation of plots, growing heavy indebtedness, this class had been increasingly impoverished since it came into existence. It had been in a state of permanent disintegration.

The woes of the peasant proprietors during this period were altogether new. These land proprietors suffered from their disintegration. However, a few of them who owned larger patches of land rose to the level of rich peasants while a large number of them were reduced to the status of poor peasants, tenants of absentee landlords or land laborers. This process of differentiation of the peasant proprietors grew at an accelerated rate since the rate of impoverishment of the peasantry increased. The colonial period witnessed, on one hand, the impoverishment of the tenants and, on the other hand, differentiation and

disintegration of the peasant proprietors. As a result of this process, there emerged, in rural India, the class of absentee landlords, one hand, and the lower peasantry and agricultural laborers, on the other.

The post-independent India, thus, found a tenancy highly settled and disintegrated.

### **Variations in Tenancy**

It must be observed that in India the agricultural sector, constitutionally, is the subject of the state. Land taxation, thus, is determined by the state government. Because of this statutory position, there is much variation in agricultural tenancy in India is that it is shaped by the historical land cultural forces of a particular region or part of the country. For instance, we have certain castes which are actually agricultural castes; e.g., Patidars of Gujarat, Jats of Haryana and Sikhs of Punjab. This is purely a cultural phenomenon. It also affects the size and pattern of agricultural practices.

Historically, variation in tenancy could be explained by the fact that the colonial forces in British India and feudal forces in princely states also determined the form and extent of tenancy. However, at a broader plane, it could be said that there are five variations of tenants in the country:

1. **Cash tenants:** They pay a fixed cash rent for the use and occupancy of their land.
2. **Share-cash tenants:** They pay part of their rent in cash and part in the share of crops.
3. **Crop-share tenants:** They pay a share of the crops only.
4. **Croppers:** They pay a share of the crops but usually work under the close supervision of landlord or his agent.
5. Other and unspecified tenants

We have argued that there is much variation in agricultural tenancy. The classes of tenants which we have given above are not exhaustive. As a matter of fact, the sharecropper is both a tenant and also landowner of a patch of land. K.L. Sharma, who has worked on the problem of feudalism and peasant movements in Rajasthan, argues that there has been much variation in the realm of tenancy in Rajasthan itself. He says that all through the country the number of tenants has been increasing. Leaving aside a some, in Kerala, the

agricultural labourers have increased over the last two decades.

A.R. Desai has studied, historically, the rise of new social classes of peasantry in India. His approach to the study of tenancy or tenants is based on a Marxian perspective. He has taken into consideration the tenancy variations in India on a broader plane. Historically, as a result of the creation of the zamindari and ryotwari systems, a new class of peasant proprietors emerged in India. While the zamindari system was a link between the tenant and the state, the ryotwari system included the peasant proprietors who were themselves owners of the land. Desai has made three divisions of the class of peasant proprietors:

1. Upper class landowners having big patches of land.
2. Middle class landowners having landownership at the intermediate level.
3. Lower strata including marginal and small farmers.

With the passage of time, the number of lower classes of peasantry increased. A large number of them were reduced to the status of agricultural laborers and paupers. What is important here is that tenancy variations are not new to rural India. It has been in operation since the period of the Mughal Empire.

The issue of tenancy variation in contemporary times could be seen from the empirical studies made by Jan Breman, Andre Beteille, Daniel Thorner, and others.

Jan Breman has worked in the Surat district of Gujarat. He has made an intensive study of three talukas, namely, Bardoli, Palsana and Valod of Surat district. His focus is on the landowners, tenants and sharecroppers. He observes that the agrarian population has three categories of tenancy as under:

1. Marginal and small farmers (owning less than 5 acres of land)
2. Middle farmers (owning 5.15 acres of land and below 15 acres)
3. Large farmers (owning more than 15 acres of land)

The tenancy variations found in Surat district are not exclusive. They are only factual because at the empirical plane there is much variation in the access to land. Pointing to this elaborate variation Breman observes:

The limitations imposed on classification by this three-way division-still retained in much of the literature, nevertheless-are rather arbitrary given the great variation in access to land, soil fertility, intensity of cropping, availability of labour power and other factors of agronomic or social-economic nature which influence farming productivity.

Breman has drawn attention to the fact that tenancy variation should not be considered on the size of landholding only. In any scheme of tenancy variation we should also take into consideration the nature of soil, its productivity, irrigation facilities and infrastructure for marketing. Given all the productivity of land, the absence of marketing also puts the landowner or tenant to a perpetual loss.

Andre Beteille has worked authoritatively on the problem of agrarian society. He dwells at length on landowners, tenants and agricultural labourers. Andre restricts his study to Sripuram village which is situated in south India (Tamilnadu state). He finds that in Sripuram the agricultural population is divided into two classes of peasants: (i) owners of land or peasant proprietors, and (ii) non-owners of land.

In the village Sripuram majority of people are non-owners of land who are engaged in agricultural work. They actually work on land owned by others. And this constitutes the basis of economic and social ties between the different classes of people in the village. His observation is that landowners and tenants constitute distinct entities only as conceptual categories, and not as concrete groups of individual. He writes:

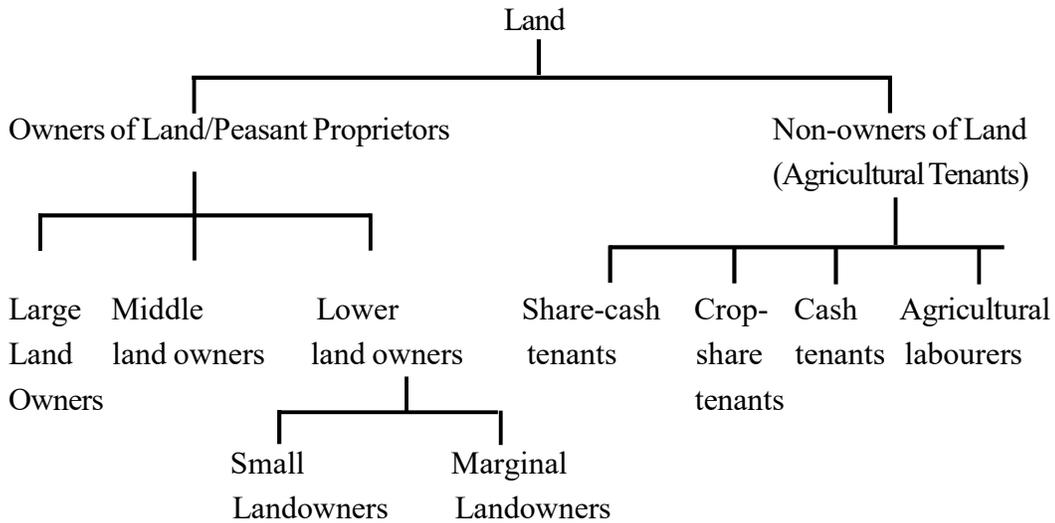
One and the same person may be, and not infrequently is, both an owner of land a tenant so somebody else's land.

The variations in tenancy as given by Breman, Sharma, Beteille and others could be summarized in some categories. For instance, tenancy on a broader plane has two divisions. And more or less it includes most parts of the country. These two divisions are: (i) owners of land, and (ii) non-owners of land. The sub-divisions of owners of land consist of (i) large landowners, (ii) middle landowners, and (iii) lower landowners. This third sub-division is further divisioned into (i) small landowners, and (ii) marginal landowners. The second division of tenancy, i.e., non-owners of land, do not have any land in their possession. In this category too there are future sub-divisions, such as (i) share-cash tenants, (ii) crop-share tenants, (iii) cash tenants, and (iv) agricultural labourers.

Thus, the tenancy as a whole is divided into two divisions, which are further

divided into several sub-divisions. It very clearly shows variations in agricultural tenancy. The divisions and sub-divisions are shown in the following chart:

### Variation in Tenancy



We have argued in the preceding pages that a majority of peasants in agricultural India are tenant peasants. Tenancy had its beginning during the colonial period when the British Raj introduced Permanent Land Settlement. Tenants constitute a heterogeneous group. Interestingly enough, some of the tenants are also landowners. Actually, there are among the tenants. We now propose to discuss the relations between the landowners and the tenants.

### *Agrarian relations*

Land is capital and retinal existing is Man-Land-Man. Here Man is the first category is owner of means of production, land is the means of production, and the main in the second category is the worker/labour. Thus it is the land which give rise to new relations of production.

In Asiatic society there was collective ownership of land and therefore involvement of private ownership was negligible resulting into classless society. The concept of private ownership of property came to India during British Period when they introduced, the idea of Peasant proprietors i.e. land to the cultivators with selling rights previously at was

Ryotwari and Mahalwari systems which existed in the agrarian society in India.

The coming of British rule in India made the state determining factor in the land tenurial system in which, as the report of National Commission on Agriculture has clearly pointed out, the maximization of revenue collection was main goal. Later on, Zamindari system was introduced by Britishers in 1793.

### **5.19 AGRARIAN CLASS STRUCTURE IN THE PRE-BRITISH PERIOD**

In the Pre-British period, agrarian society of India was based on the self-sufficient village community system of production. This system was largely based on the functional interdependence of the castes. Under this system, the socio-economic relationships of the rural areas were governed by traditional norms and values and by the customary patterns and conventions of great antiquity. According to Thorner, under this system the villagers inherited their traditional occupations. The artisans and craftsmen were also dependent on agriculture. They received a regular stipend from the crops of the village. The village itself consumed most of the food-stuffs and other raw materials it produced. However, it is not to be assumed that the self-sufficient village community system of production had no connection with the outside world. The state had overall control over these village communities. In fact, the state was at the top of the agrarian hierarchy of landownership acting as the super landlord. Immediately below the state there were the jagirdars who in due course had become unquestionable owners of the lands allotted to them by the king. Then there were the zamindars. They were in fact the rent receivers. Gradually they became the hereditary owners of the land and emerged as the powerful landed aristocrats in the agrarian society. Below the zamindars were cultivators who also enjoyed hereditary occupancy rights. However, it is significant to note here that in those days, there was no concept of the sale and purchase of land, no market for the sale and purchase of agricultural produce, no private property rights in land and no employer and employee relationship in the modern sense of the term which were necessary for the emergence of class relations in agriculture. These situations and relationships emerged for the first time in Indian agrarian society under the British rule.

### **5.20 AGRARIAN CLASS STRUCTURE IN THE BRITISH PERIOD**

The agrarian society in India became highly stratified in the British period. Various agrarian classes emerged as a fallout of the British policy in India. The main objectives

of the British land policy in India were

- i) to collect the maximum amount of rent from Indian agrarian society.
- ii) to introduce international money into agrarian economy to suit their interest.
- iii) to introduce free trade in agriculture; and
- iv) to make Indian agrarian economy a part of their colonial market.

All these arrangements were made by the Britishers to serve their colonial interest. Hence to further their interest, the Britishers, besides introducing new land tenure system, took effective steps for opening up of road and railway communications, promotion of export trade in certain agricultural commodities within the framework of the free trade policy of the colonial power.

### **Land Tenure Systems**

The Britishers introduced three major types of land tenure systems in India: The Zamindari, the Ryotwari and the Mahalwari.

#### **i) Zamindari System**

On the basis of the Permanent Settlement Act, 1793 the Zamindari system was introduced in Bengal and later it was extended to U.P., Bihar, major parts of Orissa and some parts of Madras. Under this system, Zamindars were given the freedom to collect whatever they possibly could as rent.

#### **ii) Ryotwari System**

Under the Ryotwari system settlement was made separately with each peasant who was recognized as the proprietor with the right to sublet, mortgage or transfer. This system was initially introduced in Madras and later extended to Bombay, Madhya Pradesh and some parts of Assam. It is to note here that 95% of the cultivable lands was under the Zamindari and the Ryotwari system in this period.

#### **iii) Mahalwari system**

Under the Mahalwari system settlement was made with the entire village, and the peasants contributed on the basis of their respective holding, to the total revenue demand

of the village. It was initially introduced in some part of the United Province and later extended to some parts of Punjab.

In this period, however, an entirely different system of land tenure existed in the North-Eastern regions. In the tribal areas of North East the cultivable land falling within the village limits was distributed by the village authority to different clans inhabiting the village. The clan then distributed it among its members. A cultivator under this system could neither acquire any ownership right on the land nor could he transfer it.

### **Agrarian Classes and Class Relations**

In due course of the functioning of the colonial rule, the agrarian society of India became highly stratified. Here class-differentiation was sharpened among various agrarian categories. In the Zamindari areas, Zamindars and other intermediaries constituted dominant classes of the rural society. Under this system, the actual cultivators were denied their traditional rights of security of tenure and gradually they were reduced to the position of sharecroppers and agricultural labourers. In the Ryotwari areas the big landlords sublet lands and emerged as the non-cultivating honers of vast plot of lands. There also gradually emerged sub-tenants, sharecroppers and various types of agricultural labourers. In the Mahalwari areas as well classes of big landowners and cultivating peasants began to dominate in the agrarian society. Here we can identify the following broad agrarian classes of the British Period in India.

#### **i) Landlords**

They were the owners of vast plots of land. However, there were various categories of landowners within this class viz., intermediary landowners (like the Zamindars, Talukdars, Patnidars etc.), the absentee landowners, the rich farmers etc. But the common ground of their economic interest was that they employed mostly either the tenants, sharecroppers or the agricultural labourers for the purpose of cultivation of their land. Indeed they were the non-cultivating reinter class.

#### **ii) Tenants**

They were holding leases under the landlords of various categories. Many of the tenants also employed under-tenants for the purpose of cultivation of a part of their land.

### **iii) Peasant Proprietors**

They were the cultivators of small plots of land with or without occupancy rights. They were mostly the subsistence cultivators and were dependent on family labour for the cultivation of their land. Small peasants and under-tenants belonged to this class.

### **iv) Agricultural working class**

They mostly worked in the field of others for the mainstay of their livelihood. The agricultural labourers and sharecroppers belonged to this category. For subsistence many of the sharecroppers, worked as agricultural labourers seasonally, while the landless agricultural labourers sold their labour throughout the year.

The British land system gave enormous scope to the landlord class to exploit the poor peasantry and to make agriculture market-oriented. This landlord class emerged at the cost of the decay of the poor and medium cultivators who transferred their land to this new stratum. This class also relied on usury as a means of their social advancement. They took full advantage of the poverty of the peasants. The high rates of interest varying from 400% to 500% made it impossible for the peasant to repay the loan. Thus he ended up transferring his land to the money-lenders.

The British period has visualized a phenomenal growth of the sharecropping system of land cultivation both in the Zamindari and Ryotwari areas. The spread of sharecropping system was related to the indebtedness of small peasants. They were indebted to the village money-lenders, traders and rich farmers and the intermediaries. When the peasants lost their land, because of their failure to repay the loan in time, they were resettled on the condition that they would pay half of the produce. The Land Revenue Commission (Bengal) showed that in 1940 of the total land sold and purchased around 32% was brought under sharecropping system of cultivation.

It is important that when the indebted peasants were not resettled on their land as sharecroppers, they were incorporated in the category of landless agricultural labourers. Their number also sharply increased in this period. In Bengal their growth Bengal. Between 1921-31 their number increased to 49%.

In this period the traditional village and cottage industries were destroyed. A significant sections of the village artisans and craftsmen joined the army of agricultural labourers since

no other avenue of employment was left for them.

## **5.21 AGRARIAN CLASS STRUCTURE IN THE POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD**

The attainment of Independence, according to the National Commission on Agricultural, created the essential pre-conditions for restructuring the rural economy with a view to putting it on the path of progress and accelerated development. The situation called for far-reaching structural reforms in the agrarian system and basic changes in the socio-economic relations of production. Comprehensive land reform and rural development programmes have been formulated by the national and the state governments towards this goal since Independence.

### **Land Reforms: Aims and Objectives**

In the First Five Year Plan it was for the first time that the land reform policy was concretized at the government level. In the successive Five Year Plans also various measures have been undertaken to use land reform as the effective instrument in attaining economic development with social justice in the rural areas. Hence the main objectives of the land reform have been:

- i) Abolition of intermediaries
- ii) Imposition of ceiling restrictions on landholding
- iii) Distribution of surplus vested land among the rural poor
- iv) Tenancy reforms
- v) Increase in agricultural production.

### **i) Land Reform Measures of 1950s-1960s.**

The legislative measures for the abolition of intermediaries were introduced soon after independence in the United Provinces and were followed up in West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and some other states. The major facets of this land reform were the abolition of zamindari system, fixation of land ceiling, providing tenurial security to the unerrryots and the sharecroppers. For example, West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act 1953 abolished the intermediary rights of all kinds on land and fixed a land ceiling at 25 acres per individual

holder. The under-ryots holding land from the ryots were upgraded as ryots and came in direct relationship with the state (W.B.E.A. Act 1953). Again with regard to the sharecroppers the West Bengal Land Reform Act 1955 stipulated that

- i) the produce of the crops shall be divided between the sharecroppers and the landowners equally if the required inputs are supplied by the landowners. In all other cases the produce shall be 60% in favour of the sharecroppers.
- ii) it, however, empowered the landowners to terminate the share croppers to bring their land under self-cultivation.

## **ii) Land Reform Laws of 1970s**

Experiencing the loopholes of the land reform laws the gap between land reform legislations and their implementation and their resultant impact on the agrarian society many of the state governments introduced new amendments in the land reform laws in conformity with the national guidelines issued in 1972. The state governments introduced progressive land reform laws. For example, West Bengal new land reform laws were introduced in the 1970s to (i) make the tenure of the sharecropper hereditary (ii) to raise share of the sharecroppers from 60% to 75% of the procedure (iii) to impose ceiling restriction to 7 (approximately 17 acres) hectares and (iv) to empower the sharecroppers to be a riot of the surplus vested land provided the amount of such land cultivated by him does not exceed 1 hectare. In the late seventies the newly elected Left Front Government of West Bengal introduced the Operation Barga programme for quick recording of name of the sharecroppers to provide them with all the institutional facilities of cultivators and the tenurial security. In this process the lower strata of the agrarian society were organized for the rapid implementation of Operation Barga, distribution of surplus vested lands among rural poor etc. All these affected the pre-existing organization of production in agriculture and the agrarian class structure as well.

## **5.22 UNDERSTANDING AGRARIAN STRUCTURE IN INDIA**

Many sociologists have attempted to understand Indian agrarian class structure on different lines.

- (1) **Daniel Thorner and P.C. Joshi:-** Used the agrarian structure to refer to the network of reins among various groups of peoples connected with or involved in

process of cultivation and includes lands, tenants and agricultural labourers.

There understanding is on Marrian line giving more emphasis on cultivation as activity of production and on rins of production based on the basis of ownership and cultivation of land.

- (2) **To Andre Beteille:-** “The study of agrarian system will center around the problems of land and its utilization for productive purposes.”

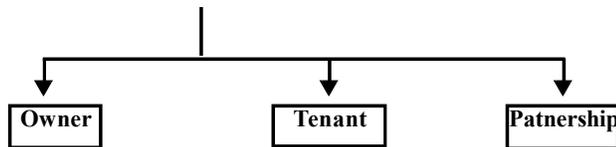
He also recognizes the inter-relatedness of the structural elements in agriculture such as technology, work cycle, organization of production and agrarian hierarchy.

To him, having or not having land is not important but the utilization is important.

- (3) **Michael Todaro:-** For him agrarian system is the pattern of land distribution, ownership and management and also the social and institutional structure of agrarian economy.

His understanding of agrarian class structure depends on the ownership of land but not the real ownership i.e. it may be borrowed one i.e. it depends on:

- having (how much)
- type of ownership



### **Class Structure: A Glimpse**

- (1) **By Daniel Throner: three classes**

- Malik (Big Landlords, rich landlord)
- Kisan (Small landlords Substantial tenants)
- Mazdoor (Sharecroppers, landless, labourers)

**(2) R.K. Mukherjee**

Class-I: Occupational groups of Landholders and superior farmers.

Class-II: Self-sufficient peasantry, cultivators and Artisans.

Class-III: Share-croppers, agricultural labourers service holders.

**(3) G.R. Gadgil**

I: Substantial landlords & Trade money landers

II: Landless Labourers exploited

**(4) P.C. Joshi - Interested in issue of commercial farming**

I: Big farmers

II: Small farmers

III: Marginal farmers

IV: Landless Labourers.

**(5) Utsa Patnaik**

She analyses the understanding class is exploitation i.e. E-factor. Nature of exploitation involved nature of labour e.g. family labour and labour-use is the index of classification.

a. Land Lord

b. Rich Peasant

c. Middle Peasant

d. Small Peasant

e. Poor Peasant

f. Landless Labour

1) Land Lord :- No manual labour as self-employment and large employment of other's labour.

2) Rich Peasant:- At least as large as employment of others labour as self employment.

- 3) Middle Peasant:- Smaller employment of others labour than self-employment.
- 4) Small Peasant:- Zero employment of others and working for others to a smaller extent than the self employment.
- 5) Poor Peasant:- Working, for others to a greater extent than self-employment.
- 6) Landless Labour:- No self-employment and working entirely for others.

### PEASANTRY

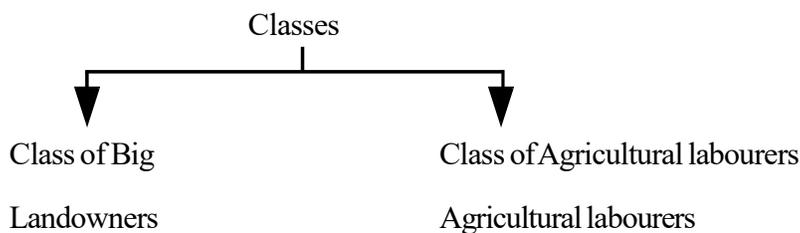
PEASANTRY	Magnitude of Land
- Poor peasantry	Between 1.60 acres or less
- Middle Peasantry	Between 1.61 to 9.80 acres
- Lower Middle	Between 1.60 to 4.60 acres
- Upper Middle	Between 4.60 to 9.80 acres
- Rich capitalist landlord	Between 9.81 and above

### (6) D.S. Swamy (1986)

His analysis of agrarian class structure is based on Marrian line (Based on means of production). His analysis in differentiation of peasantry in India talks of

- i. Landlord
- ii. Poor Peasant
- iii. Small Peasant
- iv. Well to do Peasant

### (7) Ashok Rudra (1988) Two



Owner/Haves

Labourers/Have nots

This classification is clear-cut Marxian line having capitalistic as well as feudalistic character.

**(8) Pranab Bardhan (1982)**

Identify four agrarian classes:

- i. Landlords
- ii. Rich Peasant
- iii. Poor Peasants
- iv. Landless agricultural labourers

1. Landlord is a person who gets his land cultivated wither through hired labour or by a tenant. In other words he hires in others labour power never puts in self employment-symbolically in case of land lord.

SE = O, While, HI = O

(SE- self employment, HI- Hired-in-labour, HO- Hired Out)

2. Rich Peasant. As a rule relies on hired labour or tenant's labourers apart from putting his own labour on land. He may hire out his own labour as a tenancy but never as agricultural labourers. Thus symbolically SE = O while, HI > HO
3. Poor Peasant. Holds land, but survives mainly by hiring out his labour he may be either an owner-cum-tenant-own-labourer.  
He may hire in seasonal labour to carry out agricultural operations. In case HO > HI.
4. Landless labourer. Does not hold any land even in capacity of a tenant. He makes his living only by hiring out his labour as a labourer. In his

**Parmjit Singh Judge's Understanding of Agrarian classes.**

Understanding agrarian classes aims at examining various groups of people who are related to each other in terms of their position in the process of agricultural production. Four classes:

- Big-Landlords
- Peasant proprietors
- Tenant and Agricultural labour

**Andre Beteille** On the basis of study in Tanjore Village of Tanjore District. He talks of following classes existing in these village.

**CLASS STRUCTURE: (A. Beteille)**

- Land owners of land
- Non-owners of land
- Big-absent landlords
- Small owners cultivators
- Tenant
- Agricultural labourer

**Relation**

An analysis of rns b/w different classes has to begin with the basic principles of land tenure. These principle have undergone many changes from time to time which lead to good deal of divergence b/w principles and practices in sphere of agrarian rns.

**Andre Beteille**

Summarized on the basis of his study of Tanjore villages, by giving some of the basic features of village economy or agrarian class structure.

- 1) Agriculture plays a predominant part in productive system.
- 2) The organization of production is based upon the rinships b/w different classes, characterized essentially by ownership and non-ownership of production especially land.
- 3) The composition of the different classes as well as their interrelationships has been undergoing funds accelerated since independence.
- 4) Land has come into the market; the old landowners are how scattered; new laws

have been passed which seek to reorganize agrarian rins.

- 5) Traditional agrarian rinship based on nature in which the cash nexus plays an important part
- 6) Village handicrafts have undergone a process of disintegration.
- 7) The village has become in a multitude of ways part of a much wider economic systems.

### **5.23 CONCLUSION**

The unit began with discussion on the agrarian social structure and the agrarian classes. We have also discussed factors affecting the organization of production in agriculture. It has been followed by discussion on the agrarian class structure of the British period and post independent India. We also talked about the land reforms and the rural development strategies of independent India. In this unit we also analyzed the class structure as suggested by various social scientists. At the end the changing agrarian structure has been discussed.

### **5.24 FURTHER READINGS**

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Chaitamber J.B; 1993 Introductory rural sociology, New Age Publisher, Delhi.

### **Ask yourself**

Q Define Rural Society. Explain various determinants of Agrarian society?

Q Briefly explain agrarian class structure in Pre-British, British and Post-British period in India?

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**Structure**

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Changing Social Structure
- 6.3 Revolt by Moplah Peasantry
- 6.4 Downfall of Moplah Movement
- 6.5 Further Readings

**6.0 OBJECTIVES**

The main thrust of the unit is to

- Identify changing agrarian structure of Malabar
- Highlight revolt by Moplah peasantry
- Trace the outcome of movement.

**6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The Moplahs of Malabar in southern India present a fascinating case for study. A series of Moplah uprisings against both Hindu landlords and the British occurred throughout the nineteenth century and culminated finally in the greatest sustained armed revolt to break out in Malabar in the first quarter of this century. The chapter focuses mainly on the interaction of agrarian, religious and political developments, and the Moplah response to them, between 1835 and 1921, in order to explain the social structure and those changes within it from which the Moplah rebellions sprang.

Nowhere in India have foreign trading, commercial and religious interests interacted within the indigenous socio-economic and political institutions more intimately than they have in Malabar. The history of Arab trading contacts with Malayali society dates back to the ninth century. Local Hindu chiefains in this coastal region needed the support of the wealthy and enterprising Arab traders and hence granted them liberal concessions in their trade and business. Subsequently those Arab traders who settled in Malabar married local women, mostly Nayar and Tiyars (Tiyans); their descendants—a mixed race—are called Moplahs or Mappilas. Thereafter, the Moplah population increased steadily. The traders purchased large number of children from lower-caste Hindus and other subordinate groups in order to man their navies—a practice not only permitted but openly enjoined by the Zamorian rajas in Malabar. Occasionally those Tryar woman who violated the rigid sexual taboos were sold to the Moplahs, for whom each new proselyte was a welcome addition despite the fact that the upper-caste Hindus treated them as outcasts.

## **6.2 CHANGING SOCIAL STRUCTURE**

Conversion had also opened up an avenue of social mobility for the Cherumars who, being at the bottom of the social hierarchy in Malabar and being attached to the land as slave labour had suffered oppression from the powerful land-owning castes (particularly Nambudri Brahmins) for centuries. The Cherumar slaves were sold, mortgaged or hired along with (or sometimes without) land. By conversion to Islam, however, they could not only free themselves from bondage but could also rise in the social scale without any reprisals from the caste-Hindu population. As converts they merited both the sympathy and protection of the well-organized Moplahs whose ranks they joined. Forced conversion was practically unknown before the arrival of the Mysorean conquerors and proselytism in general seems to have progressed through economic incentives and persuasion.

The Arabs monopoly of trade and their political influence were both endangered when the Portuguese arrived in Malabar at the end of the fifteenth century; later the Dutch, English and French joined the contest for supremacy in Malabar's export trade. The historical details of their mercantile and power rivalries are documented elsewhere and need no repetition here.

In the coastal towns, The Moplahs were usually employed as petty traders and

merchants, but a large proportion of those in the interior had taken to agriculture; they also emulated the martial tradition of the Nayars and acquired a reputation as warriors. Most Moplahs, however, lived in areas governed by Hindu chieftains. The Arikkal Raja of Cannanore was the only Muslim chieftain who was a political power to reckon with in northern Malabar; his troops consisted mostly of Moplahs. Occasionally, Moplahs were recruited as soldiers by the French and the English as well, but this was in no sense a political alignment. It was not until Hyder Ali, the Mysorean ruler, invaded Malabar in the 1760s that the Moplahs aligned themselves politically with an external power. During these invasions, Nambudri Brahmins fled in fear and sought asylum in the state of Travancore where the rulers were Kshatriya (warrior-caste Hindu), while the Nayar chiefs either followed suit, surrendered to the conqueror, or took refuge in the jungles to continue the struggle. Those who attempted to resist and recapture their territories were brutally suppressed by the Mysoreans.

In the first decade of British rule in Malabar, one of the questions that caused the new authorities anxiety concerned the land-owning rights of the different classes. The Nayars and the Nambudris were now returning and re-establishing themselves, but during their absence many Moplahs had taken possession of the land they had previously held. The new government had a difficult time reconciling the conflicting claims to land of the Nayars and the Moplahs, and particularly in checking the now widespread Moplah banditry. The customary land rights of various classes had been disturbed during the short-lived Mysorean rule, and the British administrators attempted to restore them in the course of their first land settlements. Therefore the way that the British understood the various different kinds of land tenure and defined (or redefined) and enforced them should provide us with certain clues as to the causes of the Moplah uprisings that occurred intermittently throughout the nineteenth century, culminating in the rebellion of 1921.

In Malabar the economic hierarchy of rights in land corresponded perfectly with the several-tiered social structure, with Nambudri Brahmins at the top and Cherumars, Pulayas, Parayas and so on at the bottom. Although the exact nature of the Nambudris 'superior' rights in land was rather unclear until the first British settlements, it is nevertheless true that members of the priestly caste had held large estates for centuries. The ancient land tenure system in Malabar was somewhat similar to the feudal system of tenures in

medieval Europe. The ruling king made grants of land to Nambudri Brahmins for the management of temples and other institutions they looked after, and also to the rajas and chieftains (mostly Nayars) who had a military obligation to the king to protect his territory with their retainers.

The fundamental idea in the Malabar land system thus seems to have been ‘protection and supervision’ rather than ‘ownership’ in the modern sense.

Those who held land (called *jenmis*—that is, those having a birth-right), let it out to others for cultivation, retaining only a small portion as personal farms to be cultivated by bond slaves. Land grants were hereditary and implied customary sharing of the produce between the *jenmi* and those other classes below him which included the *kanamdars* (or Kanakkaran), the *verumpattamdars* and the agricultural labourer. *Kanam* was a tenure whereby the tenant offered a sum to a *jenmi*, either as security or as advance rent, in return for land leased out for a specified period : this was more or less the equivalent of mortgaging land. *Kanamdars* either sub-let the land to *verumpattamdars* for actual cultivation or hired labourers to cultivate it under their own management; only a few of them cultivated land with family labour. Most of the *kanamdars* came from the educated middle class and held bureaucratic positions (particularly after the arrival of the British). Having invested money in securing *kanam* tenure, they as mortgagees had come to occupy the middle man’s position in the agrarian social structure.

It was during the Mysorean invasions that the agrarian structure of Malabar was disturbed for the first time. The Mysorean rulers introduced a land tax, which encroached on the customary shares of the *jenmi* and the *kanamdars* (who formerly used to divide the *pattam* equally), but left the share of the *verumpattamdars* (the actual cultivator) intact. Since many Brahmins and Nayars had fled, lands were actually in the possession of *kanamdars*—now mostly Moplahs. Therefore, in all probability, it was with the Moplah *kanamdars* that the Mysorean revenue officials made the first settlement. Those who rebelled or resisted were hanged. In this respect, as has already been mentioned, the Mysoreans did not spare even their co-religionists.

After taking control of Malabar in 1792 the British government appointed a joint commission to inquire into the nature of Malabar land tenures. The commission began its work in the midst of near anarchy. The Brahmins and Nayars, who had fled, were now

returning and trying to reinstate themselves under British protection. Claims and counterclaims regarding the control of land had created a chaotic situation, while religious persecution by the Mysoreans had totally upset the hitherto friendly relations between the Brahmins, the Nayars and the Moplahs. It was therefore the urgent need to settle the land question in Malabar that drove the first joint commissioners to recognize *jenmam* rather hastily as an absolute proprietary right in land, and to declare the *kanamdars* and *verumpattamdars* the tenants of the *jenmi*—mere leaseholders liable to be evicted at expiry of the lease. To a degree, the British recognition of the *jenmi's* right as an absolute proprietary right may be seen as part of a general tendency to relate the kinds of property right with which the English administrators were familiar at home. Secondly, the commissioners used the system of land settlement in Mysore as their point of reference with the result that the revenue rates they fixed were very high. In 1800, for example, the revenue burden amounted to nearly 35 to 40 percent of the gross produce. Thirdly, the government relied on the recently restored Hindu rajas and chieftains for the collection of revenue, and this resulted in unequal assessment—Moplah cultivators being rated more heavily than the Hindus. This occasioned several outbreaks of violence between Moplahs and Nayars, which were suppressed by the British.

It is important to note that the recognition of the *jenmi* as an absolute owner or 'lord of the soil' formed the lasting basis of British land policy in Malabar and, throughout the nineteenth century, British administrative and judicial institutions thus worked directly to restore the landed aristocracy of the Nambudri *jenmis* and Nayars.

Preservation of the class of landlords was vital to the British policy of securing allies, although the professed aim of the policy of restoration was stated to be the attainment of the higher objects of good Government and the future improvement of the people. Corruption was rife in the ranks of the revenue staff, who made a common cause with the landlords, tampered with deeds and contracts so as to best serve the landlords interests and, by such means, also made their own fortunes. With newly established law courts, *jenmis* were able to extort more renewal fees and rents from their leaseholders whom they simply threatened with legal eviction if they refused to pay. By such means, each superior 'right-holder' could extract a larger share than previously from the one immediately below him in the chain of subinfeudation, and the worst sufferers of all were the *verumpattamdars* and the landless labourers—whether Moplah or Hindu.

### 6.3 MOPLAH REBELLION IN MALABAR (1921)

The Moplah peasant movement was engineered in August 1921 among the peasants of Malabar district in Kerala. The Moplah tenants were Muslims and they agitated against the Hindu landlords and the British government. Their grievances related to lack of any security of tenure, renewal fees, high rents and other oppressive landlord exactions. In the 19th century as well, there had been cases of Moplah resistance to landlord oppression but what erupted in 1921 was on a different scale altogether.

Actually, the freedom movement covered a span of long decades, beginning from 1835 to 1947. The social and economic background of the Moplah has been quite heterogeneous. The elites among the Moplah earned their livelihood by working as petty traders and merchants. However, the masses of Moplah earned their livelihood by working as small agriculturists. They were the tenants of the big land lords who happened to be high-caste Hindus. Though the Moplahs were poor they imitated the traditional ways of Nayers and acquired the reputation of warriors. There was British rule in Malabar. The officials in collaboration with Hindu landlords exploited the Moplahs and oppressed them a great length.

The Moplah agitation of 1921 was preceded by several movements between 1835 to 1921. D. N. Dhanagare elaborates the series of Moplah movement which took place before the major Moplah movement of 1921. He traces the history of Moplah movement as under :

Significantly, as soon as the *Jenmi* landlords, backed by the police, the law courts and the revenue officials, tightened their grip on the subordinate classes, the Moplah peasantry in its turn started to revolt against its oppressors. The first such outbreak occurred in 1836 and thereafter between 1836 and 1854, 22 similar uprisings occurred, of which two, one in 1841 and the other in 1849, were quite serious. In general, outbreaks followed a similar pattern, almost invariably it would involve a group of Moplah youths attacking a Brahmin Jenmi, a Nayar official or a Jenmi's servant; sometimes it also involved the burning or defilement of temples, and occasionally the burning or looting of landlords' houses. Such a rebels often took refuge in a mosque or seized a Hindu temple for their final stand against the police or troops, who in the end would shoot them down.

The Moplah movement of 1921 was altogether different. First, it erupted among the Muslim peasants against the Hindu landlords. Second, it was characterised by violence. Third, the movement as the history goes, fell in the trap of Hindu-Muslim riot. During this period there was Khilafat movement - a movement raised for the attainment of freedom for Muslims.

Some of the causes of Moplah peasant movement are given below :

- (1) Any analysis of the peasant movement of Moplahs should take into account that the Moplahs were Muslim peasants. Their landlords who were called *Jenmis* were mostly Hindus. The relations between the *Jenmis* and the Moplahs were historically quite unfriendly. In other words, the relations were both economically and religiously antagonistic. Since 1835 the Hindu landlords suppressed the Moplah tenants. Thus, the basic cause of the Moplah agitation was the operation against the *Jenmis*.
- (2) The land tenure system in Malabar was quite unfavourable to the Moplah tenants. There was total insecurity of tenure to the Moplahs and they could be ejected from their land without any appropriate notice.
- (3) The immediate cause of Moplah agitation was the renewal of fee at an exorbitant rate fixed by the *Jenmis*. This was unbearable for the Moplahs.
- (4) The exactions practised by the *Jenmis* were of very high order. More than often the Moplahs were discriminated against the Hindu tenants.

The course of events that led to the Moplah movement can be described as under :-

- (1) The first impetus for Moplah resistance against the landlords came from the Malabar District Congress Committee held at Majeri in April 1920. This conference supported the tenants' cause and demanded legislation to regulate landlord-tenant relations.
- (2) Following the Majeri conference of 1920, the Moplah tenants formed an association which had its branches in the whole of Kerala. This brought the Moplah tenants under one organisation.

- (3) Yet another motivating factor for 1921 Moplah agitation was the Khilafat movement which constituted a wider part of national struggle for independence. This movement developed its roots in Malabar also. The Moplahs took active part in Khilafat movement also. Actually, in practice the meetings of the Moplahs and the Khilafat could hardly be separated. The bonds between the Khilafat movement and Moplah tenants became so much mixed that the government issued prohibitory notices on all Khilafat meetings on 5th February, 1921. This displeased the Moplahs and ended up with the agitation of the Moplah peasantry.
- (4) The British government was weakened as a result of the First World War. It was not in a position to take strong military action, against the Moplahs. As a result of this, the Moplahs began to exhibit increasing sense of turbulence and defiance of authority. The final break came only when the district magistrate of Eranad taluka, on 20th August, 1921, raided the mosque at Tirurangadi to arrest Ali Musaliar - a Khilafat leader and a highly respected priest. The people were quiet and peaceful, but the police opened fire on the unarmed crowd and many were killed. A clash ensued and government offices were destroyed, records burnt and the treasury looted. The rebellion soon spread into the Eranad, Valluvanad and Ponani talukas - all Moplah strongholds.
- (5) In the agitation the targets of Moplah attack were the unpopular *Jenmis*, mostly Hindus, police stations, treasuries and offices and British planters. The Hindu landlords who were lenient in their relations with the Moplahs were spared by the latter. Interestingly, the Moplah rebels travelled several miles through territory populated by Hindus and attacked only the landlords. This gave a communal flavour to the peasant agitation. As a matter of fact, the Malabar people in general lost all their sympathy with the Moplahs. Communalisation of peasant agitation was suicidal for the Moplahs. Commenting on this new aspect of the Moplah agitation Bipan Chandra observes :

The communalisation of the rebellion completed the isolation of Moplahs. British repression did the rest and by December 1921 all resistance had come to a stop. The toll was heavy indeed : 2,337 Moplahs had lost their lives. Unofficial estimates placed the number at above 10,000, 45,404 rebels were captured or had surrendered. But the toll was in fact even heavier, though in a very different way from then onwards, the militant Moplahs were so completely crushed and demoralised that till independence their participation in any form of politics was almost nil.

The movement of Moplah is a failure story. Much of its defeat lies in the fact that it took to communal swing. Secondly, when the Khilafat movement stood for non-violence and also the struggle for independence the Moplah took to violence as a method of agitation. Thirdly, the movement did not motivate the peasantry of the neighbourhood to stand in arms against the landlords. It was perhaps a lone tragedy of Moplahs that their landlords happened to be Hindus. This was never a case in any of the agitations which took place during 1920s and earlier.

To conclude, it can be said that the peasant movements which took place in 19th and early 20th centuries were a part of wider national struggle. On the one hand, these movements were influenced by the freedom struggle and on the other hand they had their impact on the struggle also. Most of these movements were the experiments in *satyagraha* and *non-cooperation* of Gandhiji. Then, there was participation of intelligentsia and educated people in these movements. There were several causes of these movements; the major the being increase in land tax, security of tenure and exploitation of the poor peasantry by the landlords. The big and middle peasants also participated in the movements. Most of the movements, leaving aside Moplah, were characterised by non-violence.

In the next part of the chapter we propose to discuss the peasant movements which took place either at the transitional period, that is, the end of freedom struggle and the attainment of freedom or soon after independence. This will be followed by an analysis of a few of the ongoing peasant movements in contemporary India.

#### **6.4 FURTHER READINGS**

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Desai, A.K.; 1986; Agrarian Struggle in India after Independence, Oxford University Press.

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#### **Ask Yourself**

Q Critically explain Moplah Peasantry movement of Malabar.

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**Structure**

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 The Agrarian social structure
- 7.3 Political mobilization of Bengal Peasantry
- 7.4 Nature of the Share Croppers Revolt
- 7.5 Social Forces that weakened the movement
- 7.6 Conclusion
- 7.7 Further Readings

**7.0 OBJECTIVES**

The main thrust of the unit is to

- highlight the genesis of Tebhaga movement
- highlight the agrarian Structure of Bengal
- highlight the outcome of the movement

**7.1 INTRODUCTION**

The *Tebhaga* movement in Bengal in the mid-forties was a struggle by sharecroppers to retain a two-thirds share of the produce for themselves and there by to reduce the rent they paid to *jotedars* — a class of rich farmers who held superior rights in land—from one-half to one-third of their produce. The movement

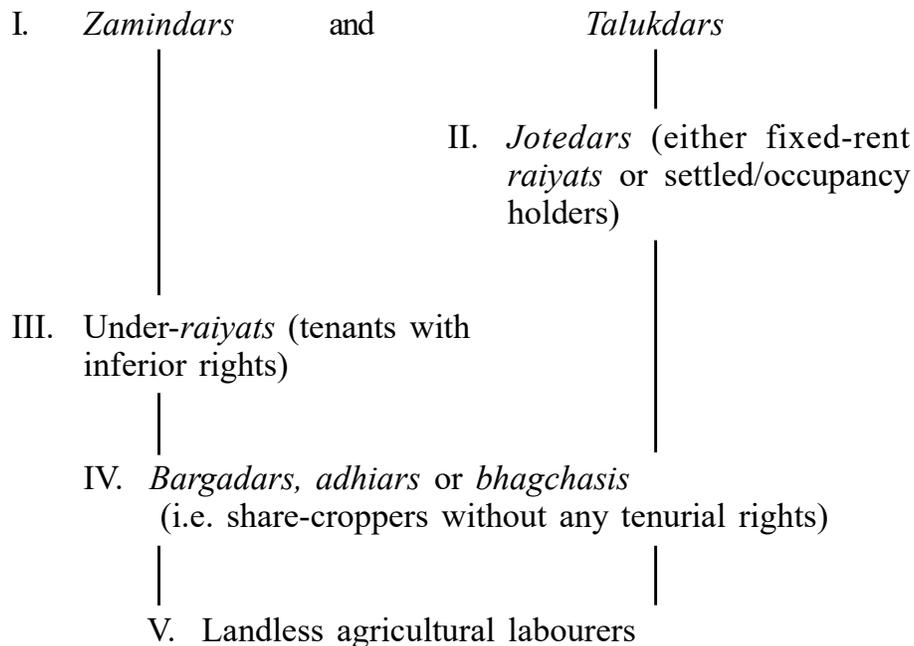
was limited in its impact and spread, and was launched at a crucial juncture on the eve. of India's Independence and partition of the subcontinent. Prior to the *Tebhaga* struggle, many agrarian movements developed within the framework of the Indian national movement but, with a few exceptions, their dominant ethos was Gandhian as they sought reformist goals through 'passive resistance' and 'nonviolence'. The *Tebhaga* movement was, however, a marked departure from this pattern. Being the outgrowth of left-wing mobilization of the rural masses it was the first *consciously* attempted revolt by a politicized peasantry in Indian history. Therefore, the movement assumes a special significance in the study of Indian peasant struggles. Here an attempt has been made to trace the social origins and structural setting of the *Tebhaga* movement, to elicit its class character, leadership and organizational aspects and to analyse the historical conditions in which it developed.

## **7.2 THE AGRARIAN SOCIAL STRUCTURE**

The British introduced the Permanent (*Zamindari*) Settlement in Bengal in 1793 and thus inaugurated new social arrangements on land. Revenue-collecting intermediaries under the Mughal agrarian system were recognized as landlords with full property rights whereas the actual tillers were reduced to the status of tenants by the new settlement. Notions of prestige prevented the *zamindars* from taking any entrepreneurial interest in land management and improvement, while population growth and a steadily rising demand for cultivable land led to subinfeudation and rack-renting throughout the nineteenth century. The extension of cultivation to all arable lands had reached saturation point by 1875. Due to over-utilization of land without adequate capital inputs, crop production had begun to decline, particularly in the first quarter of the present century. The slow disintegration of rural industries and absence of new industrial enterprises and employment further accentuated the pressure on land.

To contain the growing subinfeudation in Bengal the British, in the course of land settlements, created a number of intermediary tenures between *zamindars* and actual cultivators. Consequently, new classes and interest-groups emerged in the countryside. Although the number and variety of these intermediaries varied from place to place or from estate to estate, they could be broadly classified into five strata of agrarian hierarchy

in Bengal, as explained by the diagram :



The landlords held large estates but subdivided them into smaller ones which they leased out (either directly or through *talukdars*) to *jotedars*. The rights of the *jotedars* were permanent, transferable and hereditary and implied power to sublet. The landlords paid the government fixed amounts of revenue and received from the *jotedars* rents fixed in perpetuity. Although some *jotedars* were men of enterprise, few of them really utilized their potential for revolutionizing the mode of agricultural production. Most preferred to sublet their plots to *bargadars* for cultivation. The under-*raiyats* held land directly under the landlords for a fixed period of time, but their tenures were inferior to those of the *jotedars* in terms of market value as well as social prestige, and were not ordinarily saleable. The share-cropping arrangement ensured the *jotedars* better returns without either any capital investment or the risk of accrual of any subtenurial rights on their lands. So extortionate was the produce-rent system that in the 1890's a share-cropper paid a rent that was thirty times more than the revenue his *zamindar* paid to the government.

The growth of the class of *bargadars* in Bengal was not due only to demographic and ecological crises. From the mid-nineteenth century, a large-scale expansion of

transport and communications brought the farm produce of the countryside within the reach of urban markets. This resulted in the system of subsistence agriculture being supplanted by the new market economy. Landowning classes now became increasingly interested in directly securing crops for the market rather than in settling peasants on land. Since a share in the produce gave the *jotedars* access to markets they increasingly went in for crop-sharing cultivation.

The newly created tenures and subtenures provided an opportunity for men of high caste and urban interest-groups to invest money in landed property. Consequently, land passed into the hands of non-cultivating classes. A number of lawyers, merchants-traders, land speculators, or brokers and urban money-lenders, who constituted the *bhadralok*—the urban middle-class of Bengal, became *jotedars* and under-*raiyats* in this process. Those *jotedars* who were money-lenders and merchants naturally preferred *bargadari* cultivation because their interests lay primarily in securing commercial crops for marketing purposes. The *bhadralok* comprised mostly upper-caste Hindus such as Brahmins, Kayasthas and Vaidyas, who had both the desire and the resources to secure an English education, and hence were the main source of recruitment to government services. Landed property, to them, was the symbol of prestige and status; it was also the safest field for investment in those days which explain why, at the turn of the century, there were in fact very few *bhadralok* families without an interest in landed rents.

In Bengal the three sectors of the rural economy can be broadly identified as the landlord-tenant-sharecropper sector; the independent small holders sector (which would imply those *jotedar* tenants or under *raiyats* who had small holdings which they normally cultivated with family labourer and for subsistence and the rich peasant farm labourer sector. These sectors were not mutually exclusive nor did they function independently of each other. Bargaders could be found in all three, of which however, the first sector was the most dominant.

### **7.3 POLITICAL MOBILIZATION OF THE BENGAL PEASANTRY**

The efforts to organize peasants in Bengal date back to the early 1920's, when the new Left Wing enthusiasm in India was crystallizing into concrete organizational forms. The pioneers of the Bengal communist movement, Nalini

Gupta and Muzaffar Ahmad, were convicted in the Kanpur Conspiracy Case. Their release in early 1926 coincided with the adoption of a new tactical line of organizing the Workers' and Peasants' Party (hereafter W.P.P.) as the front-line party of the Indian communists. The establishment of the W.P.P. in Bengal was followed by enthusiastic activities on the rural front. A series of peasants' and fishermen's conferences were organized in different districts. The objectives of the Bengal W.P.P. reflected both the old and new ideologies. The Party then stood for 'complete independence based on social and economic emancipation, demanded nationalization of all industries, services and land, but interestingly enough, affirmed its faith in 'non-violent mass action as the principal means'.

In the 1920's there was another peasant organization—the Ryot-Krishak Sabha (Tenants and Peasants Association) of Bengal, which was largely controlled by the rich farmers (substantial *jotedars* and under-*raiyats*) who, in fact, exploited the actual peasants (small-holders and *bargadars*) far more than the *zamindars* did. This party was politically conservative and pro *status quo*, and its leaders wanted to make new landlords out of big tenants and were not at all willing to make the actual peasants class conscious.

The Krishak Proja Party, which attained phenomenal electoral successes in the 1930's, drew its main support from the Muslim peasantry. It too represented the interests of substantial tenants and rich peasants, and its programme laid emphasis on the abolition of intermediary landlordism and on the 'establishment of peasant proprietorship in land.' Upholding the principal of liberal democracy, non-violence and constitutional methods, it was totally opposed to communism. Its leader, Fazlul Huq, a prominent personality in Bengal politics for many years, used the Proja movement as his power-base. The party was an unpredictable phenomenon being 'connected to all but committed to none.' Between 1932 and 1935 the Krishak Proja Party had come to dominate the Local and the District Boards because of the tremendous following it had among the Muslim peasant masses in north and east Bengal, where the bulk of landlords, *mahajans* and *jotedars* were Hindu. In alliance with the Congress, the Praja Party projected an anti-imperialist image and, in the 1937 Assembly Elections, succeeded in capturing the votes of the Muslim poor peasants. The Krishak Praja Party was thus able to form the first popular ministry in Bengal which,

subsequently, appointed the Bengal Land Revenue Commission (in 1938), to which reference has been made earlier.

The Bengal Kisan Sabha, the provincial branch of the All India Kisan Sabha was set up in April 1936. In a sense, it was a revival of communist activities, this time under the garb of the 'United Front' policy. Such a reactivation of Leftist forces in Bengal was imminent because many C.P.I. workers had come in contact with a number of *bhadralok* terrorists and revolutionaries in jail. The later's absorption into the C.P.I. during the 1930's had vastly improved the party cadres. C.P.I. membership grew from 37 in 1934 to over 1,000 in 1942, and almost 20,000 in 1947.

Kisan Sabha leaders, both at the local and district levels, came either from the non-cultivating classes—teachers, university graduates, etc. or from some *jotedar* families. Initially, both the W.P.P. in the twenties and the Kisan Sabha in the thirties were dominated by a strong pro-rich and middle peasant lobby. But from 1937 to 1940 or so the Bengal Kisan Sabha drifted gradually to the cause of the poor peasants—*bargadars*—and consequently was cut off from the support of rich and middle peasants, although in some places the latter continued to operate within the Kisan Sabha framework even after 1940. But, by and large, different agrarian classes were polarized to different political parties in Bengal by 1940.

In the beginning, the Kisan Sabha units focussed attention on local issues and mobilized the peasantry to resist high local taxes, interest, or rental rates in some place. By 1938-9 the government was already anxious over the 'tenants' no-rent mentality' which it attributed to the growing communist campaign in Bengal. What perhaps radicalized the Kisan Sabha's agitational politics was the complete change in the Krishak Proja Party's attitude towards agrarian problems and questions while in office. The Proja Party's (1937) election manifesto contained a promise to abolish landlordism; on assuming office its ministry appointed the Land Revenue Commission. But thereafter the Party suddenly became ambivalent to agrarian questions. Its ministers now began to openly defend 'the *zamindari* system as the archstone of society' and to condemn 'communism as anti-religions. The Krishak Proja Party's government unscrupulously intermed hundreds of C.P.I. leaders and Kisan Sabha workers in an attempt to check the spread of communism among the rural peasantry.

Natural calamities in the form of floods, famine and disease were so enormous from 1941 to 1945 that any follow-up on the Land Revenue Commission's recommendations was unthinkable. The conditions of the *baragdars*, however, went on steadily worsening, since, despite the famine, the share-croppers' obligation to surrender half their produce to the *jotedars* remained unchanged. Between 1940 and 1942 several leaders of the Kisan Sabha were interned, which gave them an opportunity to sharpen their understanding of the agrarian crisis, and the nature of class conflict in the countryside. A clearer articulation of the notion of 'peasant' and the class-base of the party emerged through that process of maturation. The Kisan Sabha by 1945 had become a predominantly poor peasant organization.

At the time of the natural disasters the communist units/Kisan Sabha workers who were already released, engaged themselves in massive famine-relief works; they set up relief committee and grain co-operative, in the *mofussil* districts and organized some relief kitchen, which fed at least 117,000 destitutes everyday. These relief activities enabled the C.P.I. and the Kisan Sabha to consolidate themselves organizationally. In 1945 the Kisan Sabha had some 77,000 members in nearly a thousand villages, and about a thousand full-time organizers in Bengal districts. In the course of the relief work Kisan Sabha workers advised tenants and *bargadars* to withhold rents or share of crop. But the actual struggle for *tebhaga*, calling for direct action from the sharecroppers to retain a two-thirds share of the produce for themselves and to pay the *jotedars* only one-third, was launched in September 1946.

#### **7.4 NATURE OF THE SHARE-CROPPERS REVOLT**

The movement started first in a village—Atwari in north-west Dinajpur—where several *bargadar* volunteers cut the paddy crop and carried it to their own *khamar* (threshing-floor) instead of taking it to their *jotedars'* *khamars* as they used to do in the past. When the police intervened, peasant-police clashes followed. Fearing mass arrests, the Kisan Sabha and communist leaders who spearheaded the movement, went underground. The resistance of share-croppers was initially more intense in the Thakurgaon subdivision of Dinajpur district, but within a fortnight the movement spread to several villages covering nearly three-fourths of that district.

Because it was the harvesting season the agitation spread very fast. By the middle of December 1946 the movement had gathered momentum in eleven districts, and over 1,000 Kisan Sabha workers and peasant volunteers had been arrested. Everywhere the pattern of the struggle was the same.

Another stronghold of the movement was Mymen singh district in East Bengal. In the northern Susang region of the district, the Hajong tribals turned tenant paid *tanka* (a fixed quantity of crop) as rent to their landlords; in the central and southern parts the bulk of share-croppers were either Muslims or tribes, whereas the *zamindars*, *talukdars* and big *jotedars* were mostly Hindu, though a few of them were Muslim. Hence the agrarian movement in this district was a mixture of the *tanka* and *tebhaga* struggles.

### **7.5 SOCIAL FORCES THAT WEAKENED THE MOVEMENT**

The nature of the *tebhaga* movement leaves little doubt that on the whole the share-croppers resistance was weak and that on no occasion did they seem to have threatened the very structure of authority of the system they were part of. Was this weakness inherent in the class position of *bargadars* in the agrarian social structure in Bengal, or did it stem from certain external forces ? This is the moot point of our discussion. An examination of the attitude and role of the Muslim peasantry in the *tebhaga* movement, the timing of the struggle, of the general historical conditions and political context in which occurred might provide us with some important clues.

In Dinajpur district it appears that only the Rajbansi and Santal tribals participated in the movement wholeheartedly; the Muslim peasants did not readily participate, with the result that the Kisan Sabha had to depute a prominent Muslim worker to draw the Muslim *bargadars* into the struggle. Those who did participate in the movement also began to desert it soon after the police firings in Balurghat, Thakurgaon and other places; they even promptly surrendered paddy to their *jotedars*. In Rangpur district both the Rajbansi and Muslim *bargadars* had collectively launched the movement by taking the paddy crop to their own *khamars*. But even when some Muslim *jotedars* fatally attacked their Hindu and tribal share-croppers, the leaders of the movement disallowed any retaliation, fearing that such

reprisals against Muslim *jotedars* might rupture the class unity of Hindu, tribal and Muslim *bargadars* and might spark off serious communal strife.

Two explanations are possible for the ambivalence of Muslim peasants. The first is that the agrarian classes in Bengal, as elsewhere in India, were only partially isomorphic with the 'community-based' social categories, such as types of religion, tribe and caste. It is true that the bulk of actual tillers—poor peasants and landless labourers—were Muslims, *adivasis* (tribals) and *Harijans*, whereas the *zamindars*, landowners and *jotedars* were mostly upper-caste Hindus as well as Muslims. But each class category was not homogeneous in terms of its religious, caste and ethnic composition, nor did members of one single, 'community-based' category belong to the same socio-economic stratum (or class situation). Such interpenetration of one set of categories by the other must have posed enormous problems for Kisan Sabha leaders in building up a 'class' organization and launching the *tebhaga* as a 'class' movement. That their success was only partial cannot be over-emphasised. The second explanation is that whatever the unity of the class struggle, it tended to be eroded by the upper classes' appeal to, and manipulation of, primordial loyalties within the peasantry. Talk of the transfer of power and partition of India was in the air from 1940. The Muslim League represented basically the Muslim upper and middle classes and landlords, that its appeal for a separate nation swept across all economic strata of the community and unified them politically. Consequently, in Bengal the Muslim League steadily gained ground. It tried to win over the Muslim peasantry through hostile propaganda against the C.P.I. and the Kisan Sabha. Despite spirited opposition, the Kisan Sabha mustered support from some Muslim peasants and some of its local leaders were Muslims. But this does not detract from the fact that an ever larger proportion of Muslim peasants in Bengal supported the League from 1940 onwards.

Growing communal politics in a Muslim-majority province like Bengal led to one of the worst communal riots in Indian history, in August 1946, with its resultant traffic of refugees. Tragic incidents continued to occur almost until the beginning of the *tebhaga* movement, and the intense communal conflict was bound to dampen the *tebhaga* struggle. Large numbers of Muslim peasants now deserted the Kisan Sabha and refused to participate in the agrarian agitation. Thus communal politics vastly diminished

the scope of the class struggle.

The *tebhaga* revolt, therefore, never assumed the serious proportions some claim. In fact, although the situation had potential for a massive peasant rebellion, it did not develop into one. The total number of peasants killed in scuffles with the police did not exceed fifty, although 3,119 arrests were made, which is a considerable number. It is significant in this context that 'not a single *jotedar* was killed, nor a single *jotedar* house burnt down. The reason seems to be that the *tebhaga* was only a struggle to obtain a two-thirds share of the produce for the *bargadars*; the scope of the revolt could obviously not be extended beyond the limits imposed by the very nature of the issue. Thus, once the *bargadars* removed the paddy to their *khamars*, the struggle in a sense was over.

The foregoing discussion suggests that the weakness of the *tebhaga* revolt was not inherent in the class position and structural dependence of the *bargadars* in the agrarian social structure of Bengal. Rather, communal politics and the general political development in the country turned out to be overwhelmingly decisive. Above all, the particularistic nature of the *tebhaga* issue not only circumscribed the scope of the struggle and underplayed the more oppressive character of the system of land control, but also brought to the surface the differences within the Kisan Sabha. This obviously weakened the resistance movement. Consequently, share-cropping, the highly retrogressive mode of agricultural production in Bengal, continued even after the *tebhaga* struggle ended. The formal exercise of *zamindari* abolition in the post-independence land reforms, too, left the grievances of the share-croppers unredressed. Those very grievances of the poor peasantry in Bengal loomed large in the 1960's, constituting the *raison d'être* of the agrarian radicalism that has come to be known as Naxalism in India.

## **7.6 CONCLUSION BOLD IT**

Clearly, then, the *tebhaga* movement was the outcome of politicization of the peasantry in Bengal. While the agrarian class structure, the social changes taking place until the mid-forties and the economic crisis following the war and famine were all conducive to such a resistance movement, without C.P.I. and Kisan Sabha activity the *tebhaga* struggle would not have developed. But the movement also

demonstrates how sometimes politicization can weaken the rebellious impulse of the peasantry.

### **7.7 FURTHER READINGS**

Dhanagare, D.N., 1983 Peasant Movement in India, 1920-50 Oxford University Press.

Desai, A.R ; 1986 Agrarian Struggle in India after Independence, Oxford University Press.

### **Ask Yourself**

Q What are the causes and outcomes of Tebhaga movement of Bengal?

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**Structure**

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Socio-economic structure of Hyderabad State
- 8.3 Early Social Reform movement
- 8.4 From Reform to Revolution
- 8.5 Conclusion
- 8.6 Further Readings

**8.0 OBJECTIVES**

The major objectives of the unit are

- To understand socio-economic structure of Hyderabad
- To observe revolution in the state
- To observe the role of different forces in channelizing the movement.

**8.1 INTRODUCTION**

Despite obvious structural constraints, traditional India has experienced a number of peasant uprisings before and after Independence. The Communist-led armed insurrection between 1946 and 1951 in the Telangana region of the former princely state of Hyderabad certainly stands out as the most important one. The present ideological and organizational split in the Communist Party of India can be traced back to the differences in the thinking of the Party's leadership during the last phase of the Telangana

uprising. Today we find the Communist Party divided into three distinct ideological groups: the Communist Party of India (CPI), the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) and the Communist Party of India-Marxist-Leninist (CPI-ML). The viewpoint of each of these groups has been presented in recent publications by the respective parties. The CPI considers the armed struggle in Telangana, which took place after the accession of the state of Hyderabad to the Indian Union in September 1948, as undesirable. The CPI-M supports the continuation of the struggle after the accession as a partisan peasant struggle but not as a liberation struggle against the Indian Union government led by the Congress party with Nehru as the Prime Minister. The implications of the peasant movement for a strategy of revolutionary change in India, the nature of the Telangana peasant uprising, the historical and structural conditions which led to its growth, and its consequences deserve a sociological analysis.

Peasant uprisings form part of several social movements in Telangana. Smelser categorized social movements as being either 'norm-oriented' or 'value-oriented'. While the former are generally reformatory, the later are revolutionary in orientation. A norm oriented movement may in due course develop into a value-oriented movement or vice-versa. At a particular point in a movement a situation could develop which contains elements of both. Which form would subsequently become dominant and continue would depend on the objective conditions on the one hand and the subjective feelings of the participants and the ideology put forth by the leaders on the other.

In what follows, the Telangana peasant movement, which took place over the years 1946-1951, is analyzed as part of different social movements and as such the nature and characteristics of each of the stages preceding and succeeding it are brought to light.

## **8.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF HYDERABAD STATE**

The state of Hyderabad was ruled by the Nizam, a Muslim, from around 1720. It was a multi-lingual state consisting of three linguistic areas : Telangana (eight districts), Marathwada (five districts) and Karnataka (three districts). The Telangana region comprised almost half the area of the state. Muslims lived in the urban areas including the city of Huderabad. Owing to the influx of Muslims from other states in India and the proselytization of Harijans and other backward classes, the percentage of Muslims is estimated to have risen from 10 per cent in 1901 to 14 per cent in 1948.

Agriculture was the main occupation of 85 per cent of the population. Industrial growth was very little and 90 per cent of the industries were owned by Muslims. About 60 per cent of the land in the state was under the Ryotwari revenue system and the remaining 40 per cent was under the direct control of the Nizam, the overlord, and the sub-feudal lords such as jagirdars and *makedars*. Even in the non-jagirdari areas, almost every village was under the control of landlords—locally called Deshmukhs and Deshpandes—and the village hereditary officials. These landlords owned major portions of the lands in the villages. All this gave rise to absentee landlordism and an oppressive system of land tenure. Of course, the conditions in the jagirdari areas were worse. While many jagirdars were Muslims, the landlords were mainly Hindus and mostly belonged to the Brahmin and dominant agricultural castes such as Reddis, and Velamas. It was estimated that between 1910 and 1940 land alienation took place on a large scale and many cultivators became tenants-at-will, crop-sharers and landless labourers. Side by side, owing to the increase in the cultivation of commercial crops, owner-cultivators became rich. But during the period of economic depression (1929-34) and for some time after, the price situation was not favourable to the cultivators in general and to small cultivators in particular. Around the Second World War, prices increased and this was advantageous to the rich peasants but not to the poor. As the wages did not increase corresponding to the rise in prices, labourers were affected adversely.

In the countryside, the jagirdars, landlords and government officials were exploiting the people in a number of ways. The *vetti*, or the practice of free and forced labour and exactions, was in vogue in the state of Hyderabad in general and in Telangana in particular. Under the feudal system in each village the service castes were granted partially rent-free lands and the families holding these lands were expected to serve the officials visiting the villages for some nominal payment. But in practice they were paid nothing and were treated no more than slaves. The Harijan leather-workers, the washermen, potters, barbers as also carpenters and blacksmiths served the Deshmukhs and officials for no payment. Harijans virtually acted as watchmen of the houses of the jagirdars, Deshmukhs and village officials. This practice also enveloped the merchants who were expected to supply provisions free of cost to the visiting officials. The Brahmin purohit was also not exempt from the system of free services.

### 8.3 EARLY SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENTS

It is necessary to note that the early social movements in the state of Hyderabad originated in the city of Hyderabad, which was a part of the Telangana region. In the initial stages, the movements were cultural and literary in character, supported and led by the upper-middle class Hindu intellectuals largely belonging to the Brahmin caste followed by the Reddis. In the beginning of the twentieth century, a Telugu literary movement was started and efforts were made to establish libraries in different towns of Telangana. It was in 1901 that the first literary association (Sri Krishnadevaraya Bhasha Nilayam) was established in the city of Hyderabad under the leadership of K. Lakshman Rao. A concerted effort, however, may be said to have been made only in 1921 in the form of an association called the Andhra Jana Sangham. The objectives of this association were : establishment of libraries, felicitation of Telugu pandits, development of research in Telugu language and culture, and spreading education among the people. Influenced by the Indian National Congress and the various social reform movements then taking place in other states, the Sangham also included help to destitutes as one of its objectives. The development of the arts was also one of its aims. The Sangham soon began to take interest in the abolition of social evils such as the system of forced labour (*vetti*). The merchants also went into action and formed an association which demanded the abolition of the practice of free supply of provisions to government officials. These programmes gave a spurt to the reform movements in the Telangana region in general and in the districts of Nalgonda and Warangal in particular. In 1922, two Telugu weeklies were also started. Thus, the Jana Sangham, which was started primarily as an association for the cultural development of the Telugu-speaking people and as a protest against the dominance of Urdu, became an important social and cultural reform organization. As a reaction to this, the Muslims formed an association called the Majlis Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen. Its aim was to organize the Muslims as a united force against the Hindus and to lend support to the Nizam of Hyderabad. Each Muslim declared himself 'Anar Malik' meaning 'I am the head'.

The Telangana leaders in Hyderabad felt it necessary to intensify their social reform activities as also to spread the message to different parts of Telangana. In 1930, the Andhra Mahasabha was formed with the main purpose of educating the people against forced labour, untouchability, and other social evils and to impress upon the government the need for the abolition of such undesirable practices. The

meetings of the Sabha concentrated on social evils such as purdah, child marriage and the taboo on widow-remarriage. They propagated the entry of Harijans into temples and requested the government to lift the prohibition on cultural meetings. Organization of Mahil Sabhas and exhibition of physical exercises were a regular feature of each of the Sabha meetings. The Andhra Jana Sangham slowly became defunct and all its members joined the Andhra Mahasabha. M. Hanumantha Rao was the moving spirit being the Mahasabha.

In the beginning, the Nizam's government responded well to the demands of the Andhra Mahasabha and issued orders prohibiting forced labour—however, these orders were never really implemented. Soon the Muslim organizations and the government came to suspect the motives of the reformers and began to create a number of hurdles in the functioning of the Mahasabha. It became difficult for the Mahasabha to conduct meetings every year.

A section of the elite of the state of Hydreabad revived the demand for equal rights for Hindus along with Muslims, and also for responsible representative government in the state. Accordingly, an organisation called the Nizam Subjects League was formed in 1935 and a number of nationalistic Muslims joined it even though the government soon declared it illegal. It was, therefore, given to the Andhra Mahasabha to take the lead. By this time a number of middle class youth had joined the organisation and they too felt the need for political reform in the state.

From 1938 onwards, important political developments took place in the state in quick succession. The Hyderabad State Congress was established and many from among the younger generation joined. The Nizam's government objected to the name of the organisation as it sounded like a state branch of the Indian National Congress.

In 1945, there were two rival meetings of the Andhra Maha Sabha. One was held at Warangal and was attended by non-Communists. The other was held at Khammam and was attended by Communists and their sympathisers. Both the groups discussed the problems of popular government, representation for different religious groups, problems of peasants and agricultural labourers etc. It must be noted that these were also the last important meetings of the two wings of the Andhra Mahasabha. While the liberals slowly became a part of the state branch of the Indian National Congress, the radicals joined forces with the Communist party. Of course, within the Congress there were two groups as well—one consisting of liberal-conservatives and

the other of progressive nationalists.

#### **8.4 TELENGANA PEASANT STRUGGLE (1947-51)**

This movement was launched in the state of Andhra Pradesh against the former Nizam of Hyderabad. The agrarian social structure in the Nizam's Hyderabad was of a feudal order. It had two kinds of land tenure systems, namely, raiyatwari and jagirdari. Under the raiyatwari system, the peasants owned patta and were proprietors of the land; they were registered occupants. The actual cultivators of the land were known as shikmidars. Khalsa lands were chieftain's land, and out of revenue collected from these lands, personal expenses of the royalty were met out. The deshmukhs and Deshpandes were the hereditary collectors of revenue for khalsa villages. In jagir villages, the tax was collected through jagirdars and their agents. Both the jagirdars and the Deshmukhs wielded immense power at the local level.

The region of Telangana was characterised by a feudal economy. The main commercial crops, viz., groundnut, tobacco and castor seed, were the monopoly of the landowning brahmins. The rise of Reddis and peasant proprietors further strengthened the high castes and propertied class. The non-cultivating urban groups, mostly Brahmins, Marwaris, Komtis and Muslims, began to take interest in acquiring land. Consequently, the peasant proprietors slid down to the status of tenants-at-will, share-croppers and landless labourers.

Following were the main causes of the movement :

- (1) The Nizam's former Hyderabad state had a feudal structure of administration. In the *jagir* area, the agents of the jagirdar who were the middlemen, collected the land taxes. There was much of oppression by the jagirdar and his agents. They were free to extort from the actual cultivators a variety of taxes. This condition of exploitation remained in practice till the *jagirdari* system was abolished in 1949.

On the other hand the khalsa land or the raiyatwari system was also exploitative though the severity of exploitation in the khalsa system was a little lesser. In the khalsa villages, the Deshmukhs and Deshpandes worked as intermediaries. They were not in the payroll of the jagir administration; they were only given a percentage of the total land collection made by them. The Deshmukhs and Deshpandes then developed a habit to cheat the peasants by creating fraud in the land records. Thus,

in countless instances they reduced the actual cultivator to the status of tenant-at-will or a landless labourer.

In both the systems of administration; i.e. jagir and khalsa, the Peasants were exploited by the intermediaries appointed by Nizam. High taxes, fraud with the record and exploitation resulted in creating discontent among the poor peasants.

- (2) Yet another cause of peasant movement in Telangana was the exploitation of the big peasants. D. N. Dhanagare informs that the Jagirdars and the Deshmukhs had thousands of acres of land in their possession. The families of these big peasants and their heads were called Durra or Dora. It means, the master or lord of the village. Dhanagare says that the Dora exploited the small peasants and agricultural labourers. This exploitation, in course of time, became legitimised with the big farmers. It was considered to be the privilege of the Dora to exploit the masses of peasants. Dhanagare observes :

Such exaction had become somewhat legitimised by what was known as the vetti system under which a landlord or a Deshmukh could force a family from among his customary retainers to cultivate his land and to do one job or the other-whether domestic, agricultural or official, as an obligation to the master.

- (3) In the whole former state of Nizam a system of slavery, quite like that of *Hali* of south Gujarat, was prevalent. This system was known as Bhagela. The Bhagela were drawn mostly from aboriginal tribes who were tied to the master by debt. According to Bhagela system, the tenant who had taken loan from the landlord was obliged to serve him till the debt is repaid. In most of the cases, the Bhagela was required to serve the landlord for generations.
- (4) The Reddis and kammars were notable castes who traditionally worked as traders and moneylenders. They exercised a great deal of influence in the countryside. They wanted to pull down the dominance of Brahmins as agriculturists in the state.
- (5) The Telangana region was economically backward. The development of agriculture depended on the facilities of irrigation. The commercial crops could hardly be taken without irrigation facilities. Though, the lack of irrigation was realised by Nizam and he provided irrigation facilities to the peasants both in khalsa and jagir villages. But,

these facilities were largely cornered by the big farmers.

- (6) Land alienation was not new to the former Hyderabad state. Between 1910 to 1940, the frequency of land dispossession increased. On the one hand, the land possessed by the non cultivating urban people, mostly Brahmins, Marwaris, and Muslims increased and on the other hand the tribal peasants got reduced to the status of marginal farmers and landless labourers. Describing the impact of land alienation on the poorer peasants D. N. Dhangare writes :

As a result of growing land alienation many actual occupation or cultivators were being reduced to tenants-at-will, sharecroppers or landless labourers.... in fact, where rich *Pattadars* held holdings too large to manage, they tended to keep a certain amount of irrigated land to be cultivated with the help of hired labour and turned over most of their dry lands either to *Bhagela* serfs or to tenant cultivators on very high produce rents.

The Telangana peasant unrest did not erupt over night. It took about three to four decades. Actually, till 1930, the poor condition of the peasants had reached its culmination. Meanwhile, there had been much transformation in agricultural economy. The Telangana economy, which was only subsistence economy, had grown into market economy by the 1940s. With the change in capitalistic agricultural economy, there was no change in the status of the tenants and sharecroppers. Actually, the modes of production and exchange remained pre-capitalist or semi-feudal and emerged as the major source of discontent among the poor peasantry in Telangana. On the other hand, with the termination of Second World War, there was a terrible fall in wholesale prices. The price trends strengthened the position of moneylenders and traders who tightened their grip on indebted small *Pattadars* and tenants. One of the bitter consequences of the forces of change has been an increase in the number of agricultural labourers. It appears that there was enough discontent among the lower segments of peasantry. Peasants were only waiting for some opportunity to engineer some insurrection.

The course of events that led to the Telangana peasant struggle can be described as under :-

- (1) The Telangana peasant movement was engineered by Communist Party of India (CPI). It is said to be a revolution committed by Communists. The Communist

Party started working in Telangana in 1936. Professor N. G. Ranga had laid down the regional level peasant organisation in Telangana. This regional organisation was affiliated to the All India Kisan Sabha -- an organ of CPI. Within a period of three or four years, say by 1940, the CPI had established its roots in the former Hyderabad State. During the period from 1944 to 1946, the Communist activities increased in several of the districts of Hyderabad. A proper framework was, therefore, prepared for launching a peasant movement in Telangana.

- (2) The next event which took place in Hyderabad and more actually in Telangana was the famine of 1946. All the crops failed and there was a crisis of the availability of fodder. The prices of food, fodder and other necessities of life increased. This was a crisis for the tenants and the sharecroppers. Actually, the year 1946 provided all opportunities for engineering the peasant struggle. In the early July 1946, the peasants resisted the government orders. Militant action was taken by the CPI-led peasants.
- (3) The CPI made an objective to mobilise the peasants. It took up a campaign to propagate the demands of the lower peasants. By the middle of 1946, the Communist propaganda was fully intensified and covered about 300 to 400 villages under its influence. The movement during this period was slow but the peasants showed enough resistance to the government dictates. However, it must be mentioned that in the mobilisation of peasantry, only Telangana local peasants participated.
- (4) The second conference of CPI was held in March 1948. It resolved to give a revolutionary turn to the peasant movement in Telangana. The peasants later on were organised into an army and intermittently fought guerrilla wars. Writing about this part of the course of events of Telangana peasant struggle Hamza Alavi observes:

...Telangana movement had a Guerrilla army of about 5,000. The peasants killed or drove out the landlords and the local bureaucrats and seized and distributed the land. They established governments of peasant 'soviets' which were integrated regionally into a control organisation. Peasant rule was established in an area of 15,000 sq. miles with a population of four million. The government of the armed peasantry continued until 1950; it was not finally crushed until the following year. Today, the area remains one of the political strong holds of the Communist Party.

- (5) Besides the peasant agitation, a parallel discontent was also taking place in Hyderabad. A para-military voluntary force, organised by Kasim Rizvi, was taking its roots. The members of this voluntary organisation were known as *Razakars*. This organisation was against the peasants. The peasants consolidated their movement in the face of the oppression of Nizam, activities of Razakars and the authority crisis in Hyderabad.
- (6) On September 13, 1948, the Indian army marched into Hyderabad and within less than a week the Nizam's army, police and the *Razakars* surrendered without resistance. The police action, taken by the newly framed Central Government of independent India, was very quick to suppress the peasant movement. D. N. Dhanagare elaborates the police action as under :

On India's part the 'police action' was taken to stop the Razkar frenzies as they not only created anarchic conditions within the state but also posed a serious threat to the internal security of neighbouring Indian territory. The police action was therefore, unsavoury but essential .... once the *Razakars* were overpowered, and a military administration set up .... the offensive was immediately directed at the peasant rebels in the troubled districts of Telangana. The superior Indian army spared no measure to suppress the communist squads."

The peasant movement in Telangana had to be withdrawn. Actually the the police action gave a death blow to the Communist led Telangana peasant movement. In this struggle, the movement had to suffer a lot. Fighting with the Indian army over 2,000 peasants and party workers were killed. By August 1949, nearly 25000 Communists and active participants were arrested; by July 1950 the total number of detainees had reached 10,000. This should suffice as an index of the intensity of Telangana peasants struggle.

The Telangana peasant movement continued for about five years. Its outcomes can be enumerated as below :

- (1) The struggle had the Participation of a mixed class of peasantry. Though the rich peasants, mainly the Brahmins, had their involvement in the struggle, the major achievement was that the struggle for the first time brought together the tenants, sharecroppers and the landless labourers. This was by all means a very big

achievement of the struggle. The Kammar and the Reddy castes who belonged to the rich class of peasants though gained enough but the movement consolidated the strength of poor peasants, particularly the tribals, who were the victims of vetti-the bonded labour.

- (2) Yet another benefit of this struggle was in the favour of the Communist Party. The Communist, for a long time to come, exercised their hegemony over the entire state of Hyderabad.
- (3) Though the Communist Party, as a whole, benefited from the Telangana peasant struggle, it had its own losses also. Ideologically, the party got split from top to bottom. One group of Communists supported the struggle while other decried. The second group argued that the struggle was in no case less than terrorism. Writing about the division of Communist Party during the struggle, P. Sundarayya writes :

It is relevant to mention here that during the course of the struggle, particularly during the phase of its last two years, the Communist Party from top to bottom was sharply divided into two hostile camps, one defending the struggle and its achievements and the other denouncing and decrying it as terrorism, etc. Those who opposed this struggle had even openly come out with the press, providing grist to the mill of the enemies in maligning the struggle and the Communist Party that was leading it. This sharp political ideological split, though enveloping the entire party in the country, was particularly sharp and acute in Telangana.

- (4) So far the demands of the poor agricultural classes were concerned the movement was a failure. Surely, there were some gains to Kammar and Reddy - the rich peasant, but the gains of the poor peasants such as sharecroppers were quite meagre.

The Telangana peasant struggle, it must be boldly said, was from above and not from the peasants themselves. No single agrarian stratum initiated the movement. It was all the handy work of the Communist Party. Despite the failure story of Telangana struggle it must be admitted that it was a source of inspiration for the Communists as a whole in the country. D. N. Dhanagare very rightly makes his conclusive statement about the outcome of the movement when he says :

... Telangana insurrection was no more successful than other peasant resistance movements in India. Like all other movements, though, the Telangana struggle has become the source of legends and inspiration for the radical left in India. Recently, there has been renewed interests, academic as well as political, in the study of the Telangana struggle, its silver jubilee celebrated by all shades of Communist Party in India, became, however, an occasion for mutual mud-slinging; but that must be left out of this study.

## **8.5 CONCLUSION**

We have analysed the class composition and ideological foundations of the Telangana movement in its different phases. The antecedents and consequences of the armed struggle have been noted.

The peasant movement led by the Communists with a revolutionary ideology of class struggle has to be seen in relation to other movements which sprang up in Telangana in the beginning of the twentieth century. The Talegu literary movement introduced ideas of renaissance and was against the Nizam's establishment. Under the influence of the Indian National Congress and the Arya Samaj the Telangana elite gave a new direction to the activities of the Andhra Mahasabha in the 1930s. They mobilised the public for the abolition of forced labour, untouchability and other social evils. They also demanded equal educational and economic opportunities.

## **8.6 FURTHER READINGS**

Rao, M.S.A; 1979; Social Movement in India Manohar Publication, Delhi.

Dhangare; DN ; 1983 ; Peasant Movement in India Oxford University Press.

### **Ask Yourself**

Q Analytically explain different phases of Telangana movement of Hyderabad.

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**Structure**

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 The region : A Profile
- 9.3 The Community
- 9.4 Social Structure of the area
- 9.5 Naxalbari Peasant Struggle
- 9.6 Conclusion
- 9.7 Further Readings

**9.0 OBJECTIVES**

The main objective of the unit is to acquaint you with

- The social background of the Naxalbari area.
- The role of CPI in raising the issue.
- The causes of Naxalbari movement.
- The important leadership in the movement.

**9.1 INTRODUCTION**

There is sufficient evidence to believe that the pro-Chinese component of the top CPI-M leadership in West Bengal had actually encouraged the communist cadres in Siliguri sub-division to develop militancy on the peasant front. One of the leading

activists of the Naxalbari movement claimed that in a Krishak Sabha meeting in 1964, Konar had argued forcefully that the Parliamentary path was mere trickery and that they should prepare for an armed struggle without which fundamental changes in the agrarian front cannot be achieved.

The Naxalbari peasant uprising exacerbated the existing schisms within the CPI-M and the extremist radical groups were either expelled or they dissociated themselves from the Party. The Darjeeling District Committee had to be dissolved and as many as forty members were expelled from the Party. The Communist Party of China (CPC), which had been providing moral support to the radical dissenters within the Party, hailed the Naxalbari event as a 'spring thunder' over India, which according to them was a prelude to the revolutionary transformation ahead.

The most conspicuous among the breakway groups was the Naxalbari-o-Krishak Sangram Sahayak Samiti (Naxalbari and Peasant Struggle Assistance Committee—NKSSS) led by Sushital Roychoudhury. He was earlier editor of the CPI-M organ *Deshahitaishi* from which post he was removed forcibly. Thereafter, he started another paper, *Deshbarati*, which served as the mouthpiece of the NKSSS. Among other important splinter groups were the Commune group which advocated a guerilla type of revolution, patterned on the Cuban model of Che Gueyara. This group operated clandestinely from within CPI-M.

It was at the initiative of the NKSSS—which had gained the recognition of the expelled members of the CPI-M of the Darjeeling District Committee under the leadership of Charu Mazumdar, Kanu Sanyal and Souren Bose—that the formation of the Coordination Committee of Revolutionaries (CCR) was spearheaded and came into existence by August 1967. This was before the Madurai meeting of the CPI-M Central Committee on 18 August 1967. The establishment of the CCR led to similar formations in the states of Bihar, Punjab, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, and Kerala. The extremists in Andhra Pradesh deferred the formation of a Coordination Committee until they were expelled by the CPI-M in their Burdwan plenum in April 1968. By November 1967, again at the initiative of the West Bengal Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (WBCCCR), the different state coordination committees resolved to form the All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (AICCCR). Thus, the extremists within the various states were organised

with amazing rapidity and this was followed by their coordination at the inter-state level. By 22 April 1969, the process had reached its logical culmination with the formation of the third communist party of India on the birth centenary of Viadimar I. Lenin, the chief architect of the Russian revolution. The formation of the new party was announced by Kanu Sanyal at the May Day rally in Calcutta.

The birth of the Communist Party of India–Marxist–Leninist (CPI-ML) can be distinguished from the CPI-M on several counts. The latter came into existence as a consequence of a division within the CPI. It was a mobilization of protest within the Party which gradually led to the severance to ties from the undivided Party. A new party was born out of the womb of the agrarian struggle. Its period of gestation and maturity was irrevocably linked with this struggle. It took a definite form by stages. It also emerged as the result of the combined efforts of many groups and individuals fired by a common vision of the revolution. It was different in yet another sense—the new party attracted many recruits who were novices without any prior political socialization, and whose first political experience was becoming a member of the third communist party of India which promised a revolutionary transformation of society. However, the CPI-M, it should be remembered, was only one, though the major, constituent of Naxalite politics. There were others, like the MCC, who championed the cause of armed seizure of political power by the country's most oppressed.

Once the ideological and political bases of the Naxalite groups in different states were crystallized as the CPI-ML, they entered the political arena with renewed vigour. This time the programmatic content differed substantially from that of the peasant uprising in Naxalbari in 1967. From massive participation of peasants for forcible occupation of benami, vest land, and *khas* land, emphasis was now placed on the liquidation of class enemies by a programme of annihilation through the use of guerilla tactics. Mass movements were rejected as revisionist, and secret and underground small-group squads replaced them with the aim of seizing political power. The programmes of strengthening base areas and preparing a Peoples' Liberation Army were not given any serious thought. In short, the Maoist strategy underwent a transformation in which Lin Piao's strategies during the Chinese guerilla offensive against Japan were invoked to legitimize the new strategies.

The brutal suppression of the movement by the ruling Congress Party led to the unusual phenomenon of mass emigrations from communist to a non-communist party—the Congress. This emigration took place partly on account of the newly acquired charisma. Indira Gandhi riding on the crest of a military and electoral victory and partly because many of the cadres were a political or of the lump pen variety. In Naxalbari, quite a few took refuge with the CPC which has been in close alliance with Congress Party. This was facilitated by mass arrests, torture and indiscriminate liquidation of cadres. This brutal suppression was once again possible because of the conspiratorial means used to annihilate class enemies and the decision by the CPI-ML to establish the supremacy of red terror over white terror. This mis-interpretation of Maoism by Charu Mazumdar was communicated to him by the CPC some time in early 1971 but fearing the repercussions that such a critique of the policy from China would have on the leaders and cadres of the movement, it was neither released for discussion nor disclosed to the leaders until just before Mazumdar's arrest in July 1972.

## **9.2 THE REGION : A PROFILE**

Darjeeling is a frontier district of India. It is bounded on the North by Sikkim, on the North-east by Bhutan, on the West by Nepal, and on the South-east by Bangladesh. In 1971 it had a total population of 781,777 with an adverse female sex-ratio of 882, and a low density of population of 254 per sq. km. compared to the West Bengal density of 504. Interestingly enough, the literacy rate at 33.07 per cent compares marginally better with the average of 33.2 per cent for the state as a whole (*District Census Handbook, 1973 :v*). The percentage of cultivators to total workers has declined from 37.5 in 1961 to 30.46 in 1971. But the percentage of agricultural labourers to total workers has increased from 2.9 to 9.12 within the same decade. Whether or not this is strongly suggestive of a down ward mobile group from cultivators to agricultural labourers should form an important aspect of an economic analysis of this district. There is also a marginal decline in the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes populations (13.18 per cent in 1961 and 12.57 per cent in 1971 for scheduled tribes).

The regions characterized by peasant revolt are the three police stations of Phansidewa, Naxalbari and Khoribari, covering an area of about 274 sq. miles with a population of about 1,50,000. There are 32 tea gardens in this area with a labour population comprising 30 percent of the total population of the area. The terrain is

scenic with forests and plantation. Cultivation is largely of paddy and jute. The area is of strategic importance. One principal feature of this region is the high percentage of share-croppers. Among those owning 5 acres or less, the percentage of share-croppers in Naxalbari, Phansidewa and Khoribari are 60.1 percent, 65.0 per cent and 50.1 per cent respectively. These were the marginal peasants in the Tebhagha movement as well as in the recent Naxalbari uprising who provided the main thrust of the movement. In comparison to the share-croppers, there are a few agricultural labourers in the area (4.6 per cent in Naxalbari, 6.1 per cent in Phansidewa, and 5.4 per cent in Kharibari). However, one has to understand the structure and historical background of the institution of crop-sharing associated with this part of Bengal in order to be able to appreciate the peasant mobilization that took place.

### **9.3 THE COMMUNITY**

The Rajbansis are the most preponderant community in the population of this region and Jalpaiguri. They constitute nearly 25 per cent of the population of the entire Terai region and certainly more than 50 per cent of the population in the regions of peasant unrest. It is said that this community is an aboriginal tribe earlier known as Koch. Around the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries under their leader, Main they founded the Koch kingdom on the ruins of the ancient Hindu kingdom of Kamrup, with Kuch Behar as its metropolis. With the introduction of Brahminism two generations later, they abandoned the name Koch (which thereafter was despised) and adopted the name of Rajbansi, literally 'of royal kindred'. Obviously not all Kochs became Rajbansis so a hierarchy emerged. Many Kochs who were denied entry into the Rajbansi community opted for Islam. Thus the struggle for higher status led one section of the Kochs to become Rajbansis and another section to become Muslims. Those who remained Kochs therefore had to accept a lower status.

The Oraons, Mundas and Santhals constitute a large proportion of the population in this region. Historically their immigration from the Chotanagpur and neighbouring regions seems to have been prompted by the need of the plantation owners to have a labour force which could clear forests and engage in efficient plantation labour. The tribals of this region were found most suitable and were presumably brought into the region as indentured labour. This aspect of the migration requires a more thorough study.

Unfortunately, readily available historical material on agrarian relations in this frontier forest region of North Bengal is dismally inadequate. What constitutes the districts of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri was annexed by the British from Bhutan in 1865 ‘after a war into which we had been reluctantly forced by aggressions and insults’ (Hunter, 1974:5). However, of the Jalpaiguri region the ‘Report of Mr J. Tweedie, Deputy Commissioner of the Western *Dwars* on the land tenures of that part of the country, dated 11th September 1865’, tells us that ‘the Bhutias were foreigners in the *Dwars* and in this respect they and ourselves are equal. The inhabitants of the *Dwars* are Hindus and Mohammadans, with the exception of the migratory *Mechs* who live along the base of the mountains...’ (Hunter, 1974 : 282). Hunter’s statistical account unfortunately has less on the *jotedari* system of the terai regions of Darjeeling district than of Jalpaiguri district. But since both these tracts of land were annexed by the British from the Bhutanese, and both seemed to have had a predominantly non-Bhutia population more characteristic of the Indian communities, it may be profitable to examine the *jote* system falling within the purview of the Bhutan Subah.

#### **9.4 SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE AREA**

The agrarian hierarchy in the pre-British period in the Jalpaiguri region was headed by the Subah or the Bhutia Lieutenant-Governor who had no personal interest in the soil as landlord or tenant. His function was to transmit revenue collected from his area to the royal authority after retaining for himself a sanctioned portion. He was an appointed authority with no guarantee of permanency of position “Under him were several tehsildars or *Kathans*, ‘who were of respectable birth, and of good repute in the country’.” Next in the agrarian hierarchy came the *jotedar*, ‘a person who holds in severalty, joint, or in common, a piece of land for which he pays revenue directly to Government through his agents the *tehsildars*’. the original *jotedars*, it seems, were settlers who would clear forest land, make it fit for cultivation, and then such lands would become their *jotes*. Thereafter the rule of succession would apply to the ownership and control of *jotes*. This process, in fact, was encouraged by Bhutia Rajas and governors who ‘were wont to allow settlers to occupy unpopulated tracts of country for a term of five years, more or less, without payment of revenue. *Jotes* however could also be acquired by purchase or as gifts or grants from the Bhutia Raja.

The *jotedar* could operate as a peasant proprietor cultivating and disposing his produce in any manner he deemed fit. But the *jotedar* could also chose to play the role of a superior landlord in relation to the 'inferior estates, the tenants'. The *chukanidars* or *mulanidars* were those who entered into contract, for periods of more than one year, with the *jotedars* on fixed money rentals. The contract was temporary with no rights of sale or transfer except with the explicit permission of the *jotedar*. The *rayats*, in comparison, were yearly tenants paying annual money rents to the *jotedars*. The last in the hierarchy was the *praja*, or the tenant-at-will, who paid his rent in kind. Further, he was without capital and was dependent on the *jotedar* for his seed plough-cattle, and implements of agriculture. The seed advanced was deducted at harvest time and the balance produce shared equally (Hunter, 1974 : 280-6). Interestingly enough there was 'no tendency towards the growth of a distinct class of day-labourers in Jalpaiguri District, neither renting land nor possessing fields of their own' (Hunter, 1974 : 279). However, there were those cultivating small patches of land who would also till the fields of others on the basis of equal sharing. These were the *adhias* cultivators, who in the erstwhile Bhutia regions had to be given every kind of input by the *jotedar* and the only factor of production they could claim as their own was their manual labour. Undoubtedly, they must have been from the *praja* category of tenants-at-will, who, unable to meet their basic requirements, would become *adhias* on a crop sharing basis.

The Terai region extending over the Himalayan foothills, we are told, was annexed in 1850 and the northern portion was attached to Darjeeling district. In this region the revenue collectors before the British were Bengali officers known as *choudharis*, who were not only the chief landholders and *jotedars* in the areas but also 'exercised civil and criminal powers'. When the British administration took over, they were retained 'with some alteration in their profits but were stripped of their civil and criminal powers. However, by 1864 the institution of *choudharis* was abolished and the government entered into direct settlement with the *jotedars* (Baden-Powell, 1892:500). The *Jotedars* in this region were on leasehold lands usually renewable on termination of the lease period. Initially, they were given three years contracts which by 1853 were increased to ten year periods.

Apart from the *choudhary* we find another variation in this region when compared to the agrarian structure in Jalpaiguri district. In addition to the *praja*, there were also

*thikadars*. Instead of paying produce rent as the *prajas* did, the *thikadars* paid money rent and kept the entire produce (Hunder, 1974:103 116–9). Also, although like in the Jalpaiguri region no class of day labourers could be discerned, ‘children of ten years of age and upwards are commonly employed on agricultural labour only during the leaf-picking season in the tea plantations’ (Hunter, 1974:103). Thus first indications of the advent of wage-labour in the form of child-labour can be noticed in the plantations.

This *jotedari* system of the nineteenth century steadily crystallized into a *jotedari–adhiari* system by the twentieth century. We have already noted the landlord–tenant configuration in which the structural position of the tenant–at–will (*Praja*) was precarious. It has also been observed that this group of *prajas* did not own any of the means of production and had to engage in *adhiari* cultivation. Over a period of time the *adhiari* system became a necessary and inevitable complement of the *jotedari* system, presumably because the *jotedar* in general were not peasant proprietors who also tilled their own land. Hence the gulf between owners and tillers widened to the advantage of the owners. The *prajas* became *adhiars*.

By about the fourth decade of the century the agrarian system of exploitation had sufficiently crystallized all over Bengal to evoke the first major peasant revolt against the iniquitous relations of production. This crystallization of the *jotedari–adhiari* system was also expressed in physical terms. The residential pattern of each *jote* was mainly a *jotedar–praja* complex. Around the *jotedar*’s establishment would be located the houses of his *adhiars* or *prajas*. This residential configuration constituted a *jote* named after the original *jotedar*. The *adhiar* seldom had a residence which he could claim as his own. He was the *jotedar* who provided the shelter and cattle-plough. But here the broad generalities end.

There were variations within the category of *adhiars*. The most preferred *adhiars* who gained precedence and favour over others were those who did not claim any share of the crop they produced. After harvesting, the entire paddy was taken to the landlords threshing floor (*khamar*) and nothing was taken by the *praja*. The condition of work followed the dictum, ‘I will feed you (i.e., take care of you), you produce for me’. However, although the most preferred by the landlord, this was not the most pervasive form of *adhiarian* for the ration provided by the *jotedar* was hardly above subsistence level. Besides, this limited the freedom of consumption, whatever may be the meaning

of such 'freedom' in real terms. The more prevalent form of *adhirai* was based on a system of share-cropping. On completion of harvesting the *adhiar* received his share of produce after certain standard, conventional deductions. The usual procedure followed a set pattern. The grain would first be stacked on the landlord's threshing floor, and the entire crop would then be divided into two equal parts. The *adhiar's* share would then undergo... the following deductions :

1. If the cattle-plough had been provided by the landlord a deduction of 8 maunds would be effected. This was known as *panudan*.
2. If the seeds were supplied by the landlord, twice the amount would be retrieved.
3. For every maund of crop weighed by the *sherwan or morol* (paid servants of the landlord who perform the weighing operations), a deduction of 10 seers would be made. Incidentally, the deductions so accumulated could not be by the *morol*. He would be paid a standard 10 to 15 maunds for weighing the total produce of 20 to 30 *adhiars*.
4. If the *adhiar* had borrowed paddy from the landlord as a consumption loan, one-and-a-half times the amount of paddy would be deducted, i.e., and interest of 50 per cent in kind.
5. If the *jotedar* needed to construct a granary (*gola*), he would deduct 10 to 20 seers of paddy. The landlord would exclaim, 'where will I put the paddy unless you construct the (*gola*) (*Dhanta Rakhobo Kothai, gola tairikore de*).
6. Anywhere between 2.5 seers to 5 seers would be deducted for the maintenance of the *jotedar's* stable, if he had one.

As a consequence of such extractions the little that the *adhiar* could take back home was grossly insufficient for his minimum needs, will the result that he would end up borrowing from the landlord. Thus continued the story of the ever-increasing burden of debt which kept the *adhiar* bonded in perpetuity.

While we have examined the *jotedar-adhiar* relationship in its structural aspects, it is also necessary to examine it in a dynamic processual dimension. *Jotedar* would often want to clear forests and make them fit for cultivation so that they could augment their income. Often parcels of forest land would be given to persons free of rent—an

arrangement colloquially described as *mufate khawa* (literally 'eating tree'). In about three to four years of hard and exacting labour the land (of say about 5 acres) would become fit for cultivation. No sooner would it start yielding a crop, than the *potedar* would impose a *thika* or contract based on an assessment of the expected yield. If one 'hal' of land was expected to yield say about 20 mounds, the contract bound him to a payment of say about 5 mounds annually. This would make him a *sarta praja*, meaning the *praja* under contract. He would then be given a plain paper receipt. As the yield would go on increasing and reach, say 50 to 10 maunds, he would be induced to accept rent receipts on the plea that this would give him the status of a permanent tenant who, therefore, could not be evicted. It is alleged that such 'rent receipts' would actually carry a declaration that he was an *adhiar* paying 15 maunds of paddy annually—the same amount he was paying *thika* ! After a lapse of a year or two the illiterate cultivator would suddenly be accosted by the *jotedar* for paying only 15 maunds where he was his *adhiar* ! Thus unwittingly he would become an *adhiar* from, *thika*, to *praja* to *adhiar*. While this may not have been true for all *jotedars*, there is reason to believe that such tricks were widely prevalent.

Relationships of dependency and exploitation were not confined to the relations of production. The institution of *begar* or free labour prevalent in other parts of the country took the following forms :

1. The *adhiar* was expected to supply free labour for the *jotedar* kitchen garden. This included cultivation of vegetables, etc. as well as such other work like erecting fences against strong? cattle.
2. Periodic repairs to the *jotedar*'s house was the responsibility of his *adhiars*.
3. If any marriage was finalized in an *adhiar* family, the *jotedar* had to be given a *bhent*, that is, some kind of a presentation in his honour. This could be a goat, or some rice, dal and vegetables, etc. The *bhent* invariably would be some article of food, sufficient in quantity for the *jotedar*'s entire household a functional equivalent of a marriage feast in which there was status bar to their participation.

The *jotedar* also appropriated to himself the role of the judiciary at the *jote* level. He would not permit disputes to be taken to the formal institutions of justice, and pronounced his own judgement whenever necessary. Punishments for offences would

range from fines payable in cash to the *jotedar* to beatings and expulsions from the *jote*. During popular festivals the *jotedars* would encourage the *adhiars* to accept food and meat articles to make merry. Later on however, they would retrieve twice the amount supplied to them—one hundred per cent interest on their merrymaking!

Thus the *jotedari-adhiari* system had perfected the exploitation to the labour of the *adhiar* by every conceivable means, keeping him utterly dependent on the *jotedar*. With no alternative occupation choices open to him, the *adhiar* became inextricably reliant on the *jotedar* for his very survival. This was the structure of relationship between the *jotedar* and the *adhiar*. This did not preclude, however the existence of enlightened *jotedars*, who, operating within the exploitative system, gave evidence of human considerations for their subjects. That is, they would exploit their labour within the framework of the system without becoming oppressive. But the fear and practice of oppression kept the system going.

## **9.5 NAXALBARI PEASANT STRUGGLE**

The Naxalbari peasant struggle was launched in March - April 1967. This movement had Tebhaga (1946) peasant movement as its torch bearer. The light provided by Tebhaga inspired the Naxalbari movement. The prime objective of this movement was to change the whole society, not the conditions of peasants only. Then, the Naxalbari movement was highly charged by the ideology of violence. The idiom of the movement was that power comes from the barrel of the gun and not by slogans and non-violence. The movement was aimed at the total annihilation of the big farmers, landlords and jagirdars. Nothing short of it could change the structure of society. Naxalbari is a police sub-station in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal. It is in the name of the police sub-station that the movement is known all over. At a later stage it took an ideological flavour.

One principal feature of the region of Darjeeling is the high percentage of sharecroppers. It is because of this that the Naxalbari movement was essentially a movement launched by sharecropper. In the beginning the movement remained restricted to three police stations only, namely, Phanisidewa, Naxalbari and Khoribari, having a population of about one lakh. The percentage of sharecroppers in and around these three police stations came to be 65 and 50 respectively. The commonly grown crops by the people

predominantly include paddy and jute.

The Rajbansis are the most Preponderant community of the region. They constitute more than 50 percent. It is said that earlier this community was a tribal group known as Koch. With the growing influence of Brahminism in the region, some affluent sections of Koch adopted the nomenclature of Rajbansis. This created social differentiation among the Kochs - one section became Rajbansi, another converted to Islam, and the third one adhered to the original Koch stock. In the process of political development which took place in the Tarai region, the Rajbansis acquired larger portions of land and came to be known as Jotedar. A Jotedar is a person who holds in severalty, joint or in common, a piece of land for which he pays revenue directly to government through his agents. At a later stage, the Jotedar legally became the owner and controller of jotes. Jotes could also be purchased or acquired as gift.

The Jotedar was the peasant proprietor. He leased-out lands to tenants - raiyats, who paid annual rents to him. He also granted land to tenants-at-will praja. The praja paid rent in kind. The tenants-at-will, as elsewhere in the country, were fully dependent on Jotedar for their seed, plough, cattle and agricultural implements. The seed advanced was deducted at harvest time from the produce and the balance was shared equally. Below the Jotedar were small farmers, adhiars who cultivated small patches of land on equal share basis.

The production relations in the Darjeeling district, where the uprising was concentrated, consisted of the nexus of Jotedar-rayat-Praja-adhiar. Under this system, the cultivator was merely reduced to the status of a sharecropper. The sharecropper was completely in a state of dependency, and suffered exploitation and succumbed to bondage.

While writing anything on the Naxalbari peasant movement it must be observed categorically that the movement was started by sharecroppers. Second, it was inspired by Tebhaga, the region now being in Bangladesh. Following are some of the important causes of the movement :

- (1) The landlord used to take a larger share out of the produce made by the sharecropper. The general share taken by the landlords varied from one-half to one-third. It was quite excessive. The sharecroppers, which included rayat, praja

and adhiar, demanded reduction of the share of produce.

- (2) Another cause of the movement was the demand for the regulation and distribution of benami lands in an appropriate way by the peasants.
- (3) The sharecroppers had no power with them. They were helpless under the bondage of the big landholders. It was the major cause for the uprising.
- (4) The Naxalbari movement was admittedly a movement of the peasants but above all the major cause of the movement was the class war, between the big farmers and the ordinary peasants.
- (5) The sharecroppers alleged that they were against their dependency on the big farmers. The big farmers were guided by the motto: "I will feed you, you produce for me". Such a kind of dependency was not acceptable to the tenants-at-will, the praja and the landless labourers.
- (6) The praja had to submit to begar, that is, to work as Hali or Vetti.
- (7) The Judiciary of the district was in all cases in favour of the big farmers. The praja were always victimised by the Judiciary.

The production relations between the Jotedar, that is, former Rajbansis with the praja, adhiar, that is, sharecroppers were strained. The exploited masses of peasants were groaning to engineer a revolutionary struggle.

The Course of events that led to the Naxalbari movement can be described as under :-

- (1) Charu Majumdar was the leader of Naxalbari movement. There was a group of revolutionary leaders known as Siliguri group. This group gave out six documents known as the guidelines for the peasants. The document advocated the ideology which worked behind the Naxalbari movement. The sum and substance of the six documents include that militancy was the guiding ideology for capturing power. Majumdar and his group preached violence to the peasants saying that land was to be given to the tiller and Congress was to be defeated. The mobilisation of the peasantry was made on the lines of class consciousness. It was planned to establish

a people's government after annihilating the jotedar-jamindar through armed revolution. The participants to the struggle were the peasants who were sharecroppers and who identified big farmers-jotendars as their class enemy. Thus, the movement was mobilised against the landed propertied class. For this movement it can safely be said that the broad-based peasantry, inclusive of all its strata, was involved in the struggle.

- (2) During the month of March 1967, the violent leaders of the movement killed a moneylender within the jurisdiction of Naxalbari police station. This murder was followed by a series of other murders and one after another the Jotendars, Sahukars were killed by the participants of the movement.
- (3) The messages of the movement were given through several slogans. Some of the slogans were borrowed from Tebhaga peasant movement. Throughout the area the leadership to movement was given by Panchnam Sarkar, Kanu Sanyal and others.
- (4) In course of time the movement got ablaze in different parts of West Bengal. College students including females participated in the movement. The movement, thus, was not only a movement of the peasants but the society at large.

The Naxalbari movement was essentially against the big farmers, that is, jotedar. Though there was no immediate gain of the struggle, it definitely influenced the course of peasant movements in the country. The Naxalbari movement was a specific struggle ideologically oriented to Marxian socialism. In the Jotendar-adhiar relation there was a visible contradiction in capital and labour. The deprivation of adhiar and for that matter for rayat and praja was due to the process of differentiation resulting from the force of history and modernisation. The rank and file of the Communist Party had made the adhiars conscious of the contradiction which turned them to pauper. Yet another outcome of the Naxalbari movement was that like other movements of the country, it did not stand for or put the demand for structural changes in the old feudal system. Instead, the movement, ideologically and operationally too, stood for a systematic change which could end exploitation and operation inherent in the semi-feudal system.

## **9.6 CONCLUSION :**

In this unit we came to know that how the existing social structure played a crucial role in the emergency of the movement. The prevalence of the jotedar - adhiar relationship to some extent sharpened the issue between the peasantry and the landed masses. Further, the existence of CPI in different forms and having different strategies too supported the issue and thus the culmination of political-social environment led to the emergence and propagation of movement in North East India and in parts of West Bengal.

## **9.7 FURTHER READINGS**

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**Structure**

- 10.0 Objectives
- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 New Farmers Movement in India
- 10.3 The ‘Newness’ of the Farmer’s Movement
- 10.4 The Class Composition of the New Farmers Movement
- 10.5 Farmer’s movement at Regional level : Shetkari & BKU
- 10.6 Shetkari Sangathan in Maharashtra
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- 10.9 Conclusion
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**10.0 OBJECTIVES**

The main thrust of the unit is to make you aware —

- About the new social movement.
- About Farmers movement in India.
- About issues and strategies of farmers in social movement.
- About class dimension of the new farmer's movement.

## 10.1 INTRODUCTION

The so-called new farmers' movements in India began in the 1970's, in parts of Tamil Nadu and the Punjab. Certain 'price and related issues' had become the object of lobbying and rural agitation via non-party movements. These movements, it is suggested, involved 'farmers', rather than 'peasants' : the former being distinguished, it seems, by significant market involvement, both as commodity producers and as purchasers of inputs. The issues included, crucially, the prices of agricultural products — the fixing of procurement prices being of particular concern and the demand grew for 'remunerative prices'. The 'other and related issues encompassed the prices of agricultural inputs, electricity charges, irrigation charges and betterment levies, and the taxation of agriculture, all of which, it was argued, should be lower. Non-repayment and waiving of government loans would also become an issue.

These movements grew in the 1970s, and by the late 1970s they had emerged strongly, too, in parts of Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, (particularly the west) Karnataka, and Gujarat. They were little in evidence in other states, however. In the 1980s they became a powerful forces employing the distinctive *rasta roko and rail roko* (blocking of roads and rail), and *gavbandi* (refusing politicians and bureaucrats entry to villages; and with tens of thousands courting arrest) they peaked in influence and activity in the late 1980s and have waned since, although a farmers' movement did erupt in Haryana early in 1993. They continue strong in Maharashtra, and retain some presence in western Uttar Pradesh, the Punjab and Haryana. They may well emerge strongly again. That they merit close attention is

clear. Already much important work on them has been done in India. This collection is a contribution to the debate on their nature, causes and significance.

The so-called ‘new issues’, pursued via non-party movements and employing new forms of agitation, have been counterpoised against ‘the old issues’. These latter, whose encapsulating slogan was ‘land to the tiller’ and which were the driving force of previous ‘peasant movements’ were landlordism, tenancy, rent, and land redistribution; and they were often taken up by the political parties. Of course, peasants had agitated on ‘price and related issues’, often with considerable success, long before the 1970s, both in the states mentioned and elsewhere. Prices had never previously dominated rural agitation, however, and had never been such a major focus of non-party action. Now they did become dominant.

Already, then, we have four senses in which a new phenomenon is suggested : agency had passed from ‘peasants’ to ‘farmers’; the central focus of rural agitation had shifted from land to prices; the essential agitational form was a non-party one; and distinctive, novel methods of agitation were employed. All of this is controversial, and that controversy is joined in the pages that follow.

During the 1980s there was a fifth, limited, sense in which these movements might be seen as ‘new’ : with a broadening of agenda and ideology, to include the environment and women’s issues. This is especially so in Maharashtra. Women’s issues seemed, also, to be on the agenda in Karnataka. Certainly, old-style peasant movements had never included such concerns. And by no mean all the ‘new farmers’ movements’ have. But their existence, however limited, has led some to argue that they are part of world-wide ‘new social movements’, which embrace a new set of post-material values.

## **10.2 NEW FARMERS MOVEMENTS OF INDIA**

Emerging from the late 1970s onwards, the farmers movements operate under different names in specific context throughout India (see map). (The most important of them are : the *Shetkari Sanghatana* in Maharashtra, led by Sharad Joshi; the *Bharatiya Kisan Union* (BKU), led by M. S. Tikait in Uttar Pradesh,

and by Ajmer Singh Lakhwal, Balbir Singh Rajwal and Bhupinder Singh Mann in the Punjab, the *Bharatiya Kisan Sangh* in Gujarat; The Tamil Nadu Agriculturalists' Association (*Tamilaga Vyavasavavigal Sangham* or TVS) in Tamil Nadu, led by Narayanaswamy Naidu; and the Karnataka State Farmers' Association (*Karnataka Rajya Ryota Sangha* or KRRS) in Karnataka, led by M. D. Nanjundaswamy. As all the contributions to this collection testify, it is impossible to ignore or underestimate the powerful effect the farmers' movements have had on local, regional and national politics in India throughout the past decade. Their impact extends from demonstrations, blocking the food transportation system, denying officials access to villages, refusing to pay outstanding bills (tax arrears, electricity dues, bank loans), and withholding crops from local markets (which results in price rises), to an important role in the overthrow of Rajiv Gandhi's Congress government in the 1989 elections.

The contributions to this volume include general considerations of background issues (Brass, Banaji) and also case studies of the more important of the farmers' movements : the *Shetkari Sanghatana* in Maharashtra (Dhanagare, Omvedt, Lindberg), the BKU in Punjab (Gill) and Uttar Pradesh (Hasan, Lindberg, Gill), the *Raitha Sangha* in Karnataka (Assadi), the BKS in Gujarat (Banaji) and – to a lesser extent – the TVS in Tamil Nadu (Lindberg). From the outset emphasis was placed on the fact that significant differences existed between the farmers' movements from each area, due in part to regional economic and cultural variations. The most obvious divergence is on the issue of economic liberalisation, supported by Shetkari Sanghatana but opposed by the BKU in UP and the KRRS in Karnataka. The difference between BKU in UP and Punjab on the one hand, and the Shetkari Sanghatana in Maharashtra on the other, is attributed by Lindberg to the presence in the former of a favourable ecology compared with poor soils and a lack of water in the latter context. Contrasting attitudes towards gender issues are also regionally specific : thus the farmers' movement in Maharashtra adopts a progressive stand on women's issues, whereas the BKU in UP adheres to traditional patriarchal values. Indeed, gender issues are presented by Shetkari Sanghatana and the KRRS as

evidence of their progressiveness but, according to Gill, the BKU in Punjab has been unable to secure support from women.

### **10.3 THE NEWNESS OF THE FARMERS' MOVEMENTS**

The first theme addressed questions of definition. What are the new farmers' movements, and are they new? Are there parallels with other forms of (urban) mobilisation elsewhere in the world during the 1980s which come under the general rubric of 'new social movements'? For very different reasons, and drawing very different conclusions, Lindberg, Omvedt and Brass argue that the farmers' movements are part of the new social movements that have emerged as a global phenomenon from the late 1960s onwards. Locating his analysis of the farmers' movements within a framework that combines interactionist collective identity formation with a structuralist interpretation, Lindberg eschews his earlier argument that the new farmers' movements in India are rich peasant mobilisations, and maintains instead that they are the response of a mass-based, commodity-producing peasantry to a state whose control over input/output prices affects rich, middle and (to a lesser extent) poor peasants alike. He describes such movements as new, not least because cognitively they draw on a plurality of traditions, are organisationally anarchic or postmodern, and lack a set of fixed criteria for membership. Much of this definition is shared by Omvedt, for whom the farmers' mobilisations in India are also part of the new social movements world-wide : as with the latter, contemporary agitations undertaken by Indian peasants are non-political in form, and characterised by an anti-urban/anti-state/anti-capitalist ideological content.

By contrast, in his first contribution to this volume Brass maintains that the farmer's movements are indeed the same as the new social movements, but paradoxically because neither are in fact new, being much rather the same old class movements articulating the same old class discourses. The claims to 'newness' on the part of the farmers' movements are similarly questioned by Gill and Assadi. The latter shows not only that traditional practices (such as bonded labour, atrocities against backward castes, tribals and women), continue, but also that claims by the KRRS for the a-political nature of its mobilisation are unfounded. For his part, Gill links the rise of the

BKU in Punjab and UP to the long history of peasant struggles in the Green Revolution belt of northern India, organised initially by pro-landlord groups and then by political parties of the left, the implication being that in this region such mobilisation is anything but new. He also shows that, although the BKU in Punjab, Haryana and UP has successfully resisted attempts by politicians to utilise the farmers' movement as a vehicle to further their own political careers, it too has nevertheless entered into informal alliances with different political parties in these states.

The problem with many definitions of new social movements which turn on issues such as chronology, organisational modes, and objectives, is that they could apply to almost any kind of historical/contemporary agrarian mobilisation. This in turn raises the awkward question of exactly how 'new' these movements really are : as Lindberg himself notes, not only does land continue to be a live political issue, but action undertaken by Shetkari Sanghatana is based on 'old tactics' employed by farmers in Maharashtra and historically the issue of prices and the role of the state (the colonial state) have also been targets of peasant mobilisation. Since in the case of India claims for the 'newness' of the social movements of the 1980s made by/about these movements derive largely from what are perceived to be a combination of novel actions/objectives (the relative unimportance of the land question, the participation of woman, antagonism towards the state, higher prices for agricultural produce) none of which it seems are actually new, this particular point is of considerable importance.

#### **10.4 THE CLASS COMPOSITION OF THE NEW FARMERS' MOVEMENTS**

Another area of interest concerns the social composition of the new farmers' movements in India, an issue which raises a number of important and complex questions. For example, what kind of following, and why, do these new movements have? Is there any regional specificity to this, or do the movements in Maharashtra, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh all draw on the same kind of support? How was this support categorised in terms of class: are the farmers' movements composed predominantly of rich peasants, or middle peasants, or a combination thereof? And, most importantly, what was the attitude towards and / or the position in these movements of poor peasants and agricultural workers? If the latter did indeed support the objectives of the new farmers' movements,

was this conditional; if so, why, and if not, why not ?

Dhanagare argues that the Shetkari Sanghatana in Maharashtra is a movement led by and reflecting the interests of rich farmers operating holdings of ten acres or more, on which they cultivate cash-crops such as onions, sugarcane, tobacco and cotton. Criticising the view that the farmers' movements in India are mobilisations of independent, petty commodity producing family farms (= middle peasants), he points out that such claims (made by, among others, Lennberg [1988] and Rudolph and Rudolph [1987]) are based on unacceptably broad and socio-economically undifferentiated census categories which conflate small agrarian capitalists and subsistence producers. Omve, by contrast maintains that the same movement draws its main support from the poorer eastern districts of the state, and that Shetkari Sanghatana is composed of petty commodity producers or peasants from whom surplus is extracted by state-based power-holders through exchange relations.

Hence the view (see below) that new farmers' movements in India are conducted in the interests solely of rich peasants or kulaks is strongly disputed by Omvedt, who maintains both that peasant family labour is every bit as much the source of wealth as landless workers, and that the latter would benefit from demands for higher crop prices every bit as much as peasant proprietors. Her argument is that the retention in the agrarian sector of capital accumulated there by the utilisation of unpaid family labour in petty commodity production would lead to higher growth in agriculture and generate non-agricultural labour-intensive village employment. Because they fail to impute a value to family labour, Omvedt argues, calculations effected by government price-fixing institutions such as the Agricultural Prices Commission failed to cover production costs incurred by petty commodity producers.

Like that of Dhanagare, the contributions by Banaji, Assadi and Hasan all maintain that in terms of class composition, the farmers' movements are rich peasant organizations. Basing his argument on accounts of Shetkari Sanghatana conventions over the 1982-85 period, Banaji suggests that the Maharashtrian movement is composed of better off sections of the peasantry. For him, the Shetkari Sanghatana is an example of a rural coalition, or a mass organization led by an agrarian elite. Although the

membership of the KRRS in Karnataka is also composed of rich peasants, Assadi points out that the latter nevertheless do not regard themselves as part of the Indian ruling class, and thus perceive themselves as unrepresented by the Indian state. The contribution by Hasan demonstrates how in western UP the BKU finds support among those agrarian capitalists who are surplus-producing farmers operating more than eight acres. She also shows the important role they have in the production of foodgrains in northern India, a point also made by Lindberg with regard to peasant cultivators belonging to the BKU in both Punjab and UP. There are two crucial effects which follow from this. First, surplus-producing farmers in western UP are especially affected by government procurement schemes designed to provide cheap subsidised food for the less well off—in particular the urban proletariat. Accordingly, these farmers object to what they see as artificially low prices for their output, and consequently demand higher (or ‘remunerative’) prices. And second, the strategic economic importance of their position as food providers to the nation has given these surplus-producers a significant form of leverage over the Indian government.

As already mentioned, Lindberg by contrast sees the new farmers’ movements as basically middle peasant movements engaged in conflict about the terms of trade between agriculture and industry. The leadership is socio-economically and politically heterogeneous, while the activists are drawn from the ranks of educated sons of farmers for whom there are no urban employment opportunities. A slightly different position is held by Gill, who argues that the farmers’ mobilisations in Punjab, Haryana and UP have all attracted heterogeneous support from every peasant stratum. Initially, therefore, both rich and poor peasants benefited from the Green Revolution; however, the decline in crop prices after the mid-1970s, due to the deteriorating terms of trade between agriculture and industry, had a negative impact on the profits of rich peasants and the deficits of poor peasants, and it was this according to Gill that generated the farmers’ movements. Like Lindberg, Gill also points to the fact that the core activists and militants of the farmers’ movements in the Green Revolution belt of northern India have been drawn from farmers’ sons denied urban jobs linked to their educational attainments and, further, that in Punjab such cadres are also drawn from retired military and bureaucratic personnel with

rural backgrounds.

We see the new Farmers movements emerged in 1970's. These growth was not homogenous but it affected many part of India like Maharastra, Gujarat, U.P., Rajasthan, Karnatak, Punjab etc. The newness the movement was there issues and strategies especially the price issues, electricity, universal appeal, environment etc. Thus these movements are having its relvance in contemporary India.

### **10.5 FARMER'S MOVEMENT AT REGIONAL LEVEL : SHETKARI & BKU**

Beginning in the early 1970s the new farmers movements, or farmers' agitations as they have often been called, have become some of the most important non-parliamentary political forces in various states of India. From one state to another farmers have formed organisations to struggle for better economic conditions in an increasingly commoditised agricultural economy. The main target is the state and its intervention in the agrarian economy, supplying many of the inputs and regulating the markets. Farmers demand lower prices on inputs like seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, lower tariffs on electricity and water, lower taxes, and debt relief. Likewise they demand higher prices for their products of grains, cash-crops, vegetables, milk and so on. 'Farming is not remunerative after the coming of the Green Revolution' is their message, and they claim that the calculations of the Agricultural Price Commission (APC) have not reflected the real costs involved. They also hold that terms of trade between industry and agriculture is increasingly developing in favour of industry and against agriculture.

The movements, which started in Tamil Nadu and Punjab in the early 1970s, later spread to Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh (UP) and some regions in neighbouring states. Today the most important movements are the Shetkari Sangathan, in Maharashtra, led by Sharad Joshi, and the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) in Western Uttar Pradesh, lead by Mahendra Singh Tikait. The Punjab BKU, through very much affected by the conflict in the state, is also fairly strong. The movements in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka were very strong in the 1970s and early 1980s, but have now become fairly weak.

The movements have strong charismatic leaders like, for example, Sharad Joshi

and Mahendra Singh Tikait. Though very different in character and style – Joshi is a retired UN official, while Tikait is a Jat peasant and clan leader in Uttar Pradesh—these leaders formulate much of the analysis and take the lead in agitations and other actions. Equally important is the role of intellectuals at various levels, from the academy to the village, who develop the everyday discourse of the movement and defend it against attacks from the outside.

Before the outbreak of communal violence on a large scale in the late 1980s, the peasant unions staged agitations reminiscent of the classic civil disobedience movement. Demonstrations (*dharnas, gheraos*) were truly massive, involving lakhs of peasants and lasting for many days. Roads and railways were blocked (*rasta rokko*), and villages were closed to government officials and politicians (*gavband*). In some states stocks of produce (onions, cotton, tobacco) were withheld from the market, causing steep price rises. The later type of agitation has, for example, been common in Maharashtra under Sharad Joshi's leadership. Moreover, in some states peasants have refused to pay tax arrears and electricity bills, or to pay interest and amortisation on loans from banks and credit cooperatives. Of late (1990-92), however, the unions have refrained from these types of agitation. One reason for this, according to Sharad Joshi, is that the methods used in the 1970s and 1980s have become ineffective as they have been taken over by the communal forces. He says that 'We were prepared to die one by one for our cause, but they are sending thousands to death. Violence dominates the political scene today, and there is less room for our type of confrontation with the state.'

The central message is the simple and powerful slogan formulated by Sharad Joshi : *Bharat against India!* *Bharat* is the indigenous name for India, with positive connotations, while *India* is the westernised name, symbolising exploitation. They stand for the rural and the urban-industrial populations respectively. On this point Joshi has observed (interview, March 1989) : 'The real contradiction is not in the village, not between big peasants and small, not between landowners and landless, but between the agrarian population as a whole and the rest of the society.'

For the supporters of the movements, the velocity of such pronouncements is confirmed on a daily basis in the form of the opulent living standards of the urban middle

classes displayed in or referred to by the media (television, radio and the press). As Mahendra Singh Tikait put it after one of his visits to Delhi : ‘Let’s talk about land reforms when there is a ceiling on urban property-look at those skyscrapers!’

Union and state governments have been strongly affected by the massive political and economic agitations and demonstrations. The most common reaction has been repression by the police and military, and the peasant movements now count their martyrs in hundreds. Since the farmers are too powerful to be crushed in this manner, such policies have also been combined with negotiations and concessions of a temporary duration. There are strong indications that the farmers movements played an important role in the overthrow of the Rajiv Gandhi government in the 1989 general elections. In Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, for example, the BKU worked decisively for the National Front opposition, which won an almost complete victory over the Congress. The National Front government later tried to carry out a new policy, involving the moratorium of debts upto Rs. 10,000 and the preparation of a new agricultural policy, still incomplete when the government fell in early 1991. There are, however, also many other signs that today almost all political parties have been affected by farmers’ agitations, at least on the level of rhetoric. When the new Congress government tried to increase fertiliser prices 40 per cent in July 1991, there was such massive opposition from all political parties that the proposal had to be changed drastically. Similarly, when the same government decided to import wheat in 1992 to keep prices down, it also resulted in countrywide protests by the peasant movements and opposition parties.

How are we to understand these farmers’ movements? Are they related to the so-called ‘new social movements’, which have emerged globally and especially in the Third World over the last two decades? In India the new farmers’ movements have been seen by some observers as part of a new wave of movements, which also includes environmental, women’s and Dalit’s movements. What is the substance of this claim? On a more general level it is important to ask how the new farmers’ movements are related to the agrarian and overall economy.

## 10.6 SHETKARI SANGATHAN IN MAHARASHTRA

This is the story of Maiah, a 40-year-old woman activist, who had worked as a schoolteacher in Western Maharashtra for many years :

We went to Yavatmal district in 1980, and at that time we went there for the landless labourers. We had read about their situation. Even my grandfather was a landlord, and we had seen that the exploitation of the labourers gives nothing to them, and how the landlords squeeze them. We had a sort of communist theory that the landlords are the exploiters.

So we went there to work against farmers and for the cause of the labourers. For two years we were working in about 35 villages on the landless labourers' cause, the minimum wages act and all this. All the farmers were against us, that is, me and my husband, threatening to kill us. They said, "You are the ones that have come and now we have to give extra wages."

While we were doing that work I myself had to buy a small piece of land. It was a great struggle for us just to live in the villages. Whatever extra room there was, was only with the landlords, and they said 'No, no, you don't stay here.' And there was no house to live in, so we decided to buy a small patch of land so that we can build our own hut. I purchased according to the government act and all that. One must have at least three acres, so we purchased near about 5 acres of land.

From whom did I purchase this land? He had 30 acres of land. When I went to his house and saw what he eats and how he sleeps, his mattresses and so on, I realised that he was a very poor man. According to my theory, 30 acres of land, that is, a farmer owning 30 acres of land must be a rich man. But when I really saw, whatever we had read in the books, what I saw on the land was that the people owning 30, 40 or 50 acres of land were hardly living an ordinary life of a clerk or even of a 'chaprassi' in the towns and cities. They had a very low standard of life.

At the same time Sharad Joshi was doing his work in Poona. We happened to come across Sharad Joshi at one of his meetings. That meeting was arranged to discuss—what do you call it—EGS, the Employment Guarantee Scheme; that is, bread for the labourers. Sharad Joshi had come there. We were discussing that 2200 calories is essential, and for that much this much wage is essential. Then Sharad Joshi stood up and said : ‘Are you talking about hens and pigs, that he requires this much. He is a man, he is a person. He has his cultural life, he has his other entertainment needs. Where is the money that you are thinking of?’

Then my husband thought : ‘Here is a man working for the farmers and he is really thinking for the labourers.’ And then we met again with Sharad Joshi and we had quite a discussion with him. We realised that the problem is really with the farmers. That is, the farmers don’t get enough. Whatever information we had about landlords and labourers, we had some confusion in our minds, no clear vision as such. There was some confusion. There is some disturbance. Whatever is written in that communist ideology and the practical things are two different things.

Then we started working with the farmers, started going to them and asking about their problems, and what prices they get for their crops. And we started to work along with Sharad Joshi. My husband was the first person in Yavatmal district to start Sharad Joshi’s work there in 1981.

The Shetkari Sangathana of Maharashtra is a modern type of organisation and movement. The caste composition is very mixed, and it is hard to find any dominant caste in the movement as a whole, since the Sangathana is found in widely different regions of the state. The leadership and cadres are drawn from among many different groups, extending from the political left to the right; groups which were originally mobilised in the late 1960s and now participate in a second round of mobilisation. Among them are found urban intellectuals from the Jaya Prakash Narayanan’s movement, the Lal Nishan Party and so on. Local activists are often farmers’ sons who have studied at

colleges and universities, but have returned to take up farming because they could not find a job in the urban economy.

Shetkari Sangathana has focused its actions on one crop at a time, with the objective of enabling farmers to retain control over a substantial portion of what is harvested. This strategy, which is often thought to have been invented by Sharad Joshi, is in fact an old tactic used by previous peasant movements : it was, for example, used by the cotton farmers of Vidarbha district before Joshi entered the scene. The particular contribution of Sharad Joshi is that he has applied the strategy with great skill to cover a large area, and has managed to make it into a national issue.

Sharad Joshi is the undisputed and charismatic leader. His leadership is not contested, but the organisation is highly fluctuating from a low of almost no activities to a high of massive and strong mobilisation. The movement is highly dependent on its ability to raise a relevant issue and fight it out. At times when there is no agitation, it is as if the organisation does not even exist.

Thus the organisational form is anarchic or 'post-modern' in the sense that, much like new social movements in the West, it builds structures around actions rather than routine organisation. There is no fixed membership, no fixed rules of organisation, or strict tiers between local, intermediate and top levels in the organisation. Anybody who wears the badge, who participates in agitation, goes to gaol and so on, is a member.

Sharad Joshi is a modern leader whose message is as much directed at the evils of the rural social structure as against urban exploitation. Rural society is seen to be backward because of urban bias, which leaves no surplus for the development of agriculture and rural industries. Joshi has developed a whole world-view around this core, which he has elaborated in a number of speeches and writings. His language and ideology is that of economic and cultural reform, with strong reference to previous works in Marathi of social reformers like Jotiba Phule and Ambedkar. It must also be seen against the background of social transformations in Maharashtrian society during the last century, where the caste system has been eroded by Harijan and anti-Brahmin movements, and where gender oppression is less pervasive than in North India. More

recently, this emphasis on cultural reform has taken the form of endorsing anti-Brahmin religious traditions.

At the same times the Shetkari Sangathana is actively involved in furthering a broad-based process of social transformation, of which the massive mobilisation of rural women is perhaps the most interesting and novel feature. Nowhere in India, and rarely in the Third World generally, can one find such a large-scale politicisation of women. The normal pattern of feminist politics is that of urban middle-class women working in small groups, supporting peasant and working class women, but rarely generating any major movement as such. In Maharashtra, by contrast, thousands of women have participated in the farmers' agitations, hundreds have gone to gaol, and tens of thousands have held women's meetings on a grand scale, the first taking place in Chandwad in 1986 with more than 1,50,000 participants. The main demand of the *Shetkar Mahila Aghadi* (women's front of the Shetkari Sangathana) is that women should have equal rights to land and property, and there have been attempts to make farmers transfer a part of their land to their wives. So far this has happened only in a few areas, but the women's front attaches symbolic significance to this process, not least because of the increasing incidence of abandoned wives, and question of support or alimony in cases of divorce. Another important issue taken up by Shetkari Sangathana is violence against women. In these ways the peasant movement has also created a space for women's collective action, although there are extensive discussions between Shetkari Sangathana, the *Samagra Mahila Aghadi* and other women's organisations over the wish of Sharad Joshi to subordinate the women's front to the goals of the farmers' movement. The Shetkari Sangathana also receives support from activists engaged in other social movements, such as the Dalits, the Science forum, health-to-the-people, and green movements.

Shetkari Sangathana is currently one of the most powerful popular groups opposed to the spread of Maharashtra's Shiv Sena in small towns and rural areas. At the moment, however, the communal tide is strong, and there has been a formidable upsurge of these forces recently, which Shetkari Sangathana may not be in a position to stop.

## 10.7 THE BKU IN UTTAR PRADESH

When compared with the Shetkari Sangathana in Maharashtra, the Bharatiya Kisan Union of Uttar Pradesh has a very different origin. The movement is confined to four districts of western UP, and is completely dominated by the Jat caste. While farmers of other castes and religions (including Muslims and Christians) have also joined the movement, it is under the traditional caste leadership that has dominated the region economically and politically for a very long time.

From an interactional and cognitive point of view the most interesting feature of the BKU is its seemingly traditional form and content. The Jat khap organisation (based on clan structure) is the backbone of the movement, with one of the foremost khap leaders, Mahendra Singh Tikait as leader. Some observers claim that it was by using his position in this traditional system that Tikait was able to take over the leadership of the BKU in 1986. Yet the local, district and state units are organised in a modern organisational form which, as is well known, developed in the transition to a capitalist industrial society in the West starting with the clubs in towns and cities). Formal membership, annual fees, rules, and boards with chairmen, secretaries and treasurers, exist at all levels from the village to the state level. Similarly, BKU members sometimes invoke Arya Samaj and argue against excessive dowry gifts occasioned by marriage; the practice of inter-caste village meetings organised by Arya Samaj may also have prepared the ground for collective inter-caste action. In other ways, however, the ideology of the BKU is highly traditional and parochial, invoking Hindu religious symbols and the virtues of traditional rural society. Social reform has little or no relevance in agitations, and women have no role in the BKU except as housewives and servants. ('The women are standing behind us', is what Tikait replies when asked about women's participation in the movement and women's issues). This is also a reflection of the patriarchal gender relations in Jat Society.

The strength of the BKU is very much related to the charismatic leadership of Chaudhari Mahendra Singh Tikait. However, Tikait's dominant position is also a basic weakness : there is a constant conflict below the surface on how to conduct the struggle, what issues to take up, how to relate to political issues and parties and so on. There

are even entrepreneurs who use the networks of the BKU for building alternative organisations for more or less personal gains. One important aspect of the dominance of Tikait is the authoritarian claim to represent not only UP, despite the BKU having a strong presence only in its western parts, but also the whole of India : Tikait is the self-styled All-India President of Bharatiya Kisan Union of India. When he summons an All-India meeting, only district presidents and secretaries from UP turn up; it is nevertheless considered an All-India gathering discontent with Tikait in many movement sub-networks has not so far lead to any serious split within the BKU as such : it is widely believed that the BKU is nothing without Tikait. Thus, his position seems to prevent the emergence of alternative ideologies and strategies within the movement.

Because it is where the temple struggle in Ayodhya is taking place, the rise of Hindu fundamentalism and politics have been particularly strong in UP. In the recent state elections, (May-June 1991) the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was voted into power, which it held up to December 1992. BKU leaders and members stress the non-communal character of the peasant union. Mahendra Singh Tikait also emphasises this point strongly, and it is reported that he very often begins a public meeting by greeting the participants with both a Hindu and a Muslim slogan. In 1991 when asked about their relation to the BJP and the temple issue, Mahendra Singh Tikait answered : ‘We don’t participate in those kind of struggles. It is not an important issue for us. So we are strong and our community is strong, that is all.

A number of interviews with Muslim farmers who are also members of the BKU confirm that the BKU is a multi-communal organisation. These Muslims are not afraid that the temple struggle will split the movement : ‘It will not affect the village situations’ some claimed. They maintain that the BKU has worked for communal harmony.

There are, however, consistent rumours that, in order to get concessions out of an emerging political force, the BKU indirectly supported the BJP in the last elections. Although in my recent fieldwork no leader or supporter was willing to confirm such rumours, Tikait himself answered in the following ambivalent manner :

Election is one thing and BKU is another. We don't ask people to vote either this side or that side. People vote according to their conscience, so they can vote any way they want. However, political leaders like Abdul Akadi, who is a muslim leader, made some wrong deals, as a result of which the votes got divided on communal lines. So the muslims voted for Janata Dal, while others voted for BJP. That is a political issue with which we have nothing to do, so it does not affect BKU.

BKU or not, it is quite clear that a number of those involved in the recent demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya came from those very villages in Western UP where the BKU has a large following.

### **10.8 COMPARISON BETWEEN BKU AND SHETKARI**

As we have argued above it is possible to see both Shetkari Sangathana and the BKU as offsprings of the same structural features of the agrarian transformation after independence. They have mostly appeared as non-political mobilisation, and they have also been treated very similarly by intellectuals, journalists and political parties. Most of these observers and commentators are not very sympathetic, seeing them only as spokesmen of the rich peasants and capitalist farmers. An interactionist and regional analysis as outlined above reveals, however, that the farmers' movements in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh are indeed very different types of mobilisations. What are the reasons for this difference, and what are the implications for the future mobilisation and impact of the farmers' movements in India?

Important reasons for the differences are of course the political and cultural variations to be found between the regions, and the way social transformations have taken place. There is, however, also a very important difference of ecology and political economy. In UP and Punjab (and Haryana) there are very favourable ecological conditions for the application of the green revolution strategy and a stable agricultural growth. The Indian State is very dependent on the food and cash crops produced in these states for feeding the rest of the country. It would seem, therefore, that the supporters of the BKU in UP and Punjab are in a strong bargaining position. They have economic resources

to fall back on, and their production is crucial to the country as a whole. Very little new thinking on agricultural development has been developed in these unions : they simply ask for the best deal since they are fulfilling the objectives of the green revolution. However, so far their struggles have not met with much success.

The situation in Maharashtra is very different. Because of unstable agricultural growth due to poor soils and lack of water, the Green Revolution has not been much of a success in the state. It is easy to imagine, therefore, that Shetkari Sangathana's bargaining position would be much weaker than that of BKU in Punjab and UP. Nevertheless, the struggles in Maharashtra have generally been much more successful in achieving their targets.

The agricultural background in Maharashtra is also reflected in the recent thinking of the Shetkari Sanghatana on issues of alternative agricultural development : small-scale and water saving irrigation schemes, new water sharing systems, new bio-technology, as well as rural industrialisation, all form part of their discussions and demands.

## **10.9 CONCLUSION**

The New Farmers' Movements in India represent a major change in rural social mobilisation, and must be seen as a response to the structural transformation in the agrarian economy brought about in India since independence. These Farmers' Movements have some features in common with other new social movements across the world in the 1970s and 1980s, but it is a similarity in form rather than in content. Farmers' movements are classically within the mould of popular movements, which, like the working class movements, are formed around a basic class contradiction in capitalist society. The new movements, in contrast, address other issues in contemporary capitalist society, such as gender, the environment, and the crisis of community, urban renewal and redemocratisation. As such, they tend to straddle class borders rather than polarise along them. However, as was shown above, there are several possibilities for alliances between the farmers' movements and these new movements.

## 10.10 FURTHER READINGS

Excerpted Brass T. 1995; *New Farmers Movement of India*, Frankcass, U.S.A.

### Ask Yourself

- Q Write a note on New Farmers Movement in India, with reference to BKU and Shetkari movements.

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**11.0 STRUCTURE**

- 11.1 Objectives
- 11.2 Introduction
- 11.3 Importance of Rural Development
- 11.4 Nature and Scope of Rural Development
- 11.5 Objectives of Rural Development
- 11.6 Approaches to Rural Development
- 11.7 Conclusion
- 11.8 Further Readings

**11.1 OBJECTIVES**

The main thrust of the unit is to acquaint you with.

- The idea of rural development
- Utility of rural development
- Approaches of rural development

**11.2 INTRODUCTION**

Rural development involves raising the socio-economic status of the rural population on a sustainable basis through optimum utilization of local resources both natural and human. While external help is necessary, rural development can be achieved only, when the rural people actively participate in the development process.

The essence of development is not in 'providing' but in promoting the rural sector. The rural population should know to sustain itself financially and gain economic independence. Therefore, the stress of rural development should be on self-reliance. Also rural development should result in greater access to the rural population to goods and services.

### **11.3 IMPORTANCE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT :**

The emphasis on Rural development (RD) in most developing countries is understandable. The majority of the population lives in the rural areas. As such their backwardness would be retarding growth in others sectors and in the economy as a whole. The growth of towns and cities (urbanization) will only be possible, if backed by prosperity in rural areas. Rural backwardness is the major cause for falling demand (recession) for most products.

The stress on rural development is also due to many constraints faced by the rural areas, which generally suffer from inadequate infrastructure facilities and technological advancements. The rural areas are not well placed in terms of even minimum needs like safe drinking water, primary health and road transport. The apart the rural population suffers from indigence, ignorance and illiteracy. Their traditional outlook towards development has been preventing them from taking full advantage of the incentives offered by the Government. But with substantial exposure to media, both electronic and print media, the rural sector is moving towards self reliance and economic independence, Also the ownership of land and other assets have been heavily concentrated in the hands of a few. It is precisely for this reason that the benefits of rural development programmes failed to reach the rural population targeted for these benefits to the extent expected.

It is true that the process of economic development involves a shift from agricultural and allied activities to non agricultural activities. It is however, erroneous to believe that the increase in non-agricultural activity should be confined to towns and cities. After all, villages with growing non-agricultural activity will without doubt become towns in course of time. What needs to be done is that non-agricultural activities in the rural areas need to be focused upon and strengthened on priority basis.

The rural areas remain impoverished with remunerative economic activities initiated to be carried out only in towns and cities. Thus, even an essential commodity like soap is being produced in urban area. The argument generally advanced for this is that rural areas lack the basic infrastructure facilities for setting up industrial units. But it is conveniently forgotten that such facilities would be available in rural areas only when these areas become centres of growing economic activity. It is nothing that Gandhi laid stress on village development.

So long rural areas are deprived of minimum facilities there will be rural exodus. Migration of rural people to urban areas has serious implications providing to be of burden on the available resources and facilities in Urban areas. It is estimated that urban population is growing at 4% per year and 2% of the increase in urban population per year is reportedly caused by migration from rural areas.

The administration in the urban areas has been finding it difficult to provide employment to the rural labour force migration to towns and cities. According to Michael Toaro, "Migration in excess of job opportunities is both symptom and a contributing factor to third world under development." The social consequence of rural exodus like growing slums are too serious to be ignored by the urban administration authorities.

Another disturbing trend in the rural sector is that the surpluses generated in the rural areas are being invested in urban areas for various reasons. While the Government has stepped up its investment in rural areas, the rural surpluses are diverted to urban areas. When rural services are heavily subsidized by the Government the rural rich have an obligation to step up their investment in rural areas.

#### **11.4 NATURE AND SCOPE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT :**

Over the year, rural development has emerged as "a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people the rural poor. It involves extending the benefits of development of rural population who seek a livelihood in the rural areas"

Rural development denotes over all development of rural areas with a view to improving the quality of life of rural people. The concept is comprehensive and multi-

dimensional in nature. It encompasses development of agriculture and allied activities, cottage and small scale industries, traditional crafts, socio-economic infrastructure rural manpower and improvement in community services and facilities

Rural development covers, besides agricultural development, a comprehensive set of activities, pertaining to all aspects of rural economy. It confers benefits on a number of classes like cultivators, landless labour and rural artisans.

Agriculture in its broad sense, itself is very vast. It covers activities like horticulture, of irrigation land development, soil and water conservation, animals husbandry, drying, poultry, pig farming, fishery, handloom and other villages industries, social forestry and setting up of agro based industries and forest based industries.

But rural development which is much more than agricultural development ought to take into account the existing local and area wise resources and complementary links among them. There are various classes in rural India and sometimes the relations among them may be conflicting. These conflicts have to be resolved.

Rural development requires a vast infrastructure. Provision of this is no easy task because it has to be undertaken by the Government. Private investment in this area has been meager and continues to be so. But the trend of meager investment in the rural sector is gradually changing in terms of economic sustenance. However evolving and appropriate technology has to simultaneously achieve the twin objectives of raising growth rates and stepping up opportunities of employment. The setting up of appropriate institutions and co-ordinating their activities are crucial to any rural development strategy.

The potential of self reliance in rural areas needs to be exploited in a planned manner. A single approach to rural development would not be effective. In fact, rural development is the product of inter-action between various physical, technological, economic, socio-cultural, institutional and environmental factors. Indeed, the rural sector should experience the required changes so that it can join the mainstream of national development and contribute its share for economic development should not be seen as a package of specific needs but as a transformation of rural life and conditions.

## **11.5 OBJECTIVES OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT :**

Rural development programmes, in the Indian context, have aimed at achieving a number of objectives. These include :

1. Changing the attitude of rural people towards development/transformation of the village community;
2. Promotion of democratic leadership at the grassroots level by setting up local self-governments;
3. Provision of basic needs such as drinking water, health care, better sanitation, housing and employment;
4. Development of both farming and non-farming activities so as to generate gainful employment without adversely affecting the environment;
5. Improving infrastructure facilities in villages, particularly transport and communication facilities; and
6. Ensuring a tension-free life for the rural population by promoting communal harmony any unity, levels of literacy education and cultural activities.

### **Rural development should have the following major objectives :**

- i) Full employment of labour and physical resources,
- ii) Setting up of agro-industrial complexes,
- iii) Laying down minimum standards of productivity of efficiency for those owning or using precious resources,
- iv) Minimum standards of performance by public agencies by making them accountable to the local people, and
- v) Creating scientific temper which implies a changing of the mind and old habits of thought and action.

According to ASCAP (The Economic and Social Commission for Asia, and Pacific) the criterion for rural development involve :

- i) drawing the entire rural labour force into the mainstream of economic activity.
- ii) realizing the creative energies of the rural people,
- iii) checking the drift of the rural population to cities,
- iv) enhancing participation of women and youth in the rural development process,
- v) improving the quality of life through integration between development, and
- vi) the all-round development of the rural population by tapping the abundant manpower.

Rural development involves generating employment opportunities for the rural people active so that they are able to meet their needs and ultimately become major agents of economic progress and social change. A climate has to be created which enables the rural poor to realize their full potentialities to attain a higher quality of life with economic security to sustain themselves. This alone can prevent rural exodus.

#### **11.6 APPROACHES TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT :**

The choice of interventions in planning rural development programmes has shifted from the target sector to the target area and to the target group approach and their combinations as shows in Table 1.

Any pragmatic approach to rural development in the Indian context should concentrate on :

- i) removal of disabilities (lack of necessary skills, absence access in puts, and
- ii) programmes meet to enhance gainful employment opportunities and raise the productivity levels of the rural sector.

(i)	Approach	Emphasis
(ii)	Rural Construction	Village centred movement based on principles of voluntary effort.
(iii)	Target sector	Intensive development of a selected sector or sectors of activity with emphasis on Concentrating in areas of comparative advantage.
(iv)	Target group	Growth with social justice for the weaker sections of population.
(v)	Growth centres	Spatial planning and development.
(vi)	Backward area development	Reduction of regional imbalances in development.
(vii)	Minimum needs	Equalisation of social consumption.
(viii)	Area planning with full employment	Rural development in an area frame with removal of unemployment and poverty an important aim.

**Table 1**

### **Rural development Strategies : Evolution**

#### **Community Development Programme**

India launched the first year plan in 1951. It was rightly thought that planning would not be effective without substantial participation of the people, thus suggesting that planning ought to be a “people’s movement”. Surely development effort cannot be the sole responsibility of the government. The Government may create a climatic conducive to development, but the pace of development depends on the initiative and dynamism exhibited by people who must be equipped with necessary skills and resources to take advantage of and benefit from the government-sponsored programmes.

The National Community Development Programme (NCDP) was launched in 1952, its aim being to bring about the over-all development of the rural community with people’s participation in the development process. The government, on its part, decided to provide technical and other services in a co-ordinated fashion. An institutional structure was provided in the form of panchayati raj, cooperative and village schools. The approach to development

is a holistic one.

### **Intensive Agricultural District Programme :**

As the agricultural yields were very low, the Government thought wise to evolve a new strategy to boost foodgrain output. Whereas CDP is based on equity principal, the intensive agricultural District Programme (IADP), launched in 1960, aimed at concentrating resources in agriculturally better placed areas.

The essence of IADP strategy has been to attain foodgrain self-sufficiency in the shortest period possible, calling investment of substantial in favourable are with maximum irrigation facilities and minimum natural harzards, providing simultaneously all the requisite essential inputs and service was needed. Thus, a package approach to steep up agricultural production was evolved.

Seven districts were selected initially for IADP. These were : Thanjavur (Tamil Nadu), West Godavari (Andhra Pradesh), Shahabad (Bihar), Raipur (Madhya Pradesh), Aligarh (Uttar Pradesh), Ludhiana (Punjab) and Pali (Rajasthan). The Government of India declared these seven as IADP districts in June 1960, and suggested that one district in each state may be selected for IADP.

For the successful implementation of the IADP, the appropriate infrastructure was made available at the national, state and district levels. At the block level, the staff responsible for implementing the CDP was strengthened with additional staff. The subject-matter specialists provided technical assistance and training to the block level staff.

Credit must be given to the efficiency of IADP that it has achieved its major objectives. It has created new dynamism in the farming community, popularized the HYV programme, greatly enhance the technical inputs at the district level and also contributed to the growth of marketing and storage facilities as well as supporting services.

However, the IADP strategy faced many problems. The administration at the district level failed to generate benefits for the rural sector because of inadequate staff and inadequate training. Crucial inputs like fertilizers, co-operative credit and supporting services were not given to the rural population for becoming self reliant. A unified responsibility at the district level with full control over all inter-related disciplines was absent.

### **Growth Centre Strategy :**

It is argued that if investment activities are intensified in select areas of a region, they will produce sufficient 'spread effect' leading to all-round development of the region. A leading industry exerts its influence on the economy through inter industrial linkage, itself playing a leading and innovative role through backward and forward linkage. When once inter-industry linkage are well established, the process of development becomes smooth.

The concept of 'growth pole' was first introduced by Perroux in 1955 is based on one simple truth: human activities must cluster together to generate internal and external economies. This may, however involve some social, costs which can be minimized in the due course through policy intervention.

The village is neither a homogeneous unit nor is it necessarily a viable unit. In order to avoid wastage of resources, Prof. V.K.R.V. Rao has suggested formation of clusters of villages implying that, it is necessary to determine the minimum size of rural settlements. Regrouping of a small cluster of census village with a central village or a small town as its focus point and with functional inter-linkage should be the idea unit/area for planning.

After the formation of cluster of villages, it is necessary to identify the dynamic clusters among them and locate the growth foric within them. These growth foci have to be interlinded with one another in such a way that hierarchy is established with service centres as the local level, growth points at the subregional level., growth centers at the regional level and growth pole at the national level. Obviously, the focus should be on those clusters which have the largest development potential.

In India, in the Fourth Five Year Plan (1969074) a pilot research project for growth centers was launched, establishing 20 centres in various states. Each growth centre consisted of about 20 blocks (two million population). An attempt was made to intensify location - specific activities.

The Draft-Five-Year Plan (1978-83 suggested setting up of rural growth centers. The selection of such centers is to be based on availability of infrastructure including co-operative institution, presence of progressive farmers and effective local participation.

Walter Stohar has observed that ‘growth centers have essentially led to shift of disparities from the inter-regional to the intra-regional level, but rarely seem to have led to an over-all-reduction of spatial disparities in living level’.

The policy of growth centers in India is concerned more with development of areas rather than with their rates of growth, development of areas rather than with their rates of growth, development situations and is too rigidly linked to industrialization.

In the Indian context, two approaches have emerged towards integration of spatial units, namely, villages. These are : (i) the growth centre approach as developed by Gadgil and Sen, and (ii) the village cluster approach as developed by V.K.R.V. Rao and V.M. Rao, the former suggested a vertical integration between the hierarchy of human settlement i.e, villages and towns. It is assumed that such a link up will transmit to the lower point in the hierarchy growth impulses from the top growth centers. The latter, on the other hand advocates a horizontal linkup among the villages themselves so that they support each other functionally so as to make the cluster of villages an economically viable unit. Of course, both approaches stress on linkage, backward for forward.

### **Concept of “Integration” :**

It has been realized that development should be an integrated one. This is possible when sectorial development programme, human resources development programme, social welfare schemes and infrastructure development programmes “are brought within the framework of a prospective plant of implementation, and efficiency and viability, (ii) sectorial balance, to be achieved through national and state priorities, local relevance, economic efficiency and internal continence, and (iii) the operational balance which can be achieved through organization, delegation of functions management procedures and personal systems.

The most important single reason for laxity in the performance of various rural development programmes has been the negligence of inter-sectorial linked ages and lack of co-ordination among various functionaries. For instance, when programmes for agricultural development are planned, an assessment of the backward linkages which include supply of seed, fertilizers and pesticides, agricultural implements, water,

drought animals, power, storage and credit facilities grain priority. The forward linkages include supply of raw material, fodder and provision of storage, transport, marketing and agricultural processing facilities.

Spatial integration refers to “spatial planning” which in turn, implies appropriate location of social and economic activities over a physical space for the development of a region. Proper spatial planning is necessary to provide adequate inputs and infrastructure and scarce, they have to be put to the optimum use. A uniform spatial planning may not be appropriate to all regions, in a country like India, because of their diverse nature. However, appropriate methodologies for spatial planning have been evolved through identification of central places (growth centres, service centres and central village).

There is need for integrating objectives, namely more production, more employment and more equitable distribution of income. A particular growth model may be successful in stepping up growth rates, but very often it fails to solve the more important problem of poverty eliminating and unemployment. While a high rate of growth is no doubt welcome in the Indian context, how it has been achieved is also important. In other words, the economic and social costs of development cannot be ignored, particularly in a country suffering from inequalities in income and wealth and regional disparities in development. Hence, the increasing stress on rural development and local level planning.

The concept of integration is also viewed as integration of low income segments with the rest of rural community by ensuring them a better participation in the production process and a more equitable share in the benefits of development.

## **11.7 CONCLUSION**

Over the years, rural development has emerged as a strategy designed to improve the quality of life of rural people. India has gained a vast experience in the implementation of rural development programme. It has also evolved various strategies and approaches to rural development like rural reconstruction, community development target sector, growth centers etc.

### **11.8 FURTHER READINGS :**

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2. R. P. Misra. K. V. Sundaram and V. L. S. Prakasa Rao (1976) : Regional development planning in India, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, pp. 143-144.
3. Vasant Deasi 1988; rural development, Himalaya Publishing House, Bombay  
Sundaram, Sai, 1997: Rural developments, Himalayan publishing house; Bombay.

### **Ask Yourself**

- Q Explain the nature and scope of Rural development?
- Q Write the importance of Rural development and give its objectives.
- Q What are the different approaches of Rural development?

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**Strategies, Planning & Implementation of Rural Development**

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**12.0 STRUCTURE**

- 12.1 Objectives
- 12.2 Introduction
- 12.3 Rural Development Schemes : A Review
- 12.4 Strategies of Rural Development
- 12.5 Conclusion
- 12.6 Further Readings

**12.1 OBJECTIVES :**

The main trust of the unit is to acquire you with the

- Idea of Rural Development
- Different Development Programme
- Implementation of land reforms
- Rural Development Strategies

**12.2 INTRODUCTION :**

Rural development may simply be understood as a trinity of economic growth, judicious distribution of benefits and accessibility to improvement opportunities to fulfill the needs and aspiration of the rural inhabitants.

**12.3 RURAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME : A REVIEW :**

Agricultural and rural development have been accorded a high priority in India's five

year plans. The first Plan was dominated by the Community Development programme (CDP), which reflected India's over-riding concern with nation building and equity. The Second Plan accorded a high priority to the development of heavy industries and consequently under the constraint of limited resources, food production suffered. By the middle of the Second Plan, it became increasingly evident that whatever the success of the CDP, a new approach would be required if agricultural production was to stay ahead of the demands of India's mounting population. In 1957-58, India faced its first post-Independence food crisis. In response to this crisis, and on the basis of the recommendations of the Ford Foundation-sponsored Team of American Agricultural Production Specialists, a new programme called the Intensive Agriculture District Programme (IADP), or Package Programme, was formulated and launched in seven selected districts in the country in 1960-61, and was later extended to eight more districts.

The IADP represented a significant departure from the CDP, in that it employed the concentration principle in deploying resources, as opposed to the equity criterion of the CDP. Its main objective was to achieve rapid increase in (package approach) at the farm level. Farm planning formed the core of IADP. By 1966, the basic concept of concentration and effective use and better management of resources had gained national acceptance, and a number of new Agricultural Area Programme (AAP), the High Yielding Varieties Programme (HYVP), and the Intensive Cattle Development Programme (ICDP), had been patterned like the IADP. All these programmes were growth oriented; they did not address themselves to equity issues. They demonstrated, on one hand, the effectiveness of the concentration principle in achieving rapid increases in food production, and on the other, the rural poverty and income inequality. The most important lesson learned from the experience with these programmes was that a rising economic growth rate was no guarantee against worsening poverty, and that a direct frontal attack on the basic problems of poverty and unemployment was called for.

The failure of the growth oriented strategies of the sixties to make any marked impact on the problem of poverty led to a re-examination of these strategies. As a consequence, special programmes like the small farmer development agency, Marginal farmers and Agricultural labourers Scheme, Drought Prone Area Programme and Tribal Area Development Programme for the "weaker sections" and "economically depressed area" were introduced in the seventies. These programmes were aimed at tackling the problems

of poverty and backwardness directly by helping the weaker sections to increase their incomes through self-employment and wage-paid employment. To supplement the income-increasing effect of these programmes, a programme to provide civic amenities and community facilities was launched in the Fifth Plan. This programme was known as the Minimum Needs Programme (MNP). In 1978-79, the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was launched in 2300 selected community development blocks in the country, and from 2nd October 1980 it was extended to all the block in the country. It is the single largest anti-poverty programme currently under way in the country. The major premise of the special programmes launched in the seventies was that their benefits would flow to the weaker sections and backward areas, because of the specificity of the target groups and target areas.

#### **12.4 STRATEGIES OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT :**

A review of various rural development programmes and policies followed in India after Independence reveal four strategies of development.

##### **Growth Oriented Strategy :**

This is based on the philosophy that rural people, like any other people, are rational decision makers, who when given adequate opportunity and a proper environment will try to maximize their incomes. The role of the state in this strategy is to build infrastructure , and maintain a favorable climate so that the benefits of increased production will gradually “trickle down” to the poor. The regulation and coordination of the activities of private and public agencies is primarily through market mechanisms. This paradigm formed the basis of the predominant agricultural development strategy of the 1960’s, when programmes like the Intensive Agriculture District Programme (IADP), the Intensive Cattle Development Programme (ICDP) the high Yielding varieties Programme (HYVP), were launched. But this paradigm failed to make any dent on the basic problem of poverty, unemployment and inequality, and had to be abandoned.

##### **Welfare Oriented Strategy :**

This seeks to promote the well-being of the rural population in general, and the rural poor in particular, through large - scale social programmes like the Minimum Needs Programme, Applied Nutrition Programme. Mid - Day Meals Programme, etc. The primary means used in this strategy are free provision/ distribution of goods, services and civic

amenities in rural areas.

The critical assumptions of this strategy is that people are not competent to identify and resolve their problems, and that government specialists can identify their needs and meet them with the financial and administrative resources available with the government. The role of villagers in that of passive receptors of services. This strategy has a paternalistic orientation. The performance of the programmes is judged by the quantity of goods, service, and civic amenities delivered. The welfare oriented programmes present a mixed picture; the rural poor have benefited significantly through some programmes in a few areas, but not in others. There are two major criticisms of this strategy, namely, (a) it has created dependence; and (b) it requires resources that are beyond that means of governments.

### **Responsive Strategy :**

This is aimed at helping rural people i.e. help themselves through their own organizations and other support systems. Its concern is with responding to the felt needs of the rural people, as defined by them. The role of the government is to facilitate the self-help efforts of villagers by providing technologies and resources that are not locally available. The critical assumption of this strategy is that the rural poor will identify and resolve their problems if provided with minimal support, and otherwise left to their own devices and initiatives. Community participation in, and control of, projects activities is the primary performance indicator of this strategy. India's operation Flood, which was launched in 1970 in '8 milk sheds in 10m states, is a good example of this strategy. Operation Flood aimed at modernising and developing India's diary industry through a three-tier structure of Anand pattern diary cooperatives. Many voluntary agencies are also following this paradigm of development.

### **Integrated or Holistic Strategy :**

This combines all the positive features of the earlier three strategies, and is designed to simultaneously achieve the goals of growth, welfare, equity and community participation. This paradigm takes a very comprehensive but integrated view of the basic problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality, and seeks to address the physical, economic, technological social, motivational, organizational and political bases of these problems.

The multiple goals of this strategy are sought to be achieved by building the capacity of the community to involve itself in development in partnership with the government. The critical assumption underlying this approach is that the government can restructure social power relationships, and centralized bureaucracies can learn to share power with community

groups. Successful implementation of this strategy requires complex decentralized matrix structures, with permanent mechanisms for vertical and lateral integration, a combination of specialist and generalist skills, institutional leadership, social intervention capability and systems management. The anti-poverty programmes launched in India in the 1970s, particularly the Integrated Rural Development Programme, National Rural Employment Programme, and Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment were intended to follow this paradigm. But given the existing organizational structure, which does not have many of the pre-requisites discussed earlier for the successful implementation of this strategy, there is very little hope that this paradigm would yield the desired results.

## **12.5 CONCLUSION :**

India has a very long history of government intervention in the rural sector, with a view to improve the socio-economic condition of rural people, especially the poor. However, there is no comprehensive integrated national policy for agriculture and rural development yet declared and adopted by the government. What exists now are an assortment of a few subsectorial policies, such as land reforms policy, a national water policy, national forest policy, and a host of agricultural and rural development programmes. In many cases, the objectives of one programme conflict with those of other, and there is no institutional mechanism for reconciling them. Consequently, many programmes not only fail to produce the intended benefits, needed in a long term comprehensive integrated national policy which clearly charts the further course of agricultural and rural development in the country in the twenty-first century. This is all more necessary in the wake of the new economic policy characterized by the liberalization, privatization and globalization of India's economy. To do this successfully, we need to build up and strengthen the expertise in the area of public policy may also be established in reputed institutes/universities.

## **12.6 FURTHER READINGS :**

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### **Ask Yourself**

Q Write a note on strategies of Rural Development ?

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**Understanding Social Inclusion in Rural Development Unit-III**

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**13.0 STRUCTURE**

13.1 Objectives

13.2 Introduction

13.3 Social Change in Rural Society

13.4 Subsidence to Market Economy

13.5 Rural Society & Technology

13.6 Emergence of Various Associations & Institutions

13.7 Contemporary Rural Cultural Changes

13.8 Conclusion

13.9 Further Readings

**13.1 OBJECTIVES:-**

The main thrust of the unit is to make your aware about

- Features of rural society
- Dimensions of rural society
- Rural society in Transition

**13.2 INTRODUCTION:-**

Rural society is not static. It has been changing fast. The changes have been more rapid during the last four decades. It is quite interesting to mention that not only in India but

in almost all the Third World countries, much amount has been spent on rural development. It has been stressed by economists and sociologists that key to our development lies with the development of rural people. International agencies have provided focus on the economic development of the rural society. Various aspects of rural life, namely, education, industry, cooperatives and entrepreneurship are stressed by national government. It is agreed that the targeted goals of village development have not been achieved, but the fact remains that much awakening has come among the village people. Perhaps, the objective development of village people is debatable, but subjective development has definitely come to the people. Much of the rural development may not be through the directed planned change but the village people and surely the elites and the middle classes have been marching well on the road to development.

### **13.3 SOCIAL CHANGE IN RURAL SOCIETY:-**

The basic question is: What is the direction of social change in rural society? A.R. Desai has tried to identify some of the trends of rural transformation resulting from development programmes. He identifies four major trends of rural social change:

- (1) rapid transformation of agrarian society from subsistence economy to market economy;
- (2) rapid transformation followed by the introduction of modern technology;
- (3) abolition of intermediaries such as zamindar and bisweddar; and
- (4) emergence of various associations and institutions having linkages with urban and national organizations.

Notwithstanding, the criticism of the development attained by rural society, it must be admitted that there has been a definite change in rural society. There are some higher strata in the society which have benefited the most out of the development investment. This benefit has deprived the poorer sections of rural society. Surely, on the basis of social justice, this kind of one-sided development cannot be in the interest of the formation of a democratic society. But the fact remains that the villages as a whole have developed. It is also interesting to know that a new class society has emerged in rural India. This class society consists of big farmers, elites of weaker sections and political leaders. In fact, the rural society has swung in favour of the well-to-do classes of rural people. There has also emerged a new kind of leadership which is characterized

by an ideology very much influenced by the superiority of higher caste culture. The basic institutions of the village life have undergone tremendous changes.

Now let us discuss the institutional and organisational changes which have come in the Indian rural society.

#### **13.4 SUBSISTENCE TO MARKET ECONOMY:-**

Throughout the periods of history the village economy has been a subsistence economy. It is because of this that we characterise the rural society as an agrarian society. Opposite to it is the industrial and urban society. As a result of the development programmes and the consequent emergence of infrastructures of technology, education, transport, media, the village economy has moved towards diversified economy.

Even when the villages survived under subsistence economy, there was some role of market. Despite the village being self-sufficient in the fulfillment of their needs the village people depends on weekly or occasional markets. These markets give interrelationship between the clusters of villages. The weekly markets provided place for limited exchange of goods and services. Though the production in the field was meant for the consumption of family only, a part of produce was brought to the weekly markets. People living in hills and forests, specially the tribal people, climbed down to plains in the weekly markets to exchange their goods. This kind of market was quite rudimentary and primary in its functions.

With the coming of modernisation in India, say from the British rule, there came a new kind of capitalistic economy in agriculture. Land became a property. Commercial crops gave rise to market economy. It means that the villagers now produce not only for their own consumption but a part of it for market too. This was initial stage for the development of market. Recently, the market has become an important mechanism for linking the village to the capitalist mainstream of the country. There has been a systematic expansion of market. It has now reached to the doorstep of the village.

The both pastes and for the matter of beverages of all kinds have made their entry in the village life. The eggs and milk of a simple remote village have reached the metropolitan market. This is by a means an ordinary change. The expansion of market has various explanations. In the similar way there is hierarchy of markets. All markets are not uniform. There are markets for the class, there are also markets for the disadvantaged people. With the expansion and hierarchy of market, the fact remains that market has played a key note

in the expansion of rural society.

### **13.5 RURAL SOCIETY AND TECHNOLOGY:-**

The Indian agrarian society for longer periods of history cultivated its fields in a primordial way. It carried out its agricultural operations through indigenous breed of bullocks, plough and leveler. Such a method of cultivation, coupled with organic fertiliser, did not give any surplus to be taken to the market. Such a state of agriculture got a revolution by technological innovations. These innovations on the one hand saved much of manual labour and on the other increased the productivity. Technology, thus has proved to be a multiplier. Some of the major impacts of technology are given below:

#### **(1) Improved Implements**

Since the introduction of Community Development Projects in 1952, the development programmes introduced new technological inputs in the villages with the objective of giving self-sufficiency to the peasants. Improved variety of plough, cattle, along with an appropriate technology, have been introduced to the peasants. The tractor, lorry, thresher and a large number of techniques have been given to the village people. There are some parts of our country such as Punjab, Maharashtra and Gujarat where the use of bullocks has become oblivious. Bullock-cart has also become outdated. All this clearly shows the role played by new technology.

#### **(2) New Agricultural Inputs**

The Five Year Plans throughout their history of implementation have given many new agricultural inputs. The electric or diesel oil-run water pumps have revolutionised the old pattern of irrigation. The construction of dams - major and minor - has also added great facilities of irrigation. The chemical manure and insecticides have added much to the farm produce. Much of our food deficiency has been covered by the agricultural growth. The green revolution is the result of this new input.

#### **(3) Improved Cattle**

India despite its being an agrarian society suffered from scarcity of milk. But the supply of improved cattle has revolutionised the dairy produce. India is now at the stage of white revolution. The production of milk has give rise to a large number of by-products which have assumed importance of export.

### **Abolition of Intermediaries:-**

The system of intermediaries in the forms of *jamindars* and *jagirdars* which was abolished by the middle of 1950s in parts of India where there was feudal rule, a structural change has been observed. The breakdown of the feudal order brought a large number of changes in rural society. K. L. Sharma, in his study of rural Rajasthan where there was feudalism, brings out two major changes in the rural society: proletarianisation and bourgeoisification. By the process of proletarianisation, the jagirdar and his kin people took to cultivation and menial works as a result of the withdrawal of power. Actually, the abolition of jagirdari system obliged the landlords and their tenants to take to the status of a proletariat. Thus, in different states of India, such as Rajasthan, Punjab, Gujarat and Karnataka where there were princely states, there came a structural change in rural society.

### **13.6 EMERGENCE OF VARIOUS ASSOCIATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS:-**

The emergence of new associations and institutions in the rural society also marks a watershed in the process of transformation from pre-independence to post-independence, the later characterised by planned development. Among the institutions are caste and class which assumed new definitions and formations in rural society. We shall discuss some of the major changes which are observed in caste and class.

#### **(1) Caste**

Sociology has enough research material which indicates changes that have come in rural caste system. We shall restrain ourselves only to changes which are observed in rural caste system. Some of the changes are as below:

- (i) It is observed that caste barriers to economic mobility have slowly given way to secular occupations. The village traditional occupations, such as that of oil pressures (Teli), weavers (Julaha), have now observed mobility. All kinds of occupations have been taken over by the village people notwithstanding their caste and religion. The occupational changes, therefore, have a revolutionary content.
- (ii) There has been clear-cut drift of rural population towards cities and towns. People are migrating to cities because of several reasons. Burden on land has increased. People have got some education which can provide them new employment opportunities in cities and towns. And, then, there is a fascination to live in a city for the rural people. Urban life also makes available facilities of different kinds such as health and education.

- (iii) Though caste has taken new functions in rural society, it continues to remain a mark of identity among the village people.
- (iv) Surely, the caste as a system is weakening in rural life; it has assumed new political dimensions. Actually, from several considerations because of the caste system, rural stratification is closed rather than open. There has been some correspondence between caste and landholding. For instance, the Rajputs and the Jats possess larger portions of land compared to intermediate and lower castes.
- (v) One very structural change which has come in the rural society is the empowerment of the women and formation of Panchayati Raj. Panchayati Raj is an effort to develop the village through the decisions made by the people themselves. There is a decentralisation of power in the formation of Panchayati Raj. This formation has substantially weakened the traditional caste associations. Though the caste associations have taken over matters related to marriage, succession and family matters, the ultimate authority to be approached is the court of law.

## **(2) Class**

Sociologists are recently talking about caste-class nexus. The argument that the caste is changing into class, is a misconception. Caste and class are not dichotomies. There is a nexus between the two. The caste is both a cultural structure and an economic organization also. In rural society, both these variations of caste and class are observable.

One very significant feature of class formation in the rural society is the emergence of new classes. The planned development has given green revolution and white revolution. These two revolutions have resulted in class polarisation in rural society. As a result of planned development and reservation of seats for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, a new class from these sections has emerged. Now, there are classes in scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. These classes are integrated into the classes belonging to higher castes and thus the whole rural society is polarized into two categories of classes: (1) classes emerging out of the higher caste who have benefited from rural development programmes, and (2) classes belonging to weaker sections who have cornered a larger portion of the benefits from the programmes of rural development.

### **(3) Associations and Organisations**

The rural primordial associations and institutions have now given way to new associations and institutions such as cooperatives, educational societies, religions and political parties. Besides, a new crop of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has also spread its network in the rural society. There are also peasant organizations of various ideological orientations. Though these peasant organizations claim to be non-political they have some implicit alliance with some political party. These organizations advocate programmes of rural social change.

#### **13.7 CONTEMPORARY RURAL CULTURAL CHANGE:-**

People of India (POI), a giant effort made by the Anthropological Survey of India, identifies 91 cultural regions within India. The project informs that each state has plural cultural regions. At the regional level, there is regional self-consciousness or identity of castes, tribes and minorities or other regional groups. This kind of regional or village self-consciousness is increasing but happily this regional consciousness also results in the growth of a holistic consciousness. As a result of the two kinds of cultural consciousness, the village society has assumed a particular cultural identity. On the plane of cultural changes some of the characteristics of the emerging rural society are given below:

- (1) It must be admitted that across the nation, the life-style and leisure time activities of the people have changed. It includes modes of consumption, style of dress, uses of synthetic material or artifacts, modes of transport and the weakening of the traditional interdictions about the consumption of meat, poultry etc. The consumption of fruits, vegetables and milk products now has a much wider base. The green revolution that took place in the 1970s is now supplemented by a white revolution.
- (2) Yogendra Singh argues that in the contemporary social change that India witnesses, there is profound significance of culture. He argues that the higher consumption level which is being attained by the rural people, indicates that despite being quite traditional, the rural society has taken to new cultural ways of life. He writes:

The past orientalist pronouncement, that Indian cultural being other worldly and fractured by segmentary divisions into caste, tribe, etc., would not only help or rather hinder the growth of a modern economy and democratic polity, has been proved erroneous. Castes,

tribes, family institutions and religions as illustrated by sociological studies, have richly contributed to the growth in agricultural and industrial entrepreneurship, and modern systems of profession, education, technology and science.

### **13.8 CONCLUSION**

We find that the previous perception of village community is isolated and with the advancement of time the rural society is changing into rise of commercialization of agriculture, improved technology, classness, scientific outlook, rationality and others. All this has led to change in life style and life chance of rural people towards betterment.

### **13.9 FURTHER READINGS:-**

Desai, A.R; 1969 Rural sociology in India, popular, Prakshan, Bombay

Doshi & Jain, 1999. Rural sociology Rawat Publication Jaipur.

#### **Ask Yourself**

- Q Rural society is not static but changing comment.
- Q Explain the role of technology in social change in rural society.

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## 14.0 STRUCTURE

- 14.1 Objectives
- 14.2 Introduction
- 14.3 Meaning and Objective of CDP
- 14.4 Coverage of CDP
- 14.5 Activities of CDP
- 14.6 Organization of CDP
- 14.7 Financing of and Assistance of CDP
- 14.8 Evaluation of CDP
- 14.9 Conclusion
- 14.10 Further Readings

## 14.1 OBJECTIVES

The main thrust of the unit is to acquaints you with:-

- Idea of CDP
- Objectives of CDP
- Organization of CDP and its financing.
- Evaluation of CDP

## 14.2 INTRODUCTION:-

India has a very long history of experimenting with various approaches to rural development. Even in the pre-independence era, a number of rural reconstruction experiments were initiated by nationalist thinkers and social reformers. Well-known among them were the Gurgaon Experiment of F. L. Brayne (1920), the Marthandam Experiment of Spencer Hatch (1921), the Sriniketan Experiment of poet Rabindra Nath Tagore (in the 1920s), the Sewagram Experiment of Mahatma Gandhi (1933), the Firka Development Scheme (1946), and the Etawah Pilot Project of Albert Mayer (1948). Besides these experiments by social reformers and missionaries, various departments of the government - agriculture, cooperative, irrigation, health, education-also tried in their own way to resolve rural problems failing within their respective jurisdictions.

The Grow More Food Campaign (GMFC) was India's first organised efforts to increase food production. Although the campaign was launched in 1943 in the wake of the Bengal famine, it did not make much head way until 1947. The campaign had a two-pronged approach. First, to bring idle but potentially productive land under the plough, and second, to stimulate cultivator interest in increasing crop yield per hectare. In 1948, the GMFC was reviewed by the Thakurdass Committee, and following its recommendations, the campaign was reoriented in 1950-51. In the following year, the GMFC became a part of the First Plan. In 1952, the Government of India appointed the Grow More Food Inquiry Committee under the chairmanship of Sir V.T. Krishnamachari to evaluate the campaign. The committee found, *inter alia*, that (a) all aspects of village life are interrelated, and no lasting results can be achieved if individual aspects of it were dealt with in isolation; and (b) the movement touched only a fringe of the population, and did not arouse widespread enthusiasm, or become in any sense a national programme. The committee also made a number of recommendations regarding the future policy of the GMFC. One of the recommendations was that an extension agency should be set up for rural work, which would reach every farmer and assist in the coordinated development of rural life. It was out of this background and experience that India's Community Development Programme (CDP) was born.

The following basic premises were fundamental in India's decision to create the National Community Development Programme in 1952 (Ensminger 1968: 3):

1. The overall development of the rural community can be brought about only with effective participation of the people, backed by the coordination of technical and other services necessary for securing the best from such initiative and self-help. It was to provide the necessary institutional structure and services that early attention was given to the development of basic democratic village institutions especially panchayati raj. Cooperatives and village schools
2. The problems of rural development have to be viewed from a holistic perspective, and the efforts to solve them have to be multifaceted.

One of the important initial moving forces in community development was Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru's interest in the programme. Nehru felt that one of India's most important undeveloped resources was the people, living in its some six hundred thousand villages. Nehru saw in community development the way to involve the village people in building a new India. He visualised that through their involvement in self-help oriented programmes, would come the development of the people and people's institutions - both essential ingredients in moving India towards one of its most clearly stated objectives, that of developing into a viable democracy.

### **14.3 MEANING AND OBJECTIVE OF CDP**

Community development may be defined as a process by which the efforts of the people themselves are combined with those of government authorities, to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation, and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress.

The central objective of the CDP was to secure the total development of the material and human resources of rural areas, and to develop local leadership and self-governing institutions. The basis idea was to raise the levels of living of rural people through a number of programmes. This objective was to be attained by bringing about a rapid increase in food and agricultural production by strengthening programmes of resource development, such as minor irrigation and soil conservation, by improving the effectiveness of farm inputs supply systems, and by providing agricultural extension services to farmers.

The draft outline of the programme, which received the sanction of the Government of India, stated at the beginning that:

The Purpose of the Community Projects shall be to serve as a pilot in the establishment, for men, women and children covered by the project areas, of the 'Right to Live'; food - the principal item in the wherewithals for this purpose - receiving the primary emphasis in the initial stages of the programme (quoted in Ensminger 1972; 4).

#### **14.4 COVERAGE OF CDP:-**

The CDP was formally inaugurated on 2 October 1952. It was intended to be the first step in a programme of intensive development, which was expected over a period of time to cover the entire country. Initially, the CDP was launched in 55 project areas located in different parts of the country. Another 110 areas had necessarily to be added to the original 55 in the course of six months. Demands for the expansion of the CDP form members in the state legislatures and from members of parliament continued skyrocketing. It was difficult to resist the mounting political pressure to expand the programme.

A new, somewhat less ambitious scheme, called the National Extension Service (NES) was evolved and launched in 1953, whereas in the CDP, intensive development was taken up in all fields, the NES scheme was designed to provide the essential basic staff and a small amount of funds, with which the people could start the development work, essentially on the basis of self-help. The NES blocks were subsequently converted into CDP blocks. The pattern of the CDP was further revised with effect from 1 April 1958. According to this pattern, the CDP blocks had a life of 10 years, consisting of Stages I and II of equal duration, the budget provision in Stage I being higher. Besides, a one-year pre-extension phase preceding Stage I, with attention exclusively devoted to agricultural development, was introduced from 1 April 1969, the CDP was transferred to the state sector.

Originally, each of the 55 project areas was to embrace approximately 300 villages, with a population of about 200,000 people, and cover a cultivated area of approximately 150,000 acres. A project area was to be divided into three development blocks, each comprising about 100 villages and a population of about 65,000 people. In areas where a full project was not considered feasible, one or two development blocks were started to begin with. The 55 projects were to include approximately 16,500 villages, and over a crore of people.

However, as mentioned earlier, the CDP had to be expanded phenomenally under political pressure, and soon it became a national programme encompassing 400 million rural people across the four corners of the country. Indeed, while America took 50 years, despite its enormous resources, to establish a rural extension programme covering 7 per cent of its rural population, India was obliged under political pressure to set a target to cover the whole country with the NES programme in eight years, and the more extensive CDP in 12 years. Both the programme as well as the inputs had necessarily to be diluted under this abnormal rate of expansion. The CDP now covers all the rural areas in the country.

#### **14.5 ACTIVITIES OF CDP**

The following rural community development activities are undertaken in such varying degrees (within the limits of the available funds), as are advisable under the circumstances peculiar to each block (Ensminger 1972; 105-07):

##### **Agricultural and Related Matters**

1. Reclamation of available virgin and waste land.
2. Provision of water for agriculture through irrigation canals, tube-wells, surface wells, tanks, lift irrigation from rivers, lakes and pools, etc.
3. Development of rural electrification.
4. Provision of commercial fertilizers.
5. Provision of quality seeds.
6. Promotion of improved agricultural techniques and land utilisation.
7. Provision of veterinary aid.
8. Provision of technical information, materials and bulletins on agriculture.
9. Provision for the dissemination of information through slides, films, radio broadcasts and lectures.

10. Provision of improved agricultural implements.
11. Promotion of marketing and credit facilities.
12. Provision of breeding centres of animal husbandry.
13. Development of inland fisheries.
14. Promotion of home economics.
15. Development of fruit and vegetable cultivation.
16. Provision of soil surveys and information.
17. Encouragement of the use of natural and composit manures.
18. Provision of arboriculture, including plantation of forests.

### **Communications**

1. Provision of roads.
2. Encouragement of mechanical road transport services.
3. Development of animal transport facilities.

### **Education**

1. Provision of compulsory and free education, preferably basic education, at the elementary stage.
2. Provision of high and middle schools.
3. Provision of adult education and library services.

### **Health**

1. Provision of sanitation (including drainage and disposal of wastes) and public health measures.
2. Provision for the control of malaria and other diseases.
3. Provision of improved drinking water supplies.

4. Provision of medical aid for the ailing.
5. Antenatal care of expectant mothers and midwifery services.
6. Provision of generalised public health service and education.

### **Training**

1. Refresher courses to improve the existing standard of artisans.
2. Training of agriculturists.
3. Training of extension assistants.
4. Training of artisans.
5. Training of supervisors, managerial personnel, health workers and executive officers for projects.

### **Social Welfare**

1. Organisation of community entertainment.
2. Provision of audio-visual aids for instruction and recreation.
3. Organisation of sports activities.
4. Organisation of *melas* (village fairs).
5. Organisation of the cooperative and self-help movement.

### **Supplementary Employment**

1. Encouragement of cottage industries and crafts as the main or subsidiary occupation.
2. Encouragement of medium and small-scale industries to employ surplus hands for local needs, or for export outside project areas.
3. Encouragement of employment through trade, auxiliary and welfare services.
4. Construction of brick kilns and saw mills to provide building materials for local needs.

## **Housing**

1. Demonstration and training in improved techniques and designs for rural housing.
2. Encouragement of improved rural housing on a self-help basis.

### **14.6 ORGANISATION OF CDP**

The CDP was undertaken and implemented by the Government of India (GOI) and the various state governments in cooperative with one another. For this purpose, an organisational structure was contemplated under the Technical Cooperation Programme Agreement of 5 January 1952 between the GOI and the Government of USA. Some salient features of the organizational structure are briefly presented in the following paragraphs.

#### **Central Organisation**

The GOI formed a Central Committee at the national level with the Prime Minister as the Chairperson, the Members of the Planning Commission, and the Minister of Food and Agriculture as members to lay down the broad policies, provide the general supervision for the agreed projects. An Administrator was appointed to plan, direct, and coordinate the programme throughout India, under the general supervision of the Central Committee, and in consultation with appropriate authorities in the various states. All nation-building ministries were directed to collaborate with the programme through the community Projects Administration (CPA) which was specially created for the purpose. The administrator was assisted by a team of highly qualified executive staff, in areas such as administration, finance, personnel (training), community planning and other matters, and by operating divisions in the fields of (a) agriculture; (b) irrigation; (c) health; (d) education; (e) industries; (f) housing; and (g) community facilities. This staff worked with the state, district and project level workers to implement the CDP.

The CDP organization at the national level has undergone a number of changes. In September 1956, a new Ministry of Community Development was created. Thereafter, for many years, the Department of Rural Development under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development was in overall Charge of the programme in the country. Now (1998-99), there is a separate Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment in charge of all centrally sponsored rural development programmes.

### **State organization**

Each state government established a state development committee or similar body consisting of the Chief Minister as the chairperson, ministers representing the nation-building departments as members, and a highly competent officer as Development Commissioner, who acted as the secretary to the Committee. He was responsible for directing the programme within the state, and coordinated the activities of the heads of various departments concerned with the programme of various departments concerned with the programme. He was assisted by suitable operating staff.

My states constituted state planning commissions or state planning boards for this purpose, and the Development Commissioner in many states was redesignated as the Agricultural Production Commissioner, or the Principal Secretary, Agriculture.

### **District Organisation**

This was established at the district level. Where necessary, a district Development Officer (DDO) was responsible for the CDP in his district. This officer has the status of an additional collector, and is responsible for the execution of the community projects as well as the general development in the district. He operates under the direction of the state Development Commissioner, and is advised by a district development board consisting of the officers of the various departments concerned with community development, with the collector as chairperson, and the district development officer as the executive secretary.

Now, after the 73rd Constitution Amendment, statutory Zila Parishads are responsible for the implementation of the programme in the districts. The Zila Parishad is chaired by an elected non-official, and the DDO is the chief executive officer of the zila parishad. There are state-to-state variations in the organizational structure of the CDP at the district level.

### **Block Organisation**

At the block level, a Block Development Committee (BDC) was established with the sub-divisional officer acting as its chairperson, and a Block Development Officer (BDO) acting as its executive secretary. The BDO is responsible for the implementation of the programme within the block. He is assisted by a number of Extension Officers (EOs) in

the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry, rural engineering, public health, cooperation, social education, women's and children's programmes, and rural industries.

After the introduction of panchayati raj, the BDC has been replaced by the statutory block panchayat or *samiti* or block panchayati samiti, which is chaired by an elected non-official. The BDO is the secretary of the block samiti.

### **Village Organisation**

Initially, at the village level, 10 Village Level Workers (VLWs) or *gram sevaks* and two *gram sevikas* were responsible for implementing the programme within a cluster of villages. VLWs work under the advice and control of the BDO. With the establishment of panchayati raj in all states now, the village or gram panchayat, which is headed by an elected non-official, is responsible for implementing the programme within its jurisdiction. The VLW assigned to the panchayat is its secretary.

## **14.7 FINANCING AND ASSISTANCE OF CDP**

The community Development Programme was conceived, planned and initiated as a people's self-help programme. Parliament appropriated funds annually on the condition that the funds had to be committed within the year appropriated, or reverted to the treasury. The administrative bureaucracy - centre and state - projected targets and allocated funds for the specific projects undertaken by community development blocks.

Initially, financial and technical assistance to the CDP was made available by the US government under the Technical Cooperation Programme Agreement signed on 5 January 1952. Financial assistance worth \$ 8.67 million was made available for payments to be made outside India in US dollars for the procurement of supplies, equipment, services and other programme materials and their transportation to India (exclusive of allotments from other operational agreements). The dollar funds provided under the agreement to finance the programme were to be treated as a loan to the states to the extent deemed feasible and advisable by the GOI, estimated at about 55 per cent of the total dollar funds, to be repaid upon such terms and conditions as would be determined. The proceeds of such repayments were to be deposited in a fund for the prosecution of further projects of economic development mutually agreeable to the Government of India and the USA, as provided in the agreement.

The US government also made available funds necessary to pay the salaries and other expenses of the technicians employed by the United States government for the purpose of providing technical assistance in the CDP.

To meet the local expenditure on the implementation of the CDP, funds were drawn from the GOI, the state governments, as well as the people. For each project area, the programme prescribed a qualifying scale of voluntary contribution from the people in the form of money as well as labour. Where the state offered material assistance for the execution of these projects, the expenses were shared by the state and central governments in the proportion of 1:3 in the case of non-recurring items. However, the recurring expenditure was shared equally between them. For productive works like irrigation and reclamation of land, to mention just two, necessary funds were advanced by the central government to the state governments in the form of loans. From 1 April 1969, the CDP was transferred to the state sector. The state governments are now free to provide resources for the programme from within their state plan ceiling, according to the priority accorded to the programme by them. The central government's assistance to the states is now given as annual lump-sum grants, as block grants and block loans.

The Technical Cooperation Administration (TCA) for India provided technical assistance to the CDP at both the central and state levels. At the central level, the services of the Director of the TCA were made available to the Central Committee. The Director was assisted by a deputy director for community development who coordinated and expedited all technical assistance to the CDP. The TCA also provided specialists in agricultural, irrigation, education, health, agricultural extension, vocational training, agricultural engineering, and extension methods and materials. These specialists served as advisers and consultants to the extent required.

The CDP was related to, and supported in part by, most of the other projects under the Indo-American Technical Cooperation Programme.

The fertilisers required by the CDP were acquired and distributed, pursuant to Operational Agreement No.1 dated 1 May 1952. The iron and steel needed for farm implements and tools was acquired and distributed, pursuant to Operational Agreement No. 2 dated 29 May 1952.

The tubewells to be constructed in community project areas were allocated from the project for ground water irrigation, pursuant to Operational Agreement No. 6 dated 31 May 1952.

Information and services with respect to soils and fertiliser application were made available to the programme from the project, to determine soil fertility and fertiliser use, pursuant to Operational Agreement No. 4 dated 31 May 1952. Similarly, assistance in malaria control in the community project areas was forthcoming from the project for malaria control planned under the Technical Cooperation Programme between the two Governments.

Training of VLWs and project supervisors for the CDP was carried out under the village workers training programme by the two governments and the Ford Foundation of America.

The Necessary allocation of funds for equipment, construction, supplies, information and other support for such projects was determined by the particular ministry supervising the project, and the Administrator. Each ministry supervising the project was responsible for all necessary arrangement for the proper and effective allocation of such support to the CDP.

#### **14.8 EVALUATION OF CDP**

A continuing evaluation of the progress of the CDP was expected to be undertaken by the Planning Commission, in close cooperation with the Ford Foundation and the Technical Cooperation Administration. Accordingly, the CDP has been reviewed from time to time by the Programme Evaluation Organisation of the Planning Commission, the National Institute of Rural Development (formerly known as the National Institute of Community Development), and by various other research institutes and individual research scholars. In addition, various committees and commissions were also appointed by the government to look into the functioning of the CDP, and make recommendations for the improvement of its effectiveness.

There have been a number of surveys and studies which have highlighted the tangible achievements of the CDP in terms of distribution of improved seeds, use of chemical fertilisers, plant protection chemicals, improved farm tools and equipment, construction of

roads, wells, irrigation canals, establishment of primary health centers, rural dispensaries, *balwadis* (nurseries), etc. On the basis of these studies, it would be fair to say that the CDP contributed significantly towards the creation of basic socio-economic infrastructure in rural areas, and helped expand and improve the production base of the rural economy of India. The CDP has also fulfilled, to a large extent, the equity norm of rural development.

However, the CDP failed to achieve the expected increase in agricultural production. This failure could be attributed to its diffused character, as it did not put sufficient and direct emphasis on agricultural production. The financial, material and administrative resources of CDP were spread too thinly - albeit uniformly - all over the country side to produce any tangible impact on agricultural production and rural poverty. In other words, the resources devoted to agricultural production fell short of the 'critical minimum' required to escape from the perpetual problem of low productivity in Indian agriculture.

By the middle of the Second Plan, it became increasingly evident that whatever the success of the CDP, a new approach would be required if agricultural production was to keep ahead of the demands of India's mounting population. With foodgrain production at 64 million tones in 1957-58 (five million tones below the 1953d-54 level), India faced its first post-Independence food crisis, and as a result there was a substantial shift in the agricultural development strategy of the CDP.

Douglas Ensminger (1968: 12), however, does not subscribe to this criticism of the CDP. In his opinion, the failure on the agricultural front was due partly to the fact that the agricultural prices had, prior to 1964, been oriented towards cheap food for poor people, and had thus served as disincentives to the producers to produce more, and partly due to the planners' unrealistically low estimate of the time required (15 years) to attain self-sufficiency in food production in India. He asserts that a more realistic time-frame for India to achieve self-sufficiency in this area must be thought of as closer to 25 years, starting in 1952, and not 15 years.

Some of the other criticisms of the CDP include that : (a) it has not been a people's programme: (b) it has followed a 'blueprint' approach to rural development: (c) it has employed a large army of untrained extension workers who, because of lack of coordination among themselves, were less a source of help to the villagers and more a source of bewilderment and confusion; (d) a spirit of ritualism has permeated the

block programmes, and the inauguration, opening or foundation stone laying became the 'be-all and end-all' of all block activities: and (e) there was lack of functional responsibility at the block level that led to a good deal of confusion and interdepartmental jealousy.

Despite all this criticism, however, it would be fair to say that the CDP was instrumental in laying the foundation for further growth and development of the rural economy of India.

#### **14.9 CONCLUSION:-**

Community development programme is the first development programme in India after Independence. Its main motive of overall development of rural society. Normally it includes all aspects of rural life like education health, sanitation, agriculture, live stock etc thus leading to complete development of rural society. It is a programme which is supported by both centre and state government and its evaluation and financing is conducted by planning commission of India.

#### **14.10 Further Readings:-**

Singh, Kartar, 1999; Rural Development: Principle, Policies and Mangement, range Publication, Delhi.

Desai, A.R; 1969; Rural sociology in India, Popular Prakshan, Bombay.

Doshi S. Jain ; 1999 Rural sociology; Rawat publication, Jaipur.

#### **Ask Yourself**

- Q Critically examine the role of community Development Programme in India?
- Q Explain briefly meaning & objectives of CDP.

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**15.0 STRUCTURE**

- 15.1 Objectives
- 15.2 Introduction
- 15.3 History of Land Reforms
- 15.4 Access to Land Reforms
- 15.5 Common Attributes of Land Reforms
- 15.6 Failure of Land Reforms
- 15.7 Conclusion
- 15.8 Further Readings

**15.1 OBJECTIVES**

- The main objective of the units is to familiarize you with
- The meaning of land reform
- Characteristics of land reform
- Implementation of land reforms
- Failure of land reform

**15.2 INTRODUCTION:**

The study of rural sociology, in fact, is the study of agrarian social system. The social and cultural of a village is largely determined by the relations of people of the land. It is in

this border context that we have discussed the tenancy system prevalent in our country. In doing so, we have examined the status of landowners, their types and the statuses of tenants including their variations. On a broader plane it should be said that a larger portion of land is cultivated by tenant and labour are crucial in the process of production from the farm. The reality is that agricultural is the main sources of employment and income in rural society.

Much depends on the production achieved in agriculture. Rural sociology basically studies the relations between the landowner, sharecropper, labourer and above all the market system where the farm produce is exchanged. Ironically, the land owned by the people is not in equal size for all the cultivators. The land size varies from the peasant. There are peasants who own larger chunk of land, and at the same time there are peasants who are marginal only. In other word, land is not equally distributed. The unequal distribution of land creates sharp stratification in rural society. Gunnar Myrdal very rightly observed in Asian Drama:

Inequality among individuals is largely a question of landownership. Rural income has been functionally related to landholdings, the poor are more likely to be landless than owning land.

In a rural society, land is the prime productive asset which determines the income, employment, status and authority of a person. In any discussion of rural sociology land tenure system and land reforms constitute an important part of study. In the next section of this chapter, we shall discuss some of the measures taken for land reforms in India.

### **15.3 HISTORY OF LAND REFORMS :-**

At that outset, it must be observed that land constitutes the Concurrent list of the constitution of India. It is within the state power to legislate for land reforms. Normally, the central government does not intervene in the control, revenue and management of the land in the state. It is because of this constitutional division that each state in the country has its own agenda of land reforms. This also prohibited us to make any comparative study of land reforms.

The history of land reforms in India goes back to the period when the nation was involved in its struggle for independence. Our national leaders were struck by unequal distribution of land. Land is the gift of god; it is part of nature. Nobody can distribute it

equally. Nehruji always pronounced that when India will get freedom, land would be justifiably distributed. Other freedom fighters also had the perception that British colonialism was the sole of the poverty of the Indian peasants.

When India got independence, the government decided to abolish the system of jamindari and jagirdari, in order to remove the intermediaries between the state and the peasants. This was the first legislation taken by almost all the states in the early 1950s and is known as Abolition of Jagirdari/Jamindari System Act. The land reforms made or legislated by the state governments thus had an objective to make a justifiable distribution of land and removal of all the intermediaries. Land reforms, thus, have the following objectives :

1. To make a redistribution of land to achieve a socialistic pattern of society. Such an effort will reduce inequalities in ownership of land.
2. To enforce land ceiling and take away the surplus land to be distributed among the marginal and landless peasants.
3. To legitimize the agency with the ceiling limit.
4. To register all tenancy arrangements with the Village Panchayat.
5. To establish relationship between ceiling and tenancy.

Land reforms thus constitute our national legacy. Admittedly, it was easy for the state government to have abolition of Jagirdaris and Jamindaris, but when the question of imposing ceiling laws arose it became very difficult for them to enforce these laws. The basic objectives of land ceiling is to remove the land inequality. And, this always contested by the big farmers.

Our experience of the last four decades in the field of land reforms shows that except in state like Karnataka in the 1970s and West Bengal in the 1980s, very little success has been achieved in Land redistribution. Even the Five Year Plan documents have acknowledge the failure of most states of achieve the objectives of reducing inequalities in landownership. Inequalities seem to have increased with the concentration of land holding on the one hand and fragmentation on the other. The latter renders the holdings of the poor economically non-viable. Besides, the amendments to the Karnataka Land Reforms Act in 1995 and

similar government orders in Gujarat indicate that even states that have implemented. The failure is attributed factors like lack of political will, loopholes in the law, delays caused by litigation and the growing political clout for the peasants.

#### **15.4 ACCESS TO LAND REFORMS**

We must reiterate that land reforms is the subject of state government. Each state in the union has made its own efforts to implement land reforms. P.C. Joshi has suggested three approaches to land reforms. These are : (1) The Gandhian approach, (2) the radical nationalist approach, and (3) the Marxist approach. “The Gandhian view does not bring out directly the contradictions of the Indian rural society in regard to its land relations,” However, Vinoba Bhava started a movement which is known as Gramdan. This movement approached the landlords to party away with their surplus land as a donation to give to those who were landless peasants. In the initial stages, response to this movement was satisfactory. At a later stage the movement cooled down.

The second approach is that of radical nationalist did not work satisfactorily. It turned out to be a formal approach generally adopted by the state governments. The Marxist approach takes into consideration the peasant movements and other non-legal lines and action.

Taking into consideration the three approaches mentioned above, it is clear, that in order to reduce the sharp class difference, land reforms have to be implemented.

Before we examine the land reforms adopted by different states we must bring out some of the common features accepted by all the states in country. Admittedly, some states have emphasized a particular perspective and the other have taken different perspectives. Despite this variation in the attributes of land reforms, there are a few which have been stressed by all the states. Here we discuss some of the attributes of land reforms.

#### **15.5 COMMON ATTRIBUTES OF LAND REFORMS :**

Soon after the adoption of constitution, various states have take certain measures of land reforms. These measures are as under :

1. Abolition of intermediaries.

Before the attainment of independence we had four tenancy system in the country, viz., (i) ryotwari, (ii) mahalwari, (iii) zamindari, and (iv) jagirdari.

(i) Ryotwari : This kind of land tenancy was first introduced by the British in Madras in 1772. Later on it was extended to Bombay presidency. Under this tenancy system every registered holder of land was recognized as its proprietor. He paid revenue directly to the government. He was at liberty to sublet his property or to transfer it by gift, sale or mortgage. He could not be ejected from his land till he paid the revenue. Absence of subinfeudation and the cultivator's direct relation with the government was the main advantage of this tenancy system. Yet another advantage of this system was that the proprietor of the land took all interest for improving the land and its irrigation facilities. But the inherent drawback of the system was that the land was sublet to the landless peasants. In the long run the ryotwari system created a group of peasants who were subordinate to the proprietor of the land.

The ryotwari system was abolished by the land reform measures.

(ii) Mahalwari : This kind of tenancy was introduced during the British rule. It was first started in Agra and Audh and was later on extended to Punjab. Under this system, land was held jointly by co-sharing bodies of village communities. This body was treated as "jointly and severally liable for the land revenue". A typical example of the mahalwari tenancy system was widely prevalent in Punjab. It was a kind of joint landlordism and distinguished from individual landlordism under Zamindari system.

In a typical joint village the owners were themselves cultivators. In some cases, land was cultivated by tenant who paid rent either in cash or in kind. Best result of cultivation were obtained when a peasant proprietor possessed enough land to cultivate with the help of his family.

The mahalwari system of intermediaries was abolished as a part of land reforms taken up in the fifties.

(iii) Zamindari : It is yet another system of tenancy which prevailed in Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Bombay presidency and Tamilnadu. Under this system one or more persons owned a village and were responsible for the payment of revenue. This system, also created by the British, was highly exploitative. It also encouraged absentee landlords who

more than often enhanced the rate of land rent. The actual tiller of land was always in fear of his ejection from land because he was not the owner of land. No land development efforts were made. The zamindar was interested to realize that land rent from the tiller. Prem Chand, the noted Hindi novelist and story writer, has very emphatically brought out the miserable condition of the tiller under the zamindari system. Hori, the hero of his novel Godan, very exemplifies the plight of the peasantry under the zamindari system.

As a part of land reform programmes zamindari system has also been abolished by the various state governments in the country.

(iv) Zamindari : The zamindari tenancy system was found mainly in the former princely states of Rajasthan. Under this system of Rajasthan zamirs were granted to certain military commanders, ministers and corps who took the revenue for their own support or for the military force, which they were obliged to maintain. The zamindari system thus created class of unproductive mass of people by granting them zamir lands. K.L. Sharma informs that the zamirdars “extorted and extracted as many as 175 faces and cases. Thikandars and zamirdars revived these taxes not only to maintain the feudal set up, but also to meet expenses of individual members of the royal family, and on cultural, religious and other miscellaneous activities”.

The Rajasthan zamir Abolition Act was passed in February 1952 and implemented in 1954. This put an end to zamindari tenancy system in Rajasthan and elsewhere in other parts of the states of the union.

- (1) The powerful landlords such as zamindar and zamirdar became extinct.
- (2) The abolition of the intermediaries gave relief to the tillers. Their exploitation ceased to exist.
- (3) Transfer of the land of intermediaries to the tillers reduced land inequalities to some extent.
- (4) The new proprietorship of land, resulting from the abolition of intermediaries, provided opportunities for land improvement and land production.
- (5) The ex-landlords or the zamindars and zamirdars withdrew their status and took to new occupations, thereby contributing the growth of national economy.

- (6) The rents received from the new owners of the land, as a result of abolition of intermediaries, gave additional revenue to the state government. This money is utilized for the development of agricultural input and general rural development.

## **LAND CEILING**

The basic objective of land reforms was to remove or minimize the unequal distribution of land. The position today is that a large number of people have minimum land in their possession. Such a kind of land distribution is against any principle of social justice. During our struggle for independence, the national leaders, time and again, stressed that in free India land would be distributed on the basis of social justice. The land reforms thus are the result of our historical commitment to the masses of peasants for equitable distribution of land.

Land ceiling is one of the measures to take away surplus land from those who cross the limit of land possession beyond a certain point. Ceiling limit of land was imposed on the following groups :

- 1 Land is a sources of income :** In rural India, land provides employment opportunities. And, therefore, the agricultural labourers, marginal farmers and small farmers should be given some land for their livelihood. Land ceiling limit, therefore, should apply to only those groups who have more land to their requirement.
- 2. Land ceiling should be imposed on all variety of lands :** The land possessed by the peasants is of different kinds : (1) fallow, (2) uncultivable, (3) cultivable, and (4) irrigated. Ceiling should apply to all these categories of lands.
- 3. Ceiling on irrigated and two crops a year land :** Through the limit of ceiling on two crops a year and irrigated land varies from state to state, on broader plane 18 acres has been the limit for possessing this kind of land. It means that a peasant having more than 18 acres of land, which is irrigated, two crops will be declared as a peasant having surplus land.
- 4. Assured irrigation and one crop land :** A peasant having up to 27 actress of land with irrigation and one crop a year does not come in the ceiling law. But any land above the 27 acres is declared surplus and taken over by the state government.

- 5. Ceiling up to 54 acres :** In case of owners of holdings consisting of different types of land, the total holdings after the best categories of land into lowest category is up to 54 acres.

These limits of ceilings are subject to variation from state to state. The ceiling acts also take into consideration the family size, which is dependent on the size of the landholdings. For the purpose of Act (1) a family of five members has been taken as a unit, including husband and wife and three minor children. Provision has been kept for the additional members of the family, but not exceeding twice the ceiling limit; (2) where both husband and wife hold land in their own names, the two will have the right in the properties within the ceilings in proportion to the value of the land held by each before the application of ceiling; and, (3) each major child is treated as a separate unit for the purpose of application of ceiling.

**Some exemptions :**

The Ceiling Acts have also certain exemptions. These are as below:

- (1) There are exemptions in favour of plantations of tea, coffee, rubber and cocoa.
- (2) Exemption is also given for the land held by industrial and commercial undertakings.
- (3) As a measure of exemption the sugarcane factories are permitted to own land up to 100 acres.

We would reiterate that ceiling laws vary from state to state. For instance, in the state of Andhra Pradesh, the ceiling limit for irrigated land is 10-18 acres. In West Bengal it is 12.4 acres, whereas in Haryana it is 17/9 acres and in Karnataka 10.13 acres.

**Land Possession & Social Power :-**

The agenda of land reforms as discussed earlier is quite comprehensive. Besides the abolition of intermediaries and land ceiling, it is also being increasingly realized that land is not only a source of production. It is also a source of power. Expressing this new dimension on landownership Walter Fernandes very rights of observes.

An aspect that needs to be borne in mind in order to understand this apparent contradiction is that land is not merely a source of cultivation or building, as it is made out

to be in most legislation. Its ownership pattern in an agrarian economy is a sign of a person's social status.

Quite supporting the point of view of Fernandes, Morely Mohan Lal also makes the following observation :

The ownership of land....reflects social class and class relations as they represent on array of legal, contractual or customary arrangement whereby people engaged in cultivation gain access to productive opportunities linked with land and thereby income.

The objective of land reform legislation is also to bring social change in the society. Actually landownership pattern, besides bringing equal distribution of land, also symbolizes social change. It is in this context that one has to study the land reforms and changes in the landownership pattern in the country.

#### **Legitimation of tenancy within the ceiling limit :**

The land reform legislation does not end with enforcement of land ceiling. It also functions to regularize the land tenure records. The Indian rural society has a tradition to transfer the land from one generation to another. It does not take the form of a document. This comes in the way of getting a sanction for development loans. It is, therefore, also the objective of land reform legislation to enforce registration of all tenancy arrangements with the Village Panchayats.

#### **Land as Private Property :**

The history of land legislation goes back to the British rule. It was for the first time that Lord Cornwalles in 1793 introduced the Permanent Land Settlement in Bihar, Orissa and Bengal. The land settlement system was important so far land revenue and land tenancy are concerned but it was also important that land for the first time become a private property of the landholder.

Earlier settlement of land, all over the country was held by the community. There was now ownership of land on individual basis.

The land reforms legislations also try to strengthen the idea that land should be made illegally a party of individual's property. It is in this respect that there should be proper codification of land and documents prepared thereof.

## 15.6 FAILURE OF LAND REFORMS

Land reforms legislation has become controversial today. Its meaning also has become erroneous. Actually the term means reform of the basic relations between man and land, and between tillers of the land and other beneficiaries from the land tiller interaction like landlords, moneylenders and village merchants. While discussing land reforms we must keep in mind that in a country like India where 70 percent of the population is dependent on land, relations between various categories of people like big farmers, sharecroppers and agricultural laborers on the one hand, and the nature of their respective control over land on the other, is of paramount interest. It must also be admitted that any strategy for increasing agricultural production cannot overlook these structural questions, just as rural poverty and agricultural backwardness cannot be understood without reference to the agrarian structure.

When the land reforms were introduced it was understood that the discrepancy between the ownership of land and operation of land must be regarded as one of the basic maladies of our agrarian structure. If we look at the result of the operation of different land reform legislations it appears that some of them have failed. However, the failure rate varies from state to state.

We give below some of the areas of agriculture, that is, tenancy relations where the land reforms legislation have failed.

**(1) Increasing land inequality :** The basic objective of land reforms was to establish land equity among various categories of peasants. The objective has not been achieved because of constant change in definitions; it is difficult to compare the landownership data of different years. But one can see a trend of deteriorating land relations. What ever aggregate data that we can get shows that there have been inequalities in landownership. For instance, in 1961 a little over 19 million rural households were landless and the total number of land holdings was 64 millions. In other words, 19.01 percent owned 0.49 acre or less or an average of 0.09 acre of land. This data of 1961 can be compared with the data of 1971. Such a comparison shows that 51 percent of total peasants were marginal farmers who occupy 9 percent of the area. The percentage of small farmers has risen to 18.9. At the other extreme end, those owning more than 20 acres of land, a bare 1 percent of the total occupied 13.5 percent of the operational area. These are the official data

pertaining to the year 1971.

The Reserve Bank of India survey data given in 1981, show that “the poorest 10 percent owned only 0.4 percent of the total assets in the rural areas and 0.1 percent in the urban areas. On the other hand, the top 10 percent owned 49.5 percent of the rural assets and 58.7 percent of the urban assets. The trend continued till the late 1980s (Government of India, 1988) and is also true today”.

**State side With The Big Farmers :** N.C. Saxena has analysed, elaborately, the failure of land reforms legislations in states of the country. He says that the state governments, which control the land operations, have always moved favourably towards the big farmers. As a result of such a kind of prejudicial intervention of state governments, the small farmers have always suffered.

**Big Farmers corner the land of marginal farmers :** As a result of the transfer of surplus land to the landless labourers, marginal farmers and small farmers, the big farmer have increased the size of their land. Smaller patches of land cannot be operated upon their agriculture, manually. As a result their farm yields economically become costlier. Finally, the benefit of land ceiling goes in the favour of big farmers.

**Surplus land is fallow and uncultivable land :** The surplus land got out of land ceiling is usually uncultivable. The holders of surplus land manipulate the land date in such a way that the land in excess in their possession is usually barren and uncultivable. Such a surplus land is of the one benefit to landless peasants. This renders the land reforms legislation null and void.

**Benami transactions :** The land ceiling legislations, in most of the case, have proved to be fraud. The land possessed in excess to the land ceiling limit is adjusted against benami persons. Such benami transactions do not make any change in the operational aspect of agriculture.

**Lack of political will :** The political parties are not without their vested interests. It is because of the lack of political will that we find the failure of land legislations. Besides the political parties, the former jagirdars and zamindars are also responsible for non-implementation of land reforms. The Bihar Acquisition of Surplus Act of 1981 and the subsequent amendments could not correct the earlier deficiencies of Land Reform Act due

to the influence of former intermediates. It is reported that in Bihar big landowners who held much more than the ceiling area had been increasing their holdings. In a recent seminar (NIRD, 1991) it was concluded that in Bihar the impact of land reform measures was very little. Quite like Bihar the impact of land reforms in the Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Harayana has not been striking. This can be explained by the fact that the politicians have little will to implement the reform measures.

### **15.7 CONCLUSION**

It is through the land in rural India that employment and income are generated. Besides this, land possession also gives status and power. It is only recently that women have started in some parts of the country a movement, which demands that the names of women should also be included in the land documents, i.e., patta. Such a kind of movement is basically a gender problem. What would happen to this demand is a guess today. However, what is important is that the land tenure system, land reforms and the problems associated with this cannot be postponed any longer. The issues and problems are urgent and immediate. The state governments will soon have to implement some of the important measure of tenancy and land reform. Before the process of peasant popularization completes its course, land reforms have to be enforced.

### **15.8 Further Readings :**

- A.R. Desai, Social Background of Indian Nationalism, Popular prakashan, Bombay, 1981 (Reprint).
- K.L. Sharma, Caste, Class and Social Movements, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 1986.

### **Ask Yourself**

Q Enlist the reasons for failure of land reform in India?

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## 16.0 STRUCTURE

16.1 Objectives

16.2 Introduction

16.3 Historical Backdrops

16.4 Balwant Rai Mehta Committee

16.5 Ashok Mehta Committee

16.6 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act

16.7 Functions of PRI

16.8 Empowerment of Women and Weaker Section,

16.9 Critique of 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act

16.10 Conclusion

16.11 Further Readings

### 16.1 OBJECTIVES:

The main thrust of the unit is to familiarise you with:-

- Characteristic Feature of PRI
- Function of PRI

## 16.2 INTRODUCTION

Panchayati Raj means democratic decentralisation. The term Panchayati Raj in India signifies the system of rural local self-government. It ensures the direct participation of people at the grass root level. It is created in all the states in India by the acts of concerned state legislature to establish democracy at the grass root level. It is entrusted with the duties and the responsibilities in the field of rural development. It was constitutionalised through the 73rd constitutional Amendment Act of 1992. At the central level, the Ministry of Rural Development looks after the matters relating to the Panchayati Raj bodies. It falls within the great tradition of our country. We often talk about Panch Parmeshwar. It means that the god speaks through the Panch. Panch Prameshwar can never be prejudicial to anybody. It is how we understand about the Gram Panchayats. Our tradition of Gram Panchayat is elaborately manifested in our languages. Besides, we also have tradition of Caste Panchayat. The Caste Panchayat looked after the problems at local level. Among tribals, even today, the role of traditional panchayat is so much important that the member of the tribe makes his first approach to it. If he is dissatisfied at this level, then he goes to the court of law. In some villages, the Caste Panchayat is also important. A large number of decisions pertaining to social and marital conflicts and disputes are solved by the Caste Panchayat.

The role of Panchayati Raj has to be analysed with reference to this great Indian tradition. Gandhiji had a conviction that Gram Panchayat should be make all-powerful so that it could take all decisions pertaining to its administration and development. Gandhiji often talked about and actually stood for Gram Swaraj. Literally, it means autonomy of village. The village as a collectivity should rule over itself. The theory of Gram Swaraj as given by Gandhiji runs as below:

My idea of village swaraj is that is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants a yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus every village's first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and playground for adults and children. . . . The government of the village will be conducted by a panchayat of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribe qualification. These will have all the authority and jurisdiction required. Since there will be

no system of punishment in the accepted sense, this panchayat will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office..... here there is perfect democracy based upon individual freedom. The individual is the architect of his own government. The law of non-violence rules him and his government. He and his village are able to defy the might of a world. For the law, governing every villager, is that he will suffer death in the defence of his and his village's honor.

### **16.3 HISTORICAL BACKDROP:-**

The concept of Panchayati Raj is relatively a new. Earlier, it was termed as Village Panchayat or District Board. It was used for rural self-government. Actually, the Village Panchayats were meant for rural administration and particularly administration in the fields of social service and rural reconstruction. The Village Panchayat is a link between the people and the bureaucracy at the state level.

In our country, the system of Village Panchayats is very old, though its structure varied from time to time. There were Village Panchayats in ancient and medieval periods. During the last phase of medieval India the Gram Panchayats became oblivious or ineffective. During the British Raj an effort was made to revive the Panchayati Raj. When popular ministries were formed under the Government India Act, 1919, various provinces passed the Village Panchayat Acts at 1919.

The Gram Panchayats which worked during the British period largely consisted of the higher castes of the village. The poor and the lower castes had no representation in these bodies. The powers which were given to the Gram Panchayats were very few. Their main concern, however, remained limited to social reform and administration of welfare measures. The Gram Panchayats during the British period could not make any success. Actually, the area under the Gram Panchayat was very large. And, what is worse, the funds given to them were not sufficient. These gram Panchayats could not be effectively linked to the District Boards and, this resulted in the failure of the Gram Panchayats.

#### **A. Constitutional Obligation.**

The constitution of Panchayati Raj is not the sweet will of the state government. It is the result of the provisions made in Indian Constitution. The Directive Principles of State Policy lays down that the state shall take steps to organise village panchayats..... to enable

them to function as units of self-government.

The objective of the constitution of Panchayati Raj was mainly two-fold: (i) decentralisation of power, and (ii) development of villages. Yet another reason for the creation of Panchayati Raj was to seek the cooperation and participation of masses of people in the national reconstruction and development. Initially, in 1952, the Panchayati Raj bodies were entrusted with the implementation of Community Development Projects (CDPs). The institution of shramdan, voluntary labour, was created to involve the people in the development of their own village. The panchayati Raj, however, did not make any headway in the development of village. The CDPs were considered as projects of development from the above, that is, the government. It was essential for development that the initiative should have come from the below, the masses of people and in fact, from the grassroots. To overcome this difficulty a committee headed by Balwant Raj Mehta was constituted. This committee made initial experiment in Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan. The Mehta Committee was the watershed in the development of Panchayati Raj.

#### **16.4 Balwant Rai Mehta Committee**

In January 1957, the Government of India appointed a committee to examine the functioning of the Community Development Programme (CDP) in 1952 and the National Executive Service in 1953 and to suggest measures for their better performance. The committee submitted its report in November 1957 and recommended the establishment of the scheme for 'democratic decentralisation' which ultimately came to be known as the 'Panchayati Raj'.

The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee found that the CDPs when came at the Gram Panchayat level were considered as programmes of the government and not programmes of the village people. The village self-sufficiency could not be attained without the active partnership of the village people. The Mehta Committee, therefore, suggested that the villagers should be given power to decide about their own felt needs and implement the programmes accordingly. Bidyut Mohanty, while explaining the recommendations of the Mehta Committee, observes:

In 1959, the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee suggested that an agency should be set up at the village level which would not only represent the interests of the village community

but also take up the development programmes of the government at its level. The Gram Panchayat which was to constitute this agency was, therefore, perceived as an implementing agency of the government in a specific, namely, developmental sphere.

The specific recommendation made by it are:

- Establishment of a three-tier Panchayati Raj System which includes Zila Parishad at the District Level, Panchayat Samiti at the Block Level and Gram Panchayat at the Village Level.
- These tiers should be organically linked together through a device of indirect elections.
- The Village Panchayat should be constituted with directly elected representatives, whereas the Panchayat Samiti and the Zila Parishad should be constituted with indirectly elected members.
- All the planning and development activities should be entrusted to these bodies.
- The Panchayat Samiti should be the executive body while the Zila Parishad should be the advisory, co-ordinating and supervisory body.
- The District Collector should be the Chairman of the Zila Parishad.
- There should be a genuine transfer of power and responsibility to these democratic bodies.
- Adequate resources should be transferred to these bodies to enable them to discharge their functions and fulfill their responsibilities.
- A system should be evolved to effect further devolution of authority in future.
- These recommendations were accepted by the National Development Council in January 1958.
- The Council did not insist on a single rigid pattern and left it to the States to evolve their own patterns suitable to the local conditions. But the basic principles and the broad fundamentals should be identical throughout the Country.
- Rajasthan was the first State to establish the institution of Panchayati Raj.
- The scheme was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru on

October 2, 1959, in Nagaur District.

- Rajasthan was followed by Andhra Pradesh which also adopted the system in 1959.
- Rajasthan adopted a three-tier system.

***Exception***

- Tamil Nadu adopted a two-tier system.
- West Bengal adopted a four-tier system.

The panchayati Raj, which came into existence following the recommendations of Mehta Committee, has the following major objectives:

- 1) to represent the felt needs of the village community:
- 2) to give power to the non-officials for the development of village communities, and
- 3) to give power of implementation or execution of programmes to the people.

Thus, the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee legislatively made the villagers active partners in the task of village development. The responsibility of the execution of development programmes was left to the elected members of the Panchayati Raj.

The Panchayati Raj, as suggested by Mehta Committee was first implemented in the state of Rajasthan. (Nagaur District) on October 2, 1959. This was followed by Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. It was an irony of fate that the state of Rajasthan which experienced feudal rule throughout the medieval period was first to implement the Panchayati Raj. The experiment was further taken over by Andhra Pradesh and other states. The Mehta Committee suggested a three-tier structure for Panchayati Raj. These tiers could be altered vis-à-vis the needs of the state. The bottom tier consisted of Gram Sabha which was constituted on the basis of population size. Sometimes it included a big village but generally two or three villages on the strength of their population size constituted a Gram Sabha. This was the lowest rung of Panchayati Raj. The second tier was coterminous with the tehsil or taluka. And, at the apex level was the district. The three-tier structure thus consisted of the elected non-officials who implemented the programmes of development on the technical and bureaucratic guidance of the officials. The pattern of Panchayati Raj

was thus developed on the coordination between the officials and the non-officials.

The Panchayati Raj could not come out as a successful story. Though, theoretically, the decisions had to be taken by the non-officials at all the three tiers of Panchayati Raj, the officials become the major decision makers. The non-officials being illiterate and uneducated could not wield their power. And, what is worse the Panchayat Samiti which implemented the development programmes at the tehsil level, cornered most of the benefits for the high castes and big peasants. The poor segments of society remained neglected as before. The apex tier at the district level did not have any power of implementation. It also failed to bring coordination among the three tiers. The three-tier pattern of Panchayati Raj as recommended began to crumble down, and a new pattern was evolved on the basis of the recommendations made by the Ashok Mehta Committee.

### **16.5 ASHOK MEHTA COMMITTEE**

In December 1977, the Janata Government appointed a committee on Panchayati Raj Institutions under the chairmanship of Ashok Mehta.

Ashok Mehta, an economist, headed over a committee to suggest changes in the pattern of Panchayati Raj recommended by Balwant Rai Mehta Committee. In 1977, the Ashok Mehta Committee recommended a fundamental change in the Panchayati Raj system. It asked for transformation of the panchayat from an implementing agency to a political institution. In order to implement this recommendation the need for constitutional amendment was felt. It, however, took more than a decade for the first steps in this direction to be taken in the form of the 64<sup>th</sup> Constitution Amendment Bill which was defected in Rajya Sabha. In 1992, another legislation, the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Bill was introduced in parliament which adopted it in the same year.

Its main recommendation are :

- The three-tier system of the Panchayati Raj should be replaced by two-tier. system, that is, the Zila Parishad at the district level, and below it, the Mandai Panchayat consisting of a group of villages comprising a population of 15,000 to 20,000.
- A district should be the first point for the decentralisation under the popular supervision below the State level.

- The Zila Parishad should be the executive body and be made responsible for planning at the district level.
- There should be an official participation of the political parties at all the levels of panchayat elections.
- The Panchayati Raj institutions should have compulsory powers for taxation to mobilise their own financial resources.
- There should be a regular social audit by a district level agency and by a committee of legislators to check whether the funds allotted for the vulnerable social and economic groups are actually spent on them.
- The State Government should not supersede the Panchayati Raj institutions.

In case of imperative super session, election should be held within six months from the time of super session.

- The Nyaya Panchayats should be kept as separate bodies from that of development panchayats. They should be presided over by a qualified Judge.
- The Chief Electoral Officer of the State in consultation with the Chief Election Commissioner should organise and conduct the Panchayati Raj Elections.
- Development functions should be transferred to the Zila Parishad and all the development staff should work under its control and supervision.
- The voluntary agencies should play an important role in mobilising the support of the people for the Panchayati Raj.
- A minister for the Panchayati Raj should be appointed in the State Council of Ministers to look after the affairs of the Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- Seats for the SCs and the STs should be reserved on the basis of their population.
- Due to the collapse of the Janata Government before the completion of its term, no action could be taken on the recommendations of the Ashok Mehta committee at the Central level.
- The three states of Karnataka, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh took steps to revitalise

the Panchayati Raj, keeping in view some of the recommendations of the Ashok Mehta Committee.

### **GVK Rao Committee**

- The Committee on Administrative Arrangement for the Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation Programmes under the chairmanship of G.Y.K. Rao was appointed by the Planning Commission in 1985.
- The committee came to the conclusion that the developmental process was being gradually bureaucratised and divorced from the Panchayati Raj.

The Committee made the following recommendations to strengthen and revitalise the Panchayati Raj System:

- The district level body, that is, the Zila Parishad should be of pivotal importance in the scheme for democratic decentralisation.
- Some of the planning functions at the State level should be transferred to the district level planning units for effective decentralised district planning.
- A post of District Development Commissioner should be created. He should act as the chief executive officer of the Zila Parishad and should be in-charge of all the developmental departments at the district level.
- In this respect, the G.Y.K. Rao Committee Report (1986) differed from the Dantwala Committee Report on the Block-Level Planning (1978) and the Hanumantha Rao Committee Report on the District Planning (1984).
- The Hanumantha Rao Committee differed in respect from the Balwant Ray Mehta Committee, Administrative Reforms Commission of India, the Ashok Mehta Committee and finally the G.Y.K. Rao Committee which recommended reduction in the developmental role of the District Collector and assigned a major role to the Panchayati Raj in development administration.

### **LM Singhvi Committee**

- In 1986, Rajiv Gandhi Government appointed a committee on the 'Revitalisation of the Panchayati Raj Institutions for Democracy and Development' under the chairmanship

of L.M. Singhvi.

***Its major recommendations are:***

- The Panchayati Raj Institutions should be Constitutionally recognised, protected and preserved. For this purpose, a new chapter should be added in the Constitution of India.

It also suggested some Constitutional provisions to ensure regular, free and fair elections to the Panchayati Raj bodies.

- Nyaya Panchayats should be established for a cluster of villages.
- The villages should be organized to make the Gram Panchayats more viable. It also emphasized the importance of the Gram Sablu and called it as the embodiment of dire democracy.
- The Village Panchayats should have more financial resources.
- The Judicial tribunals should be established in each State to eradicate controversies about election to the Panchayati Raj Institutio their dissolution and other matters related their functioning.

### **16.6 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitution Amendment Act**

The present Panchayati Raj differs from the Balwant Rai pattern in two respects. First, the earlier Panchayati Raj was not a political institution but only an implementing body. In this pattern there was no role of political parties. Elections to panchayat bodies were held on individual basis. The candidates contesting for elections were not nominated by the political parties. The 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitution Amendment Act allows political parties to enter into election fray. In other words, elections to panchayati Raj today are contested on party basis.

Second, the present Panchayati Raj is not an implementing body to the development programmes. It is a decision making body and rules over the governance of the village. One very conspicuous aspect of the present Panchayati Raj is that it empowers the women and weaker sections including women are given representation by a fixed quota fixed by the constitution. In other words, membership to Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) is reserved

vis-à-vis the members of the weaker sections. The Panchayati Raj thus has empowered the women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

The present Panchayati Raj is constituted as an amendment to the Constitution of India. It is, therefore, the central Act which is adopted by all the states of the union. Some important features of the Act are given below:

1. Panchayats will be considered political institutions in a truly decentralised structure.
2. The Gram Sabha shall be recognised as the life-line of the Panchayati Raj. The voters of the village or clusters of villages will constitute its membership.
3. There will be direct elections in all the three tiers of governance:
  - (i) Gram Panchayat at the village level, (ii) Panchayat Samiti at the intermediate level; and (iii) Zila Parishad at the district level.
4. So far as the empowerment of women is concerned, the Act has provided that at least one-third of the total seats at all levels shall be reserved for women of whom one-third shall be from the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. In this context it is important to note that at least one-third of the total posts of the office bearers at all levels will also be reserved for the women.
5. Each PRI will have a tenure of five years and in case it is dissolved by the state government fresh election will be held within a period of six months.
6. The election to local bodies has to be conducted regularly.
7. There will be a separate Election Commission and also a Finance Commission for PRIs in every state.
8. It is obligatory on the part of centre as well as the state to provide adequate funds for the PRIs to enable them to function properly.

In additions, the PRIs will have their own fund raising capacity on the basis of the local resources.

9. Some states like Rajasthan, Haryana and Orissa have debarred the candidates, having more than two children, from contesting in the election with a view to

controlling population growth, given the low average age of marriage of girls (19), they would have crossed the two children norm by the time they contest for elections. Hence, it will be difficult for the states to get suitable women candidates for the Panchayati Raj elections.

10. Some states like Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Karnataka have provision of Nyaya Panchayat to settle the disputes at all the three levels.

However, the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act does not make it obligatory for states to provide for Nyaya Panchayats to solve local disputes. Secondly, although the objective of the Act is to build the Panchayati Raj as an effective decentralised political institution at the grassroot level, the division of functions in its XI schedule makes it in reality, essentially an implementing agency for developmental activities.

## **16.7 FUNCTIONS OF PANCHAYATI RAJ**

The structure of Panchayati Raj is designed in such a way that the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitution Amendment act gives certain powers and functions to the three-tier structure of the Panchayati Raj. The idea is to decentralize the power of rural administration to the elected representatives. The Act enables the elected representatives to take their own decisions within the framework of Act. Some of the important functions of the Panchayati Raj are enumerated below:

1. Agricultural development and irrigation facilities
2. Land reforms
3. Eradication of poverty
4. Dairy farming, poultry, piggery and fish rearing
5. Rural housing
6. Safe drinking water
7. Social forestry, fodder and fuel
8. Primary education, adult education and informal training
9. Roads and buildings

10. Markets and fairs
11. Child and women development
12. Welfare of weaker sections, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes

Some special Provisions

1. Enforcement of prohibition
2. Protection of land
3. Minor forest produce
4. Water resources
5. Village markets
6. Development

If we analyse the functions of Panchayati Raj, it is found that the Act is highly elaborate. The functions of Panchayati Raj in terms of Gram Sabha, Panchayat Samiti, and Zila Parishad are spelt out separately. Quite like functions the administrative powers are also ascribed to each tier. On the whole, the Panchayati Raj system empowers the total functioning of the village system. It stresses on the limited autonomy of the village but also encourages it for interdependence with other clusters of villages.

## **16.8 EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND WEAKER SECTION**

All over the world and particularly in south and east Asia the gender problem has loomed large during the current years. The gender issue has become a crucial point of argument. The United Nations, in its various declarations, have made it clear that women now cannot be asked to wait for any more time. Their sufferings are historical. Thus, the gender problem, in the context of new forces of development, assumes vital importance. Underline the problem of the empowerment of women is the plea for shared responsibility between the male and female. The simplest way to distinguish between sex and gender is to define sex as biological and, therefore, given and gender as socially and culturally constructed and, therefore, variable over space and time. Whereas multiple sexual encounters for men are seen as the sign of their virility, menstruation for women is seen as

polluting in many cultures. Actually gender is constructed in part through the organisation of our culturally experienced bodies.

The gender disabilities are, therefore, not uniform all over the country. There are regional variations in the power status of the women. For instance, in north India, there is much discrimination against women. There is a limited public space for them. Young girls are not allowed to move freely. However, such a hard discrimination is relatively lesser in the southern states. In Kerla, because of the high rate of literacy, there is least discrimination against the women. However, in Tamilnadu, there are instances of female infanticide. On a broader plane it could be said that all over India and generally in south-east Asia there is much discrimination against the women. They are considered to be a weaker section of society. Such a state of socio-economic affairs warrants for a plan to give special political status to the women.

The 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitution Amendment Act has made an effort to give some special powers to women in all the three tiers of Panchayati Raj. It is argued that women have acquired some improvement in their social and economic life. There was a time in the earlier part of 1930s when Bombay University did not allow a woman to take courses in graduation. The candidate was informed that the university rules did not permit women to take admission in graduate courses. The framers of 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitution Amendment Act had the argument the social and economic status of women could not be improved much without political power. The females in the village need to be given some political power. They should have their share in the decisions made about the development of their village. The new Panchayati Raj is a part of the effort to empower the women at least at the village level.

### **50% reservation for women in Local Self Nort Local Self Government**

India has become the first country to reserve 50% seats for women in local self government. The new reservation ratio is applicable to the total number of seats to be filled by direct ekctions .the offices of chairpersons.and the seats and offices of chairpersons reserved for scheduled castes and trihes.

It is noted that Government of India amended Article 243D of the Constitution to raise the level of reservation for women including Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe women in Panchayats from the present one-third to at least half of the seats and offices of

Chairpersons in panchayats during the recent Parliament Session following the initiatives of states like Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan. Bihar was the first state to offer 50% reservation for women in panchayats, in 2005 and implemented in 2006 followed by Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Rajasthan has also announced 50% reservation. Kerala implemented 50% reservation for women in panchayats and other local bodies followed by Maharashtra and Gujarat.

In most other states women's representation is around 36.87% of the 28.18 lakh elected panchayat representatives. When provided for, the law will be applicable in all states and union/ward/MPTC/BP/TP territories except for Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram, tribal regions of Assam and Tripura, and the hill areas of Manipur.

The panchayati raj system, being a state subject, makes it the prerogative of states, where the quota for women is less than 50%, to formulate their own rules to implement the provision once it is made part of the constitution.

The reservation of one-third seats for women along with the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes, is, therefore, a bold step towards the empowerment of women. It is quite interesting that the women who have been working as farm labourer, cleaning the utensils and fetching the water, and legally permitted to share the jajam with the males of the village in matters of decision making. The provisions of Act for the women are in no way less than a revolution.

But the question remains to be answered: Why do the women require empowerment?

Effort to empower women are not statutory only. Women are empowered through women emancipation movement, education, communication, media, political parties and general awakening. The Panchayati Raj effort of empowerment is one of the several efforts made simultaneously in the society. And, above all, the empowerment action, whether to women or poor and weaker sections of society, has a multiplying effect. For instance, when a woman in the village gets a berth in the Panchayat Samiti, she becomes automatically powerful in the family, kin and village. She is listened to by the people, for she is a decision maker; she can do and undo certain things in the village. She can get her school raised to higher standard, she can get a water pump installed at a particular place in a village and so

on and so forth. Surely, she is not everything by becoming member of the samiti but definitely she can influence the decisions of the samiti.

We give below some of the reasons which explain the need for the empowerment of women:

### ***1. Health***

One of the reasons for empowerment is health. It is found that women suffer from poor health condition. There is a general practice .in India that the women first serve food to the male members of the family, then comes the turn of children and finally they take food whether it IS adequate or not. They have to bear children and they do not get the required calories which are desirable for pregnant women. Thus, the women suffer in the matter of health because of the surrounding cultural and social set-up.

In the matter of medical treatment also the women are sufferers. We have enough research evidence which shows that both women and children are discriminated against medical treatment. Bidyut Mohanty, for instance, referring to the neglect of women and children health, observes:

With regard to health care, discrimination against females is also reflected in the type and relative frequency in utilising the same. The data show males receive better medical treatment than females in all age groups but this is more prominent in case of childrens.

Mohanty further providing evidence to his generalisation says that even in Punjab the second girl child is often neglected in terms of medicare. He argues that "this kind of discrimination against women cuts across castes and classes. Even though there are monetary transactions among the low caste women which are kept hidden from the male family members, these do not go very far in enhancing their social power. Though they are slightly better placed in this respect than the lower middle class women.

However, women in Kerala are better off compared to their counterparts in other states of the country. Such a state of Kerala women is explained by the fact that in this state the rate of women literacy is very high.

### ***2. Literacy***

The need for empowerment is also for the poor state. of illiteracy among women. In absence of literacy and education the women have to suffer a lot. They work in the fields,

but the fields legally do not belong to them; they live in and work for the upkeep of a house which does not belong to them. It is a real tragedy. In 50 per cent of the states the sex ratio is below the national average. With regard to women literacy rate, only 39 per cent of the total female population above seven years of age is literate. In some of the northern states female literacy rate is much below the national average. For example, the female literacy rate in rural Rajasthan is only 12 (Census of India~ 1991). Besides, so far as the school enrolment is concerned, there is a huge gap between boys and girls. Of course, recently, the life expectancy at birth of females has exceeded marginally to that of males. This can be explained in terms of more females in the age group of 60 and above compared to males. However, in the younger age groups, the female mortality rate has been higher than that of males leading thereby to a missing 100 million women in successive censuses.

### ***3. Economic***

Economically too, women all over the country are weak. They are dependent on males, the latter being their bread-earner. Only a small proportion of women is gainfully employed. They are also culturally so much dominated by the males that they cannot take any decision against the wishes of the males. A female is boss in the office but she is subordinate mistress while in the house.

### ***4. UN Declaration and Women's World Congress***

Empowerment of women is not only a regional matter. The UN declaration of 1975 compelled the national government to shift its emphasis on women's programmes from welfare to development. Earlier to this declaration the national governments including our own floated a large number of welfare programmes for the women. But these programmes do not provide any long-term solution to the problems of women. And, therefore, the declaration prescribed for the development of women.

Yet another effort made towards empowerment of women is the document released in 1985 after the Women's World Congress at Nairobi. Following this conference a national document was prepared laying down forward-looking strategies for women's development. In this document, the question of women political participation was highlighted and it was recommended that 35 per cent of the total seats should be reserved for women. It was also recommended that some posts should be reserved for women at the block and village level bureaucracy. On the economic front, a number of income-generating schemes were

introduced for women. In addition provisions were also made to keep certain proportion of women as beneficiaries in all the developmental schemes like Integrated' Rural Development Programme (IRDPA), Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), and Training of Rural Youth and Self-Employment (TRYSEM). Thus, we find a host of national and international events, coupled with the complex social and economic factors influencing the decisions as regards the status of women, culminating in the reservation of 33.3 per cent of the total seats for them at the panchayat level.

### **5. Atrocities**

Much injustice is done to women all over the country. There is female infanticide observed in different parts of the country. The motivation to get a son is so strong that girl children before they are even born are killed in the womb. Such a practice is found even in metropolitan cities like Delhi and Mumbai. There is a striking evidence from Bihar where midwives are hired for killing female babies on payment of only Rs. 60 and a saree only. There are cases of rape, dowry, deaths and incest sex relations. Women in all walks of their life are discriminated against men. They are victims of atrocities.

As observed earlier, the need for female empowerment was never so urgent as it is today. The 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitution Amendment Act is just only one step towards the development of women.

Empowerment of weaker sections goes back to the constitutional provisions which provide for developmental and protective safeguards for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes. These groups have been given protective safeguards through legislation and reservation of seats in Vidhan Sabhas and Lok Sabha. They are also given protection through the provision of reservation in services, professional institutions, schools and colleges. The Prevention of Atrocities on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Act is a major mechanism to protect the weaker sections.

The development safeguards include Tribal sub-Plan area for implementing area development in tribal majority parts. The development programmes implemented in these areas provide for individual beneficiary schemes and Community Development Programmes. The objective of these programmes is to improve the lifestyle of the weaker sections of society. The end result of these programmes is to empower the weaker sections of the

society. These weaker sections, it must be mentioned, are largely concentrated in Indian villages.

### **16.9 A CRITIQUE OF 73<sup>RD</sup> CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT ACT:-**

It was in April 1993 that the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitution Amendment Act came into force and following it, the different states amended their laws accordingly. Since then, hardly five years have passed. During this period not much empirical research has dwelt on the evaluation of the programme. However, some analysis has been made. Some of the drawbacks of the Act have been pointed out by the critiques which we propose to discuss below:

- (1) Bias towards elites and middle class: Though the Act has a focus on women and weaker sections of society, it is guessed that the creamy-layer of these disadvantaged group would corner most of the benefits. It has been the experience in our country that through the development schemes are oriented to weaker sections, the beneficiaries have always been the higher echelons among the weaker sections. The specialty of the new Panchayati Raj is that is given reservation to women also. But the question is: What class of women would take benefit of this reservation? Surely, the better off women of the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and general sections of people would get their place in the Panchayati Raj. The weakest of the weak, the poorest of the poor would continue to suffer in the new pattern of Panchayati Raj also.
- (2) Illiteracy: The kind of Panchayati Raj which we have floated presupposes some level of education among the village women. As we find today, the female literacy rate is very poor in our villages. In such a situation what would happen to the female members at different tiers of Panchayati Raj. It is believed that as members of PRIs they will work according to wills and wishes of the male members.
- (3) Non-availability of Women: Looking to the socio-economic status of women in rural India, it is difficult for us to find out adequate number of females to work as members of the Panchayati Raj committees. Either we would have inadequate number of women or less qualified women to work as members in various committees. Such a poor situation does not assure us for healthy working of the Panchayati Raj.

- (4) Corrupt leadership and bureaucracy: India's bureaucracy is notorious. It never works without greasing its palm. It is our experience that an overwhelming part of our development money goes to the purse of bureaucrats. The same applies to our leadership also. The rural leadership is more than shrewd. It knows the art of grabbing money. In such a situation, what will be the fate of development in village India is anybody's guess.

### **Problems in the Working of Panchayats**

Panchayati Raj in India faces problems at political economic and social levels. These problems have stood in the way of efficient functioning of the panchayati raj institutions:

#### **At political level and administration level**

- Though the constitution provides elections after every five years, some of the states have tasted elections after decades and in some elections are yet to take place.
- Groupism, caste, class etc play a dominant role in the election and working of the representatives.
- Political interference from the state governments and the administrative agencies has become a common phenomenon.
- There is absence of clear functional jurisdiction for panchayats.
- There is absence of administrative autonomy to the panchayats.
- There is absence of in-built structural and organizational strength to force the administrators to follow the decision
- Use of manpower, money power and muscle power in elections to Panchayati Raj System.

#### **At social level**

- Caste, class, religion and other sectarian interests are playing a dominant role in the working of Panchayati Raj institutions.
- The policy of reservation for weaker sections has not been of much use due to ignorance and illiteracy of people and the representatives

- Anti-social and economically powerful people run the institution from backdoor.

#### **At economic level**

- Paucity of funds and resources to the Panchayati Rai institution.
- There is absence of coherence between the responsibilities and resources
- Dependence upon the doles of the state government.
- Lack of financial autonorny and power to impose taxes, and charges.

#### **16.10 CONCLUSION**

The chapter talks about the Panchayat Raj institution as a mechanism of democratic decentralization of power. It relies on coordination at three levels state, district and village. It includes the functions like Health, Sanitation, Drinking water, Education, employment and other allied factors. Thus the functioning of PRI leads to upliftment of rural social, especially through 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment which includes welfare of women and weaker section.

#### **16.11 Further Readings:-**

Desai, A.R. 1969 Rural sociology in India, Popular Prakshan , Bombay

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Singh, Kartar, 1999 Rural development , Sage Publication, Delhi

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## **17.0    STRUCTURE**

17.1 Objectives

17.2 Introduction

17.3 Meaning of Cooperation and Cooperative societies

17.4 Basic Characteristics of Cooperatives

17.5 Types of Cooperative Societies

17.6 Examples of Cooperative Societies

17.7 Operation Flood: A case Study

17.8 Conclusions

17.9 Further Readings

## **17.1    OBJECTIVES**

The main thrust of the Chapter is the acquire you with:-

- Idea of Cooperatives
- Types of Cooperatives
- Important Cooperatives society in India
- Amul cooperative ; Operation Flood.

## **17.2    INTRODUCTION**

Some preliminary observations are necessary to determine the status of cooperatives

in rural India. The history of rural society shows it vividly that the peasants always stand in need of some financial assistance or cooperation. Historically, therefore, the Indian peasant is born in indebtedness, lives in indebtedness and dies in indebtedness. The situation of indebtedness always requires some agency to advance loans. This introduces the role of an intermediary.

The British Government and the feudal regime, which was in vogue in princely states, did not do anything to create some institution which could eliminate the intermediary and make provision for the advancement of loan.

The government of independent India took the economic status of the villager into consideration. It was planned to create cooperative societies which could come in help for the peasantry as a whole. A.R. Desai, while stressing the importance of cooperative societies in independent India, argues for the encouragement of cooperative sector in rural society.

The history of cooperative development indicates that the government has made all efforts for the establishment of cooperative societies. It is also a fact that our national leaders, including Gandhiji and Nehruji, made all efforts for the promotion of cooperative societies. However, the present-day working of cooperative societies is quite dismal. Leaving aside the states of Gujarat and Maharashtra, the rest of the country does not have a meaningful cooperative society.

Before we discuss the present status of cooperatives in rural India we must take into account various dimensions of this movement. There are serious criticisms on the functioning of this movement. For instance, B.S. Baviskar argues that power conflict has emerged in the cooperative societies. In other words, there is a special kind of 'cooperative politics' in the major cooperative societies of the 'country'. Daniel Thorner, on the other hand, has come out with the findings based on empirical research that the village cooperatives today are controlled and run by the richer sections and are strengthening those strata.

Yet another observation which needs to be made at the beginning is that like any economic innovation, the creation of cooperatives is largely based on caste. The cooperatives survive and continue to function only on the caste economics which prevails in villages. We may try to make our cooperatives quite secular but caste and religion which are inherent in our villages also turn the cooperatives to fulfill the ritual and religious functions.

### 17.3 MEANING OF COOPERATION AND COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

The dictionary meaning of cooperation is “to work together”. However, the meaning of cooperative societies is quite technical and has the context of village cooperatives in India. In one form or the other some kind of cooperative societies are found all over the world. A few of the meanings of cooperative societies given by the experts are explained as under:-

“M.T. Herrick” in the context of peasantry that he describes the cooperative societies. He writes:

*Cooperation is the act of poor persons voluntarily unite for utilizing reciprocally their own forces, resources or both under their mutual management, to their common profit or loss.*

Thus, Herrick brings out a few elements which are essential to any cooperative society: (1) it is an organization of poor, (2) it is voluntary, and (3) it is sharing common resources. The author stresses that the poor peasantry has meager resources and, therefore, they unite together to pull their resources for common good. The basic idea of cooperative society excludes the role of big peasants. It is supposed to be a union of small and marginal peasants.

The cooperative Planning Committee, constituted in 1946, has defined the cooperatives in the context of Indian peasantry. It observes:

*Cooperation is a form of organization in which persons voluntarily associate together on the basis of equality for the promotion of their common interest.*

The committee has elaborated further the meaning of cooperatives. It says that the objective of a cooperative society is to promote the economic interests of the common peasants. The association of members is based on equality. The functions of the cooperative society cannot be fulfilled by individuals. The idea is that what individual cannot do because of his limitations can be done by economic enterprise.

Yet another meaning of cooperatives was to serve the consumers in case of a scarcity that could be caused by war, flood, drought, etc. Then, in the 1940s, the idea of social service emerged. It means help given to the peasants. Recently the meaning of cooperatives

has undergone a revolutionary change. The cooperatives today are formed for the attainment of development. In other words, cooperatives are constituted to provide loans for agricultural inputs, like purchase of implements, manure, digging of wells, etc.

#### **17.4 BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF COOPERATIVES**

As stated above, the scope and meaning of cooperatives has undergone radical change. During the colonial period it was our realization that peasantry was the most exploited group of people. The industrial policy that the colonial regime had adopted, was fatal for small artisans and workers engaged in cotton industry. Gandhiji realised that if the cultivators were not rescued from the onslaught of industrial development, the village would be ruined. The plough, therefore, has always been the hope and glory of the people. It was emphasised that the cultivators had to be financially assisted to increase their farm product and thus made India self-sufficient.

The salient features of cooperatives which we identify today are the products of the policy adopted by post-independent India. The Rural Credit Survey Committee in 1951 suggested that the cooperatives should provide coverage to the rural poor, who have no chance against the vested interests of the landlord-moneylender-trader class. The committee, therefore, recommended that the state government should participate in the share capital of the cooperatives and also provide managerial support and subsidies.

The committee also recommended that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) should support the movement by way of reimbursement of loans extended by cooperative societies. The committee suggested a three-tier structure of the large-size credit cooperative societies at the base. The district cooperative banks as central financial agencies, and at the apex cooperative banks at the state level supported by the agriculture division of the Reserve Bank of India.

Thus, on the basis of the above mentioned provisions of cooperative societies we give below a few features of cooperative societies:

- (1) Organisation of the poor: Theoretically, the cooperative society has no scope for the membership of the rich. In fact, the major function of a cooperative society is to provide credit facilities to the peasants for productive purposes only. It does not give credit for fulfilling social obligations. Thus, a cooperative society is an

association of the poor peasants for meeting their productive needs.

- (2) **Membership is voluntary:** Membership to a cooperative society is voluntary. A peasant should assess his needs and accordingly take membership to a particular society. For instance, where a person does not have any cattle or sugarcane crop, why should he be member of a dairy or sugarcane growers cooperative society. A cooperative society has definite objectives and those who find possibility of their objectives fulfilled should opt for membership.
- (3) **Absence of exploitation:** A cooperative society inherently denies exploitation of its members and consumers. Basically, the society takes care of the mutual economic benefits of its own members. In this way, the cooperative society rejects any exploitation which was this basis of the intermediaries.
- 4) **The role of bank:** The cooperative society cannot left to itself. The government being welfare-oriented cannot remain a spectator only. It has to intervene and play its role in providing assistance to the peasants. It is on this theory that the RBI and other nationalised banks provide assistance to the cooperative societies. The RBI, being the apex bank, has made provisions for the working of cooperative banks.
- 5) **Subsidies:** There is a always some risk involved in advancing loans. Sometimes it so happens that due to flood and scarcity the peasant is unable to repay the loans. Or it is also possible that the input to purchase. In such a situation some subsidy has to be given to the peasant. In other words, through the cooperative societies are autonomous, they are also guided and controlled through banks and government cooperative department.

## **17.5 TYPES OF COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES**

Credit society was the first type of cooperatives. Its objective was to provide credit to the members of the society. Later on, with the increase in the needs of the peasant people, the cooperatives took different forms. If a categorisation of different forms of societies is made today, it would make a long list. However, on the basis of its functioning, the cooperatives may be divided into three types: (1) credit societies, (2) consumers societies, and (3) producers society. These three basic types are further divided into several types. For instance, there is a society of the peasants. This is sub-divided into cotton grower's

society, sugarcane society, wheat producer society and so on and so forth. In the similar way there are sub-types of consumers cooperatives and producers cooperatives. We shall discuss the three major types of cooperatives below:

- (1) **Credit Cooperative Societies:** Credit societies are voluntary and mutual aid associations. The major function of this type of society is to provide credit on personal security or on the basis of nominal security to its members, who are either cultivators, workmen or lower middle class people. They are of two types, viz., of unlimited liability and of liability. The difference between the two is with regard to liability of members, size of shares, territorial scope, division of profits, management, reserve fund, and their business and moral aspect.
- (2) **Consumers Societies:** The membership of these societies consists of agricultural workers and the middle class people who organize a consumer store. The members of the society earn their independent living they are not supposed to depend on the consumer society. The society only helps them in the better utilisation of their income. And, thus lowering their cost of living, correct weighing, quality goods and reasonable prices are the chief aims of consumer's society. These societies were originally started in England where the first store of this kind was launched in 1844.
- (3) **Producers Societies:** A producer's society is organised for the production of goods and services based upon common ownership and management by a group of workers to eliminate the employee-employer relationship.

In our country, the above three types of cooperatives have taken a mixed form. A single society could be a credit, consumer and production society at the same time. Later, we shall have opportunity to discuss this mixed type of cooperative society.

### **History of Cooperative Movement in India**

The experience of British government with India's peasant society on occasions of famine, scarcity gives the idea of providing some financial assistance to the village people. It was also found that Indian peasantry always suffered from lack of funds required for the development of farm produce. The striking factor is that the jagirdars and zamindars always exploited the peasants when the latter failed to deposit the land tax in time. Even

they required money for their subsistence if there was a famine. Realisation of land tax was the first objective of the colonial rule. This prompted the British government to establish credit cooperative societies in the villages. The first Cooperative Credit Societies Act was passed in 1904 to remove the weaknesses of this Act, the new Cooperative Societies Act was passed in 1912. The movement has now made rapid strides. “The government before fostering and supporting it, wanted to be sure if it was developing on right lines. Therefore, it appointed Maclagan Committee in 1914 which suggested certain improvements in its functioning, such as better procedure of audit, emphasis on teachings to members and to have steady progress of the movement. However, in spite of warning given by the committee, the number of societies continued to increase rapidly.

The cooperative movement got a boost during the war period. Various post-war plans were drawn up in the country and they all emphasised the increasing role of cooperative movement. The second report on recommendation and planning issued by the Government of India gave an important place to cooperative movement. As a result, a Cooperative Planning Committee was appointed by the Government of India in 1945.

It was in 1951 that the RBI appointed a committee with the terms of guidance to survey All India Rural Credit Societies. The report of this committee was submitted in 1954. The important suggestions and recommendations given by the committee include the following:

- (1) There should be a partnership of the state government in all kinds of societies (such as credit societies) and banks like Central Bank, State Banks, Cooperative marketing, Storage, Warehousing and all other important societies such as dairying, milk supply, transport and industrial societies.
- (2) A central committee for cooperative training should be set up.
- (3) It would be the responsibility of the state government to implement these programmes. Besides, the other two main agencies will be the Minister of Food and Agriculture of Government of India and the Reserve Bank of India.
- (4) The funding for the cooperative societies of all kinds including the cooperative training centre will be from the following sources:

- (i) Reserve Bank of India;
  - (ii) National Agricultural Credit (Long Term Operation) Fund;
  - (iii) National Agricultural Credit Stabilisation Fund;
  - (iv) State Agricultural Credit (Relief and Guarantee) Fund;
  - (v) State Cooperative Development Fund;
  - (vi) State Cooperative Bank and Central Cooperative Bank.
- (5) The Credit institutions at the primary, secondary and apex levels need to be reorganised and at least 51 per cent of the shares in apex organisations should be held by state government. These apex organisations will purchase 51 per cent of the shares in central organisations and the central institutions in their turn of primary organisations.
- (6) There shall be a Central Land Mortgage Bank in each state and, Primary Land Mortgage Banks at the lower level.
- (7) Primary Village Credit Societies should be reorganised as to have a membership of about 500 persons. And, these should be linked up with marketing societies, in the marketing centres. Processing function is to be developed substantially and specially for the producing sugar, ginning cotton, crushing oil and baling jute.

Most of the above mentioned recommendations were accepted by the Government of India and put into effect under the Second Five Year Plan.

## **17.6 EXAMPLE OF COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES**

While giving the major types of cooperative societies, namely, credit, consumer and producer, there are a large number of big and small cooperative societies working in villages. The implementation of development programmes has added a large number of cooperative societies in the rural areas. For instance, the mild cooperative societies development in Gujarat have given rise to ‘white revolution’. Similarly, the sugarcane cooperative societies in Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra have brought about massive production. Here, we propose to deal with some of the specific societies which have assumed importance at the national level.

### **(1) Agricultural Credit and Multipurpose Societies**

In the beginning, when the cooperative movement was started in 1904, there were only credit societies. During the later years, when there was depression during 1929-30, it was realised that the main weakness of the movement was its absorption in credit activities to the exclusion of others, which went to make up the economic life of the villagers. It was also felt that (i) moneylender could not be dispensed with unless all his functions were taken up, that is, supply credit and marketing; (ii) credit without linking up it with production and marketing offered a dangerous temptation, and (iii) there was paucity of trained personnel to manage various societies in the same village. This idea came to the forefront with the publication of a bulletin by Reserve Bank of India. Since then, it has strongly veered round it, in this country and their formation has also being recommended by various committees including the Cooperative Planning Committee (1946). Since then attempts have been made to organise such societies in various states.

### **(2) Farmers' Service Societies**

The National Commission on Agriculture gave the idea of the formation of Farmers' Service Societies in 1970. These societies have been constituted in a few states. The idea ultimately was to convert the service societies into large-sized multipurpose credit societies. The agricultural credit or multi-purpose credit societies. The agricultural credit or multi-purpose credit societies supply short and medium credit to members in rural areas. These societies get amount mostly from the Central Cooperative Banks and State Cooperative Banks. The long-term loans are supplied by the State Land Development Banks through the Primary Land Development Banks in the different areas of the states. Recently, the short-term, medium-term and long-term loans are advanced by a single agency only.

### **(3) Cooperative Marketing and Processing Societies**

Effort has been made towards the creation of cooperative marketing and processing societies. The marketing societies procure and distribute foodgrains and certain other commodities to be distributed through its branches to the consumers. The processing societies have come out successfully in the field of producing sugar, ginning cotton, crushing oil and baling jute.

#### **(4) Large Scale Agriculture Multipurpose Societies (LAMPS)**

In the 1970s it was realised that the fruits of economic development were not reaching to the poorer and backward strata of the rural society. The small and marginal farmers who formed the bulk of rural households were not getting their due. The concept of Farmers' Service Society was conceived as a device to provide a say to these people in the management of the credit cooperative societies. We have mentioned about these multipurpose cooperative societies earlier. A form of such society was introduced among the tribals. And, here we discuss the LAMPS working among tribals in Tribal Sub-Plan projects.

It must be stressed that the emergence of LAMPS as a Cooperative organisation was specially meant for the tribals. The tribals took to agriculture about 100 years back. They are actually latecomers to agriculture. Earlier to it they lived on forest and forest produce. LAMPS are actually a component of the wider cooperative structure. These are a specific type of cooperative.

- (1) to provide trade facilities to the people of the tribal area;
- (2) to provide loaning facilities to the tribals in order to get them rid of the exploitation by the traders;
- (3) to bridge the gap in development between tribals and non-tribals segment and also to eradicate poverty among the tribals;
- (4) to help the agriculturists in the procurement and marketing of minor forest produce, agricultural commodities, articles of consumption and to maintain eco-system alongwith the guidance for development; and
- (5) to work as an agent of the government or state level cooperative institution and local-self corporation for providing, seed, manure, agriculture implements, foodgrains and consumption articles.

Thus, the introduction of LAMPS, therefore, is made with the objective to cope up with the particular economy of the tribals. LAMPS are found in all the states where there is Tribal Sub-Plan area. No specific findings are available, however, on the functioning or the LAMPS. On a general plane it could be said that much of the success of LAMPS rests

on the awareness of the members of the LAMPS. As a prerequisite to the success, it must be said that the members must be not only educated but familiar with the ideology of cooperatives. Surely, the development agencies have housed the LAMPS in particular villages but the absence of non-awareness results in the defunct LAMPS. Most of them, all the time, are found locked.

### **(5) Milk Supply Societies**

The milk supply societies are also of a specific kind of cooperative societies. There is a network of such societies all over the country. The prime objective of such type of society is to provide good quality milk at reasonable prices to consumers in the urban areas. But, these societies also work for the production of milk in a larger way by the agriculturists. The agriculturists can increase their income by dairy farming. The milk supply societies not only collect the milk available in the villages and supply it to consumers in the town but they also provide agriculturists with funds to purchase more milch animals, feeds to nourish them, and to raise superior cattle. These activities relieve unemployment and underemployment among villagers and convert farming into a paying mixed farming proposition. The number of milk unions and milk supply societies was very small in the beginning. However, there has been tremendous increase in it and the business due to introduction of certain special schemes.”

### **(6) Sugar Cooperatives**

Sugar cooperatives are essentially processing cooperatives. The sugar cooperatives are formed in the regions where sugarcane is grown in abundances. Generally, the cane growers in a given area, for instance, in a cluster of 100 villages, form a cooperative. The members cultivate cane on their own lands. The sugarcane cooperative society provides a number of services; e.g., it gives crop loans and provides automatic repayment, helps to establish ancillary organisation, such as lift irrigation societies, poultry cooperatives etc., distributes hybrid seeds, chemical fertilisers and research information, provides soil testing services, organizes the harvest and transport of cane through contract teams, processes the cane into sugar and markets the sugar and distributes the profits in the form of high cane prices to farmer members.

## 17.7 OPERATION FLOOD:-A CASE STUDY

Operation flood (OF) can rightly be considered the world's biggest dairy development programme in terms of its coverage and longevity. It covers over 10 million rural milk-producing households all over India, and, initially launched on 1 July 1970, it is still under way. It is credited with having ushered in the 'White Revolution' in India, by creating a flood of rurally produced milk and enabling India to achieve self-sufficiency in milk and milk products. Thanks largely to OF, India is likely to emerge as the world's highest milk-producing country by the year 1998-99. The programme has also generated a lot of debate nationally and internationally about its strategy, implementation and impacts.

### Genesis of O.F.

Operation Flood owes its origin to the late Prime Minister, Mr Lal Bahadur Shastri. The Kaira (Kheda) District Cooperative Milk Producers' Union Limited, popularly known as AMUL (Anand Milk Union Limited), invited Prime Minister Shastri to inaugurate its most modern, computerised Cattle Feed Plant at Kanjari, a village situated eight km away from Anand. The Prime Minister commissioned the plant on 31 October, 1964, amidst a gathering of thousands of milk producers. Abekke Boerma, Executive Director of the World Food Programme, was also present on the occasion. After having a hectic schedule in the day, beginning very early in the morning with a visit to a village milk producers cooperative society's milk collection centre, and continuing with the inauguration of the Cattle Feed Plant, the Prime Minister chose to stay overnight with a farmer in a nearby village. Verghese Kurien, the then general manager of AMUL, selected Ajarapura village for the purpose. The village had a milk producers' cooperative society having 411 members. The prime Minister strolled through the village, talking to villagers, asking questions and listening attentively to replies. He talked to men and women, small and marginal farmers, *harijans* and Muslims, and had his evening meal of *jowar roti*, *dal* (pulse curry) and *chhas* (buttermilk) with his host, Ramanbhai P. Patel and his family. The Prime Minister kept on talking to villagers, until he was persuaded to go to bed around two in the morning. Next morning, Kurien met the Prime Minister for the first time. The prime Minister asked Kurien a number of questions, including what the secret of success of AMUL was. Among other things, Kurien told him that there could be an AMUL at Anand because there was a huge market for its milk in Bombay, not too far away, and that the milk producers themselves

owned the AMUL dairy and operated it through competent professionals employed by them, and hence accountable to them. The Prime Minister was so convinced about the AMUL model of dairy development, that he asked Kurien to prepare a programme, later christened Operation Flood, and sent it to the Prime Minister. On 2 December 1964, the Prime Minister sent a demi-official letter to all his cabinet ministers and to the chief ministers and governors of all states, commending the programme to all of them for implementation. The Prime Minister also approved the establishment of an organization, the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), with the mandate to replicate the AMUL model all over India. The NDDB was officially registered on 27 September 1965 as an autonomous government society under the administrative control of the Union Ministry of Agriculture. Prime Minister Shastri's most valuable legacy to India was perhaps NDDB, and Operation Flood, that NDDB designed and launched.

At Kurien's insistence, NDDB was headquartered at Anand. The Prime Minister appointed Kurien as honorary chairman of NDDB, a position which he held from 1965 until 27 November 1998. Officially no guidelines were set for NDDB, beyond an echo of the Prime Minister's wish for replication of AMUL all over the country. No authority was given to NDDB to undertake projects; perhaps it was regarded as merely an advisory body. After having realised the limitations of NDDB in raising adequate funds for implementing the Prime Minister's wish, Kurien persuaded the GOI to permit NDDB to charge fees for its consultancy services. Consequently, NDDB was able to generate some funds from dairy constituencies and turnkey jobs, mostly in Gujarat. This was made possible by AMUL's expertise, placed at the disposal of NDDB. As a matter of fact, to begin with, NDDB had only an honorary chairman, honorary secretary, and honorary treasurers, who were all employees of AMUL, and NDDB's office was housed in an AMUL office building.

As a happened, after a lot of hassles, NDDB received only an initial grant of one lakh rupees from GOI. Now and then, it also received ad hoc assistance from state government agencies. But such meager and uncertain assistance dashed NDDB's hopes of fulfilling Shastri's mandate. So Kurien thought of an innovative plan to set up a modern slaughter house and meat processing plant as a means of generating funds from export of hides and sale of meat in domestic markets. Kurien went to Rome and placed his proposal for financial assistance before the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), who at that time was an Indian, B.R. Sen. Although Kurien won over B.R. Sen,

the proposal was rejected by the then Union Minister for Food and Agriculture, Jagjivan Ram: India in the mid-sixties was not prepared for such a project.

Consequently, Kurien was compelled to explore other sources of funding for NDDB. By a stroke of luck, he came to know from a knowledgeable person about an impending threat to India's dairy industry. He was told that mountains of surplus skimmed milk powder (SMP) and butter oil (BO) had been building up in Europe for quite some time, and that these surpluses would be shipped to India as free food aid, exactly when state-owned urban dairies had begun to lobby for an increase in SMP imports. Kurien feared, and rightly so, that with the donated SMP and BO being recombined into milk and sold in Indian markets, the price of fresh milk produced in India would be forced down to a level that was unremunerative to the producer, which would cripple India's infant dairy industry. Not only this, when the free aid was no longer available, doors of expanded milk markets in India would be open for multinational companies to slide in and make money. Kurien converted this threat into an opportunity. He devised a plan proposing the surplus SMP and BO be gifted to NDDB, which would then recombine them into milk and regulate the flow of that milk into the Indian market, such that the producers' price of fresh milk was not depressed below the remunerative level. The proceeds from the sale of milk made out of the gifted SMP and BO were to be used for establishing feeder balancing dairies, mother dairies, cattle feed plants, artificial insemination centres, and so on. This was the novel and brilliant idea which was translated into a project proposal by Michael Halse, an Englishman who was a graduate of the Harvard Business School, then a Ford Foundation visiting professor at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, doing some case studies in AMUL.

In 1968, Kurien sent his proposal to GOI for financial assistance. The then Director General of FAO, Adekko Boerma, had not forgotten Kurien, nor the inauguration of the Kanjari Cattle Feed Plant by Prime Minister Shastri, four years earlier. Boerma was impressed by the very innovative proposal, when it was placed before him after having been rescued from the onslaught of the Indian bureaucracy. He guided the proposal through many vicissitudes to its final approval at the FAO General Meeting in October 1969. The project was the biggest ever undertaken by the World Food Programme of FAO, and also the first that FAO had accepted on such terms. The name given by FAO to the project - WFP 618 - was not found appealing, hence NDDB substituted it with 'Operating

Flood'. In November 1969, NDDDB submitted to GOI a detailed plan for the first phase of Operation Flood (OF-I). OF-I was formally launched on 1 July 1970 by the newly formed Indian Dairy Corporation (IDC). IDC was wholly GOI-owned corporation specifically set up to serve as a 'finance and promotion' house for OF. Originally, OF-I was to conclude in five years, but it had to be extended until 31 March 1981. Concurrently, OF-IOI was launched on 2 October 1979. It concluded on 31 March 1985. OF-III was launched on 1 April 1985, and concluded on 31 March 1996. Since 1 April 1996, OF-IV has been under way in some selected unions that are currently financially viable, but vulnerable to threats from competition of the private trade, or those that are currently sick, but can be turned around.

### **Objectives**

OF was aimed at creating a virtual 'flood' of rurally produced milk in India, by helping rural milk producers in 18 milk sheds in 10 selected states of India to organise Anand pattern dairy cooperatives (APDC). The basic philosophy behind OF was that milk production in the rural milk sheds could be encouraged only by providing an efficient channel and a ready market for the rurally produced milk. The milk production, procurement, processing and marketing organisations were to be organised on Anand model cooperatives, which had already proved to be successful before OF.

More specifically, the main objectives of phase one of were as follows.

1. To make available wholesome milk at stable and reasonable prices to the bulk of city consumers - including vulnerable groups like pre-school children and nursing and expectant mothers-with major effects on protein intake.
2. To enable the dairy organisations involved in the project to identify and satisfy the needs of consumers and producers, so that consumers' preferences could be fulfilled economically, and producers could earn a larger share of the amount paid by consumers for their milk.
3. To improve the productivity of dairy farming in rural areas, with the long-term objective of achieving self-sufficiency in milk, there-by bringing about major increases in agricultural output and incomes, with special emphasis on the improvement of the income of small farmers and landless people.

4. To remove dairy cattle from the cities, where they represent a growing problem of genetic waste, social cost and public health.
5. To establish a broad basis for the accelerated development of the national dairy industry in the project period, as well as the post-project period.

### **The AMUL Model of Dairy Development**

Operation Flood sought to replicate the AMUL model of dairy development all over India. The AMUL model is based on the Anand pattern cooperative structure, which seems to be the most appropriate form of people's organisation for rural development. The Anand pattern dairy cooperatives (APDCs) formulate and implement their own policies and programmes for dairy development in their area, and hire professional managers and technicians for these purposes. The role of the government is limited to assisting the cooperatives financially, in implementing their own programmes. Government funds for dairy development are placed at the disposal of the cooperatives. The Anand pattern cooperative structure has the following salient features:

#### **Three-tier Organisational structure**

This consists of a milk producers' cooperative society at the village level, a cooperative milk producers' union at the district level, and a cooperative milk producers' federation at the state level. This structure permits the horizontal and vertical integration of all the dairy development activities in a state, and makes it possible to realize the economies of scale in procurement, processing and marketing of milk through the use of modern technology.

#### **Producer-elected leadership and Decentralised**

#### **Decision Making**

Milk producers who are members in good standing of their village cooperatives constitute a pool from which policy makers are elected. Management committees at the society level and boards of directors at both the union and federation levels have both powers and responsibilities for formulating their respective policies, and appointing their chief executives who are responsible for implementing the policies. This democratic and decentralised policy making structure may well be called an organizational innovation which has evolved over some 50 years since 1946, when the first Anand pattern cooperatives

was founded.

### **Cadre of Professionally Competent Managers and Technicians**

Management is one of the crucial determinants of the success of a development programme. In the Anand pattern cooperative structure, special emphasis is placed on finding, attracting and retaining professionally competent managers, technicians and other supporting staff, to ensure the most efficient functioning of the system. The staff is always conscious of the fact that they are the employees of the milk producers, and hence they must work with full zeal and devotion in the best interests of their masters. A management institute called the Institute of Rural Management, Anand (IRMA) was specifically established by NDDDB to meet the managerial manpower requirements of the Anand pattern rural producers' organisations in the cooperative sector.

### **Provision of Necessary Production Inputs and services**

Anand pattern cooperatives provide their members with all the necessary inputs and services for increasing milk production. Nutrition's and well-balanced cattle feed is supplied by the unions throughout the year at a reasonable price and in adequate quantities through the village cooperatives, strictly on a cash basis. Artificial insemination to upgrade the local stock of much animals, necessary animal health care and improved quality of fodder seeds are also provided by the unions to the members at nominal cost.

### **Integration of Production, Processing and Marketing**

These three functions are fully integrated to derive full benefits from the backward and forward linkages between them, and to eliminate the exploitation of producers and consumers by intermediaries. The year-round assured market at remunerative prices for producers' milk provides the necessary incentive for the producers to increase their milk production.

### **Continuous and Concurrent Audit**

Anand pattern cooperatives are subject to continuous and concurrent audit to ensure clean business and to minimize the chances of corruption.

Cash Payment for Milk Daily/Week/Fortnightly on the Basis of Fat Content

This has helped in meeting the day-to-day cash requirements of the members, as also in maintaining their faith in the system.

### **Contribution to village Amenities**

Anand pattern village cooperatives set aside a considerable portion of their annual net profits to help provide basic village amenities and facilities, like schools, health centres, libraries, panchayat *ghars*, roads and drinking water. These activities serve to win the loyalty and support of other villagers who are not members of the cooperative.

These characteristics of the Anand pattern cooperatives make them potentially suitable for dealing with the programmes of rural development as well.

### **17.8 CONCLUSION**

Cooperative is an arrangement whereby the people try to manage the resources by themselves. It can be credit cooperatives, consumer society, producer society. At works on the principle of no profit no loss with voluntary membership. In Indian case the sugar cooperatives and AMUL cooperatives are the best example of cooperatives.

### **17.9 Further Readings:**

Doshi, S. Jain, 1999; Rural sociology, Rawat Publishers, Jaipur.

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**STRUCTURE**

- 18.1 Objectives
- 18.2 Introduction
- 18.3 Historical Development
- 18.4 Objectives of Act
- 18.5 Salient Features of Act
- 18.6 Provision under NREGA
- 18.7 Implementing Agencies
- 18.8 Roles of Responsibilities of Key Agencies
- 18.9 Criticism

**18.1 OBJECTIVES**

After going through this chapter you will be able to understand :

- 1. Regarding MG NREGA
- 2. Its Objectives
- 3. Provisions
- 4. Features etc.

**18.2 INTRODUCTION**

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, NREGA also known as National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, NREGS is Indian legislation enacted on August 2, 2005 and notified on September 25, 2005. The scheme

provides a legal guarantee for at least one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage of 120 per day in 2009 prices. If they fail to do so the govt. has to pay the salary at their homes. The Central government outlay for scheme is 4000 billion in Financial Year 2010-11.

### **18.3 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

This act was brought about by the UPA coalition government supported by the left parties. Dr. Jean Drèze, a Belgian born economist, at the Delhi School of Economics, has been a major influence on this project. A variety of people's movements and organisations actively campaigned for this act. NREGA was launched on 2 February 2006 from Anantapur in Andhra Pradesh and initially covered 200 of the "poorest" districts of the country. The Act was implemented in phased manner; 130 districts were added from 2007 to 2008. With its spread to over 625 districts across the country, the flagship program of the UPA Government has the potential to increase the purchasing power of rural poor, reduce distress migration and to create useful assets in rural India. Also, it can foster social and gender equality as 23% workers under the scheme are Scheduled Castes, 17% Scheduled Tribes and 50% women. In 2010-11, 41 million households were employed on NREGA worksites.

### **18.4 OBJECTIVE OF THE ACT**

The objective of the Act is to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Besides this the act was introduced with an aim of improving the purchasing power of the rural people, primarily semi or un-skilled work to people living in rural India, whether or not they are below the poverty line. Around one-third of the stipulated work force is women. The law was initially called the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) but was renamed on 2 October 2009 as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

### **18.5 SALIENT FEATURES OF THE ACT**

i) Adult members of a rural household, willing to do unskilled manual work, may

apply for registration in writing or orally to the local Gram Panchayat.

- ii) The Gram Panchayat after due verification will issue a Job Card. The Job Card will bear the photograph of all adult members of the household willing to work under NREGA and is free of cost.
- iii) The Job Card should be issued within 15 days of application.
- iv) A Job Card holder may submit a written application for employment to the Gram Panchayat, stating the time and duration for which work is sought. The minimum days of employment have to be at least fourteen.
- v) The Gram Panchayat will issue a dated receipt of the written application for employment, against which the guarantee of providing employment within 15 days operates.
- vi) Employment will be given within 15 days of application for work, if it is not then daily unemployment allowance as per the Act, has to be paid liability of payment of unemployment allowance is of the States.
- vii) Work should ordinarily be provided within 5 km radius of the village. In case work is provided beyond 5 km, extra wages of 10% are payable to meet additional transportation and living expenses.
- viii) Wages are to be paid according to the Minimum Wages Act 1948 for agricultural laborers in the State, unless the Centre notifies a wage rate which will not be less than Rs. 60/ per day. Equal wages will be provided to both men and women.
- ix) Wages are to be paid according to piece rate or daily rate. Disbursement of wages has to be done on weekly basis and not beyond a fortnight in any case.
- x) At least one-third beneficiaries shall be women who have registered and requested work under the scheme.
- xi) Work site facilities such as crèche, drinking water, shade have to be provided.
- xii) The shelf of projects for a village will be recommended by the gram sabha and approved by the zilla panchayat.

- xiii) At least 50% of works will be allotted to Gram Panchayats for execution.
- xiv) Permissible works predominantly include water and soil conservation, forestation and land development works.
- xv) A 60:40 wage and material ratio has to be maintained. No contractors and machinery is allowed.
- xvi) The Central Government bears the 100 percent wage cost of unskilled manual labor and 75 percent of the material cost including the wages of skilled and semi skilled workers
- xvii) Social Audit has to be done by the Gram Sabha
- xviii) Grievance redressal mechanisms have to be put in place for ensuring a responsive implementation process.
- xix) All accounts and records relating to the Scheme should be available for public scrutiny.

## **18.6 PROVISIONS UNDER NREGA**

- \* Adult members of a rural household, willing to do unskilled manual work, are required to make registration in writing or orally to the local Gram Panchayat
- \* The Gram Panchayat after due verification will issue a Job Card. The Job Card will bear the photograph of all adult members of the household willing to work under NREGA and is free of cost.
- \* The Job Card should be issued within 15 days of application.
- \* A Job Card holder may submit a written application for employment to the Gram Panchayat, stating the time and duration for which work is sought. The minimum days of employment have to be at least fourteen.
- \* The Gram Panchayat will issue a dated receipt of the written application for employment, against which the guarantee of providing employment within 15 days operates
- \* Employment will be given within 15 days of application for work, if it is not then daily unemployment allowance as per the Act, has to be paid liability of payment of unemployment allowance is of the States.

- \* Work should ordinarily be provided within 5 km radius of the village. In case work is provided beyond 5 km, extra wages of 10% are payable to meet additional transportation and living expenses
- \* Wages are to be paid according to the Minimum Wages Act 1948 for agricultural labourers in the State, unless the Centre notices a wage rate which will not be less than 60 (US\$1.10) per day. Equal wages will be provided to both men and women.

**Note:** The original version of the Act was passed with Rs155/ day as the minimum wage that needs to be paid under NREGA. However, a lot of states in India already have wage regulations with minimum wages set at more than 100 (US\$1.80) per day. NREGA's minimum wage has since been changed to 130 (US\$2.40) per day.

- \* Wages are to be paid according to piece rate or daily rate. Disbursement of wages has to be done on weekly basis and not beyond a fortnight in any case.
- \* At least one-third beneficiaries shall be women who have registered and requested work under the scheme.
- \* Work site facilities such as crèche, drinking water, shade have to be provided
- \* The shelf of project for a village will be recommended by the gram sabha and approved by the zilla panchayat.
- \* At least 50% of works will be allotted to Gram Panchayats for execution
- \* Permissible works predominantly include water and soil conservation, afforestation and land development works
- \* A 60:40 wage and material ratio has to be maintained. No contractors and machinery is allowed
- \* The Central Govt. bears the 100 percent wage cost of unskilled manual labour and 75 percent of the material cost including the wages of skilled and semi skilled workers
- \* Social Audit has to be done by the Gram Sabha
- \* Grievance redressal mechanisms have to be put in place for ensuring a

responsive implementation process.

## **NREGA GOALS**

- a. Strong social safety net for the vulnerable groups by providing a fall-back employment source, when other employment alternatives are scarce or inadequate
- b. Growth engine for sustainable development of an agricultural economy. Through the process of providing employment on works that address causes of chronic poverty such as drought, deforestation and soil erosion, the Act seeks to strengthen the natural resource base of rural livelihood and create durable assets in rural areas. Effectively implemented, NREGA has the potential to transform the geography of poverty
- c. Empowerment of rural poor through the processes of a rights-based Law
- d. New ways of doing business, as a model of governance reform anchored on the principles of transparency and grass root democracy

## **18.7 IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES**

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, in its performance audit of the implementation of MGNREGA has found "significant deficiencies" in the implementation of the act. The plan was launched in February 2006 in 200 districts and eventually extended to cover 593 districts. 44,940,870 rural households were provided jobs under NREGA during 2008-09, with a national average of 48 working days per household. In recent times, NREGA workers have faced problems due to delays in payment of wages, some of which have been pending for months. In July 2012, the Government admitted that the programme is plagued with corruption and it needs to be dealt with meaningfully. The Gram Panchayat is the single most important agency for executing works as the act mandate's earmarking a minimum of 50% of the Gram Panchayat. The other implementing agencies can be intermediate and District Panchayats, line departments of the Government, Public Sector Undertakings of the central and state governments, Cooperative Societies with a majority shareholding by the central

and state government and reputed NGOs having a proven track record of performance. Self help groups may also be considered as possible implanting agencies.

## **WORKS AND ACTIVITIES UNDER NREGA**

The NREGA achieves twin objectives of rural development and employment. The MGNREGA stipulates that works must be targeted towards a set of specific rural development activities such as: water conservation and harvesting, afforestation, rural connectivity, flood control and protection such as construction and repair of embankments, etc. Digging of new tanks/ponds, percolation tanks and construction of small check dams are also given importance. The employers are given work such as land leveling, tree plantation, etc. First a proposal is given by the Panchayat to the Block Office and then the Block Office decides whether the work should be sanctioned. In Rangareddy district manchal mandal the dry land horticulture and plantation of trees on the bunds of the fields taken up under MGNREGA programme is taken up in a big way. MGNREGA is a poor and those family are provided work in at a time.

## **SANCTIONING OF WORK**

All the work is required to obtain administrative sanction and technical sanction. The gram Panchayats are generally the appropriate authorities empowered to start work and to allocate employment among persons who have applied for work. The Programme officer shall also act as an authority empowered to start if the demand for employment is either received by the programme officer or referred to it by the Gram Panchayat.

## **FUNDING OF NREGA**

MGNREGA started with an initial outlay of \$2.5bn (Rs113 billion) in year 2006-07. The funding has considerably been increased as shown in the table below:

S. No.	Year	Total Outlay(TO)	Wage Expenditure (Percent of TO)
1	2006-07	\$2.5bn	66
2	2007-08	\$2.6bn	68
3	2008-09	\$6.6bn	67
4	2009-10	\$8.68bn	70

## **PAYMENT OF WAGES THROUGH BANKS AND POST OFFICES**

All the payments of NREGA wages through Banks or Post Offices are a useful means of separating payment agencies from implementing agencies.

- a) Bank/Post office accounts should be opened on behalf of all concerned labourers by an appropriate authority (Bank or Gram Panchayat.) labourers should not be required to open their own Bank account.
- b) Special awareness and outreach activities should be conducted to ensure that all labourers including women are able to handle bank procedures.
- c) Payment should not be made through individual cheque drawn in favour of workers to avoid use of large number of cheques.
- d) All data regarding wage payment through Bank/post office must be recorded in the job card.

### **MAINTENANCE OF FUNDS BY THE GRAM PANCHAYATS:**

1. Each Gram Panchayat will have a single bank account for the purpose of implementing NREGS work. This NREGS account will be operated jointly by the President and the secretary of the Gram Panchayat.
2. Funds from the NREGS account may be spent on NREGS works after only these works have received the required Administrative and Technical Sanction from the competent authorities
3. The NREGS- related account of the Gram Panchayat accounts of the Gram Panchayat shall be presented for scrutiny at the biannual social audits of the Gram Sabha, in pre- specified formats.
4. NREGS funds at the Gram Panchayat level cannot be used for other purposes under any circumstances.

### **RECORDS TO BE MAINTAINED**

Proper maintenance of records is one of the critical success factors in the implementation of NREGA. In order to facilitate systematic collection of

information at various levels, following records are to be maintained under NREGA.

**Muster Roll Issue Register:** It should be maintained by the Programme Office who is the Muster Roll issuing authority. This register helps to correlate the Muster Rolls Issued with the work and the agency for which it is issued.

**Muster Roll Receipt Register For Gram Panchayats:** this is to be maintained by the Gram panchayat which receives the Muster Roll from the programme officers. It contains the details of the receipts of the used Muster Roll given to Gram Panchayats by other implementing agencies.

**Job Card Register:** This Register, the details of the members of the households who have been issued job cards are given. It is maintained by Gram Panchayat/Programme Officer.

**Works Register:** It contains details of the work such as number and date of sanction order, completion date, expenditure, date of social audit, etc. it is maintained by the Programme Officer/Gram Panchayat/Other Implementing Agencies.

## **18.8 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF KEY AGENCIES**

### **Central Government:**

1. Make rules
2. Issue guidelines
3. Notify areas of application of Act
4. Facilitate technical support
5. Monitoring and Evaluation and Research

### **State Government:**

1. Make and notify the rural employment guarantee scheme
2. Budget Provision for and Release of state share
3. Provide technical support
4. Training

## **GRAM SABHA**

1. Assist in identification of beneficiaries.
2. Recommend developmental works

## **PROGRAMME OFFICER**

1. Ensure that every applicant is provided unskilled manual works in accordance with the provision of the scheme within 15 days.
2. Match the demand for employment with the employment opportunities in the block.
3. Receive the application for work and issue a dated receipt to the applicant and this responsibility is shared with the panchayats.
4. Keep a copy of the muster roles available for inspection.
5. Ensure that regular social audits of all works are carried out by the Gram Sabha.
6. Prepare an annual report on the implementation of the act in the block.

## **MGNREGA**

The law was initially called the national Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) but was renamed as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on 2nd October 2009.

## **WORKS/ACTIVITIES**

The MGNREGA achieves twin objectives of rural development and employment. The MGNREGA stipulates that works must be targeted towards a set of specific rural development activities such as: water conservation and harvesting, afforestation, flood control and protection such as construction and repair of embankments, etc. digging of new tanks/ ponds are also given importance. The employers are given work such as land leveling, tree plantation, etc.

## **PARADIGM SHIFT FROM WAGE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES**

NREGA marks a paradigm shift from all precedent wage employment

programmes. The significant aspects of this paradigm shift are captured below:

- i) NREGA provides a statutory guarantee of wage employment.
- ii) It provides a rights-based framework for wage employment. Employment is dependent upon the worker exercising the choice to apply for registration, obtain a Job Card, and seek employment for the time and duration that the worker wants.
- iii) There is a 15 day time limit for fulfilling the legal guarantee of providing employment.
- iv) The legal mandate of providing employment in a time bound manner is underpinned by the provision of Unemployment Allowance.
- v) The Act is designed to offer an incentive structure to the States for providing employment as ninety percent of the cost for employment provided is borne by the Centre. There is a concomitant disincentive for not providing employment as the States then bear the double indemnity of unemployment and the cost of unemployment allowance.
- vi) Unlike the earlier wage employment programmes that were allocation based. NREGA is demand driven. Resource transfer under NREGA is based on the demand for employment and this provides another critical incentive to States to leverage the Act to meet the employment needs of the poor.
- vii) NREGA has extensive inbuilt transparency safeguards.

## **DRAWBACKS AND CHALLENGES**

However, while the objectives are laudable, MGNREGA is beset with many drawbacks and challenges, and consequently considerable trenchant criticism. The drawbacks and challenges form a long list and include :

1. Registration problems in terms of caste discrimination.
2. Uniform distribution of job cards is a time consuming process and leads to dissatisfaction.
3. Illegal charges levied on people for application forms.

4. Non-issuance of receipts to applicants.
5. Unavailability of necessary facilities at the work places.
6. Improper maintenance of attendance of the workers.
7. Payments of wages delayed.
8. Measurement of work done by the workers a major problem.
9. Inadequate number of officials for the scheme.
10. Delay in appointments of officials in the villages.

### **18.9 CRITICISM**

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act works towards the betterment of rural areas by giving employment to unskilled rural dwellers. But the scheme is by no means free from corruption which seems to have become endemic in the country. The points of criticism form a much longer list than the drawbacks and challenges faced by the scheme and include :

- \* The Planning Commission has criticised that the majority of the jobs that are created in this scheme are mainly in the areas of water conservation, land development and drought proofing, whereas, the scheme was designed for overall rural development.
- \* Poor implementation has been a major area of concern in this scheme and criticism on issues such as lack of balanced development and proper, timely action is commonplace.
- \* The Planning Commission has also pointed out that payments to the workers are delayed as there is a late measurement of work.
- \* The upcoming changes are likely to create chances where rural jobs schemes would be used as a medium of vote banks for huge expenditures.
- \* It is felt that the scheme, instead of making any improvements in the rural infrastructure, is just a way of redistributing income.
- \* There are not enough administrative and technical officials. The lack of administrative power in running the scheme in a proper decentralised manner to accomplish the building of blocks and capacity is an area of

concern.

- \* The main problem with the scheme is that a grievance redressal system does not exist. As a result, workers find it very difficult to find a solution to their problems.
- \* As the main focus of the scheme is to provide local employment, it may be discouraging rural workers from going to better places where they can improve their skills. This could well delay the process of achieving economic transformation.
- \* There are lots of deficiencies in the making of job cards and even if job cards are made, they are not handed over to the desired person within the stipulated time.
- \* The payment mode is also very contradictory and in some cases it has also been found that payments are made in the name of dead persons.
- \* Fake job cards and ghost beneficiaries continue to be problem areas.
- \* Only those people closely associated with the Sarpanch get the proper stipulated work duration of 100 days, while the others, who are often in the majority, do not enjoy the full benefits.
- \* The role of villagers in theoretical terms is very high but in practical terms the role of villagers is very minimal in the social audit as majority of the villagers are still not fully aware about the scheme.

Though the scheme in general has provided a broader prospective, its drawbacks are resulting in a lot of questions being raised about its actual viability and value. Less than a year ago, a critique in Business Standard pointed out that due to MGNREGA "Farmers have been complaining about their inability to get cheap labour for their farms. Industry, too, has raised the alarm saying that this is squeezing their margins; higher rural wages mean fewer people are willing to work on construction sites, where a slowdown implies lower output increases in steel, cement and even biscuits that are had by the construction workers during their tea break..." Uneven distribution of benefits is another drawback which has been acknowledged even by Union Rural Development Minister Jairam Ramesh, who said

that implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is not satisfactory in states like Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha. Replying to a question in the Rajya Sabha in May this year, he said that despite poverty and unemployment in the three eastern states, demand for rural job is not so much as in the other well-to-do states. It was also in May that a radically improved version of MNREGA, expanding the schedule of work under the rural job scheme to enhance productivity in 30 areas including watershed related works, agriculture, livestock, fisheries and sanitation came into force on paper. How it will work out at the ground level remains to be seen. It must be underlined that the Rural Development Ministry spends about 40,000 crores rupees each year on the job guarantee scheme.

## **CRITICISMS**

Many criticisms have been levelled at the programme, which has been argued to be no more effective than other poverty reduction programs in India. The program is beset with controversy about corrupt officials, deficit financing as the source of funds for the program, poor implementation, and unintended destructive effect on poverty. A 2008 report claimed the state of Rajasthan as an exception wherein the rural population was well informed of their rights and about half of the population had gained an income from the entitlement program. However, a 2011 Wall Street Journal report claims that the program has been a failure. Even in Rajasthan, despite years of spending and the creation of government mandated unskilled rural work, no major roads have been built, no new homes, schools or hospitals or any infrastructure to speak of has resulted from the program.

At national level, a key criticism is corruption. Workers hired under the MGNREGA program say they are frequently not paid in full or forced to pay bribes to get jobs, and aren't learning any new skills that could improve their long-term prospects and break the cycle of poverty. There are also claims of fictitious laborers and job cards by corrupt officials causing so called leakage in program spending.

Another important criticism is the poor quality of public works schemes' completed product. In a February 2012 interview, Jairam Ramesh, the Minister of Rural Development for the central government of India, admitted that the

roads and irrigation canals built by unskilled labor under this program are of very poor quality and wash away with any significant rains. Villagers simply dig new irrigation pits every time one is washed away in the monsoons. The completed works do not add to the desperately needed rural infrastructure.

The MGNREGA programme spent US\$ 9 billion in the 2011 fiscal year according to official data. Economists have raised some concerns about the sustainability of this subsidy scheme - India's fiscal deficit is expected to reach 5.6 per cent of GDP this year, compared with 5.1 per cent last year. The MGNREGA program has been found to distort labor markets and has helped - along with fuel and fertilizer subsidies - to balloon India's federal fiscal deficit.

Yet another criticism is the unintended effect of MGNREGA in terms of skill growth. A review published by India in September 2011 conceded that the lack of skilled technicians at almost every site under MGNREGA program, along with rules banning the use of machinery or contractors (labour is usually by shovel). Such bureaucratic regulations mean that the labourers learn no new skill, and that the ponds, roads, drains, dams and other assets built with manual labour are often of wretched quality. The idea behind MGNREGA program is to create as many jobs as possible for unskilled workers. But in practice, say critics, it means no one learns new skills, only basic projects get completed and the poor stay poor - dependent on government checks.

"We work because there's high unemployment here and the land is less fertile." But he questioned the point, saying "There's no meaning to it. Instead of this they should build proper roads."

A multi-million-Rupee fraud has also been suspected where many people who have been issued the NREGA card are either employed with other government jobs or are not even aware that they have a Job Card. The productivity of labourers involved under NREGA is considered to be lower because of the fact that labourers consider it as a better alternative to working under major projects. There is criticism from construction companies that NREGA has affected the availability of labour as labourers prefer to working under NREGA to working under construction projects.

It is also widely criticised that NREGA has contributed to farm labour shortage. In July 2011, the government has advised the states to suspend the NREGA programme during peak farming periods. The National Advisory Committee (NAC) advocated the government for NREGA wages linkage with statutory minimum wages which is under Minimum wages act as NREGA workers get only Rs100 per day.

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## **STRUCTURE**

- 19.1 Objectives
- 19.2 Introduction
- 19.3 Economic Liberalization
- 19.4 Economic Liberalization in India
- 19.5 Policies
- 19.6 Impact
- 19.7 Economic Liberalization Social Transformation

### **19.1 OBJECTIVES**

After going through this chapter you will be able to understand :

1. Concept of economic liberalization
2. Policies and impact of it.

### **19.2 INTRODUCTION**

Since Independence India followed the mixed framework by combining the advantages of the capitalist economic system with those of the socialist economic system. Some scholars argue that, over the years this policy resulted in the establishment of variety of rules and laws, which were aimed at controlling and regulating the economy,

ended up instead in hampering the process of growth and development. Others state that India, which started its developmental part from near stagnation, has since been able to achieve growth in savings, developed a diversified industrial sector which produces a variety of goods and has experienced sustained expansion of agricultural output which has ensued food security.

In 1991, India met with an economic crisis relating to its external debt- the government was not able to make repayments on its borrowings from abroad; foreign exchange reserves. The crisis was further compounded by rising prices of essential goods. All these led to introduce a new set of policy measures which changed the direction of our developmental strategies. Therefore, the policy of liberation was introduced to put an end to these restrictions and open up various sectors of the economy. Though a few liberalisation measures in 1980 in the areas of industrial licensing, export-import policy, technology upgradation, fiscal policy and foreign investment, reform policies initiated in 1991 were more comprehensive. The reform policies introduced in and after 1991 removed many of these restrictions.

### **19.3 ECONOMIC LIBERALIZATION**

Economic liberalization is a very broad term that usually refers to fewer government regulations and restrictions in the economy in exchange for greater participation of private entities; the doctrine is associated with classical liberalism. The arguments for economic liberalization include greater efficiency and effectiveness that would translate to a "bigger pie" for everybody. Thus, liberalisation in short refers to "the removal of controls", to encourage economic development.

In this era of globalisation, most first world countries, in order to remain globally competitive, have pursued the path of economic liberalization: partial or full privatisation of government institutions and assets, greater labour-market flexibility, lower tax rates for businesses, less restriction on both domestic and foreign capital, open markets, etc.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair has rightly remarked that: "Success will go to those companies and countries which are swift to adapt, slow to complain, open and willing to change. The task of modern governments is to ensure that our countries can rise to this challenge."

Many countries nowadays, particularly those in the third world, arguably have no choice but to also "liberalize" their economies in order to remain competitive in attracting and retaining both their domestic and foreign investments. This is referred to as the TINO factor, standing for "there is no alternative". In developing countries, economic liberalization refers more to liberalization or further "opening up" of their respective economies to foreign capital and investments. Three of the fastest growing developing economies today; Brazil, China, and India, have achieved rapid economic growth in the past several years or decades after they have "liberalized" their economies to foreign capital.

For example, in 1991, India had no choice but to implement economic reforms. Similarly, in the Philippines, the contentious proposals for Charter Change include amending the economically restrictive provisions of their 1987 constitution.

The total opposite of a liberalized economy would be North Korea's economy with their closed and "self-sufficient" economic system. North Korea receives hundreds of millions of dollars worth of aid from other countries in exchange for peace and restrictions in their nuclear programme. Another example would be oil-rich countries such as Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, which see no need to further open up their economies to foreign capital and investments since their oil reserves already provide them with huge export earnings. Thus, it is clear that adoption of economic reforms in the first place and then its reversal or sustenance is a function of certain factors, presence or absence of which will determine the outcome.

Economic liberalization encompasses the processes, including government policies, that promote free trade, deregulation, elimination of subsidies, price controls and rationing systems, and, often, the downsizing or privatization of public services.

Economic liberalization has been central to adjustment policies introduced in developing countries since the late 1970s, mostly in the context of the conditions for lending set by international financial institutions. Thus, government policies were redirected to follow a noninterventionist, or laissez-faire, approach to economic activity, relying on market forces for the allocation of resources. It was argued that market-oriented policy reforms would spur growth and accelerate poverty reduction. From this perspective, government intervention in markets is seen as both inefficient and distortionary. It is argued that even if an interventionist State acts with good intentions, it does not have the competence to manage the economy well. By moving scarce resources into less productive economic activities, the State is thought to reduce overall economic growth, with adverse consequences for poverty reduction. Additionally, for public choice theory, rational, self-interested individuals maximize their economic benefits and overall economic welfare. In civic life, politicians, bureaucrats and citizens are all considered to act solely out of self interest in the political arena. Politicians and State bureaucrats, acting from self-interest, use their power and the authority of the Government to engage in rent-seeking behaviour, which distorts the allocation of resources and results in disincentives for private investment and entrepreneurship (Buchanan, 1980).

Therefore, the power of the State and political actors, including the ability to intervene in the economy, should be limited. Within this framework, the State creates enabling conditions in the form of macroeconomic stability, guaranteeing property rights, and maintaining law and order for rapid economic growth driven by private sector (both domestic and foreign) investment. As economic growth rises, poverty will fall. Distribution and social justice benefit from the trickle-down principle, as economic growth will eventually benefit all members of society. The free market, based on comparative advantage, will thus bring about economic expansion through labour-intensive export activities, which will create employment and hence improve the general well-being of the entire society. The present chapter critically evaluates the growth, employment and poverty impacts of three major elements of recent economic

liberalization-trade liberalization, financial liberalization and privatization.

## **19.4 ECONOMIC LIBERALISATION IN INDIA**

The Economic liberalisation in India refers to ongoing economic reforms in India that started on 24 July 1991. After Independence in 1947, India adhered to socialist policies. Attempts were made to liberalise economy in 1966 and 1985. The first attempt was reversed in 1967. Thereafter, a stronger version of socialism was adopted. Second major attempt was in 1985 by Prime Minister, Rajeev Gandhi. The process came to a halt in 1987, though 1966 style reversal did not take place. In 1991, after India faced a balance of payments crisis, it had to pledge 20 tons of gold to Union Bank of Switzerland and 47 tons to Bank of England as part of a bailout deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In addition, the IMF required India to undertake a series of structural economic reforms. As a result of this requirement, the government of P. V. Narasimha Rao and his finance minister Manmohan Singh (the current Prime Minister of India) started breakthrough reforms, although they did not implement many of the reforms the IMF wanted. The new neo-liberal policies included opening for international trade and investment, deregulation, initiation of privatization, tax reforms, and inflation-controlling measures. The overall direction of liberalisation has since remained the same, irrespective of the ruling party, although no party has yet tried to take on powerful lobbies such as the trade unions and farmers, or contentious issues such as reforming labour laws and reducing agricultural subsidies. Thus, unlike the reforms of 1966 and 1985 that were carried out by the majority Congress governments, the reforms of 1991 carried out by a minority government proved sustainable. There exists a lively debate in India as to what made the economic reforms sustainable.

The fruits of liberalisation reached their peak in 2007, when India recorded its highest GDP growth rate of 9%. With this, India became the second fastest growing major economy in the world, next only to China. The growth rate has slowed significantly in the first half of 2012.[9] An Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report states that the average growth rate 7.5% will double

the average income in a decade, and more reforms would speed up the pace.

Indian government coalitions have been advised to continue liberalisation. India grows at slower pace than China, which has been liberalising its economy since 1978. The McKinsey Quarterly states that removing main obstacles "would free India's economy to grow as fast as China's, at 10 percent a year". There has been significant debate, however, around liberalisation as an inclusive economic growth strategy. Since 1992, income inequality has deepened in India with consumption among the poorest staying stable while the wealthiest generate consumption growth. For 2010, India was ranked 124th among 179 countries in Index of Economic Freedom World Rankings, which is an improvement from the preceding year.

## **19.5 RE-LIBERALISATION POLICIES**

Indian economic policy after independence was influenced by the colonial experience and by those leaders' exposure to Fabian socialism. Policy tended towards protectionism, with a strong emphasis on import substitution, industrialisation under state monitoring, state intervention at the micro level in all businesses especially in labour and financial markets, a large public sector, business regulation, and central planning. Five-Year Plans of India resembled central planning in the Soviet Union. Steel, mining, machine tools, water, telecommunications, insurance, and electrical plants, among other industries, were effectively nationalized in the mid-1950s. Elaborate licences, regulations and the accompanying red tape, commonly referred to as Licence Raj, were required to set up business in India between 1947 and 1990.

Before the process of reform began in 1991, the government attempted to close the Indian economy to the outside world. The Indian currency, the rupee, was inconvertible and high tariffs and import licensing prevented foreign goods reaching the market. India also operated a system of central planning for the economy, in which firms required licenses to invest and develop. The labyrinthine bureaucracy often led to absurd restrictions-up to 80 agencies had to be satisfied before a firm could be granted a licence to produce and the state would decide what was produced, how

much, at what price and what sources of capital were used. The government also prevented firms from laying off workers or closing factories. The central pillar of the policy was import substitution, the belief that India needed to rely on internal markets for development, not international trade—a belief generated by a mixture of socialism and the experience of colonial exploitation. Planning and the state, rather than markets, would determine how much investment was needed in which sectors.

In the 80s, the government led by Rajiv Gandhi started light reforms. The government slightly reduced Licence Raj and also promoted the growth of the telecommunications and software industries. The Vishwanath Pratap Singh (1989-1990) and Chandra Shekhar Singh government (1990-1991) did not add any significant reforms.

## **19.6 IMPACT**

- \* The low annual growth rate of the economy of India before 1980, which stagnated around 3.5% from 1950s to 1980s, while per capita income averaged 1.3%. At the same time, Pakistan grew by 5%, Indonesia by 9%, Thailand by 9%, South Korea by 10% and Taiwan by 12%.
- \* Only four or five licences would be given for steel, electrical power and communications. License owners built up huge powerful empires.
- \* A huge public sector emerged. State-owned enterprises made large losses.
- \* Income Tax Department and Customs Department manned by IAS officers became efficient in checking tax evasion.
- \* Infrastructure investment was poor because of the public sector monopoly.
- \* Licence Raj established the "irresponsible, self-perpetuating bureaucracy that still exists throughout much of the country" and corruption flourished under this system.

## **NARASIMHA RAO GOVERNMENT (1991-1996)**

Present prime minister Manmohan Singh was then Finance Minister in Cabinet of prime minister P V Narasimha Rao. The assassination of prime minister Indira Gandhi in 1984, and later of her son Rajiv Gandhi in 1991, crushed international investor confidence on the economy that was eventually pushed to the brink by the early 1990s.

As of 1991, India still had a fixed exchange rate system, where the rupee was pegged to the value of a basket of currencies of major trading partners. India started having balance of payments problems since 1985, and by the end of 1990, it was in a serious economic crisis. The government was close to default, its central bank had refused new credit and foreign exchange reserves had reduced to the point that India could barely finance three weeks' worth of imports. Most of the economic reforms were forced upon India as a part of the IMF bailout.

A Balance of Payments crisis in 1991 pushed the country to near bankruptcy. In return for an IMF bailout, gold was transferred to London as collateral, the rupee devalued and economic reforms were forced upon India. That low point was the catalyst required to transform the economy through badly needed reforms to unshackle the economy. Controls started to be dismantled, tariffs, duties and taxes progressively lowered, state monopolies broken, the economy was opened to trade and investment, private sector enterprise and competition were encouraged and globalisation was slowly embraced. The reforms process continues today and is accepted by all political parties, but the speed is often held hostage by coalition politics and vested interests.

### **LATER REFORMS**

- \* The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-Atal Bihari Vajpayee administration surprised many by continuing reforms, when it was at the helm of affairs of India for five years.

- \* The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance Coalition began privatising under-performing government owned business including hotels, VSNL, Maruti Suzuki, and airports, and began reduction of taxes, an overall fiscal policy aimed at reducing deficits and debts and increased initiatives for public works.
- \* The United Front government attempted a progressive budget that encouraged reforms, but the 1997 Asian financial crisis and political instability created economic stagnation.
- \* Towards the end of 2011, the Government initiated the introduction of 51% Foreign Direct Investment in retail sector. But due to pressure from fellow coalition parties and the opposition, the decision was rolled back. However, it was approved in December 2012.

## **IMPACT OF REFORMS**

1. The HSBC Global Technology Center in Pune develops software for the entire HSBC group.
2. The impact of these reforms may be gauged from the fact that total foreign investment (including foreign direct investment, portfolio investment, and investment raised on international capital markets) in India grew from a minuscule US\$132 million in 1991-92 to \$5.3 billion in 1995-96.
3. Cities like Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, NOIDA, Gurgaon, Gaziabad, Pune, Jaipur, Indore and Ahmedabad have risen in prominence and economic importance, become centres of rising industries and destination for foreign investment and firms.
4. Annual growth in GDP per capita has accelerated from just 1¼ per cent in the three decades after Independence to 7½ per cent currently, a rate of growth that will double average income in a decade. In service sectors where government regulation has been eased significantly or is less burdensome—such as communications, insurance, asset management and information

technology-output has grown rapidly, with exports of information technology enabled services particularly strong. In those infrastructure sectors which have been opened to competition, such as telecoms and civil aviation, the private sector has proven to be extremely effective and growth has been phenomenal.

5. Election of AB Vajpayee as Prime Minister of India in 1998 and his agenda was a welcome change. His prescription to speed up economic progress included solution of all outstanding problems with the West (Cold War related) and then opening gates for FDI investment. In three years, the West was developing a bit of a fascination to India's brainpower, powered by IT and BPO. By 2004, the West would consider investment in India, should the conditions permit. By the end of Vajpayee's term as prime minister, a framework for the foreign investment had been established. The new incoming government of Dr. Manmohan Singh in 2004 is further strengthening the required infrastructure to welcome the FDI.

Today, fascination with India is translating into active consideration of India as a destination for FDI. The A T. Kearney study is putting India second most likely destination for FDI in 2005 behind China. It has displaced US to the third position. This is a great leap forward. India was at the 15th position, only a few years back. To quote the A T Kearney Study "India's strong performance among manufacturing and telecom & utility firms was driven largely by their desire to make productivity-enhancing investments in IT, business process outsourcing, research and development, and knowledge management activities".

## **ONGOING ECONOMIC CHALLENGES**

- \* Problems in the agricultural sector.
- \* Highly restrictive and complex labour laws.
- \* Inadequate infrastructure, which is often government monopoly.

- \* Inefficient public sector.
- \* Inflation in basic consumable goods.
- \* Increasing Gap between the Lower and Upper Classes.
- \* Corruption
- \* High fiscal deficit
- \* Stagnant export and increasing Imports.

In labour markets, employment growth has been concentrated in firms that operate in sectors not covered by India's highly restrictive labour laws. In the formal sector, where these labour laws apply, employment has been falling and firms are becoming more capital intensive despite abundant low-cost labour. Labour market reform is essential to achieve a broader-based development and provide sufficient and higher productivity jobs for the growing labour force. In product markets, inefficient government procedures, particularly in some of the states, acts as a barrier to entrepreneurship and need to be improved. Public companies are generally less productive than private firms and the privatisation programme should be revitalised. A number of barriers to competition in financial markets and some of the infrastructure sectors, which are other constraints on growth, also need to be addressed. The indirect tax system needs to be simplified to create a true national market, while for direct taxes, the taxable base should be broadened and rates lowered. Public expenditure should be re-oriented towards infrastructure investment by reducing subsidies. Furthermore, social policies should be improved to better reach the poor and-given the importance of human capital-the education system also needs to be made more efficient.

## **19.7 ECONOMIC LIBERALISATION AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION**

Social transformation is a process which refers to large scale social change as

in cultural reforms or transformation. Social transformation requires a shift in collective consciousness of a society at local, state, national, international or global level so that reality is refined by consensus. This often happens by external stimulus. Here, economic liberalisation serves as external stimulus. Therefore, economic liberalisation has not led to alteration only in economic sphere but has also brought tremendous changes in different aspects of society viz social, political as well as cultural sphere. In this era of post modernity the policy of Liberalisation Privatisation and Globalisation (LPG) has become a life line of economy of all the countries. A country cannot survive or develop his economy without these policies which fairly means to remove the iron walls/ boundaries from the political and geographical map of nations and to remove trade barriers and united the world as a global village. Social transformation under the impact of economic liberalisation has brought changes in the following areas:-

1. **Social systems:-** Change in different institutions of society. e.g. Marriage, family, education, polity, etc.
  - a) **Marriage pattern:-** Patterns of mate selection has changed over the recent years. Now mates give importance to personal attributes not to the family status of the partner. Now preference is given to individual's own choice. E.g. Increase in no. of love marriages.
  - b) **Family institution:-** Now the joint family system is replaced by nuclear family system.
  - c) **Caste system:-** Caste based occupation system is not significantly important today. Restrictions based on caste are also losing their strength..
2. **Cultural pattern:-** Westernisation has altered all the aspects of individual's life like dressing sense, eating habits, etc. Also ayurveda and yoga is followed by different developed nations.
3. **Food habits:-** Caffe Coffee day(CCD), Pizzas, burgers, KFC, Mc.D, etc.

4. **Education and Change:-** Introduction of innovative and job oriented course. Joint educational programmes with different countries.
5. **Role of International Organisations:-** UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, IMF, ILO, etc.
6. **Women Empowerment:-** Reducing gender gaps and empowerment of women.
7. **Human Rights:-** Importance is given to human welfare and his rights.
8. **Environment concerns at global level:-** Addressing the environmental issues globally.
9. **Science and technology:-** Scientific innovations and revolution in technology. e.g. Digitisation and its impact in society.

Therefore it is seen that the economic liberalisation has been an important instrument of social transformation which liberalises not only the economic affairs but also resulted into different walks of life of people. This ongoing process of exchange and flow of different cultural patterns has altered and transformed the socio-cultural aspects of different nations all over the world globally.

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