UNIT 1 SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION AND PROBLEMS

Structure

1.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are to describe relationship between social transformation and social problems. After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- learn about the concept of 'social transformation', its two models of 'modernisation' and 'revolution' and their critical appraisal;

- understand the relationship between social transformation and social problems;

- describe the concept of 'social problems' and the related questions;

- elucidate definitions, characteristics and types of social problems;

- discuss the linkage between social problems, institutions and movements; and

- explain policy implications in relationship to transformation and problems.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The subject matter of this unit is social transformation and social problems. Naturally, you have to understand the relationship between these two processes. Neither society nor social problems are static. Social problems are closely linked with social structure, ideologies, values, attitudes, institutions, power, authority and interests of society. The process of social transformation brings about change in these different aspects of social life and side by side generates new social problems.

First of all, let us try to understand the theoretical background of the concept of social transformation. In early sociology, concepts of 'evolution' and 'progress' were used to indicate the dynamic aspects of society. It was gradually realised that these were that these were value-loaded concepts, and therefore, replaced by 'social change' which was considered to be more neutral and value-free.

After the Second World War, concepts of 'development' and 'modernisation' occupied a significant place in the terminology of social sciences. These two concepts represent ideologies of the developed, industrialised, capitalist and democratic Western societies. The term 'revolution' was preferred by radical social scientists interested in overhauling the capitalist social system and influenced by the Marxist ideology.

'Social transformation' is a broad concept used to indicate social dynamics. The ideas, conveying the meanings of evolution, progress and change on the one hand and the meanings of development, modernisation and revolution, on the other, are incorporated within the concept of transformation.

Social transformation and social problems are closely linked with each other. Society is not static but the dominant groups in society sometimes want to perpetuate their hold over society and protect their interests by repressive methods. Thus, in a negative manner, if the process of social transformation is suppressed, it generates new social problems. On the other hand, if the process of social transformation is taking a natural course, the society faces the problems of adjustment during the transitional phase of the decline of the old system and the emergence of a new system.

1.2 THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

The concept of 'social transformation' has occupied a significant place in social sciences after the Second World War. The literal meaning of the concept is 'changing form or appearance or character or alter out of recognition'. This concept was specifically used by Karl Marx in his book 'German Ideology' (1846) to mean a facet of social change which arises out of contradictions in a society and leading to rapid change or revolution. Marx feels that at some stage

of social development, there is a conflict between the material forces of production with the existing rules of production. The conflict, based on these contradictions, leads to social revolution. This phase of social revolution has been termed by Marx as a period of rapid social transformation. Social transformation indicates the change in the form of society or the rise of new formations. Rajni Kothari (1988) is of that view the modernisation and revolution are two models of social transformation. They can be presented in the following manner.

Social Transformation

Modernisation   Revolution

Let us discuss these two models of transformation one by one.

1.2.1   Model of Modernisation

Modernisation, as a concept, represents ideologies and values of the industrial, capitalist and democratic societies of the Western Europe and the North America. The opposite to modernised structure is agrarian, traditional, custom-based, technologically and economically backward social structures of Asia, Africa and Latin America. As pointed out by Daniel Lerner (1964) modernisation is represented by literacy, political participation, urbanisation, occupational mobility and empathy. The other characteristics of modernisation are free market, industrialisation, modern technology, democratic state and modern education. There are five major dimensions of modernisation i.e. technological, economic, political, social and psychological. Along with their components, they can be presented as follows:

Modernisation				
Technological	**Economic**	**Political**	**Social**	**Psychological**
• inanimate sources of energy • modern machines • heavy technology	• market • capital • commodity • consumerism	• freedom • individualism • democracy • political participation	• mobility • occupational differentiation • universalism • specificity • urban-industrial culture • literacy and modern education	• cosmopolitan mind • achievement orientation • empathy

In the model of modernisation, the transformation is supposed to be sustained, evolutionary, gradual and linear. In this gradual process, change is the result of a long duration. It is significant that the process of modernisation visualises a structural transformation in the society.

As pointed out, the modernisation model of development has a close relationship with the process of industrial and the industrial society. We are in the early part of the twentieth century. The industrial society has also undergone a phenomenal change over the last several decades.

1.2.2   Marxian Revolution Model

In this model, the change is brought about by men's intervention. As indicated by Engels, man is the only animal who is capable of transformation in accordance with this requirements.

Apart from the French (1779) and the American (1789) revolutions, the revolutionary social transformation was experimented effectively in this century in Soviet Russia (1719) and China (1949). According to the exponents of this model, the industrial-capitalist system is afflicted by exploitation of man by man. It has produced unprecedented social inequality. Despite industrialisation, application of heavy technology and a large scale production, man has lost his dignity in the capitalist model or modernisation. According to the exponents of the revolutionary model, only a revolutionary transformation can eliminate poverty, inequality, exploitation, unemployment and dehumanisation.

The final goal of the Marxist-Leninist concept of the revolutionary transformation is the building of a classless and stateless society based on equality. After the revolution, in the phase of transition, a society based on revolutionary transformation is characterised by the points as given below:

Society based on Revolutionary Model of Transformation (transitional phase)		
Collective ownership of the means of production	Power Structure based on the dictatorship of the proletariat	Decision Making based on a single political party (Communist Party) and its politbureau

Box 1.1

Sanskritisation and Westernisation

In the Indian Context, a clear distinction should be made between the two processes of transformation known as Sanskritisation and Westernisation. Sanskritisation as used by Srinivas refers to the imitation of the manners and customs of the upper castes by the lower castes, whereas, Westernisation means the impact of Western culture, values and institutions on the Indian Society. The basic attributes of the 'model of modernisation' as discussed in this unit are similar to the attributes of Westernisation.

Critical Appraisal of these Models

The human society has experienced both modernisation and revolutionary models of transformation. As pointed out by Rajni Kothari, human society has seen keen competition between these two models–leading to the global problems of Cold War, deadly armaments, threats of nuclear weapons, division of World into two power blocks (before the collapse of the Soviet Union) and attempts to dominate over others. The 19th Century European mind was full of optimism; it has tremendous faith in progress. After the First World War, the voices of dissent against the Western civilisation, its patterns of development and material advancement were raised by Joseph J. Spengler in his 'Decline of the West' and P.A. Sorokin in his 'Socio-Cultural Dynamics'. These writers stressed that Western civilisation represented by materialism, industrialisation and modern technology was moving towards decline. Perceptive Critical analysis of the industrial and capitalist pattern of modernisation was done by Karl Mannheim in his 'Man and Society: In an Age of Reconstruction', ErichFromm in his 'Sane Society' and Petre L. Berger and others in their 'Homeless Mind'. They were of the view that the industrialised capitalist societies of the West were moving towards —

- decline,

- disintegration and disorganisation,

- lack of moorings,

- weakening of institutions like family and religion,

- loss of autonomy of individuals, and

- emergence of mass society.

The functioning of communism, its system of production, economic organisation and power structure as a product of revolution were criticised by Kruschev, Djilas and Gorbachev. As a system, it created dictatorship, police-terror, executions, denial of human rights, decline in productions, collapse of economy and the creation of a 'new class' of party functionaries and the State officials. The social problems of violence, unequal distribution of resources, poverty, unemployment could not be solved by these two models of transformation. We have to keep in mind that when society starts moving from one formation to another formation, certain problems are bound to crop-up. The period, lying between the movements from one formation to another formation or from one stage of transformation to another stage of transformation, may be regarded as the stage of 'transition'. The period of transition in any society creates problems of social and psychological adjustment, cultural accommodation and economic recasting. Societies move forward in the pattern of challenge and response. Whenever there is any challenge, society tries to meet it by its response. When the responses are effective, there is positive transformation and development. When the responses do not meet the challenges, there is decline in a situation when there are likely to be a large number of social problems. Simply stated, social transformation results in social problems. The effort to solve social problems can initiate social transformation.

Check Your Progress 1

i)   Explain the meaning of social transformation in eight lines.

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ii) Mention models of social transformation and enumerate major problems created by them in eight lines.

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iii) Indicate the names of major critics of the Western materialistic, capitalist model of modernisation with titles of their books.

a) ....

b) ....

c) ....

d) ....

e) ....

iv) Write a critique of the revolutionary model of transformation in five lines.

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1.3 TRANSFORMATION AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

In the process of transformation, society moves from the traditional to modern social structure. Scholars also point out that human societies are becoming more and more globalised in the wake of fast spread of information and communication technology, industrial development, physical communication networks and so on.

1.3.1 Traditional and Modern Societies

The traditional Society is characterised by agriculture, villages, small scale undeveloped technology, customs and simple social structure. In traditional societies, there is said to be harmony in social relations and in social institutions. There is consistency between institutions, the accepted norms and patterns of behaviour. The mechanism of the social control operates through customs, folkways and mores. There tends to be a close correspondence between expectations and achievements in traditional societies.

The modern society is characterised by industry, cities, heavy technology, rule of law, democracy and complex social structure. The introduction of new social relations, new social roles as a result of transformation from the traditional society to modern society tends to make earlier behaviour ineffective to achieve new goals set as a result of the movement. This results in tensions and frustrations. To meet the changes, new patterns of behaviour emerge. The old established order changes and there is confusion. The changes in the various cultural items (e.g. acceptance of technology) would mean acceptance of scientific attitude to life, being punctual at the place of work, new forms of social organisation such as trade unions which are different from traditional values. It takes time for people to adjust to the emerging situations in the phase of transition when the 'old' is not fully rejected and the 'new' is not fully accepted.

1.3.2   Before and After Transformation

Whenever, there is either a gradual or a revolutionary transformation, certain problems are bound to emerge in society. For the purpose of understanding, we may consider two stages of society i.e., before the transformation and after the transformation. In the pre-transformation phase, the people develop their own way of life, social relations, norms, values, productive system and consumption patterns. With the process of transformation, people are required to adjust themselves to the new requirements. In the transformation phase, they find difficulties in moving away from the age old habits.

This point can be explained by taking the example of the Indian Society. India attained her independence by following the path of struggles–sometimes by revolutionary methods (for example the revolts of 1857 and 1942) and by and large, though by peaceful means yet determined resistance to colonialism. India, being an ancient civilisation, is characterised by certain traditional institutions like caste, joint family and untouchability. Indian society is moving from the traditional social structure to the modern one. Apart from the age old traditional institutions, now, there are certain new structures based on constitutional provisions such as a modern State, parliamentary democracy and organisations for the planned development of society.

In the post-independence period, concerted effort has been made through the constitutional provisions for social transformation and planned development, elimination of untouchability and creation of a just and equal society in India. Despite these efforts, even today, in several parts of India, untouchability is practised in one or the other form.

1.3.3   Examples of Linkage

Certain social problems are directly linked with social transformation. The process of rapid economic development and industrialisation are bound to take place in modern society. They are the indicators of modernisation but at the same time, they generate problems of regional imbalance, pollution, ecological degradation, slums linked with violence, crime and delinquency.

Democracy is supposed to provide equal opportunities to all citizens. It believes in legal and political equality. It is supposed to increase human dignity. But unfortunately, elections–an essential part of democracy–have encouraged regionalism, communalism and casteism in India.

Affluence and leisure are the indicators of a modern society. At the same time, they are creating problems of loneliness, alcoholism and drug addiction in highly industrialised societies as well as in the rich section of Indian society.

Activity

Write a two-page note on the impact of a factory on pollution as known to you.

1.4 CONCEPT OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS

All societies have certain situations which affect them adversely. In a commonsense way, social problems are considered as conditions which are widespread and have harmful consequences for the society. However, it is not quite as simple. What may have been considered as not harmful, at one time, may be considered harmful at other times. Smoking was not considered a serious social problems for over a long time. In contemporary times because of growing awareness of health hazards, it has become matter of great concern. It seems easy to understand social problem but when an effort is made to deal with them the complexities to the social problems become evident.

What might be considered a social a social problem in one society may be considered as such in another society. The perception is dependent on the norms and values in a society. In some societies divorce would be considered a social problem. In others, it may not be considered. So also with taking alcoholic drinks. Even within a society there might be differences of opinion when it is large and heterogeneous. There are certain behaviours which are considered as deviant and harmful in all societies viz. murder, rape, mental illness. There is no value-conflict in these conditions. Although, the approach to solutions to these problems may be different in different societies.

There are several issues involved in the conceptualisation of social problems which may be described as follows:

● at what stage, any specific condition is regarded as a social problem?

● how the gap between 'what actually exists' and 'what ought to be' is identified?

● what are the criteria to determine a social problem?

These questions are closely linked with the following points:

a)   perception of the public,

b)   social ideals and realities,

c)   recognition by a significant number.

Let us discuss these points one by one.

Box   1.2

Crisis

Crisis is a medical concept used to indicate a critical stage of illness of a patient. Several Sociologists, such as Karl Mannheim, Albort Salomon and Bernard Rosenberg etc. in the place of disorganisation or deviance, prefer to use the concept of crisis to indicate the illness of modern society.

1.4.1 Perception of the Public

Often a social condition which is not in the interest of the society may exist over a long period without being recognised as such. It becomes a problem only when it is perceived as a problem. Poverty has been with us for a very long time. It is only after independence that poverty removal programme became an important component of our planning process.

The perception of the public is dependent on how visible a problem is. Crime is easily recognised and the public perceives it as a problem. There are, as mentioned earlier, problems which may exist but are not recognised. There may be some who see that a particular condition may become a problem and try to make people aware of the situation. Social movements start this way. Women in many societies suffer from many disabilities, denial of ownership of property, widow remarriage, right to divorce, equal wages etc. Yet few societies considered such situations as problematic only a few decades back. Women's liberation movements are trying to make the public aware of their plight. There must be therefore significant number in the public who perceives a situation as problematic.

1.4.2 Social Ideals and Realities

Social problems indicate a gap between what actually exists as compared to what ought to be or what is considered as ideal. The ideal of any society is based on values in a society. Social problems are defined as undesirable conditions in a society. What is undesirable is defined by the values. Values determine what is good and what is bad. Earlier it was noted that different societies have different values. Hence, what might be considered as bad or undesirable in one society may not be so in another society.

Social values are dynamic–they keep changing. What was considered a problem a few years ago may not now be considered as undesirable. Some years ago, boys and girls studying together in schools and colleges was not approved by a large number of people. At present, there is little opposition to it. There was not much concern till recently about the pollution–smoke from the factories, dumping of waste in rivers, cutting down of forest etc. However, there is now an awakening and great desire to protect the environment. There is a gap between social reality of the ecology being disturbed and the ideal to have an environment which is balanced and beneficial to the people.

1.4.3 Recognition by Significant Number

A social condition does not become a problem until a sufficiently large number of people think of it as a problem. The opinion makers can influence the thinking of the people. To go back to the earlier example, few thought of pollution of deforestation as a matter of concern about which something had to be done. However, there is now a much greater awareness of the harm caused by this to the society. Efforts are being made to reduce the ill effects of the cutting down of trees. If there is only a small group of people who consider a particular condition as bad they have to educate people, so that, there is public awareness.

1.5 DEFINITIONS

In the light of the different approaches and theories of the social problems, it is a difficult task to arrive at its commonly accepted definition. As pointed out by

Merton and Nisbet (eds.) (1971) sometimes, it appears, as if there is only a chaos of conflicting theories, but in Sociology, there is a condition of theoretical pluralism with differing theories often complementing each other. As regards theories and approaches to the understanding of social problems, we have discussed them in details in the Unit 2 of this Block.

Nisbet defines social problems as behavioural patterns regarded by a large portion of society as being in violation of one or more generally accepted social norms (Merton and Nisbet eds.), (1971). Merton thinks that social problems are a deviation from the accepted social ideals and they are dysfunctional.

On the other hand, Spector and Kitsuse define social problems as activities of groups which make protests to organisations, institutions and agencies against conditions which they regard as grievable.

Two clear perspectives emerge out of these definitions:

● Social problems are violations of accepted norms and deviations from the accepted Social ideals.

● They are a protest against certain grievances.

1.5.1 Characteristics of Social Problems

Now, let us try to understand the characteristics of social problems. They are as follows:

i) **A social problem is caused by many factors**

Earlier, it was indicated that there is a cause-effect relation with regard to a social problem. This does not however mean that a social problem can be explained or understood by one cause only. Illiteracy is caused by many factors, such as attitude of people to education, lack of schools in many areas, status of girl child, care of the younger children by older children, malnutrition and poverty to name a few. To solve the problem of illiteracy, all these problems have to be taken into consideration.

ii) **Social problems are interrelated**

Often there is a relation between various social problems. Ill-health is related to poverty, lack of education, attitude of sickness, unemployment, non-availability of medical care, status of women. It is not very difficult to see relations between all the 'causes' and the 'effects'.

iii) **Social problems affect individuals differently**

If there is inflation some people are affected by it more than others. People who are poor or who have fixed income will feel the problem more than those that are well-off and who have ways and means of increasing their income. Dowry is more a problem for the poor than for the rich. The family with a large number of daughters have a bigger problem in dowry than a family which has only sons. The problem of unemployment is more severe for those who are less educated and lack skills. It is also possible that some groups are affected more than others; for example–women, weaker sections, minorities, rural and urban poor.

iv) **Social problems affect all people**

The people in a society are interdependent. What affects one group will affect most members of the society also over time. Few persons are able to protect themselves fully against many of the social problems – violence, unemployment, inflation, communal riots and corruption etc.

Kenneth Henry (1978) rightly considers social problems as a Sociological process, as ideologically interpreted and as subject to different theoretical approaches.

Check Your Progress 2

i) Write in ten lines how and when a particular situation is considered to be harmful for society and is conceived as a social problem.

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ii) Define 'Social Problem' in eight lines.

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iii) Mention names of two books on social problems with names of their Writers/Editors.

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b) ....

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iv) Enumerate characterstics of social problems.

a) ....

b) ....

c) ....

d) ....

1.5.2   Types of Social Problems

Merton classifies social problems in the following two categories:

i)   social disorganisation

ii) deviant behaviour

In all social problems, some elements of disorganisation refers to two conditions:

i)   **Social Disorganisation**

●   inadequacies in the social system,

●   ineffective working of status and roles.

There are certain sources of social disorganisation. In all societies, there are some consensus on values and interests. Whenever this degree of unanimity is disturbed by conflicting interests, we find trends of disorganisation in that particular society. Similar is the case with status and roles. Every individual occupies multiple statuses such as father, husband, member of a political party, practicing a profession and member of his professional organisation. He performs his roles accordingly. He decides his priorities of roles and acts accordingly in social life. But if there is a conflict between the different status and roles and a group of people are not in a position to decide their priorities or to reconcile between the conflicting roles, it is bound to lead to social disorganisation. The process of socialisation helps people to learn language, customs, traditions, culture and values of the group. If the process of Socialisation either at the level of family or school and the peer group is defective, it will adversely affect the personality of the member of a group and the organised functioning of the group itself. Society develops informal and formal mechanism of social control to regulate behaviours of its members. Whenever, these mechanisms do not work in a effective manner, the trends of disorganisation are visible in the society.

The social disorganisation is manifested in the breakdown in the effective institutional functioning, disorganisation of family, marital breakdown, poverty, collective violence, population explosion, community disorganisation and urban problems such as slums and inhuman living conditions.

ii) **Deviant Behaviour**

The concept of deviant behaviour is used by Sociologists to include serious crimes as well as the violation of moral codes. In every society, there is a commonly agreed idea of normal behaviour. Whenever someone moves away from the accepted norm and behaves differently that behaviour may be regarded as abnormal or deviant behaviour.

The crimes, juvenile deliquencies, mental disorders, drug addition and alcoholism are some of the examples of deviant behaviour.

Box 1.3

Social Pathology

Social Pathology is a sub-division of Sociology conceptually borrowed from the medical sciences. In Sociological literature, several books have been written under the titles of social disorganisation and social problems. The sub-division of Sociology concerned with these problems has often been called as the Sociology of Social problems or deviance. Some Sociologists who stress on the crisis aspect have preferred to call this sub-division as Social Pathology.

1.6 SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Social problems, under several circumstances, are the products of outdated institutions. For example monarchy, as an institution, is mainly responsible for repressive measures against democratic aspirations, even today, in many countries of the world. Similarly, problem of untouchability is linked with the caste system in India. The system of arranged marriages is basically the cause of dowry and dowry death in our society. Apart from the institutional settings, sometimes, the programmes launched for development also result in social problems. The large scale requirements of timber for constructions, railways, furniture and fuels have caused deforestation. Industrialisation and the expansion of the factory system has led to the pollution of air, water and the earth. Construction of big dams, power projects, high ways etc. lead to large scale dis-placement of the local people.

Further, social problems are also a result of the gap between the social ideals and the actual practice. Inspite of so much talks against corruption and slogans for the value-based politics by press, public leaders and intelligentsia is India from the platform and in the mass-media, corruption in public life and criminalisation of politics has increased in our society. As indicated by Feagin(1986) the protests and movements organised by people against social problems and for social change are very significant.

1.6.1 Obstacles in Implementation

It is not an easy task to organise movements against social problems. There are many vested interest groups who may want a particular situation to continue. The forest contractors would oppose the stopping of the felling of trees. The owners of liquor shops would not favour prohibition. Over a time, movements are able to make the government and other institutions recognise the situation and accept the legitimacy of the claim. As a result, policies could be formulated by the government to deal with the situation – rules against deforestation, various laws to improve the conditions of women (equal wages, laws against dowry, sati, inheritances etc.) The formulation of policies by itself is not sufficient. It is to be implemented. Often there is a delay or inadequate efforts. The movement then has to focus on getting the policy implemented. Many times there is no complete solution to a problem. Social movements indicate that collective action can get action from authorities.

1.6.2 Stages of Movements

The outmoded institutional settings, the ill-conceived programmes and the increasing gap between ideals and practice are often either not perceived or ignored by the silent majority in any society. Some people are able to see these problems. At first stage, there is the awareness about social problems in a few individuals or in a small group. At the second stage, they try to propagate their point of view among the people. At the third state, there is organised dissent, protest and agitation. Finally, it leads to the building of a movement. If we take the example of the *Sati Pratha* as practiced in India in the 19th century and the movement started by Raja Rammohan Roy against it then we find that the anti-sati movement passed through all the phases which are mentioned above. Now, all over the world in general and in India in particular, there is a powerful women movement to protect the rights and interest of women. The organisation of Indian women along with the enlightened citizens and mass-media are fighting against dowry and dowry deaths. Similarly, there is the movement of environmentalists against ecological degradation and pollution. The *Chipko* movement launched in the hills of Uttar Pradesh against deforestation has attracted world wide attention. The voluntary organisations and officials are trying to create awareness against drug addiction and alcoholism.

There is a close relationship between the remedial measures against the social problems and the social movements. Social movements arise when some people feel that a particular situation is not good for the society and that something should be done to change it.

1.7 SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND SOCIAL POLICY

Social policy refers to the view that a government has on a particular situation and how it will deal with it. In India, there is a social policy on education, women, environment, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, urbanisation, and drug addiction etc. There is intimate relationship between social movements, social problems and social policy.

Social movements pressurise governments to evolve remedial measures to control social problems. In this context, we have to keep in mind that only the acceptance of a policy and its announcement will not solve social problems. The *Sarada Act* was enacted in the late twenties to check child marriage but it has not fully succeeded in stopping child marriage. The social legislations against untouchability were passed in the mid fifties but even till today the practice of untouchability is not fully eradicated from our society. Inspite of constitutional provisions, all children of the school going age do not attend schools.

Actually, strong social movements, public awareness and official policies–all the three must work together to combat against social problems. In this context, we have to keep in view that the State is the most powerful and significant institution in modern society. Its role is very important in combating against social problems. But state intervention has got its own limits and it can be more effective if there is the support of the people behind the actions of the state and policies adopted by it.

1.7.1 Policy, Ideology and Welfare

We have yet to understand the relationship between social policies and social welfare on the one hand and social policy and ideology on the other. It is difficult to differentiate between social policies and social welfare policies as some of the groups which are covered under social policy may also need welfare. All over the world, irrespective of ideologies, States are adopting welfare policies such as child-welfare, youth-welfare, women-welfare, welfare of aged, welfare of the weaker sections and policies related to employment, security, health scheme, education, ecology and rural-urban development. These policies have contributed very significantly in curbing the ménace of the several social problems. The policy with regard to social problems is dependent on ideology. The capitalist point of view would be that open market and free economy would take care of the needs of society. The individuals can look after their own welfare. The socialists feel that the structure of the society should be changed through the State intervention. A government is therefore likely to formulate a policy according to its ideological commitment.

There cannot be an overall policy with regard to all social problems. Each problem has to be dealt with separately. The laws that are passed are often related to specific problems. For example–drug-addiction, dowry, prohibition, child labour etc. It would be obvious that each of these aspects needs to be dealt with in a special way.

Check Your Progress 3

i)   Define Social disorganisation with suitable examples in five lines.

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ii)   What is deviant behaviour? Write in four lines with suitable examples.

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iii) Mention the different stages of a social movement in four lines.

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iv) Define Social Policy.

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1.8 LET US SUM UP

This unit began with the concept of transformation and its models of modernisation and revolution. The relationship between social transformation and social problems, concept definitions, characteristics and types of social problems are also discussed in this unit. The linkage between social problems, institutions and movements and finally the policy implications in terms of transformation and problems are also highlighted in this unit.

1.9 KEY WORDS

Social Transformation	:	It is a broad concept which incorporates the meaning of evolution, progress, change, on the one hand, and development, modernisation and revolution on the other. Its literal meaning is 'changing form' or 'appearance' or 'character'.
Modernisation	:	Development of a society, from the traditional, agricultural, rural, custom based, particularistic structure to urban, industrial, technological and universalistic structure is called modernisation.
Revolution	:	The violent or non violent abrupt social change making reversal of condition, or bringing about fundamental change is called revolution.
Social Problems	:	Behavioural patterns – in violation of accepted social norms or protests against grievances are called social problems.
Deviant Behaviour	:	It is used by Sociologists to include serious crimes as well as violation of moral codes. Whenever commonly accepted idea of 'normal' is violated by someone's behaviour that is termed as the deviant behaviour.

1.10 FURTHER READINGS

Merton K., Robert, Nisbet Robert, 1971 COntemporary Social Problems, Fourth Edition, Harcourt Brace and Co., New York.

Lerner Daniel, 1964 THepassing of Traditional Society, The Free Press, London.

Polanki Karl, 1957 The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origin of our Time, Beacon Press, Boston.

Kothari Rajani, 1988 Transformationand Survival, Ajanta Publications, Delhi

1.11 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

i) Social transformation is a broad concept used to indicate social dynamics. The literal meaning of this concept is 'changing form of appearance or character or alter out of recognition'. According to Marx, transformation is that facet of social change which indicates the rise of contradictions in a society leading to rapid change or revolution. Social transformation refers to the change in the form of society or the rise of new formulations.

ii) a) **Modernisation**

It represents economy, polity and values of the industrialised capitalist societies – representing extreme of affluence and extreme of distress. It is responsible for poverty, unemployment and deprivation in a vast section of mankind and over-abundance, over-production and over-consumption in another very small section

b) **Revolution**

The functioning of communism as a product of revolution has been criticised for its association with dictatorship, police terror, executions, denial of human rights, decline in productions, collapse of economy and creation of a new class of the part functionaries and the state officials.

iii) a) Joseph J. Spengeer: The Decline of the West

b) P.A. Sorokin: The Social and Cultural Dynamics

c) Karl Mannheim: Man and Society: in an AGe of Recondstruction

d) Erich From: The Same Society

e) Pelne L. Berger and others: 'Homeless Mind'

Check Your Progress 2

i) Social problems are widespread conditions which have harmful consequences for the society. The perception of being harmful is dependent on the norms and values of a society. Certain problems are directly linked with social transformation. Rapid industrialisation generates the problem of regional imbalance pollutions and slums. In the following condition, a situation is considered to be harmful and becomes a social problem:

a) gap between social ideals and reality.

b) recognition by a significant number.

ii) Social problems are behavioural patterns regarded by a large protion of society as being in violation of the accepted social norms. They are also considered as a deviation from the accepted social ideals and thus they are sysfunctional. Another definition regards social problems as activities

of groups which make protests against conditins which they regard as grievable.

iii) a) Robert K. Merton and Robert Nisbet, Contemporary Social Problems

    b) Kenneth Henry, Social Problems, Institutional and Interpersonal Perspectives.

iv) a) A social problem is caused by many factors,

    b) Social problems are interrelated,

    c) Social problems affect individuals differently,

    d) Social problems affect all people.

Check Your Progress 3

i) Social disorganisation refers to the breakdown in the effective institutional functioning. Whenever the balance in socity is disturbed by conflicting values, lack of proper socialisation and weakening of the mechanism of social control that state of society is termed as disorganisation. Its examples are familydisorganisation, marital breakdown and community disorganisation.

ii) In every society, there is a commonly agreed idea of normal behaviour. Whenever, someone moves away from the accepted norms and behaves differently, that behaviour may be regarded as abnormal or deviant behaviour. The crimes,juvenile deliquencies, mental disorders etc. are the examples of the deviant behaviour.

iii) a) awareness in a few individuals

    b) propagation of their point of view among the people

    c) organised dissent, protest and agitation

    d) finally, building of a movement

iv) Social policy refers to the view that a government has on a particular situation and how it will deal with it.

UNIT 2   APPROACHES AND PARADIGMS

Structure

2.0   OBJECTIVES

In the Unit 1, we discussed about social transformation and problems. After going through the Unit 1, you must have understood these two concepts and their relationship.

Now, in the Unit 2, we are going to discuss the various approaches to the study of social problems and the paradigms of transformation. After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- understand different approaches to the study of social problems;

- explain the basic formulations of the Functionalist, the Marxist and the Gandhian approaches;

- examine the inadequacies of these approaches;

- grasp the dysfunctional aspects of socio-economic development at the global, national and the local levels and the need for alternative approaches;

- describe the different paradigms of transformation; and

- elucidate the roles and limitation of the state intervention.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the Unit 1, the concept of transformation is already introduced to you. All Societies, in one or the other form, experience slow or rapid transformation. The Societies which experience slow process of transformation find little difficulties in adjusting to the changed conditions. By and large, the slow process of social transformation is visible in the tribal and agrarian structures, whereas, it is more rapid in the urban-industrial social structure characterised by cities, high technology, modern production, consumerism, rapid means of transport and communication, migration, mobility, anonymity, secondary groups and impersonal relationships.

The strains caused by the rapidity of social transformation and even a partial inability on the part of the society to recast its structural frame in accordance with the changed conditions either strengthen the existing challenges to the social order or generate new tensions and problems.

This point can be explained by taking the example of urbanisation. Urbanisation, as a process, is an important indicator of social transformation. At the same time, this process produces social problems such as poverty, unemployment, overcrowding in cities, shortage of housing, lack of civic amenities, impersonal relationship, slums and a social environment which leads to delinquency, crime and other anti-social activities. Man, as a social being, encounters rapid social transformation on the one hand and constantly endeavours to find out appropriate solution to social problems generated by social transformation on the other.

Social problems afflict societies and to understand their nature and find answer to them, it is relevant to discuss different sociological approaches which emerged in the course of the understanding of the nature and genesis of social problems. This point has to be kept in view that the society has concerns for the normal as well as the abnormal conditions of society. It is concerned with happy families as much as unhappy or problem families. A Student of Sociology studies social problems in order to arrive at a better understanding of the abnormal social conditions which adversely affect social functioning. There is a close relationship between social and personal problems. The problems which appear to be personal in nature such as sickness, personal violence, malnutrition etc. are linked with social conditions that afflict thousands in similar life situations.

2.2 EARLY APPROACHES

Historically, starting from the 17th Century upto the beginning of the 19th Century when law and order was the major concern of the state and the ruling elite, crime was the main social problem which attracted the attention of the early social thinkers. There were several exercises either in the form of beliefs and superstitions or in the form of serious and systematic understanding of

the problems of famine, epidemics and crimes. For the purpose of
understanding, they may be classified as follows:

beliefs and superstitions,
classical approach,
physical-constitutional approach.

2.2.1 Beliefs and Superstitions

Starting from the primitive phase of human life till today, man has been facing
famines scarcity, epidemic, violence, homicide and crimes. These problems,
in many societies in the early periods or in some segments of human society
even today, are considered to be the outcome of the influence of spirits, ghosts
and witches. Such beliefs are based on the lack of proper understanding between
the cause and effect relationship.

2.2.2 The Classical Approach

Starting from the 18th Century, some attempts were made to understand crime
in a more systematic manner. Cesare Becaria (1764) an Italian and Jeremey
Bentham (1823) an Englishman were the pioneers who did serious exercise to
explain the causation of crime as a social problem. Their formulations are
known as the classical theory or approach which stressed on the hedonistic or
the pleasure seeking nature of men which motivate them to violate accepted
social norms and thus resulting in crimes. In other words, some men commit
crimes in order to gain pleasure or crimes are utilitarian for them.

2.2.3 The Physical Constitutional Traits

Later on, some empirical or positivist efforts were made to explain the
occurrence or crimes as a social problem. Cesar Lombroso (1836-1909) an
Italian viewed crimes in relation to physical-constitutinal traits, therefore, this
approach is known as physical constitutional approach or the Italian School of
the theory of crimes. Since, he tried to verify his assumptions by empirical
methods, this is also known as the Positivist approach to the explanation of
crimes. According to Lombroso:

 criminals are born with certain physical traits,

 the physical traits of criminals are different from the normal persons.

2.2.4 Critical Review

A critical review of these approaches reveal their limitations which are as
follows:

 the first approach was based only on superstitions and ignorance,

 the latter two approaches are only of historical importance today,

 they are not based on the scientific analysis of crimes,

 the focus of the classical and the physical constitutional approaches is on
individuals,

 they have not kept in view the social, economic and cultural factors.

Check Your Progress 1

i)   Describe major characteristics of the Urban-industrial social structure in three lines.

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ii) Mention the names of the two main propounders of the classical approach to crime with countries of their origin.

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iii) Indicate the name of one main propounder of the Physical-Constitutional approach to crime as a social problem with country of his origin.

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iv) Discuss the limitations of the early approaches in eight lines.

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2.3   CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES

The 19th Century European Society experienced a great social transformation which is characterised by the decline of the hold of church, monarchy, feudalism and the rise of secular ideology state and the industrial revolution. Accordingly, there was a shift in ideas, methods of analysis and conceptualisation.

The distinct intellectual trends were visible during this century in the field of social sciences:

●   in the first trend, the major emphasis was on the centrality of 'social order' with major components of preservation, solidarity, cohesion and integration,

●   in the second trend, the central theme was social dynamics with its components of contradictions and conflict.

Out of the two intellectual trends there was the emergence of the functionalist and the Marxist approaches.

In the 19th Century the Indian society was fully subjugated by the British power. The Gandhian approach to eradicate problems of subjugation, colonial cultural domination, decline of village-industries, hold of superstitions, fear and untouchability can be grasped in the light of this socio-political background.

In contemporary period, a definite shift is visible in the analysis of social problems. Briefly, this shift in analysis can be explained in the following manner:

● earlier social problems and their causation were explained in terms of individuals. Now, the emphasis is on the social, economic, political, cultural or on structural factors.

● earlier emphasis was on the maintenance of social order and preservation of equilibrium which used to make social change a suspect phenomenon. Now, it is accepted that strains and social problems emerge due to contradictions existing in the social system which can be sorted out by removing these contradictions.

There are different perspectives to explain in the nature and genesis of social problems in contemporary sociology. These perspectives have given birth to two major theoretical approaches which are as follows:

● the Functional approach,

● the Marxist approach.

In the Indian context, out of his experiments on political movements and social reconstruction, Gandhi tried to develop a framework to eradicate social problems and to reorganize Indian society. Thus, the third approach which we have to explain is:

● the Gandhian approach.

2.3.1   The Functional Approach

The functional approach views society as a system, that is, as a set of inter-connected parts which together form a whole. The basic unit of anylysis in society and its various parts are understood in terms of their relationship to the whole. Thus, social institutions, such as family and religion, are analysed by functionalists as a part of the social system rather than as isolated units. As parts, they contribute to the integration and maintenance of the system as a whole.

Thus, parts of society are functional insofar as they maintain the system and contribute to its healthy survival. The functional approach also employs the concept of dysfunction to refer to the effects of any social institution which detracts from the maintenance of society. The concept of dysfunction is of vital significance in the modern study of social problems.

The functionalist point of view is reflected in the works of Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer–two of the founding father of Sociology. Later, it was developed by Emile Durkheim. It was further refined by Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Merton. The early functionalists drew analogy between society and an organism such as the human body. Just as an organism has certain basic need which must be satisfied if it is to survive, similarly, society has certain

basic needs which must be met if it is to continue to exist. The basic emphasis of the early functionalists is on the following points:

- well-knit relationship between parts (individuals, family, religion, education, law etc.) and the whole (society),

- smooth functioning of the system,

- maintenance of order,

- cohesiveness, and

- social solidarity.

i)   **The Functional Pre-requisites**

In this approach certain functional pre-requisites (necessary conditions of social existence) are identified. They are considered to strengthen the processes of integration, adaptation and maintenance and to help in the smooth functioning of society. The major pre-requisites are as follows:

- role differentiation,

- communication,

- normative regulation,

- socialisation, and

- social control.

If there is a breakdown in the functional pre-requisites, society will face social problems and social disorganisation.

ii)   **The Concept of Role**

In the functional analysis, the concept of 'role' occupies an important place. It refers to the work which an individual or an institution is expected to perform. The roles are assigned to individuals on the basis of their personal motivations and the social need. People performing on type of role belong to one position, strata or class. In all societies, there are role differentiation of individuals and institutions. As groups of individuals perform different roles, similarly, social institutions like family and religion also perform their assigned and expected role which are different from each other.

According to the functional analysis, if the role differentiation or the role performance is not in accordance with the prescribed norms, the functioning of society is affected and different social problems crop up.

After explaining the general formulations, now, let us consider the views of some major functionalist thinkers in more specific terms.

iii)   **Social Facts and Anomie**

In the functionalist analysis, the way the relationship between 'parts' and the 'whole' has been explained, it gives an impression that the 'whole' is simply of the sum total of 'parts'. However, Durkheim in clear terms rejects this formulation in his studies on division of labour, religion and suicide. The major points of Durkheim's analysis are as follows:

- Sui generis nature of society.

- Social facts, and

- anomie

The Society is a self-emergent reality (termed by Durkheim as reality 'sui generis') which is out of and above the individuals. The members of a society are constrained by social facts which are defined by Durkheim as ways of acting, thinking and feeling. These are external to the individual and endowed with a power of coercion by reason of which individuals are bound to obey social facts.

In Durkheim's analysis, social facts may be divided into normal and pathological types. The division of labour, religion, law and morality are normal social facts, whereas, anomie (normlessness) is a a pathological condition of society. The extreme form of 'division of labour' is characterised by cut-throat competition, interest orientation and the lack of societal consciousness in individual. In such a situation, anomie trends emerge. In Durkheim's concept, 'anomie' is a major social problem. Durkheim feels that the 'intensity' of the 'collective conscience' decreases with over differentiation and the extreme form of the division of labour. The actions of members of a group cannot be regulated by common social ideals in such a situation. The extreme form of differentiation, lack of common beliefs, morals and ideals create normlessness which has been called by Durkheim as 'anomie'.

Activity 1

On the basis of personal understanding of your village/locality/office, write a note of two pages and the actual functioning of the division of labour in any one of these three fields.

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iv) **Social Order and the Value Consensus**

As Durkhiem's major concern is 'social solidarity', similarly, the emphasis of Parsons is on social order which he has developed in his book 'Social System'. He observes that social life is characterised by 'mutual advantage and peaceful co-operation rather than mutual hostility and destruction'. Parsons believes that only commitment to common value provides a basis for order in society.

According to Parsons, 'value' – consensus forms the fundamental integrating principle in society. Common goals, unity and cooperation are derived from the shared values. The social values provide a general conception of what is desirable and worthwhile. The goals provide direction in specific situations. The roles provide the means whereby values and goals are translated into action.

According to Parsons, there are two main ways in which social equilibrium (the various parts of the system being in a state of balance) is maintained:

- The first involves socialisation by means of which values are transmitted from one generation to the next and internalised to form an integral of individual personalities. The family and education system in the Western Society are the major institutions concerned with this function.

- Secondly, it is also maintained by the various mechanism of social control which discourage deviance and so maintain order in the system. Thus, the processes of socialisation and social control are fundamental to the equilibrium of the system and therefore to the order in society.

Thus, socialisation and social control in inculcate the spirit of 'value-consensus' and help in the maintenance of the order.

According to Parsons, adaptation, goal attainment, integration and pattern maintenance are the functional pre-requisites. These are essential preconditions for the survival of society.

It may be summed up that social problems are indicated by the lack of order and value-consensus which are the result of the lack of socialisation, social control, adaptation, goal attainment, and pattern maintenance.

The weakening or absence of these conditions ultimately disturb the 'social equilibrium' leading to disorganisation, crime, delinquency and other social problems.

Activity 2

Prepare a two-page note on the nature of social integration in India of the people belonging to the different religions, languages and regions.

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v)   **The Social Dysfunction, Anomie and Structure**

The social problems have both objective and subjective aspects. They have been termed as 'manifest' and 'latent' respectively by Merton. It is, essential to study not only manifest social problems which are clearly identified in society but also latent social problems which refer to conditions that are also at odds with current interest and values but are not generally recongnised as being so. The manifest problems are apparent and objective, whereas, the latent problems remain suppressed and are subjective.

Both, manifest as well as latent aspects of social problems, are linked with dysfunctions.

In Merton's analysis the study of social problems require a focus on the dysfunctions of patterns of behaviour, belief and organisation rather than stressing simply on their functions only. A social dysfunction, according to Merton, is any process that undermines the stability or survival of a social system. This concept curbs any tendency towards the doctrine that everything in society works for 'harmony' and integration.

A social dysfunction is a specific inadequacy of a particular part of the system for meeting a functional requirement. Dysfunction provides a set of consequences which interfere with the requirements of functions in a social system. For example, large scale migration from villages to cities is dysfunctional for maintaining social solidarity, demographic composition and cultural ethos of the rural life. At the same time, it is dysfunctional for urban life also since, it increases overcrowding and decreases basic civic amenities. The same social pattern can be dysfunctional for some and functional for others in a social system. The accumulation of dysfunctions disturbs social stability and creates new social problems.

Merton suggested that certain phases of social structure generate the circumstances in which infringement of social codes constitutes a normal response. Among the elements of social and cultural structure, two are important for the purpose of approaching social problems. In this context, two aspects of social structure must be kept in view:

- The *first* consist of culturally defined goals. It comprises as frame of aspirational references. Some of these cultural aspirations are related to the original drives of man, but they are not determined by them.

- The *second* of the structure is socially approved means.

Every social group couples its cultural objectives with regulations rooted in institutions of approved procedures for moving toward these objectives.

With varying differential emphasis upon goals and institutionalised means, the society becomes unstable and there develops anomie or normlessness.

In this way the theory of anomie and opportunity – structure, set forth by Merton states that the rates of various kinds of deviant behaviour are highest where people have little access to socially legitimate means for achieving culturally induced goals. For example, the culture affirms that all members of society have a right to improve their social status but they are excluded from acceptable means for doing so. This denial of opportunity directs us to the structural sources of social problems.

Check Your Progress 2

i)   What is dysfunction? Describe its importance in the study of social problems in about eight lines.

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ii) Define latent functions and show their significance in the functional approach in about four lines.

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2.3.2   The Marxist Approach

Marx begins with the simple observation that in order to survive man must produce food and material objects. In doing so he enters into relationship with other men. From the simple hunting stage to the complex industrial stage, production is a social enterprise.

Except the societies of pre-history, all societies contain basic contradictions which means that they cannot survive in their existing form. These

contradictions involve the exploitation of the poor by the rich. For example, in the feudal society, lords exploited their serfs. In capitalist system, capitalists exploit their workers. This creates fundamental conflict of interest between these two classes since, one gains at the expense of the other. Thus social problems in society represent contradictions inherent in it.

According to Marx, the capitalist system is beset by a number of social problems such as:

- exploitation of man by man,
- inequality and poverty,
- alienation of workers from their own products,
- dehumanisation.

In this context, we would specially like to discuss inequality and poverty, in the light of the Marxian theoretical frame. These two problems are specially concerned with Indian Society.

i) **Inequality**

According to Marx inequality occurs in all societies because of unequal distribution of means of production.

From the Marxian perspective, the key pre-requisite of a society based on equality is 'each one according to his need', whereas, in the capitalist system and in the functional analysis the emphasis is on 'each one according to his capacity'.

The functionalists and the Marxists disagree on the sources of inequality. Both agree that inequality is linked to the division of labour in society. Marx stressed that social inequality was ultimately the result of economic disparity and deprivation. According to functionalists, stratification is functional for society and stratified. Societies are bound to have social inequality. The merit, ability, performance and achievements of all men are not equal. Thus, in the functionalist analysis, social inequality also appears to be functional.

ii) **Poverty**

Poverty in capitalist society, according to Marx, can only be understood in terms of the system of inequality generated by the capitalist economy. Wealth is concentrated in the hands of those who own the means of production. Members of the working class own only their labour which they are bound to sell in return for wages in the labour market.

From a Marxian perspective, the state in capitalist society reflects interests of the ruling class, the Government measures, therefore, can be expected to do little except reduce the harsher effects of poverty.

Even in the capitalist societies, the measure of Social Welfare and Social Securities have been adopted to minimise the hardships of the poor and socially deprived people. These measures have helped the needy but they have not resulted in the redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor. Excess of poverty and the excess of wealth in the hands of a few are inevitable consequences of the capitalist system. The solution to poverty does not involve reforms in the social security measures. Instead, like other social problems under capitalism, it requires a radical change in the structure of society.

2.3.3 The Gandhian Approach Related to Social Problems

For the proper understanding of the Gandhian approach, a clear distinction must be made between his basic perspectives and the immediate social and political concerns. As regards his basic perspectives, Gandhi wanted to create a moral order based on truth, non-violence, brotherhood, *swadeshi*, *swaraj*, decentralisation of power and economy, austerity and resistance to injustice by determined peaceful means known as *Satyagraha*.

There were several social problems of long and short ranges faced by Indian Society such as low position of women, untouchability, poverty, illiteracy, colonial education, village reconstruction and day to day political problems. When Gandhi appeared on the Indian political scene as a political leader and as a social thinker, he was deeply concerned with them.

i) Means and Ends

Gandhian approach to social problems regards means and ends as parts of a whole which has transcendental reference, unlike, Marx who places emphasis on ends. Gandhi stood steadfastly for a non-exploitative social order for he understood well that violence is built into an exploitative system. Gandhi's major goal in life was to achieve *swaraj* for India. His socio-political philosophy was based on truth, non-violence and the unity of means and ends.

For Gandhi, means are more than instrumental. They are creative. His quest for creative means derived from a positive spiritual decision has armed men with a gallant ethical arsenal to resist all oppressions. Exerted either from within the social system or from outside. Gandhi has preferred to call this instrument as *Satyagraha*. To him, not only the end but means to achieve them should also be equally pure.

ii) The New Economic System

Gandhi said, you cannot build a non-violent society on factory civilisation but it can be built on self-contained villages. The violence that prevails to day has its roots mainly in economic factors and the only remedy for it lies in doing away with concentration of wealth in the society. The productive system should be based on the idea of progressive and regulated minimisation of needs and not on that of multiplication of wants. The economy should be life-centred and not one that is oriented to commodity production. This means that the socio-economic system should operate on the principle of a metaphysically grounded optimum and not on the principle of maximisation. Consequently, it is to be a non-exploitative economy based on simple and limited technology. Social and economic organisation should be decentralised–based on the principle of optimum autonomy. The social and economic systems should be non-competitive and non-acquisitive, based on the principle of 'trusteeship'.

iii) Inequality

Gandhian approach envisages that the goal of economic equality is equality of wages for an honest day's work, be it that of a lawyer, a doctor, a teacher or a scavenger. It requires much advanced training to reach that state of equality.

So, economic equality of Gandhian conception does not mean that everybody would literally have the same amount or would possess an equal amount of

worldly goods. It is possible to reduce the difference between the rich and the poor. There must be a general leveling down of the few rich in whose hands the bulk of the national's wealth is concentrated and a levelling up of the dumb millions. Further, everyone must be assured a balanced diet, a decent house to live in, sufficient cloth to cover himself, facilities to educate his children and adequate medical relief. So, the real meaning of economic equality is 'to each according to his need'. Gandhi did not want to produce a dead equality where every person becomes or is rendered incapable of using his ability to the utmost possible extent for such a society carries with it the seeds of ultimate destruction.

He wanted the rich to hold their wealth in trust for the poor to give it up for them. A state of economic equality cannot be brought about by dispossessing the wealthy of their possession through resort to violence. Violent action does not benefit society for it stands to lose the gifts of a man who may know how a produce can add to the wealth.

iv) **The Caste System and the Untouchability**

In his early writing, Gandhi appeared to favour *Varnashram* which implied to him self-restraint, conservation and economy of energy. Arrogation of superior status by any of the *varna* over another is the denial of the human dignity and particularly so in the case of the section of society which was considered untouchables in an unjust manner. Untouchability is a curse that has come to us. So long as Hindus willfully regard untouchability as part of their religion, *Swaraj* cannot be attained.

v) **Constructive Programmes**

Gandhi coined a new term known as '*Harijan*' for the so called untouchable. He was so much concerned with the eradication of untouchability that in 1934 he resigned from the ordinary membership of the Indian National Congress and vowed to devote his full time for the eradication of untouchability.

Besides removal of untouchability and the development of *Khadi*, Gandhian constructive programme consisted of communal unity, prohibition, village sanitation, health and hygiene, basic education, adult education and literacy, uplift of women, spread of *Hindustani*, work for economic equality, service of the aboriginal's and organisation of students, peasants and labourers.

The communication order aimed in Gandhian approach depended upon a life on non-exploitation which was in consonance with the eleven vows advocated by Gandhi. These vows are truth, non-violence, control of the pations, non-stealing, non-possession, fearlessness, *Swadeshi*, removal of untouchability, labour, tolerance, and equality of religions.

Check Your Progress 3

i)   Write a note on the social problesm in the capitalist sociey as perceived by Karl Marx. Use seven lines to answer.

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ii) What are the significant points in Gandhian approach? Answer in eight lines.

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2.4 INADEQUACIES OF THESE APPROACHES

The Functional, Marxian and the Gandhian approaches have tried to understand social problems from their own perspectives. No approach can be regarded as final. We have to keep in mind that these approaches emerged according to the requirements of their time and the place of origin. The classical functionalist like Comte, Spencer and Durkheim were concerned with the problems of the 19th Century European society which was experiencing new challenges with the process of transformation, i.e., moving from rural to urban, agricultural to industrial, feudal to capitalist system. Naturally, they were concerned with reorganisation of society, functional integration and social solidarity. On the other hand, Karl Marx was more concerned with historical development of human society and problems generated by industrialisation and capitalism such as alienation, exploitation of man by man, dehumanisation and inhuman working conditions in the emerging industrial and urban centres. Gandhi was primarily concerned with the problems of Indian society such as colonialism, imperialist exploitation, untouchability, status of women, alcoholism, weakening of rural communities and the destruction of cottage industries etc.

These approaches have been questioned for their inadequacies. In a brief manner, we would like to discuss the inadequacies of these approaches one by one.

2.4.1 Critical Review of the Functional Approach

The basic premises of the functional approach have been questioned by P.A. Sorokin in his book, 'Sociological Theories Today', 1966. According to Sorokin, the shared orientations and goals of slaves and masters and of the conquered and their conquerors are not the same, inspite of the fact they are the part of the same society. As regards the dysfunctional aspects, Sorokin raises the question whether the activities of Socrates, Jesus and Marx may be

regarded as functional or dysfunctional, whether the emphasis of the early Christian communities or the civil rights workers are the emphasis of adaptation or non adaptation. The answer to these questions will depend upon with which side we identify ourselves in respective societies.

The functional approach treats an effect as a cause. It explains that parts of a system exist because of their beneficial consequences for the system as a whole. Further, it gives a deterministic view of human action because human behaviour has been portrayed as determined by the system. Man is pictured as an automation, programmed, directed and controlled by the system.

Alvin Gouldner states that while stressing the importance of ends and values that men pursue, Parsons never asks whose ends and values these are. Few functionalists accept the possibility that some groups in society, acting in terms of their own interests, dominate others. From this point of view social order is imposed by the powerful and value consensus is merely a legitimation of the position of the dominant group.

Functionalists, thus fail to recognise the conflict of interests which tend to produce instability and disorder. Conflict is also an integral part of the system, hence is equally relevant to the sociological analysis of social problems. In the functionalist approach, historical explanations find little place in understanding society and its problems.

2.4.2 Critique of the Marxist Approach

Both, the Functionalist and the Marxian approaches are deterministic in nature. In the first, the deterministic factor is social system, whereas, in the second it is the mode of production and economy.

While making a critical review of the Marxian approach, we must keep in view the following two aspects of Marxism:

● Marxism as a theory,

● Marxism as a practice.

As regards the first aspect, Marxian approach has over emphasised the role of material forces and conflict. It has over-simplified the class structure of the capitalist society–ignoring the importance of new occupation, professions, and the middle class.

In practice, the Marxist utopia could not be achieved by the Communist States in the former Soviet Union and the Eastern Europe. The social inequality and exploitation remained in communist States also. The Communist States were characterised by dictatorship, police state, inefficiency and corruption. As a result not only the Communist States collapsed but even the dream of Marxism was shattered in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Europe.

Marx predicted that finally the intermediate strata, i.e., the middle class would disappear and there would be only two classes, i.e., capitalist and the working class. But a reverse process is visible whereby increasing numbers of affluent manual workers were entering the middle stratum and becoming middle-class. A middle mass society is emerging where the mass of the population is middle rather than the working class. This process is visible in both capitalist and communist societies.

In the Communist States as indicated by Djilas–a new class–consisting of communist leaders have emerged. The political power and higher opportunities are concentrated in this class. The class, structure and the domination of a new over the majority could not be eliminated in the communist states.

With an increasing emphasis upon multi-casual explanation of social problems, it has become difficult to provide an analysis by one cause alone, the economic, as Marx propounded in his economic determinism. Further, too much weight on 'ends' alone does not seem to be logical in a wholesome approach to various aspects of culture and social structure.

Societies under transformation are undergoing various processes of fission and fusion, cohesion and conflict which yield new consciousness and in consequence a different nature of social problems than found earlier. The consideration of time and space has now become significant in any integrated approach to social problems.

2.4.3   Review of the Gandhian Approach

Gandhian approach offers a critique of the existing order, propounds certain basic elements of a new society and provides a methodology for solving social problems. Critics have argued that Gandhian approach lacks originality and is a combination of the traditional Indian thinking, welfare policies and liberalism. It is idealistic and divorced from the rough nature of the social reality. An ideal State based on truth and non-violence with practice of austerity, sacrifice and moral standards seems to be utopian. The Gandhian method of 'Satyagraha' to fight against injustice has gradually found favour allover the world. It has been applied successfully by blacks in the USA and in South Africa and even by the people in the Eastern Europe to fight against communalism.

Activity 3

Write a note of one page on the functioning of any Gandhian Constructive Programme (such as Gandhi Ashram, the *Harijan Sewak Sangh* or the *Adim Jati Sewak Sangh* etc.)

2.5   THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL REALITY: DYSFUNCTIONAL ASPECTS

The activities and conditions which adversely affect the smooth functioning of society are termed as dysfunctional. In Sociology, this term was used by Merton. In all societies crime, delinquency, alcoholism, drug addiction, prostitution, poverty and socio economic inequalities are regarded as 'dysfunctional'.

In contemporary society, there are several dysfunctional activities and conditions which operate at the global, national and local levels. These three levels of the dysfunctional aspects are closely linked with each other.

2.5.1   The Global Dysfunctions

There are several institutions which operate at the global level. After the First World War, the League of Nations was set-up to prevent future wars and to develop better understanding between the nations. It could not perform its functions effectively. Ultimately, the Second World War broke out in 1939. The First and the Second World Wars created a great deal of misery and

destruction. The threat of the cold war and the fear of the nuclear weapons were felt at the global level till the dismantling of the USSR. In the recent decades, the emergence of religious fundamentalism, increasing rate of unemployment, slow growth of economy, manifestation of global terrorism have been the prominent global challenges.

In a globalised world it is very difficult to assure that social problems are confined to the national boundaries. However, there are certain problems which are specific to certain nations predominantly. In this context, we may pinpoint some of the dysfunctions and problems which are visible in India at the national level. The religion as an institution is supposed to spread brotherhood and amity among the human beings. Unfortunately, in India, religious divisions have led to the dysfunctional aspects of communalism. Consequently it has become a victim of religious fundamentalism and terrorism.

Similarly, there are certain specific problems of Indian society such as poverty, untouchability, casteism and corruption, which at times changes the foundation of Indian democracy.

2.5.2   The Local Dysfunctions

There are certain dysfunctional conditions of Indian society confined to certain localities, regions and the States. For example, terrorist activities are concentrated in Kashmir and the North-east. Similarly there are other forms of ethnic violence, gender based social discrimination, conservatism etc. as the localised forms of dysfunctional activities.

The moot question is how and why such dysfunctional conditions emerge in Society. The different societies have their specific contextual problems. There is a difference in the socio-economic conditions of India, Western Europe and North America and thus there is a difference in social problems faced by these societies.

The dysfunctions in a society are closely linked with the socio-economic and political transformations. The Western industrial capitalist societies which receive their ideological support for the functional theory are facing the challenge of the rising curves of crimes, delinquency, alcoholism, loneliness, sex offences, mental breakdown, increasing rate of divorce and economic inequality. Similarly, in the former Soviet Russia and in the Eastern Europe, where during the last seven decades, a concerted effort was made to transform and the free society from exploitation, dehumanisation, alienation and socio-economic inequality, these dreams have been shattered. The Indian Society, where Gandhi made his experiments of truth, non-violence and moral order, is also facing the challenges of rising violence, terrorism, crime and corruption.

In the light of these facts, there is a need to examine alternative paradigms which claim to transform and to reorganise society to make it free from tensions, conflicts, social problems and disorganisation.

2.6   THE PARADIGMS OF TRANSFORMATION AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Of late, the concept of paradigm is often used in social science. The literal meaning of this word is 'inflexions of word tabulated as an example' or 'to

express grammatical relationship between different words' or 'bend' or 'curves'. Thus the concept of paradigm has come in social sciences from grammar. For the first time, in social sciences, the theoretical and philosophical formulation of the concept of 'paradigm' was made by Thomas S. Kuhn in his book the 'Structure of Scientific Revolution', 1962. In Social Sciences, this concept is used to mean a major shift or revolution in ideas or the emergence of new traditions of thought in the place of the old one after vigorous discussions and debates. Thus paradigm indicates towards the radical transformation of ideas.

During the last two hundred years, a great deal of debate has been going on about the patterns of social, economic, and political development and transformation. In this process, there were shifts in idea, replacement of one ideology by the other. In modern terminology, it may be regarded as paradigm–shifts or in the place of the old paradigms, the emergence of new paradigms of development. We can divide these paradigms of transformation and development in the following categories:

- the liberal capitalist,

- the communist,

- the democratic socialist, and

- the Indian experiments and the Gandhian Paradigm

2.6.1   The Liberal - Capitalist Paradigm

The Liberal industrial democracy generated new thought patterns which were completely different from the ideas of the earlier periods. The major emphasis of this paradigm was on democracy, political freedom, free enterprise, industrialisation, modern technology and mass production. The social economic and political consequences of the application of these ideas were democratic state, large scale industrialisation, migration from villages to cities, unprecedented urbanisation in Europe and North America followed by anonymity, impersonal relationship and the decline of the traditional mechanism of social control.

The democratic capitalist societies have succeeded in providing a minimum standard of living to their citizens and a good deal of political freedom. At the same time, the developed and industrialised societies are suffering from crime, white collar criminality, fear of war, juvenile delinquency, anomie, mental health problems, discrimination based on race and growing apathy. They have not succeeded in solving the problem of poverty and gender discrimination. The race riots in the USA in 1992 are some of the examples of the growing racial hatred. The similar trends of manifest or latent racial hatred are visible in England, Germany and France also.

2.6.2   The Communist Paradigm

The Communist Paradigm of the social and economic transformation is primarily based on the theories of Marx and Lenin. The ideology of communism is opposed to the ideology of capitalism. Its major emphasis is on collectivity, control over the means of production by the Communist State, dictatorship of the proletariat and the utilisation of the means of production and resources for benefit of the working class. In his classical analysis, Marx was of the view

that the capitalist system of production has generated problems of class conflict, exploitation, social and economic inequality, suppression of the working class their alienation from the ownership of the means of the production.

Communism claimed to offer an alternative social, political and economic system. It was supposed to eliminate the social problems produced by the capitalist system. The Communism as an alternative paradigm was practiced in the Soviet Russia from the year 1917 to 1991, in China, since 1949, in most of the countries of the Eastern Europe from 1945 to 1991, in Vietnam since 1945 and in Cuba since 1955. The communist societies suffered from a number of socio-political problems such as dictatorship, lack of freedom, large scale corruption, inefficiency, growing divorce, alarming rate of abortions, loneliness and fear psychosis. The Communist system could not fully solve the problems of poverty, lack of a minimum level of quality of life etc. As a result, communism has collapsed not only in soviet Russia but in the whole of Eastern Europe, also.

2.6.3 The Paradigm of the Democratic Socialism

A group of perceptive thinkers, particularly Fabians in England and some others in Germany and France had a critical view on the claims of communism, since the last quarter of the 19th Century. They thought that the capitalism and communism, were equally incapable of meeting the challenges posed by the industrial, technological revolution. Capitalism cannot provide economic freedom and communism cannot offer political freedom. Both systems equally degrade human dignity. The new society can be created only when men are free from social economic and political inequalities.

In several Western European countries, the socialists and the labour parties were in power after the First World War. The Labour party in Britain and the social democrats in Sweden and Germany tried to apply the ideals of the democratic socialism in their countries. In concrete terms, their social, political and economic ideals took the shape of a number of social security measures such as the nationalisation of major industries in Britain, France, Sweden, and Germany, security of jobs, *employment*, minimum wages, health scheme to provide medical facilities and educational reforms to protect the interests of the working class.

Inspite of the policy of the intervention by the State, the problems of crime, delinquency, racial discrimination, gender discrimination, drug addiction, sex crimes, unemployment, alcoholism, growing divorce and prostitution etc. could not be solved in Sweden, Britain, France and Germany where democratic socialist were in power at one or the other period.

2.6.4 The Indian Experiments and Gandhian Paradigm

The policy of democratic socialism along with mixed economy and the Gandhian ideology was followed by the independent India State after 1947.

In the ideal Gandhian paradigm of social transformation, there is a little scope for the State, since, it represents brute force. The Gandhian paradigm plans to make a society based on the decentralisation of power and economy, self-sufficient village community and a moral order rooted in truth and non-violence. In independent India, the Gandhian emphasis on the Village Panchayats,

reconstruction of villages, the legal measures against untouchability and the revitalisation of the cottage industries were adopted. India adopted the path of social and economic transformation with emphasis on community development, removal of poverty, planned agricultural and industrial development, protective discrimination in favour of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the upliftment of the socially and educationally backward classes. The concerted effort was made to improve health, education, and social security measures for the benefit of the underprivileged people.

The problems of poverty, ill health, slum conditions in the urban centres, illiteracy, increasing drug addiction, alcoholism, untouchability, growing terrorism and violence have not been solved as yet in India. In this context, we have to keep in mind that these problems cannot be solved only by the intervention of the State. The machinery of the State has got its own limitations.

2.7 LIMITATIONS OF STATE INTERVENTION

In the modern period, State has emerged as a powerful institution. This process started in Europe in the 17th Century with a gradual decline in the power of the Church and separation between the powers of the Church and the State. This process has passed through the following two phases:

- the policy of the Laissez-Faire,

- the rise of the Collectivist Ideologies.

2.7.1 The Policy of the Laissez-Faire

In the 19th Century, there was more emphasis on the policy of 'laissez-faire' which refers to the minimum interference by the State in day to day affairs of its citizen. The major concern of the State should be only the enforcement of law and order and State should not involve itself with welfare measures to protect the interests of its citizens. Every person understands his or her own interests.

2.7.2 The Collectivist Ideologies

Under the impact of the Collectivist ideologies – propagated by Communists, Socialists and the Fascists, there was growing emphasis on the role of the State in combating social problems and in promoting social welfare measures. After the great depression of 1929, even the capitalist State like the USA, the U.K. and France intervened to regulate economy and market. Certain special measures were taken by these States to control unemployment and the closures of factories.

The State is the most powerful institution and undoubtedly its roles are very significant in controlling violence, communalism, social discrimination and in promoting social security and welfare.

2.7.3 Limitations

The policy of the laissez-faire has been discorded even by the capitalist States. The State has tried to intervene in many areas particularly after 1919. Similarly, the Collectivist ideologies of the State intervention has also not succeeded.

There are limitations of the State intervention. The social problems can be more effectively checked by social consciousness, sense of participation, on the part of citizens and the sense of responsibility on the part of the public. The efforts of State will not be effective unless welfare measures are accepted by society. Thus, we have to keep in mind that the measures initiated by states have their limits. Society and State combined together can effectively sort out challenges posed by social problems, trends of disorganisation and pathological conditions.

Check Your Progress 4

1) Describe the major inadequacies of (a) the functional, and (b) the Marxist approaches in four lines each.

   a) ....
   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....

   b) ....
   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....

2) What is the meaning of Paradigm?

   a) ....
   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....

2.8   LET US SUM UP

This unit starts with an introductory remark showing the relationship between social transformation and social problems. The early and the modern approaches to the understanding of social problems and their differences are mentioned in this unit. You have also learnt, in somewhat details, about the Functional, the Marxist and the Gandhian approaches and their inadequacies. The paradigms of transformation and problems generated by them have also been described. Finally, we have thrown some light in this unit on limitations of State intervention in finding solution to social problems.

2.9 KEY WORDS

Anomie	:	For the first time this term was used by Emile Durkheim to indicate normlessness in a society and the lack of society in individuals. In such a situation, an individual or a group is not in a position to decide what should be done or what should not be done.
Dysfunction	:	The consequences of an event or action which adversely affects the functioning, unity and stability of a society.
Satyagraha	:	Peaceful and truthful resistance to injustice.
Paradigm	:	The literal meaning of this term is 'inflections of a word' or a grammatical relationship between different words. It was used for the first time in Social Science by Thomas S. Kuhn in 1962 to mean major shifts in ideas.
Collective Consciousness	:	The French counterpart of this term 'La Conscience Collective' was used by Emile Durkheim to mean common beliefs and accepted norms of a society which promote social solidarity.
Alienation	:	Means estrangement, separation or to find oneself as a stranger in a situation. This term was used by Hegel but was developed as a sociological concept by Karl Marx.
Capitalism	:	An economic system characterised by private ownership of the means of production, competition, free market and a strong profit motive.
Communism	:	A social philosophy represented by the public ownership of the economic services and the material resources of production. It believes in strong state control and the dictatorship of the proletariat class.
Disorganisation	:	A break in the social order or in its activities.

2.10 FURTHER READINGS

Jonathan H. Turner, 1987; *The Structure of Sociological Theory*, Fourth Edition, Rawat Publications, Jaipur.

Kenneth Henry, 1978; *Social Problems: Institutional and Interpersonal Perspectives*, Scott, Fopresman and Company, Illinois, London.

Robert K. Merton, Robert Nisbet, 1976; *Contemporary Social Problems*, Hercourt Brace Iovanovich, International Editing, New York, Chicago.

2.11 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

i)   Urban Industrial Social Structure is characterised by rapid social transformation, cities, high technology, modern productions, consumerism, rapid means of transport and communication, migration, mobility and anonymit, a secondary groups and impersonal relationships.

ii)   a)   Cesar Becaris (1786), Italy

b)   Jereme Bentham (1823), U.K.

iii) Cesane Lambroso (183601909), Italy

iv) ●   Earlier understanding of crime and other social problems was based on superstitions and ignorance.

●   the Classical and the Physical — Constitutional approaches are only of historical importance, today, their focus is on individuals.

●   they have not made adequate emphasis on the social, economic and cultural factors.

Check Your Progress 2

i)   Dysfunction is the consequence of an even or action which adversely affects the functioning, unity and stability of a society. This concept curbs this tendency towards the doctrine that everythins in a society works for harmony and integration. A social dysfunction is a specific inadequacy of particular part of the system for meeting a functional requirement.

ii)   To Merton, functions and social problesm have both subjective as well as objective aspects. Mainfest functions are apparent and objective, whereas, the latent functions are hidden and subjective. Laten social problems refer to conditions which are at odd with current interest and values but are not generally recognised as being so.

Check Your Progress 3

i)   According to marx, the Capitalist System is beset by a number of social problems, such as:

●   inherent contradictions,

●   exploitation of many by man,

●   alienation of workers from their own products,

●   dehumanisation, poverty and inequality.

According to Marx, socio-econom inequality is a major problem of the capitalist system where the emphasis is not on the human need but on the human capacity.

ii) Gandhian ideology emphasised on the creation of a moral order – based on truth and non-violent. In this order, there is a little scope for the State. Gandhi strongly believes in the decentralisation of power and economy. His main instrument to fight against injustice is *Satyagrah*. Gandhi mobilised relentlessly against untouchability and alcoholism in India.

Check Your Progress 4

i) a) The functional approach does not keep in view the contradictions existing in society and the clash of interests between the different groups and classes. It treats an effect as a cause. It provides a deterministic view of human action. The functionalists portray social system as an active agent, whereas in reality, only human beings act.

    b) Marxism as a theory has over-emphasised the role of material forces and conflict. It has over-simplified the calss structre of the capitalist society. In practice, the Marxist Utopia could not be achieved by the Communist State.

ii) The literal meaning of this term is teh 'inflections of words or 'a grammatical relationship between different words'. It was used for the first time in social Sciences by Thomas Kuhn in 1962 to mean major shift or revolution in ideas after a great deal of debates and discussions.

iii) a) the liberal Capitalist,
     b) the communist,
     c) the democratic Socialist,
     d) the Ganhian.

UNIT 3   SOCIAL PROBLEMS: THE INDIAN CONTEXT

Structure

3.0   OBJECTIVES

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

- understand the relationship between social transformation and social problems in the Indian context from a historical point of view;

- describe the linkage between the structural transformation and social problems;

- explain the relationship between social factors and social problems; and

- point out the nature of the State intervention to deal with these problems in India.

3.1   INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we propose to discuss 'Social Problems: The Indian Context'. There are certain unique features of the Indian Society. Indian Society, even today, maintains continuity with her remote past. The Social institutions such as *Varnashram*, Caste, joint family system and village communities emerged in the early phase of India society which are also responsible for several of the social problems in the modern period. India has been a multi-religious, multi-linguistic, multi-cultural and multi-regional society, since time immemorial. These diversities of Indian society have made significant cultural contributions and certainly they are a source of strength to the rich cultural heritage of India. But at the same time, they have often posed a number of problems to the social, cultural and political cohesiveness of Indian society.

3.2   TRANSFORMATION AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

We have discussed the theoretical relationship between social transformation and social problems in the Unit-1 of this course. The present unit provides an opportunity to understand this relationship with special reference to India.

In this context, we have to keep in mind the following aspects of transformation and their relationship with social problems:

- historical, and

- structural.

The historical understanding of transformation and its relationship with social problems may be divided in the following two parts:

- understanding social problems through different historical phases, i.e., ancient, medieval and modern (upto the 19th century) periods,

- social problems in the contemporary period.

3.2.1   Social Problems: Historical Phases

The Indian society, being part of an ancient civilisation, has passed through different historical phases. The *Vedic* period in India sowed the seeds of a

civilisation – characterised by the emergence of sophisticated philosophy, religion, astrology, science and medicine. Its institutional base centered around *Varnashram* and caste, emphasis on rituals, higher position of ritual performers over others and the sacrifice of animals. The following were the major social problems in the early phase of the Indian civilisation.

- conflict between the two major social groups, i.e., the Aryans and the *Dasas Dasyu* as mentioned in the Vedic texts.

- increasing rigidity of social hierarchy,

- emphasis on the observance of rituals,

- sacrifice of animals.

Jainism and Budhism emerged as a protest against these practices. It is to be noted that during the Vedic and the post-Vedic periods, the social position of Women was quite high. The child marriages were not common in this period.

India's contact with Islam has passed through the phases of conflict, gradual accommodation, increasing synthesis and the revival of communal antagonism. With the advent of the Muslim rule in India, two major trends were visible in the Indian Society:

i) The first was the trend of the growing insularity and attitude of avoidance towards others.

   This strengthened the notion of the purity – pollution and practice of untouchability. The rigid restrictions on the sea - voyage were imposed on the people in this period. As a consequence, firstly, it reduced the spirit of enterprise and adventure among the Indians. Secondly, it minimised contacts of Indians with the outside world.

ii) During the early phase of invasions and conflicts, the practice of *Sati* and the child-marriage developed as a defense mechanism among the Hindus. Only a small section of the Muslim population immigrated to India from Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey and the Arab countries. The rest of them were local people who accepted Islam. Due to contacts with Hinduism and conversion, the Muslim in India were also influenced by caste-system. Thus, the social hierarchies were introduced even among the Muslims in India.

iii) The second trend was in the form of the emulation of the customs of the Muslim rulers by the elite and section of the upper caste Hindus. This encouraged the adoption of the practice of *Pardah* (veil to cover the face) by the upper caste women in north India.

In the medieval period, the *Bhakti* movement, reassert the humanist elements of the Indian civilisation by preaching equality, speaking against rituals, the caste rigidity and untouchability. The practices of untouchability, child marriage, *sati*, infanticide, organised *thagi* (cheating) increased in the Indian Society particularly during the declining phase of the Mughal empire. Even the religious beliefs encouraged the addiction of tobacco, hashish and opium.

By the early part of the 19th Century, the colonial administration in India was fully established. After 1820, it adopted a reformist zeal. There were several

social reform programmes to eradicate the practices of *Sati* and the *Thagi* – widely prevalent during this period.

In the early 19th Century, the questions related to the social problems of *sati*, remarriage of widows, spread of modern education, evils of child marriage and of untouchability were raised by social reformers.

In the 19th century, there were four major reform movements:

- Brahmosamaj–led by Raja Rammohan Roy,
- Aryasamaj–led by Swami Dayanand Sarawati,
- Prarthana Samaj–led by Mahadeva Govind Ranade,
- Ramakrishna Mission–inspired by Ramkrishna Paramhansa and led by Swami Vivekanand.

These reform movements opposed the practice of untouchability, *Sati*, infanticide and propagated in favour of the remarriage of widows and the modern education. Due to the tireless efforts of Raja Rammohan Roy, the practice of *Sati* was legally abolished in 1829. The *Arya Samaj* contributed significantly in weakening the caste-rigidity and reducing the practice of untouchability in the Punjab, Haryana and the Western Uttar Pradesh. The activities of the *Prarthana Samaj* were mainly confined to the Bombay Presidency. The Ram Krishna Mission contributed significantly in the field of educations and health services..

3.2.2 Social Problems: Contemporary Phase

In contemporary India, there are several social problems. Though, they are called as social problems, yet, in some problems socio-cultural overtones are more prominent, whereas, in some others, the economic and legal overtones are conspicuous. Thus, the contemporary social problems may be classified in the following categories:

i)   socio-cultural problems: communalism, untouchability, population explosion, child-abuse, problems of the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes, the backward classes, women, alcoholism and drug addiction,

ii) economic problems: poverty, unemployment, black money;

iii) Legal problems: crime, delinquency, violence, terrorism.

These classifications are only the purpose of narration. They are closely interrelated with each other. Poverty is an economic as well as a social problem. Similarly, communalism is closely linked with economic factors. The crime and delinquency are having legal overtones but they are closely related to the social and economic factors.

As there were organised social movements against social problems in the previous phases of the Indian society, similarly, concerted social and political movements were launched in the contemporary period against communalism, casteism, untouchability, illiteracy, alcoholism and drug addiction. Gandhi– as the leader of the national movement after 1919, devoted a considerable part of his action-programme for the uplift of *Harijans*, *Adivasis* and Women. He

tried to reorganise education and village industries. He fought relentlessly against communalism, untouchability and alcoholism.

In the contemporary period, there are organised movements of women, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, backwards castes and labour to protect their interests. There are voluntary organisations working against ecological degradation, drug addiction and child abuse in India.

3.2.3   Structural Transformation and Social Problems

Several attempts have been made to understand Indian social problems in terms of structural transformation. In the Indian context, the following three patterns of transformation are visible:

- Sanskritisation,
- Westernisation,
- Modernisation.

Sanskritisation is a process through which lower castes achieved upward social mobility either by adventure or by emulating the customs and rituals of the upper castes. It is a cultural process but changes in social status and occupations as a consequence of the upward mobility brought about by sanskritisation makes it also a structural process.

The contact with the West, particularly with England, set in motion another process of transformation in India known as Westernisation. It is characterised by Western patterns of administration, legal system and education through the medium of the English language. Under the impact of the Western way of life, a sizeable section of educated and urbanised Indian adopted Western style of dress, food,drink, speach and manners. The emulation of the West inculcated the values of Western democracy, industrialisation and capitalism. There are cultural as well as structural aspects of Westernisation. It brought about structural changes by the growth of modern occupations related with modern education,economy and industry, emergence of urban centres with the introduction of colonial administration and the rise of urban middle class under the impact of education, administration, judiciary and press. As explained earlier, modernisation and westernisation are closely related in the Indian context. The major components of modernisation such as education, political participation, urbanisation, migration, mobility, money, market, modern technology, communication-network and industrilisation were introduced by the colonial administration. They received an impetus in the post-independence period. The independent India adopted a modern constitution, founded a secular democratic state and followed the policy of planned socio-economic development, democratic decentralisation and the policy of protective discrimination for the weaker sections.

The real question is how these patterns of structural transformation have generated social problems in India? Inspite of several contradictions existing in Indian society, revolution, as defined by Marxists and as explained in Unit 1, did not take place in India. The processes of transformation–represented by sanskritisation, westernisation and modernisation have been, by and large, smooth and gradual in the Indian context.

3.2.4 Structural Breakdown and Inconsistencies

The following two concepts may help us in understanding the relationship between structural transformation and social problems:

● structural breakdown, and

● structural inconsistencies.

The concept of the 'structural breakdown' has been used by Talcott Parsons to mean the systemic rigidity which tries to resist or retard social transformation and thus leads to the breakdown of the system or the social disorganisation. In the Third World Countries, there is a growing urge for modernisation in the post-independence period. These countries borrowed parliamentary democracy, adult franchise, modern constitution without the supporting structural base of economy, industrialisation, modern technology, literacy and normative base of rationality, civic culture and secular values. As a result, in several of the ex-colonial societies – democracy could not function successfully. The ethinic, communal, tribal, caste and regional aspirations have become so strong that they are eroding even the basic structures of democracy, modern state and civic society. This is so obvious in the case of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and in many countries of Africa. The impact of social transformation on the Indian society is visible in the following manner.

● on the one hand, three patterns of transformation as mentioned earlier, has created new problems of adjustment,

● on the other hand, occasionally, the process of social transformation has been resisted. In this context, we may cite the examples of the resistance of the urge of the upward social mobility of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, denial of the rightful claims of women, and obstructing land reforms by hook or crook.

In the Indian context, structural inconsistencies are also visible. They are symptoms as well as the cause of social disorganisation and social problems. By structural inconsistencies is meant the existence of two opposite sub-structures within the same structure which are not consistent with each other. In India, on the one hand, there are highly sophisticated modern metropolitan upper and upper middle classes influenced by consumerism. On the other hand, there is a large number of the Indian people who live in inaccessible tribal and rural areas and who might have not seen even a train. A small section of the Indian society belongs to the jet age, whereas, a large Indian population even today depend on the bullock-cart. This situation is the clear indicator of the gap between the rich and the poor, the rural and the urban creating a gulf between the different groups and strata. These structural inconsistencies are the indicators of poverty, inequality, inaccessibility and deprivation existing in Indian society.

3.2.5 The Soft State

Gunnar Myrdal in his book '*Asian Drama*' discusses the problems posed by modernisation in several Asian countries – including India. He feels that strong states, effective governments with their capacity to take hard decisions and strict enforcement of the rule of law are the major features of modern European

society but in South Asian countries in general and in India in particular, an approach is being followed by the ruling elite in the post-independence period which has been termed as the policy of 'soft-state' by Myrdal. The democratisation of polity has further strengthened this policy. It has weakened the capacity of state in enforcing the rule of law. As a result, there is an increasing rate of crime, violence, terrorism, violation of law, corruption in the public life and the criminalisation of politics.

Check Your Progress 1

i) Describe the major social problems in the following historical phases in India.

    a) ancient

    ....

    ....

    b) medieval

    ....

    ....

    c) modern

    ....

    ....

    d) contemporary

    ....

    ....

ii) Name the four major reform movements of the 19th century.

    a) ....

    b) ....

    c) ....

    d) ....

iii) Mention three major forms of transformations in India.

    a) ....

    b) ....

    c) ....

3.3 SOCIAL FACTORS AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Social problem is a situation that objectively exists in particular society and is subjectively accepted as undesirable by that society. Social problem therefore, is relative to society or has a social context. Hence, study of social problems requires understanding of their social contexts.

The social context may be discussed in a historical or structural perspective. Earlier, we have explained how in various historical phases in India, the different

types of social problems emerged. Now, let us try to understand the major social factors which are associated with various problems.

3.3.1 Major Social Factors

Study of Indian social problems – their emergence and persistence in Indian society – requires understanding of the Indian social situation in which the problems exist. One has to analyse the social factors that are relevant to the understanding of social problems in India. Some of the major factors that constitute the social context in India, as far as social problems are concerned, are as follows:

- heterogeneity of Indian population,

- cultural elements,

- economy, poverty and education,

- state and polity,

- urbanisation and industrialisation.

3.4 HETEROGENEITY OF INDIAN POPULATION

India is a heterogeneous society – where there are several religions, castes, linguistic and tribal groups. The heterogeneous nature of the Indian population has been the cause of a number of social problems in India.

3.4.1 Religion

The multi-religious nature of society and conflict among the different religions has given rise to the problem of communalism in India. The phenomenon of communalism, as a vitiated form of inter-religious group relationship, particularly between Hindus and Muslims is a grave problem in India. It has its historical linkage with the Muslim invasions in India, early conflicts between Hindus and Muslims, British rule and policy of encouraging communal-divide, competition for political power, service and resources.

Gradually, the problem of communalism has affected the Hindu-Sikh relationship also. There is a sizeable group of Sikhs in India. They are concentrated in a relatively developed region (Punjab) of the country. Their existence as a powerful community in the region and as a minority in the larger nation is to be taken into consideration in understanding the emergence of communal politics followed by terrorism in Punjab. In this context it must be noted that by and large both Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab have shown a great deal of understanding and amity even in the midst of terrorism. The Indian concept of secularism accepts all religions as equal and does not discriminate one religion against another. As indicated by Myrdal, the policy of a 'soft state' and not taking hard decisions against communal organisations has also aggravated problems of communalism in India. The considerations of electoral gains by using religions have also contributed in the growth of communalism in the post-independent period of India.

3.4.2 Caste

Another element of Indian social structure is the caste system. The Caste system has been divided Indian population into numerous groups that enter into relationships of various types and degrees among them. It has been the root cause of various social problems in India. The Casteism as a problem refers to both the discrimination of one caste against another and the particularistic tendency of favouring one's caste group in violation of the principle of universalism. The practice of mobilisation on the basis of caste and favour or disfavour shown in education and employment on caste considerations are the major features of casteism. One may justify caste criterion for welfare programmes in favour of the weaker sections in India social situation. At the same time, such welfare measures have generated tensions and conflicts that exhibit casteist tendencies.

The caste system has had its adverse impact on education in India. Traditionally, caste determined the eligibility of the people for education. In the traditional system, education was considered to be the prerogative of the upper castes. Steeped in this tradition of reserving pursuit of knowledge to the upper castes, the masses did not receive education. This is one of the reasons for the problem of widespread illiteracy in India.

3.4.3 Language

Another aspect of Indian society is that of the existence of several languages which often leads to conflicts between the different linguistic groups. India has recognised the socio-political reality of language by reorganising the states on the basis of language which has encouraged the assertion of linguistic identities. It may also be noted that as a nation, India has not been able to have a national language that is acceptable to all and that effectively serves as the link language. For historical reasons, English continues to be the link language for the purpose of higher education, administration and diplomacy. In this context, there is a two-fold relationship:

- at the national level, there is the question of the relationship between English and Hindi.
- at the State level, there is the question of the relationship between English, Hindi an the regional languages.

The situation arising out of this peculiar linguistic configuration has created the problems of linguistic minorities in several states, border dispute between states, and the question of the medium of instruction in educational institutions. All these issues have repercussions on national integration. They have generated tensions an conflicts.

3.4.4 Tribes

India is a country with large population of tribals. Tribals in India are not a homogeneous group. They differ in terms of their ways of life, exposure to the outside world and adoption of the programmes of welfare and development. The tribals have been isolated from the mainstream of the Indian society for several years which accounted for their backwardness. In addition, they have

been subjected to various types of exploitation by the non-tribals with whom they have come into contact. While the non-tribals exploited the tribals for economic gains, the tribals are facing the phenomenon of detribalisation which refers to the loss or degeneration of the tribal culture and way of life. In this context, the main problems of Indian tribes are backwardness, exploitation, detribalisation, ethnic tensions, various kinds of tribal movements and tribal insurgency in certain parts of India.

3.4.5 Minorities

The heterogeneity of the Indian population has given rise to the problem of minorities in India. The major minority groups that have been identified in India are religious and linguistic. While religious minorities can be considered to exist at the national level, linguistic minorities have their relevance at the state level. Apart from religious and linguistic minority, caste and tribal groups may assume the status of minorities group in the context of inter-group relationships in particular situations.

3.4.6 Population Explosion

Another social factor that has implications of social problems in India is the phenomenon of population explosion. The population in India has been growing phenomenally during this century. Development and welfare programmes for the masses have not been able to catch up with the increasing population. Consequently, the benefits of the developmental programmes gained by the masses whose number is ever increasing, have been far below the expectation.

With the increase in population, the problems of poverty, unemployment and illiteracy has been accentuated in India. In absolute terms the number of people who are affected by these problems have been increasing. The sheer size of the population is also a factor that affects the increasing ethnic problem of various kinds. The larger the size of the caste or the tribe, the greater is the tendency to assert their parochial or ethnic identities at the cost of national integration.

In the population of India, there is a considerable number of the physically handicapped also. They are dependent on society at large for their survival. The country does not have enough institutions to take care of the various needs of the physically handicapped. Many of them turn to streets as beggars which is another social problem.

The increasing population of India is making increasing demands on the resources of the land, capital and forest. With the growing population, the hunger for land in both rural and urban areas is increasing. With the growing burden on the national finance, the welfare programmes and social services like education, health, employment, rural development, welfare of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, backward castes, youth and women etc. are adversely affected. The needs of fuel, timbers and the hunger of land for cultivation and habitation are steadily depleting the forest resources. The increasing denudation of the forest areas is creating various kinds of environmental problems in the country. The adverse consequences of the ecological imbalance created by deforestation are visible in the changing pattern of rains, increasing soil erosion, floods, scarcity of fodder for animals and firewood for poor people.

Box 3.01. Socio–demographic Profile of States in India

State/UT	Persons	Growth rate	Sex ratio	Density	Literacy Rate		
		1991-01			T	M	F
India	1,027,015,247	21.34	933	324	65.37	75.85	54.16
J & K	10,069,917	29.04	900	99	54.46	65.75	41.82
Himachal	6,007,248	17.53	970	103	77.13	86.02	68.8
Punjab	24,289,296	19.76	874	482	69.95	75.63	63.55
Chandigarh	900,914	40.33	773	7903	81.76	85.65	76.65
Uttarachal	8,479,562	19.20	964	159	72.28	84.01	60.26
Haryana	21,082,989	28.06	861	477	68.59	79.25	56.31
Delhi	13,782,957	46.31	821	9294	81.82	87.37	75.0
Rajasthan	56,473,112	28.33	922	165	61.03	76.46	44.34
Uttar Pradesh	166,052,859	25.80	898	389	57.36	70.23	42.9
Bihar	82,878,796	28.43	921	880	47.53	60.32	33.6
Sikkim	540,493	32.98	875	76	69.68	76.73	61.49
Arunachal	1,091,117	26.21	901	13	54.74	64.07	44.24
Nagaland	1,988,636	64.41	909	120	67.11	71.77	61.92
Manipur	2,388,634	30.02	978	107	68.87	77.87	59.7
Mizoram	981,058	29.18	938	42	88.49	90.6	86.0
Meghyalaya	2,306,069	29.94	975	103	63.31	66.14	60.41
Assam	26,638,407	18.85	932	340	64.28	71.9	56.30
West Bengal	80,221,171	17.84	934	904	69.22	77.58	60.22
Jharkhand	26,909,428	23.19	941	338	54.13	67.9	39.4
Orissa	36,706,920	15.94	972	236	63.61	76.0	51.0
Chhatisgarh	20,795,956	18.06	990	154	65.2	77.8	52.4
Madhya Pradesh	60,385,118	24.34	620	158	64.09	76.7	50.3
Gujrat	50,596,992	22.48	921	258	69.97	80.50	58.60
Daman & Diu	158,059	55.59	709	1411	81.1	88.4	70.4
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	220,451	59.20	811	449	60.3	76.3	43.0
Maharastra	96,752,247	22.57	922	314	77.27	86.27	67.5
Andhra Pradesh	75,727,541	13.86	978	275	61.11	70.85	51.17
Karnataka	52,733,958	17.25	964	275	67.04	76.3	57.49
Goa	1,343,998	14.89	960	363	82.32	88.9	75.5
Lakshadweep	60,595	17.19	947	1894	87.52	93.1	81.5
Kerala	31,838,619	9.42	1058	819	91.0	94.2	87.8
Tamil Nadu	62,110,839	11.19	986	478	73.5	82.3	64.5
Pondicherry	973,829	20.56	1001	2029	81.5	89.0	74.0
A&N Islands	356,265	26.94	846	43	81.2	86.0	75.3
Tripura	3,191,168	15.74	950	304	73.66	81.47	65.4

Source: *Census of India* 2001

Check Your Progress 3

i) Write in four lines on religion and politics.

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....

ii) Describe the relationship between caste and education in four lines.

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iii) Discuss the problem of language at the Centre and the State levels in four lines.

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iv) Mention problems of (a) tribes, and (b) minorities in three lines each.

a) ....

....

....

b) ....

....

....

v) Mention five major consequences of population pressure.

a) ....

b) ....

c) ....

d) ....

e) ....

3.5 CULTURAL ELEMENTS

There are certain cultural elements that have had their own contribution to the persistence of the certain social problems in India. The following cultural traits can be particularly identified in this context.

- Fatalism,

- Particularism,

- Lack of regard for public property,

- Patriarchal system.

3.5.1 Fatalism

A cultural element that has been relevant to social problems in India is fatalism. The Hindu doctrines of "karma" and rebirth contain strong elements of fatalistic attitude to life–an attitude of acceptance of and resignation to the vicissitudes and failures in life. It has proved to be a one of the mechanisms for checking the resistance of the masses against of injustice and exploitation. Social practices such as untouchability, discrimination, bonded labour persisted in India for a long time almost unchallenged by those affected by them. It happened so because the affected people considered these practices as the result of their 'Karma' (action) of the previous birth and luck. The welfare and developmental programmes themselves get a setback on account of the apathy and indifference of the masses who are under the spell of religious fatalism.

3.5.2 Particularism

Another cultural trait widespread in Indian society is particularism as against universalism. This reflected in the excessive consideration for one's own people, kingroup, caste or religion. Often universalistic standards are set aside in one's decisions and actions. Corruption – involving favouritism or discrimination that is prevalent in our society is the result of such disregard for the norms of universalism. Some of the intergroup conflicts on the basis of caste, tribe, religion, language or region can also be attributed to the mobilisation based on sectional identities and particularism.

3.5.3 Attitude of Public Property

Another trait of the Indian society that has implications for corruption is the disregard for public property and money. There is a belief that Indians have inherited it as a legacy of the colonial rule. Unfortunately, this attitude seems to have continued to exist in India even after independence. This lack of respect for public property is one of the root causes of corruption, black money, tax-evasion, misappropriation of public goods and use of substandard material in public constructions.

3.5.4 Patriarchal System

As elsewhere in the world, the Indian society, by and large, has been patriarchal where woman is subjected to man. The role of woman in the Indian society has been conceived as that of wife and mother. The woman in India possesses a inferior social status to that of man.

The problem is further accentuated by the cultural need to have male offspring for perpetuating the family performing the rituals after one's death. It has contributed to the cultural preference for a male child and imposition of inferior status to the female. This had led to the subjugation of women and discrimination against them in various spheres of social life. The problems such as dowry, ill-treatment of the daughter-in-law, wife-beating , illiteracy,

occupational discrimination, social isolation, and psychological dependence, etc. faced by women have roots in this cultural preference for the male.

3.6 ECONOMY, POVERTY, EDUCATION

Economically, India remains predominantly an agricultural society. Naturally, there is an excessive dependence of labour force on agriculture. This over-dependence of the labour force on the underdeveloped agriculture is the major cause of many of the social problems in India. It directly leads to poverty which is one of the basic causes of many other social problems in India. The malnutrition, ill-health, beggary, prostitution, etc. are rooted in the large-scale poverty in India.

Indian society is characterised by the unequal distribution of wealth. One observes affluence amidst pervasive poverty in both the rural and urban area of India. On account of this disparity, benefits of development and welfare services also accrue unequally to the different sections of the society. The benefits that the poor gain are comparatively low. Consequently, the lot of the poor and the backward sections of the society has not improved as expected. There is a close linkage between economy, poverty and education. The illiteracy and education. The unplanned growth of higher education has created the problem of educated unemployment.

Some Aspects of Human Development in India

India is one of those countries who occupies a low rank in the Human Development Index. Some aspects of the Human Development Index (2000 view) of India is given below:

Box 3.02 Human Development Index				
1.	Life expectancy	63.3 yrs	2.	Adult Literacy rate (15 years and above) 57.2%
3.	Combined enrolment ratio	55%	4.	% of Population not using improved drinking water sources 12%
5.	Underweight children under age 5	47%	6.	% of people living below National Poverty Line 35.0%
7.	Annual Population growth rate	1.9%	8.	% of urban population 27.7%
9.	Population not using adequate sanitations facilities	69%	10.	Children underweight for age [under 5 years] 47%
11.	People Living with HIV/AIDS (2001)	0.79%		
Source: *UNDP*, 2003				

3.6.1 Child Labour

Child labour, a manifestation of poverty in the country has become a social problem in India. A large number of families belonging to the poor section of the society are forced to depend upon their children's contribution to the family income. They are not in a position to spare their children for full-time or even part-time schooling. Thus children who are expected to be in schools are found working as labourers.

Apart from the economic constraints of the families of the working children, the owners of some of the small-scale enterprises also prefer to employ child labour. For them, child labour is cheap. It reduces the cost of production and maximise their profit. Thus, child labour gets encouragement from both - the parents of the children and the owners of the enterprise. Therefore, despite the appalling conditions under which children work and the low wages they earn, child labour thrives in India.

Activity 1

Please prepare a report of two pages based on the monthly income and its sources of ten families living in your locality.

3.6.2 Illiteracy and Education

Widespread poverty has its own repercussions on education in India. The problem of mass-illiteracy in the country is largely by the result of the situation of poverty under which the masses live. The poor are so preoccupied with the concern for their survival that they do not have the inclination or time for education. It is ridiculous to convince a poor man about the value of education when he is struggling to make both ends meet. Most of the people belonging to the poor section are not inclined for schooling of their children. Many of those who enroll their children in schools withdraw them before they acquire any meaningful standard of literacy. The result is that India is faced with the problem of mass-illiteracy. Nearly 50 per cent of the country's population capable of acquiring literacy skills are still illiterate.

3.6.3 Educational System

The educational system affects the society at large in various ways. Education at the higher level in India has expanded indiscriminately in response to social demands and political pressures. Some of the major features of the educational system in India are as follows:

- widespread illiteracy,
- unachieved targets of the universalisation of education,
- lack of proper emphasis on the primary education,
- misplaced emphasis on higher education which is, by and large, poor in quality excepting institutes of technology, management, medicine and few colleges and universities in the metropolitan centres.

Consequently, there has been no attempt to see that the educational system at the higher level produced the manpower in quality and quantity that the economic system of the country could absorb. The net result of this unplanned expansion has been increased in the educated unemployment and underemployment. Here it is obviously the situation of the producing manpower in excess of the demand of the economic system or mismatch between educational and economy.

There is another kind of mismatch between education and economy in India. It is the situation wherein some of the highly qualified manpower produced by some of the educational institutions in India do not find the placement in the country rewarding enough. The result is the brain drain in which India loses what cream of its highly qualified manpower produced at a very heavy cost of public resources.

3.6.4 Industrialisation and Urbanisation

The process of industrialisation and urbanisation has been slow in India. Industrialisation has been concentrated in certain pockets in the country. The result is the inordinate growth of population in a few urban centres. This over-growth of population in a few urban centres has created various problems of – urban poverty, unemployment, congestion, pollution, slum, etc.

Rural poverty and unemployment have had their own contribution to the urban problem in so far as people migrated from the rural areas to the urban centres in numbers larger than the urban areas can absorb. As a large section of the rural migrants are illiterate and unskilled, they are unable to adjust themselves into the urban economic situation and thereby suffer from unemployment and poverty. Many of them resort to begging and some of these helpless people belonging to the female sex are forced to adopt prostitution for their living. Thus, while urbanisation and industrialisation are processes of development, they have their own adverse by-products in India in the form of various social problems.

3.7 STATE AND POLITY

The intervention of the State has been very significant either in the checking or in finding solution to the social problems in India. In the early colonial period, several steps were taken by the State to abolish the practice of *Sati* (1829) and to control *thagi*. In the later part of the 19th century steps were taken to provide legal opportunities for inter-community and inter-caste marriage. In 1929, the *Sarada Act* was passed to check child marriages. In the post-independence period, India resolved to constitute a democratic, sovereign, secular and socialist society. In the constitution, special provisions were made to safeguard the interests of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward classes, women and children.

The practice of untouchability was declared as an offence. Some special measures-such as the *Hindu Marriage Act and Succession Act* were adopted to reform the Hindu Society in general and the Hindu marriage system in particular. The welfare programmes have been launched for the uplift of youth, children, and physically handicapped. The Five Year Plans were launched for the socio-economic transformation of Indian Society. After 1970, special attention was paid towards the removal of poverty, rural development and generation of employment in the rural areas.

The impact of these programmes in visible on the socio-economic life of India. Despite considerable achievements, India is still beset with so many problems such as poverty, unemployment and sub-standard life conditions for a large section of Indian society. The turn taken by Indian polity and electoral process during the post-independence period is also responsible for several of our social problems.

3.7.1 Electoral Process

Politically, India has a multi-party parliamentary form of democracy. Ideally, political parties are to be organised on universalistic ideologies and the citizens are expected to choose their representatives on universalistic principles. In fact, particularistic tendencies play an important role in the electoral process of the country. One can find political parties formed on communal or parochial lines and political mobilisation undertaken by political parties and individuals on the basis of caste, religion, language and region. The political activities of

this sort are negation of the healthy democratic polity. They are also leading to sectional conflicts, atrocities against weaker sections, linguistic and religious minorities. Thus, the political functioning and the electoral process, as they exist today, are fomenting problems of communalism, casteism and conflicts between the different sections of society.

3.8 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, first of all the relationship between social transformation and social problems has been discussed. The process of transformation has been explained in terms of historical as well as structural aspects in the Indian context. It has been followed by examining the relationship between social factors and social problems, cultural elements and social problems, economy, polity and social problems. Finally, we have discussed the role of the State in dealing with these problems, and the problems being generated by the actual functioning of the Indian polity.

3.9 KEY WORDS

Structural Breakdown	:	This concept was used by Talcott Parsons to mean the system of rigidity which tries to resist or retard social transformation and thus leads to breakdown of the social structure. The steps taken by the people against systematic rigidity in the form of collective mobilisation has been called by Marxists as revolution.
Structural Inconsistencies	:	This concept indicates the existence of two opposite sub-structures within the same structure which are not consistent with each other.
Soft-State	:	This concept has been used by Gunnar Myrdal in his book "The Asian Drama: An Enquiry into the Poverty of Nations'. By this concept he means the functioning of newly Independent Asian States which find difficulties in taking hard decisions to enforce the rule of law.

3.10 FURTHER READINGS

Ahuja Ram, 1992. *Social Problems in India*, Rawat Publications, New Delhi.

Singh, Yogendra, 1988. *Modernisation of Indian Tradition*, Reprint, Rawat Publication, Jaipur.

3.11 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) a) Caste distinctions, overemphasis on rituals over knowledge, rigid hierarchy, higher position of ritual performers, sacrifice of animals.

   b) Attitudes of avoidance, superstition, increased notion of purity and pollution, untouchability, child marriage, lower position of women, strict observance of widowhood.

   c) *Sati*, Widowhood, Child marriage, illiteracy, untouchability, *thagi*, superstitions.

d) Communalism, untouchability, population expolosion, problems of weaker section alcoholism, drug adiction poverty, unemployment, black money, crime, delinquency and violence.

2) Arya Samaj, Brahmasamaj, Prarthan Samajand Ramakrishna Mission.

3) Sanskritisation,

Westernisation,

Modernisation

Check Your Progress 2

1) The Indian Society is multi-religious in nature, During the colonial period, the relationship between different religious communities particularly between Hindust and Muslims was politicised. It encouraged a tendency known as communalism which as been strengthened by mutual suspicious idologies, competition for power, service and resources.

2) The education in the traditional Indian system was primarily confined to the upper castes. It has its adverse impact on the spread of mass education. This is one of the reasons for the widespread illiteracy in India.

3) English continues to be the link language in India for the purpose of higher education, administration and diplomacy. At the level of the centre, there is teh question of the relationship between English and Hindi for the purpose of the medium of instructions and administration and at the State level between English, Hindi and the regional languages.

4) a) There are several tribes in India and they comprise around seven per cent of India's population. They are not homogeneous in their customs. They are isolated and exploited and facing the problem of detribalisation.

b) Thee are religious and linguistic minorities in india. Sometimes, castes and tribes may also be considered as minorities within specific areas.

5) a) Adverse effects on development and welfare programmes,

b) Poverty,

c) Illiteracy,

d) Increased pressures on land, capital, forest and other resources.

Check Your Progress 3

1) a) Excessive consideration for one's own kin group, caste, tribe or religion,

b) corruption-involving favouritism,

c) discrimination,

d) inter-group conflicts

2) This lack of respect for public property is one of the root-causes of corruption, black money, tax-evasion, misappropriation of fund and use of sub-standard materials in pubic constructions.

3) There is a close linkage between economy, poverty and education. The illiteracy in India is directly linked with poverty. There is a mis-match between economy and education in the Indian context.

4) In fact, particularistic tendencies play an important role in the electoral process of the country. Several political parties have been formed on communal and parochial lines. At the time elections, castes, religion, language and region play significant roles. This types of mobilistion is also responsible for many socio-economic problems in India.

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UNIT 4 SOCIAL DEMOGRAPHY

Structure

4.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit, we have discussed various aspects of social demography in India as a social problem. After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- describe various aspects of the demographic situation in India, like the size and growth of the population, the fertility, mortality, age and sex structure of the population;

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- explain the determinants and implications of these aspects of the demographic situation in India;
- examine the concept of family planning and family welfare and the barriers to the acceptance of family planning;
- state and describe the current status of the population policy of India; and
- describe the future prospects of family welfare programme in the light of the current achievements.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The term 'demography' is derived from the Latin word 'demos' meaning people. Hence, demography is the science of population. On the one hand, demography is concerned with a quantitative study of the size, structure, characteristics and territorial distribution of human populations and the changes occurring in them. On the other hand, demography is also concerned with the study of the underlying causes or determinants of the population phenomena. It attempts to explain population phenomena and situations as well as the changes in them in the context of the biological, social, economic and political settings. Social demography looks at the population phenomena mainly at the social level.

Keeping these perspectives in mind, Section 4.2 of this unit describes the size and growth of the population of India and their implications. Section 4.3 is devoted to fertility in India, its determinants and implications of high fertility. A detailed discussion of mortality in India, its determinants and implications of declining mortality and high infant and child mortality is undertaken in Section 4.4. The age and sex structure of the Indian population is described in Section 4.5, which also examines the determinants and implications of the age structure and the determinants of the sex structure. Section 4.6 is on family planning and family welfare and the barriers to family planning. Finally, section 4.7 is focused on the Population Policy of India, its evolution and components, achievements, achievements of the family welfare programme and its future prospects.

4.2 SIZE AND GROWTH OF POPULATION IN INDIA

The size and growth of population are two important components of the demographic phenomena in a developing country like India. These have severe implications on the social and economic spheres of our life. Hence, let us begin with a discussion on the size and growth of the population and its socio-economic implications.

4.2.1 Size and Growth of Population

India is the second most populous country in the world, ranking only after China. In the last Census, taken in 2001, the population of India is found to be 103 crores; 18 crores of people were added to the population since the last Census taken in 1991. This means that more than around 1.8 crores of persons are added to India every year. This is more than the population of Australia.

India's population has more than doubled since Independence. In the first post-Independence Census, taken in 1951, the population stood at 36 crores, with an average annual growth rate of 1.25 per cent for the decade 1941-51. However, the average annual growth rate for 1991-2001 was 2.1 per cent and the decadal growth rate was 21.32 per cent.

4.2.2 Determinants of Population Change

Three factors determine the change in the size of the population of any country: how many persons are born, how many persons die, and how many persons are added to the population after considering the number of persons leaving the country and the number of persons coming into the country. The last of these factors, that is, migration does not play a large role in determining population growth in the Indian context. It, therefore, becomes necessary to consider in greater detail the other two factors, that is, fertility and mortality.

4.2.3 Implications of the Size and Growth of Population

The size of the population of India is itself staggering, and it is growing at a high rate. Despite intensive efforts through development programmes, the achievements have not been able to keep pace with the needs of the growing population.

The per capita production of food grains has increased over the years, but the per capita increase has been only marginal because of the high growth rate of the populations. The housing shortage has also been increasing over the years. The norms for the health and medical services have not been met. The upward trend in the gross and net national products is not reflected in the per capita income to the same extent. The situation related to unemployment and underemployment reflects the inability of the employment market to absorb the pressures of increasingly large labour force.

The growth rate of the population may not appear to be too high. Yet when applied to a large base population, the addition to the population is quite staggering.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Mark the correct answer.

    According to the 2001 Census, India's population was:

    a)   65 crores
    b)   85 crores
    c)   103 crores
    d)   113 crores

2) What are the implications of the large size and high growth rate of India's population? Answer in about seven lines.

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    ....
    ....
    ....

4.3   FERTILITY

As you know, fertility is an important determinant of population growth. In this section, we shall discuss the measurement, levels and trends and implications of high fertility.

4.3.1 Measurement of Fertility

At the outset, it is necessary to differentiate between fecundity and fertility. Fecundity refers to the physiological capacity to reproduce. Fertility, on the other hand, refers to the actual reproductive performance of an individual or a group.

While there is no direct measurement of fecundity, fertility can be studied from the statistics of births. The crude birth rate is an important measure of fertility for which only live births, that is, children born alive are taken into account. The crude birth rate is calculated by dividing the number of live births occuring during a calender year in a specified areas by the midyear population of that year. The crude birth rate is generally expressed per thousand of population. It is computed in the following manner:

$$\frac{\text{Total number of live births during a year}}{\text{Total population in the middle of that year}} \quad 1000$$

The crude birth rate directly points to the contribution of fertility to the growth rate of the population. It suffers from certain limitations mainly because it has in the denominator the total population which includes males as well as very young and very old women who are biologically not capable of having babies. There are other more refined fertility measures like the general fertility rate, the age-specific fertility rates, etc., that overcome these limitations, but these do not concern us here.

4.3.2 Levels and Trends of Fertility in India

As in other developing countries, the crude birth rate has been quite high in India. In the first decade of the twentieth century, the estimated birth rate for India was as high as 49.2 per thousand population. In the decade 1951-61, that is, the decade immediately following Independence, the birth rate declined by only four points, and was around 45 per thousand population. Since 1961, however, the birth rate has been progressively declining, though not at a very fast pace. According to the estimates of the sample registration system, the birth rate in India, in 1988, stood at 31.3 per thousand population. For the same year, while it was 32.8 per thousand population for the rural areas, it was 26.0 per thousand population for the urban areas. According to the Sample Registration System, the birth rate in India in 2002 was 25.8 per thousand population. Significantly there have been much regional variations among the states.

4.3.3 Determinants of High Fertility

Several factors contribute to the high fertility of Indian women. Let us examine some of these factors:

i) All the religions of the world, except Buddhism, contain injunctions to their followers to breed and multiply. It is, therefore, not surprising that belief in high fertility has been strongly supported by religions and social institutions in India, leading to appropriate norms about family size.

ii) Another factor contributing to high fertility is the universality of the institution of marriage. Amongst the Hindus, a man is expected to go through the various stages of his life (Ashramas), performing the duties attached to each stage. Marriage is considered one such duty. For the

Hindu woman, marriage is considered essential, because it is the only sacrament she is entitled to, though the Hindu man goes through several sacraments throughout his life.

iii) Till recently, the custom in India required the Hindu girls to be married off before they entered puberty. Even today, despite legislation forbidding the marriage of girls before they are 18 years of age, many girls are married off before they attain that age. In India, traditionally women start childbearing at an early age, and continue to do so till they cross the age at which they are no longer biologically capable of bearing children.

iv) As in all traditional societies, in India too, great emphasis is laid on bearing children. A woman, who does not bear children, is looked down upon in society. In fact, the new daughter-in-law attains her rightful status in the family only after she produces a child, preferably a son.

v) The preference for sons is deeply ingrained in the Indian culture. Sons are required for extending the family line and for looking after the parents in their old age. Among the Hindus, a son is desired not only for the continuation of the family line and for providing security in old age, but also for ceremoniously kindling the funeral pyre and, thus, effecting the salvation of his father's soul. The preference for sons is so high in the Indian society that a couple may continue to have several daughters and still not stop childbearing in the hope of having at least one son.

vi) In Indian society, a fatalistic attitude is ingrained and fostered from childhood. Such an attitude acts as a strong influence against any action that calls for the exercise of the right of self-determination with reference to reproduction. Children are considered to be gifts of God, and people believe that it is not upto them to decide on the number of children. High infant and child mortality rates also contribute to a large family size. A couple may have a large number of children in the hope that at least a few of them will survive upto adulthood. The low status of women is also a contributing factor to high fertility. Women, unquestioningly, accept excessive childbearing without any alternative avenues for self-expression.

vii) Children in the Indian society have a great economic, social, cultural as well as religious value. Fertility of Indian women is, therefore, high. Often, there is no economic motivation for restricting the number of children, because the biological parents may not necessarily be called upon to provide for the basic needs of their own children since the extended family is jointly responsible for all the children born into it.

viii) Again in the absence of widespread adoption of methods of conception control, the fertility of Indian women continues to remain high.

It is important that none of these factors is to be seen in isolation. Indeed, it is the combination of several factors, that contribute towards the high fertility rate in India. While considering the factors contributing to high fertility, it is necessary also to consider traditional Indian norms which regulate the reproductive behaviour of couples. Breast-feeding is universally practiced in Indian sub-continent and this has an inhibiting influence on conception. Certain taboos are also practiced during the postpartum period when the couple is expected to abstain from sexual activity. The practice of going to the parental home for delivery, specially the first one, common in some parts of the country

also ensures abstinence after childbirth leading to postponement of the next pregnancy. Cohabitation is also prohibited on certain specified days in the month. It is also common knowledge that a woman would be ridiculed if she continued to bear children after she had become a grandmother.

4.3.4 Implications of High Fertility

Apart from contributing in a big way to the population problem of the country, high fertility affects the family and, in turn, society in many ways.

Women are tied down to child-bearing and child-rearing for the best years of their productive lives. They are, therefore, denied the opportunity to explore other avenues for self-expression and self-development. This could lead to frustration. Excessive child-bearing affects their own health and that of their children. Looking after a large number of children puts a further strain on the slender physical and emotional resources of such women.

The burden of providing for a large family sits heavily on the bread-winner of the family. The constant struggle to maintain a subsistence level is exhausting. To escape from the problems of everyday life, he may take to drinking. This would lead to further deterioration of the economic and emotional well-being of the family.

The children, often unwanted, unloved and neglected, are left to their own devices to make life bearable. Indulgence in delinquency is sometimes the result. The children in large families often have to start working at a very early age to supplement the slender financial resources of the family. They are, therefore,

Social Impacts of High Fertility

denied the opportunity to go to school and get educated. The girl child is the worst sufferer. She is often not sent to school at all, or is withdrawn from school at an early age to help her mother in carrying out domestic chores and to look after her younger siblings when the mother is at work. Early marriage pushes her into child-bearing, and the vicious cycle continues. The children, both boys and girls, in a large family are thus often denied the joys of childhood, and are pushed into adult roles at a very early age.

Happy and healthy families are the very foundation on which a healthy society is built. Excessive fertility, as one of the factors leading to family unhappiness and ill health, needs to be curbed in order to build up a healthy society.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Write down the formula for computing the crude birth rate. Use about two lines.

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2) List the determinants of high fertility in India. Use about five lines to answer.

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3) What are the implications of high fertility for the family and society? Use about ten lines to answer.

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4.4 MORTALITY

Mortality is an important determinant of population. Let us examine a few important aspects of mortality.

4.4.1 Measurement of Mortality

Various measures of mortality are employed in the analysis of mortality. For a general understanding of the process of mortality, it is sufficient to describe three basic measures of mortality: the crude death rate, the expectation of life at birth, and the infant mortality rate.

i) Crude Death Rate

The Crude death rate is the ratio of the total registered deaths occurring in a specified calendar year to the total mid-year population of that year, multiplied by 1000. It is computed in the following manner:

$$\frac{\text{No. of registered deaths during a year}}{\text{Total population in the middle of that year}} \quad 1000$$

As in the case of the crude birth rate, the crude death rate also suffers from several limitations, mainly because it considers the mortality experience of different groups in the population together. The age and sex structure is not taken into account. For instance, a country having a very large proportion of elderly people may have the same crude death rate as that in another country where this proportion is very low. The mortality conditions of these countries cannot be considered to be similar. It is, therefore, customary to calculate age specific death rates, and report them separately for the males and the females.

ii) Expectation of Life at Birth

The average expectation of life at birth is a good measure of the level of mortality because it is not affected by the age structure of the population. The term "average expectation of life" or life expectancy represents the average number of years of life which a cohort of new-born babies (that is, those born in the same year) may be expected to live if they are subjected to the risks of death at each year, according to the age-specific mortality rates prevailing in the country at the time to which the measure refers. This measure is complicated to calculate but easy to understand.

iii) Infant Mortality Rate

Infants are defined in demography as all those children in the first year of life who have not yet reached age one, that is, those who have not celebrated their first birthday. Infants are studied separately, as mortality during the first year of life is invariably high. In countries like India, where health conditions are poor, infant deaths account for a substantial number of all deaths. The infant mortality rate is, therefore, often used as an indicator for determining the socio-economic status of a country and the quality of life in it.

Box 1   Measurement of Infant Mortality

The infant mortality rate is generally computed as a ratio of infant deaths (that is, deaths of children under one year of age) registered in a calendar year to the total number of live births (children born alive) registered in the same year. It is computed in the following manner:

$$\frac{\text{Number of deaths below one year registered during the calendar year}}{\text{Number of live births registered during the same year}} \quad 1000$$

It needs to be noted that this rate is only an approximate measure of infant mortality, for no adjustment is made for the fact that some of the infants dying in the year considered were born in the preceding year.

4.4.2 Levels and Trends of Mortality in India

Up to 1921, the crude death rate in India was quite high (between 40 and 50 per thousand population), the highest being for the decade 1911-21, mainly because of the influenza epidemic in 1918, when more than 15 million persons died. Since 1921, the death rate has been declining. From 1911-21 to 1971-81, that is, in a period of 60 years, the average annual death rate declined from 48.6 per thousand population to 14.9 per thousand population – a reduction of more than 69 per cent. The estimates of the Sample Registration System indicate that for the year 1988, the crude death rate was 11.0 per thousand population. In 2000 the crude death rate has declined to 8.5 per thousand population.

The average expectation of life at birth has also increased over the years. During 1911-21, it was 19.4 years for the males, 20.9 years for the females, and 20.1 years when both sexes were considered together. These figures may be considered to be the lowest for the country, and one of the lowest anywhere in the world. For the 1941-51 decade, these figures were 32.5 years for the males, 31.7 years for the females, and 32.1 years when both sexes were considered together. During the period 1981-86, life expectancy was 55.6 years for the males, 56.4 years for the females, and 56.0 years when both sexes were considered together. The latest statistics indicates that the average life expectancy in India is 63.3 years. While the female life expectancy is 63.8 years, for male it is 62.8 years.

4.4.3 Determinants of Declining Mortality

The decline in mortality in India has been mainly due to public health and disease-control measures, which were mostly imported from the developed countries. These include DDT spraying, the use of antibiotics like penicillin and vaccines against many communicable diseases like tuberculosis, polio, typhoid, cholera and several childhood diseases. Dreaded "killer diseases" like plague and smallpox have been completely eradicated. The extension of health and medical services to different parts of the country and the application of advances in the medical sciences have contributed in a big way to the decline in mortality in India. The effect of severe famines have also been considerably reduced by preventive and relief measures. Much still remains to be achieved for bringing about further decline in mortality.

4.4.4 Implications of Declining Mortality

The decline in the death rate and high birth rate have been the main factor responsible for the rapid growth of population, as the declining death rates have not been accompanied by corresponding declines in the birth rates.

The increased average expectation of life at birth has resulted in a higher proportion of persons in the older age group, that is, those above the age of 60. At present, the percentage of the aged in India (6.49 in 1981) is not as high as that in the developed countries (for example, 16.47 in the United States, in 1984). The absolute numbers are, however, quite high.

In our country aged persons, do not necessarily contribute to the national income or the family income. They have to be looked after, and the expenditure on their health and medical needs has to be met. When strong supports are not

provided by the joint family, the burden falls on society. Old-age homes or foster care homes for the aged have to be provided through the State funds, when the aged are not in a position to incur the expenditure involved. Many of the state governments have introduced the scheme of pensions for the aged in a limited scale. However, for a poor country like India, all such success of such measures needs a political commitment.

4.4.5 Levels and Trends of Infant Mortality in India

In India, the infant mortality rate was as high as 140 per thousand live births in 1969. In 1989, the infant mortality rate was less than 100 per thousand live births.

India has still a long way to go for achieving the goal of an infant mortality rate of below 60 per thousand live births by the year 2000 A.D.–one of the goals to be reached for securing 'Health for All' by 2000 A.D. However in 2002 the infant mortality rate of India was 68 per thousand life births.

Box 2. Variation in the Estimated Death Rates of the Children Aged 0-4 years by Sex and residence in India and in its Major States, 1998.			
	Total	**M**	**F**
India	22.5	21.0	24.1
Andhara	18.1	17.8	18.4
Assam	27.5	29.2	25.6
Bihar	22.9	21.2	24.8
Gujarat	19.6	18.5	20.9
Haryana	22.4	19.4	26.2
Himachal	16.7	14.1	19.7
Karnataka	16.7	16.5	16.8
Kerala	3.6	4.2	3.0
Madhya Pradesh	32.6	31.6	33.7
Maharashtra	12.7	11.2	14.3
Orissa	29.0	28.7	29.4
Punjab	16.8	15.9	17.9
Rajasthan	27.7	27.3	28.1
Tamil Nadu	13.0	12.3	13.8
Uttar Pradesh	29.6	25.3	34.5
West Bengal	15.0	16.2	13.8

Source : *Registrar General of India*, Sample Registration System

All India : Rural

Total	M	F
24.8	23.2	26.6

All India : Urban

Total	M	F
12.8	12.0	13.6

4.4.6 Determinants of Infant and Child Mortality

The determinants of mortality during the neonatal period (that is, the first four weeks of the baby's life) on the one hand, and the post–neonatal period (that is, the period between one and 11 months) together with the childhood period (that is, the period between one and four years) on the other, are quite different.

i) Neonatal Mortality

Biological factors play a dominant role in determining the level of neonatal mortality. These factors are also known as endogenous factors.

a) It is known that neonatal mortality rates are higher when the mother is below the age of 18 or above 35, when the parity is above 4, and when the interval between two births is less than one year. These conditions are fairly common in our country, leading to high infant mortality.

b) While the standards laid down by the World Health Organisation specify that babies with a birth weight of less than 2,500 grams should be considered as "high risk" babies, needing special care, 24 to 37 per cent of Indian babies have a birth weight below 2,500 grams without the possibility of receiving any special care.

c) Ante-natal care, which is generally concerned with the pregnant woman's well-being is lacking in our country. It is, therefore, not possible to identify high risk cases requiring special care, to administer tetanus toxoid injections for immunising the unborn child against tetanus, and to provide iron and folic acid tablets to prevent anaemia among pregnant women. An anemic mother gives birth to a low-weight baby with slender chances of survival.

d) Proper hygienic conditions and medical care during delivery are not ensured, specially in the rural areas. The delivery is generally conducted by an untrained traditional birth attendant (*dai*) or an elderly relative. The scheme of providing dais with training has not yet reached all parts of the country.

e) Fortunately, the practice of breast-feeding is widespread in our country. This protects the baby from exposure to several infections. Breast-feeding is, however, initiated only after 48 to 72 hours of birth, and is absolutely prohibited during the first 24 hours. If the baby is put to the breast soon after birth, it acquires several immunities which are passed on by the mother through colostrum (the first flow of breast milk).

This opportunity to acquire immunity against several diseases is denied to the baby, exposing it to the risk of neonatal mortality.

ii) **Post-neonatal and Child Mortality**

The factors contributing to the post-neonatal and child mortality are generally not biological, but arise out of the environment and the behavioural response to it. These factors are also known as exogenous factors.

a) Common childhood diseases, such as, diptheria, pertusis (whooping cough), measles and polio as well as tuberculosis contribute substantially to the post-neonatal and child mortality. Deaths due to these diseases can be prevented, but immunisation services are either not available or easily accessible in the rural areas, or may not be accepted by the rural population either because of ignorance and superstition or sheer apathy.

b) Diarrhoea and its consequence, and dehydration, is another factor contributing heavily to post-natal and child mortality. It has been estimated that every year about 1.5 million children under the age of five years die due to diarrhoea, of which 60 to 70 per cent die of dehydration.

The oral rehydration therapy introduced in recent years does not involve heavy expenditure or undue efforts on the part of those who look after the affected child. The oral rehydration solution can be prepared at home with a tablespoon of sugar, a pinch of salt and a glass of boiled water. The material for preparing the solution can also be obtained from the government health workers or the local Health Guide. The obstacle, however, is in the form of the age-old traditional belief that a child should not be given milk or any kind of food during an attack of diarrhoea. The dehydration that sets in due to diarrhoea can be so severe that the slightest delay in treatment can cost the child its life. On the other hand, the oral rehydration solution, which can be considered a household remedy, not only prevents dehydration, but also controls diarrhoea.

c) Nutritional deficiency is another factor contributing to child mortality. The National Institute of Nutrition found in a study conducted in 1981 that around 85 per cent of the children under four years were malnourished, of whom almost 6 per cent were severely malnourished.

These malnourished children are also more prone to contact diarrhoea and other debilitating diseases, exposing them to the risk of dying during childhood. Malnourishment itself could also be a result of attacks of childhood diseases. This vicious circle, unless broken effectively through an educational and service programme, will continue to result in high infant and child mortality rates.

4.4.7   Implications of High Infant and Child Mortality

It has been observed that wherever infant and child mortality is high, fertility is also high and vice-versa. A couple is interested in the number of surviving children and not in the number of children born. Because of the high levels of infant and child mortality, a couple may go in for a large number of children in the hope that at least a few would survive to adulthood. Also, when a child dies, the parents are keen to replace it as soon as possible by another. It is also known that when a child dies in infancy, the mother is denied the natural protection from pregnancy provided through breast-feeding. She is then likely to conceive early, leading to high fertility.

Thus, apart from the emotional trauma caused to parents, high infant and child mortality rates result in high fertility rates leading to a population problem. Looking after these children, who die before they can start contributing to the country's well being, also places a heavy burden on the country's meager resources. It needs to be reiterated that the level of the infant mortality rate of a country is considered as an important indicator of the socio-economic status of that country and the quality of life in it.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Define "average expectation of life" or "life expectancy". Use five lines to answer.

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2) What is meant by neo mortality? Use three lines to answer.

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3) What are the factors contributing to high neo natal mortality in India? Mention at least seven factors. Use three lines to answer.

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4) List three factors contributing to high infant and child mortality in India. Use two lines to answer.

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4.5   AGE AND SEX STRUCTURE

Age and sex are the basic characteristics or the biological attributes of any population. These characteristics or attributes affect not only the demographic structure, but also the social, economic and political structure of the population.

Age and sex are also important factors, because they are indicators of social status. Each individual is ascribed a certain status in society on the basis of sex and age. Status and roles are culturally determined, and vary from one culture to another. Even within the same culture, status and roles may undergo changes over a period of time. While in traditional societies, age demands respect, modern societies may be more youth-oriented. While the age structure of a

population may have implications for the status and roles of older persons, the sex structure may be a reflection of the social reality.

The age-sex structure of a population is both the determinant and consequence of birth and death rates, internal and international migration, marital status composition, manpower, and the gross national product. Planning regarding educational and health services, housing, etc., is done on the basis of the age structure of the population.

4.5.1 Age Structure

i) **Measurement of the Age Structure**

It is customary to classify age data in five year age groups, such as 0-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19, and so on.

The simplest measure to study the age structure of any population is the percentage distribution of the population based on the absolute numbers in various five-year age groups. This percentage distribution indicates the number of persons in an age group, if the total number of persons considered is 100. This measure is useful for understanding and describing the age structure of any population. It can also be used to compare the age structure of two or more populations at a point of time, or to compare the age structure of the same population at different points of time. Age-sex pyramids can also be constructed with the help of age-sex histograms.

Box 3. Dependency Ratio

An important measure to study the structure of the population is the dependency ratio. This measure indicates the number of dependents per 100 workers. Three age groups are considered for this purpose. The population in the age group 15-50 or 15-64 is considered to be the working population, the population below 15 is considered as young dependents and the population above either 60 or 65 is considered to be old dependents. The dependency ratio is computed by using the following formula.

Dependency Ratio = Population in the age group 0-14 + Population in the age group 60 + or 65 + Population in the age group 15-59 or 15-64

The dependency ratio gives us only a broad idea of economic dependency in any population, and it is not a full measure for assessing the dependency burden. It needs to be noted that not all persons in the working age group (15-59 or 15-64) are employed and not all those in the dependent age groups (0-14 and 60+ or 65 +) are economic dependents. In a country like India, children start working at a very early age as helping hands to the parents among craftsmen, poor agriculturalists or newspaper hawkers or as hotel boys. In rural areas, old people continue to engage themselves in some kind of economic activity, as there is no retirement age in an agricultural economy. Then there are activities like those of doctors, lawyers, traders and other self-employed persons for whom the age factor does not lead to retirement from economic activity.

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ii) **Age Structure in India**

Determinants and Implications

India is an old country with a large young population belonging to the age group of 0-14 years and a growing number of aged population in the age group of above 50 years.

According to the 1991 Census, the young dependency ratio in India was 67.2, meaning that 100 persons in the working age group (15-59) had to support 67.2 children in the age group of 0-14 years. Simiarly old dependences in India is to the extent of 12.2.

The age structure of any population is determined by the levels of fertility, mortality and migration. Of these three factors, migration can affect the age structure of any population only when the migrants are concentrated in any one age group and the volume of migration is large.

India has a large "young" population because the birth rates are high and the number of children born is large. The sustained high level of birth rates has resulted in a large proportion of children and a small proportion of old population. On the other hand, in economically developed countries, the birth rates are low and less children are born. The low birth rats result in a higher proportion of old people. Compared to the role of fertility, the role of mortality in determining the age structure of a population is limited, specially when mortality is high. Rapid reductions in mortality and lengthening of the life-span result in a "younger" population. This is mainly because the improvement is first experienced by the infants and children. More infants and children survive, leading to an increase in the proportion of the young persons in the population as in the case of India. On the other hand, when the mortality level is very low, there is no further scope for any large increases in survivorship during infancy and early childhood, and any improvement in mortality conditions would affect the older age group and lead to a further aging of the population, that is, increase in the proportion of older persons in the population. Such a situation prevails in developed countries like Sweden, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, France and Australia.

A young population implies a heavy burden on the economy of the country as they have to be educated, clothed and provided shelter, while they themselves are not expected to contribute immediately to the family or national economy.

One other implication of the young age structure of the Indian population is that it also has the potential of the high growth rates of the population in further years. Within a few years, these children will grow up, get married and start reproducing. When the number of couples in the reproductive age group (wife in the age group 15-44) is high, the birth rate can also be expected to be high, even with moderate fertility. This, in turn, leads to a high population growth rate.

4.5.2   Sex Structure

In this section we shall discuss the measurement of sex structure, sex ratio and its determinants in India.

i)   Measurement of Sex Structure

Two measures are generally used for studying the age structure of any population–(1) the percentage of males in the population or the masculinity proportion, and (2) the sex ratio. Of these two measures, the sex ratio is more frequently used in the study of the population.

The sex ratio of a population may be expressed either as the number of males per 100 females or the number of females per 100 males. The Indian Census

has preferred to define the sex ratio as the number of females per 1000 males, though the definition of the sex ratio followed the world over is the number of the males per 100 females.

ii) Sex Ratio in India and its Determinants

Generally, in most countries, the overall sex ratio of the population is favourable to the females, that is, there are more females than males in the population. When the situation is different, that is, when there are more males than females in the population, this is considered unusual. The population statistics available through the Census indicate that the sex ratio in India has always been adverse to the females, that is, the number of the females per 1,000 males has always been less than 1,000. In fact, the sex ratio has been declining from 972 in 1901 to 930 in 1971. A slight improvement was registered in the 1951 Census, and again during the 1981 Census, but the 1991 Census registered a fall by five points-from 934 in 1981 to 929 in 1991. In 2001, female sex ratio was 933, which was an improvement over the 1991 figure.

The following three factors are responsible for determining the sex ratio of any population: (1) the sex ratio at birth, (2) the sex ratio of the deceased persons and (3) the sex ratio of the net migrants. In a developing country like India, another factor could be added to this list. There is always a possibility that women are under-enumerated because they are not reported as members of the household by the head of the household, when the Census enumerator collects the information.

Of all these factors, high mortality of the females appears to be the most plausible explanation for the sex ratio in India, which is adverse to the females. Though biologically stronger than the male, the female in India is in a socially and culturally disadvantaged position, and has been accorded an inferior status over the centuries. The death rates for the females in most age groups are higher than those for the males. Of the other factors, the sex ratio of new born babies is not much different from that in other countries. Hence, a sex ratio that is adverse to the females, a peculiarity of the Indian demographic picture, need not be attributed to this factor. As for international migration of men, it is quite insignificant and is, therefore, not found to affect the sex ratio in India. Under-enumeration of the females cannot explain more than a very small part of the numerical imbalance between the males and the females in India.

Check Your Progress 4

1) Why is India known as an old country with a large young population? Use four lines to answer.

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2) Why is the sex ratio not favourable to women in India? Use three lines to answer.

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4.6 FAMILY PLANNING AND FAMILY WELFARE

In India, the concepts of family planning and family welfare are very important. Let us know the meanings of the concepts.

4.6.1 Concept of Family Planning and Family Welfare

At the level of the family, family planning implies having only the desired number of children. Thus family planning implies both limitation of the family to a number considered appropriate to the resources of the family as well as proper spacing between the children. The adoption of family planning, obviously, requires conscious efforts made by the couple to control conception.

As a social movement, family planning implies an organised effort by a group of people to initiate change in the child-bearing practices of the people by creating a favourable atmosphere. The birth control movement, as it was initially called, aimed at relieving women of excessive child-bearing, and was seen as a way of achieving the emancipation of women through the right of self-determination.

A family planning programme involves a co-ordinated group of activities, maintained over a period of time, and aimed at fostering a change in the child-bearing behaviour of the females. The aim of the family planning programme may either be to improve the health status of women and their children and/or of reducing the birth rate, and thus reducing the population growth rate of the country. Most countries with a population control policy also emphasise the health aspects of family planning. The various components of the family planning programme are : (1) Information, Education and Communication Activities, (2) Contraceptives: Supplies and Services, (3) Training of Personnel, (4) Research, and (5) Administrative Infrastructure.

When the government concerns itself with promoting the total welfare of the family and the community, through family planning, the programme consists of a wide range of activities, covering education, health, maternity and child care, family planning and nutrition. Since 1977, the Indian family planning programme is known as the family welfare programme with greater emphasis on the welfare approach to the problem.

4.6.2 Barriers to Family Planning

Most of the reasons mentioned in Sub-section 4.3.3, under Determinants of High Fertility, act as barriers to the acceptance of family planning, which implies controlling fertility. These barriers include fatalism, and emphasis placed on having children in the Indian culture and religious beliefs.

In addition, the use of various methods of family planning also pose certain difficulties. The methods are not always acceptable because of the possible side-effects, perceived unaesthetic attributes or the discipline their use demands. All methods are not equally effective. While sterilisation, male and female, can be considered one hundred per cent effective, a method like the IUD is considered to be 95 per cent effective, and the conventional contraceptive like the condom is considered to be only 50 per cent effective. Oral pills are almost

one hundred per cent effective, but their effectiveness depends on taking them regularly and on following a certain regime. The easy availability of supplies and services is a necessary condition for the practice or adoption of family planning. When supplies and services are not easily available, it becomes difficult for people to practise or adopt family planning, even when they are inclined to do so.

Activity 1

Read Sub-section 4.3.3 (Determinants of High Fertility) and Sub-Section 4.6.2. (Barriers to Family Planning) very carefully. Then write an essay comparing the factors mentioned in these sections with the situation prevailing in your society. Exchange your note, if possible, with your co-learners at the Study Centre.

4.7 POPULATION POLICY OF INDIA

India has the distinction of being the first country in the world to have a fully government-supported family planning programme. This is not an overnight development. The foundations were laid in the early part of the twentieth century.

Even during the pre-independence period, the intellectual elite among the Indians showed some concern about the population issue, and supported the cause of birth control. Their British rulers, however, kept aloof from this controversial issue.

Support for birth control was evident when the Health Survey and Development Committee set up by the Government of India, in 1945, under chairmanship of Sir Joseph Bhore, recommended that birth control services should be provided for the promotion of the health of mothers and children. The pressure from the intellectuals that the government formulate a policy for disseminating information on birth control and for encouraging its practice was mounting during the pre-independence period.

4.7.1 Components of the Current Population Policy

With the advent of Independence, family planning as a measure of population control has been given top priority in the development plans of the country, starting with the First Five Year Plan (1951-56). The increasing financial allocations for the family planning programme in each sucessive plan are also indicative of the growing emphasis accorded to the family planning programme.

a)   **National Population Policy 1976 and 1977**

Though implied in the family planning programme undertaken by the government, the population policy of the country was not explicitly stated, and it remained unarticulated in the formal sense. It was on April 16, 1976 that the National Population Policy was declared. It underwent some modifications in June, 1977.

Till the National Population Policy was first declared in April, 1976, the Population Policy of India was generally equated with the family planning policy. One of the grounds on which India was criticised in international circles was that other solutions to the population policy were ignored. The statement of the population policy took into account some of the complex relationships

between the social, economic and political aspects of the population problem. It included appropriate measures to tackle the population problem, many of which went "beyond family planning". The policy statement also contained several approaches to the improvement of the family planning programme.

The statement of policy regarding the Family Welfare Programme issued on June 29, 1977, eliminates all measures which have the slightest element of compulsion or coersion, and emphasis on the welfare approach to the problem. The name of the family planning programme, has also been changed to the family welfare programme to reflect the government's anxiety to promote through the programme the total welfare of the family and the community.

Many of the measures outlined in the National Population Policy, declared in 1976, have been retained. These include the following: (1) raising the minimum legal age at marriage for girls to 18 and for boys to 21, (2) taking the population figure of 1971 till the year 2001, in all cases where population is a factor in the sharing of the Central resources with the States, as in allocation of the Central assistance to the State Plans, devolution of taxes and duties and grants-in-aid, (3) accepting the principle of linking 8 per cent of the central assistance to the State Plans with their performance and success in the family welfare programme, (4) including population education in the formal school education system, (5) plans to popularise the family welfare programme and use of all media for this purpose, (6) participation of voluntary organisations in the implementation of the programme, (7) improvement of women's educational level, both through formal and non-formal channels. The Policy Statement also declared that the government would give special attention to the necessary research inputs in the field of reproductive biology and contraception.

b) **National Population Policy 2000**

India has framed a new National Population Policy in 2000. It enumerates certain socio-demographic goods to be achieved by 2010 which will lead to achieving population stabilisation by 2045. The policy has identified the immediate objectives as meeting the unmet needs for contraception, health care infrastructure and trained health personnel and to provide integrated service delivery with the following interventions:

i)   Strengthen community health centres, primary health centres and sub-centres,

ii)   Augment skills of health personnel and health care providers

iii) Bring about convergence in the implementation of related social sector programme to make Family Welfare Programme people centered.

iv)   Integrate package of essential services at village and household levels by extending basic reproductive and child health care through mobile health clinics and counselling services; and explore the possibility of accrediting private medical practitioners and assigning them to defined beneficiary groups to provide these services (Govt. of India 2003)

4.7.2 Achievements of the Family Welfare Programme

As of March, 1989, the number of couples protected through some method of family planning was estimated to be 64.79 million, forming 46.7 per cent of the estimated 138.9 million eligible couples (with wife in the reproductive age

group 15-44) in the country. Taking into account the use-effectiveness of various methods, which is assumed to be 100 per cent for sterilisation and oral pills, 95 per cent for IUD and 50 per cent for conventional contraceptives like the condom, the number of couples effectively protected as of March, 1989, was 58.14 million, forming 41.9 per cent of the total eligible couples.

Sterilisation is the most widely accepted method, effectively protecting 29.8 per cent of the eligible couples. Of the total eligible couples, 5.9 per cent are effectively protected by IUD, 4.5 per cent by conventional contraceptives, 1.7 per cent by oral pills.

While terminal methods, like the male and female sterilisation, continue to be the major share, it is worth noting that the female sterilisation is more highly favoured than the male sterilisation; 86.8 per cent of the total sterilisations done in 1988-89 were female sterilisations.

The statistics for 1987-88 indicate that, on an average, the age of the wife for vasectomy acceptors is 32.4 years, for tubectomy acceptors it is 30.2 years and for IUD it is 27.4 years. These couples have, on an average, 3.6, 3.3. and 2.3 living children at the time of the acceptance of vasectomy, tubectomy and IUD respectively.

During 2001-2002, 47.27 lakh sterilisations were performed in the country. The number of Intra-Ulterine Device (IUD) insertions during the same period was 62.02 lakhs. Besides, there were 145.69 lakhs of candom users and 74.75 lakhs of Oral Pill (OP) users. The use of contraceptives has been increased from 40.06% in 1992-93 to 48.2% in 1998-1999. (Govt. of India 2003)

It can be observed that family planning is accepted generally after the most fertile period in a woman's life (up to 29 years) is over, and when the couple has exceeded the norm of two children advocated by the government.

Inter-State variations in family planning performance are also observed. States like Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Union Territories like Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Delhi and Pondicherry have a higher percentage of effectively protected couples than the all-India average. All the other States have recorded a lower percentage of effectively protected couples than the all-India average, except for Andhra Pradesh, where this percentage is identical to the all-India average.

4.7.3 The Changing Trends

It is obvious that the family welfare programme slowly recovering from the setback it received after the Emergency, during which some coercive methods were used for achieving spectacular results.

The long-term goal to be achieved for the country is to reach a replacement level of unity (net reproduction rate of one, when each woman will be replaced by only one daughter). The demographic goals laid down as part of the National Health Policy are to achieve by 2000 A.D., a birth rate of 21 per thousand population and an effective protection rate of 60 per cent. The corresponding mid-term goals to be reached by the end of the Seventh Plan (1990) are: crude birth rate of 29.1 and effective couple protection rate of 42 per cent.

The Changing Trend in the population in India is shown in the table below.

Growth of Population in India		
Census Year	**Decadal Growth (per cent)**	**Average Exponential Growth (per cent)**
1971	24.80	2.20
1981	24.66	2.22
1991	23.86	2.14
2001	21.34	1.93

Parameter	1951	1981	1991	Current Level
Crude Birth Rate (per 1,000 population	40.8	33.9 (SRS)	29.5* (SRS)	25.8 (SRS 2000)
Crude Death Rate (per 10,000 population)	25.1	12.5 (SRS)	9.8* (SRS)	8.5 (SRS 2000)
Total Fertility Rate (per woman on average)	6.0 (SRS)	4.5 (SRS)	3.6* (NFHS-II)	2.8
Maternal Mortality Rate (per 1,00,000 live birth)	437 (1992-93)	N.A.	N.A. (1998)	407
Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)	146 (1951-61)	110 (SRS)	80* (SRS)	68 (SRS 2000)
Couple Protection Rate (per cent)	10.4 (1971)	22.8	44.1	48.2 (NFHS-II)
Life Expectancy at birth years (M)	37.2	54.1	60.6	63.87# (2001-02)
Life Expectancy at birth years (F)	36.2	54.7	61.7 (1991-96)	66.9# (2001-02)

*Excludes Jammu and Kashmir # Projected

SRS = Sample Registration System of Office of Registrar General India.

Check Your Progress 5

1) What are the major "Beyond Family Planning" measures included in the National Population Policy of India? Use seven lines to answer.

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2) On what factors does the future of India's family welfare programme depend? Use six lines to answer.

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4.8   LET US SUM UP

This unit begins with defining demography and examines its scope: mortality, fertility, composition of population and migration. Techniques of measurement are mentioned and the need for highlighting their social and cultural aspects stressed. Then we described the size and growth of the population of India and examined their implications. The determinants and consequences of fertility and mortality in India are explained. The age and sex structure of the Indian population, their determinants and implications are classified. The concept of family planning and family welfare and the barriers to family planning are discussed. The Population Policy of India, its evolution and components, achievements of the family welfare programme and its future prospects enable us to see how social problems at the demographic level could be solved.

4.9   KEY WORDS

Fertility	:	Fertility refers to the actual reproductive performance, whether applied to an individual or to a group, measured in terms of the number of children born alive.
Life Expectancy/Average Expectation of Life at Birth	:	The average number of years of life which a cohort of new born babies (that is, those born in the same year) may be expected to live if they are subjected to the risks of death at each year according to the age specific mortality rates prevailing in the country at the time to which the measures refer.
Neonatal and Post-neo natal Mortality	:	When a baby dies within the first four weeks of life, it is known as neo natal mortality. When a baby dies after it has survived beyond four weeks, but before the first year is completed, it is known as post-neonatal mortality.
Population Growth Rate	:	One way of measuring population growth is to calculate the rate at which population grows. This is done by first finding out the difference in the population size of a

specified area at two points of time, and then by dividing the absolute change by the population at the earlier point of the time.

Sex Ratio : The sex ratio of a population may either be expressed as the number of males per 100 females or the number of females per 100 males. The Indian Census has preferred to define the sex ratio as the number of females per 1000 males.

4.10   FURTHER READINGS

Bhende, Asha A. and Kanitkar, Tara, 1992. *Principles of Population Studies.* Himalaya Publishing House: Bombay (Fifth Edition), (Chapters 7,8, 9 and 15).

Misra, Bhaskar D., 1981. *An Introduction to the Study of Population.* South Asian Publishers Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi: (Chapters 3 and 11).

4.11   ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1)   b) 844 million

2)   The development programmes are not able to keep pace with the needs of the growing population. The country is facing shortages in housing, health and medical services and employment opportunities. The increase in the per capita production of food grain is only marginal, and the per capita income is low. These problems have arisen because of the large size of the population and the high rate of the population growth.

Check Your Progress 2

1) $$\frac{\text{Total No. of live births during a year}}{\text{Total population in the middle of the year}} \times 1000$$

2)   i) Most religions encourage high fertility, ii) Universality of marriage, iii) Low age at marriage, iv) Emphasis on bearing children, v) Preference for sons, vi) Fatalistic attitude, vii) High infant and child mortality, viii) Low status of women, ix) Joint family.

3)   Women are tied down to childbearing and childbearing for the best years of their productive lives. Excessive childbearing affects their health. The bread-winner is unable to provide for a large family and becomes frustrated. The children are often neglected. They may indulge in delinquent behaviour. They are often required to drop out of school, and to start working at an early age. The girl child is denied education and pushed into early marriage and early child-bearing.

Check Your Progress 3

i)   The term "average expectation of life" or "life expectancy" represents the average number of years of life which babies born in the same year (cohort) may be expected to live according to the mortality conditions prevailing at that time.

ii) Neonatal mortality refers to deaths occurring in the first four weeks of the babies life.

iii) a) Mother below 18. b) Parity above 4. c) Interval between births less than one year. d) Low birth weight. e) Lack of ante-natal care. f) Home deliveries conducted in unhygienic conditions g) Colostrum (first flow of breast milk) not given to the baby.

iv) a) Common childhood diseases not prevented through immunisation.

b) Diarrhoea and dehydration c) Nutritional deficiency.

Check Your Progress 4

i) India is an old country because its history goes back to several centuries. It has a young population in the sense that about 40 per cent of the population is below the age of 15. In a developed country like the United States of America this percentage is only about 22.

ii) The sex ratio in India is not favourable to women mainly because of the low status of women leading to their neglect. The death rates are higher for women than for men in most age groups.

Check Your Progress 5

i) a) Raising the minimum age at marriage. b) Population education in schools. c) Improving the status of women, specially through education. d) Freezing the population figure of 1971 till 2001 in all cases where population is a factor in the sharing of the Central resources with the States. e) Linking Central assistance to the State Plans with the performance of the family welfare programme.

ii) a) Widespread acceptance of family planning. b) Improved performance of the family welfare programme in low performing States, such as, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh etc.

iii) Acceptance of family planning at a lower age and limitation of the family size to two children, whatever the sex composition.

UNIT 5 MIGRATION

Structure

5.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit our emphasis is on migration as a demographic process and as an agent of social change in society. After going through this unit, you should be able to:

● describe what migration is;

● examine the importance of migration as an agent of social change;

● explain the various reasons of migration;

● discuss the consequences of such migration in the national and international situation; and

● analyse the migration policy.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Migration is usually defined as a geographical movement of people involving a change from their usual place of residence. But it is distinguished from temporary and very short distance moves. Migration can be internal (within the national boundaries) or international (across the international borders). After discussing the sociological significance and the definition and concepts of migration in Section 5.4, we discuss the major determinants of migration in terms of social,

economic, psychological, political and religious factors. Types of migration, like rural and urban, as well as voluntary or involuntary migration are explained in Section 5.5. What consequences follow when people move to different places whithin the national boundaries or across the national boundaries are discussed in Section 5.6. Section 5.7 highlights the problems of the refugees and displaced persons in national and international situations. Section 5.8 of the unit deals with national and international policy on migration and future trends in migration.

5.2 MIGRATION : SIGNIFICANCE, CONCEPT, FORMS AND CHARACTERISTICS

In this section, we shall be introducing to you the various aspects of sociological significance and characteristics of migration. Let us begin with its significance.

5.2.1 Sociological Significance

Migration is the third component of population change, the other two being mortality and fertility, studied in Unit 4 of this block. However, migration is different from the other two processes, namely, mortality and fertility in the sense that it is not a biological factor like the other two, which operate in a biological framework, though influenced by social, cultural and economic factors. Migration is influenced by the wishes of persons involved. Usually each migratory movement is deliberately made, though in exceptional cases this may not hold true. Thus migration is a response of human organisms to economic, social and demographic forces in the environment.

The study of migration occupies an important place in population studies, because, along with fertility and mortality, it determines the size and rate of population growth as well as its structure and characteristics. Migration also plays an important role in the distribution of the population of any country, and determines the growth of labour force in any area. Migration is thus an important symptom of social change in society.

5.2.2 Concepts

In a layman's language, the world 'migration' refers to the movements of the people from one place to another. According to Demographic Dictionary, "migration is a form of geographical mobility or spatial mobility between one geographical unit and another, generally involving a change in residence from the place of origin or place of departure to the place of destination or place of arrival." Such migration is called permanent migration, and should be distinguished from other forms of movement, which do not involve a permanent change of residence. Everett Lee, a well known demographer, defines migration broadly "as a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence". No restriction is placed upon the distance of the move or upon the voluntary and involuntary nature of the act. Migration, according to Eisenstadt, refers to "the physical transition of an individual or a group from one society to another. This transition usually involves abandoning one social-setting and entering another and different one." Mangalam also stresses the permanent shifting of people in his definition and considers migration as a relatively permanent moving away of a collectivity, called the migrants, from one geographical location to another.

It is preceded by decision-making on the part of the migrants. They weigh and consider sets of values in two comparative situations, resulting in changes in the interactional system of the migrants. Holiday trips or sailor's occupations are not included in it. Mehta, in his study of Rajasthan, treats migration as an act of movement or spatial mobility.

A perusal of all these definitions indicates that almost all scholars emphasise time and space, and define migration as a movement from one place to another, permanently or semi-permanently. In brief, when a person leaves his native place or village, comes to an urban area, takes up a job, and starts living there, he is known as a migrant and his move is referred to as migration.

5.2.3 Forms

People may move within a country between different states or between different districts of the same state or they may move between different countries. Therefore, different terms are used for internal and external migration. Internal migration refers to migration from one place to another with a country, while external migration or international migration refers to migration from one country to another.

a) **Immigration and Emigration** : 'Immigration' refers to migration into a country from another country and 'emigration' refers to migration out of the country. These terms are used only in connection with international migration. For example migrants leaving India to settle down in the United States or Canada are immigrants to the United States or Canada and emigrants from India.

b) **Inmigration and Outmigration** : These are used only in connection with internal migration. 'Inmigration' refers to migration into a particular area while 'outmigration' refers to movements out of a particular area. Thus, migrants who come from Bihar or Uttar Pradesh to Punjab are considered to be immigrants for Punjab and outmigrants for Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The term 'inmigration' is used with reference to the area of destination of the migrants and the term 'outmigration' is used with reference to the area of origin or place of departure of the migrant.

The main forms of migration can be summarised in a chart.

Chart 1

MIGRATION

INTERNAL   EXTERNAL

INMIGRATION   OUTMIGRATION   IMMIGRATION   EMIGRATION
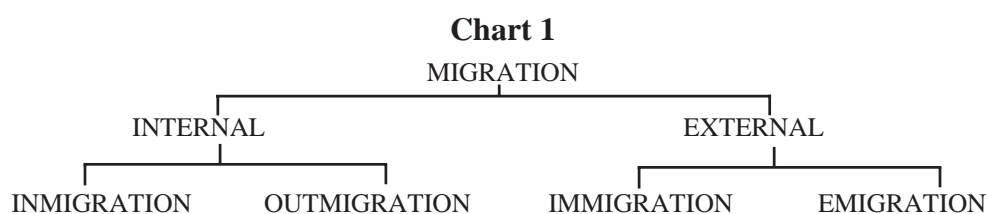
There are three important sources of information on internal migration in a country. These are national census, population registers and sample surveys. In India, the most important sources of data on internal migration are national census and sample surveys.

c) **Forms of Internal Migration in India** : Information on migration for India, as a whole, and its different parts is obtained through the use of the Census. Better and more detailed questions have been asked in recent census counts. They show improvements in the studies on migration.

Indian census gives information regarding migration streams made from 'birth place' statistics from 1872 onwards. However, in 1961, the birth place was classified as rural or urban, and put into four categories of space migration (i) within the district of enumeration, (ii) outside the district but within the state of enumeration, (iii) outside the state of enumeration, i.e., inter-state, and (iv) outside India. The 1971 Census defined these statistics by including a question on place of last residence, and 1981 Census included a question on reasons for migration.

In India, the migrants are classified into four migration streams, namely, **rural to rural, rural to urban, urban to urban and urban to rural**. Rural to rural migration has formed the dominant migration stream since 1961. There have been substantial increases in the proportion of rural to urban, and urban to urban migration with the passage of time. Another important point is that the proportion of the females is much higher in rural to rural migration, while in the other three streams the proportion of the males is comparatively much higher. This is simply because the females change their residence on getting married, and new places could be in the neighbouring districts.

Researchers have, from time to time, suggested various types of migration while taking into account space, time, volume and direction. On the basis of space, there are four important streams of internal migration. These are:

i)   Rural to rural

ii)   Rural to urban

iii) Urban to urban

iv)   Urban to rural

Indian census gives this fourfold typology. However, in some developed and highly urbanised countries there have also been migrations from cities to the suburbs.

The relative size and importance of these migration streams may vary from country to country. In some countries, rural to rural migration is the dominant type of migration, while in others it is rural to urban and yet in many others the highest proportion of migrants are found in urban to urban migration. In India, as stated earlier, rural to rural migration formed the dominant migration stream in the 1961, 1971, 1991 and 2001Census. However, there have been substantial increases in the proportion of rural to urban and urban to urban migration with the passage of time, the increase being much more during the decades of 1970s, 1980s and 1990s than of the 1960s. However the dominant form of internal migration in the country is rural to rural. In all other streams (rural to urban, urban to urban and urban to rural) there is dominance of rural to urban migration among the males could be due to better developed agriculture in certain states and districts, which may attract migrants from other parts of the country. Development of industries in certain states or cities may be another important factor in rural to urban migration. Rural to rural migration is mostly dominated by the females. The female migration is largely sequential to marriage, because it is a Hindu custom to take brides from another village (village exogamy). According to the National Sample Survey, more than 46 per cent migration to urban areas is also caused by marriage. The custom of women returning to urban areas is also caused by marriage. The custom of women returning to her

parents to deliver her first child also accounts for significant internal migration.

Typology based on time classified migration into long range migration and short range or seasonal migration. When a move is made for a longer period, it is called long range migration. However, when there is permanent shift of population from one region to another, it is known as permanent migration. But when people shift to the sites of temporary work and residence for some or several months, it is known as periodic or seasonal migration. For example, during peak agricultural season excess labour is required, and people from the neighbouring areas is also caused by marriage. The custom of women returning to her parents to deliver her first child also accounts for significant internal migration.

Typology based on time classifies migration into long range migration and short range or seasonal migration. When a move is made for a longer period, it is called long range migration. However, when there is permanent shift of population from one region to another, it is known as permanent migration. But when people shift to the sites of temporary work and residence for some or several months, it is known as periodic or seasonal migration. For example, during peak agricultural season excess labour is required, and people from the neighbouring areas go to these places for seasonal work.

Apart from these two important types, migration could be voluntary or involuntary or forced, brain drain (migration of young skilled persons) and migration of refugees and displaced persons.

5.2.4 Characteristics

There are some important characteristics of the migrants and migration. An important characteristic is the age selectivity of the migrants. Generally, young people are more mobile. Most migration studies, especially in developing countries, have found that rural-urban migrants are predominantly young adults and relatively better educated than those who remain at the place of origin. It is obvious that migration for employment takes place mostly at the young adult ages. Also a major part of the female migration consequential to marriage occurs at the young adult ages. Thus people have a tendency to move when they are between their teens and their mid-thirties (15-35 years) than at other ages.

Another important characteristic is that the migrants have a tendency to move to those places where they have contracts and where the previous migrants sere as links for the new migrants, and this chain is thus formed in the process, and is usually called chain migration. Various studies show that people do not blindly go to a new place. They usually have kinship chains and networks of relatives and friends who help them in different ways. In some cases, the migrants not only tend to have the same destination but also tend to have the same occupation. For example, research reveals that in certain hotels in Jaipur almost all the workers belong to one particular sub-region of Kumaon. The agricultural labourers in Punjab and Haryana are mainly from Bihar and Eastern Uttar Pradesh.

Check Your Progress 1

i)   What is the sociological significance of migration? Use six lines to answer.

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ii) What are the important variables taken into consideration in defining migration? Use four lines to answer.

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iii) Classify the following types of migration:

    a) From Kerala to the Gulf-countries.

    b) From Kerala to Delhi.

    c) From Bihar to the West Indies.

    d) Arrival of people from Bangaldesh to India

    e) Arrival of people to Rajasthan from Karnataka.

5.3 REASONS FOR MIGRATION

It is important to know why some migrate while others do not. The important factors, therefore, which cause migration or which motivate people to move may broadly be classified into four categories: economic factors, demographic factors, socio-cultural factors, and political factors.

5.3.1 Economic Factors

The major reason of voluntary migration is economic. In most of the developing countries, low agricultural income, agricultural unemployment and underemployment are the major factors pushing the migrants towards areas with greater job opportunities. Even the pressure of population resulting in a high man-land ratio has been widely recognised as one of the important causes of poverty and rural outmigration. Thus, almost all studies indicate that most of the migrants have moved in search of better economic opportunities. This is true of both internal as well as international migration.

The most important economic factors that motivate migration may be termed as 'Push Factors' and 'Pull Factors'. In other words it is to see whether people migrate because of the compelling circumstances at the place of origin which pushed them out, or whether they are lured by the attractive conditions in the new place. Now we shall discuss these factors.

i)   **Push Factors**

The push factors are those that compel or force a person, due to various reasons, to leave that place and go to some other place. For example, adverse economic conditions caused by poverty, low productivity, unemployment, exhaustion of natural resources and natural calamities may compel people to leave their native place in search of better economic opportunities. An ILO study reveals that the main push factor causing the worker to leave agriculture is the lower levels of income, as income in agriculture is generally lower than the other sectors of the economy. According to the estimates of the Planning Commission over one-third of the rural population is below the poverty line. Due to rapid increase in population, the per capita availability of cultivable land has declined, and the numbers of the unemployed and the underemployed in the rural areas have significantly increased with the result that the rural people are being pushed to the urban areas. The non-availability of alternative sources of income in the rural area is also another factor for migration. In addition to this, the existence of the joint family system and laws of inheritance, which do not permit the division of property, may also cause many young men to migrate to cities in search of jobs. Even sub division of holdings leads to migration, as the holdings become too small to support a family.

ii)   **Pull Factors**

Pull factors refer to those factors which attract the migrants to an area, such as, opportunities for better employment, higher wages, better working conditions and better amenities of life, etc. There is generally cityward migration, when rapid expansion of industry, commerce and business takes place. In recent years, the high rate of movement of people from India as well as from other developing countries to the USA, Canada and now to the Middle-East is due to the better employment opportunities, higher wages and better amenities of life, variety of occupations to choose from and the possibility of attaining higher standard of living. Sometimes the migrants are also attracted to cities in search of better cultural and entertainment activities or bright city lights. However, pull factors operate not only in the rural-urban migration, but also in other types of internal as well as international migration.

Sometimes a question is asked which factors are more important, push or pull? Some argue that the push factor is stronger than the pull factor as they feel that it is the rural problems rather than the urban attractions that play a crucial role in the shift of the population. On the other hand, those who consider the pull factors as more important emphasise high rates of investment in urban areas leading to more employment and business opportunities and greater attraction for the city way of life.

This classification of motives for migration into push and pull factors is very useful in analysing determinants of migration, but all migratory movements cannot be explained by these factors alone. Moreover, sometimes migration may occur not by push or pull factors alone but as a result of the combined effect of both.
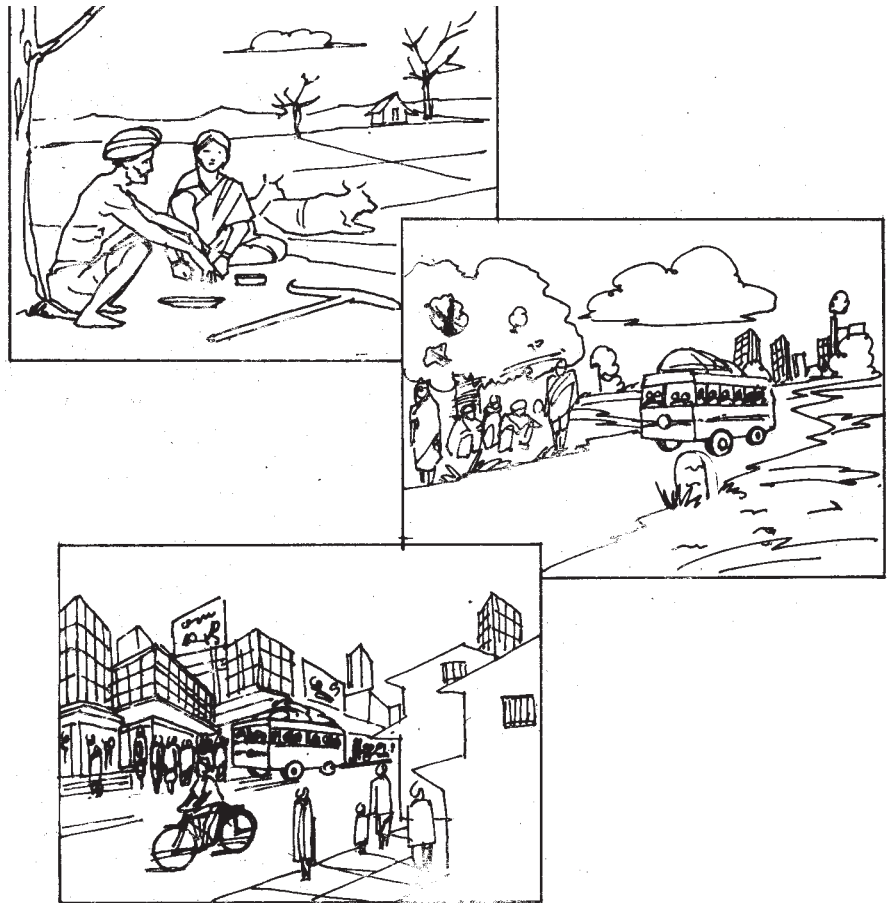
iv) **Push Back Factors**

In India, and in some other developing countries also, another important factor which plays crucial role in migration is 'push back factor'. In India, according to Asish Bose, the urban labour force is sizeable, and the urban unemployment rates are high, and there also exist pools of underemployed persons. All these factors acts in combination as deterrents to the fresh flow of migration from the rural to urban areas. He calls this as a 'push back factor'. He further adds that if new employment opportunities are created in the urban areas, the first persons to offer themselves for employment are the marginally employed already residing in those areas, unless of course special skills are required.

5.3.2   Socio-Cultural and Political Factors

Besides these push and pull factors, social and cultural factors also play an important role in migration. Sometimes family conflicts also cause migration. Improved communication facilities, such as, transportation, impact of the radio and the television, the cinema, the urban-oriented education and resultant change in attitudes and values also promote migration.

Sometimes even political factors encourage or discourage migration. For instance, in our country, the adoption of the jobs for 'sons of the soil policy' by the State governments will certainly affect the migration from other states. The rise of Shiv Sena in Bombay, with its hatred for the migrants and the occasional eruption of violence in the name of local parochial patriotism, is a significant phenomena. Even in Calcutta, the Bengali-Marwari conflict will have far-reaching implications. And now Assam and Tamil Nadu are other such examples. Thus the political attitudes and outlook of the people also influence migration

to a great extent. There have also been migrations from Kashmir and Punjab because of the terrorist activities.

Box 1. Reasons of Migration

An Analysis of Census Data

In the Indian Census, data on reasons for migration were collected for the first time in the 1981 Census.These reasons are given in the following table.

Table 1 : Per cent distribution of life-time migrants of each sex by reasons for migration, India 1981

Sex	Reasons for migration	Total	Rural to Rural	Rural to Urban	Rural to Urban	Rural to Urban
Male	Employment	30.79	19.49	47.49	41.12	27.00
	Education	5.15	4.18	8.07	6.20	3.17
	Associational	30.57	33.74	23.54	31.52	31.89
	Marriage	3.05	5.46	1.17	0.99	2.23
	Others	30.44	37.12	19.73	21.18	35.73
		100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Female	Employment	1.92	1.13	4.20	4.46	3.34
	Education	0.88	0.43	2.58	2.21	1.00
	Associational	14.72	8.64	29.27	35.89	21.23
	Marriage	72.34	81.73	51.53	43.56	59.33
	Others	10.14	8.07	12.42	13.88	15.10
		100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

It is clear from the data that among the male migrants from rural to urban and urban to urban, employment was the most important reason. Education accounted only for about 3 to 8 per cent of migration according to these migration streams. Among women, as expected, marriage was the most important reason for migration, followed by associational migration. Employment and education accounted for a very small proportion of th females.

Besides economic factors, sometimes lack of educational opportunities, medical facilities and many other facilities including the desire to break away from the traditional constraints of rural social structure may push people out of the rural areas. However, all migration caused by push factors are not confined to the rural areas only as there are also migration flows between rural areas and urban areas, indicating movement of people out of comparatively poor areas to areas with relatively better opportunities.

Activity 1

Find out if any of the members in two neighbouring families were born outside your city, when they come, and what reasons they had in mind for coming there? Then try to illustrate the types of migration and causes of migration from these cases. Compare your note if possible with other students of the study centre.

Check Your Progress 2

Tick mark the correct answer :

i) One of the important reasons for the out migration of the rural people is:

   a) growing pressure of population,

   b) rural poverty

c) rural unemployment

d) all of the above.

ii) Factors which attract the migrants for migration are known as:

a) Push factors,

b) Pull factors,

c) Push back factors,

d) All of the above.

iii) Which one of the following is not a type of migration:

a) Rural to Rural.

b) Rural to Urban

c) Urban to urban

d) None of the above.

5.4   CONSEQUENCES OF MIGRATION

The consequences of migration are diverse. However, some of the important consequences discussed in this unit are economic, demographic, social and psychological. These consequences are both positive as well as negative. Some of these affect the place of departure while others influence the place of destination.

5.4.1   Economic

Migration from a region characterised by labour surplus helps to increase the average productivity of labour in that region, as this encourages labour-saving devices and/or greater work participation by the remaining family workers. On the other hand, there is a view that migration negatively affects the emigrating region and favours the immigrating region, and that migration would widen the development disparity between the regions, because of the drain of the resourceful persons from the relatively underdeveloped region to the more developed region. But the exodus of the more enterprising members of a community cannot be considered a loss, if there is lack of alternative opportunities in the rural areas. As long as migration draws upon the surplus labour, it would help the emigrating region. It will have adverse effects only if human resources are drained away at the cost of the development of the region. Another important point is that when migration draws away the unemployed or underemployed, it would enable the remaining population of the region to improve their living conditions as this would enable the remaining population to increase the per capita consumption, since the total number of mouths to be fed into is reduced as a result of emigration.

However, the labour-sending regions may gain economically by the money brought in by the emigrants. In India, the influx of the rural migrants to cities and towns has resulted in a steady outflow of cash from the urban to rural areas. Most migrants are single males, who after securing urban employment generally send a portion of their income to their village homes to supplement the meagre incomes of their families. At the same time, it also affects the savings of the family as sometimes the migrants take money (family savings) with them, which is necessary for their travel and stay in a new place. In recent

times, a sudden increase in migration to the Middle East has resulted in steep rise in the remittances of foreign money in our country. In 1979, it was found that the annual remittances to the tiny state of Kerala were estimated to Rs.4000 million.

The rising inflow of money from the Gulf countries has resulted in the building of houses and buying of agricultural land, and even investments in business and industry. This has also resulted in the rise in the levels of consumption in the family. Money is also being spent on children's education. On the other hand, the outflow of men has caused labour shortages and has pushed wages upwards.

5.4.2 Demographic

Migration has a direct impact on age, sex and occupational composition of the sending and receiving regions. Migration of the unmarried males of young working age results in imbalances in sex ratio. The absence of many young men from the villages increases the proportion of other groups, such as, women, children and old people. This tends to reduce the birth rate in the rural areas. Further the separation of the rural male migrants from their wives for long durations also tends to reduce the birth rate.

5.4.3 Social and Psychological

Urban life usually brings about certain social changes in the migrants. Those migrants who return occasionally or remain in direct or indirect contact with the households of their origin are also likely to transmit some new ideas back to the areas of origin. Several studies attribute technological change to the dynamism of the return migrants, who bring money as well as knowledge and experience of different production techniques, and this may lead to mechanisation and commercialisation of agricultural activity. A number of ex-servicemen, on retirement go back to their native areas and promote such practices in the villages. Contact with the urban and different cultures also brings attitudinal change in the migrants, and helps them to develop more modern orientation, including even the consumerist culture in their own areas.

On the other hand, migration which results in the absence of the adult males for long periods of time may cause dislocation of the family, and, under such circumstances, women and children often have to take over more and different types of work and other more important roles in household decision-making. Studies have revealed very disturbing effects of the male migration from Kerala. Neurosis, hysteria and depression are said to be on the increase among the emigrant workers' wives in Kerala. The gulf boom has also taken a toll of mental health of the families.

Check Your Progress 3

i)   How is the labour-sending region benefited by the process of migration? Answer in about seven lines.

....

....

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ii) Write in about seven lines the socio-psychological consequences of migration.

....

....

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....

iii) Tick mark the correct answer.

Large exodus of refugees may_____.

    a)   create no problem for the countries of destination,

    b)   create only economic problems for the countries of destination,

    c)   create only health and ecological problems for the countries of destination,

    d)   create social, economic and political problems depending on the dimensions of the exodus of refugees.

5.5   PROBLEMS OF REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

Sometimes forced movements of people take place due to political and religious disturbances or wars. Such movements shift people to the neighbouring countries as refugees. The United Nations defines "a refugee as every person, who owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country." (U.N. 1984)

Thus many international movements of population involving very large numbers have occurred due to compelling reasons of political, religious or racial character. Perhaps the largest movement of people in this century has occurred in the Indian sub-continent. The partition of the country in 1947 into the Indian Union and Pakistan led to large exodus of the refugees into each nation from the other. Estimates indicate that not less than 7 million persons went to Pakistan from India and more than 8 million people came to India from Pakistan. Indo-Pakistan war in 1971 also caused a large number of people from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) to move into the north-eastern states of India as refugees, and this became a permanent problem for the region, as much as "Bihari" Muslims continue to be problematic for Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Some of the largest forced international migrations in history have occurred in

recent times in Asia. For example, in the 12 years following 1975 more than 1.7 million refugees have left Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos. Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, in 1979, produced a flow of refugees which has led to some 2.7 million being temporarily settled in Pakistan and 1.5 million in Iran. Most of these refugees are still in the camps in the neighbouring countries. Recently, due to political disturbances in Sri Lanka, large numbers of Tamilians have entered India, and are staying in Tamil Nadu.

It is found that on humanitarian grounds the refugees are often given shelter by the governments of various countries. However, the sudden influx of the refugees creates enormous pressure on the native society. It leads to short supply of essential commodities, ecological imbalances and health hazards in the countries of asylum. The large magnitude and the various economic, political and social dimensions of the exodus of the refugees create many problems, particularly for the countries of destination. Sometimes they cause political complications in the receiving countries. They organise themselves by forming groups, and pressurise the governments for some concessions. For example the United Kingdom, Canada and Sri Lanka are facing political and racial crises due to migration. Sometimes this causes clashes between the natives and migrants. Sri Lanka is a recent example of this.

But, in some instances, the refugees do make a positive contribution to the development of the host country, when settled in sparsely populated areas, by clearing and cultivating land.

5.6   MIGRATION POLICY

In India, little attention has been paid at the policy level to control the pattern of either international or internal migration. At the international level, the country does not have even up to date statistics of the immigrants and the emigrants although most of the international migration is controlled by passports and visa permits, etc. Questions have been raised about the brain drain from India in various forums, but nothing has been done to stop it as there are considerable numbers of educated unemployment in the country. It is only recently that the ministry of labour established a cell to protect the interests of the Indian emigrants, who are working as skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers in other countries, especially in the Middle East.

At the national level, the government has not shown any concern for the problems relating to internal migration, and has, therefore, not formulated any policy. Although rural to rural migration, as indicated earlier, constituted the dominant migration stream among both the males and the females, very little is known about the factors that govern this migration except through the 1981 Census. Since major part of rural to rural migration is associational or for unspecified reasons, it is necessary to understand it more clearly.

There has been significant seasonal migration of agricultural labourers in different parts of the country, especially those parts which are experiencing the green revolution. Not much information is available about the volume of this stream of the migrants or their duration of stay.

As rural to urban migration is next only to rural to rural migration, and is quite sizeable, it is influenced by the urbanisation policies and programmes. In the Fourth and Fifth Five Year Plans, the need for a balanced spatial distribution

of economic activities was emphasised, and stress was laid on the need to prevent the unrestricted growth of big cities.

Recognising the problems associated with the rapid growth of big cities (million plus), the government is now trying to adopt policies which would help in controlling migration to big cities and metropolises. During the 1980s, emphasis was on the provision of adequate infrastructural and other facilities in the small, medium and intermediate towns so that they could serve as growth and service centers for the rural region. The Planning Commission emphasised the needs for positive inducements to establish new industries and other commercial and professional establishments in small and medium towns. In the next unit (Unit 6) of this block, we shall take note of these problems in a detailed manner.

Thus, in the absence of any specific migration policy, it is difficult to predict the major directions of future migration flows. However, considering government's emphasis on developing small, medium and intermediate cities, it is expected that intermediate cities and medium towns will attract more migrants in the future. Although industrial cities, with expanding industries, will continue to attract new migrants, the young educated males and females may have a greater tendency to seek white collar employment in small towns and cities.

Check Your Progress 4

Tick mark the correct answer.

i)   In recent years, the Ministry of Labour, Government of India, has established a cell to protect the interest of the Indian emigrants who are working _____.

a)   only as skilled workers in other countries,

b)   only as unskilled workers in other countries,

c)   only as semi-skilled workers in other countries,

d)   All of the above are correct.

ii)   Considering the government's emphasis on developing small, medium and intermediate cities, it is expected that

a)   intermediate cities will attract more migrants in future and big cities will reduce their importance.

b)   Although big cities will continue to attract the migrants, the young educated migrants may have greater tendency to seek white collar employment in small towns and cities.

c)   Rural to urban migration will stop in future.

d)   All are correct.

5.7   LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have explained that migration, which refers to the movements of people from one place to another, is an important demographic process, which affects the spatial distribution of the population in a country. Then we have highlighted the factors which motivate people to move from one area to another. Related to this are the types of moves which people make in terms of

direction and duration of move, and whether the move are voluntary or involuntary. Then we came to the consequences of migration. In other words, what happens to the place from where the migrants move and to the place where they arrive. We have discussed the problems created by the refugees and displaced persons. Lastly, we have highlighted the Migration Policy.

5.8 KEY WORDS

Fertility	:	Biological potentiality of reproduction.
Migration	:	A process of movement of the population from one place to another for a considerable period of time.
Mortality	:	It is the proportion of death to the total population of the country in a particular period of time.

5.9 FURTHER READINGS

Sinha and Ataullah, 1987. *Migration: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, Seema Publishers, Delhi.

Premi, M.K. 1980. *Urban Out-Migration* : *A Study of its Nature, Causes and Consequences*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi.

5.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

i) Migration is a response of the human beings to the economic, social and political and demographic forces operating in the environment. It determines the size and rate of population growth of the labour force in that area. It is an important symptom of social change.

ii) Scholars emphasise time and space as the important variables, and define migration as a movement from one place to another permanently or semi-permanently.

iii) a) Emigration
   b) Out-migration
   c) Emigration
   d) Immigration
   e) Inmigration

Check Your Progress 2

i) d)

ii) b)

iii) d)

Check Your Progress 3

i) It helps increase the average productivity of the labour in that region, since migration encourages the labour-saving devices and greater work participation by the remaining labourers. This region also gains

economically by the money brought in by the emigrants. It results in the level of rise in the levels of consumption, education, technology of production as well.

ii) Many times migration results in the absence of the adult males for long periods of time. This causes dislocation of the family. Under these circumstances, women and children often have to undertake more responsibility. They may have to work harder than before. Studies show that neurosis, hysteria and depression have increased among the migrant workers' wives in Kerala.

iii)   d)

Check Your Progress 4

i)   d)

ii)   b)

UNIT 6 URBANISATION

Structure

6.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are to explain the meaning of urbanisation and point out some of the major problems which have assumed a massive proportion due to unprecendented rate of urban growth in India. To be more specific, after reading this unit, you should be able to :

● explain the meaning and social dimensions of urbanisation,

● describe "over-urbanisation" and its problems with special reference to the question whether India is really over-urbanised,

● discuss the problems of housing, water supply, transport and environment pollution in urban India,

● examine problem of slums in Indian cities,

- analyse the major social consequences of urbanisation in relation to the life and activities of urban dwellers, and

- discuss the state policy on urban housing, water supply, sanitation, etc.

6.1   INTRODUCTION

In the earlier two units of this block we discussed the social demography and migration in the context of social problems in India. In this unit we shall deal with the important facets of the social problems of the urban areas.

This unit begins with a discussion on the various dimensions of urbanisation, viz., demographic and social. The demographic aspects cover the growth of urban population and cities and metropolitan towns and their recent trends. In the social aspects, we discuss urbanism as a way of life, the primary and secondary urbanisation and the changing social and economic institutions. The social problems of urban areas are discussed in great length in this unit with special reference to the problems of over-urbanisation, housing, water supply, transport, pollution and environmental decay. Problems of slums are also dealt with in this unit. There are various negative social consequences of urbanisation, viz., crime, isolation, maladjustment, etc. These undesirable consequences and measures undertaken to curb these consequences are discussed in this unit. Lastly, we discuss the state policy on urban housing, water supply and sanitation. In this section, we discuss social legislation relating to urban land and housing programmes of slum clearance and urban development in the Five Year Plans.

6.2   URBANISATION : DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL DIMENSIONS

In Unit No.4, Block 1, of ESO-02, we introduced you to the patterns of urbanisation in India. In this unit we shall discuss the social problems associated with the process of urbanisation in contemporary India. Before discussing these problems, let us have an overview of the demographic and social dimensions of urbanisation in India.

6.2.1   Demographic Dimensions

In simple words, the process of urbanisation denotes population growth of the cities and towns. Sociologically, it also denotes the spread of urban way of life to the country-side. Thus, the process of urbanisation has demographic as well as social dimensions. In present times, with the spread of industrialisation, the process of urbanisation has received unprecedented momentum all over the world and more specifically in the third world countries. It is predicated, on the basis of the current rates of urbanisation, that within a few decades the urban population of the third world countries will grow twice that of the present industrialised societies.

i)   **Growth of Urban Population and Metropolitan Cities**

Though India is known as a country of villages the size of her urban population is second largest in the world with 307 million (30.7 crores) of population living in the urban areas. According to 2001 census 30.5% of Indian population

live in the urban areas. Over the years there have been a steady increase in the urban population in India from 17.29% in 1951 to 30.05% in 2001. However, there have been variations in the decennial growth rate of urban population caused by various socio-economic and political factors. The broad picture of urbanisation in India is given in table 1 below:

Table 1

Total Population and Urban Population in India

Year	Towns (No.)	Cities (UAs with million+ population)	Urban population (million)	Urban population (%of total)	Decennial growth rate of urban population (%)	UA population (million)	Decennial growth rate(%)
1901	1827	-	228.9	10.84	-	-	-
1911	1815	1	252.1	10.29	0.17	-	-
1921	1949	2	251.3	11.18	8.30	-	-
1931	2072	2	279,0	11,99	19,07	-	-
1941	2250	2	318,7	13,86	32,04	-	-
1951	2843	5	361,1	17,29	41,34	28,10	
1961	2365	7	437,2	17,97	25,84	40,07	42,61
1971	2590	9	548,2	19,91	38,93	62,21	55,27
1981	3378	12	683.3	23.34	46.12	95.69	53.81
1991	3768	23	844.3	25.72	36.16	141.15	47.51
2001	NA	40	1027.0	30.5	44.25	213.00	50.90

Source : *Census of India* (2001)

In ESO-2, Block 1, you have studied in details the patterns of urbanisation in India. However, for further clarification you would be interested to know that: (a) more than two-third of the urban population live in Urban- Agglomerations (UA), i.e., cities having a population greater than one million (see table 2); (b) the patterns of urbanisation have been very uneven in India (see table 3); (c) though there are several positive sides of urbanisation, the process has been accompanied by several urban problems.

Table 2

Distribution of Urban Population, 2001			
India/State/Union Territory	Total	Urban	% of Urban
Delhi	13	12	92.31
Chandigarh	0.9	0.8	88.89
Pondicherry	0.97	0.6	61.86
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	0.23	0.12	52.17
Goa	1.3	0.67	51.54
Mizoram	0.8	0.4	50.00
Tamil Nadu	62.1	27.2	43.80
Lakshadweep	0.06	0.026	43.33
Maharashtra	96	41	42.71
Daman & Diu	0.15	0.057	38.00
Gujarat	50.5	18.9	37.43
Punjab	24	8.2	34.17
Karnataka	52.7	17.9	33.97
Haryana	21	6	28.57

West Bangal	80	22.5	28.13
Manipur	2	0.56	28.00
Andhra Pradesh	75	20.5	27.33
Madhya Pradesh	60.4	16.1	26.66
Kerala	31.8	8.3	26.10
Jammu & Kashmir	10	2.5	25.00
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	0.2	0.05	25.00
Uttaranchal	8.5	2.1	24.71
Rajasthan	56	13	23.21
Arunachal Pradesh	0.87	0.2	22.99
Jharkand	26.9	6	22.30
Uttar Pradesh	166	34.4	20.72
Chhatisgarh	20.8	4.2	20.19
Meghalaya	2	0.4	20.00
Tripura	3.2	0.5	15.63
Orissa	36.7	5.5	14.99
Assam	26.6	3.4	1278.00
Sikkim	0.5	0.06	12.00
Himachal Pradesh	5.4	0.6	11.11
Bihar	82	8.7	10.61
Nagaland	1.9	0.2	10.53
India	**1027**	**285**	**27.75**

Source : *Census of India*, Government of India Press, New Delhi.

Table 3

Name	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	Decennial growth rate in 50s(%)	Decennial growth rate in 60(%)	Decennial growth rate in 70s(%)	Decennial growth rate in 80s(%)	Decennial growth rate in 90s(%)
Kolkata	4.67	5.98	7.42	9.19	10.86	13.2	28.1	24.1	23.9	18.2	21.5
Greater Mumbai	2.97	4.15	5.97	8.23	12.56	16.4	39.7	43.9	37.9	52.6	30.6
Delhi	1.43	2.36	3.65	5.71	8.37	12.8	65.0	54.7	56.4	46.6	52.9
Chennai	1.54	1.95	3.17	4.28	5.36	6.4	26.6	62.6	35.0	25.2	19.4
Hyderabad	1.13	1.25	1.8	2.53	4.27	5.5	10.6	44.0	40.6	68.8	28.8
Bangalore		1.2	1.65	2.91	4.11	5.7		37.5	76.4	41.2	38.7
Ahmedabad		1.21	1.74	2.51	3.27	4.5		43.8	44.3	30.3	37.6
Pune			1.14	1.68	2.44	3.8			47.4	45.2	55.7
Kanpur			1.28	1.69	2.1	2.7			32.0	24.3	28.6
Lucknow				1.01	1.66	2.3				64.4	38.6
Nagpur				1.3	1.65	2.1				26.9	27.3
Jaipur M. Corp.				1.00	1.51	2.3				51.0	52.3
Surat					1.51	2.8					85.4
Coimbatore					1.51	2.8					85.4
Cochin					1.13	1.4					23.9
Vadodara					1.11	1.5					35.1
Indore					1.1	1.6					45.5
Madurai					1.09	1.2					10.1
Bhopal					1.06	1.5					41.5
Vishakhapatnam					1.04	1.3					25.0
Varanasi					1.01	1.2					18.8
Ludhiana M. Corp.					1.01	1.4					38.6
Patna					1.09	1.7					56.0
Agra					1.01	1.3					28.7
Meerut					1	1.2					20.0

Note : Data refers to the entire urban agglomeration around each city except for Jaipur, Ludhiana, Agra and Meerut.

Source :   *Census of India, 2001*, Government of India Press, New Delhi.

Visakhapatnam has shown the highest rate of growth, i.e., 73.9 per cent followed by Hyderabad (67.9 per cent), Ludhiana (66.7 per cent), Surat (66.0 per cent), Lucknow (65.7 per cent) and Bhopal (55.8 per cent) during 1981-91.

iii) Recent Trends

In brief, the demographic trends reveal that although the proportion of urban population in India is relatively less, yet in terms of absolute numbers, India's urban population is more than the total population of several developed countries. It is projected that at the beginning of the twenty-first century as many as 32 crores of people will be living in urban centres in India.

The rapid growth of urban population in the third world countries has led to the availability of public utilities becoming scarce. In India, such a situation in big cities has made it very difficult for the local administration to cope with the increasing population and arrive at any enduring solution. In social science, this has led to formulation of the controversial notion of *over-urbanisation*. In order to ameliorate the fast deteriorating conditions of urban living systematic urban policy and effective measures, urban renewal have become inevitable in India and all other third world countries.

6.2.2 Social Dimensions

The process of urbanisation has to be explained both in demographic and social contexts. In demographic sense, the term "urbanisation" is largely used to explain the process of urban growth. In this sense, it refers to the proportion of a total population living in cities and towns at a given point of time. In sociology, the term urbanisation is also used to denote a distinct way of life, which emerges in cities due to their large, dense and hetrogeneous population. Such a life is distinct from the life and activities of the people living in villages. In this section, we shall discuss the social aspects of urbanisation. Let us begin with the formulation of Louis Wirth.

i) Urbanism as a Way of Life

Louis Wirth's formulation of 'urbanism as a way of life' explains that the city, characterised by a relatively large, dense and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals, gives rise to various kinds of social relationships and patterns of behaviour among the city-dwellers. Further, Louis Wirth also argues that the city effects are wider than city itself. Thus, the city draws the surrounding villages and even remote communities into its orbit. In other words, urbanism as a way of life is not peculiar to city-dwellers alone as the influences of the city (i.e., impact of urbanisation) stretch far behind its administrative boundaries. In brief, urbanisation in its demographic sense refers to the trends of growth of the urban population. In societal context and in its sociological sense it also denotes a distinct way of life typically associated with living in the city and the process of transforming rural ways of life into urban ones.

ii) Primary and Secondary Urbanisation

Robert Redfield and Milton Singer elaborate the role of cities in the light of the impact of urban growth and urbanisation on a culture. They describe the city as a centre of cultural innovation, diffusion and progress. They have classified the process of urbanisation into two categories:

a) Primary urbanisation, and

b) Secondary urbanisation.

According to them, "the trend of primary urbanisation is to coordinate political, economic, educational, intellectual and aesthetic activities to the norms provided by Great Tradition. The process of secondary urbanisation works in the industrial phase of the city, and is characterised by heterogenetic development. Thus, the effects of secondary urbanisation are those of disintegration. They opine that: "the general consequence of secondary urbanisation is the weakening of suppression of the local and traditional cultures by states of mind that are incongruent with those local cultures." The first type carries forward the regional tradition, and the city becomes its epi-centre, the second type bring external elements to the city.

iii) **Changing Social and Economic Institutions**

Urbanisation has its bearing on social relationships in community living. The relationships of community-living tend to become impersonal, formal, goal-oriented, contractual and transitory. With urbanisation, transformation of economic activities from the agricultural sector to the non-agricultural sector takes place, and the proportion of population engaged in secondary and tertiary sectors of activities increases with division of labour and specialisation of work. Further, the process of urbanisation also leads to breakdown in the functioning of traditional institutions and patterns of behaviour and of social control. It leads to a situation of continuity and change in the sense that the traditional forms often continue to persist, but their functions undergo major re-adaptations in the face of urbanisation. As pointed out by Yogendra Singh, "many new roles, often rational and modern in orientation, are added on to the traditional institutional forms." In India, the traditional institutions like caste, joint family and neighbourhood, etc., offer ample evidence of such continuity and change in cities.

Urban growth coupled with industrial development induces rural-urban migration whereby the cities of bigger size, offering opportunities of improving life, tend to overflow with the rural migrants. On the one hand, such migration accelerates the pace of urbanisation and, on the other, it creates excessive population pressure on the existing public utilities with the result that cities suffer from the problems of slums, crime, unemployment, urban poverty, pollution, congestion, ill-health and several deviant social activities. In this context, it is essential to know the various facets of over-urbanisation and urban problems in India.

Check Your Progress 1

i) According to the 2001 Census, what percentage of the total population live in the urban areas?

   a) 17%

   b) 27%

   c) 30.5%

   d) 47%

ii) Who among the following sociologists formulated the concept of 'urbanism as a way of life'?

a) Emile Durkheim

b) Karl Marx

c) Max Weber

d) Louis Wirth

iii) In the process of urbanisation, the relationships of community living tend to become ………

a) personalised

b) informalised

c) goal-oriented

d) casual

6.3 PROBLEMS OF URBAN AREAS

Many scholars have tried to explain the social problems of urban India in terms of over-urbanisation. It would be interesting to know the meaning and dimensions of urbanisation and their applicability in the Indian context.

6.3.1 Over-urbanisation

Over-urbanisation in one sense implies excessive urbanisation in relation to employment growth. It also means that the urban population has grown to such a large size that the cities fail to ensure a decent way of life to the urban-dwellers on account of excessive population pressure on civic amenities, housing, etc. In the Indian context, the idea of over-urbanisation has been advanced on the grounds that (a) there is an imbalance between the levels of industrialisation and urbanisation in India, (b) the process of urbanisation takes away a lion's share of resources and, thus, impinges upon the rate of economic growth of society, (c) the availability of civic amenities and facilities is so poor that these have now reached a point of break-down and become almost incapable of bearing further growing urban pressures.

Contrary to the idea of over-urbanisation, several scholars have stressed that India does not suffer from the problem of over-urbanisation. In order to support this argument, it has been pointed out that the trends of industrial-urban growth in India conform to similar trends in as many as 80 per cent of the developing societies. Secondly, it has also been argued that with the rise of urbanisation in India diversification of economy providing for new opportunities of employment have also considerably increased. This has also led to a rise in the levels of the income of the urban-dwellers.

The analysis offered by the Institute of Urban Affairs does not support the idea that rapid urbanisation in India is causing a distortion in the allocation of resources between urban and rural areas, and thereby negatively affecting the pace of economic development. In other words, the urban problems in India area not a result of over-urbanisation but are largely due to lack of effective urban policy governing the patterns of urbanisation. Let us now turn to some of the major problems of urbanisation in India.

6.3.2 Inadequate Housing

The rapid growth of population in cities has given rise to numerous social problems among which the problem of housing is the most distressing. In fact, a vast majority of urban population live under conditions of poor shelter and in highly congested spaces. It is estimated that nearly 70 per cent of population in big cities live in sub-standard houses, which they call their homes. Special mention may be made here of the old houses, which are deteriorating in the sense that they are unserved, overcrowded and dilapidated. Usually, such decaying houses are found in the middle of most of the cities. Similarly, there are hundreds of such people who are living in cities as pavement-dwellers, without any kind of shelter at all.
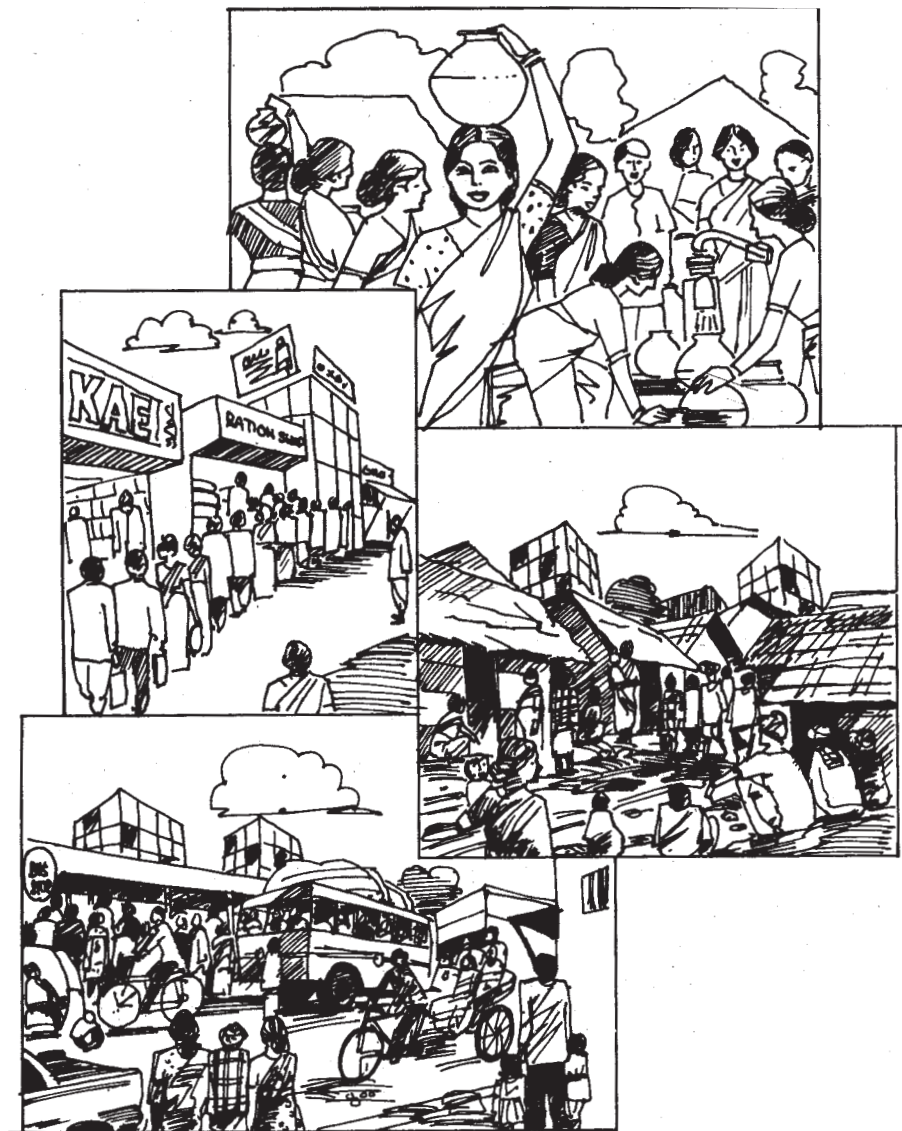
Problems of Urbanisation

The available statistics show that in India more than half of the urban households occupy a single room, with an average occupancy per room of 4.4 persons. In Greater Bombay, as many as 77 per cent of the households with an average of 5.3 persons live in one room, and many others are forced to sleep on the pavements at night. The conditions of other big cities and others are forced to sleep on the pavements at night. The conditions of other big cities and

industrially growing towns are believed to be equally disturbing. It is estimated that more than 3 lakh persons in Delhi are without a shelter of their own.

In order to solve the problem of urban housing, systematic efforts are being made through various programmes of urban development. Among these efforts, special mention may be made of the schemes of subsidised housing for economically weaker sections and the schemes of slum-clearance and improvement. These schemes are relevant and beneficial to the urban poor.

6.3.3 Unsafe and Insufficient Water Supply

Availability of water for domestic use constitutes one of the basic civic amenities. Unfortunately, in the cities of the third world countries including India there are only a few urban dwellers, who enjoy this amenity on a regular and satisfactory basis. Nearly 30 per cent of the urban population in India is deprived of safe drinking water facility. Largely, the municipal pipes and handpumps are the major sources of procuring water in towns and cities. But in most of the cities, specially the rapidly growing ones, the slum-dwellers have to suffer acute problems in procuring water for domestic use. Several systematic studies have brought out the plight of the slum-dwellers in this regard. Not only have they to wait for long hours at the water-tap but many a times fights and unpleasant disputes for the sake of drinking water arise owning to the heavy rush of the slum-dwellers to procure water before it stops running through the water tap every day. In some cases, it was found that more than a hundred families depended exclusively on one water tap. The problem of regular water supply in smaller cities and towns too is assuming an accute form with rapid and unmanageable stream of urbanisation.

6.3.4 Inefficient and Inadequate Transport

The lack of efficient transport facility is yet another major problem which has become, almost in all big cities, a headache for the local authorities. In fact, an efficient and well-knit network of transport facilities is essentially required for the movements of the city-dwellers between their residence and place of work and to the central business area. It also facilitates the movements of the daily commuters, who depend upon the city for their earning without living there permanently. The narrow roads and streets, their poor conditions, on the one hand, and, on the other, numerous vehicles, public-buses, rickshaws, two-wheelers, cars, bullock-carts, trucks and bicycles, all plying together create a unique scene of traffic congestion and traffic jams practically in every part of the city, more so in the central business area and other important zones of the city. The problem of transport in the wake of rapid urbanisation has become so serious that any effort to check it hardly yields a permanent solution. In the old and pre-industrial areas of the city, narrow roads and still narrower residential streets hardly offer any scope for efficient transport facilities. Moreover, whatever little transport network is seen in the cities, that too has become a major source of environmental pollution due to traffic jams and poor conditions of vehicles.

6.3.5 Pollution

The recent trends of industrial urban growth in India and several third world countries have created a very serious problem of pollution threatening the health and happiness of human beings. The problem of pollution is so different from many other problems that common people hardly comprehend its seriousness although everyone slowly and continuously becomes the victim of ill-effects.

Margaret Mead observed that pollution is one of the greatest problems by modern industrial urban civilisation.

The problem of pollution is becoming increasingly acute with the rise of urbanisation on account of the following reasons:

a) Indiscriminate growth of industrial and chemical plants in spite of the efforts through legal measures to check such growth.

b) Pre-industrial structure of cities with narrow streets and roads, which have become defective and inefficient in regulating traffic.

c) High-rise buildings, representing vertical growth of cities, ultimately causing high density of population, congestion on roads and pollution.

d) Lack of effective and systematic use pattern on account of scarce land and its commercial speculation.

Today, in India, Bombay (now Mumbai) and Calcutta (now Kolkata) belong to the category of world's very densely populated cities. The situation of other class I cities is also equally worse. Some years ago, R.S.Kamat carried out a study in Bombay with a view to compare the health of 4000 persons living in the Chembur and Lalbaugh areas of pollution with posh areas of Khar. He found that the inhabitants of the Chembur and Lalbaugh areas had shown high incidence of diseases like asthma, allergy, T.B., burning of eyes and cancer, etc., whereas the inhabitants of the Khar area showed much less. Similarly, under the auspices of K.E.M. Hospital, Bombay, a study was conducted a few years ago. It revealed that nearly 16 per cent of the textile workers in Bombay were suffering from respiratory diseases. In Calcutta, it was found that almost 60 per cent of the population was suffering from respiratory problems due to polluted environment. One of the studies on slums in Kanpur has revealed that more than 55 per cent children were suffering from T.B., because of dirt, filth and pollution in and around slums. Laster Brown, Cristopher Flavin and their colleagues in the World Watch Institute, based in Washington D.C. and engaged in environmental research, have recently said that air pollution has assumed such alarming proportions in several cities and rural areas around the world that merely breathing the air in Bombay is now equivalent to smoking ten cigarettes a day.

One of the greatest sources of pollution in cities is ever-increasing traffic. The vehicles plying on the congested roads release smoke, carbondioxide, nitrogen oxide, hydrocarbon, aldehydes and Ieadoxide, etc. J.N. Dae of Jawaharlal Nehru University conducted a study in Bombay and Delhi, and found that the means of transportation plying in these metropolises released 70 per cent carbon monoxide, 40 per cent hydrocarbon and 30 to 40 per cent other pollutants along with smoke and fumes, causing serious environmental pollution affecting the health of the city-dwellers. According to the report of the National Policy Committee of the Planning Commission (1978), there were more than nine lakhs and 50 thousand vehicles in the four metropolises – Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi and Madras (now Chennai). This figure has possibly reached to over 20 lakh vehicles by now. In addition to all these vehicles, the industries, factories, slums, and the high density of population are equally responsible sources is also found as a major source of pollution. The availability of liquid petroleum gas has not yet reached a large section of the population, hence, a majority of people still depend upon traditional fuel for cooking purposes. It is estimated that till the end of 1988 the facility of LPG become available only in 805 urban centres covering about 11 million households.

Do You Know 1

Availability of Electricity, Safe Drinking Water, Sanitation and Health Infrastructure (1997-98)

Type of facility	Percentage of households		
	Total	Rural	Urban
Electricity	52.4	36.5	86.2
Safe drinking water	32.9	14	73
Electricity and safe drinking water	42.4	29.2	73.2
Safe drinking water and toilet	30.8	15.3	64.1
Electricity and toilet	29.7	11.1	69.3
All the three facilities	28.0	12.3	61.2
None of the three facilities	16.4	22.5	3.5
Beds per 10,000 population in Public hospitals	10.1	2.4	26.3

Source : *World Development Indicators*, World Bank, 2001.

Do You Know 2

Air Pollution Levels in various Cities 1998

City	Total suspended Particulates (Micro-grammes per cubic metre)	Sulfur dioxide (micro-grammes per cubic metre)	Nitrogen dioxide (micro-grammes per cubic metre
Ahmedabad	299	30	21
Bangalore	123	-	-
Kolkata	375	49	34
Chennai	130	15	17
Delhi	415	24	41
Hyderabad	152	12	17
Kanpur	459	15	14
Lucknow	463	26	25
Mumbai	240	33	39
Nagpur	185	6	13
Pune	208	-	-

Source : *World Development Indicators,* 2001, World Bank, 2001.

Do You Know 3

Delhi Slums - the Reality

Delhi has seen a swelling of its population from 2 million in 1947 to over 13 million today. The government has been unable to meet the infrastructure and social challenges that have arisen from this growth, and shanty towns have emerged as a response. For those living in shanties the outlook is bleak. Record show:

1. 1500 shanty colonies in Delhi over 3 million people.

2. The average population density in a shanty town is 300,000 people per square kilometer.

3. An average dwelling houses 6-8 people, yet measures 6ft (2mt) 8ft (2.5 mt).

4. The under-five mortality rate is 149 per 1000 live births.

5. 1 water pump on average serves 1000 people.

6. Many slums have no facilities. Where latrines are provided, the average is 1 latrine per 27 households.

7. 40 per cent of children are severely malnourished in Delhi, about 40,000 children are labourers, 30,000 assist in shops, another 30,000 work in teashops and 20,000 in auto repair shops.

8. 100,000 children are part-time or full-time domestic helps.

9. 75 per cent of men and 90 per cent of women living in shanties are illiterate.

Source : <http://www.asha-india.org/slumsreality.asp>

6.3.6 Environmental Decay

Added to all these demographic and technological sources of pollution, the human factor involved in causing environmental decay needs attention. The apathy of the city-dwellers and industrialists towards cleanliness of the environment, lack of seriousness on the part of local civic authorities in maintaining environmental standards, stronghold of the vested interest groups on available land, poor maintenance of public utilities, such as, latrines, drainage, dustbins, water-taps and bathrooms, etc., contribute to the environmental pollution so much that many parts of the city become the living examples of dirt and filth. At times, it is seen that even the hospitals and gardens are also very poorly maintained from the standpoint of cleanliness. With the ever-increasing pace of urbanisation and resultant population pressure on the available land and public utilities the environmental pollution in cities has now become a great challenge to the health and happiness of the urban people. The fast deteriorating conditions of urban living can only be ameliorated through systematic programmes flowing from a well-conceived and effective rational policy on environment as well as emergence of a serious awareness among the city dwellers and commuters for pollution control.

Check Your Progress 3

i)   What are the major features of over-urbanisation in India? Answer in about six lines.

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ii) Write a short note, in about six lines, on the housing problems in the Indian urban areas.

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iii) What are the main reasons for the increase in the pollution problems in urban areas?

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6.4   PROBLEMS OF SLUMS

In the wake of rapid urbanisation, slums in cities have become an almost inevitable and necessary evil.

6.4.1   Slum Population

The figures relating to urban population living in slums are not accurately available, nevertheless it is commonly accepted that nearly one-fifth of the total urban population in India lies in slums. According to the statistics provided by the Seventh Plan document, nearly 10 per cent (or 3 crore of the total 16 crore) of the urban population in India live in slums. The Task Force on Housing and Urban Development, appointed by the Planning Commission of India, estimated nearly 23 per cent or over 3 crore 60 lakh persons as the urben slum-

dwellers in India. The proportion of the slum-dwellers increase with the size of the urban population. Cities with less than one lakh population have 17.5 per cent; cities with the population between one lakh and ten lakhs have 21.5 per cent, and cities having more than ten lakhs of population have 35.5 per cent slum-dwellers in the total population. In the case of Calcutta and Bombay, it is estimated that 43.86 lakhs and 41.26 lakhs, respectively lived in slums, in the year 1990. The four metropolitan centres, Calcutta, Bombay Delhi and Madras, have around 50 per cent of the total population living in slums by now. A similar situation prevails in African and Latin American countries.

6.4.2 Emergence of Slums

The National Institute of Urban Affairs, New Delhi, has recorded that the emergence of slums is essentially the product of three forces:

a)   demographic dynamism of a city attracting more people from the rural areas offering greater potential for employment;

b)   its incapacity to meet the rising demand for housing; and

c)   the existing urban land policies, which prohibit the access of the poor to the urban land market.

It is further observed that the urban poor are left with no choice but to make or take shelter illegally on any available piece of land. Sometimes a slum is the consequence of blight in the old parts of the city. At times, a slum is inherited in the form of an old village or a haphazardly growing locality within the extended territorial limits of a town.

The magnitude of the problem of slums is alarming. The Government of India, for purposes of the implementation of various schemes relating to urban development, has defined a slum area as follows: "A slum area means any area where such dwellings predominate, which by reason of dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement and design of buildings, narrowness and faulty arrangement of street, lack of ventilation, lack of sanitation facilities, inadequacy of open spaces and community facilities or any combination of these factors, are detrimental to safety, health or morale." These slum areas are also referred to as the 'blighted area'; 'renewal area'; 'deteriorated area', 'gray area'; 'lower class neighbourhood'; 'lower income area'; etc. In India, these areas are also known as 'Jeropadpatti'; Juggi Jhounpadi'; 'Bastee'; 'Akatas' and 'Cherri', in regional vocabularies.

Michael Harington says that in the face of rapid industrial-urban growth in the technologically advanced and capitalistic country like the United States of America also there are such slums, which at times are referred to as the 'other America'.

Box 1 : Characteristics of Slums

The physical aspects and general conditions of the slums are by and large the same everywhere. The foremost characteristics of slums can be briefly enumerated in the following manner:

1)   Dilapidated and poor houses in slums are made of poor design and scrap materials. These are often raised on unauthorised land.

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2) High density of population and housing leads to over-crowding and congestion; one room is often used for all practical purposes of domesticating living. In Bombay and in many other big cities, it can be seen that in the slum areas one room tenement with 100 sq.f. to 150 sq.f. of space is occupied by more than 10 persons.

3) Lack of public utilities and facilities, such as, drainage, sanitation, water taps, electric light, health centres, common latrines and public parks, etc., are widely observable characteristics of slums.

4) The slum-dwellers are functionally integrated with the mainstream of the city life, yet the high incidence of deviant behaviour such as crime, juvenile delinquency, prostitution, drug use, beggary, illegitimacy, illicit distilling of liquor, gambling and other social evils are associated with slum areas. It does not mean that all those residing in slums are necessarily associated with such deviant behaviour. The slum areas, socially and physically provide greater opportunity for such kinds of deviant behaviour.

5) Slums have a culture of their own, which Marshall Clinard has termed as 'a way of life'. It is said to be largely a synthesis of the culture of the lower class and of that which Lewis has referred to as the 'culture of poverty'.

6) Though the slum-dwellers are functionally integrated to the city life, apathy and social isolation characterise a slum. It means that largely slums are subject to neglect and apathy of the larger community. These areas are looked down upon and considered inferior. Such a reaction from the larger community renders slums into social isolation, detached from the city as a whole. Under these circumstances, the slum-dwellers find it almost impossible to improve these conditions through their own efforts.

Slums are dilapidated and overcrowded areas with lack of adequate public utilities, yet their existence in the city does serve a purpose, especially for the urban poor and migrants coming for some job opportunities in the city. It is in slums that poor people like industrial workers, casual labourers, hawkers, petty shopkeepers, vegetable-sellers and several others offering useful services to the city find a place to stay. These poor people belonging to different castes, religions, regions and languages live together even amidst extreme poor conditions. At times, these slums play a very vital role in orienting the new migrants to the city environment. In other words, the slum-dwellers, by providing social comfort and support to the new migrants, help them to adjust to the conditions of city-living and finally integrate themselves with the mainstream of city life.

In India, the slums are usually classified into the following three categories: (1) the old building which have become dilapidated and deteriorated in course of time; (2) the slums which are characterised by poor and inadequate housing conditions, constructed legally around mills and factories, (3) the slums which illegally come up in different parts of the city through unauthorised occupation of open land.

Activity 1

Visit a slum area, preferably of your home town. Try to find out, either through observation or through interaction, the major problems faced by these slum-dwellers. After the collection of information is over, try to develop a note on the **'Problems of Slum-dwellers in My Home Town'** in about two pages. If possible, discuss your note with the coordinator and the co-learners of your Study Centre.

6.5 SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES – CRIME, ISOLATION AND MALADJUSTMENT

The rapid urbanisation over the last few decades in India (and elsewhere in the third world countries) has latently led to rise in several problems. In fact, in the modern developed societies, these problems came into existence since the emergence of industrialisation during the 18th century. Today, the developing societies are acquiring the characteristics of the developed societies even in crime, juvenile delinquency, rape, murder, prostitution, gambling, suicide and alcoholism. Moreover, the unprecedented pace of urbanization, causing high density of population and conditions of urban anonymity, have given rise to socio-psychological problems of adjustment, especially in the case of the migrants to the city of their destination. Here, we shall briefly look into the problems of crime, isolation and maladjustment.

6.5.1 Crime

The metropolises and the big cities provide greater environmental opportunities for committing crimes and acts of juvenile delinquency. The rate of crime is very high in cities compared to the rural and tribal areas. With the rise of urbanisation, the rate of crime gets further accentuated as the opportunities of success through socially legitimate means remain scarce as against the number of aspirants. Moreover, urban anonymity in a way encourages resorting to unlawful activities, as the traditional agencies of social control and law and order become noticeably weak. Under these conditions of urban living, crimes such as theft, burglary, kidnapping and abduction, murder, rape, cheating, criminal breach of trust, gambling, prostitution, alcoholism and counterfeiting, etc., have become almost routine affairs in most cities, especially the "million" cities. Further, in all big cities the criminal gangs indulging in organised crimes have become a grave social problem. These criminal gangs have their network stretching beyond a given city, spread over more than one city. At times, these gangs are so resourceful that, even when caught by the police, they easily succeed in escaping punishment.

Modern research points out that the great amount of crime in modern urban centers reflects the inability of the urban community to integrate all its members and to control those who resist integration. Crime and city are thus casually connected. Scholars pointed out that the urbanisation of rural areas and an increase in crime go hand in hand. Several years ago it was found that among the rural areas and an increase in crime go hand in hand. Several years ago it was found that among the rural inmates in an Iowa performatory in the USA characteristics associated with an urban way of life played a significant role in their criminal behaviour.

Compared to western societies, the rate of crime in urban India is low; nevertheless, the problem of crime is becoming grave in all big cities in India. The most significant reasons for this deteriorating situation lie in an unprecedented rate of population growth of these cities, widespread economic insecurities, and decline in the management of law and order. In 1974, out of the total crimes reported all over the country, more than 12 per cent crimes were committed in eight big cities – Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi, Madras, Kanpur, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Bangalore. The accompanying table shows some

details about the crimes reported under the Indian Penal Code in the eight major cities, in 1979.

The Crime reported in eight Indian cities under IPC in 1979

City	Number of Crimes	Rate of crime per lakh & population
Ahmedabad	7,178	345.1
Bangalore	24,693	1240.9
Bombay	36,417	447.9
Calcutta	13,103	391.1
Delhi	41,516	784.8
Hyderabad	7,359	336.0
Kanpur	7,192	496.0
Madras	8,843	264.8
Total	1,46,301	526.1

Source: Drawn from *Hand Book on Social Welfare Statistics* 1981, Govt. of India, Ministry of Social Welfare, New Delhi.

The national capital, Delhi, continued to be the crime capital of the country, recording a crime rate that is more than double the national average among the metropolitan cities. During 2002, Delhi's crime rate was put at 385.8 per lakh of population, much higher than the national average of 172.3.

While the crime rate of Chennai stood at 113.5 per lakh of population, Kolkata reported at an even lower rate of 90.6 and Mumbai at 177 was slightly above the national average.

The highest crime rate among large urban centres was reported in Bhopal (740.9), followed by Vijayawada at 666, Indore 626 and Jaipur 524.

Activity 2

Read any national daily for at least 30 days to classify the crimes reported from various cities in India.

In Western societies, the unskilled labour is identified with the 'blue collar' shirts and the office-going people with the 'white collar'. Generally, people think that the 'blue collar' has close links with crime. It has, however, been found that wrong behaviour is not limited to this group, and even persons associated with clean dress commit objectionable behaviour that at times goes unnoticed. The white-collar crimes, which are committed largely by violating the rules and regulations of trade, business or profession during the conduct of these activities also become widespread, especially in cities which are the victims of rapid urbanisation. Usually, individuals and groups resorting to the white-collar crimes enjoy power, prestige and clandestine relations with the authorities due to their professional or business activities. On account of such social connections, many among them find it easier to escape punishment even if the consequences of their unlawful activities are grave in the larger interests of society.

6.5.2 Isolation

Social interaction with others is a basis of all forms of social relationships and social groupings. It plays a very vital and meaningful role in all forms of social life: rural, urban or tribal. In smaller communities, such interactions in different aspects of life provide for personal and intimate social relationships, whereas in the cities due to the large, and heterogeneous population, the possibilities of such relationships are considerably minimised. With the rise of urbanisation, a city-dweller, while living amidst a sea of fellow city-dwellers, is detached from them socially . In other words, a city-dweller is physically in proximity with others in different walks of life, but socially he is under conditions of relative isolation, if not absolute isolation. Socially, isolated persons are rarely found in village communities. In the city, people are usually unable to make intimate and emotionally strong relationships. This tendency goes on increasing as the city grows in the face of rapid population growth. Older people, the migrants who are still strangers in the city, people who are unable to get along with others, socially rejected persons and persons who do not find people of their liking often feel acute isolation even amidst thousands of the urban-dwellers.

The rapid growth of urban population leads to greater divisions of labour and specialisation of work which, in turn, creates interdependence among individuals participating in a given economic activity. Such an interdependence is partial and restricted only up to the fulfillment of a given fraction or a portion of the total activity. Thus, there is extremely limited scope for sharing a totality of experiences and social life. The heterogeneity of population, especially in matters of social status, caste, class, religion, income, occupation, etc., creates partial isolation under which, as K. Dais says, integrity of particular groups is reinforced by maintaining social distance (avoidance) toward other groups. Residential segregation is one of the manifestations of partial isolation in cities.

In a broad perspective, Kingsley Davis observes that partial isolation, whatever its specific form, tends to be associated with the individuals positions and to be expressed in the rights and duties of these positions. It implies that between individuals of different status there is a difference of ends. It is, therefore, one of the means by which societies are organised. Some mutual avoidance, social distance, and ethnocentrism emerge. A similar, by and large, prevails in the face of rapid urbanisation.

6.5.3 Maladjustment

The process of urbanisation adds to the complexities of city - life. It generates and strengthens the forces of social change, leading to new social reality and inevitable pressures of conformity. As the process of urbanisation accelerates, the city life tends to be rapidly characterised by cultural diversities, socio-economic inequalities, competition, conflict and several other manifestations of complexities of social reality. The fact of social mobility also affects the life of the city-dwellers. In a way, all these social forces impose a functional adjustment on the part of the city-dwellers to lead a peaceful and fuller life. However, all the city-dwellers are not fortunate enough to satisfactorily adjust to the diverse challenges of a growing city. For example, in the field of economic activities, even in a rapidly growing city, the number of opportunities for successful adjustment are smaller than the number of competitors. In such a

situation, several among those, who are the losers, fail to suitably adjust to the reality, and become victims of frustration, inferiority complex and loss of a meaningful integration with the totality of city-life. All such failures give rise to the problem of maladjustment. Similarly, even among the successful ones, many fail to conform to the new situations, and become maladjusted.

The problem of maladjustment becomes all the more acute in the case of those city-dwellers, who are relatively recent migrants. They, in fact, present cases of "Marginal Man"–a concept developed by Robert E.Park and later elaborated upon by Everett V.Stonequist. The marginal-man, in simple words, is said to be one who is in the process of changing from one culture to another. Some scholars have also used the term "transitional man" in the sense that the individual in question is in the process of assimilation with the culture of the place of his destination. Further, a marginal man suffers from the problems of maladjustment precisely because he feels lost amidst the pressures of two cultures, as he cannot completely change from one cultural system to another. On the one hand, he tends to retain some traits of his cultural past and, at the same time, he is forced to acquire the traits of new culture. In such a situation, he experiences internal conflicts, intense anxiety and socio-psychological tensions, which often tend to enhance the incidence of maladjustment.

Apart from these adverse consequences of urbanisation, it is also found that various forms of social disorganisation are associated with the rapid growth of cities. Special mention may be made here of family, kinship and community disorganisation endangering the cohesive and integrated social life. These forms of social disorganisation are reflected through the disruption of mutually expected roles and obligations in the wake of unequal rates of social change in different aspects of city-life. In the case of the family, the increasing rate of divorce and break down of jointness in the joint-family are indicative of dissociative and break down of jointness in the joint-family are indicative of dissociative implications of urbanisation. The withering away of kinship obligations provide similar examples. In like manner, the enormous expansion of the city area and the increasing pressure of its heterogeneous population raise several problems and lessens the normative integration of the city. The net result, as observed by William Foot Whyte, is that a large, heterogeneous, and widely dispersed population faces many new problems for which solutions do not exist in the culture of that society.

6.5.4 Efforts to Curb Undesirable Consequences

The increasing proportion of these evil consequences of urbanisation has led to some systematic efforts for effectively curbing their incidence. These efforts include legislative measures for the removal of urban poverty and unemployment as well as measures of slum clearance and urban community development programmes. From the Sixth Five Year Plan onwards, special attention is being paid to the socio-economic development of small towns and cities to divert the flow of the rural migrants. It is hoped that, with the rise of new opportunities of employment in towns and small cities, the metropolitan centres will be relieved of further increase in the pressure of excessive population, which has by now made it almost impossible for the civic authorities to ensure efficient and adequate supply of public utilities to the citizens.

In addition to these planned efforts, social legislation relating to suppression of immoral traffic in women and girls, prevention of beggary, prevention of

alcoholism and drug abuses, correctional programmes for criminals and juvenile delinquents, and rehabilitation schemes for deviant persons under the programmes of social defence are equally significant steps taken towards the amelioration of these problems of urban living. In Section 6.7, you will come to know about the policy of the State specifically addressed to the solution of several urban problems so as to make urban living a decent way of life.

Check Your Progress 3

Tick the correct answer.

i) Crime is usually

    a) Higher in rural than in urban areas

    b) Higher in big cities than in rural areas

    c) Similar in rural and urban areas

    d) Lower in metropolitan cities than in small towns

ii) Compared to the Western societies, the crime rate in urban India is

    a) high

    b) low

    c) no different

iii) Tick the correct statements

    a) A city-dweller is usually socially far detached from his fellow city-dwellers while living in the sea of humanity.

    b) Socially isolated persons are often found in villages.

    c) A city-dweller is usually unable to make intimate and emotionally strong relationship with his fellow dwellers.

    d) Rapid growth of urban population leads to greater division of labour.

iv) The concept of the marginal-man is developed by

    a) Robert E.Park

    b) Robert Redfield.

    c) Louis Wirth.

    d) Louis Dumont

6.6 STATE POLICY ON URBAN PROBLEMS

In India, it is now recognised that urbanisation is not a trivial aspect of the processes of economic development and social change. This has led to a demand that there ought to be a national policy statement on urbanisation, as it is true in matters of industrial development, population growth, and education. Several reasons account for the lack of national policy on urbanisation, foremost among which have been the issues of overwhelming concern for self-sufficiency of villages and the inclusion of urbanisation in the state subjects of our Constitution. However, in our efforts of planned development, the five year plans do reflect the general policies being followed for the management of the urban problems, which are assuming massive proportion due to unprecedented rise in the rate of urbanisation. It should be noted here that, by and large, the

emphasis of these efforts has been towards the amelioration of the conditions of the poor and the lower income groups. A brief appraisal of the efforts to solve the problem of housing, sanitation and water supply, along with several other problems of urban development, is presented here.

We have seen that one of the grave problems of urbanisation has been acute shortage of housing facilities in cities. This problem has reached almost a breaking point in the case of the metropolitan cities. In order to meet this problem, planned efforts are made in the following two directions:

a)   Social legislations relating to urban land and housing;

b)   Programmes of slum clearance and construction of new houses.

Let us see what has been done under these heads to solve the problem of urban housing.

6.6.1   Social Legislation Relating to Urban Land and Housing

The Constitution gives the fundamental right of the freedom of movement to every citizen of India, but does not guarantee the right of housing to either the urban-dwellers or the village people. In our Constitution the responsibility of urban development and related welfare programmes has been assigned to the state governments. The social legislation governing rent and sale of land and houses include the following two important enactments:

1)   Rent Control Act (RCA), 1948, and

2)   Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act (ULCRA) 1976.

i)   **The Rent Control Act, 1948**

The Rent Control Act was enacted with a view to control and regulate the rent of the houses. It was first enacted in the then Bombay State, in 1948, and later on in several other states. The Rent Control Act also protects the tenants from the atrocities of the house-owner, especially in the sense that the owner of a house can neither force the tenant to vacate house, nor can he raise the rent of the house at his own will. Further, the Rent Control Act also imposes the responsibility of repairs of the house on the owner rather than on the tenant living in it.

Systematic studies evaluating the impact of the Rent Control Act have revealed that the Act has not been able to bring about a solution to the problem of urban housing in the desired direction. Kiran Wadhava's study reveals that the said Act has hardly been able to make any noticeable progress in solving the problem of urban housing, and its need continues to be equally significant even today. In fact, there have been some latent consequences of this Act, adding to the already acute problem of housing. The owners are now not eager to rent out the house, as it will never come back in their possession due to the conditions of the Rent Control Act. Similarly, now people do not like to build houses with a view to earn rent. All such calculations ultimately add to the scarcity of houses. It is also observed that the owners hardly show any interest in the repair of houses, which have already been rented out, simply because all such expenses are finally going to be a burden on them alone, without any possibility of raising the rent. Owing to such apathetic attitude of the owners towards

timely repairs, a large number of buildings in cities have deteriorated and become dangerous for living.

The ill-effects of the Rent Control Act are not systematically recognised and in order to put a curb on such effects the Ministry of Urban Development has taken some serious steps. In 1987, The National Commission on Urbanisation was appointed under the auspices of the Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India. The Commission also went into the details of the Rent Control Act, and recognised the seriousness of the adverse effects of the Act. In its interim report, the National Commission on Urbanisation made several recommendations relating to the amendments in the terms and conditions of the existing Rent Control Act relating (1) the continuation of the protection of the interests of the existing tenants, (2) the inclusion of the possibility of raising rent, (3) the separation of the rules the regulations of renting houses for commercial purposes from houses to be rented for residential purposes, (4) the provisions of providing incentives to build new houses, etc. It is believed that the inclusion of these amendments, while not necessarily solving the acute problem that has been growing over the years, will certainly lessen the adverse effects of the existing Rent Control Act.

ii) **Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act , 1976**

The second important step relating to the management of urban land is the enactment of the Urban Land Ceiling Act of 1976. This Act has the following three fundamental objectives:

a) Redistribution of land,

b) Prevention of speculation in land, and

c) Regulation of construction on vacant land.

Under the provisions of this Act, the excess land, i.e., land excluding the prescribed size of the available plot, can be procured by the local authorities or the state government for wider public interests. Usually, the excess land under this Act is procured for the construction of houses for the urban poor and the low income groups. Moreover, this Act imposes restrictions on the sale of excess land so as to curb speculation in urban land.

Critics have pointed out that despite the existence of this Act the prices of land in every city have reached far beyond the capacity of common-man and speculation in land is flourishing almost unchecked. Moreover, the land procured for construction of houses for the urban poor and other public utilities is also negligible in size. In several cases, the owners of excess land have been successful in escaping the demands of the Land Ceiling Act through corrupt practices and use of their political connections.

6.6.2 Programmes of Slum Clearance and Construction of New Houses

We have seen that, in the face of rapid urban growth, a large section of urban population is living in slums and suffering from acute shortage of houses, water-supply, sanitation and other public facilities. These urban problems have assumed massive proportion, warranting social legislation and special attention in our national planning. Following from these efforts, one of significant

programmes is the slum clearance scheme and programme of construction of new houses for the urban poor and the low income groups. Under this scheme, low cost houses, equipped with latrine, bathroom, water-tap, sanitation and drainage facilities, are made available to the poor people, who can afford to pay a token amount as rent from their meagre earnings. Moreover, under the scheme of slum clearance an entire area inhabited by economically and socially weaker sections is provided with these common utilities to be shared by all. These programmes under the slum clearance scheme are subsidised to provide assistance to the state governments for construction of one crore and 40 lakh new houses at the rate of Rs.5000 per house for the benefit of the urban poor and the low and middle income groups. In addition, the state governments and the local bodies of the cities also provide necessary funds for execution of such projects. It should, however, be noted that the voluntary agencies have still lagged behind in taking up the activities of slum clearance and construction of houses for the poor people.

The following schemes have been executed in several cities with financial and other support from the state governments and local bodies for the construction of new houses:

a) In 1952, a scheme for the construction of houses for the industrial workers came into existence.

b) A scheme was introduced, in 1954, for the construction of houses for the low income groups.

c) Since the implementation of the Second Five Year Plan (1956), the scheme of slum clearance and improvement came into existence on a regular basis.

d) The Life Insurance Corporation of India started giving loans since the Second Five Year Plan to the middle-income groups for the construction of houses.

e) Since the Fifth Five Year Plan, the programme of building houses for the higher-income groups were taken on hand with the objective that profit earned through such projects will be diverted for the construction of houses for the urban poor and the low-income groups. Special instructions were issued to the Housing Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) in this respect.

However, systematic studies have revealed that most of the advantages of these schemes have been taken away by the middle and high income groups. The plight of the urban-poor has more or less remained the same.

One of the greatest obstacles in effective implementation of the slum-clearance programme has been lack of adequate funds. The issue received significant attention in the Seventh Five Year Plan. It led to the establishment of a National Housing Bank (NHB) with an assistance of Rs.100 crores from the Central government. It is proposed that the following shall be the objective of the National Housing Bank:

1) To provide a national body for financing the programmes only for the construction of houses.

2) To raise the sources for procuring finance for the construction of houses and make effective use of all such sources.

3) To raise financial institutions at local and regional levels for advancing loans for construction of houses and institutions giving loans for other purposes.

4) To establish meaningful links between financial institutions advancing loans for construction of houses and institutions giving loans for other purposes.

All these efforts are made with a hope that conditions of the slum-dwellers and the urban poor can be suitably improved so that they can also lead a fuller urban life free from dirt, disease and pollution.

6.6.3   The Five-Year Plans

The policy of decentralisation in our national planning has lately been found useful in matters of urban development also. In the First Five Year Plan no special attention was paid to the solution of urban problems. Yet, it did recognise the acute shortage of housing and steep rise in land prices in big cities. By the end of the First Five Year Plan several institutional set-ups to ease this problem came into existence. For example, a new ministry of works and housing was first established and later renamed as the Ministry of Urban Affairs. The National Building Organisation was established to design low cost housing. Steps were taken to train personnel in town planning. The Second Five Year Plan emphasised the need for planned development of cities and towns, and advocated an integrated approach to rural and urban planning in a regional framework. During this plan, The Urban Development Authority came into existence, and a master plan was prepared for the first time for the development of Delhi. This was a major step in urban planning and its implementation, which was later followed in the case of other big cities in several states.

The Third and Fourth Five Year Plans laid emphasis on town planning for which the responsibility was shifted from the Centre to the states. A model town-planning Act was prepared in 1957 by the Town and Country Planning Organisation in Delhi, and this led to the enactment of laws in other states. The Third Five Year Plan extended financial support for the preparation of master plans for the development of cities and towns in the states. As a result of such efforts, nearly 400 master plans were prepared. Moreover, the Third Plan also initiated urban community development schemes in selected cities as an experimental scheme to solve social and human problems associated with urban slums. The Fourth Plan recognised the need of financing urban development schemes. It was during this plan period that an agency – Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) – came into existence to provide funds for the metropolitan authorities, State Housing Boards and other urban institutions for the construction of houses in urban areas. The Fifth Plan document, in a separate chapter on urban and regional planning, laid down the following objectives of its urbanisation policy: (a) to augment civic services in the urban centres, (b) to tackle the problems of the metropolitan cities on a regional basis, (c) to promote the development of small towns and new urban centres, (d) to assist inter-state projects for the metropolitan projects, and (e) to support industrial townships under government undertakings.

The Sixth Plan also had a special chapter on urban problems but greater emphasis was given to the problem of housing both urban and rural areas. In this plan, necessary attention was drawn, for the first time, to regional variations

in the levels of urban development. It should also be mentioned here that, during the Sixth Plan, provisions were made to develop adequate infrastructural and other facilities at the small, medium and intermediate towns so as to make them 'growth centres' in promoting rural development. Further, 200 towns were to be identified for integrated development of water supply schemes in 550 towns, and sewerage projects in 110 towns in the country.

Thus, the Sixth Plan recognised the problems of basic needs of the urban-dwellers and took some concrete steps towards amelioration of their conditions.

The Seventh Plan, on the one hand, stressed the need for integrated development of small and medium towns and, on the other, minimising the growth of the metropolitan cities. To attain this objective, special incentives are offered for the establishment of industries in small and medium towns. It also advocates for greater financial support to local bodies by the state governments. In terms of institutional set up, the Seventh Plan recommended the establishment of the National Urban Infrastructure Development Finance Corporation, to provide capital for the development of infrastructure in small and medium towns. Apart from these steps, the emphasis on housing for the urban poor and the low income groups, integrated development and provisions for promotion of basic amenities for the urban-dwellers are continued in the Seventh Plan and proposed draft of the Eighth Five Year Plan.

In brief, although the Five Year Plans do not as yet exhibit any comprehensive policy on India's urbanisation and urban problem, there are obviously certain aspects which have received greater attention to ameliorate the conditions of the urban-dwellers. Special mention may be made of (a) finance for housing, (b) slum clearance and improvement, (c) town water supply and sewerage, (d) urban transporation, and (e) the preparation of master plans for the development of cities, especially bigger ones.

Check Your Progress 4

i)   What are the major objectives of the Rent Control Act, 1948? Answer in
     about five lines.

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ii) Write a short note on the social legislation on the urban land in India. Use
     about six lines to answer.

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iv) What are the major features of the Slum Clearance Programme in India? Answer in about seven lines.

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6.7 LET US SUM UP

Urbanisation refers to a social process. In demographic sense, it exhibits the proportion of the urban population to the total population of a society. In sociological sense, it also refers to a way of life typically associated with the city. The haphazard and steep rise in the population of big cities has led to the notion of over-urbanisation in India, which, in the societal context, is not true. Even today only less than one-third of the total population of India lives in towns and cities.

The industrial-urban India has given birth to several social problems among which the problems of slums, crimes, housing, pollution and inadequate public utilities have become grave. In the absence of a national policy on urbanisation, the matters of urban planning and development remain largely confined to the efforts of the state governments. The schemes of slum clearance and housing for the urban poor and the low-income groups are in a way addressed to the solution of these problems. The five year plans have also made significant efforts through making provisions of financial support to several programmes of urban renewal.

6.8 KEY WORDS

Marginal man	:	A marginal man is one, who has not been able to give up the traits of his cultural past, nor has been able to assimilate with the new culture. Thus, he is a man in transition, placed between two cultures.
Million city	:	A city with a population over ten lakhs.
Over-urbanisation	:	A term describing the process of excessive growth population in cities (mainly through migration) in relation to employment and other facilities available in them.
Primary urbanisation	:	A process of coordinating the activities of local tradition to the norms provided by the Great Tradition.

Slum	:	Broadly speaking, it is a locality characterised by inadequate and deteriorated housing, deficient public utilities, overcrowding and cogestion and usually inhabited by the poor and socially heterogeneous people.
Urbanisation	:	A process in demographic sense, which refers to the proportion of a total population living in towns and cities. In sociological sense, it refers to a way of life associated with living in the city.
White-collar crime	:	It refers to malpractices employed during the conduct of any profession, business or trade.
Secondary urbanisation	:	A process of heterogenetic development associated with the industrial phase of the city.

6.9   FURTHER READINGS

Institute of Urban Affairs. 1988. *State of India's Urbanisation*, Institute of Urban Affairs : New Delhi.

Rao, M.S.A (ed.) 1974. *Urban Sociology in India*. Orient Longman : New Delhi.

6.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

i)   b)

ii)   d)

iii)   c)

Check Your Progress 2

i)   The main features of over-urbanisation in India are as follows:

a) There is a seeming imbalance between the levels of industrialisation and urbanisation in India. (b) The process of urbanisation takes away a large share of national resources and, thus, impinges upon the rate of economic growth in society. (c) There has been excessive population pressure on the civic amenities and housing.

ii)   It is estimated that nearly 70% of the urban population in India live in sub-standard houses. Here, more than half of the urban households occupy only a single room with an average occupancy per room of 4.4 persons. Besides, there are a large number of homeless persons. Only in Delhi there are more than three lakh homeless persons.

iii)   (a) Indiscriminate growth of industrial and chemical plants. (b) Pre-industrial structure of cities with narrow streets of roads. (c) High-rise of buildings with high density of population, congestion on roads and pollution. (d) Lack of effective measure for systematic use of land.

Check Your Progress 3

i)   b)

ii)   b)

iii) a), c), d)

iv)   a)

Check Your Progress 4

i)   The main objectives of this law are to (a) regulate the rent of the house, (b) protect the tenant from the atrocities of the houseowners, (c) make the landowner responsible to undertake the repair of the house regularly.

ii)   The Urban Land Ceiling Act, 1976, covers on broad aspect of urban land management. This Act has three fundamental objectives : (a) distribution of surplus land, (b) prevention of speculation in land, (c) Regulation of construction on vacant land. However, despite the provisions of this Act, the price of urban land has gone beyond the reach of the common man, and speculation in land is also flourishing without being checked.

iii) Under this scheme, low cost houses equipped with latrine, bathroom, water tap, sanitation and drainage facilities are made available to the poor people, who can pay a token amount as rent from their income. These schemes are subsidised by the government. However, one of the greatest obstacles for the speedy implementation of this programme has been that of adequate funds. The Seventh Five Year Plan has given emphasis on the issue of slum clearance.

UNIT 7 CHANGING FAMILY STRUCTURE

Structure

7.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit, we shall discuss the changing family patterns in India. After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- describe a family;

- discuss its various types;

- explain the factors responsible for change in the family system;

- examine the changes in the traditional joint family system; and

- analyse the changes in the rural and urban family system in India.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous Units of this Block, we introduced you the various dimensions of social demography, migration and urbanisation in India. In this Unit, we shall discuss the changing family structure in India. This Unit begins with a short discussion on the definition and types of the family. Industrialisation, urbanisation and modernisation are the important social forces affecting the traditional family structure in India. We discuss these factors briefly and

describe a perspective to understand the change in the family structure in Section 7.3. In Section 7.4, we discuss the change taking place in the traditional joint family system in India. The change in the rural family and the impact of the breakdown of the rural joint family are discussed in this Section. Change in the urban family system and its various facets are examined in section 7.6

7.2 FAMILY : DEFINITION AND TYPES

In Unit No. 6. Block 2 of ESO-02, we discussed in detail the institution of the family in India. There we discussed the continuum between the nuclear and the joint family. In this Unit, we shall discuss the form and direction of changes in the family system in India. To begin with, let us study the definition and types of family.

7.2.1 Definition

Ordinarily, a family, particularly an elementary family, can be defined as a social group consisting of father, mother and their children. But in view of the variety as found in the constituents of a family, this definition in rather inadequate. Bohannan (1963), in his definition of the family, emphasised the functional as well as the structural roles of family. According to him, "a family, contains people who are linked by sexual and affinal relationships as well as those linked by descent who are linked by secondary relationships, that is, by chains of primary relationships".

Box 1. Characteristics of Family

For a comprehensive understanding of what the family stands for today, William J. Goode (1989) suggests the following characteristics:

a) At least two adult persons of opposite sex reside together.

b) They engage in some kind of division of labour i.e., they both do not perform exactly the same tasks.

c) They engage in many types of economic and social exchanges, i.e., they do things for one another.

d) They share many things in common, such as food, sex, residence, and both goods and social activities.

e) The adults have parental relations with their children, as their children have filial relations with them; the parents have some authority over their children and both share with one another, while also assuming some obligation for protection, cooperation, and nurturance.

f) There are sibling relations among the children themselves, with a range of obligations to share, protect, and help one another.

Individuals are likely to create various kinds of relations with each other but, if their continuing social relations exhibit some or all of the role patterns noted here, in all probability they would be viewed as the family.

7.2.2 Types of Family

On the basis of the composition of the family, three distinct types of family organisation emerge.

a)   **Nuclear Family**

The most basic among the families is called natal or nuclear or elementary, or simple family, which consists of a married man and woman and their offspring. In specific cases, sometimes one or more additional persons are found to reside with them. Over a period of time, the structure of a family changes. Often additional members, viz., an aged parent or parents or unmarried brother or sisters may come to like with the members of a nuclear family. It may lead to the development of varieties of nuclear families. While discussing the nature of the joint family in India, Pauline Kolenda (1987) has discussed additions/modifications in the nuclear family structure. She gives the following compositional categories :

i)   **Nuclear family** refers to a couple with or without children.

ii)   **Supplemented nuclear family** indicates a nuclear family plus one or more unmarried, separated, or widowed relatives of the parents other than their unmarried children.

iii)   **Sub nuclear family** is identified as a fragment of a former nuclear family, for instance, a widow/widower with his/her unmarried children or siblings (unmarried) or widowed or separated or divorced) living together.

iv)   **Single person household**

v)   **Supplemented sub nuclear family** refers to a group of relatives, members of a formerly complete nuclear family along with some other unmarried, divorced or widowed relatives who were not member of the nuclear family. For instance, a widow and her unmarried children may be living together with her widowed mother-in-law.

In the Indian context, it is easy to find all these types of family. However, in terms of societal norms and values, these types relate to the joint family system (cf. ESO-02, Unit 6)

Nuclear families are often combined, like atoms in a molecule, into larger aggregates. Although such families are generally referred to as composite forms of family, on the basis of their structural characteristics they can be differentiated into two distinct types; like i) polygamous family and ii) family.

b)   **Polygamous Family**

A polygamous family ordinarily consists of two or more nuclear families conjoined by plural marriage. These types of families are statistically very few in number in general. There are basically two types of polygamous family based on the forms of marriage, viz., polygyny, i.e., one husband with more than one wife at a time, and polyandry, i.e., one wife with more than one husband at the same time.

c)   **Extended Family**

An extended family consists of two or more nuclear families affiliated through the extension of parent-child relationship and relationship of married siblings. The former can be designated as a vertically extended family, whereas the latter would be referred to as a horizontally extended family. In a typical patriarchal extended family, there lives an elderly person with his son and

wife and their unmarried children. You may be interested to know what constitutes the jointness in the joint family. Usually, the jointness is depicted in a number of factors, viz., commensality (eating together from the same kitchen), common residence, joint ownership of property, cooperation and common sentiments, common ritual bonds, etc. You may also be interested to know who constitute the joint family. It is the kin relationships. Hence Pauline Kolenda (1987) points out the following types of the joint family in India:

i) **Collateral Joint Family** comprises two or more married couples between whom there is a sibling bond.

ii) **Supplemented Collateral Joint Family** is a collateral joint family along with unmarried, divorced and widowed relatives.

iii) **Lineal Joint Family** consists of two couples, between whom there is a lineal link, like between a parent and her married sons or between a parent and his married daughter.

iv) **Supplemented Lineal Joint Family** is a lineal joint family together with unmarried, divorced or widowed relatives, who do not belong to either of the lineally linked nuclear families.

v) **Lineal Collateral Joint Family** consists of three or more couples linked lineally and collaterally. For example, a family consisting of the parents and their two or more married sons together with unmarried children of the couples.

vi) **Supplemented Lineal – Collateral Joint Family** consists of the members of a lineal collateral joint family plus unmarried, widowed, separated relatives who belong to none of the nuclear families (lineally and collaterally linked), for example, the father's widowed sister or brother or an unmarried nephew of the father.

This discussion should have given you a broad picture of the existing family structure in India. In this Unit, we shall discuss the changing family structure. Before we introduce ourselves to this discussion, let us know the social factors that affect the family structure. In the following section, we shall discuss these factors. Before that you must complete this 'check your progress' exercise.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Which one of the following is not a characteristic of the family?

   a) At least two adult persons of opposite sex reside together.

   b) These persons engage in some kind of division of labour.

   c) They engage in many types of economic and social exchanges.

   d) None of the above.

2) In a polyandrous family there…………..

   a) is a wife with more than one husband at the same time.

   b) is a husband with more than one wife at the same time.

   c) is one husband and one wife at the same time.

   d) is a married couple without children.

3) An extended family can be ……………

a) only vertically extended.

b) only horizontally extended.

c) both vertically and horizontally extended

d) none of the above.

7.3 SOCIAL PROCESSES AFFECTING FAMILY STRUCTURE

A host of inter-related factors, viz., economic, educational, legal and demographic like population growth, migration and urbanisation, etc., have been affecting the structure of the family in India. We shall take care of these factors while discussing the changes, in the following sections. Here, let us discuss the broad processes of industrialisation, urbanisation and modernisation as factors affecting the family structure.

Nuclearisation of Joint Family
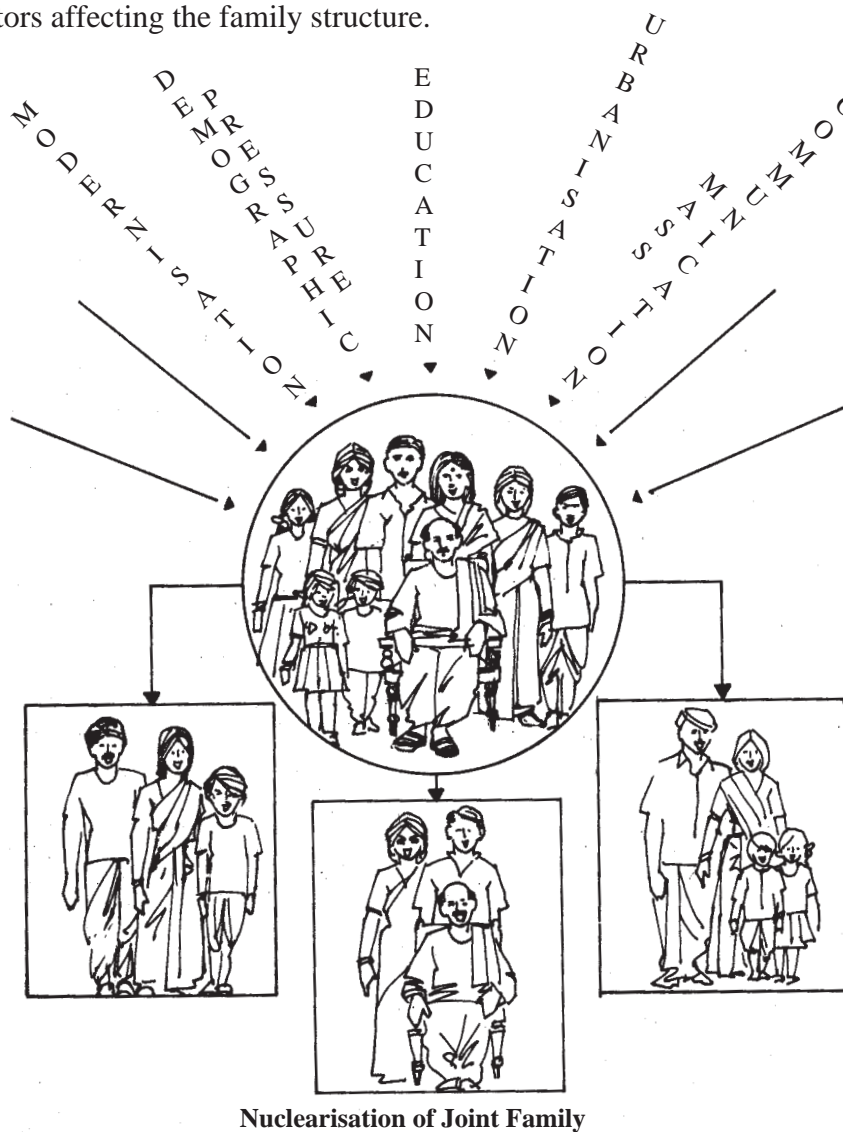
7.3.1 Industrialisation

There are innumerable published accounts demonstrating that changes have taken place in the structure of the family due to exposures to the forces of industrialisation. Nuclearisation of the family is considered as the outcome of its impact. Such an interpretation presupposes existence of non-nuclear family

structure in such societies. Empirical evidence sometimes does not support this position. Further, industrial establishments have their own requirements of human groups for their efficient functioning. As a result, people are migrating to industrial areas, and various kinds of family units have been formed adding extra-ordinary variety to the overall situation. It is, nevertheless, important to note down in this context that despite definite visible trends in the changing structure of the family due to industrialisation, it is not yet possible to establish any one-to-one relationship.

7.3.2 Urbanisation

In most of the discussions on impact of urbanisation on the family structure, one specific observation is fairly common: that, due to the influence of urbanisation, the joint family structure is under severe stress, and in many cases it has developed a tendency toward nuclearisation. When there is no disagreement on the authenticity of such a tendency, the traditional ideal joint family was perhaps not the exclusive type before such influence came into existence. Nevertheless, various accounts demonstrate how both nuclear and joint structures have evolved innumerable varieties due to the influence of urbanisation.

7.3.3 Modernisation

Both industrialisation and urbanisation are considered as the major contributing factors toward modernisation. In fact, modernisation as a social-psychological attribute can be in operation independent of industrialisation and urbanisation.

With the passage of time, through exposures to the forces of modernisation, family structure underwent multiple changes almost leading to an endless variety. There are instances too, where family structure has become simpler due to its impact. There are also contrary instances indicating consequent complexity in family structure.

7.3.4 Change in the Family Structure : A Perspective

One of the important features of the family studies in India has been concerned with the question of whether the joint family system is disintegrating, and a new nuclear type of family pattern is emerging. "It seems almost unrealistic", Augustine points out, "that we think of a dichotomy between the joint and nuclear family. This is especially true given the rapidity of social change, which has swept our country." In the context of industrialisation, urbanisation and social change, it is very difficult to think of a dichotomy between the joint and the nuclear family in India. In the present contexts, these typologies are not mutually exclusive. Social change is an inevitable social process, which can be defined as observable transformations in social relationships. This transformation is most evident in the family system. However, because of structures of our traditionality, these transformations are not easily observable (Augustine 1982:2).

Against this backdrop, to understand the dimensions of changes taking place in Indian family system, the concept of transitionality may be used. This concept, according to Augustine, has two dimensions : retrospective and prospective. The retrospective dimension implies the traditional past of our family and social system, while the prospective one denotes the direction in

which change is taking place in our family system. Transitionality is thus an attempt to discern the crux of the emergent forms of family (Augustine 1982:3).

Keeping in mind this perspective, we shall examine the emerging trends of change in the family system in contemporary India. However, at the outset, we are to make it explicit that, within the given space, it would not be possible for us to document the changes individually taking place in the family system of various castes or ethnic groups spread over diversified socio-cultural regions of this country. Hence for your broad understanding, we shall concentrate on three broad areas of our enquiry : change in the traditional extended family, rural family and urban family. Let us begin with change in the traditional extended family. Before that complete this activity.

Activity 1

Try to know the past 40 years' history of your family from some elderly member. It may have undergone significant changes over the years. List down the factors responsible for changes in your family. Write a note on these changes of about 2 pages. If possible, discuss your findings with the Counsellor and the students at your Study Centre. You should find it sociologically interesting.

7.4 CHANGE IN THE JOINT FAMILY SYSTEM

The extended family in India is known as joint family. The ideals of the joint family are highly valued throughout the country, especially among the Hindus. However, studies conducted in several parts of the country show that the joint family system in India is undergoing a process of structural transformation due to the process of modernisation, industrialisation and urbanisation. But the fact remains that the values and attitudes of the Indian society have favoured the joint family tradition for centuries, and these are still favoured. Many scholars have viewed the transformation in the joint family system in terms of the concept of the family cycle.

A nuclear family develops into a joint family after the marriage of a son; that is with the coming in of a daughter in-law. Hence the process of fission and fusion take place in the family system due to various reasons. In most parts of India , where patriarchal families exist, sons are expected to stay together with the parents till the siblings of the family are married. After this they tend to separate. Thus the process of fission takes place, and the joint family is broken into relatively smaller number of units - sometimes into nuclear units. Nicholas, on the basis of his study in rural West Bengal, concludes that if a joint family between a father and his married sons divides, a joint family among brothers rarely survives. The father seems to be the keystone of the joint family structure. Despite the solidarity among the male siblings, after the father's death, many forces tend to break the joint family into separate hearths, even though at times the property may be held in common (Cf. Ishwaran, 1982 : 8).

I.P. Desai, in his famous work, *Some Aspects of Family in Mahuva* (1964), points out that in Gujarat 'a residentially nuclear group is embedded in social, cultural and other non-social environments, which are not the same as those in the societies of the West' . He defines the structure of a family in terms of one's orientation to action. When action is oriented towards the husband, wife and children , the family can be categorised as a nuclear unit; and when the action is oriented towards a wider group, it is defined as a joint family. To

him, through the nuclear family does exist in India, it is, however, not the prevalent pattern. In his sampling, only 7% of the households considered nuclear family as desirable, while around 60% considered jointness as desirable.

Significantly, elements of jointness were found among all religious groups. Their greater degree was available among the business and the agricultural castes. It is important to note that property was an important factor behind the jointness. Kapadia also found that though most families are nuclear, they are actually 'joint' in operation. These families maintain their connections through mutual cooperation and rights and obligations other than those of property. To him, not the common hearth, but mutual ties, obligations and rights, etc., have been the major elements of jointness in the contemporary functionally joint family in India (Kapadia 1959 : 250).

In his study of a village in South India, Ishwaran (1982) found that 43.76% nuclear (elementary) families and 56.24% were extended (joint) families. The villagers attach a wealth of meaning to the term 'jointness' and in their opinion one either belongs to the joint family or depends upon the extended kin. In fact, the isolated independent elementary family does not exist for them, and indeed its actual existence is largely superficial due to heavy reliance upon the extended kin group. The extended family is the ideal family, reinforced by religious, social, economic and other ideological forces. He concludes that even though the nuclear families are on the increase, perhaps because of the greater geographical and social mobility found in a society being modernised, these families cannot live in isolation without active cooperation and contact with the extended kin (Ishwaran 1982 : 20)

There is no denying the fact that the trend of modernisation has been dominant in India. However, the physical separation does not speak for the departure from the spirit of jointness of the family structure. The sense of effective cooperation in need, and obligation to each other, have remained prevalent among the family members in spite of being separated from the erstwhile joint family. Hence, we are required to understand not only the manifestation of nuclearisation of the family structure in India, but also the latent spirit of cooperation and prevalence of common values and sentiments among the family members. The extent of cooperation and the prevalence of common values and sentiments may vary in the rural and urban areas. We shall discuss the patterns of change in the rural and urban family structure, separately, in the following sections.

Check Your Progress 2

i)   Write a note, in about six lines, on the fission in the traditional joint family system in India.

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ii)   How can you define the structure of a family in terms of one's orientation towards action. Answer in about five lines.

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7.5   CHANGE IN THE RURAL FAMILY SYSTEM

Scholars have identified the joint family as typical of rural India. These families are exposed to various forces, viz., land reforms, education, mass media, new technology, new development strategies, urbanisation, industrialisation, modernisation, and so on. These above-mentioned forces are found to exercise tremendous influence on the contemporary family systems in rural India. Let us examine these forces in detail.

7.5.1   Factors Responsible for Change

There are various factors affecting the family structure in rural India. We shall discuss some of these factors here.

i)   **Land Reforms**

Earlier, the members of the joint family normally lived together due to common ancestral property, which was vast in size. Land reforms imposed ceiling restriction on the landholdings. In many cases, the heads of the family resorted to theoretical partition of the family by dividing the land among the sons in order to avoid the law of the land ceiling. During their life-time the sons live under his tutelage, if he was powerful; otherwise, sons gradually began to live separately during their parents life-time. Thus the theoretical partition hastens formal partition, and sows the seeds for separate living (Lakshminarayana, 1982 : 44). Again, in many cases, real partition has taken place in the joint family, immediately after the implementation of the land ceiling laws.

ii)   **Education and Gainful Employment**

Education, industrialisation and urbanisation have opened the scope for gainful employment to the villagers outside the village. Initially, a few members of the joint family move to the city for education. After successful completion of education, most of them join service or opt for other avenues of employment in the urban areas. They get married and start living with their wives and children. Gradually, such separate units become the nuclear families. However, the members of these nuclear units keep on cooperating with the other members of their natal family on most occasions.

iii) **Economic Difficulties in Rural Areas**

The rural development strategies in India, aimed to eradicate poverty and unemployment, enhance a higher standard of life and economic development with social justice to the rural people. However, in reality these have generated

regional imbalances, sharpened class inequality, and have adversely economic and social life of the lower strata of the rural people. In the backward areas, people face enormous hardship to earn a livelihood. Hence, people of these areas are pushed to migrate to the urban areas. This migration has affected the family structure. Initially men alone migrate. Then they bring their family and gradually become residentially separated from their natal home.

iv) **Growing Individuals**

A high sense of individualism is also growing among section of the villagers. Penetration of the mass media (viz., the newspapers, the T.V., the radio), formal education, consumerist culture and market forces have helped individualism grow at a faster rate than ever. The rural people and the members of the rural joint family have started believing more in their individuality. In the past, the size of the family was relatively big. The kinship network was large and obligations were more. It was imperative that relatives were given shelter. Today, every individual strives to improve his/her standard of living and enhance his/her status in the community outside the purview of the family and the kingroup. This is possible if the individual has lesser commitments and fewer obligations (Lakshminarayan 1982 : 46). This situation grows at a faster rate immediately after the marriage of the sons and coming of the daughters-in-law. Many times value conflicts between an educated individualistic daughter-in-law and old mother-in-law lead to the break down in the joint family system.

7.5.2   Impact of the Breakdown of the Joint Family

The transition in the rural family structure has certain significant impacts on the status and role of the family members. One impact is that of the diminishing authority of the patriarch of the joint family. In a joint family, traditionally, authority rests on the eldest male member of the family. Once the family splits into several units, new authority centres emerge there, with the respective eldest male member as the head of each nuclear unit. Authority is also challenged frequently by the educated and the individualistic young generations. Youngmen exposed to modern ideas of freedom and individualism show resentment to the traditional authority (Ibid.).

After the split in a joint family, women, who earlier had no say in the family affairs, also emerge as mistresses of the nuclear households with enormous responsibility. In this process of transition, the oldest woman also tend to lose their authority. Many of young women also challenge the dominating attitudes of the mothers-in-law. Similarly, many of the traditional mothers-in-law also face an uneasy situation due to growing disproportionate individualism among the daughters-in-law.

With the breakdown of the joint family system, the aged, widow, widower and other dependents in the family face severe problems. The joint family system provides security to these people. After the breakdown of this family system, they are left to themselves. In the rural area, the day care centres for the old or the children's home for the orphan are not available. Hence, their position becomes very critical. Many widows, widowers, children, and even old couple become beggars. Many leave for old people centres around pilgrim centres as the last resort of their social security and mental peace.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Describe the impact of land reforms on the joint family system in India. Use five lines to answer.

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2) What has been the impact of the mass media on the joint family?

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7.6 CHANGE IN URBAN FAMILY SYSTEM

Significant numbers of studies have been conducted on the urban family structure in India. T.K. Oommen (1982), after surveying all these studies, points out that most of these studies have been obsessed with a single question; Is the joint family in India breaking down and undergoing a process of nuclearisation due to urbanisation? A group of sociologists postulated this assumption that the joint family system is breaking down and the trend is toward the formation of nuclear units in the urban areas. While another group is of the opinion that joint family ethic and the kinship orientation still exist even after the residential separation.

7.6.1 Family in the Urban Setting

Scholars point out that industrial urbanisation has not brought disintegration in the joint family structure. Milton Singer (1968) studies the structure of the joint family among the Industrialists of Madras City. He finds that joint family system has not been a blockade for entrepreneurship development. Rather, it has facilitated and adapted to industrialisation. Orensten, in his study on the *Recent History of Extended Family in India* analyses the census data from 1811 to 1951. He finds that joint and large families in India are not disappearing by the processes of industrialisation and urbanisation. However, the prevalence of the joint family structure has not been of uniform one across society. Ramakrishna Mukherjee finds that (a) the joint family is over-represented in the trade and commerce sector of national economy and in the high and middle grade occupations; (b) nuclear family is over-represented in the rural rather than in the urban areas. Based on his study on the family structure in West Bengal, he concludes that the central tendency in the Indian society is to pursue the joint family organisation (cf. Oommen 1982: 60). Joint family sentiments

widely prevail over nuclearisation of family units in spite of residential separation, etc.

7.6.2 Direction of Change

T.K. Oommen is of the opinion that so far urban family has been viewed from within as a little society. To him, for a proper understanding, the urban family should be placed in a broad social context. For this purpose, the urban families are to be distinguished through the mode of earning a livelihood and sources of income, structure of authority, urban social milieu and social ecology and the emerging value patterns. He points out that the type of family postulated in the Indian Constitution is an egalitarian, conjugal and nuclear family. Besides the Constitutionality, the socio-ecological factors, like the settlement patterns, native cultural environments of the urban migrants, and associations to various occupational, political, ideological, cultural-recreational, economic groups influence and reorient the style and pattern of the urban familial life. He mentions that urban centres have been the melting pots of traditional and modern values. Individualism is growing at a significant speed in the urban areas. It admits freedom of individuals in the decision-making process in the family, choice of mates, acquisition and management of personal property, establishment of separate households after marriage, etc. Individualism is, however, against the spirit of the joint family and questions the established authority of the elder male. There may be contradictory emphasis on the value hierarchies and individualism. This is also likely to influence the urban family life. However, the influence of the above-mentioned factors may be of a diverse nature, based on the typology (metropolis, city, town, etc.) of the urban areas and the extent of industrialisation as well. Along with these, the traditional cultural patterns of the family also continue. To him, there are three broad categories of urban families on the basis of their income. These families have distinct socio-cultural and ecological milieu, patterns of familial authority and value. Forces of urbanisation have affected these families diversely. Let us examine these families.

i)   **Families of Proprietary Class**. Their basic resource is the family of capital. The elder males in the family have substantial authority, as they own and control property. These are mostly the joint-households. Socially, they are the local people or the old migrants from the same region and same cultural milieu. In these families, traditional hierarchies are accepted and individualism is incipient.

ii) **Families of the Entrepreneurial-cum-Professional Category**. The basic resources of these families are capital and expertise/skill and their simultaneous investment for generating income. Small commercial/trade/industrial establishments owned and managed by the family, practitioners of professions, etc., belong to this category. The adult males have less authority. Though these families are joint in nature, there is a tendency of breaking up as adult sons marry. Socially, they are mostly the local and the old migrants. However, new migrants are also there. In these households, hierarchy and traditional authority is questioned and individualism is visible.

iii) **Families of Service Category**. These families generate income exclusively through selling their expertise skill or labour power in the service sector. This category is again divided into three sub-categories.

a) **Families in the service sector**. The major source of their income is professional/managerial or administrative expertise. In these families, the domination of the male and the old members are not sustained. Neolocal nuclear households are the dominant patterns. Socially, they are mostly the new migrants from diversified socio-cultural regions. In these families, hierarchy erodes and individualism is strong.

b) **Families in the service sector**. The main source of their income is administrative skill and semi-professional expertise. There are decentralisation of authority because of women's contribution in the family income, retirement from work, dependency on sons or daughters, etc. These are neolocal households with dependent kins. Socially, they are a mixture of locals, old and new migrants and come substantially from various regions. Traditional authority and hierarchy are questioned, and individualism slowly emerges there.

c) **The labour families in the service sector**. The only source of their income is the labour power. These are essentially the nuclear households. However, due to poverty, they share housing with kins. There have been the sharing and decentralisation of authority among the family members, based on the extent of their economic contribution. They are a mixture of locals, old and new migrants from same cultural regions. In these families, hierarchy breaks down with the growth of individualism.

An analysis of the changes in the above-mentioned families shows that the forces of change have diversely affected these families. The old migrants and the local people, who earn absolutely from their household investment, have accepted the traditional authority. Individualism has not penetrated there. The tendency toward nuclearisation is more among the new migrants and among the families in the servicing sector. Individualism has also grown because of diverse socio-economic conditions. T.K. Oommen, however, points out the possibility of overlapping between these types of urban families.

7.6.3 Some Emerging Trends

In the context of rapid technological transformation, economic development and social change, the pattern of family living has been diverse in urban India. Today, life has been much more complex both in the rural and in the urban areas than what it was few decades ago. In the urban areas, even in the rural areas as well, many couples are in gainful employment. These working couples are to depend on others for child care, etc., facilities. With the structural break down of the joint family, working couple face a lot of problem. For employment, many rural males come out of the village, leaving behind their wives and children in their natal homes. The rural migrants are not always welcome to the educated westernised urban family for a longer stay. Their stay many times creates tension among the family members. In the lower strata of the urban society, however, the rural migrants are largely accommodated. Many times, they become the members of these families also. The 1991 Census has revealed an important trend of the changing family pattern in India. Data suggested that though nuclearisation of the family has been the dominant phenomenon the extent of joint living is also increasing, especially in the urban areas. Experts point out that the increase in the joint living is mostly because of the migration

of the rural people to the urban areas, and their sharing of common shelter and hearth with other migrants from the same region.

In the process of structural transformation, the old structure of authority and value have been challenged. The growing individualism questions the legitimacy of the age old hierarchic authority. The old value system also changes significantly. However this system of transformation has minimised the importance of mutual respect, love and affection among the family members belonging to various generations. Penetration of consumerist culture has aggravated the situation further. In a situation of generation gap, many of the aged feel frustrated, dejected and neglected in society. Since the emotional bondage has been weakened; many young members feel a sense of identity crisis in the family. The lack of emotional support in the family often leads the youth to the path of alcoholism and drug addiction. The aspect of joint family sentiments, which has been so emphasised by the sociologists, has not been always operational and effective in the changing context of the society.

Check Your Progress 4

Tick Mark the correct answers

i)   According to Milton Singer, the joint family system

    a)   has not been a blockade for entrepreneurship development.

    b)   Has been a blockade for entrepreneurship development.

    c)   Is breaking down among the business community.

    d)   Is the dominant pattern among the servicing poor.

ii) According to Ramakrishna Mukherjee the nuclear family is over represented in the ………

    a)   rural areas.

    b)   urban areas

    c)   both of these areas

    d)   none of these areas.

iii) T.K. Oommen distinguishes urban families through

    a)   mode of earning and changing value pattern.

    b)   structure of authority

    c)   urban social milieu and social ecology.

    d)   all of the above.

7.7   LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we have defined and discussed various types of family. We have also discussed various factors, viz., urbanisation, industrialisation and modernisation affecting family structure in India. Changes in the traditional joint family system are also explained. Families of the urban and rural India are affected diversely by the forces of development and change. We have discussed changes in the rural and urban families separately. Among the rural families, we discussed the factors responsible for the change, and the impact

of the breakdown of the joint family are also discussed. Lastly, the change in the urban family structure, the direction of its change and some emerging trends are also discussed.

7.8 KEY WORDS

Family Cycle	:	It denotes that the elements of family life take shape in a certain direction. It relates essentially to the process of fission in the residential and compositional aspects of the family.
Neolocal Residence	:	The custom for a married couple to reside apart from either spouse's parent or other relatives.
Patriarchal Family	:	A family in which the eldest male is dominant.
Patrilocal	:	The custom for a married couple to reside in the household or community of the husband's parents.
Polyandry	:	A form of marriage in which a wife has more than one husband at the same time.
Polygamy	:	Marriage involving more than one woman at the same time.
Polygyny	:	A form of polygamy in which a husband has more than one wife at the same time.

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7.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) d)

2) a)

3) d)

Check Your Progress 2

i)   In traditional patriarchal–patrilocal families in India, sons are expected to stay with the parents till the marriages of the siblings are over. The sons tend to separate after this. Hence, the process of fission takes place, and the joint family breaks down into relatively smaller units-sometimes into nuclear households.

ii) According to I.P.Desai, when action is oriented towards husband, wife and children, the family can be categorised as a nuclear unit; and when the action is oriented towards wider group it is defined as joint family.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Land reforms put ceiling restriction on landholdings. In many cases, the heads of respective family made theoretical partition of the family to avoid the land ceiling. However, the sons gradually began to live separately hastening the formal partition.

2) Penetration of the mass media helped individualism grow at a faster rate in the rural areas. The rural people started believing more in their individuality. Today, the individual strives to improve his/her standard of living. It is possible if the individual has lesser commitments and fewer obligations.

Check Your Progress 4

i) a)

ii) a)

iii) d)

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UNIT 8   UNEMPLOYMENT

Structure

8.0   OBJECTIVES

This unit deals with the problems of unemployment in India. After reading this unit you should be able to:

- examine the problems in creating employment;

- discuss and define unemployment;

- analyse the nature and extent of unemployment among the educated and its social consequences;

- explain the schemes introduced for tacking unemployment problems in India; and

- narrate the constitutional provisions of right to work and its implications.

8.1   INTRODUCTION

This is the first unit of this Block. In this unit we shall be discussing the various aspects of unemployment problems in India. This unit begins with a discussion on the socio-economic context of the problem of unemployment, problems of identifying unemployment and present an estimate of this problem in India. The various types of unemployment viz. the seasonal, disguised etc. are discussed here. The problems of educated unemployment are discussed in great

length in this unit. Various government policies related to unemployment are also discussed in this unit. Lastly we discussed the concept of right to work and its implications. Now let us begin with the socio-economic context of this problem in India.

8.2 UNEMPLOYMENT: SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXTS AND DIMENSIONS

The problem of finding employment for all able-bodied persons willing to work in common to all countries, developed as well as developing. Every country wants to provide employment to all its citizens. However, this is not always possible. Even developed countries like England and the USA face problems of unemployment. There are a large number of people who want to work but are unable to get jobs. In developing countries the problem is more serious because the number of unemployed are usually very large. Hence it may not be possible for the state to provide employment for these people in a short period of time. Moreover, a developing nation, being poorer than the developed countries, may not be in a position to give employment to a large number of people within the given economic infrastructure.

8.2.1 The Socio-economic Context

In India unemployment is a major problem. There are already a large number of unemployed people in the country. At the same time, because of the high rate of population growth, there are more and more people seeking employment. Therefore we find all major programmes to provide for employment for all fall short of expectations.

Employment basically means work. If more people work there will be grater production of goods and services in society. Similarly, in a society where there are a large section of people ready to work, but only few people get the opportunity to work, there will be less production. Greater production of goods and services ensures that these are available to a larger number of people. Hence more and more people are able to improve their standard of living. Employment, therfore should not be viewed merely as a means of livelihood for people. It also means that if more people are employed in a country, the more prosperous it is: because it is able to produce more and provide more goods and services to the people as a whole.

Therefore we can argue that the best way for a country to develop is to provide employment for all. Only then can there be economic advancement. This is of course true but it is easier said than done. Developing countries face several constraints and the most important is the lack of resources. For example, a person can work either in agriculture or in industry. For work in agriculture you require land. But this is not enough. You also require implements (plough, bullocks, tractor etc.). Therefore, for work on land you require all these investments, which we call capital. Similarly for work in industry factories have to be set up. Most developing countries do not have the resources to invest in creating employment in this manner. They have either to get loans or aid from developed countries or they have to plan their resources in such a way that the maximum number of people get the benefits with minimum investment. We shall discuss these problems in a later section in this unit.

Unemployment has several dimensions. The most evident is that a prison who does not have work has no income and he is unable to support himself/herself and his/her family. Moreover, as we have discussed earlier, unemployment means that the country is unable to use the labour power of a large number of people and this results in low production. These are mainly economic consequences of unemployment. There are also serious social consequences of unemployment which makes it not only an economic problem but a social problem. For a person unemployment means that he is unable to meet his basic needs. He has to depend on others for these. This makes him insecure or frustrated. Such people can take resort to anti-social activities in order to get some income. We will discuss these issues in another section of this unit. However, before we proceed any further let us first try to understand what do we mean by unemployment. We will see that there are various types of unemployment and it is not easy to identify them.

8.2.2 Problems of Identifying Unemployment

For many of us the notion of unemployment is one of those who do not have a job or, are paid no salary. This is partly correct but not wholly. Such a notion would apply largely to the educated people who are not able to find work or to those in urban areas who come to seek employment. We will leave out a large section of people, in fact the majority, who are engaged in agriculture and who may not be paid wages. For example, a person cultivating a small piece of land which he owns is also employed, through he is not paid a wage. He is more known as self-employed in agriculture. Similarly there are vast number of people in rural and urban area who do not get wages for the work they do. These are farmers, artisans, petty shop owners, small and big industrialists, taxi drivers, mechanics etc. These people are also regarded as being employed. All these people as well as those drawing salaries are regarded as being "gainfully employed" because they get some material rewards (in cash or kind) for the work they do. Those who are not gainfully employed are unemployed.

The next problem is of identifying the unemployed. This is not an easy task. Normally in our country we regard those people who are between the ages 15 and 58 as being "economically active". In other words these people have the potential of being gainfully employed. Therefore those who are not gainfully employed in this age group are unemployed. This supposition will again not be fully correct. There could be a large number of people in this age group who do not wish to seek employment. They could be students or people who can depend on other people's earnings and they do not wish to be employed. Till recently women were considered in this category since a large section of women (married women mainly) do household work. However, in recent years, this has been considered as economic activities. The Census of 1991 and 2001 have taken this into consideration.

8.2.3 Estimating Unemployment

Assessing the extent of unemployment is a very important, but difficult task. The government needs this information so that it can formulate the plans to ensure that maximum people find some employment. It is also necessary to assess where employment is needed. For this we have to assess the situation in urban and in rural areas, among various sections of the population, namely,

male, female, agricultural workers, industrial workers, educated people and illiterates etc.

The number of unemployed persons has increased tremendously in India since Independence. In 1983 the number of unemployed in Indian was 21.76 million. In 1999-2000 there absolute number has increased to 26.58 million. However, the rate of unemployment had decreased over the year from 8.30% to7.32% (Planning Commission of India 2002). However a very recent estimate shows that the unemployment rate in India is to the extent of 9%. The past and present scenario of employment and unemployment and their state wise variations are shown in table no. 1 & 2

<div align="center">

Table 1 : Past and Present Macro-scenario on Employment and Unemployment (CDS basis)

</div>

<div align="right">

(person years)

</div>

	(Million)			Growth per annum (%)	
	1983	**193-94**	**1999-2000**	**1983 to 1993-94**	**1993-94 to 1999-2000**
All India					
Population	718.20	894.01	1003.97	2.00	1.95
Labour Force	261.33	335.97	363.33	2.43	1.31
Workforce	239.57	315.84	336.75	2.70	1.07
Unemployment rate (%)	(8.30)	(5.99)	(7.32)		
No. of Unemployed	21.76	20.13	26.58	-0.08	4.74
Rural					
Population	546.61	658.83	727.50	1.79	1.67
Labour Force	204.18	255.38	270.39	2.15	0.96
Work Force	187.92	241.04	250.89	2.40	0.67
Unemployment rate (%)	(7.96)	(5.61)	(7.21)		
No. of Unemployed	16.26	14.34	19.50	-1.19	5.26
Urban					
Population	171.59	234.98	276.47	3.04	2.74
Labour Force	57.15	80.60	92.95	3.33	2.40
Work Force	51.64	74.80	85.84	3.59	2.32
Unemployment rate (%)	(9.64)	(7.19)	(7.65)		
No. of Unemployed	5.51	5.80	7.11	0.49	3.45

Source : Planning Commission 2002.

Table 2 : Employment Scenario in States

(CDS Basis)

Sl. No.	Selected States	Employment ('000) 1999-00	Employment growth) 1993-94 to 1999-00 (% p.a)	Unemployment rate		Employment elasticity 1993-94 to 1999-00	GDP growth (% per annum) 1993-94 to 1999-00
				1999-00 (%)	1993-94 (%)		
1.	Andra Pradesh	30614	0.35	8.03	6.69	0.067	5.2
2	Assam	7647	1.99	8.03	8.03	0.737	2.7
3	Bihar	30355	1.59	7.32	6.34	0.353	4.5
4	Gujarat	18545	2.31	4.55	5.70	0.316	7.3
5	Haryana	5982	2.43	4.77	6.51	0.420	5.8
6	Himachal Pradesh	2371	0.37	2.96	1.80	0.052	7.1
7	Karnataka	20333	1.43	4.57	4.94	0.188	7.6
8	Kerala	8902	0.07	20.97	15.51	0.013	5.5
9	Madhya Pradesh	28725	1.28	4.45	3.56	0.272	4.7
10	Maharashtra	34979	1.25	7.16	5.09	0.216	5.8
11	Orissa	11928	1.05	7.34	7.30	0.262	4.0
12	Punjab	8013	1.96	4.03	3.10	0.426	4.6
13	Rajasthan	19930	0.73	3.13	1.31	0.104	7.0
14	Tamil Nadu	23143	0.37	11.78	11.41	0.052	7.1
15	Uttar Pradesh	49387	1.02	4.08	3.45	0.185	5.5
16	West Bengal	22656	0.41	14.99	10.06	0.056	7.3
All India		**336736**	**1.07**	**7.32**	**5.99**	**0.160**	**6.7**

Source : Planning Commission 2002.

Check Your Progress 1

i)   Why is higher level of employment necessary for the country? Answer in about six lines

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....

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....

....

....

ii)   Tick whether the given statements are true or false:

i)   Employment means having a permanent job.   True/False

ii)   Those performing gainful economic activities are employed.
                                                      True/False

iii) Unemployment is much lower in urban areas as compared
     to rural areas.   True/False

9

8.3 TYPES OF UNEMPLOYMENT

We have seen so far that though employment is a serious problem it is not always easy to identify. The figures on unemployment quoted in the previous section show what is actually known as visible unemployment. There are other types of unemployment which are not very visible. A person can be employed but he may be actually unemployed. How is this possible? Let us try and find out. Hence we shall be discussing the typology of unemployment to understand this phenomenon.

8.3.1 Seasonal Unemployment

Normally when we talk of employed people we mean those who have work throughout the year. But this may not possible for all. In agriculture, work is seasonal even though agricultural activities are performed throughout the year. During the peak agricultural seasons (when the crop is ready for harvesting) more people are required for work. Similarly in the sowing, weeding and transplantation period more labour is required. Employment therefore increases at this time. In fact we will find that there is hardly any unemployment in rural areas during these peak agricultural seasons. However, once these seasons are over the agricultural workers, especially those who do not own land or whose land is not sufficient to meet their basic requirement (these are landless labourers and marginal farmers respectively), remain unemployed. This type of unemployment is known as seasonal unemployment. This also means that the persons who get seasonal employment are unemployed for the rest of the year. If these workers move away from the villages in search of employment elsewhere then there will not be sufficient people to work during the season and this will lower productivity. Hence it is necessary to find work during the season and this will lower productivity. Seasonal employment is most common in agriculture but it can be found in industries as well. There are some industries, such as tea, sugar, jute etc., which are agro-based and they too employ people during the peak seasons of their operation. Seasonal employment results in large scale migration of the agricultural labourers from agriculturally backward regions to that of the developed regions.

8.3.2 Disguised Unemployment

There are also instances where we find too many people working when so many are not required. In agriculture we may find that all members of the family work. It is possible that 3-4 people can do a given work in the farm, but we find that the whole family of say 10 people doing the job. This may be because the excess people are not able to find employment elsewhere, so rather than remain unemployed they prefer to do the work along with others. This is known as disguised unemployment. This occurs when more than the necessary number of people are employed for the specified work. Disguised unemployment is found in agriculture because of the lack of employment opportunities elsewhere. Similarly disguised unemployment can be found in industry and offices as well. It is not uncommon to find a lot of staff in some offices who have very little or no work to do. In some factories also we find that many more people than required are enployed. We may think that given the present situation of high unemployment, there is nothing wrong if more people are employed. However, just as employing too few people for the job
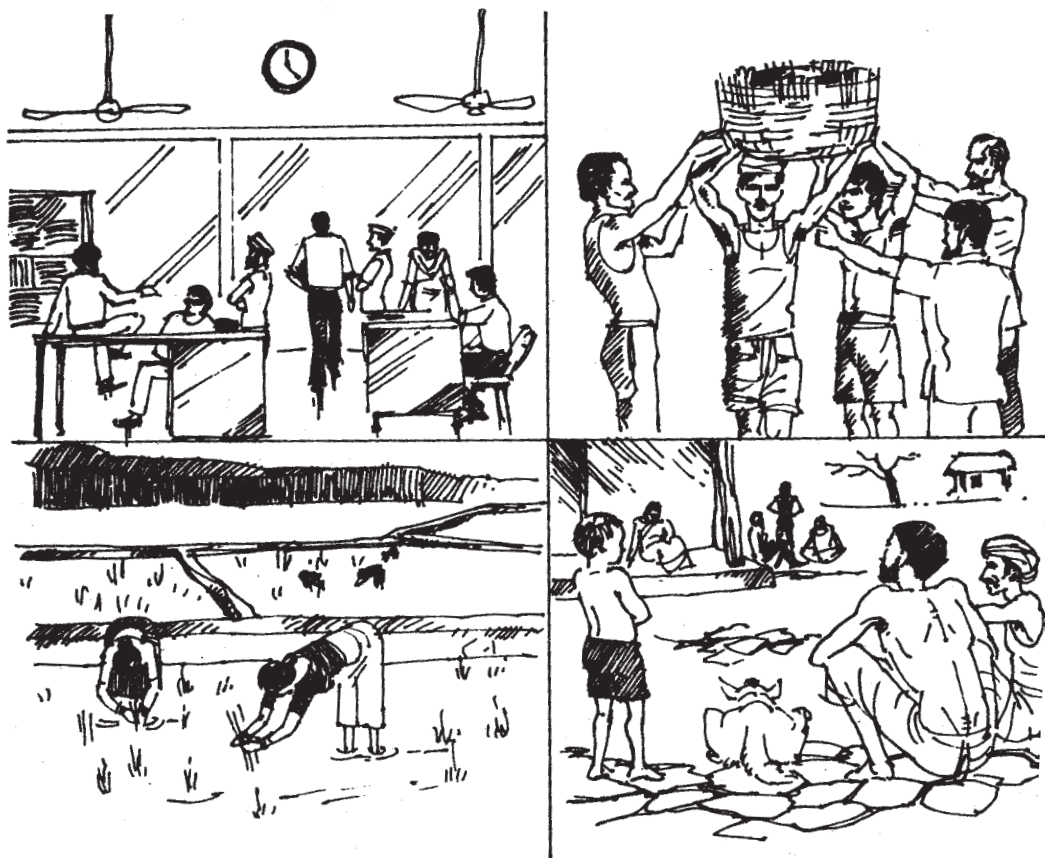
Types of Unemployment

reduces productivity, employing too many also has the same effect. Understaffed government offices may be inefficient as the staff cannot cope up with the given work load. Similarly overstaffed offices can also be inefficient because there may be overlap of work because the same work is done by many people.

In agriculture disguised unemployment means that the excess workers are being paid or they are taking a share of the agricultural products without actually helping to increase production. With the result the surplus viz. the amount remaining after those involved in actual production take their share, is reduced. For example, 10 people are required to work on a piece of land which will yield, say around 100 quintals of grain. The requirements of these 10 will be met by 50 quintals of grain. Now if instead of 10 we have 15 people working on the same land and they produce around 100 quintals of grain the requirements of the 15 will be 50% more than that of 10 i.e. 75 quintals. Hence only 25 quintals will be surplus whereas in the earlier situation 50 quintals was surplus.

In industry if more people than necessary are employed then the wage bill will increase and the profits of the unit will be lower. This will also mean that the industrial unit will have less resources to reinvest in improving production (e.g. new machinery, better raw materials etc.). Therefore disguised unemployment or surplus employment may look attractive in the short-run as a means of providing more employment, but in the long run it can become a cause for concern.

We can thus see that the problem of unemployment has several dimensions. First of all we have to identify who the unemployed are. This as we have seen occurs at two levels. Those who do not have gainful employment and who are

seeking it. The last is the active factor for determining the unemployed as there may be people who are not gainfully employed but they may not be seeking employment for various reasons. Disguised unemployment and seasonal employment are two such instances. Let us now turn our attention to another problem of unemployment which affects most of us, namely, educated unemployment.

Check Your Progress 2

i)   Seasonal employment is:

    a)   found only in agriculture

    b)   found only in industry

    c)   most common in agriculture but it can be found in the industries as well.

ii)   We find disguised employment where:

    a)   less people are working when many are required

    b)   too many people are working when so many are not required

    c)   people are employed as per the requirements.

8.4   EDUCATED UNEMPLOYED

The problem of educated unemployed is serious in our country. There are a large number of young educated people who are unable to find employment or even if some of them do they are engaged in work which require less qualifications. This means that these people accept work which does not give them the income which persons with similar qualifications get elsewhere. For example a person holding a Ph.D degree works as a lower division clerk in an office, or a highly trained engineer working as a sales assistant in a shop. We find though the overall picture of employment in India has shown an improvement, the situation among the educated unemployed has remained the same.

8.4.1   Extent of Unemployment

There has been enormous increase in the rate of unemployment among the educated in India. The number of graduate unemployed increased from 9 lakhs in 1965 to 5.6 million in 1977 with an annual growth rate of 21%. During 1980-88 there has been an annual growth rate of 23% of the graduate unemployed. The number is much larger for matriculate, higher secondary, and undergraduates. However, one has to take into account that many of these people may not be looking for employment as they would be engaged in higher studies. It seems strange that in a country like India where only a fraction of its population has had college education there should be difficulty in finding employment for these people. Let us try and find out the reasons.

The recent data available form the 939 employment exchanges in the country indicate that as on September 2002, the number of job seekers registered with the employment exchange (all of whom are not necessarily unemployed) was to the order 4.16 crore out of which, approximately 70% are educated (10th standard and above). The number of women job seekers was of the order of 1.08 crores (26% of the total job seekers). The maximum number of job seekers waiting for employment were in West Bengal (63.6 lakh), while minimum were

in the union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli (0.06 lakh) and in the state of Arunachal Pradesh (0.2 lakh). The placement was maximum in Gujarat. (Indiabudget.nic.in).

Growth in education is linked with economic development. As a country develops it requires larger number of educated people to meet its requirements for running the administration, for work in industry at different levels. As the services sector (also known as the tertiary sector) expands, and the requirement for educated, trained personal also increases. Graduates are required for work in offices of these various organisations. Moreover the teaching profession expands as there is a greater number of schools and colleges. Education therefore contributes to production as it supplies the requisite manpower. However, problems arise mainly because of the slowing down of economic growth that results in the surplus supply of the trained/educated manpower. This results in a situation where there is educational development but the growth in the economy does not keep pace with it. This results in unemployment among the educated.

There is also lacunae with the education system in contemporary India. Our education system is not producing the required manpower as per the need of our society. Thus it is producing a large number of educated manpower whose knowledge and skill are not fully used at the present juncture of the transition of the society. They have remained as surplus educated manpower, unemployable and unemployed. The Kothari Commission (1964-66) pointed that there is a wide gap between the contemporary education system and practical need of the nation at present.

8.4.2 Consequences of Educated Unemployment

The social consequences of the educated unemployed are quite serious. We will find that people with superior qualifications are doing jobs which could be done by less qualified people. This results in under-utilisation of one's capacity. We can find graduate engineers doing jobs which could be performed by diploma holders. Similarly there may be clerks and typists with post-graduate qualifications where perhaps matriculates could do the work. This is because people with lesser qualifications (matriculates) are unable to find jobs so they go for higher education with the hope that they will be in a better position to qualify for the same jobs. We therefore find that there are over qualified job seekers. This ultimately leads to the devaluation of education. An eminent educationist, A.R.Kamat, sums up the situation: "Education here is not so much an investment in human capital as a quest for a credential which will yield preference to its holder over those who do not possesses it".

Apart form this, the educated unemployed become more frustrated than the uneducated unemployed because their aspirations are higher. An uneducated unemployed person may be willing to do any type of manual work but a graduate would not be willing to do this even if such work is freely available. In fact doing a job which is not suitable for ones qualification is not only frustrating but it is also a waste of national resources. An engineer working as a clerk because he is unable to find a job in his profession will make him frustrated. In addition it also means that the investment made in making him an engineer has been wasted. Similarly a graduate working as a coolie or as a taxi-driver does so in most cases not because he prefers the work but because he has no other option. This makes him feel frustrated. It also means that the resources

spent on his education has been wasted because one does not need such high qualifications for these jobs.

As mentioned earlier, unemployment makes the person feel insecure. He may out of frustration take to anti-social activities. Many thieves, pickpockets, smugglers, drug traffickers etc. take up these activities because they are unable to find gainful employment. What is worse is that once they are in these professions it is very difficult for them to take up respectable work later even if it is available. They have been branded as anti-socials and no employer would like to offer them jobs.

Social Consequences of Unemployment

Moreover the existence of a large number of unemployed in any country can challenge the stability of the government. Not all the unemployed take to crime as an alternative means of livelihood. In fact the vast majority of them search for legitimate work. If they do not get work they become frustrated. Their families too are unhappy. This means that the dissatisfaction of not having work is not confined to only the unemployed but to many more people. If there is large-scale unemployment, this may lead to the accumulation of discontent against the government. This discontent usually manifests in the form of uninstitutionalised action and mass mobilisation. This is why we find in our country that any government or political party which wants to be in the government makes eradication of unemployment as one of the main planks of its programmes. At the same time the government tries to start schemes which are employment oriented and also provides some aid to the unemployed in order to contain the discontent of the people.

The increase in educated unemployed is therefore a threat to the harmonious working of the economic system and to the political system. The social impact of educated unemployed results in deviant behaviour. As mentioned earlier,

educated people have higher ambitions for work and rightly so. If these are not fulfilled they may take to drugs, crime etc. The drug problem among the youth in our country is largely due to the bleak employment prospects. The unemployed youth are frustrated and they take recourse to drugs or alcohol to overcome their frustrations. Even the students when they find that jobs will not be available for them when they pass out try to overcome their depression through narcotics and drinks.

The frustrations of unemployed youth can also lead to terrorism. The highly educated unemployed have anger against society for their state of affairs. They feel that if this system cannot meet their aspirations for getting proper jobs it should be destroyed. This leads them to take to organised violence against the state. Terrorism in Assam and in many other parts of the country is largely a result of the large number of educated unemployed youth in these states, among other factors. Though Punjab is the most developed state and Assam one of the more economically backward states both have the common problem of a large number of educated unemployed youth. Punjab is agriculturally the most developed. This has led to spread higher education among its youth. However its urban-industrial sector and the educated are unable to find suitable jobs.

Therefore the need to provide proper jobs to the educated is not just an economic problem. It is also a social problem which perhaps is more dangerous than the economic dimension of waste of resources.

Check Your Progress 3

i) Explain in five sentences how growth in education is necessary for economic development. Answer in about six lines.

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ii) Show how unemployment is linked with anti-social activities. Answer in about six lines.

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8.5 GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON UNEMPLOYMENT

We have seen how unemployment is a severe restraint in our economy and society. In order to overcome some of the problems created by unemployment,

the government has tried to formulate some programmes. These are directed towards creating avenues for gainful employment for the unemployed.

There are a number of programmes for counteracting unemployment. It is neither possible nor realistic to have only one scheme because, as we have seen, there are different types of unemployment. We have educated unemployment, unemployed among women, people in rural areas who are unable to find secured work and so on. The features of each of these sectors are different and hence each requires a separate scheme. Let us examine some of these schemes.

8.5.1   Schemes for Educated Unemployed

There are mainly two approaches to help the educated unemployed. Some states such as West Bengal, Kerala etc. provide stipends for unemployed for a limited period. In most cases the minimum qualification is matriculation. The amount varies from Rs.100 to Rs.200 per month for three years. It is expected that persons availing of this scheme will be able to find employment within this period.

The other scheme is aimed at promoting self-employment among unemployed graduates. This is known as the Graduate Employment Programme. Here the government provides loans to graduates to start small industries or business with the help of the District Industries Centre. Preference is given to groups of graduates (3-5) who come together with a viable scheme. One can find a large number of them in the transport sector. The state government usually gives them priority in allotting route permits and license to set up industries. Unemployed engineers, both graduates and diploma holders, are encouraged to set up small industries or take up civil contract work after they form cooperatives. They are able to get loans at low rates of interest and they are given priority in getting government contracts. Various training centers have also been open by the government to promote the entrepreneurship and self-employment among the youth.

8.5.2   Schemes for Rural Areas

The educated are not the only ones who face the problem of unemployment in the urban areas. There are large numbers of people in the rural areas who do not have a high level of education and who are unemployed. There are two main schemes for tackling this problem. These are the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY). Under these schemes the government creates public works programmes such as road building, construction, land reclamation, irrigation work etc. which provide employment to the rural poor. The advantages of such schemes are that firstly they are located in or near the villages of the unemployed so that they do not have to migrate out of their villages to seek work. Secondly they help overcome the problem of disguised unemployment and seasonal unemployment. The excess workers in agriculture can be drawn out and given work in these schemes.

There is another scheme for rural youth known as Training of Rural Youth for Self-employment (TRYSEM). This operates in selected development blocks. It imparts skills to rural youth so that they can start employment generating activities. These include weaving, training as mechanics, fitters etc.

8.5.3 Schemes for Women

Apart from the above schemes which cover both males and females, there are schemes which are directed mainly towards women. These schemes attempt to provide self-employment to women through home-based work. The Khadi and Village Industries Corporation (KVIC) provides various schemes for this purpose. These include spinning and weaving, making papads, agarbattis and other consumer products. The raw material is supplied to the women and they make the final products in their homes. The KVIC pays them their labour costs and markets the products. These schemes help increase the family income of the rural poor.

Activity 1

Interview a self-employed youth of your area. Try to find out the problems faced by him or her in starting his/her activities. Also try to find out the reasons for their being opting for self-employment. Prepare a note of around 20 lines and if, possible, exchange it with your co learners in the Study Centre.

8.6 RIGHT TO WORK AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

The growing rate of unemployment in our country is a serious problem which has been the focus of government policy. In order to ensure that government takes this up seriously it has been argued that the right to work should be included as a fundamental right to work for its citizens. The Directive Principles of the Indian Constitution however are the guidelines on which government policies should be formulated. They do not have legal backing for implementation. Hence if the right to work is made a fundamental right then every government will be forced to take measures which ensure that people get work. What exactly is meant by right work? Essentially it means that every adult citizen should have the right to do physical labour for eight hours a day, at the minimum wages. It does not mean that every citizen has a right to government employment. Nor does it mean that a person must be provided employment of his/her choice. In other words the right to work is like an employment guarantee scheme. In order to achieve the right to work it will be necessary to go in for large scale rural employment. This would essentially mean that our investments have to be directed to this sector. It would mean ensuring that artisans, craftsmen and the small farmers get enough inputs in the form of credit and raw materials so that they do not have to leave their work in the villages and join the unskilled unemployed in the cities. This will help reduce urban unemployment. In order to achieve this goal the infrastructure in the rural areas has to be improved. There has to be irrigation facilities so that there is water for land cultivation. The communication network has to be built up, roads have to be constructed and transport improved so that the farmers and the artisans can get a wider market for their product.

Box 1

Constitutional Provisions for Right to Work

The Directive Principles of the Indian Constitution speak of the right to work for Indian citizens. Article 30 reads "The state shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing – (a) that the citizens men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood."

> Article 41 especially speaks of the "Right to Work, to education, and to public assistance in certain cases" It reads": The state shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in case of unemployment.

Other facilities have to be improved as well. People can work hard and produce more only if they are healthy. Therefore health facilities and proper nutrition has to be ensured. Moreover the vast section of illiterates can be made to learn new skills only if their illiteracy is removed. Hence education and schooling facilities must be expanded to cover the entire population.

These are some of the requirements for ensuring that all able bodied people get work. To achieve this it requires not only ore investment in the rural sector but also a change in the orientation of our planning. Perhaps this is why most governments promise to take steps to ensure the right to work but do not translate this into reality.

Check Your Progress 4

i)   Right to work is included in the:

   a)   Directive Principles of the State Policy

   b)   Ninth Schedule of the Constitution

   c)   Article 370 of the Constitution

   d)   Article 356 of the Constitution

ii) Right to work means every citizen has the right to:

   a)   government employment

   b)   non-government employment

   c)   semi-government employment

   d)   do physical labour eight hours a day at the minimum wage.

8.7   LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have covered various aspects relating to unemployment in our country. We have first of all discussed the meaning of unemployment and its dimensions. We have tried to identify the unemployed on this basis. This has led us to define unemployment and then discuss it in all the aspects, namely, visible, invisible, seasonal etc., and its consequences.

We have also discussed at length the problem of educated unemployment and why it is so common in our country. The social consequences of unemployment have also been discussed. We have seen that there are over-qualified job seekers which results in a wastage of resources. Educated unemployment causes frustration and frequently leads to anti-social activities.

We have examined some of the schemes initiated by the government to overcome unemployment. There are separate schemes for the educated, for the unemployed rural poor and for women. Lastly, we have also examined the meanings and implications of right to work in Indian context.

8.8   KEY WORDS

Disguised unemployment	:	a situation in which more than the optimal (required) number of people are employed to undertake certain tasks. Hence the excess people are actually unemployed as they are not doing required work though they may be paid.
Educated unemployed	:	in most cases (unless notified otherwise) a person who has finished schooling (metric) and is on the look out for employment is regarded as educated unemployed. The important period here is that the person must be actively seeking a job, because there will be a large number of cases where matriculates may not be interested in being employed as they will be engaged in higher education.
Seasonal employment	:	a situation in which employment opportunities exist during some parts of the year but in regular annual cycles. In other words employment is available during the some few months every year. This happens mainly in agriculture.

8.9   FURTHER READINGS

Behari, B. 1983, *Unemployment, Technology and Rural Poverty*, Vicaes Publishing House: New Delhi.

8.10   ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

i) Employment basically means work. If more people work there will be greater production of goods and services in society. The greater production of goods and services ensures that these are available to a larger number of people. It will help improve the standard of living. The country will also be more and more prosperous.

ii) a) False

   b) True

   c) False

Check Your Progress 2

i) c)

   b)

Check Your Progress 3

i) Growth in education is linked with economic development. As a country develops it requires larger number of educated man power to meet its requirements for running the administration, work in the industry etc.

The service sector also expands and the requirement for the educated trained man power also increases. Hence education contributes to the growing needs.

ii) Unemployment makes the person feel insecure. He may out of frustration take resort to various anti-social activities. Many thieves, pickpockets, smugglers, drug trafficers etc. take up these activities because they are unable to find gainful employment. They may also be involved in violence.

Check Your Progress 4

i) a)

ii) d)

UNIT 9 LABOUR : INDUSTRIAL

Structure

9.0   OBJECTIVES

This unit discusses the various problems of industrial labour in India. After going through this unit you should be able to:

●   discuss the features of industrial labour and the process of their emergence in India;

●   explain the major problems of the industrial labour working both in the organised and unorganised sectors;

●   describe the various aspects of labour welfare measures; and

●   examine the nature and forms of labour unrest in India.

9.1   INTRODUCTION

In this block, as stated in the objectives we shall be discussing the various problems of industrial labour in India. In Unit 26 of ESO-04 we discussed various dimensions of urban working class in India. Since that unit is directly related to our present discussion you may like to refer that unit as and when it is required.

In this unit we begin with a discussion on the important features of the industrial working class and the processes of their emergence in India. Various important

problems faced by the workers in the organised and unorganised industrial sectors are discussed at great length in this unit. We have also explained the linkages between organised and unorganised sectors. Labour laws are an important aspect of the labour welfare in India. We shall discuss this aspect in reference to industrial labour in general and women industrial labour in particular. We will also discuss the trade union activities and the forms of labour unrests in India.

9.2 INDUSTRY AND INDUSTRIAL LABOUR

Before we discuss the major processes related to the emergence of industrial labour force in India let us begin with the basic features of the industrial labour force in general.

9.2.1 Features of Industrial Labour

The term industry is normally associated with the use of machine technology. In industrial societies production is largely done through machines rather than solely through the physical labour of human beings. Another characteristic of industrial societies is the marketing of human labour. This means that labour can be bought and sold. In real terms we can translate this as, people sell their labour and are paid wages in return. The worker here enjoys two types of freedom. Firstly the freedom to work or not to work and secondly freedom to work where he/she wants to work. In reality of course the worker may not be in a position to exercise either of these freedom. If he/she does not work he/she will starve. Moreover he/she can exercise his/her choice of working where he/she wants to only if jobs are available.

The above types of freedom may be notional but this system can be contested with the earlier feudal and slave societies. The slave had no rights of his own. He had to work for his master irrespective of his will to do so. In the feudal system the tenant worked on the land of his landlord. He could not leave his landlord to work elsewhere even if the terms and conditions were better. It is in this sense that industrial worker enjoys comparatively greater freedom. Apart form this we can see in the present times that industrial employment offers better prospects than employment in agriculture. Workers in large factories or offices get good wages, job security and other facilities. But not all those who leave their homes in their villages to find work in industries are able to find such jobs. In fact an overwhelmingly large section is able to find only low paid jobs where the work is tougher than in the better-paid jobs. Therefore in industry we find two sector. These are the organised and the unorganised sectors. The organised sector consists of workers in the larger factories and establishments where workers are employed following laid-down procedures and their terms and conditions of work are well defined by the laws of the land. These include all services under the government (central and state), local bodies, public sector undertakings and factories using power and employing at least 10 workers or those without power and employing at least 20 workers. The unorganised sector consists of casual and contract workers, workers in small industries and the self-employed ventures. (e.g. petty shopkeepers, skilled artisans such as carpenters, mechanics etc. who are not employed in factories but work on their own, unskilled manual labour such as porters, home based workers etc.). In this sector usually no laid-down procedures or laws are

followed/required to be followed while employing workers up to certain numbers.

9.2.2 Industrial Labour in India

In Unit 26 of ESO-04 we discussed the emergence of urban industrial working class in India. There we mentioned that the urban working class was a product of the eighteenth century Industrial Revolution in Europe. India was one of the colonies of England at that time and she served to quicken the process of Industrial Revolution of her master-country. The imperialist rulers plundered the natural resources of India to maximize their industrial production. The prolonged colonial administration and intensified exploitation reduced a large section of Indian people to miserable impoverished mass. Their rule amounted to destruction of self-sufficient village community, traditional village and college industries, displacement of rural artisans and craftsmen and migration of a section of impoverished rural people to the urban areas.

In India the early phase of industrialisation started in the 1850s which coincided with the emergence of industrial working class. Cotton and jute mills and mines gradually flourished in various parts of the country. Between the two world wars there was a phenomenal increase in the demands of factory products in India. However, the British government made no serious efforts to foster the growth of capital goods industries. It was only after Independence that the Government of India made conscious and deliberate efforts for industrialisation though its successive Five Year Plans. Between 1960 and 1965 the rate of growth of employment in the factories was 6.6% only. However in 1970 the factory employment absorbed only 2% of the labour force. In India since 1951 there has been a marginal shift of workers in favour of the industrial and recently the services sector. The following table will elaborate such a shift.

Table: Sectoral employment growth (CDS basis)

Sector	Employment (in million)				Annual growth (%)			
	1983	1987-88	1993-94	1999-2000	1983 to 1987-88	1987 to 1993-94	1983 to 1993-94	1993-94 to 1999-2000
Agriculture	151.35	163.82	190.72	190.94	1.77	2.57	2.23	0.02
Industry								
Mining & quarrying	1.74	2.40	2.54	2.26	7.35	1.00	3.68	-1.91
Manufacturing	27.69	32.53	35.00	40.79	3.64	1.23	2.26	2.58
Electricity, gas and water supply	0.83	0.94	1.43	1.15	2.87	7.19	5.31	-3.55
Construction	7.17	11.98	11.02	14.95	12.08	-1.38	4.18	5.21
Services								
Trade, hotels and restaurant	18.17	22.53	26.88	37.54	4.89	2.99	3.80	5.72
Transport, storage and communication	6.99	8.05	9.88	13.65	3.21	3.46	3.35	5.53

Financial, insurance, real estate and business services	2.10	2.59	3.37	4.62	4.72	4.50	4.60	5.40
Community, social and personal services	23.52	27.55	34.98	30.84	3.57	4.06	3.85	-2.08
All sectors	**239.57**	**272.39**	**315.84**	**336.75**	**2.89**	**2.50**	**2.67**	**1.07**

Source : NSSO-Different rounds.

Website : indiabudget.nic.in

Activity 1

Try to interview 10 to 12 industrial or agricultural or plantation labourers. Collect information on the terms and conditions of their employment. Now compare and contrast your findings with the feature of the industrial labourers as described in section 9.2.1. If possible exchange your note with your colearners at the Study Centre.

9.3 LABOUR IN THE ORGANISED AND UNORGANISED SECTORS

Our industrial sector may broadly be categorised under two broad headings: organised or formal sector and the unorganised or informal sector. There are different sets of norms and conditions of work for these two sectors.

9.3.1 Organised Sector

Workers who are employed in the organised sector enjoy some privileges which make them different from those in the unorganised sector. These workers enjoy permanent employment. Their jobs cannot be terminated by the whims of their employer. Once a worker is permanent he has certain rights and privileges. His/her employer can terminate his/her employment only on legal grounds (i.e. if he/she has violated the laws governing his/her employment). The privileges which the worker enjoys are granted to him/her by law and not merely by the good-will or charity of his/her employer.

i)   **Protective Laws**

There are a number of laws governing work in the organised sector. Two of the most important laws in this respect are the Factories Act of 1948 and the Industrial Disputes Act of 1947. The Factories Act in fact defines the organised sector (as mentioned above). Any factory coming under the scope of the Act has to abide by certain rules governing regulation of working hours, rest, holidays, health, safety etc. For example, the Act lays down that a worker cannot work for more than 48 hours in a week and not more than 9 hours in a day. He/she has to be given a rest intervals of atleast half an hour after 5 hours of work. The worker is also entitled to a weekly holiday and leave with pay.

The Industrial Disputes Act provides protection to the worker in case of disputes arising from his work (e.g. The amount of wage, nature of work, termination or suspension etc.). There are a number of other Acts such as the Minimum Wages Act, Payment of Bonus Act. Provided Fund Act., Employees State Insurance Act etc. which provide protection and some facilities to the workers.

ii) **Trade Unions**

Apart from getting government protection through these various Acts, the workers in the organised sector are able to form trade unions. This is a very important aspect of this sector. Trade unions unite the workers to defend their rights. They ensure that the various legal provisions are implemented. It would be difficult for workers in the organised sector to secure the rights granted to them if there were not trade unions. The government alone cannot protect the workers. The formation of trade unions is a very important aspect of this sector. We shall see while discussing the unorganised sector that even if laws are passed to protect workers they are ineffective if the workers are not able to collectively ensure their implementation.
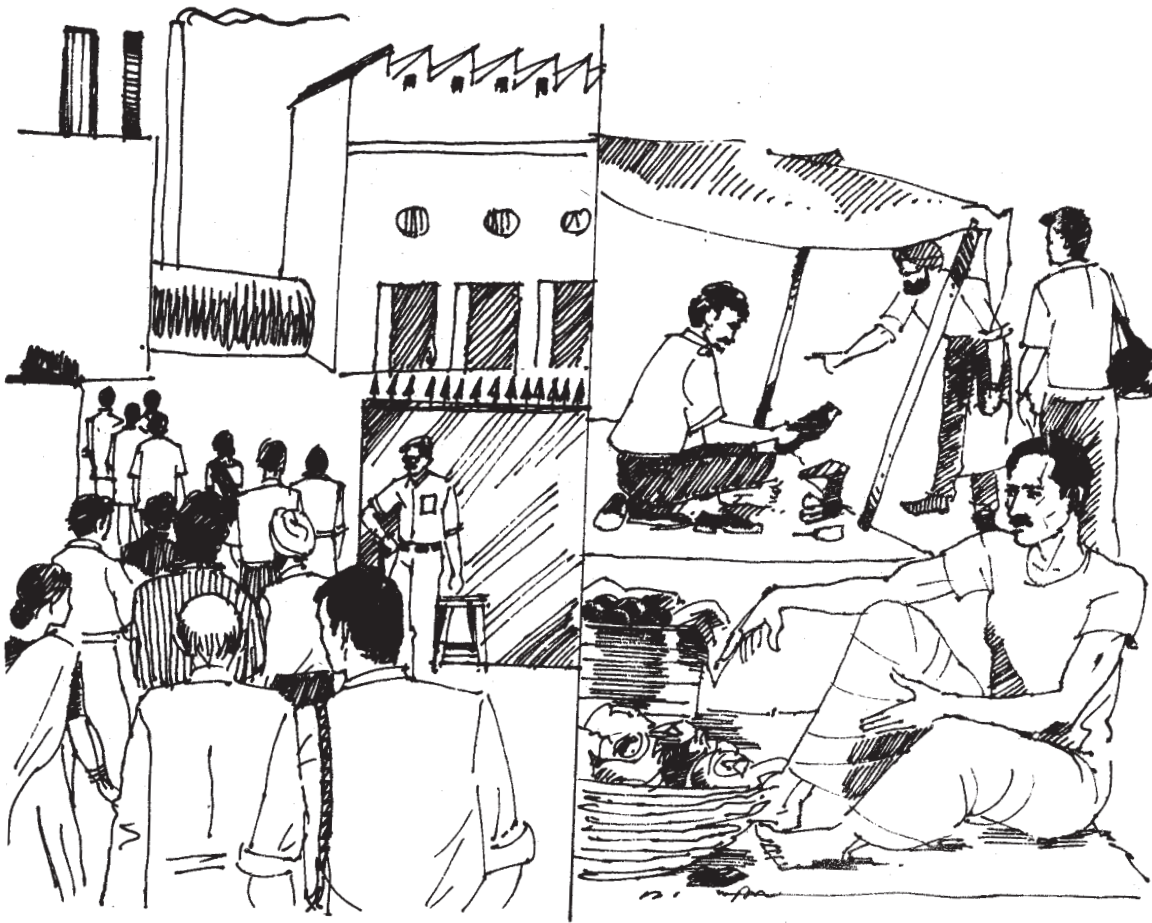
Workers in the Organised/Unorganised Sector

9.3.2 Unorganised Sector

Apart from workers in small factories and establishments there are a large number of workers in the organised sector who do not enjoy the same privileges as the regular workers. These workers are employed as casual labour and contract labour. They too come in the unorganised sector. There are some problems in this sector which are reflected in the terms and conditions of employment, work security etc. of workers. Let us examine these aspects.

i) **Casual Labourers**

We have seen earlier that workers in organised sector enjoy a number of privileges. This means that the employers have to spend more, besides their

wages, for employing them. In many cases the employers try to cut down their costs by employing casual workers i.e., workers who are not permanently employed but are employed for a limited number of days. In most cases the government rules prescribing permanent employment state that a worker who has been employed for more than a certain number of days (180 in most cases) have to be treated as permanent workers. The employers try to dodge this law by breaking the service of the workers for a day or so and reemploying them again. In this way the worker is not able to complete the minimum number of days after which he/she can become permanent. The existence of casual labour in organised industry ensures that the costs are reduced. These workers are usually granted no rights, except for their minimum wages. They have very little security of employment and they can be removed from employment at any time.

ii) **Contract Labourers**

There is another category of workers who are in the organised sector but, like casual labour, are not a part of it. These are the contract labourers. The employers in this case get workers not through direct employment but through labour contractors. Here too the workers is deprived of the advantages of permanent labour, even though he/she may be performing the same type of work as a regular worker. The contract worker at times is employed by a contractor who in turn is engaged by the employer to undertake certain types of work.

iii) **Work Security of the Casual and Contract Labourers**

Casual and contract labour forms a fairly large proportion of the workforce. In several cases we can find in a factory as many casual workers number as much as the permanent ones. Therefore we can see that within the organised sector there exists an unorganised sector. The employment of these types of workers is not restricted to the private sector alone. In the public sector undertaking too they are frequently employed. The contract labour Regulation and Abolition Act lays down that such workers (contract) can be engaged only in certain types of work. However we usually find that even in the public sector the Act is openly violated and contract workers are made to work in the same manner as the regular workers, but get less wages.

The common features of the workers in the unorganised sector, whether in small scale sector or as casual and contract labour, are that they enjoy little or no job security, they get low wages and their working homes and working conditions are largely unregulated.

The unorganised sector is also known as the informal sector. The sector can in many ways be contrasted with the organised sector. The informal sector, by implication, means a sector which is not guided by rules. The industrial establishments in this sector are small in size and they employ a small number of workers. As such they do not come under the purview of the Factories Act. Hence the workers here do not get the facilities and protection given by this Act. They are however under the purview of some of the other Acts such as Minimum Wages Act, Contract Labour Regulation and Abolition Act. However, as we shall discuss later that many of these Acts remain only on paper as far as the workers are concerned. Therefore, for all practical purposes the workers here are unorganised and helpless.

iv) **Low Wages to Women and Child Labour**

This sector also employs a large number of women and children because they
are cheaper. The employment of women in the organised sector has declined.
We shall discuss some of the reasons for this in a subsequent section on labour
welfare. Since the scope for female employment has reduced in the organised
sector, women are to depend largely on the unorganised sector for work. Since
there is little regulation in this sector it makes it easier for the employers who
are unscrupulous to employ women and children for work at low wages so
that the profit margin increases.

v) **Expansion of Low Paid Employment**

Because labour is cheap and the investment required is small, the unorganised
sector has expanded rapidly. It also offers more scope for employment.
Estimates show that the unorganised sector generates two-thirds of the national
income. The positive contribution of the unorganised sector with regard to
employment is that it is able to provide jobs to unskilled workers who would
have otherwise been unemployed or in low paid and more exploited conditions
as agricultural workers. In estimating the potential of this sector let us take the
example of the textile industry. There are three sectors here, namely the large
textile mills in the organised sector, the powerloom sector and the handloom
sector. The latter two are in the unorganised sector. In terms of employment,
the textile industry in Maharashtra has a little more than 2,00,000 jobs in the
textile mills. The powerlooms provide over 5,00,000 jobs and the handloom
sector much more. Another positive aspect of the handloom sector is that it
provides jobs in the villages. On the other hand it is also a fact that the total
wage bill of the 5,00,000 powerloom workers is less than the wage bill of the
2,00,000 textile mill workers. Moreover workers in the powerlooms work for
as long as 10 to 12 hours a day while the textile mill workers have regulated
work hours. Therefore though the unorganised sector offers more scope for
employment, the conditions of its workers are a matter of serious concern for
the policy planners, social workers and the academicians as well.

9.3.3 Linkages Between Organised and Unorganised Sectors

We have seen so far that the organised and the unorganised sectors have distinct
features which contrast with each other. This may give the impression that
these sectors are independent of each other. However, there are strong links
between these two sectors. In fact one can even argue that they are dependent
on each other in many ways. Let us examine how this is so.

In the case of the unorganised sector which exists within the organised sector,
namely contract and casual labour, it is clear that there is a strong link between
the two. Contract and casual labour, as mentioned earlier, are cheaper to employ
than permanent workers. The employers have fewer responsibilities towards
these workers as they do not come under the purview of many of the Acts. The
employers are therefore able to decrease their costs and subsequently increase
their profits.

A more or less similar principle is followed in the linkages between the large
(formal) sector and the small scale (informal) sector. The large factories do
not manufacture all the components they require for the final product. They
usually buy these from other industries which specialise in manufacturing the

needed components. Usually it is the small factories which provide these services. For example a factory manufacturing automobiles never manufactures all the parts required for making a car. It has been estimated that 60% or more of the components required are made by other manufacturers, usually in the small sector. The large factory assembles these components. In other cases, as in any large and reputable consumer goods such as shoes, garments, hosiery, etc., the entire product may be manufactured by the small sector and it is marketed under the brand name of the large sector company. This process is known as ancilliarisation. The small unorganised sector factories act as ancillaries to the large company. They manufacture parts which are sold exclusively to the concerned factory. In other words the small factory has its market in the large factory and it does not seek a market elsewhere.

One can therefore see that a large factory provides scope for setting up smaller units which employ larger number of workers. For the small sector this arrangement may be beneficial because it saves them from the problem of marketing of their products as they do not have the resources to do so. In many cases the large factories give loans or momentary advances to these small industries so that they can meet the costs of production. The organised sector benefits from this arrangement because it saves the trouble of manufacturing these components at a higher cost. By buying them at low costs it is able to cut down its total production costs.

On the other hand we can argue equally strongly that the linkages between the two sectors are in effect an exploitative one. The informal sector, in this arrangement, is tied down to the formal sector and because it cannot find its own market, it has to accept the prices offered by the buyer. Since the formal sector is at an advantage, it can fix prices which are low and the informal sector too will accept it as it has no other alternative. In order to maintain their profits (which in any case may be low) they too have to cut down costs and the most effective way to do so is to reduce wages and increase workload. In this way more is produced at less cost. Therefore the organised sector exploits the unorganised sector which in turn exploits its workers. Finally, in spite of the low prices at which the components are brought the process of the food sold by the organised sector are high. Usually the cutting of costs through manufacture in the small sector only adds to the profits of the organised sector because it does not lead to lower prices. Hence even the consumers do not benefit through this method.

Check Your Progress 1

Tick mark the correct answer.

i)   Workers in the organised sector consists of…..

    a)   all services under the government,

    b)   local bodies and big factories

    c)   factories employing 10 workers or more with power or 20 workers or more without power.

    d)   All of the above.

ii)   The workers in the unorganised sector consists of…..

    a)   casual and contract workers,

    b)   workers in the cottage and village industries.

c) the self-employed

d) all of the above

iii) The unorganised sector within the organised sector comprises

a) permanent workers

b) contract and casual labourers

c) both of the above categories of workers

d) none of the above categories of workers.

iv) State whether true of false.

a) The Factories Act covers all factories in the country.

True [   ]   False [   ]

b) The workers in the organised sector enjoy greater job security

True [   ]   False [   ]

c) Workers in the unorganised sector get no legal protection

True [   ]   False [   ]

9.4   LABOUR WELFARE MEASURES IN INDIA

The above sections discusses the nature of the employment in different sectors of industry. We find that there are unequal relationships within the industry and within the labour. Let us now turn to another important aspect of labour, namely, its welfare. We will now discuss the measures which have been taken to ensure labour welfare.

9.4.1   Responsibility of the State and Labour Laws

In any form of employment it is the obligation of the employer to provide decent living and working conditions for their employees. When employers fail to do so the government steps in to safeguard the interests of the workers by enacting legislations. Labour laws are therefore passed mainly to ensure that the employers fulfil their obligations to their employees. India has had a history of labour laws stretching to around 150 years. However it was only after Independence that several new laws were passed by the Central and State Governments which covered a wide range of workers in different types of industries. Many of the old laws (e.g. Factories Act) were amended to make them more effective.

The change in the government's attitude towards labour was mainly because the post-Independence government took a positive stand as far as the welfare of the workers was concerned. Moreover the trade union movement developed and it pressurised the Centre and State Governments to take a positive stand regarding labour.

Merely passing laws is not enough to protect workers. It is more important to ensure that the laws are implemented. The employers are of course excepted to implement the laws but they do not do in many cases. In such instances the government is expected to ensure that they are implemented. The Government at the Centre and the States have the labour department which has labour officers, assistant labour commissioners etc. who have been entrusted with the

task of ensuring the implementation of the Laws. The employer can be prosecuted in a court of law if he/she is found violating the laws. However in spite of various efforts, Government finds it difficult to perform its task efficiently. This is mainly because factories are widespread and large in size and the government machinery is not large enough to cover all cases. There is another important organisation i.e. the trade union which tries to ensure that the laws are implemented. The trade union organisation mainly tries to protect the interests of the workers. In doing so it tries to ensure that the laws are implemented.

Since labour is in the Concurrent list of the Constitution of India, both the Central and State Governments have the right to pass laws for protection of the workers. There are a large body of legislation on this matter. We have mentioned some of the more significant ones earlier which cover the organised sector as well as the unorganised sector.

9.4.2 Regulation of Work and Social Security in Organised Sector

We can divide these legislations into two groups, one dealing with the regulation of work and the other dealing with social security. In the first group we can place the Acts such as Factories Act, Industrial Disputes Act, Minimum Wages Act, Shops and Establishment Act, Workmen's Compensation Act, Contract Labour Regulation and Equal Remuneration Act and so on. Acts such as Payment of Bonus Act, Employees provident Fund Act, Employees Family Pension Scheme, Employees State Insurance Act, Payment of Gratuity Act and other fall in the second category. There are other Acts too which cover workers in specific industries such as the Plantation Labour Act, Mines Act, Motor Transport Worker's Act etc.

Box 1

Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923

This act provides for payment of compensation to workmen and their dependents in case of injury by accident including certain occupational diseases arising out of and in the course of employment and resulting in disablement or death. The Act applies to railway servants and persons employed in any such capacity as is specified in Schedule II of this Act. The Schedule II includes persons employed in factories, mines, plantations, mechanically—propelled vehicles, construction works and certain hazardous occupations. Minimum rate of compensation for permanent disablement and death have been fixed at Rs.24,000 and 20,000 respectively. Maximum amount for death and permanent total disablement can go up to Rs.90,000 and Rs.1,14000 respectively depending on the wage of worker.

These Acts ensure various facilities and protection to the workers and they embrace all aspects of the workers lives. Acts such as the Factories Act. Industrial Disputes Act, Workmen's Compensation Act, Minimum Wages Act, Equal Remuneration Act, Shops and Establishment Act, Contract Labour Regulation and Abolition Act are effective at the work place. They protect the workers against high handed oppressive actions of the employers. The other Acts provide security to workers outside their place of work. For example the Employees State Insurance Act provides for medical facilities to the workers and is based on a nominal contribution made by the employer and the employee. The Payment of Gratuity Act ensures that a worker gets an amount of money on retirement. The pension Scheme and the Provident Fund Act are designed to help the workers financially on their retirement.

We can see from the above that the industrial workers enjoy a fairly extensive measure of protection. We can contrast this with the welfare facilities to agricultural workers (discussed in the next unit). However the laws may appear attractive on paper but they come of use only if they are implemented. We have pointed this out earlier. This becomes evident when we compare workers in the organised and unorganised sectors. And when we look at women and child labour. In fact we find that it is only the worker in the organised sector who is able to enjoy some of the welfare facilities mentioned in these acts. This is because they are able to organise themselves into trade union and are able to pressurise their employers to enforce the laws. Those who are unable to do this are forced to depend on the good offices of the government or on their employers. Let us briefly look at the problems of woman in the unorganised sector.

9.4.3 Labour Welfare and Women Workers in the Organised Sector

We have mentioned earlier that women workers are found less and less in the organised sector. This is partly caused by the protection granted to them in this sector. There are various Acts which seek to regulate and protect women workers in the industry. The Factories Act lays down that women cannot be employed in the night shift. The Mines Act also prevent employers from making women work underground. In the case of children, the Factories Act lays down that those below the age of 14 cannot be employed in factories. Moreover above 14 who are employed cannot be given work for more than 4½ hours a day. Pregnant women are to be given four months of maternity leave with full pay for the leave period. The employers have to provide for creches at the workplace for the children of the working mothers. The Equal Remuneration Act (discussed in Unit 11) provides that there should be no discrimination between male and female workers if the nature of the work they perform is similar.

Implementation of these laws causes additional expenses for the employers. Hence they try to see that these workers are gradually removed from employment. Unfortunately the trade unions do not put up a strong resistance to this form of retrenchment. This is perhaps because the unions are male oriented and in the present situation of high unemployment they look at retrenchment of women workers as a way of providing employment to make worker in their place. Therefore with little resistance from the workers themselves, women find little employment opportunity in the organised sector and they have to seek employment in the unorganised sector.

Box 2

Abolition of Bonded Labour

The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976 abolished the bonded labour system all over the country. This Act envisages release of all bonded labourers and simultaneous liquidation of their debt. The New 20 point programme stipulated full implementation of laws abolishing bonded labour system which implies: (i) identification (ii) release, (iii) action against offenders, (iv) constitution and holding of regular meetings of vigilence committees at district and subdivisional levels… etc. With a view to supplementing efforts of state governments, a centrally sponsored scheme has been in operation since 1978-79 under which state govts. are provided central financial assistance for rehabilitation of bonded labour (India 1990 : 651).

9.4.4 Labour Welfare in Unorganised Sector

We have mentioned earlier that the workers in the unorganised sector are less protected legally than workers in the organisd sector. There are a few Acts which cover the workers in this sector (contract Labour Regulation and Abolition Act, Equal Remuneration Act, Minimum Wages Act etc.). In most cases since the industrial units do not come under the purview of the Factories Act, the working conditions mostly remain unregulated. Workers also do not get facilities like provident fund, gratuity, medical facilities, compensation, or in most cases paid leave.

Even the Acts providing for some regulation in their work are not implemented. The biggest drawback that the workers face is that they rarely have trade unions. They are thus unable to ensure that the existing laws are used in their favour. The workers are thus helpless and accepts the unregulated exploitative work conditions because there is no other alternative.

In looking at the situation one can see that if the workers here were able to form trade unions and if the governments supervision over the employers was more effective, they would be better off. Trade unions usually shy away from organising unorganised sector workers as it is more difficult to do so. They instead prefer to concentrate on the organised sector as the workers are easier to organise. However we can see that the unorganised sector need the help of trade unions more than any other sector. Hence till this help comes the workers' position will remain unchanged.

Check Your Progress 2

i)   Explain in about five lines the relationship between the small scale and the large scale sector.

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ii) Name the two major groups of laws protecting workers.

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....

iii) Describe in about five lines on the regulation of work for women workers.

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iv) Explain in about five lines the main causes for the failure to implement laws in unorganised sector.

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....

....

v) State whether true or false

a) Trade unions are more active in the unorganised sector.

True [ ]   False [ ]

b) Wage discrimination between male and female workers is banned.

True [ ]   False [ ]

c) Children of any age are allowed to work in factories.

True [ ]   False [ ]

d) The organised and unorganised sector are independent of each other.

True [ ]   False [ ]

e) The central government is solely responsible for passing labour legislation.

True [ ]   False [ ]

9.5 LABOUR UNREST

We have seen so far that workers are able to get the benefits accrued to them only when they are united in their action and are organised into trade unions. In this section we shall be discussing the importance of trade union in an industrial set-up and forms of labour unrest and protest. Let us begin with the trade union.

9.5.1 Trade Union

In the unit on Urban Class Structure I of ESO-04, we discussed the important facets of the growth and characteristics of urban labour movements in India. You may like to read section 26.4 of that unit. Here we shall be dealing with the importance of trade unions in solving the labour problems in India. In normal cases workers are able to put forth their demands through their trade unions to the management. These demands are discussed by the two parties (management and workers) and the management may accept some of the demands. Trade union therefore help to chanalise the grievances of the workers in an institutional manner. The management also benefits because it becomes aware of the worker's problems through the trade union. In the absence of trade unions the management may not be aware of what these problems are. If

workers have no common platform for putting forth their demands, it is possible that they will resort to individual acts of violence. In the earlier stages of industrialisation in India and in England workers were not allowed to form trade unions. They had no means to air their grievances. At times when their grievances increased they resorted to violent acts such as beating up their supervisors or destroying machinery. Trade unions therefore helped to prevent these types of acts. At the same time they proved to be effective in protecting the workers' interest.

Labour unrest is to be viewed in the above background. It would be incorrect to say that trade unions are the cause of labour unrest. The causes can be traced to the dissatisfaction among the worker on certain issues relating to their work or work life. Trade unions give vent to this dissatisfaction and in the process they organise the workers to collectively put forth their grievances before the management. This is why labour unrest is seen more often in the organised sector than in the unorganised sector. It is not that the unorganised sector workers have less grievances. In fact they have more grievances than workers in the organised sector. However, they are unable to put forth their demands because they lack a collective forum to do so. In such a situation it is not unnatural to find workers in this sector take extreme steps by resorting to violence when they are unable to express their grievances effectively.

9.5.2 Forms of Labour Unrest

Labour unrest can take different forms. The only weapon the workers have in combating the might of the employer is withdrawal from work. Similarly for the employer the most effective weapon is lock-out or suspension of the workers. Unrest is usually centred around these means. When negotiations between the workers and the employers fail or are restrained, initially the workers may express their dissatisfaction by holding demonstrations or dharnas. These actions are directed towards demonstrating their solidarity and it is expected that the management will take note of this, Usually if this does not have the necessary effect on the management workers find ways to withdraw their labour (i.e. stop or slow down work). They can resort go-slow, where they report for duty but do not complete the work allotted. In such a situation workers' wages cannot be deducted because they are not absent from work but production is nonetheless affected. Another version of the go-slow is work-to-rule. Workers claim that they will work strictly by the rules and if there is even a slight change in the work situation they refuse to work. In normal conditions workers overlook certain shortcomings. For instance, most of the public buses have some damaged parts. Their rear view mirrors may be missing or the speedmeters or feulguages are not functioning. Under normal conditions bus drivers drive the vehicle inspite of these lapses. In case of work-to-rule the drivers would refuse to drive the buses because they are not functioning well. This would result in slowing down work or in bringing it to a total standstill. The difference between go-slow and work-to-rule is that in the former workers deliberately slow down the pace of production but in the latter they work strictly according to the rule.

The most effective form of labour unrest is the strike. This means that the workers totally withdraw their labour by refusing to work. Production thus comes to a standstill. Normally unions resort to a strike as a final attempt at confronting the management. This is an extreme step and it may have adverse effects on the workers if it is unsuccessful. During the strike period workers

Labour Unrest

do not get their wages. This result in hardships for them. The extension of a strike depends to a large extent on how long the workers can sustain themselves without their wages. Labour unrest is therefore a part of the industrial system. It reflects the changes taking place in industrial relations. Workers no longer blindly follow the orders of the management. They are aware of their rights and they want them to the implemented. At the same time unrest is not a healthy sign for industry and it should be avoided. It causes strain in labour-management relations and it affects production. Therefore it is necessary for both sides, labour and management, to take into account the changing situation and adapt to it.

Check Your Progress 3

Tick mark the correct statements

i)   Trade unions helps to channalise the grievances of the workers

    a)   in an unistitutional manner

    b)   in an institutional manner

    c)   both are correct

    d)   none is correct

ii) Trade unions help

    a)   the labourers to express their dissatisfaction

    b)   the managers to be aware of workers problem

    c)   both are correct

    d)   none is correct

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iii) The only weapon the workers have in combating the might of the employer in is organised way

a) attacking the employer

b) breaking the machine

c) withdrawal from the work

d) none of the above.

9.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have covered various aspects of industrial labour. We have compared and contrasted the two major sectors in industry, namely, the organised and the unorganised sectors. We have found that labour in the unorganised sector is not only more in number than that in the organised sector but it is much worse off in terms of job security and work regulation. There are few laws governing work and social security and even these are not properly implemented. The main problem with workers in the unorganised informal sector is that they are usually not organised into trade unions. They cannot collectively ensure that granting them protection are enforced. They have to depend on the benevolence of their employers or on the government for this.

The two sectors are linked to each other as they depend on each other in their production process. The organised sector gets inputs and components at cheaper rates from the unorganised sector while the latter depends on the former for marketing its products. At the sametime the large number of casual and contract labour in the organised sector shows that there is an unorganised sector within the organised sector. Though the two sectors are linked to each other, their relationship is not on equal basis. The unorganised sector and its labour are in a weaker position.

Finally we examined the steps taken for labour welfare and found that during the post-Independence period a number of laws granting protection and social security to the workers have been passed. Their implementation depends largely on the initiative of the government and the steps taken by the trade unions. Labour unrest is largely linked to these problems.

9.7 KEY WORDS

Primary Sector	:	Primary sector of economy includes agriculture, livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting and plantations.
Secondary Sector	:	It includes mining, quarrying, household industry, other than household industry and construction.
Tertiary Sector	:	It includes trade and commence, transport, storage communication and other services.

9.8 FURTHER READINGS

Holmstrom, H. 1987. *Industry and Inequality*, Orient Longmans: Delhi.

Ramaswamy, E.A. & U. Ramaswamy 1987. *Industry and Labour*, Oxford University Press: Delhi.

9.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

i) d

ii) d

iii) c

iv) a) False, b) True, c) False

Check Your Progress 2

i) The small scale sector manufacturers components for the large scale sector at a cheaper rate. The large scale sector benefits as it gets a market for its products.

ii) One group deals with regulation of work. The other group deals with social security outside the work place.

iii) Women workers in factories are not allowed to work in the night shift in factories. In mines also they are not allowed to work underground.

iv) Firstly there is very inadequate government supervision to ensure implementation. Secondly the trade union movement is weak therefore workers cannot pressurise their employers to implement the laws.

v) a) False, b) True, c) False, d) False, e) False.

Check Your Progress 3

i) b

ii) c

iii) c

UNIT 10 LABOUR : RURAL

Structure

10.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit an effort is made to introduce to you the changing status of rural labourers in the country. After reading this unit you should be able to:

- explain the situation of agricultural labour during the British rule;

- examine the changes brought about by the Indian government through various land reforms and welfare measures;

- discuss the changing status of village artisans and other non-farm workers;

- describe the nature of conflict in rural areas in the context of agrarian social structure;

- explain the policy formulations for alleviating various problems of agricultural labourers, tenants and artisans; and

- discuss the impact of broad social process on the rural labourers in general and rural female labourers in particular.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we shall discuss the social problems of rural labour in India. Rural labourers constitute a distinct component of rural labour force. However, the

socio-economic position of rural labourers has not been the same over the broad historical periods. Hence, besides making a brief historical over view on the issues of the agricultural labourers, this unit also presents various dimensions of the problems of rural labourers. This unit begins with a discussion on the rural labour force in the pre-British India and the emergence of a new labour force in the British period. The problems of the rural labour of contemporary India are discussed at great length here with special reference to land reform and agricultural modernisation. The problems of non-agricultural labourers and artisans are also discussed in this unit. Rural unrest is an integral part of rural labour problems in India. An over view of the rural labour unrest in India and also the major labour laws and welfare programme for rural poor are presented in this unit. Lastly we have placed the socio-economic position of the agricultural labourers in general and female labourers in particular in the context of the broad social processes in India.

10.2 RURAL LABOUR IN THE PRE-BRITISH AND BRITISH PERIOD

India is predominantly an agrarian society with three-fourths of her population living in villages and depending mainly on agriculture and related occupations for its livelihood.

i) **Pre-British Period**

Traditionally, the dominant Hindu society was divided into hierarchical caste groups. Village based occupations were linked with caste groups where mostly the upper castes owned and controlled the land. They wielded economic and political power over all low castes and tribes and acted as patrons of the social and ethical codes of the entire village. The landless groups over a period of time were reduced to serving castes at the farms or related work places of higher castes. The **jajmani** system, under which hereditary patron-client relationships were maintained, provided minimum security to the serving castes. The result was that the serving castes lived a life of want and misery. As the control of land mainly decided the productive relationship among various sections of village population, the low caste groups remained a deprived section of the rural population.

The above types of land relations were associated with the subsistence nature of agriculture with low production and subsistence economy. Each village lived almost an independent and self-sufficient life. It represented a relatively closed society governed by caste and community rules.

ii) **British Period**

These traditional relationships in land experienced a steady transformation during the British rule in the country. The colonisers introduced private property in land through the new land system and thus created class of landowners, tenants, sharecroppers and agricultural labourers (see Units 24 and 25 of ESO-04). Without modernising the agriculture and by appropriating the surplus land, the British rulers inflicted untold miseries particularly on the marginal farmers and agricultural labourers. There were instances of tenant-cultivators fleeing from the land once they were unable to pay the rent or clear the debt. Wherever the commercial crops were introduced, their benefits went to the middle-men

and land owners. The conditions of tenant-cultivators and agricultural labourers in prosperous agricultural zones, instead of showing any improvement, deteriorated. Thus the British rulers in India not only disturbed the age-old self-sufficient village economy but also created land and property relations which proved to be disadvantageous to the rural poor. Another set-back to the village economy was the destruction of the artisan class by colonisers by turning India into a dumping ground for the finished products manufactured in their home land.

Thus in due course of functioning of British land policy the rural society of India emerged to be highly stratified. It led to the concentration of land in the hands of a few while many of the poor peasants lost their land. Many of these poor peasants who lost lands, because of poverty etc. were resettled on these lands as sharecroppers. And those who were not resettled joined the army of agricultural labourers. Many of the displaced artisans and craftsmen also joined the army of agricultural labourers. In this period the volume of rural labourers increased enormously.

Thus prior to Independence, Indian agriculture had a large class of poor peasants and landless labourers, the two groups together forming the majority within the agricultural sector. With the deterioration of the rural economy the survival condition of these groups of people became highly precarious. They were exploited by the landowners. Indeed they were under utter insecurity and misery.

Check Your Progress 1

1)   Who were the serving castes in traditional India? Write a note on their socio-economic positions in about six lines.

....

....

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....

....

....

2)   Tick mark the correct answer.

In the British period the colonisers introduced

a)   community ownership on land

b)   only subsistence crop cultivation

c)   private ownership in land

d)   none of the above.

10.3   NEW MEASURES AND RURAL LABOUR IN POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

In this section we shall be discussing the major facets of land reform and agricultural modernisation, that have enduring impact on rural labour in India. Let us begin with land reform.

10.3.1 Land Reforms

When the country became independent, it was faced with the major task of removing inequality and exploitation in the agrarian socio-economic structure. The most exploited group—agricultural labourers and marginal farmers—had to be the main focus in such efforts. The land, being central to village economy, needed redistribution. In the First Five Year Plan itself the land reform policy was concretised at government level. Hence the main objectives of the land reform have been: (a)abolition of intermediaries, (b) imposition of ceiling restrictions on landholding, (c) distribution of surplus land, (d) tenancy reforms and (e) increase in agricultural production. As the first and major step, the various state governments passed acts to abolish zamindari system and redistribute surplus land to the tenants and poor peasants. Most of these acts were passed sin the early 1950s. As a result of these measures the governments assumed direct responsibility for revenue administration. However, these measures met with several set-backs. The zamindari interests used every means at their disposal to prevent, delay or dilute the legislation. In some parts of the country, they managed to acquire ownership rights on vast extent of land by claiming them to be their personal estates. Large number of tenants were evicted in the process. Overall, the abolition of zamindari did not make significant impact to improve the position of share croppers and labourers. Many of the tenants, however, get ownership rights of the lands. In view of the above the land reform policies were radicalised again in early 1970s. Some of the states enacted various progressive laws. Mobilisation of rural poor was also initiated in various parts of the country for the implementation of these laws. You may see Unit 24 of ESO-04 for further details.

As regards the protection of tenant from forceful eviction by the landlord and also the transfer of ownership of land into the hands of tiller at reasonable terms the outcome was quite disappointing. In many cases, the reform resulted in forceful eviction of tenants by their landlords. This happened mainly because the landlords exercised economic and political power over their tenants. In areas where the zamindari system existed revenue collection rights were already in the hands of government. The cultivators automatically became the owners of land.

**Box 1**

Tenancy Reforms

It is an inseparable part of the land reform programme. You are aware that the old agrarian social structure was not very conducive to modernisation of agriculture and needed to be replaced by a more egalitarian social structure. The land reform programme has, therefore, been designed to break the old feudal socio-economic structure by abolishing the intermediary system of land tenure, distributing surplus vested lands among the rural poors and protecting the interests of the tenants. Under the tenancy reforms legislative provisions have been made in most states providing ownership rights and security of tenure to the tenants or sub-tenants or to the sharecroppers. For example, under Operation Barga (a tenancy reform programme) in West Bengal arrangements are made to give sharecroppers permanent tenurial security, 75% of the produced crops as their share, institutional facilities required to cultivate the land etc.

10.3.2 Agricultural Modernisation

Other than the agrarian reforms there were several factors which influenced

the rural society in the last four decades. These could be listed under two categories—institutional efforts and general changes. Under the first category, Indian government which committed itself to a democratic system, introduced several schemes for the welfare of rural poor. Particularly the landless labourers and non-farm workers. Government also invested heavily on the modrenisation of agriculture. Several irrigation schemes were taken up and improved seed and technology were introduced.

The thrust of the government to change village economy was based on a technological perspective which was best reflected in the Green Revolution experiment in Indian Agriculture. India adopted modernisation of agriculture by improving technology and other inputs. The Punjab-Haryana Western U.P. experience of dramatic growth in agricultural production and rural incomes is often cited as evidence of the validity of the perspective. Such experiments have shown very encouraging results in these states and part of Andhra. The country today is in a position to produce more than 170 million tons of foodgrains.
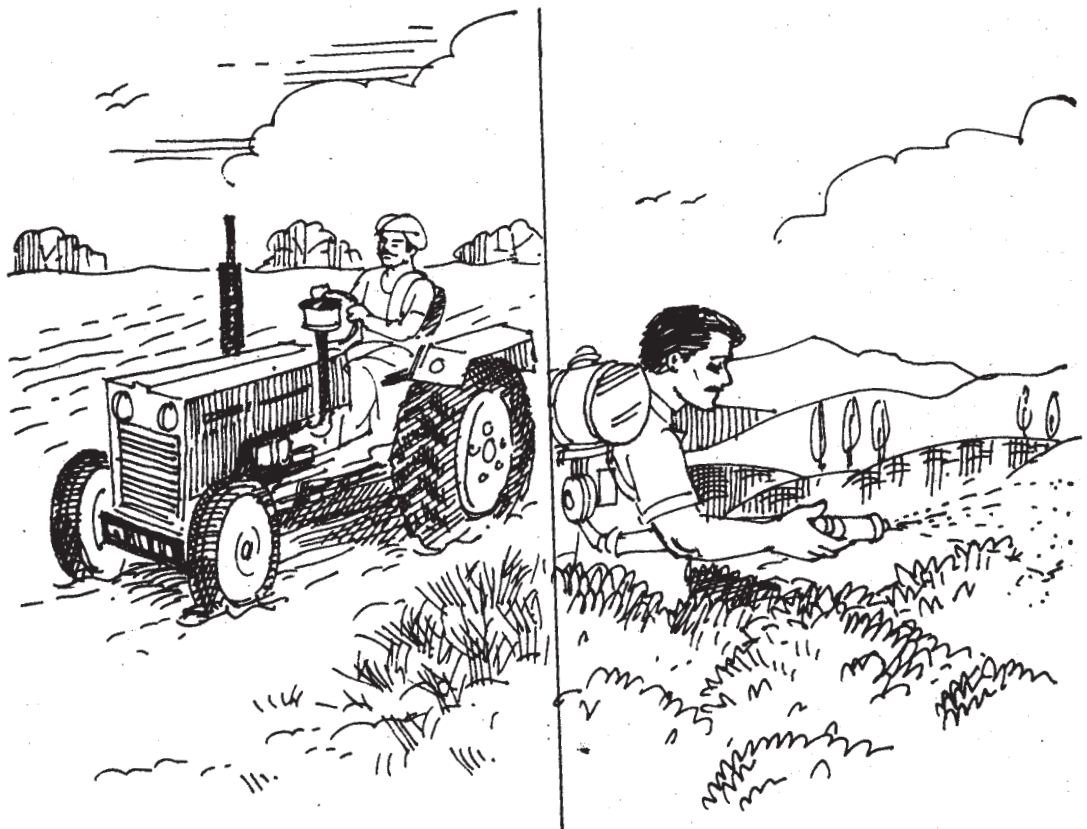
Agricultural Modernisation

However, some experts are skeptical about this 'technological thrust' of agricultural growth. For instance, about the Punjab-Haryana success story, G. Parthasarthy, an agricultural economist, observes: "It fails to note the unique circumstances particularly the substantial public investments in irrigation in Punjab agriculture, the relatively large size of holdings and relatively low demographic pressures, etc. Technology spreads in high resource areas and on richer farms by sucking the resource of the poor areas and of the poor people."

It is also worthnoting that the higher productivity and more income to big

landlords do not necessarily bring better rewards to the farm labourers whose share in the increase is negligible as compared to the gains of landloards. High-technology cultivation reduces the intensity of labour absorption. Equally relevant is the fact that for attaining some kind of equity in the distribution of productive resources Indian government needs to allocate more and more funds for the backward regions where the condition of marginal farmers and farm labourers is pathetic. Overall, the present trends of development in agriculture shows a highly unequal distribution of resources with its benefits mainly going to some regions only. The rural or are the critical manifestation of this growing imbalance. Several experts have brought out the fact that in the early years of agricultural growth, in few prosperous zones like Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh, wages in real terms had declined over a period of time. Though the situation shows a positive change in the eighties when the real wages increased steadily, the quantum of increase particularly in backward agricultural zones is less than satisfactory.

Equally disturbing is the fact that due to more and more privatisation of land, the common property resources (bachat land, grazing grounds, forest land, etc.)—which mainly used to benefit the poor rural families—have been diminishing fast. This has deprived them of free access to fuel and grazing grounds for their cattle. (for further information see Unit 24 and 25 of ESO-04.)

Check Your Progress 2

1) What are the major objectives of the land reform laws in India. Answer in about five lines.

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   ....
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2) Write a note on the impact of agricultural modernisation on the rural labour in India in about five lines.

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10.4 PROBLEMS OF NON-AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS AND ARTISANS

The non-agricultural labourers and artisans constitute an important segment of rural labour force since ages. However, their socio-economic position has not been uniform in nature over a period of time. Hence, let us know their position in the pre-independent and post-independent India.

10.4.1 Pre-Independence Period

The artisans formed the base of village and urban economy in India during the pre-colonial and early-colonial periods. All members of an artisan family were usually involved in production with specific division of labour for males, females and children. Numerous lower caste families have traditionally been engaging in various crafts and agriculture-related non-farm activities. The main among them were those of carpenter, blacksmith, potter, weaver, leather worker and basket maker. In addition to these, non-farm labourers used to perform jobs requiring special skills spread in various regions of the country—depending on the availability of particular raw materials or nature of cultivation. All these skills and activities were limited to the extend of either manufacturing articles to meet the local requirements or to provide technical services to the local population. The artisans' products usually remained out of the modern market economy—confining to the poor village consumers. Most of them worked at subsistence level of economy and usually did subsidiary jobs to supplement their earnings. Indeed the jajmani system formed the backbone of the rural society of that period. It gave them substantial socio-economic security in daily life.

In spite of many odds, village artisans and craftsmen enjoyed a reasonably good social status in the society. However, the socio-economic condition of these artisans and craftsmen deteriorated sharply with the introduction of British rule in India. Because of the import-oriented British Policy these artisans and craftsmen lost their traditional market. Many of them also lost these traditional avenues of employment. This displaced labour force was in search of alternative employment. They were extremely insecure in the rural economy. Many of them joined either the army of the agricultural labourers or migrated to the urban areas for the mainstay of their livelihood. Only those who remained in their old occupation tasted the pains of insecurity, exploitation and alienation in the society.

10.4.2 Post-Independence Period

The post-Independence period changed the situation further. The growth of urbanisation as a manifestation of the linkages between society and modern technology resulted in the weakening of traditional bonds of society. Equally significant was the creation of new opportunities in non-farm occupations. Many of the traditional artisans and craftsmen either migrated to urban areas for improving their incomes, or shifted from their traditional occupations to non-farm employment. This further weakend the traditional 'jajmani' system and caste linkages of occupations.

Due to the sharp increase in rural population, it is considered necessary to relieve agriculture from the pressure of excess labour. This would check decline in the land man ratios and thereby increase labour productivity in agriculture. It is also being realised that urban areas cannot absorb the growing migratory rural labour force due to the ever-growing number of job-seekers in both formal and informal sectors. Therefore, it becomes essential to promote non-agricultural employment in rural areas. Several studies show a slow but steady increase in the proportion of non-farm labourers in the total rural workforce.

Table: Work Participation in India by Rural and Urban areas

State Code	India/State /Union Territory*	Total Rural Urban	Persons Males Females	Total Workers (Main +Marginal	Category of workers (Main +Marginal) with percentage to Total Workers			
					Cultivators	Agricultural Labourers	Workers in Household Industry	Other Workers
				Number	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	INDIA	Total	Persons	402,512,190	31.7	26.7	4.1	375
			Males	275,463,736	31.3	20.8	3.0	44.9
			Females	127,048,454	32.5	39.4	6.4	21.7
		Rural	Persons	310,655,339				
			Males	199,199,602				
			Females	111,455,737				
		Urban	Persons	91,856,851	3.2	4.7	5.1	
			Males	76,264,134	3.0	3.4	3.8	90.1
			Females	15,592,717	4.3	11.0	12.9	71.8

Source: Census of India 2001

Government has intimated a number of schemes through which the artisans and non-farm workers are trained in various trades or skills and are helped financially to improve their earnings. There are efforts to organise them under cooperatives so that they could be freed from the cluches of middlemen. Also, several research and development schemes have been implemented in order to raise their productivity and to make their products competitive in the market. For those non-farm labourers who are engaged in seasonal works, efforts are there to provide them gainful employment during the off-seasons. It is more and more felt that the integration of non-farm manufacturing activity with the farm activity can only create a viable economy absorbing the surplus man power in rural India. There is a need for taking up an appropriate combination of farming activities with animal husbandry, priggery, poultry, duckery and fish farming. Such an approach has taken deeper roots and is extensively practiced with substantive social and private profitability in China and in a number of South-East Asian countries.

10.5 RURAL UNREST AND LABOUR WELFARE MEASURES

In this section we shall be discussing the important of rural unrest and welfare measures initiated by the government. Let us begin with an over view of the rural unrest.

10.5.1 Rural Unrest : An Overview

As stated in the introductory remarks, traditionally village India remained a self-sufficient, closely maintained. Well-knit society. The prevalent hierarchy in socio-economic relations was primarily based on the caste system, with the dominant castes controlling power and acting as guardians of the serving castes. Such a static village, once in a while, experienced dissent from the peasants when it became almost impossible for them to survive against the odds such as inadequate crops and ruthless exploitation by kings, their middlemen and moneylenders. The British rule polarised the landowners against the landless groups on one hand and weakened the traditional power of caste panchayats on the other. The isolation of the peasantry from the ruling class was well manifested in repeated insurgencies by peasants. Ranjit Guha, a well known historian, has cited as many as 110 known instances of such uprisings between the period, 1783 to 1900.

In Unit 25 of Block 6, ESO-04 we talked about the important facets of rural revolt in India. In the pre-colonial period there had been numerous rural revolts against the tyranny of the rulers. You may be aware that in the 17th and 18th centuries the Marathas of today's Maharasthra, the Jats and Rajputs of Rajasthan, Sikhs of Punjab revolted against the Mughal rule on the issues of rack renting and allied agricultural problems and religious persecutions. The latent discontent of the poor peasantry against the colonial rule were manifested through their participation in the revolt of 1857. In the independent movement the issues of the peasantry viz. the racks renting, indebtedness, growth of poverty, decline of rural industries etc. were the major concerns of the leaders. Thus the peasant movements in Champaran (Bihar), Kheda and Bardoli (Gujarat), Oudh and other places of U.P., Bihar, Chirla and Perala in Andhra and the formation of the All India Kisan Sabha became the integral parts of the Independence Movement. The discontents of the rural labour were also manifested in vehement out burst of the radical peasant movements viz., the Tebhaga Movement 1946-47, Telangana 1948-52 and in the Naxalite Movement 1967-1971. For details you may like to go through the above mentioned Unit.

In the post-Independence period, village India has no more remained a harmonic system. Various socio-economic and political changes have created conflict of interests within the village community. Traditionally, the higher castes used

to receive obedience and marked difference from their tenants and agricultural labourers—mostly the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes—but are now finding them to be 'disobedient' and 'defiant'. Due to a high proportion of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribe among landless labourers, a conflict between landowners and labourers can easily turn itself into an inter-caste conflict. Such conflicts many times turn violent resulting in inhuman torture particular of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes and their families. Mass murders, rapes, burning of houses and eviction of tenants from land, are the outcome of such growing intolerance among higher castes towards the serving castes.

Efforts to organise farm and non-farm labourers by voluntary social groups or political parties have resulted in their intimidation by the employers. Wherever the labourers have become conscious of their rights and try to assert themselves against injustice and exploitation, the feudal elements try to suppress this new awakening among them with increased brutality. Social oppression in its worst form is rampant in almost all parts of the country. The Scheduled Caste workers are discriminated in getting employment, their women are criminally assaulted, their holdings are destroyed and properties looted. The distressing aspect is that such oppression is often aided and abetted by public officials who are usually linked with the rural rich. This way the law sides with the powerful. Looking into the causes of such state of affairs, A.R. Desai observes….. "The genetic causes of numerous struggles in rural areas are the existing land relations whereby a handful of landlords own a sizeable land and the left out majority—the sharecroppers or labourers—live below the poverty line. Wherever there are mobilisations, the conflict is bound to occur. Many times, as the ownership of the land is on caste lines, such initiative take the shape of caste struggles".

10.5.2 Status of Labour Laws

Though officially rural labourers are covered under the Minimum Wage Act of 1948, it by and large remains on paper. One often sees reports in newspapers about rural workers agitating to get the minimum wages. As compared to industrial workers, only a few labour laws exist for agricultural labourers and those also supply to a few sections of them. Leaving aside a few activities like tea plantations which have a history of the organised labourers, in majority of the categories the affected workers never get benefits under these Acts: In reality, a majority of them are not even aware of such legal measures which protect their interests. The main factors which make it difficult to organises the workers are:

- the large number of employers (land holders), dispersal of workers over a large geographical region,

- uncertainty of employment (seasonal in nature),

- rapid growth of rural population resulting in surplus man power,

- family labour substituting for the hired labour, and overall low productivity in agriculture.

There are other factors too which contribute towards their backwardness. The continuance of the caste system results in a form of patron client relationship. Here the worker feels obligated to his master who usually belongs to a higher caste. This prevents the worker from taking any independent decisions. The

various forms of social backwardness is further enforced by widespread illiteracy. This keeps the agricultural labourer backward and isolated. All these ultimately result in their loss of self confidence. They are therefore unable to organise themselves against the exploitative relationship perpetuated by their masters. However, in spite of all these limitations rural labourers of India are organised under the auspices of various peasant organisation and political parties in various parts of the country. Their organisational ability and strength have been manifested during organised mass mobilisations and peasant movements. These mobilisations are usually directed against the landlords, businessmen and the administrative apparatus of the state.

10.5.3 Welfare Programme for the Rural Poor

We have discussed so far the problems faced by the weaker sections in rural society. These are mainly a result of uneven and unbalanced development in the rural economy. Therefore in order to protect the rural labourers and marginal farmers the government launched several anti-poverty programmes. Some of these programmes, such as the NREP, JRY and TRYSM, have been discussed in Unit 8. There are other schemes such as the Integrated Rural Development Programmes (IRDP) which operated at the level of the development block. This programme identified the weaker families in the villages and provides them loans and subsidies for obtaining inputs which would help improve production or create self-employment. The selected families are provided seeds, fertilisers, milch or draught cattle, pigs, looms etc. according to their needs. A major part of the cost of procuring these inputs are covered by government subsidies and the rest is through bank loans at low interest rates.

Besides the IRDP, there is the Indira Avas Yojana which provides homes and house-sites for the rural poor. The Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) seeks to improve the mental physical growth of the children. It provides for crèches, **balwadis, anganwadis** nutrition programmes and mother and child care programmes.

These programmes are initiated at the national level but operate through the various state governments. Some more programmes are run by some state Rajasthan started the **antyodaya** programme in 1978 through which five of the poorest families in every village are provided special assistance to improve their economic conditions. This state and some others have the Drought Prone Areas Programme for providing development activities to overcome draught and the Desert Development Programme. West Bengal introduced the Food-for-Work Scheme in 1977 where the rural unemployed were provided work and were paid partly in food grains and partly in cash. Maharashtra during the same time started the Employment Guarantee Scheme in rural areas which is similar to the NREP. The objective of all these development schemes is to provide some form of employment or inputs to the rural poor so that they are not left to the mercies of the exploiting sections.

Several official and unofficial evaluations of these programs have been done. One major criticism is that a majority of them are independent of the agricultural activity—without direct linkage to agriculture and allied sectors. The beneficiaries of these programmes are not necessarily the most needy. This is mainly because of the malpractices and inefficiency of the implementing agencies. Programmes are devoid of creating a sustainable activity, and
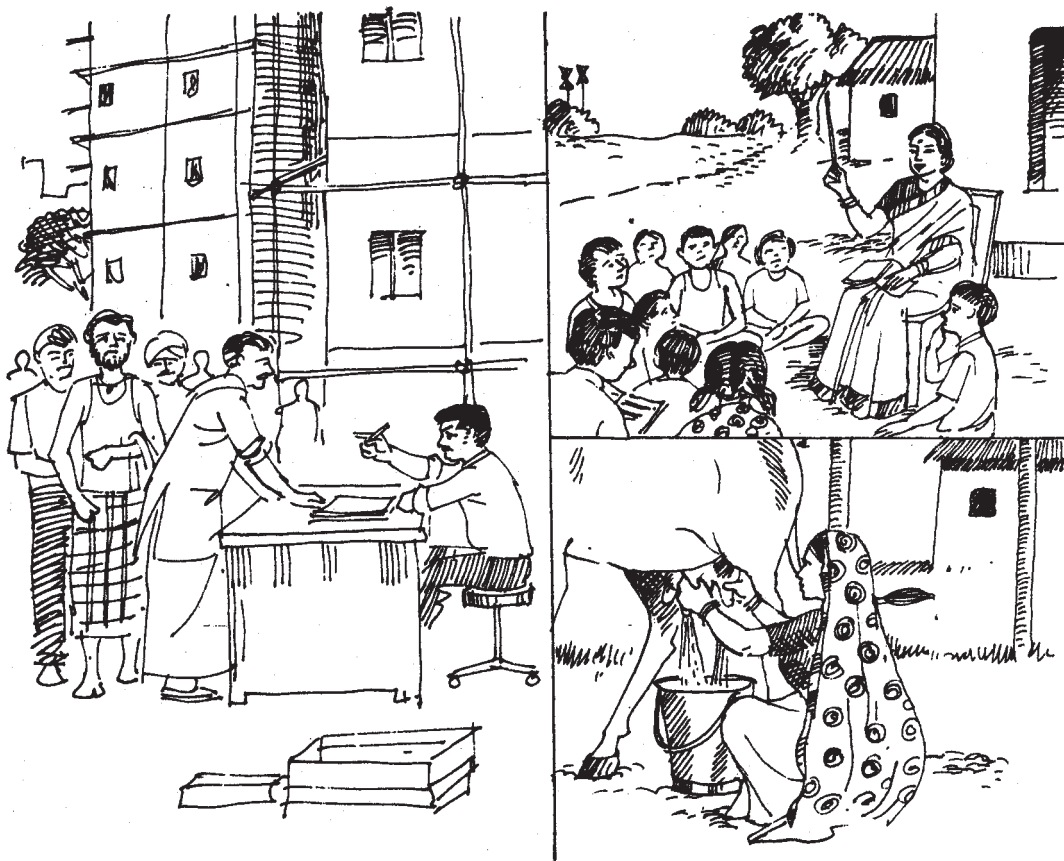
Labour Welfare in Rural Area

therefore, are more relief-oriented than development-based. In some states like West Bengal and Kerala the results are more encouraging as compared to many other states. An observation on the IRDP, states that at the end of seven years of operation of the IRDP, only about 3 per cent of the poor households in rural India have been helped to rise above poverty, and that too only for a while. This programme attempts to provide assets to the rural poor which are labour intensive and it helps in marketing the products. In order to ensure continuity the recipient (the poor household) has to be assured of continuous institutional credit (i.e. from banks or other sources). If this is withdrawn then there is every chance of failure.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Tick mark the correct answers.

   With the introduction of British rule in India the economic conditions of the rural artisans and craftsmen

   a) improved enormously

   b) declined sharply

   c) remained unaffected

   d) none of the above.

2) A rural development programme, started in 1978 through which five of the poorest families in every village are provided special assistance to improve their economic conditions, is known as

   a) Balwadis Programme

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b)   Employment Guarantee Scheme

c)   Desert Development Programme

d)   Antyodaya Programme.

10.6   CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROCESSES AND RURAL LABOURERS

Other than the institutional efforts for raising life standards of agricultural labourers, several changes have been occurring in both rural and urban societies which have also influenced their life.

10.6.1   General Impact on Agricultural Labourers

Regions close to the command areas of agricultural growth have been experiencing exodus of manpower, which in turn, hikes the wages of farm labourers. Similar situation has emerged in regions which are in contact with industrial growth centres. Earlier studies on the consumption pattern of rural poor showed that over three-fourths of their income used to be spent on food items alone. Such a trend is on the decline and wherever wages of labourers show an improvement, they spend more on durable items like purchasing a bicycle or a transistor, or improving housing. There is also evidence of change in food habits in some regions—from the coarse grains to wheat and rice.

Though in the areas of health or education no appreciable change are witnessed, the fact cannot be denied that in prosperous agricultural zones, farm labourers show improvement in their health or education. Conditions of farm and non-farm laboures also show improvement in a state like Maharashtra which has a long history of socio-religious reforms, or a state like Kerala which has successfully implemented several welfare schemes for the poor. In contrast, in states like Bihar, Orissa and eastern Uttar Pradesh, the rural poor remain a victimized lot. Particularly the Harijan labourers become the main target of social oppression. The situation of tribal is equally appalling. Commercialisation and market integration of tribal areas coupled with the replacement of collective land tenure system by individual holdings has led to growing landlessness, loss of food security and diminishing access to forest produce. These developments are slowly dividing the traditionally egalitarian communities into class-based social groups.

Wherever there are mobilisations of the rural poor by voluntary organisation or political parties, a new consciousness has emerged among them against their age old exploitation and about their rights. This has earned them social pride and economic relief. It is also a fact that such organised groups have to face the wrath of rich landlords and dominant caste groups. Traditional caste system is also going through several changes which has affected the rural poor. Rigid caste discriminations against the lower castes are slowly losing their effect. Caste based occupations are no more a binding. Caste groups are taking shape of 'interest groups' in order to mobilise resources against other competing groups. Even political mobilisations are more and more on caste lines. This is bound to create caste tensions and intolerance.

Thus, several interrelated changes are occurring in rural (as well as urban) society which are bound to create impact on the lives of farm and non-farm labourers. Their outcome is again uneven without substantial gains to the deprived sections of rural population.

10.6.2 Impact on Female Labourers

Traditionally females have actively been participating in the farm activity. They look after the cattle, domestic work and even part of the farming activity. In paddy cultivation, for instance, operations like weeding, harvesting and post-harvest operations require active participation of females—whether labourers or working on their own farms. In a male dominant society like India, it is well expected that female share the main burden in the deprived agricultural families. They are also discriminated as farm labourers against their counterparts. A few case studies show evidence to this effect. According to the NSS data the average daily earnings (of females) are found to be lower than those of male labourers in all the states and in various age groups. Punjab and Haryana, where the overall earnings of male labourers are higher, have higher female earnings. However, there are gender differential in earnings. The reported differences in the daily earnings of male and female agricultural labourers are a clear indication of discrimination against the latter. Women also suffer from a higher instability in employment. It was found that more than 50 per cent of the male workers are cultivators, while more than 60 per cent of women workers are agricultural labourers in the rural sector.

For improving the work conditions of female labourers, experts suggest measures like training of women for unconventional jobs, provision of land rights, permanency in jobs and equal wage for equal work. To achieve this, the need is felt of educating women against their victimisation on all fronts of life. Several voluntary organisations which are working among the rural poor have their programmes for the upliftment of women. Recently action groups exclusively of women have emerged which are spearheading the cause of emancipating the women from exploitation in a male dominated society.

Check Your Progress 5

Tick mark the correct boxes

i)   In the rural India caste based occupations are no more binding.

      True ☐   False ☐

ii)   In rural India no political mobilisation takes place on caste line.

      True ☐   False ☐

iii) In prosperous agricultural zones farm labourers show improvement in their health and education.

      True ☐   False ☐

iv)   In tribal areas commercialisation of agriculture and rapid spread of market forces have led to landlessness among the tribal people.

      True ☐   False ☐

10.7   LET US SUM UP

This unit began with a brief discussion of the present status of agricultural and non-agricultural labourers in the country. The discussion was spread in six main sections which covered issues like condition so agricultural labourers in the Pre-Independence and Post-Independence period, role of agrarian reforms,

general changes influencing their lives, condition of female labourers, status of non-farm labourers and artisan, and scope for their improvement, peasant unrest during pre and post-Independence periods, and need of appropriate policies and strategies for improving socio-economic status of farm and non-farm labourers. All these put together should give us a general profile of their life conditions.

10.8   KEY WORDS

Green Revolution : It is also widely known as the new strategy for agricultural development. Under the influence of Western economies, India adopted the modernisation of agriculture by improving technology and other inputs. The Punjab, Haryana, Western U.P. experience of dramatic growth in the agricultural production is popularly knows as the 'green revolution' in India.

Jajmani System : In traditional rural India, the producing castes were treated as 'jajman' by the serving castes or groups (like agricultural labourers, carpenters and washermen), who used to get payments for their services in cash or kind from the producing castes. Such a system of giving and taking of services in rural areas is known as 'jajmani system'.

Ryotwari System : Prior to the British rule in India, the collection of revenue by a king from his peasantry was practiced mainly under two systems—the 'Ryotwari' system and the 'Mahalbari' system. Under the 'Roytwari' system, the king directly collected revenue from the peasantry by appointing revenue officials. In the British period Ryotwari system was operational only in some parts of the country.

Tenancy Act : The main purpose of introducing Tenancy Acts by the governments was to confer permanent, heritable and transferable rights on the actual tillers of the land.

10.9   FURTHER READINGS

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10.10 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) The landless low caste people formed the bulk of the serving castes in traditional India. Through the jajmani system they were tied up with the upper castes of the village which provided them minimum security of life. Indeed, they lived a life of want and misery. They remained a deprived section of the rural population.

2) c)

Check Your Progress 2

1) The major objectives of land reform in India are as follows : (a) abolition of intermediaries, (b) imposition of ceiling restrictions on landholding, (c) distribution of surplus vested land, (d) tenancy reforms, and (e) increase in agricultural production.

2) The technological modernisation has helped tremendously to enhance agricultural production in India especially in the Punjab, Haryana, Western U.P., parts of A.P. etc. places. However, experts are of the opinion that technological modernisation has not helped the rural poor improve their economic lot. It has led to the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, while the majority of the rural poor remained in ultered insecurity and poverty.

Check Your Progress 3

1) b)

2) d)

Check Your Progress 4

i) True

ii) False

iii) True

iv) True

UNIT 11   LABOUR : WOMEN

Structure

11.0   OBJECTIVES

After going through the unit you should be able to :

- describe the nature and extent of women's labour force participation;

- explain reasons for the 'invisibility' and under enumeration of women's labour contribution in the home and outside;

- examine reasons for over concentration of women in certain sectors of economy;

- discuss various legislations for the protection of women labour;

- narrate the need for organising the poor rural and urban women; and

- analyse the various policies for training and income generation for poor women.

11.1   INTRODUCTION

This unit aims to introducing you to various dimensions of women's labour and factors affecting their productive roles in the Indian society. The unit discusses the nature and extent of women's involvement in key sectors of

economy, socio-economic determinants of women's labour force participation, their access to productive resources, and opportunities for skill development through training and education within the family and outside. The unit also looks into government interventions and direct measures to alleviate poverty and responses of the rural and urban women's organisations to improve their access to resources and bargaining capacities.

The unit begins with an analysis of the context of women's paid and unpaid labour within and outside home. It also analyses the socio-cultural, developmental and locational (rural-urban, agro-climatic zones) factors responsible for variations in women's labour utilisation patterns. In the units on Women's Status and Women and Work in Block 7, ESO-02, we discussed at length about various facets of women's work participation. In this unit we shall look into those issues in relation to social problems in India. You may like to look into those units before start working on the present one.

11.2 EXTENT AND NATURE OF WOMEN'S WORK PARTICIPATION

Women play an important role in the Indian economy and are engaged in a variety of occupations in rural and urban areas. The report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India (1974) pointed out that "the status of any given section of population in a society is ultimately connected with its economic positions which (itself) depends on roles, rights and opportunities for participation in economic activities".

The Report further observed that "sex inequality cannot in reality be differentiated from the variety of social, economic and cultural inequalities in India society". The inequalities inherent in our traditional social structure based on caste, community, class and gender, influence women's economic roles and opportunities. Their participation is also affected by the state of development and rural urban locations. In an earlier unit (ESO-12, Unit 31) Women and Work you have learnt that traditional role expectations, differential socialisation of girls and boys and sexual division of labour affect women's labour force participation. In this unit we shall begin with a brief discussion on the nature and extent of women's work participation.

11.2.1 Women's Work Participation

Accurate data regarding the extent and nature of women's work is limited because of the limited definition of 'work' in the Census which excludes much of the work women do within the household for the family's survival and maintenance. The data is also not comparable because of changes in the definitions of 'worker' from Census to Census and lack of uniformity in the classification of workers by age, sex and educational levels. Earners and earners' dependents have been classified differently in various census. Again, the 1971 census used the labour time disposition criterion over the reference year, and defined workers as only those who spent the major part of their time in economic activities. Thus all irregular, marginal and part-time workers come under the category of non-workers. However, the marginal, irregular workers were more likely to be concentrated among women, children and aged persons. Therefore, the census report does not give the real picture (Chattopadhyay, M. 1982:44).

The Labour Bureau has brought out a document titled Statistical Profile on Women Labour. Many of these sources underestimate women's labour

contribution in so far as the work that women do on family farms and home-based family occupations remains unpaid and 'invisible' to data collectors. No economic value is givens to work such as collection of fuel, fodder and water, collection of minor forest produce for subsistence and household maintenance activities as it does not come under the purview of market economy. Sexual division of labour relegates women's primary responsibility to providing goods and services to the family. For the poor women, all work is for subsistence and survival of the family.

Even if one does not take into account the above mentioned aspect of the women's contribution to the economy there exists a difference in assessing the workforce participation of women.

Table 1: Workforce by Gender and Rural-Urban Location: All India, 1993-94 to 1999-2000

(in '000)

Population Segment	Usual status crude worker Population ratios (per 1000)	
	1993-94	1999-2000
Rural		
Males	553	531
Females	328	299
Total	444	419
Urban		
Males	520	518
Females	154	139
Total	347	337
All Areas		
Males	544	527
Females	283	254
Total	418	395

Note: Usual Status = principal status + subsidiary status.

Source: Sundaram, K., 'Employment and Poverty in 1990s: Further Results from NSS 55th Round Employment—Unemployment Survey, 1999-2000, Economic and Political Weekly, 11 August 2001, pp. 3039-49. cf. India Development Report. 2002.

Majority of the women workers are employed in the rural areas and in agriculture. Amongst rural women workers 87% are employed in agriculture as labourers and cultivators. Amongst the women workers in the urban areas 80% are employed in unorganised sector like household industries, petty trade and services, building and construction etc. The employment of women in the organised sector (both public and private) as on March 2000 was about 4.9228 million. This constitutes 17.6% of the total organised sector employment in the country. The distribution of women employees in major industries reveals that community, social and personal services sectors continued to absorb the majority of women employees. The lowest employment of women was noticed in electricity, gas and water sectors. In the factory and plantation establishment women workers constituted 14% and 51% respectively of the total workers in 1997. In mine establishments, women workers constituted 5% of the total workers (India 2003). According to the Human Development Report in South Asia female labour force constituted 32% of the total labour force in India in 2000.

According to 2001 Census of the total female population 25.7% are workers (main and marginal. Again of the total workers 32.5% are cultivators and 39.4% are agricultural labourers, 6.4% work in the household industry and 21.7% are other category workers.

According to Dr. Asok Mitra 'the under-reporting of female work force participation rates in the Census varies from 30 to 40 per cent'. The measurement and analysis of female labour force participation suffers from underestimates, inadequate attention to unpaid work at home and outside, and lack of support services to reduce their drudgery i.e. provision of drinking water, fuel and fodder, childcare etc. All these have adverse impact on the status of women labour force.

11.2.2 Nature of Work Done by Women Workers

In the unit on Women and Work in ESO-02 we discussed in detail the nature of women's work participation and work done by women workers. It was pointed out that women's work had been subjected to invisibility because of the census bias and conservative estimate of work done by women. Here let us describe the nature of work done by women.
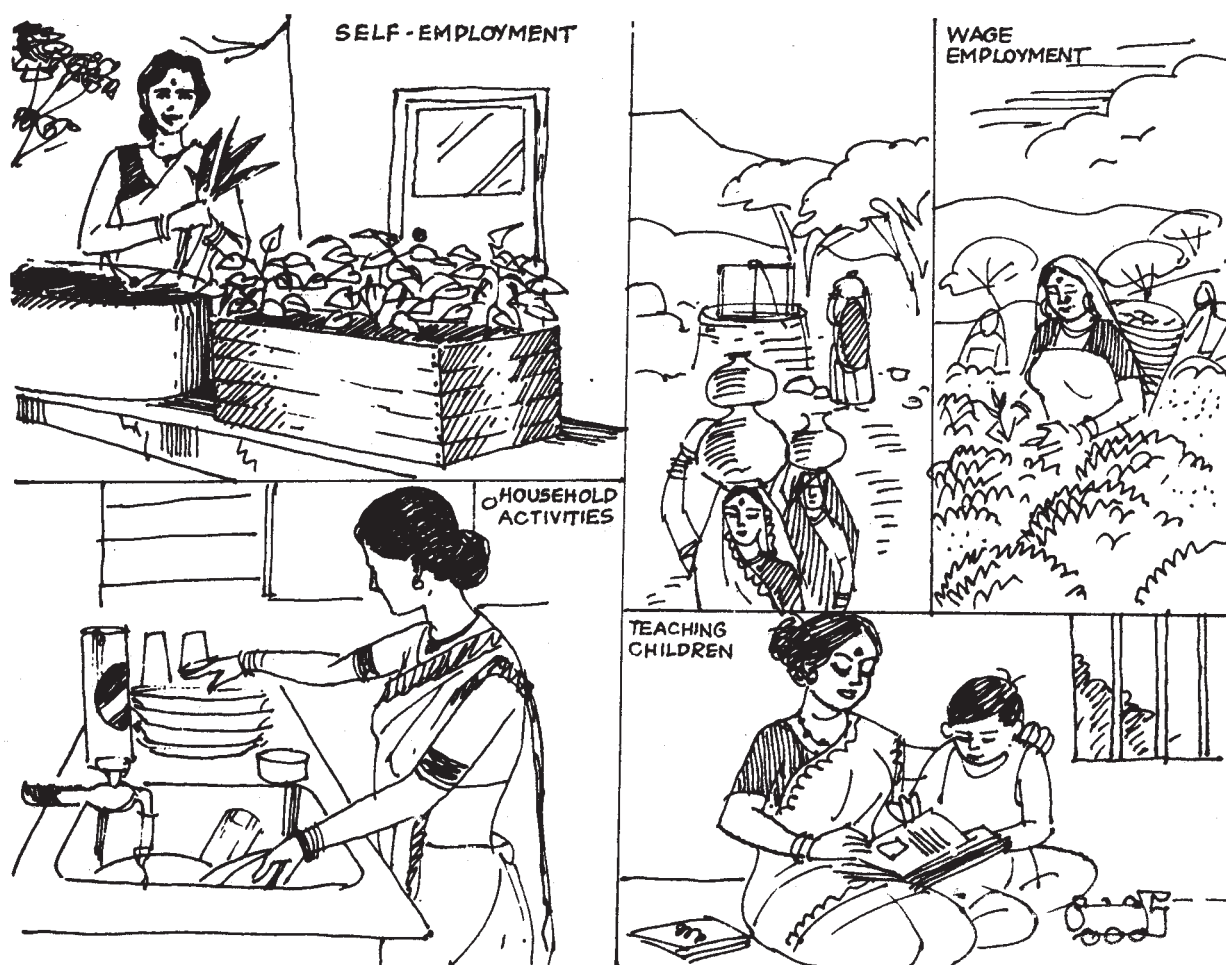
Women and Work

The NSSO has identified the following household activities in which women area regularly engaged. Maintenance of kitchen garden, orchards etc, work in household poultry, work in household dairy, free collection of fish small game, etc., free collection of firewood, cattle feed. etc., husking paddy, preparation

of gur, grinding of foodgrains, preparation of cow dung cakes for use as fuel, sewing, tailoring, tutoring of children, bringing water from outside the household premise, bringing water from outside the village.

However, a major part of the work done by women in the household is not recognised as work since these are not paid in the economic sense and not visible in the public eye as well.

11.2.3   Categories of Women Labour

On the basis of their work status, women labour can be grouped under the following three categories:

— **Self-employed** both within and outside home.

— **Wage Workers** outside home e.g. agricultural workers, construction workers, factory workers, contract workers etc. and inside home (home-based workers engaged in work on out put basis)

— **Unpaid Family Labour** on their own farm or family occupations like weaving, pottery, handicrafts etc.

Let us discuss these categories in detail.

i)   **Self-employment**

They constitute the predominant sector of employment in our country. According to the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) in 1987, 57.3 per cent of total workforce was absorbed by this sector. The choice of activity depends on family situation, women's control over the means of production, skills, technology and work organisation.

A significant number of self-employed women are working outside the home (57 per cent) with irregular income and many a time operating from the pavements (vegetable sellers, vendors, hawkers etc.).

The distribution of female work participation by status of employment indicates that there is a pronounced declining trend in the importance of the self employed category in both rural and urban areas and an overall increase in the casualisation of the women work force from 31.4 per cent in 1972-73 to 40.9 per sent in 1997 in rural India with a marginal decline to 39.6 pr cent in 1999-2000. In urban India there is a reversal of this trend with an increase in work participation rates of females under regular employment category and a decline in casualisation. Further, as per the NSSO 55th Round on Employment and Unemployment in India 1999-2000, women trend to enter the labour market later than men. Work participation of males is considerable higher in the age group of 15-29. In rural areas female work participation rate has been the highest at 58.6 per cent in the age group of 40-44 and is above 50 per cent in the age group 30-54. In urban areas female work participation rate is highest at 28.5 per cent in the age group 35-39 and is 38.3 per cent in age group 40-44. Early marriage and multiple child bearing depress the female work force participation rates in the 15-29 age group. In most developed and developing countries, the age group 15-25 exhibits a peak in women's work force participation rates.

In the construction sector the proportion of casual labour is high. The proportion of women workers has increased from 9.1 to 9.91 per cent during 1971-1981.

The increase is primarily in rural areas as numerous public works programmes for employment generation were taken up under anti-poverty programmes of the government.

Box 1

Wage Disparities

The average earnings of female casual workers are extremely lower than the average earning of regular wage earners and salaried workers. The wag inequality between men (Rs. 10.27) and women (Rs. 4.49) is higher in rural areas than in urban ones. Women workers are mostly employed as piece-rate workers doing manual work for contractors and middlemen. They provide cheap labour to industries and contractors.

Average Wage Salary Earnings Per Day for Casual Wage Labour (in Rupees)

	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-5-14	5.68	3.57	5.19	3.50
15-59	10.53	5.11	5.11	5.30
60+	9.35	3.77	9.94	4.65
All ages	10.27	4.89	11.09	5.29

Source : NSSO, 1987 (Quoted in National Commission on Self-employed Women, 1988)

Usual, Weekly and Daily Work Status by Sex

	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
Usual Status	2.12	1.41	5.86	6.90
Weekly Status	3.72	4.26	8.69	7.46
Daily Status	7.52	8.98	9.23	10.99

Source : NSSO, 1987

It is again to note that the incidence of unemployment and under-employment is higher among women causal workers than among men.

An important category of working women, is home-based workers. They are engaged in a variety of activities like bidi-making, food processing, garment making, agarbati making, spinning, toy making, fish processing, pottery, cane and bamboo work, lace making Zari work etc. No reliable statistics are available regarding the number of home-based women workers as their work is not always 'visible'.

Home-based workers fall in two categories: the self-employed, and those engaged in piece-rate work.

There is a large section of women who are doing piece-rate work. The employers have tremendous advantage in giving out work to women on a piece-rate basis as they don't have to invest in tools and machinery or any extra cost for providing the work benefits. There are not trade unions and hardly any legislation to protect their rights relating to wages, social security benefits (health and maternity benefits) etc. A lot of child labour is used in home-based

production activities. The industrial units specially smaller ones have financial advantage in not employing them directly. You will read more about child labour in the next unit (Unit No. 12).

iii) **Unpaid Family Workers**

Women provide unpaid labour on family farms, home-based small industries, family maintenance activities. The average hours of unpaid work done by women within and outside home varies from 6-8 hours per day. Women from poorer households have a heavier burden of work.

11.2.4 Factors Affecting Women's Work Participation

Women's work participation rate in general has been declining over the decades. The decline has occurred due to several factors:

a) Absence of a comprehensive and rational policy for women's development aiming at improving their employability through education, training and improving their access to resources (land, credit) and technology.

b) The perception of 'male as the bread winner' of the family conceals the fact that in low-income households woman's earning is crucial for the sustenance of the family. This perception adversely affects investment in women's education and training. Employers also visualise women workers as 'supplementary earners'.

c) Structural changes in the economy e.g. decline in traditional rural industries like pottery, blackmithy, weaving and handicrafts due to competition from modern industries have increased the dependence of women on agricultural sector and have adversely affected the status of women workforce.

d) Lack of assets (land, house) in their own name in order to have access to credit and self-employment opportunities has been the important hurdle in the upward mobility of women workers.

e) The heavy demand on the time and energy of women for subsistenance tasks (fuel, fodder and water collection) and burdens of child-bearing and rearing in addition to participation in labour force, leave them little time for education, training and self development. Besides working as labourer, they spend 6-8 hours per day on collection of fuel, fodder, water, child care and other domestic chores. Efforts to reduce women's drudgery have been highly inadequate.

f) Division of labour between women and men and technological changes in the production system also work against women. They are the first to lose their jobs and the last to be hired. Higher illiteracy and low skill development among women also result in low wages and insecure or casual employment.

Check Your Progress 1

i) What are the different categories of women labourers? Use about five lines to answer.

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ii) Tick mark the correct box (true or false)

    a)   In India most of the women workforce are self-employed.

       True ☐   False ☐

    b)   More women are employed in the non-agricultural sector.

       True ☐   False ☐

    c)   Men and women get equal wages in all sectors of employment.

       True ☐   False ☐

11.3 WOMEN WORKERS BY VARIOUS SECTORS OF EMPLOYMENT

Almost 90% of women workers are in the primary sector which include agriculture (87%) and livestock, forestry, fishing, plantation and orchards (1.8%). Agriculture remains the major sector of women's work.

Women engaged in agricultural operations work on an average about 12 hours a day on the farm in taking care of the cattle at home. There is a division of labour between the tasks men and women do in agriculture. Although it is not rigid and there are regional variations, however, some patterns are uniform. Women do not plough the field due to social taboos. Women are mainly engaged in sowing, weeding, transplanting and spraying chemical pesticides. In agriculture, women work mostly as casual labour. As agriculture labourers they comprise 60% of all agricultural workers.

Other activities where the number of women workers exceeds the number of male workers are cashewnut processing, cotton and wool spinning and weaving, manufacturing of bidis, tobacco processing, canning and preservation of fruits and vegetables.

> **Activity 1**
>
> Identify about 20-25 workers in your neighbourhood and place their work in the different types of economic activities as discussed in earlier sections. Analyse the gender differentials. If possible, exchange your note with your colearners at the Study Centre.

Let us examine the nature and extent of women's work participation in terms of various sectors of employment. You may be interested to know about the unorganised sector first.

11.3.1 Unorganised Sector

The nature and extent of women's work participation in the rural unorganised sector is qualitatively and quantitatively different in the rural areas from that of the urban areas. Hence we should discuss the rural and urban areas separately for a better understanding.

i) **Rural Unorganised Sector**

A little over 87 per cent of women are employed in the unorganised sector in rural and urban areas. Employment in this sector is characterised by lack of job security, low wages, long hours of work; and unhealthy working conditions. There are very few workers' unions to bring pressure on employers to provide more humane conditions of work. Inadequate legislation for these workers and totally ineffective enforcement of the few legislations enacted to protect their interests further aggravate their situation.

Women workers in this sector are mostly illiterate. They are drawn from the poorer sections and they lack opportunities to improve their skills through training and education. A large share of work in the rural unorganised sector is done by women.

Government programmes to increase employment and productivity are focused more on men; and women are seen as beneficiaries rather than active participants. The predominantly male bureaucracy and extension workers are not very sensitive to women's needs and problems. Land ownership and division of labour often works to women's disadvantage.

ii) **Urban Unorgansied Sector**

A large number of women are engaged in services. Forty per cent of the self-employed women are in the service sector and 30% are in petty trades. Eight per cent of the women are engaged in construction activities . A majority of the self-employed women are in petty business selling pan-bidis, fruits and vegetables, leaf, cane and bamboo products and sale of firewood etc. A significant number of self-employed women (57%) are working outside the home with irregular income and many a time operating from the pavements. Domestic service is another area where a large number of women workers are engaged as part-time or full-time workers.

In manufacturing, the percentage share of female workers in traditional industries i.e. food, tobacco and textiles has not changed. In some industries like cashew processing, coffee curing etc. it has declined due to mechanisation. Women have been employed more where 'putting cut system' is common like garments, engineering products, plastics, rubber and tobacco processing.

11.3.2 Organised Sector

The organised sector (both public and private) accounts for about 13.0 per cent of the female labour force. In the public sector as well as major industrial groups in coal, iron ore and metal mining, women's employment during the last two decades has either remained static or has declined. There has been a sharp decline in the number of women workers in coal mining, particularly after the nationalisation of the industry. There are reports that the public sector coal mines have encouraged women to 'retire voluntarily' after nominating a male from the family for the job.

In both public and private sector there is an extensive use of women contract and casual labour with a view to avoid provision of labour laws i.e. providing child-care centers, minimum wages and maternity benefits.

Here we can sum up the main characteristics of female labour working in various sectors of economy as follows:

i) Low overall participation rate of women vis-a-vis men.

ii) Regional variations in female work participation rate.

iii) Large concentration of women workers in the agricultural sector and household industries in all states.

iv) Majority of women i.e. 87% are working in the 'informal sector' which is characterised by low wages, non-unionisation, bad working conditions and irregular work.

v) Women are mostly engaged in low productivity and lowpaid occupations. Wage discrimination is widely prevalent in such jobs. About 89% of women in rural areas and 69.48% of women in urban areas are unskilled workers.

The entry of majority of women from socially and economically disadvantaged section into the labour market as unskilled workers had to be understood in terms of the factors leading to it.

In the units on Women's Status and Women and Work of Block 4. ESO-02, you have learnt that not only that women's labour within the home is unpaid and undervalued but also traditional role expectations, differential socialisation of boys and girls and gender role stereotyping have an adverse impact on women's roles and educational opportunities. Society's perception of their contribution and value of caste and community also have a significant influence on women's labour participation.

Check Your Progress 2

i) Which are the activities where women exceed the number of male workers? Use about three lines to answer.

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ii) What are the employment characteristics of informal sector? Answer in about four lines.

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iii) Mention a few important occupations for women in the informal sector in the rural areas. Use about four lines to answer.

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11.4 LABOUR LAWS FOR WOMEN WORKERS

Invisibility of women's work, marginalisation of women workers by the process of development and their concentration in the unorganised or informal sector (about which you have learnt earlier) make it difficult for women to benefit from labour laws enacted to protect them and regulate their working conditions.

Labour laws are enacted to provide safe working conditions like health and maternity benefits prevent their exploitation and regulate wages.

Since majority of women are in the unorganised sector, we will discuss the legislation which affects this group of women workers.

11.4.1 Equal Remuneration Act

This Act states that there should be no wage discrimination between male and female workers when they are engaged in the same type of activity. In other words men and women would get the same wages if the nature of work is similar.

The Act applies to workers in the organised sector, it has been largely ignored in the unorganised sector. Women in agriculture, construction, household industry etc. continue to receive lower wages than men. However the Act has been effective in the organised sector, especially in plantations where nearly half the workers are women and also in mines and factories. Wage differences between the sexes have been abolished in these industries.

11.4.2 Minimum Wages Act

For workers in the unorganised sector, this law provides a mechanism for fixing up minimum rates of wages which should reflect the basic minimum needs of the workers.

While notifying minimum wages, certain types of work done by women are classified as 'light work done by women' and 'heavier work done by men'. This is one of the methods to fix lower wages for women.

In addition women in the organised sector are entitled to maternity benefits. Employers are also expected to provide creche where more than 30 women are employed.

Law and Women Labourers

11.4.3 Maternity Benefits Act

This Act provides that women workers are entitled to 24 weeks of leave with full pay during pregnancy. Usually the female worker is allowed to take leave for 4 weeks before the birth of the child and 8 weeks leave after the birth of the child. They are also allowed to take leave for 6 weeks for abortion.

It is usually being argued that one of the reasons for the decline in the employment of women in the organised sector is that the employers have to pay maternity benefits to female employees. Since the number of women employed in the organised sector is very small, the amount paid as maternity benefit is very low in comparison to other social security benefits paid to male employees.

The National Commission on Self Employed Women suggested that maternity benefits and child care should be recognised as a package and a fund should be created to provide necessary assistance to women. Various women's organisations have been demanding that child care should be included under the basic needs programme of the government and suitable steps should be taken to implement it.

Activity 2

Interview 10-15 working women engaged in the informal sector and find out if they are aware of any of the three Acts we have discussed. If possible exchange your note with your colearners at the Study Centre.

Check Your Progress 3

i) Write a note on Equal Remuneration Act in about four lines.

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ii) The Maternity Benefit Act provides that women workers are entitled to:

a) 12 weeks of leave without pay during pregnancy

b) 12 months of leave without pay during pregnancy

c) 12 weeks of leave with full pay during pregnancy

d) 12 days of leave with full payment.

11.5 WOMEN'S WORK PARTICIPATION : CHALLENGES AND RESPONSE

In recent years there have been significant efforts to organise women workers. Efforts have been also made by the government to launch various programmes. Let us discuss the efforts made and initiatives undertaken for the mobilisation and upliftment of poor women who form the bulk of the workforce in our country.

11.5.1 Mobilising and Organising Efforts

Increasing emphasis is now given to organisation and mobilisation of unorganised women workers in order to give them voice and collective strength for the improvement of their working conditions and wages. A few organisations like Self-employed Women's Association (SEWA), Ahmedabad, Working Women's Forum (WWF), Madras, Annapurna Mahila Mandal (AMM), Bombay and several grassroots organisations have mobilised urban and rural poor women workers in order to strengthen their bargaining capacities and improve their access to credit and other resources. SEWA is a trade union of over 40,000 poor women workers in Gujarat. WWF has a membership of 15,000 women and has now spread its activities to Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Women have struggled for land ownership, minimum wages, access to forest produce, water resources, rights of hawkers and vendors etc. The revitalisation of women's movement in the 1970s and 1980s, has resulted in an increasing awareness about women's rights and their participation in local and larger struggles.

Housing, water and sanitation are the other major concerns of poor women workers. They have also organised for legal and policy changes and against sexual exploitation of women workers. The Report of the National Commission on Self-employed Women, widely known as Shram Shakti has observed that "today we are witnessing the gradual rise of a movement of poor women organising on issues, asserting themselves, articulating their needs and bringing themselves to the forefront of our political consciousness……… It has been possible only because of many earlier movements and attempts to organise by these women." Such example are however, few and far between. Some of the trade unions and most of the political parties have also set up women's wing within their organisations.

The attempts of poor women to organise themselves are often met with strong oppositions by vested interests in both rural and urban areas. The National Commission on Self-employed Women recommended a strategy to promote organisations of women and suggested that the government should play an active and positive role by insisting that all government project, schemes and programmes for the poor should have a component of organising as this will help in buildings a people's base.

11.5.2 Institutional Efforts : Anti-Poverty Programmes

Anti-poverty programmes were launched by the Government in the Fourth Five Year Plan. It was much later in the Sixth Five Year Plan that a separate strategy was considered for employment and income generation for poor women. The report of the CSWI (1974) stressed the fact that the 'poor' are not a homogeneous group. Since then several studies have highlighted the unequal burden of poverty on women due to their familial responsibilities and the need to provide for the subsistence needs of women.

The major anti-poverty programmes in the country are as follows:

i) **Programmes for providing self-employment** through loans for productive assets. The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) has fixed a target of 30% women beneficiaries to be covered under the programme. In 1982-83 a separate programme for Development of Women

and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) was taken up to provide self-employment to rural women.

ii) **Programmes of wage-employment** like National Rural Development Programme, Rural Landless Employment Guaranteee Programme. The employment generated under this programme is mainly through public works programmes like repair of roads and construction activities.

iii) **Special Programmes** for tribal areas, hilly areas and drought prone areas.

iv) **Training Programme** for upgrading or imparting new skills for generating self-employment (Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment);

iv) **Distribution of surplus land to the poor**. In these schemes under the hand reform programme mostly male head of the households have been given land.

One of the major problems with anti-poverty programmes was that poor women, handicapped by illiteracy, socio-cultural factors (as most of them are SC/ST) and inability of these agencies to imaginatively plan and implement these programmes, could not benefit from these schemes. Due to predominantly male ownership of land and other productive assets, women were not able to give bank guarantee and take advantage of the credit schemes.

There were also programmes in identifying viable activities and adequate planning for economic programmes for women and giving them support in terms of technology, training, raw material and marketing of goods.

The government estimates of surplus land distributed to the landless poor show that a very small portion has been acquired and distributed except for West Bengal and Kerala. Most of it is uncultivable or needs lots of input like fertilisers, irrigation and good soil management etc. The land was distributed to the 'male heads of households' ignoring the fact that many households were headed by women and they play an important role in marginal and landless households. It is estimated that about 30-35 per cent of households are headed or managed by women where men have migrated to towns.

Check Your Progress 4

Tick mark the correct answers.

i)   Which one of the following is not an organisation involved in the mobilisation of working women?

  a)   Self-employed Women's Association

  b)   Working Women's Forum

  c)   Annapurna Mahila Mandal

  d)   None of the above.

ii)   The Committee on the Status of Women recognises that

  a)   poor women are a homogenous group

  b)   poor women are not a homogeneous group

  c)   poor men bear more burden of poverty than women

  d)   none of the above is correct.

iii) Which one of the following is responsible for not giving women sufficient access over the anti-poverty programmes launched by the government?

    a)   Illiteracy

    b)   Predominantly male ownership of land

    c)   Inability of the agencies to plan imaginatively

    d)   All of the above.

11.6   LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have acquainted you with the major problems of the women workers in India. The unit began with a broad discussion on the nature and extent of women's labour force participation in India. There we discussed the various categories of women labourers, nature of work done by women labour, and the socio-economic factors affecting their work participation. Problems of women workers working both in the organised and unorganised sectors are discussed in this unit. There are various labour laws viz. Equal Remuneration Act, Minimum Wage Act, Maternity Benefits Act. We also discussed these laws in relation to contemporary women's work participation in India. Lastly we discussed the efforts made to organise the poor women workers and the broad welfare measures undertaken to improve women's work condition and work participation in India.

11.7   KEY WORDS

Home-based Production	:	Commodity produced based on family labour mainly.
Self-employed	:	Those who occupied independently in their own economic activities are categorised as self-employed. They may be the cultivators, artisans, vendors, petty shopowners, businessmen etc.
Wage earners	:	Those who work to receive wage for their work from their employers are categories as wage earners viz., agricultural labourers etc.

11.8   FURTHER READINGS

Jose A.V.(Ed.), 1989. *Limited Options : Women Workers in Rural India*. Asian Regional Team for Employment Promoton, ILO : New Delhi.

Singh Andrea M. and Anita K. Vitanen (Eds.), 1987, *Invisible Hands: Women in Home-based Production,* Sage Publications: New Delhi.

SinghaRoy, D.K. 1992. *Women in Peasant Movements: Tebhaga, Naxalite and After,* Manohar; New Delhi.

11.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

i)   Women workers can be categorised under three broad headings: (a) Self-employed both within and outside home; (b) Wage workers outside home and (c) Unpaid family labour work on their own farm or family occupations like weaving, pottery and handicrafts etc.

ii)   a)   False

      b)   True

      c)   False

Check Your Progress 2

i)   According to a report prepared by the Government of India, Women out numbered men in the following activities: dairying, small animal husbandry and handloom.

ii)   Employment in the informal sector is characterised by lack of job security, low wages, long hours of work and unhealthy working conditions.

iii) Agriculture, dairying, fisheries, animal husbandry, khadi and village industries, handicrafts, sericulture, handloom etc.

Check Your Progress 3

i)   This Act states that there should be no wage discrimination between made and female workers when they are engaged in the same type of activity.

ii)   c)

Check Your Progress 4

i)   d)

ii)   b)

iii) d)

UNIT 12 LABOUR : CHILDREN

Structure

12.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through the unit you should be able to:

- Explain who is a child labourer;

- Discuss various reasons for child labour;

- Describe various sectors where child labour is employed;

- Narrate the conditions of child labour; and

- Explain the application of policies and legislations enacted for the regulation of child labour.

12.1 INTRODUTION

In this course there are two units on children. One is on child labour and the other (in Block 5 Unit 14) is on the general problems of children. This unit discusses the problems of child labour in India. It begins with a discussion of its definition, and then gives the estimates and social background of child labour in India. The nature of employment of the child labour in the rural and urban areas has also been examined in this unit. This unit also goes into the various constitutional provisions and legislations on child labour in India. And finally the unit tells you about the challenge of meeting the basic needs of children.

12.2 DEFINITION, ESTIMATES, LITERACY LEVEL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND

In this section we shall be discussing the conceptual aspect and social background of the child labour in India.

12.2.1 Definition

According to the Census of India definition a child worker is one who works for the major part of the day and is below the age of 14 years. There is no agreement about the definition of the 'child'. The 1989 UN Convention on the 'Rights of the Child' sets the upper age at 18. The International Labour Organisation refers to children as those who are under 15 years. In India children above the age of 14 years are old enough to be employed.

12.2.2 Estimates

Estimates of child labour vary widely. Children's work participation is higher in the less developed regions of the world them these of the more developed ones. While in 2000, the world average of the child work participation rate was 11.3%, their participation rates in the less developed regions and the least developed countries were 13% and 31.6% respectively. Child work participation has been eliminated from the more developed regions of the world. In India in 2000 child work participation was 12.1% (Children Data Bank 2001). As indicated there are varied estimates on child labour in India. The Human Rights watch (1996) estimates that there are 60 to 115 million working children in India. According to UNICEF this figures range between 70 to 90 million. According to ILO one third of the child labour of world live in India. The UNDP estimate says that there are more than 100 million child labour in India of which around one million work as bounded labour. The 32nd round of the National Sample Survey estimated that about 17.36 million children were in the labour force. A study sponsored by the Ministry of Labour and conducted by Opreations Research Group (1985) puts the figures of working children around 44 million. Recent studies also suggest that Indian has about 44.5 million child labourers of whom nearly 7.5 million are bonded labourers. According to another estimate by Asian Labour Monitor every third household in India has a working child in the age group of 5-14. It is thus very difficult to arrive at correct estimates of child labour because of wide variations in different studies.

A large number of child workers are in the informal sector and many are self-employed on family farms and enterprises. The work participation rate of children in rural areas is three times more than in urban areas. According to 1981 Census there were 6.7 million male children and 3.5 million female children working in the rural areas for the major part of the year who were recorded as main workers. Their work participation rates were 9.2 per cent for boys and 5.3 per cent for girls. After including marginal workers the participation rate increased to 10.0 per cent boys and 7.6 per cent for girls. In other words child work participation rate was substantial among rural children as compared to urban areas. In the urban areas the work participation rate (including marginal workers) was 3.6 per cent among boys and 1.3 per cent among girls between 5-14 years.

Child labour makes a very significant contribution in arid and semiarid areas where families have to use maximum resources in traditional rainfed farming systems for about 3-4 months during the rainy season. A lot of child labour is used in collection of goods viz., fuel, fodder, minor forest produce etc. Child labour is an integral part of farmers' adaptive methods to cope with seasonal demands for labour. These situations usually do not encourage the children to go to school for study. This is more so for the female children. However, it is very difficult to make a correct estimate of these child labour.

12.2.3 Literacy Levels

Most of the studies have found a strong correlation between low literacy levels and work partcipation rates. In rural areas only 4.1 per cent boys and 2.2 per cent girl child workers were literate. Similarly in urban areas 7.0 per cent boys and 2.5 per cent girl child workers were literate. The main reason for not sending these children to school is the opportunity costs to parents who lose the wages earned by the child.

Activity 1

You may have come across a number of child labour working in your locality. Collect information directly from them about their educational status/levels of literacy. Based on your findings prepare a note of about one page, on their levels of literacy. Also explain the major cause of their illiteracy. If possible, exchange your note with your colearners at the Study Centre.

Box 1

Gender Differentiation and Child Labour

The process of gender differentiation and division of responsibility begins early in our society. Most of the children out of schools come from disadvantaged sections, and the majority of them are girls, as their parents do not see the relevance of educating them. In most economically disadvantaged families, the greater the poverty the more aggravated is the situation of the girl child. The unequal access to education, health, and nutrition, as compared to boys in the family, further restricts their growth and development. The situation of wage earning girls in the informal sector or in home-based work is even worse. As an invisible worker she is also required to look after younger siblings and do all the domestic chores in addition to helping mother in her work.

A study of girl ragpickers in Delhi noted that all the girls interviewed were from families which has migrated from Bangladesh and West Bengal. Besides ragpicking they were also engaged in preparing match sticks, domestic work, collecting fuel and water. Four years old girls used to go with their elder brothers and sisters for ragpicking. They are prone to catch intestinal infection and skin diseases.

The industries which employ a large percentage of girl children are glass works, gem cutting and polishing, match stick factories and fireworks. In these industries their work conditions are very bad.

12.2.4 Socio-Economic Background

You have earlier learnt in Unit 12 of Block 1, ESO-02, about the nature and extent of rural and urban poverty in India. The problem of poverty in India has been described in terms of social classes and castes. In rural areas landless agricultural labourers, marginal landholders, and artisans constitute poor

households. Landless labourers mostly belong to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In urban areas the poor people live in slums or in temporary hutments or on pavements. The problem of poverty in India has also been discussed in terms of its magnitude e.g. according to official figures about 40 per cent people in India live in object poverty. Rural poor unable to earn a living often migrate to towns in search of work. The face of urban India is changing, as 40 million people including 6 million children are living in slums. Millions of children from these poorer households in rural and urban areas are forced to work at an early age to supplement the family's inadequate income. Child Labour is used as a survival strategy by poor households. Thus, India has the largest child labour force in the world.

Check Your Progress 1

i)   What are the reasons for child labour? Answer in about six lines.

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ii)   Who is a child worker in India? Answer in about three lines.

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12.3 CAUSES AND CONDITIONS OF CHILD LABOUR

Children, as we have seen, are employed in all types of work. We can examine the type of work they do in the rural and urban areas.

12.3.1 Rural Areas

Children work as wage earners, as self-employed workers and as unpaid family helpers. In rural areas children are often employed for grazing cattle, in agricultural activities, in home-based industries (bidi making, handlooms, handicrafts etc.). The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) analysis shows that the prevalence of child labour across India is related to:

i)   proportion (high concentration) of Scheduled Caste population

ii)   low levels of female literacy

iii)   low wage rates for adult workers

iv)   nature of (small) size of land holdings

v)   home-based production.

Higher wage rates for women had correspondingly lower participation of girls as they were retained by their families for domestic work. Hence the NSSO study also suggested that improving the working conditions of adult women and providing alternatives to employment of children, can reduce child labour. Various studies have shown that the number of child workers is large in rural areas. Most of the child workers are concentrated among the landless agricultural households, in agriculture and livestock activities and in home-based enterprises (food processing, weaving, handicrafts, bidi rolling, papad making etc.).

The demand for child labour is also determined by culturally prescribed division of labour by age and gender. Girls in the age-group of 10-14 work much harder than boys.

Child Labour

12.3.2 Urban Areas

In urban areas children work as wage earners in small industries and workshops such as bidi, match and fireworks, glass and bangle, carpet weaving, handloom, gem polishing, potteries, paper bags, plastic goods and fish processing. Match making and fireworks industries have a large incidence of working children of a very young age. They also work at construction sites, stone quarries or in loading and unloading operations.

They serve tea and food in dhabas (small roadside eating places and tea shops) and restaurants, sell vegetables and milk, work as domestic servants, car clearners and newspaper vendors. Children from slums also work as porters and casual workers.

Children, in both rural and urban areas work as unpaid family helpers in employers' homes in contract work done by families on piece-rate basis or in families' own farms or small enterprises. The child gets no recognition or money for the work done at home. Usually the work done at home is considered to be less exploitative but many a times child abuse and long hours of work in difficult conditions takes place within the family.

Studies conducted in several parts of the country invariably show that child labourers are required to work for longer period of time for wage; and they are usually paid less. They are to work in many places also under inhuman working conditions, even without the minimum security to life.

Activity 2

Collect information from 10 child labourers who have been working in your locality, on the nature of work done, working hours and wages received by them. Prepare a note on these and compare it with other students at your Study Centre, if possible.

A significant number of the child labourers in urban and metropolitan areas consists of street children. They are children who have no homes and they live on the pavements. In Delhi alone it is estimated that of the 22 lakh children, approximately 4 lakhs are working children and of these about 1.5 lakhs are street children. Often the harsh living conditions in rural areas and domestic conflicts force children to run away.

The run aways and destitute street children are the most vulnerable group of child workers. A study of child porters in a metropolitan city found that most of them came from large families with low family earnings. Violence was stated to be an important reason for leaving their homes. They mostly slept on the pavements or on railway platforms.

Most of the child labour of our country are in situation in which they are forced to work. They have to work not for their own survival alone but also for the survival of the members of their family. However, they have to work in very unhealthy and insecure work conditions which are detrimental to the total growth of a human being. They mostly remain illiterate and are sickly build. Today's children are tomorrow's citizen of the nation. Indeed, they are likely to grow up as illiterate, frustrated and unhealthy citizens.

As already mentioned, child labourers are from poor economic background. With the limited income they earn, it is not possible for them to satisfy their needs. Hence many of them resort to anti-social activities at a very low age. In the urban areas, taking advantage of their poverty, insecurity and ignorance as well many of the organised anti-social elements use these children for their crude purposes. Hence many of these children spend their childhood in despair. In long run, many of them become destitute children.

Every state, as a welfare institution, undertakes some measures for the prohibition of child labour as also for the well being of the children. Hence, it is essential for us to look into these provisions. In the next section we shall be examining these aspects.

Check Your Progress 2

Tick mark the correct answer.

i)   Studies have shown that the number of child workers is

   a)   large in rural areas

   b)   large in urban areas

   c)   equal in rural and urban areas

   d)   None of the above is correct.

ii)   Briefly state the types of work done by child workers as paid workers in urban areas. Answer in about six lines.

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12.4   CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS AND GOVERNMENT POLICIES

In post-independent India several institutional initiatives have been undertaken to deal with the issues of children. Let us examine these briefly.

12.4.1   Constitutional Provisions

Prohibition and Regulation of Child labour has received considerable attention in the last few decades. The Constitution of India, in Article 24, provides that no child below the age of 14 years shall be employed in any factory or mine or be engaged in any hazardous employment. Article39(e) and (f) of the Directive Principle of State Policy requires the State to ensure that 'the health and strength of workers, men, women and tender age of children are not abused' and 'children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy climate, and are protected against exploitation'. The Constitution also provides that the state shall endeavor to provide, within a period of ten years from its commencement, free and compulsory education for all children up to 14 years of age.

12.4.2   Committee on Child Labour

The Report of the National Commission of Labour (1969) and the Report of the Committee on Child Labour (1981) examined the causes and consequences of child labour in India. Following the Report of the Committee on Child Labour (1981) the Government appointed a special Central Advisory Board on Child Labour under the Ministry of Labour. The Board reviews the implementation of existing legislations and suggests further legal and welfare measures. It also identifies industries/occupations where child labour needs to be eliminated.

In 1975, after the National Policy Resolution for Children was adopted, a National Children's Board was constituted with the objective of creating greater awareness about children's problems, promote their welfare and review and co-ordinate educational health and welfare programmes for children.

12.4.3 Legislations on Child Labour

In 1881 the first legislation was passed for regulating employment of children in factories. The Indian Factories Act 1881 prescribed the minimum age for employment as seven years and the working hours not to exceed nine hours. The 1891 amendment raised the minimum age of employment to nine years and maximum hours of work to seven hours. The Factories Act, 1948 prohibits employment of children below the age of 14 years.

The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986 is the first comprehensive legislation which prohibits employment of children below 14 years, and in some cases 15 years, in the organised industries and in certain hazardous industrial occupations like bidi and carpet making, cloth dyeing and weaving, manufacture of matches, explosives and fire works, soap manufacturing, leather tanning and building and construction industry. However the bulk of children are employed in nonformal sector.

12.4.4 Problems of Implementation

More than 80% of working children are in rural areas in the agricultural sector. A large number of them work in the self-employed and unorganised sector such as domestic servants, children working in small eating shops, at construction sites or as porters etc. which are not covered by any protective legislation.

The government subscribes to the view that child labour cannot be abolished but can only be regulated. The 1986 Act is totally inadequate to deal with the problems of child labour as they are rooted in poverty. The 1986 Act prohibits use of child labour in hazardous occupations and processes. Employers bypass the legislation by either not maintaining the muster roll or framing out work to smaller units or to home-based workers. Most of the children work in small industries which are not covered by legislation. Approximately 40,000 girl children working in Sivakasi match factories are below 14 years of age. In the growing carpet industries in eastern U.P., according to non government estimates, more than 25,000 child labourers work. Because of poverty many of them have migrated there from Bihar etc. places.

From employers point of view children are a source of cheap and docile labour and they do not have any obligations. Some of the employers even claim that they employ them out of sympathy and thus help poor families to supplement their income. They feel that if not employed, these child labour would be involved in anti-social activities and many of them would die of starvation. Employment of children keeps the cost of production low through low wages and thus the margin of profit increases.

Several investigative reports and documentaries have highlighted the abuse of child labour in glass and bangle industry in Ferozabad, match and fireworks industry in Sivakasi, carpet weaving industry in Mirzapur etc. Recently, in a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court put a ban on the employment of children

in bidi manufacturing. Despite legislations, exploitation of child labour continues.

Check Your Progress 3

i)   Tick mark the correct box (true or false):

Article 24 provides for the employment of children below the age of 14 years.

True [   ]   False [   ]

ii) In India education is free and compulsory for children upto 14 years of age.

True [   ]   False [   ]

iii) Write in a few words, about the National Policy Resolution for Children. Use four lines to answer.

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12.5   THE CHALLENGES OF MEETING THE BASIC NEEDS OF CHILDREN

The United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the child sets universal legal standards of protection of children against neglect, abuse and exploitation at work as well as guarantees them basic human rights. The Convention contains 54 Articles which cover children's civil, economic, social, cultural and political rights. Yet millions of children are denied their 'right to life with justice and dignity', and are forced to work under subhuman condition because they are poor and deprived. They are 'children without childhood'. India had co-sponsored the UN General Assembly's Resolution on the International Year of the Child and was the first country to adopt a National Plan of Action. The theme for the International Year of the Child (1979) was 'reaching the Deprived Child'.

Universalisation of elementary education is expected to play a dominant and effective role in reducing child labour participation rate. However, it is the poverty which forces children to drop out from school. In order to develop his/her potential, a child has to be free from hunger, neglect, exploitation and abuse. Rights of children cannot be implemented through legislation alone, but will depend on a society's commitment to improve the quality of life and particularly strengthen the economic roles of women from the poorer households.

Labour Welfare : is it Myth?

Children are the starting point of any development strategy. The Government of India's National Policy on Children (1974) emphasised that children are a nation's supremely important asset and declared that the nation is responsible for their 'nature and solicitude'. It also states that 'children's programmes should find a prominent place in our national plans for the development of human resources so that children grow up to become robust citizen…. Equal opportunities for development of all children during the period of growth, should be our aim, for this will serve our larger purpose of reducing inequality and ensuring social justice."

Following the proclamation of this policy, a National Children's Board was set up in 1975 to ensure planning, monitoring and co-ordination of child welfare services i.e. nutrition, immunisation, health care, pre-school education of mothers etc. at the national level.

Despite these policy measures, the infant mortality rate in India remains very high (93 per thousand live births). Child mortality rates are higher for girls due to neglect and discriminatory treatment in terms of food, nutrition and health care. More girls than boys drop out of school or are not enrolled from low income groups as the girl child's labour is needed by the family to release her mother's work time.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has expressed their concern for the future of the girl child and suggested for the enlargement of the definition of the 'child' to include 14-20 age groups as the adolescent girl. However, this is neither reached by government programmes for children nor by those for adult women. The greater the poverty, the more aggravated is the situation of the girl child.

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The SAARC countries had declared the 90s the Decades of Girl Child to achieve a universal coverage of education and health services for children and ensure their survival, growth and development. Hence effective economic and social policies are needed for the low income groups to bring about a significant improvement in the quality of life.

Women and children welfare is never high on the agenda of national governments. Sustained political will and united action is required by the government, international agencies and non-governmental organisations to ensure the protection and development of children.

Check Your Progress 4

Tick mark the correct answer.

i)   Which one of the following is expected to play a crucial role in reducing the child labour participation rate?

a)   High wage

b)   Good work condition

c)   Universalisations of elementary education.

d)   None of the above.

ii)   The 1990s was declared as the 'Decade of the Girl Child' by the

a)   European Countries

b)   Latin American Countries

c)   African Countries

d)   SAARC Countries.

12.6   LET US SUM UP

The problem of child labour is related to the problem of poverty in India. Most of the child workers come from the families of landless agricultural labourers, marginal farmers, artisans and migrants living in urban slums. There are no reliable estimates of child labour. However child labour is used as a survival strategy by poorer households. Children work as wage earners, unpaid family helpers and as self-employed workers selling various products. They are also employed in several hazardous occupations like match and fireworks, glass and bangle industries, carpet weaving etc. despite the legislation prohibiting their employment in such occupations.

Providing education, health care, nutrition and better living standards to millions of deprived children is the biggest challenge facing the country. To deal with all these aspects in this unit we have covered the social background and estimates and the nature of employment of child labour in India. We have also discussed the constitutional and legal provisions made in India to deal with the issues of child labour. Lastly we have discussed the challenges that need to be faced in meeting the needs of the child labour.

12.7   KEY WORDS

Home-based Production   :   Items produced exclusively using the labour of the family members.

Informal Sector	:	In India production activity can broadly be defined as formal and informal. The formal sector is governed by statutes enacted by formal bodies. By informal sector we mean various economic that are performed but no record is maintained as per the statutes. Their activities are scattered throughout the county. Most of the self-employed persons belong to this category.
Piece-rates	:	Wage given for per piece of work.
Self-employed	:	Persons employed in their own enterprise.

12.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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12.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

i)   A significant proportion of Indian population live in poverty. Many of them are forced to migrate to urban areas in search of employment. Millions of children from poor households in rural and urban areas are forced to work at an early age to supplement the family's inadequate income.

ii) According to census definition a child worker is one who works for a major part of the day and is below the age of 14 years.

Check Your Progress 2

i)   a)

ii) In urban areas children work as wage earners in small industries and workshops such as bidi, match and fireworks, glass and bangle, carpet weaving, handloom, gem polishing, potteries, paper bags, plastic goods and fish processing. They also work at construction sites, stone quarries and in loading and unloading.

Check Your Progress 3

i)   False

ii) False

iii) In 1975, after the National Policy Resolution for Children was adopted, a National Children's Board was constituted with the objective of creating greater awareness about children's problem, to promote their welfare and to review and coordinate education, health and welfare programmes for children.

Check Your Progress 4

i)   c

ii) d

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UNIT 13 POVERTY AND ITS SOCIAL DYNAMICS

Structure

13.0   OBJECTIVES

After you have studied this unit you should be able to :

- describe poverty as a social problem;

- define poverty;

- explain the causes of poverty;

- discuss poverty and its consequences; and

- explain some poverty alleviation programmes.

13.1   INTRODUCTION

In the last block we talked about social problems pertaining to different types of labour, viz. industrial, rural, women and children. In this block we are going to talk about the problems related to patterns of deprivation and alienation. The first unit of this block has to do with poverty and its social dynamics. In

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this unit we define poverty and indicate categories for its measurement. Next we look into the causes of poverty, the vicious circle theory and geographical factors. Next we deal with the consequences of poverty . This includes a coverage of the culture of poverty, poverty in India, and inequality of income distribution. Finally we deal with poverty alleviation programmes which include the IRDP, employment programmes, women and youth area development programmes and urban areas.

13.2 POVERTY AS A SOCIAL PROBLEM

There has been poverty in all societies over a long period. However the 'extent' of poverty is more in some countries than others. Every society, however, affluent, has people who are poor. In the USA more than 25 million are said to live in poverty (12-15%). It was only in the 60s that there was recognition of the prevalence of poverty. A programme of 'War on Poverty' was then started in USA. In England, the Poor Law was passed in 1601 A.D. The law provided for the establishment of a work-house to provide work to those who were without any means to meet their basic needs. The conditions and the pay in the work-house were depressing. However, this an be said to be the beginning of the idea of public assistance to the poor. For example USA an affluent society has poverty too. But by and large these countries prosperous. In India however poverty is a major problem. Thus the concept of poverty is relative. It has been so much with us that not much attention has been paid to it. It was considered a normal aspect of any society. Till recently there has been little sense of social responsibility for dealing with poverty. On the other hand there has been a rationalisation of poverty. The poor were believed to be responsible for their own plight. Unemployment was considered a sign of laziness. The Karma theory suggested poverty was a consequence of wrongs or sins comitted in earlier births. When poverty has been voluntary it has been praised by society. In such a case one cannot call it poverty per se because it is part of a saint's life style. Mahatma Gandhi lived in 'voluntary poverty'. So did the Buddha. This is different from involuntary poverty where the necessities of life are in very short supply.

In recent times there has been an acceptance of poverty as a social problem. India with the coming of independence has made some efforts to raise the level of income of people living in poverty. In 1960 the concept of poverty line was emphasised by Dandekar and Rath (1971). Specific programmes of poverty alleviation were initiated in the 4th plan.

Systematic study of the poverty is a recent phenomenon. It has been suggested that there were four questions that need to be answered to understand poverty.

i)   What is poverty ?

ii)   What is the extent of poverty ?

iii) What are the causes of poverty?

iv)   What are the solutions ?

To (iii) one may also add what are the consequences of poverty? This unit will look at poverty using these questions as a framework. The effort will be to look at the sociological aspects.

13.3 DEFINITION AND APPROACHES TO POVERTY

In this section we shall be discussing various definitions and approaches to poverty. Let us define poverty first.

13.3.1 Definition

The approach to defining poverty has usually been in economic term – the levels of income, property and living standards. People are said to be poor when their income is such that it does not enable them to meet the basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing. The concept of "poverty line" used both in India and USA fixed an income. If people fall below this line, they are considered to be poor. The poverty line is arbitrarily fixed, hence there can be questions about it. Nevertheless, it does provide one way of determining who the poor are. Sometimes, the word "pauperism" is used to denote extreme poverty. It describes a category of people who are unable to maintain themselves. In recent times there are many dimensions that are considered in looking at poverty. It is no longer seen as purely an economic phenomenon. It is now realised that there are sociological, political, psychological and geographical reasons as well as attitudes or value systems that need to be considered to understand poverty.

We suggest that a minimum approach by government in any society which has significant inequality must provide for raising minimum levels not only of incomes but also self-respect and opportunities for social mobility and participation in many forms of decision-making. What is being stated here is that in dealing with poverty one is not only concerned with the income but also with the individual's political role, opportunities for his children and self-respect. Poverty is not only a condition of economic insufficiency; it is also social and political exclusion. Poverty is therefore to be seen not only merely in economic terms but also in its social and political aspects. The concepts and approaches to poverty have been dealt with in detail in Unit 12 of ESO-02. There we have viewed poverty as a level of living that is so low that it inhibits the physical, mental and social development of human personality. There it has been pointed out that poverty has been with human culture and civilisation since ages. In the beginning of the development of human society human beings were at a low level of social organisation and technological development and that the state of poverty was general in nature, faced by all members of society. In the process of evolution of human society there have been enormous developments in social organisation and technology. However the fruits of this progress have not been equally shared by all sections of society. There have been the rich and there have been the poor.

Thus poverty has been related to the prevailing socio-economic structure of the society. Experts on poverty have broadly used two approaches. First the nutritional approach. Here poverty is measured on the basis of minimum food requirements. Second, the relative deprivation approach. Here poverty is seen in terms of relative deprivation of a section of population against the predeveloped sections. We shall be discussing these matters in detail in our section on the measurement of poverty.

13.3.2 Approaches

There are various approaches for the measurement of poverty. The major factor considered in measuring poverty is income. The question that is asked is, what resources can a particular income command? Does the income allow for obtaining the basic necessities? Consequently, it has also been suggested that the actual intake of food should be the criteria. If an adult person is unable to have a certain number of calories (2,250) a day he is considered to be poor. The economic aspect usually involves the judgment of basic needs and is mentioned in terms of resources required to maintain health and physical efficiency. Such an approach is now being questioned. Among the basic needs are also include, education, security, leisure, recreation. When the resources commanded by average individuals are so low that they are in effect excluded from living patterns, customs and activities of the society, they are said to be living in poverty. Among the ideas which have an objective and dependable measurement of poverty is a concept of PQLI — (Physical quality of live index). The three indicators used in PQLI are life expectancy at age one, infant mortality and literacy. An index number is to be calculated for all countries based on the performance of each country in these areas. The worst performance would be designated by the in index number zero and the best performance by 100. In the 70s, the PQLI index for India was 43. Various important studies have been conducted in India for the measurement of poverty. For example Ojha in his study has used the average calorie intake as the basis for defining poverty. To him persons who are below the poverty line have an intake of less than, 2,250 calories per capita per day. Dandekar and Rath (1971) have estimated the value of the calories (2,250) in terms of 1960-61 prices. They observe that there would be variation in the extent of rural and urban poverty in terms of financial index. Here they suggested that whereas the Planning Commission accepts Rs.20/- per capita per month or Rs.240/- per annum as the minimum desirable standard, it would not be fair to use this figure both for rural and urban areas. They suggested a lower minimum of rupees 180/- for the rural population and a higher amount of Rupees 270/- per annum at 1960-61 prices.

i)   **Absolute Poverty**

Absolute poverty refers to the inability of a person or a household to provide even the basic necessities of life. It refers to conditions of acute physical wants, starvation, malnutrition, want of clothing, want of shelter, total lack of medical care. At times "absolute poverty" is also called "subsistence poverty", since it is based on an assessment of minimum subsistenc requirement. Nutrition is measured by intake of calories and proteins, shelter by quality of dwelling and degree of over-crowding, and the rate of infant mortality and the quality of medical facility. With the broadcasting of the definition of poverty it is also suggested that one should go beyond the physical need and also include cultural needs—education, security, leisure and recreation.

It is difficult to fully accept the argument. The nourishment needs of a farm labourer would be different from those of a clerk in an office. Similarly clothing requirements will also differ. If cultural needs are also included then measurements become more complex.

Box 13.01

The growth experienced after 1947 in India has been unparalleled in its own history. However compared to other developing countries it has been a slow and painful process. In the past 40 years mass poverty has also grown. It is not a question of pockets of poverty, but a very large number of people living below the poverty line throughout the country.

The poverty line is often defined as a minimum intake of calories (about 2400) to live and work per day. This measure therefore does not include other subsistence needs such as housing, clothing health and education. It is thus a real minimum.

ii) **Relative Poverty**

As there are difficulties in accepting "absolute poverty" fully, another term "relative poverty" has been developed. Poverty according to this concept is to be measured according to standards of life at a given time and place. The idea is that standards of society can be changing standards. Definition of poverty should therefore be related to the needs and demands of changing societies. In 1960 those who had a per capita income of Rs.20/- or less per month in rural areas were considered to be below the poverty line. In 1990 those who have an income of less than Rs.122/- per month are considered to be below the poverty line.

The term "relative poverty" also refers to the fact that different societies have different standards, hence it is not possible to have a universal measurement of poverty. Those who are considered poor in USA by their standards, may not be considered so in India.

Check Your Progress 1

i)   How do we define poverty? Give your answer in 5-7 lines.

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ii)   What is the minimum approach to poverty? Give your answer in 5-7 lines.

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13.4   CAUSES OF POVERTY

The Human Development in South Asia 1999 reveals situation of glaring poverty, inequality and deprivation in South Asia in general and India in particular. According to this report South Asia, with 23% of the world population is the planet's poorest region. About 540 million people, or 45% of the region's population, are living below poverty line, with daily income of less than one US dollar. India has the greatest number of the poor people with 53% people living below the poverty in 1999 (i.e. earning less than one US dollar a day. This report also points out that there are dramatic desperation and concentration of wealth and power among the richest members. The highest income earning layer of 20% own 40% of total income in the region while the lowest 20% owns only 10% In India the richest 10% earns 6 times higher than the poorest 10% earns 6 times higher than the poorest 10% of the country

Poverty has direct linkages with social and economic deprivations. Some indicators of these deprivations are highlighted below :

Indicators	South Asia	India
– Deprived to proper sanitary facilities	879 million	661 million
– Deprived of safe drinking water	278 million	178 million
– Child Birth death rate per 1,00,000 live birth	480	437
– Children under 5 years suffering from acute malnutrition	79 million	59 million
– Children not enrolled in Primary Education	50 million	35 million

There are many causes of poverty and we intend to discuss these in this section and subsequent subsections. First is the nexus between inequality and poverty. Then the vicious circle theory and finally geographical factors.

13.4.1   Inequality and Poverty

Earlier the effort was to study poverty by itself, that is, not relating it to the total conditions of the society. It has been suggested by a British social welfare expert that poverty should not be defined as income insufficiency, but the focus ought to be on the degree in inequality in the distribution of wealth in a society. Inequality is generated by the capitalist economy where wealth is concentrated in the lands of a few according to Marx. These few gain control of the means of producing wealth such as slaves, land and capital. They are able to influence the political process, by which social inequality is managed. Essentially poverty boils down to this fact that some people are poor because others are rich. Since the rich have greater political power than the poor, the government policy tends to favour them. The rich therefore tend to remain rich and the poor tend to remain poor. Marx claimed that all history is a history of class conflict; hence the situation can change only when the poor have greater political influence.

There are others who believe that there are different roles to be performed by members of a society. Some roles required long training, (doctors, engineers, lawyers, physicists etc.) They get higher rewards from the society. Others like vegetable-sellers, sanitation workers, taxi-drivers, typists, receive lower rewards. There is inequality but as it happens to maintain the society, it is considered functional. All these jobs have to be performed to meet the needs of the society.

13.4.2 Vicious Circle Theory

This theory argues that the poor are trapped in circumstances which make it difficult for them to escape poverty. The poor have inadequate diet which makes for low energy and hence poor performance in school and at work. Poor diet also makes them vulnerable to illness. They have poor housing and often have to go long distances for their work. They cannot afford or are not allowed to stay near the place of work. The circumstances combine to make the poor continue to be in poverty. Discussing the problem of poverty in rural areas of India a leading authority in rural development asks the question :"Does the policy in rural development considers integrated rural poverty?" Aspects of which include poverty, physical weakness, vulnerability, isolation, powerlessness. As this theory suggests the poor cannot get over their poverty. But it is difficult to accept such a deterministic view, a view suggesting that they cannot escape poverty. Sometimes this explanation of poverty is called "Situational Theory" in the sense that poor find themselves in a particular situation and have great difficulties in getting out of it, if at all.

13.4.3 Geographical Factors

Poverty is explained at times by the geographical conditions in which people live. The resources are scarce and people are unable to overcome the problems of lack of resources. The desert areas, the hill areas are good examples. In India, certain areas have been designated as drought-prone areas. Survey in these areas indicate that not only that the conditions are poor but in spite of hard work they are unable to overcome the situation.

Neither of these theories by themselves can explain the totality of the phenomena of poverty. They do however provide some analysis and understanding as to why poverty exists.

13.5 CONSEQUENCES OF POVERTY

As mentioned earlier the rich have influence to continue to be rich. In them there is a vested interest in the continuance of poverty. Poverty survives in part because it is useful to a number of groups in society. Poverty benefits the non-poor in general and rich and the powerful in particular. There are a number of functions of poverty:

i) Poverty ensures that 'dirty work will get done, there are many menial jobs that have to be done in society. It is the poor who take up such jobs.

ii) Poverty provides a market for inferior goods and services-second-hand clothes, stale food material, poor houses, and services from unqualified persons.

iii) Poverty facilitates a life style of the affluent. The work done by the cooks, gardeners, washermen, house cleaners etc. enable the upper lasses to lead a life of comfort.

iv) Poverty provides a group that can be made to absorb the political and economic causes of change. Technological development means more unemployment for the unskilled. Building of dams displaces the areas where the cannals are built. People with no land get no compensation. Policies which change, when there is a tight budget situation, are the welfare programmes. The rich and often the government itself has a vested interest in the continuation of poverty. As it tends to provide for the maintenance of the stability of the society.

Check Your Progress 2

1) What are the causes of poverty? Give your answer in 5-7 lines.

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2) What are the functions of poverty ? Give your answer in 5-7 lines.

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13.5.1 Poverty and its Consequences

Poverty and its consequences are discussed in the subsection below. First there is the culture of poverty which is discussed. We specify this discussion with poverty in India. Finally there is the inequality of income distribution.

13.5.2 Culture of Poverty

In the previous paragraphs discussions has been with regard to the causes of poverty. The structural or the vicious circle theory suggests that poor find it almost impossible to get out of the situation. How do people in such sad conditions manage to live? One explanation is that poverty forces them to develop certain patterns of behaviour enabling them to survive the sordid conditions of poverty. This pattern has been termed 'Culture of poverty'. The concept was developed by an anthropologist, Oscar Lewis, based on his studies in Mexico. He suggests that the poor develop a culture of their own, or rather

a subculture which is not part of the behaviour pattern or the value system of the society in which they live. Lewis says that the poor tend to be socially isolated. Apart from the family, no matter what other group they belong, their outlook remains narrow. They do not relate themselves to total society in which they live or to the poor in other parts of the country. The individual who grows up in this culture has strong feelings of fatalism, helplessness, dependence and inferiority. Their orientation is to living in present, they hardly think of the future. In brief it can be said that the culture of poverty is both an adaptation and a reaction of the poor in the marginal position. It is an effort to cope with the feeling of hopelessness and despair due to a realisation that it is almost impossible to achieve success according to values of the high societies. Their isolation also means lack of participation in the activities of the society-political, social and economic. There is also a suggestion that children are socialised into such a culture and hence are not willing to make use of opportunities to improve themselves they would feel insecure in a new situation.

There are many criticisms of this concept. One of the questions that is relevant is as to whether the culture of poverty applies to the rural conditions. Lewis develops the concept on the basis of his studies in slum areas. There is some evidence that the poor in rural areas also have developed a subculture, and defense mechanisms. Some feel that the poor do not participate not because of the culture that they have developed but because the larger society in a way prevents their full participation. Participation in social institutions requires certain levels of resources which the poor do not have (for example-participating in religious festivities). Another criticism is that the concept of culture of poverty tends to put the blame on the poor for being poor, rather than holding the social system responsible. Earlier there has been a discussion of how inequality is perpetuated in society. It also suggests that the culture of the poor is a consequence or a result of the poverty rather than the cause of poverty.

Activity 1

Visit the houses of a potter or a washerman or a dishwasher. Ask them regarding whether they have a social circle of friends. Try to find out all you can about the culture of poverty. Write down your findings in two pages and then discuss them with other students in the Study Center.

13.5.3 Poverty in India

There has been a substantial discussion of poverty in India sine about 1960 when Dandekar and Rath focused the attention on the number of people who were below the poverty line. At that time they had calculated that if the income per capita per month was less than Rs.20/- the person was said to be below the poverty line. Separate figures are mentioned for rural and urban areas (For Bombay the amount indicated is Rs.200/- per month in 1960). The amount is based on what is needed to buy the required calories of 2400 per person per day. For rural areas, the figures was RS.122/- in 1988.

There are various estimates of the number of people below poverty line in rural areas. In 1977-78 it was estimated that 51% of the rural population (252 millions) were below the poverty line. In 1987-88 it was estimated that about 45% (261 millions) were below the poverty line. Although percentage-wise there is a fall, but in absolute numbers there is an increase as the population has increased. Although there are different estimates, it is generally accepted

that there are substantial number of people living in poverty. (In the urban areas the number of people living in poverty). In the urban areas the number of poor in 1987-88 was estimated 77 million (38%); in 1990, it is estimated that in rural and urban areas together about 350 millions are below the poverty line.

Table 1: Poverty prevalence Ratios by Rural-Urban Location: All India and 14 Major States (1993-4 to 1999-2000)
(Percentage of Population Below the Poverty Line)

States	Rural		Urban	
	1993-94	**1999-2000**	**1993-94**	**1999-2000**
All India	39.36	36.35	30.37	28.76
Andhra Pradesh	27.97	25.48	35.44	32.28
Assam	58.25	61.78	10.13	12.45
Bihar	64.41	58.85	45.03	45
Gujarat	28.62	26.22	28.86	21.7
Haryana	30.52	14.86	13.4	13.79
Karnataka	37.73	38.5	32.41	24.55
Kerala	33.95	26.5	28.2	31.89
Madhya Pradesh	36.93	39.35	46.02	46.29
Maharashtra	50.21	50	33.52	32.16
Orissa	59.12	62.67	36.99	34.27
Punjab	17.61	14.24	6.79	6.74
Rajasthan	25.92	15.01	30.6	24.36
Tamil Nadu	37.27	39.37	37.83	29.82
Uttar Pradesh	39.08	29.87	34.23	36.39
West Bengal	54.15	56.16	20.97	16.74

Notes: State specific poverty lines for 1993-94 have been adjusted for inflation by reference to the Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Laborers (for rural population) and the Consumer Pries Index or Industrial Workers for the urban population.

Source: Sundaram, K. 'Employment and Poverty in 1990s: Further Results from NSS 55th Round Employment-Unemployment Survey', 1999-2000, Economic and Political Weekly, 11 August 2001, pp. 3039-49.

In recent years there has been a decline in the proportion of people living below the poverty line at the all India level. However, those are several regional variations among the state. Again in some of the state while the extent urban poverty has declined the rural poverty has increased, for example the state of Karnataka, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. However in the case of Haryana, Kerala, while rural poverty has decline urban poverty has marginally increased. In the case of Assam and Madhya Pradesh extent of poverty has in creased both in the rural and in the urban areas.

13.5.4 Inequality of Income Distribution

Income distribution is very unequal. The share of the bottom 20% is 4% of the total income in rural areas whereas the share of the top 10% is 36%. Similarly in urban areas while the share of the bottom 20% is 9% that of the top 10% is

42%. The situation is indicative of the wide gap between the rich and the poor. The consumption expenditure also shows the same pattern. While the top 20% of the population accounts for 42% of the consumption, the bottom 20% accounts for about 10%. The pattern of land distribution confirms the wide difference between "haves" and "have not". About 15% of the cultivators own nearly 50% of the cultivated land whereas 50% own less than 20%. There are questions about the exact figures–but there is general agreement of the overall pattern of maldistribution of wealth, income and consumption pattern among the people.

The maldistribution of assets leaves at least one-third of the population without effective means of satisfying their basic needs. The net result is that a large number of people lie just below the poverty line or above the poverty line. And a few keep on accumulating assets. Because of such a phenomenon, one wonders whether the gap between the poor and the rich can be bridged. Poverty is the result of unequal distribution of production assets, entitlements and surpluses reinforced by a power structure of closely knit economic, political and bureaucratic forces and vested interests. When discussing the causes of poverty one of the major ones mentioned was inequality. Poverty is therefore not merely an economic phenomenon but also has political and social ramifications.

13.6 POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMMES

Planning in India has always had some concern about high levels of poverty. The approach in the earlier plan has tended to deal with the problem indirectly i.e. increasing of GNP, land reforms, provision of services, minimum needs programme etc. It is in the 6th plan that a specific poverty alleviation programme was initiated. However, there is recognition that the problem is too deep to be solved by a specific programme. The VIIth Plan documents says "Poverty alleviation programmes have to be viewed in the wider perspective of socio-economic transformation of the country. The present strategy of direct attack on poverty through specific poverty alleviation programmes is justified on account of insufficient percolation of benefits to the poor from overall economic growth. It should be appreciated that the strategy of direct attack on poverty cannot be sustained and would not yield the desired results if the growth of the economy itself is sow and the benefits of such growth are inequitably distributed. The economic betterment of the poorer section can't be achieved without social transformation involving structural changes, educational development, growth in awareness and changes in outlook, motivation and attitude.

The specific programmes which are described here should therefore be understood in the perspective of the above statement. The programmes that are mentioned here were operative in the VIIth Plan.

13.6.1 The IRDP and Employment Programmes

The Integrated Rural Development Programme was introduced in the late 70s. The main objective of the IRD Programme was to evolve an operational integrated strategy for the purpose-on the one-hand of increasing production and productivity in agriculture and allied sectors based on better use of land, water and light, and on the other of the resources and income development of vulnerable section of the population in Blocks of the country.

The Integration is in terms of bringing various programmes which dealt with specific programmes or areas, together. For example: Small Farmers' Development, Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers, Drought-Prone Area Programme. The programmes were to help the poorest of the poor i.e. whose household income was less than Rs.4,800/= per year. If the cut off point for the poverty line is Rs.240 p.a. how can this amount represent the poorest of the poor? The specific activities were target group oriented. The programmes of special rise programme, operation flood, programme for handloom, sericulture etc. Steps were to be taken to increase the industries, services and business. The financial assistance consisted of subsidies and loans.

Unemployment is a major factor in poverty. In rural areas, agricultural labour has work available only seasonally. The rate of unemployment has tended to increase. In 1971 about 31/2million persons were unemployed. In 1983 it has risen to 4.5 million. About 30 million are registered in the Employment Exchange Centre all over the country. Employment Generation is therefore an important programme in meeting the problem of poverty.

Two programmes in these areas were initiated namely, National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP). In the later part of the 80s another programme Jawahar Rojgar Yojana was introduced. The NREP was expected to generate 300-400 million mandays per annum. The programme envisaged creation of durable assets such as irrigation canals, social forestry, soil conservation, roads, school buildings, panchayat ghars etc. The RLEGP was introduced with the objective of improving and expanding employment opportunities for the rural landless. It aimed at providing guarantee of employment for at least one member of every landless household up to 100 days, and also to create durable assets. Housing, and social forestry, were among the activities to be undertaken in these programmes. In the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana the employment was to build community halls, panchayat ghars etc.

Activity 2

Visit a rural area or a slum and try to collect information on the poverty eradication programmes initiated in these areas. Based on your information write a short note of about 20 lines on the impact of poverty eradication programmes in rural/slum areas. If possible, discuss your note with your co-learners at the Study Center.

13.6.2 Women and Youth and Area Development Programmes

The Programme entitled Development of women and child in rural areas was initiated as a Pilot Project in the early 80s. The purpose was to increase their income and also to provide support, services, needed to enable them to take up income generating activities. Employment, education and improvement of health was the focus for improving the status of women. Training for rural youth for self employment was also launched in the beginning of the VIth Plan. The target group was youth between the age of 18-35 from families living below the poverty lines. The number to be trained was 40 per block per annum. Stipends to the selected youth were provided. Efforts were made to provide training relevant to the needs of the geographical areas.

There are areas which are affected adversely because nature has not been bountiful to them, viz. drought-prone areas, desert areas, hill areas etc. The incomes in these areas are subject to great fluctuations. Various programmes have been initiated to help the poverty-stricken people in these areas. In DPAP areas, for example, productive dry land farming, livestock development, sericulture, were among the activities introduced. In the desert areas, the activities included afforestation, animal husbandry, exploitation of ground water etc.

The major emphasis in the urban areas was the environmental improvement of the urban slums. Pre capita assistance of Rs.300/- per month was provided in the infrastructure, roads, payments, water supply etc.

The description of the programmes is very sketchy. The purpose is only to provide a general idea of the approach of the government to meet the problems of poverty. There have been many evaluation studies of these programmes. Most of these are of the view that while there is some improvement in the situation, target set are far from being achieved.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Discuss poverty and its consequences. Use 5-7 lines for your answer.

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2) Discribe a poverty alleviation programme. Use 5-7 lines for your answer.

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13.7   LET US SUM UP

The unit is divided into various section to provide a conceptual and also a pragmatic view of poverty. Definition of poverty includes how poverty is measured. The causes and consequences of poverty have been described. In the last section of the unit the extent of poverty in India and the policies and programmes to overcome poverty have been briefly mentioned. Solution to problems of poverty needs a multidimensional approach. These are also discussed here.

13.8 KEY WORDS

Absolute Poverty	:	Absolute poverty refers to the inability of a person or a household to provide even the basic necessities of life.
Area Programme	:	There are areas which are not bountiful by nature. Various programmes have been initiated to help poverty-stricken people in these areas.
Poverty	:	This has been defined in many ways—mainly by a poverty line falling below which a person is called poor. Now sociological, psychological and political dimensions are also taken into consideration.
Relative Poverty	:	Poverty according to this concept is to be measured according to the standards of life at a given time and place.

13.9 FURTHER READINGS

Marickan S.J. (Ed) 1988. *Poverty in India*, Xaier Board : Trivandrum.

Swamy D.S. and A. Gulati 1986. From Prosperity to Retrogression : Indian Cultivators during the 1970's. *EPW*, June 21-22, p.A-63.

13.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Poverty is defined relative to a 'poverty line' and if people fall below this line they are considered to be poor. One drawback is that the poverty line is arbitrarily fixed, hence we can question it. However, it does provide a way of determining who the poor are.

2) The minimum approach to poverty is to try to raise to the minimum level all those who are poor. It is to try and raise the self-respect and opportunities for social mobility in many forms of decision-making.

Check Your Progress 2

1) There are many causes of poverty. The first of these causes is inequality of distribution of wealth in a society. Next is the vicious circle theory where the poor remain poor due to lack of funds. Finally the geographical factors were the area where people are settled is unproductive and hence leads to poverty.

2) There are a number of function of poverty. These are that :

   i) it ensures menial labour
   ii) inferior goods and services and purchased and manned by the poor respectively.
   iii) it facilitates the life cycle of the affluent
   iv) it produces a group that is made to absorb the political and economic causes of change.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Poverty has several consequences. One of these consequences is the culture of poverty. In such a culture the poor learn to survive in solid conditions of poverty. This subculture is not the same as in the society they live. Further the poor tend to be socially located often living below the poverty line.

2) The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was introduced in the late 1970s. The main objective of the IRD Programme was to increase yields in agriculture and allied areas based on land. It was also to develop the resources and income of vulnerable sections of society.

UNIT 14   CRIME AND DELINQUENCY

Structure

14.0   OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit you should be able to :

- discuss the notions of crime and juvenile delinquency;

- comment on the "dark figures" in crime and delinquency;

- explain the innate and environmental aspects of crime and delinquency; and

- describe the impact of the familial and social environment on crime and delinquency.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit (Unit 13) we have examined poverty and its social dynamics. In this unit we turn to crime and delinquency. We begin with notes on crime and interaction and go on to deal with juvenile delinquency and crime and delinquency. We examine in the next section crucial statistics of crime and delinquency in India. After this we turn to innate and environmental factors in crime. Among the environmental factors are mainly the family. Structural breaks within it include child care, poverty, arrest and conviction. Beyond this we go 'outside the family' and examine the family environment. This section includes analysis of slum neighbourhood, earning and schooling and impact of mass media. Finally we deal with the policy on crime and delinquency control.

14.2 CRIME AND INTERACTION

Whenever people get together to satisfy individual and group needs, they set limits and make rules to regulate behaviour. Wherever there have been rules and regulations, there have also been individuals who have not followed the permitted conduct.

Every society, in the process of growth, develops certain values and norms for expected behaviour. Some of these norms later get codified into laws. Their violations become punishable by the state.

The term 'crime' means a form of anti-social behaviour that violates public sentiment to such an extent that is forbidden by law. A crime is an act which the public regards as dangerous and condemns and punishes the perpetrator of such an act. Crime thus represents a specialised portion of the totality of undesirable behaviour.

There is a large field of unethical conduct which is not punishable by law. Such behaviour is left to the control of the public. The borderline between crime and unethical or immoral behaviour is little. Acts which in some countries are regarded as crimes, are viewed as only unethical in others. Only when such practices are considered dangerous enough to call for legislative action, they do qualify to be called crimes in any society. For example buying or selling liquor may be a crime in one state in India while it is not the same in other states. Excessive drinking, though considered unacceptable will not be a legal wrong, where drinking liquor is otherwise permitted. Failure to honour one's parents will be unethical but not a legal wrong i.e., crime.

14.2.1 Juvenile Delinquency

A crime is termed "juvenile delinquency" when committed by a young person under a certain age. The age of the juvenile delinquent is not consistently set around the world. In India, this age limit is set at **16 years for boys and 18 years for girls**. The other aspect in case of young persons is that there are certain behaviour which would not be considered criminal in nature if committed by adults, but they will be taken note of as crime if committed by youth. For example, a person below the age of 16 years who:

i) is uncontrollable by his parents or guardians by reason of being wayward or by being habitually disobedient.

ii) Habitually plays truant from school

iii) Lives without ostensible means of subsistence

iv) Habitually behaves in such a way as to endanger the morale or health of himself/herself.

All these types of juvenile delinquents can be dealt with by the police and courts.

14.2.2 Crime and Delinquency

Ever since society was organized and the codes of conduct were formulated, there have always been individuals who have violated these codes. Always, and everywhere, some juveniles and many adults have flouted the patterns of permitted behaviour. The increase in such behaviour has reached alarming proportions. These unlawful activities have become intolerable in many part of the world. In comparison, we in India may be considered somewhat fortunate. However, in absolute terms the loss of life, property, and the pain inflicted is reaching quite serious dimensions.

These days, on an average, **one** person is murdered every seventeen minutes. **Twenty seven** females are raped every day. A riot takes place every five minutes and **forty-seven** persons are kidnapped or abducted every day. A robbery or docoity is committed every sixteen minutes and three hundred and fifty three houses are broken into and burgled every day. And one theft takes place every minute and a half. The value of property stolen annually is in the range of three hundred and thirty five crores of rupees of which only about 1/3 is recovered by the police.

When we consider Indian Penal Code offences (like murder, rape, kidnapping, abduction, riot, robbery, burglary, theft, cheating, etc.), little more than twenty three lakh persons were arrested by the police during 1989. Additionally, there were about forty lakh persons arrested for offences under the Local and Special Laws like Prohibition Act, Gambling Act, Excise Act, Indian Railways Act, Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, Narcotics Act, etc. Out of these total arrests of sixty three lakh persons, juveniles accounted for about thirty six thousand —24,777 boys and 11,615 girls.

14.3 DARK FIGURES IN CRIME AND DELINQUENCY

Given below are the statistics from official records (Crime in India) but actually how many persons violate the legal norms in a given society, nobody can say for sure. Many authorities believe that official crime and delinquency figures reveal nothing more than the activities of control his agents, hardly anything at all about the "real" extent of criminal behaviour. Nonetheless, howsoever imperfect these may be, crime known to the police remains the best available index since it represents crimes reported to the police by citisens, or crimes discovered by them.

Table 1: Crime in India at a Glance

Incidence of Total Crimes in (00,000)	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	1997	1998	1999	2000
Total	N.A.	N.A	38.6	39.3	50.5	64.1	61.8	49.1	51.6
IPC	6.5	6.3	9.5	13.9	16.8	17.2	17.8	17.6	17.7
SLL	NA	NA	29.1	25.4	33.7	46.9	44.0	31.5	33.9
Rate*									
Total	NA	NA	701.1	569.8	594.3	671.2	636.7	497.8	515.7
IPC	NA	16.2	26.8	61.0	12.6	7.9	9.4	8.9	9.3
SLL	NA	NA	142.8	97.7	22.1	4.4	6.0	5.6	5.6
Incidence of Juvenile Crimes in ('000)									
Total	NA	NA	169.6	158.7	34.7	12.3	15.4	14.5	14.9
IPC	NA	16.2	26.8	61.0	12.6	7.9	9.4	8.9	9.3
SLL	NA	NA	142.8	97.7	22.1	4.4	6.0	5.6	5.6
Rate*									
Total	NA	NA	30.8	23.2	4.1	1.3	1.6	1.5	1.4
IPC	NA	3.7	4.9	8.9	1.5	0.8	1.0	0.9	0.9
SLL	NA	NA	25.9	14.3	2.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.5
Decennial Crime Growth									
Total	NA	NA	NA	1.8	28.4	28.3	18.7	-8.7	5.5
IPC	NA	-3.1	50.8	46.3	21.1	22.2	23.5	15.3	10.4
SLL	NA	NA	NA	-12.7	32.4	30.7	16.9	-18.2	3.1
Police Strength (in '00,'000)(Actual)									
Total	NA	NA	7.07	8.98	11.53	12.80	13.1	13.2	13.0
Civil	NA	NA	5.34	6.92	9.04	9.90	10.2	10.3	10.3
Armed	NA	NA	1.73	2.06	2.49	2.90	2.9	2.9	2.7
Decennial Police Growth	NA	NA	—	27.0	28.4	20.8	23.3	17.7	15.1
Density of Police Personnel (Per 100 Sq. kms.)	NA	NA	—	27.3	35.1	40.4	41.5	41.8	41.0
Police Strength (Per 1,00,000 Population)	NA	NA	129	131	136	134	135	134	129

* -Incidence per lakh (1.00.000) of population

NA – Stands for Not Available.

Population figures for non-census years are based on mid year provided by RGI office.

Table 2: Crime Snapshots - 2000

- 17.2 lakhs IPC crimes; 34.0 lakhs SLL crimes reported during the year, 0.4 per cent increase in IPC crimes; 7.9 per cent increase in SLL (Special and Local Laws) crimes over 1999.

- 1.2% decrease in IPC crime rate, 6.2 pre cent increase in SLL crime rate over last year.

- 3 IPC crimes, 6 SLL crimes reported on an average in 1 minute in the country.

- Among States, Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir and Assam were more violent compared to West Bengal, Punjab and Sikkim which reported low violent crime rate.

- NCT of Delhi reported highest crime rate (399.0) for all IPC crimes, 2.3 times the national crime rate of 176.7. The frequency of Violent Crimes in Delhi was comparatively lower (one case in 13 reported IPC crimes) compared to Tripura which reported 1 violent crime in 3 IPC crimes against National Average of 1:7.

- 6300 per cent increase in Importation of girls, 70.7 per cent in Counterfeiting, 24.5 per cent in Sexual Harassment cases.

- Punjab reported 1900 per cent increase in Sexual Harassment while Karnataka reported 746 per cent increase in Counterfeiting cases.

- Bangalore reported more than half (53.1) of Cheating cases among all cities.

- 79.0 per cent IPC cases were investigated and 78.4 per cent of them were charge sheeted. 18.3 per cent cases tried, 41.8 of them resulted in convictions.

- 30.7 per cent of trials completed within 1 to 3 years, 24.2 per cent completed between 3 to 5 years.

- Pondicherry reported the highest conviction rate for IPC crimes (91.9 per cent) as compared to national level rate 41.8

- 67.4 per cent Conviction in 'Sexual Harassment' cases followed by 48.1 per cent in 'Auto Theft' cases.

- 0.5 per cent share of Juvenile crimes to total IPC crimes increased by 4.3 per cent over 1999.

- Uttar Pradesh reported 20.7 per cent of Murder cases while 40 per cent of the victims of Murder by firearms belonged to Bihar state.

- On an average, 1.5 arrests per IPC case.

- 4.1 per cent increase in Crimes against Women. Highest crime incidence in Uttar Pradesh (14.0%); highest crime rate in Rajasthan (24.0) as compared to 14.1 at All-India.

- 960 per cent increase in cases of Buying of Girls for Prostitution, 49.2 per cent increase in Foeticide cases over 1999.

- 62.5 per cent of Importation of girls cases reported from Bihar State.

- In 87.4 per cent of Rape cases, Offenders were known to the victims; 30 per cent of these were neighbours.

- 19.3 per cent; Crime against Children; highest in Madhya Pradesh.
- 33.7 per cent of Child victims of Kidnapping and Abduction (upto 10 years age) belonged to N.C.T. of Delhi.
- 28.8 per cent; highest share in Crime against Scheduled Caste in Uttar Pradesh; 44.0 per cent, highest share highest in Crime against Scheduled Tribes in Madhya Pradesh.
- 1:7 national average ratio of Police Officers (ASI and above) to the subordinate Staff (Head Constables and Constables)
- Only 38.6 per cent of police force provided with the housing facility by the Government
- Only 5.9 per cent of lost/recovered motor vehicles co-ordinated.
- 11 per cent decline in Police fatalities; Accidents claim 56 per cent of them. Almost half (46.5%) of the deceased were young (18-35 years).
- 111 serving Police Officials committed suicide.

Source : National Crime Record Bureau 2001Crimes in India. Ministry of Home Affairs Government of India.

14.3.1 Police Reports

While the crimes discovered by police will depend on its efficiency, there are many reasons why people may be reluctant to report to the police. Some of these are :

i)   the offence may be trivial

ii) the police station may be far away

iii) the low confidence people have in the various features of the legal system (police, prosecution, courts, etc.)

iv) the fear of harassment from the criminal or his associates

v)   the offence may be of embarrassing nature to the victim (sex offences)

vi) especially in juvenile cases, neighbours may adjust payment for property damage with the parents of the offending child; storekeepers may stop a young shoplifter as he leaves the store and relieve him of stolen articles; many more types of delinquencies may be ignored by the observers, even by the victims, as a part of the process of growing up.

The phenomenon of 'hidden crime and delinquency' becomes more complex when we examine the results of 'self-report' studies. Though no such efforts seem to have been made in our country, in the West, researchers interviewed in confidence 'normal' school and college students about their deviant activities. The results showed that their behaviour was not very significantly different from those proportion of training-school youth admitted, to committing many types of delinquencies. They committed them more frequently than the school and college boys and girls.

Socio-economic levels were no barriers to such behaviours, although the 'official cases' were disproportionately from the lower strata. This should be understandable since the socio-economic status of the family has an important bearing on whether the offending youth will be arrested, convicted and

institutionalised, or treated otherwise. This may also confirm the memories many of us have of our own adolescent activities. Informal inquiry among one's classmates, friends, or guests at get-togethers, ordinarily brings out plenty of information about the occurrences in 'good' families of stealing, shoplifting, assault on friends, robbing the garden or throwing stones at passing trains, etc. For this sort of conduct they could have been arrested had there been anyone concerned enough to report it.

14.3.2   Causative Factors in Crime

What causes juvenile delinquency or adult crime? There is no simple or straightforward answer available. Although criminal behaviour sometimes has its roots in juvenile delinquency, many juvenile delinquents do not become criminals as adults. Further, many criminals have no prior history of juvenile delinquency. However, the range of offences, motivations and associated causative factors are much the same in both delinquency and crime and it may be appropriate to discuss them together.

Activity 1

Collect clippings on crime from the newspapers and magazines for four weeks. What do these clipping suggest regarding the cause(s) of crime? Write a note of about two pages on this and compare it with other student in the Study Centre.

What impels some people—children, women and men to break social sanction or any law? Efforts have been made by a number of writers and researchers to understand the factors involved and they have discovered many : physical, emotional, psychological and environmental. According to a renowned authority it has not been possible to assign a single universal source nor even two or three. Crime flows out of a wide variety of sources and usually from a multiplicity of alternative and converging influences. In all, about 170 distinct conditions have been encountered, every one of them conducive to misconduct which may lead to juvenile delinquency or crime in a few years. In any given case, amid all accessory factors, some single circumstance (or a few of them) frequently stands out as the most prominent.

Box 14.01

Without contending that they will inevitably cause delinquency or crime, it is now accepted that certain conditions are more favourable to this causation than others. For example, physical deformity, mental imbalance, mental deficiency, emotional insecurity, a slum environmental stimulation to crime, etc., are obviously more favourable to anti-social behaviour than their opposites. It is also true that any or all of these unfavourable conditions will not inevitably drive a given person to commit a crime in all circumstances. It is true that all seemingly favourable circumstances are no insurance against a person committing a crime. Hidden factors that tip the scale either way can never be eliminated from specific situations by all the theories of causation in the world.

In this sort of perplexing situation then, what we can say, at best, is that the area of unknown regarding human behaviour is quite substantial though some personal factors and some common social and economic conditions go hand in hand with the committing of crime and delinquency. And the impact of

these factors, and their varying combinations, differ greatly from one individual to another. In some cases the factors responsible may be more personal than environmental, whereas in other cases the reverse may be true.

Check Your Progress 1

1) What is juvenile delinquency? Explain in about five lines.

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2) Explain the causative factors in crime. Use about five lines for your answer.

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14.4 INNATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Let us now discuss the innate characteristics and environmental factors in some detail. Personal pathology consisting of physical factors like poor health, chronic diseases, physical deformities may cause an inferiority complex and impel the individual to seek for short-cuts to compete in this competitive world. Mental factors like low intelligence, neurotic or psychotic disorders may lead to exploitation or compulsive actions or deviant sexual gratification. There is the possibility of prolonged emotional and social withdrawal, the frustration culminating in an outburst of violent behaviour.

The emotionally mature individual is one who has learned to control his emotions effectively, and who lives at peace with himself and in harmony with the standards of conduct which are acceptable to the group. Many authorities believe that delinquency and criminality are the result of serious emotional imbalance or conflicts in personalities of individuals. They are at odds with the values and mores of their groups and typically offend the sensibilities of those closest to them. Thus, from the psychological point of view, individual exhibits a distorted personality; his personal whims are largely responsible for his antisocial behaviour and he is alienated from those in his immediate social environment.

14.4.1 Reality Versus Fantasy

Stated somewhat differently, since few persons have a completely satisfactory set of experiences from birth onward, or find life entirely to their liking in adulthood, the great majority of normal human beings create for themselves a

realm of fantasy in which they realise aspirations denied to them in actual life. But in all these normal cases reality occupies the leading role in their life interests and activities. On the other hand, those with emotional disturbances are unable to face reality, resulting in mental conflicts. Their life experiences, childhood onwards, might have been such that they have created mental reaction patterns that make it very difficult for them to meet adult responsibilities. They may have suffered from insecurity, rejection, severe resentment, harsh living conditions, professional failures, and a large number of other unfortunate experiences. This may make it extremely difficult for them to face realities of life and they get into conflict with law.

Physical abnormalities as mentioned earlier and many personality problems of children and adults are developed by physical handicaps or other such abnormalities. Short stature, skin blemishes, oversised ears, obesity, to refer to a few, are likely to cause serious personality or emotional difficulties in social relationships among those afflicted. They are usually avoided in social contacts and find themselves at a disadvantage in marriage opportunities, in securing employment, and in numerous other ways. The pent-up resentment may become acute and compensatory behaviour develops, in such a manner that various forms of alienation result. A youth may compensate for his feeling of inferiority by becoming a daring robber; one may get very angry and hit back his actual or imaginary tormentors. But we must not forget, however, that quite a majority of persons thus afflicted make an adequate adjustment in their world. This is particularly true of those who have grown through childhood with a set of understanding parents and friends who have not rejected them.

14.4.2   Health and Disease

As regards poor health or chronic diseases, we do experience that persons who are ill (or fatigued, for that matter) often are irritable, unreasonable, and less controlled in their behaviour than usual. Feeble minded persons and probably more easily led to crime and delinquency because they have less ability to think critically and very often cannot make satisfactory decisions and govern their conduct accordingly. Any mental disease condition which alters the individual's judgement or capacity for self-restraint will affect his behaviour which may take absurd, dangerous, or antisocial directions. Sex murders, arson, compulsive thieving (kleptomania) are instances of crimes which involve a neurotic element.

14.5   ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS IN THE FAMILY

There can no doubt be personal factors in every delinquency or rime situation in which an individual disobeys a law. But there are also social, economic and community factors commonly termed as environmental factors, which are important in stimulating antisocial activity. We usually think of the environment as merely the more apparent factors in the life of an individual– his neighborhood, the house he lives in, his family life, his school or workplace, and the interactions he has with his friends. These are of course part of the environment. But as a scientific concept, environment must include every stimulus that impinges on the individual's structure from the moment of conception–the moment the new life begins. The environment is represented

by every possible interaction between the individual and every other individual with whom he comes in contact. His reading, the motion pictures (even posters!), the radio, television–all are a potent part of the environment.

14.5.1 The Family

We may discuss environmental factors in two parts—'within the family' and outside the family'. Of course, these two cannot be put into separate compartment since there is a constant interplay among their influences on each other, on the one hand, and on the physical, mental and emotional states of the individual, on the other.

Family is the first crucial group in the life of the child. No one can say at birth that a child will inevitable become a delinquent nor can it be said that it will inevitably remain a law-abiding individual. Family is the first agency to nurture a child's social and personal growth. Within the family lie tremendous forces for producing or presenting antisocial behaviour. This is because it has almost exclusive contact with the child during the period of greatest dependency, which lasts several years. From a warm, loving, stable family, the child learns that people are friendly, worth knowing, and can be depended upon. When a family is cold, rejecting, or neglectful, the child learns distrust, hostility, or hatred of people.

'Under-the-roof' family situation and relationships can have many 'interacting' aspects. These are involved in the formation of a cumulative atmosphere, which may affect the behaviour of the child one way or the other. Take for example the broken home, which may have been caused by death, desertion, or divorce/separation. Mother and father are generally considered two wheels of a family cart which cannot move smoothly when either of them is removed or relations between them are damaged. There is a strong belief that broken family tends to rear children with sick personalities. Sick personalities have unusual difficulty confirming to social rules. A number of investigators have pointed towards the high incidence of structural breaks in the family backgrounds of delinquent youths.

14.5.2 Structural Breaks in Family

Structural break in the family, except in case of death, is always seen to be receded by daily parental quarrels. Much tension and disruption of peaceful living have quite a traumatic effect on the children. In some circumstances, the break in the family may, at times, improve the home atmosphere. Thus, the interpersonal conditions of family relationships are very important. In disharmonious families, children too often get 'pushed' from home because of these disturbances. They have to seek outside contacts for resolving feelings of insecurity and frustration, rather than being 'pulled' by outside attractions.

Through the years, perhaps, one of the most frequently heard causes of delinquency and crime is parental inadequacy, in their role of bringing up children. Socialisation is the process through which the child becomes aware of the basic values of his society and acquires the attitudes characteristic of it. Early family training influences strongly the inculcation of these values. The growing child must learn which action is permitted, which prohibited, and why. It must learn how to get along with others, children and adults. Depending upon the patterns of disciplining and guiding and also the role models at home,

the child will learn to handle the pressures and responsibilities of growing up inside and outside the home.

Mother nature, not doubt, has helped a lot by providing, in most instances, an affectionate bond between parents and the child. However affection alone is not enough to influence the conduct of children in a wholesome way. Affection has to be backed up by consistent control and appropriate disciplining efforts. When the parents are inconsistent in behaviour the child feels very insecure. This is because he or she never knows how his parents are going to react to what he does. He or She finds that they are at times angry, sometimes interested and other times disinterested, he or she is completely confused. His or Her problems are still more when each parent reacts in a completely contradictory manner, or when one condones, and the other punishes with undue harshness.

14.5.3 Child Care and Delinquency

Working mothers have often been blamed on the assumption that a young child needs the mother's constant attention to assure its proper emotional and physical development. This becomes very difficult when she is away for a substantial part of the day and returns with nervous and physical exhaustion. Additionally, in adolescent years when supervision becomes more essential, maternal employment reduces its effectively thereby unduly exposing them to unhealthy influences. However, the evidence available does not conclusively show significant relationship between delinquency and the mother being at work. What is important is not the employment of the mother but the lack of supervision. If the mother remains at home but does not keep track of her child he/she is far more likely to become delinquent than if she is away but has made arrangement for supervision by an acceptable substitute. Actually, a working mother's economic contribution can be an integrating and stabilising influence in the family. It may mean a desire for providing greater family security, continued education of children, a summer vacation, or any of a number of things thought to be of benefit to all members of the family.

14.5.4 Poverty in the Family

Poverty in the family has been another popular explanation advanced as a cause of unsocial conduct. It is true that in a great majority of apprehended children, the economic status of the family has always been found to be low. Our data also indicates that about two-thirds of them are from families which had monthly income of up to Rs.500/= and only 4 per cent belongs to families which had income of Rs.2000/= and above. But it is also true that the majority of the poor children do not become offenders. There are far more honest than dishonest poor people. Conditions of affluence are no sure guarantee against law violations by youth as well as by adults. Had that been so, the higher standard of living in the western world should have reduced their delinquency and crime rates. It has not only not reduced them but increased them!

Paradoxically, the trend towards increasing equality in the distribution of consumer goods generates expectations of further equality. And when expectations are raising faster than the standard of living, the greater availability of consumer goods makes for greater, dissatisfaction. In other words, many crimes may be traced to economic causes. However, it is not correct that most of those who committed the offence were driven to do it by hunger. It is the envy and ambition rather than hunger and cold that stimulate many petty crimes,

in the same way that greed urges on the big-time criminals. It is not the lack of clothing, but expensive clothing that tempts hundreds of girls to become call girls. Actually, it is not always the poverty but the contrast that is the disturbing element.

Check Your Progress 2

Fill in the blanks.

1) Amongst the important factors in delinquency and crime are the …………… and the…………………factors.

2) What are the environmental factors within the family? What effect do breaks within it have on crime and delinquency? Use 7 to 10 lines for your answer.

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14.6   SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Under the above heading we will briefly consider three main factors :

i)   slums or neighbourhoods that are quite low on socio-economic scale;

ii)   preparation for honest earning through schooling, and

iii)   the components of mass-media like newspapers or magazines, radio, television, and films.

14.6.1   Slum Neighbourhoods

With many people flocking to towns and cities housing has become a problem. Slums have grown to accommodate those who were shelterless, unemployed, low salaried, etc. Crime rates are higher in these deprived sections because it is here that life is not disorganised. There are extra pressures to make a living. People in slums also want the same good things that they see others enjoying. They find that they cannot get them honestly, often because of lack of education or opportunity. This situation creates frustration and tensions, and some of them develop an indifference to law, and do not see the necessity of obeying it. Many times crime becomes an accepted way of life, an alternative to the honest work which seems unavailable or out of reach, although it may be reorganised as desireable and preferable. They are also exposed to undesirable models around, those crooks who make good money through illegal means and appear respected in the locality, nonetheless. Crime and delinquency thus become attractive, but one again we an only see an indirect relationship. Thousands of people living in substandard homes do manage somehow to remain away from unlawful activities.

14.6.2   Earning and Schooling

Besides equipping the child to learn the skills to later earn a living, education means development of personality. Through education the child is supposed to be introduced to ideals and higher types of men who can cater to refinement and broader mental outlook. Generally speaking, middle-class families place a high value on ambition, on getting ahead. Academic achievement and the acquisition of skills that have long-range economic pay-offs are highly appreciated. They socialise their children to struggle hard, exercise self-control and postpone gratifications, and to plan for the future. In the poor class family children are withdrawn from school because family needs the economic aid of the child. He or she may also be needed to take care of the siblings in the absence of the mother while on work. Dropping out may mean more leisure. More free time may mean diminishing adult supervision as well as increased scope for developing undesirable associates

14.6.3   Negative Impact of Mass Media

There is a growing concern these days that the mass media which undoubtedly inform, educate and entertain have also become a source of contamination. It is frequently alleged that newspapers, film magazines, and comics, radio television and movies have been exerting an unhealthy influence, particularly on children. Sensational reports of criminal activity in newspapers by detailing the modus operandi (i.e., types and techniques), can affect readers in two different and dangerous ways. It may affect some highly suggestible persons, among whom are many young people, to commit similar crimes. Or it may create an attitude of indifference to law and asorder through the constant repetition and exaggeration of the details of the crimes. Motion pictures dealing with rime quite often show that it is easy to lie without working legitimately. They show that crime is exiting, even though it may not pay in the long run.

They indicate that there are methods of erading the law, at least in the early parts of the film. Young girls find from many movies that love can be thrilling, that good clothes make the woman. There are many scenes which are titilating sexually. Television has grown in importance and is reaching more and more home. Not that T.V. is objected to wholesale–the prime culprits are those films and programmes loaded with vice. Such violence or vulgarity are allegedly said to induce viewers to raping, prostitution, robbery, assault or murder.

Activity 2

Watch two or three commercial movies on T.V. or in the theater. What distinguishes the criminal (villain) from the hero in the movie? Do both break the law? Then why are they separated so far as their social status and meting out of legal punishment is concerned?

Write two pages for your answer and compare these notes with other students in the Study Centre.

In a country like ours where literacy rate is quite low, the impact of radio on general attitude and approaches to behaviour can be much more potent than the published material. However, what is objected to in radio programmes are generally the crime dramas and advertising of films with violence themes, especially the sponsored programmes by producer/distributors.

Many authorities, believe that mass media has been made too much of a scapegoat for the deteriorating delinquency and crime problems. Occasionally a person states that he got the idea for a crime from a newspaper account of the activities of another criminal. But the publicity given to the modus operandi of the criminal may make the public more aware of the techniques of such activities because sooner or later police do catch the offender. About the radio, television and films it is contended that millions of people, both young and not so young, listen or view these programmes. It would be absurd to state that most of them are adversely affected. It will mostly depend on the type of person who is listening or viewing their output. Stable people, juveniles and adults, will be little affected since such influence is transient. The unstable and socially maladjusted may be somewhat affected. However, because of this unidentifiable segment of population harsh controls should not be placed on the mass media. Mass communication media have become quite important in the present times for providing information and education as well as entertainment. The freedom of expression is quite a sensitive subject for democracies.

14.6.4 Poverty and Low Income

The vast majority of those arrested and convicted belong to poor economic status. We must bear in mind that they have no one to come between them– the police and courts, when the law is broken. They lack resources and the police as well as other law enforcing authorities are more severe on them. In actual terms the administrative processes of law enforcement are seen to be quite favourable to person in economic comfort. If two persons on different economic levels, have committed the same offence, the one on the lower level is more likely to be arrested, and convicted.

It will have to be accepted that the economic factors are quite important. Poverty can engender antisocial activities in many indirect ways. Unsatisfactory human relations have been frequently seen to emanate from destitution and poverty. The feelings of inadequacy, and emotional insecurity play their part upon the inner life of potential offenders. Poverty does cause undernourishment and poor physical health which, in turn, may lead to a lowered mental resistance to temptation. Poverty-stricken families have very little choice in the selection of residential locality. Usually they live in chawls or **jhugi-jhopadies** where living conditions are congested, playgrounds are either few or altogether absent. Here the living space is too small to afford the comfort and privacy required for the development of self-respecting personalities.

Evidently, because of poverty and poor circumstances, the options of the children get severely limited. In families, generally larger than the average, with little living space and inadequate facilities, the children are driven to seek their recreations on the streets. The daily budgeting battle, often giving rise to frayed tempers between husband and wife, when there is very little money to provide for the minimum basic necessities of food, clothing, education, etc., impose extraordinary strains on the family. The parents in such situations can take little or no interest in their children, although they have affection for them. Further, because of lack of money, very often the reasonable demands of school going children are mocked at and education suffers.

However, as mentioned earlier, we cannot say that environment of poverty

makes every one delinquent or criminal since there are plenty of people who come from such surroundings and remain law-abiding. But poverty does different things to different people. For some its pressures can be among the important causes of antisocial behaviour.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Tick the right answer.

   a) Slum neighbourhoods have a bad effect on crime rates making them rise higher.

   b) Slum neighbourhoods have a good effect on crime rates making them go down.

2) What is the impact of mass media on crime? Use about five lines for your answer.

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14.7 POLICY ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY CONTROL

Adult crime and juvenile delinquency are not present day phenomena : they have always existed and always will. What is possible is that their extent can be controlled. If one talks in terms of wider origins of criminal behaviour, one has to think of human nature which contains these impulses, and we require a set of restraining institutions, for internal as well as external controls. When the family, the school, the local community are not operating effectively or are disrupted, these impulses are likely to get a free play. Again, when the agencies or criminal justice system are inadequate or ineffective, some people get freed from moral sensibilities. More and better law enforcement, more and better prepared policemen and the application of men and scientific methods of crime detection are at least partial answers to the problems of crime and delinquency. If detections are almost certain, court proceedings swift and punishments appropriate, it is possible that many a person would avoid criminal behaviour. Also, there is abundant need to strike at poverty and its related ills to reduce that problem. Family relationships require strengthening and children should have wholesome and constructive outlets for play. They should be kept away from forming undesirable habits and companionships. Though it is not guaranteed, it can be said that the more opportunities for wholesome use of leisure in childhood, the less likelihood there is of indulgence in delinquency.

Concurrently, we will need to deal with those found guilty in a manner that they are helped to improve their conduct through counseling, education and furthering occupational skills so that they do not offend again. These intentions are being translated into action through the correctional institutions—children's

institutions, brothels, and prisons—as well as through non-institutional processes of probation, parole/license, and aftercare. However, much more inputs of qualified men and adequate material resources are required if we have to achieve substantial gains in reforming and rehabilitating juvenile delinquents and adult criminals.

14.8   LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed crime and delinquency. We started our discussion with crime and interaction, juvenile delinquency, crime and delinquency. We turned next to the dark figures in crime and delinquency. Beyond this we examined the environmental factors involved in crime and delinquency. These include the perception of the divide between reality and fantasy, and the facts of health and disease. The environmental factors discussed include family structure, breaks in family structures, childcare and delinquency and so on. We have also discussed the environment around the family, e.g. slum neighbourhoods and impact of mass media. Finally we turned to policy on crime and delinquency control.

14.9   KEY WORDS

Dark Figures	:	Figure or statistics which have not come to light.
Delinquency	:	A violation of norms and values often amounting to a crime.
Environmental	:	This could be within the family or outside it. The first is family environment of the family, e.g. slums.
Innate	:	That which is within a thing, or inherent to it, e.g. an innate talent for mathematics.
Slum	:	A very poor semi-permanent type of colony housing for very poor people.

14.10   FURTHER READINGS

Cavan, R.S. and T.N. Ferdinand, 1975. *Juvenile Delinquency.* J.B. Lippincott: Philadelphia.

Sarkar, C. 1987. *Juvenile Delinquency in India*, Daya Publishing House : Delhi.

14.11   ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1)   Juvenile delinquency is a crime which is committed by a young person under a certain age. This juvenile delinquent age is not the same all over the world. In India this age is set at 16 for boys and 18 for girls.

2)   The causation of juvenile delinquency is not a simple or straightforward set of facts. However physical, emotional, psychological and environmental factors are very important causes for such crime.

Check Your Progress 2

1) 'innate' and 'environmental'.

2) Family is the most influential group within which a person operates. When a family is friendly and warm it has a good influence. When it is cold rejecting and neglectful, the child begins to distrust and hate people. Structural breaks imply disharmony (quarrels) or imbalance (death of parents or one parent). Such parental inadequacy is a major reason for juvenile delinquency.

Check Your Progress 3

1) a)

2) Mass media which has a very powerful informative role to perform, can also be a source of contamination. Sensational reporting, with details of the crime can affect suggestible young people to commit the crime. Movies can show that crime pays. Many crimes including rape and robbery have been influenced by mass media.

UNIT 15   DRUG ADDICTION AND ALCOHOLISM

Structure

15.0   OBJECTIVES

Through this unit, the learner should be able to:

- Give an overview of the global situation of drug and alcohol abuse and addiction;

- Describe what are drugs and how the process of addiction occurs;

- Explain the causes of addiction;

- Discuss the relationship between drugs and crime; and

- Describe the broad rehabilitation programme and the importance of prevention of alcohol and drug abuse.

15.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit we dealt with crime and delinquency. In this unit we deal with drug addiction and alcoholism. Drug addiction and alcoholism are also deviant activities. We begin the unit by defining some important concepts like drug use and abuse, addiction, tolerance and dependence. We then deal with some important facts about alcohol, and narcotic drugs. The process of addiction is described both for alcohol and for drugs. Next, the causes of addiction are explored. Also the connection between drugs, crime and politics is discussed. Finally we deal with treatment, rehabilitation and prevention of drugs and alcohol abuse.

Addiction to drugs and alcohol is today a worldwide crisis. Both supply and demand for natural and laboratory-produced drugs is on the increase. Many new countries are being affected and the number of addicts is increasing. National productivity has suffered as a result. Most countries are now beginning to take serious note of the problem and are taking steps to reduce this problem. This unit presents the problem of drug addiction and alcoholism from the point of view of:

i)   the extent of the problem

ii)   the nature of drugs and alcohol

iii) the causes of addiction

iv)   the rehabilitation programmes

v)   the relationship between drugs and crime.

15.2 EMERGING PHENOMENON

If data on the world situation is examined, it is seen that alcohol, opium and cannabis are the main drugs abused (described in detail later). Men, more than women are their addicts. Over the last few years, addiction to heroin in particular (described later) is rising rapidly. Taking drugs by injection exposes the individual to a high risk of developing other diseases and health problems like AIDS (Acquire Immune Deficiency Syndrome) as well as of death due to some of these problems and due to taking an over-dose.

Earlier, addiction was restricted to only some groups but today there is a wide range of users. In fact, using many drugs simultaneously, e.g. combining narcotic drugs with alcohol, is increasingly practiced. Experimenting with drugs including alcohol is beginning at an earlier age than before. In India, the problem is steadily increasing, both among urban and rural populations, due to

i)   the growing prosperity

ii)   the stresses of modern life

iii) high economic and social disparity

iv)   an increasing sense of dissatisfaction with one's life.

If we look at drug and alcohol production we find that in almost all countries, drug and alcohol production has risen in spite governmental control. To fight the problem, (i) governments have begun strict vigilance, (ii) have often ordered destruction of poppy fields and laboratories, (iii) passed harsh laws against trafficking (i.e. dealing in drugs for financial profit), and (vi) have offered international co-operation on all matters related to drug use.

Governments are also encouraging preventive education programmes. Public awareness programmes are being taken up by governmental and non-governmental agencies for prevention of addiction. Such strong efforts, however, are not noticed in the case of alcohol which is a more socially accepted drug and has become a part of the daily life of people. Other than high taxes, in most countries, no curbs are placed on its production, sale and use. Alcohol continues to be a major income-earner for many countries. Alcoholism affects a larger section of society than drug addiction and affects all socio-economic sections. Today there is a strong demand to view alcoholism as a serious social problem along with drug addition.

It is important to understand why addiction is viewed as a phenomenon that alienates and deprives. Alcohol is today almost a part of life in many societies. Legalisation of some drugs is being seriously considered in some nations. Then how can addiction be seen as alienating and depriving? This is because of the havoc caused by the substance to which one is addicted. An addict is one

i)   who cannot function physically and psychologically without drugs or alcohol,

ii) who takes alcohol/drugs beyond the socially or culturally accepted level and at times even on an inappropriate place and time,

iii) who faces harmful consequences on his/her personal, family, work and social life.

Strangely this phenomenon only affects some persons who consume alcohol and drugs and not all. It is viewed as a deviation in most countries. It is necessary to understand why alcoholism and drug addiction occur. But first, let us understand the substance itself, viz. alcohol and other drugs.

15.3   DEFINITION OF IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

In the following subsections we are going to discuss the definitions of some of the important concepts like drug use and abuse, addiction, tolerance, dependence and so on.

15.3.1   What is Drug?

Any substance (usually chemical) which influences our bodies or emotions when consumed may be called a drug, i.e. it is a chemical substance, that, when put into your body can change the way the body works and the mind thinks. These substances may be medicinal i.e. prescribed by a doctor for reducing minor ailments or problems, e.g. lack of sleep, headache, tension, etc. but are also

i)   used without medical advice,

ii) used for an excessively long period of time,

iii) used for reason other than medical ones.

The use of such drugs is usually legal.

Some drugs may be nonmedicinal in nature. Their use is illegal e.g. heroin. Another group of drugs are those that are legal, but are harmful for the person if consumed in excess, regularly, e.g. alcohol. There are other substances like cigarettes, coffee, tea etc. which can be termed as socially accepted legal drugs. But these are not seen as harmful. Some drugs like alcohol, brown sugar, etc. are dangerous and addictive. It is these drugs that will be discussed in the next subsection.

15.3.2 Drug Use and Abuse

Using drugs to cure or prevent an illness or improve one's health may be called drug 'use'. Using drugs (medicinal/non-medicinal) in quantity, strength, frequency or manner that damages the physical or mental functioning of an individual, is termed as drug abuse. This means that even taking medicines in excess or too often or too long or for the wrong reasons or in the wrong combination implies drug 'abuse'.

15.3.3 Addiction, Tolerance and Dependence

Such 'abuse' leads to addiction, i.e. inability to lead a regular life in the absence of the drug/alcohol. It causes tolerance and dependence, and withdrawal symptoms may occur in its absence. Explained simply, tolerance means the need for more quantity and more frequent use of the drug to produce the same effect as before. Dependence can be both physical and psychological. Physical means that the body cannot function without taking the drug. Psychological dependence means constantly thinking about the drug and its use, continuously trying to get it and being emotionally and mentally unable to lead one's regular life without it. Some drugs like cannabis produce only psychological dependence while others like opium and heroin, produce both physical and psychological dependence.

If the drug consumption is suddenly stopped after one became a dependent on it, withdrawal symptoms occur. These range from mild discomfort to severe vomiting and convulsions, depending on the drug being used. All drug addicts may not experience the severe withdrawal symptoms shown in TV serials and films. The severity of these symptoms varies with.

i) The type of drug

ii) The amount regularly consumed

iii) The duration of taking the drug and the treatment provided in special medical units, where such withdrawal is usually managed.

Helping the person through 'withdrawal' from drugs (usually medially supervised) so that the person's body gradually gets released from the clutches of the addiction, is known as detoxification.

It is important to note that withdrawal symptoms make it, specially difficult to give up drugs as they are very unpleasant. The user is thus afraid to quit drugs, even if he/she knows the harmful effects of drugs on his/here life.

> **Activity 1**
>
> If possible watch a TV Serial or movie in which drug withdrawal symptoms are shown. Discuss them with other students in the Study Centre.

15.4 FACTS ABOUT ALCOHOL

There are many types of alcohol. Only one can be consumed, viz. ethyl alcohol (which is used in bear, wine, toddy, whisky, brandy, rum, arrack or locally prepared liquor). When alcohol enters the blood-steam, it circulates all over the body. Its effects depend on the quantity taken. They vary depending on the speed at which a person drinks. His/her weight and the presence of food in the stomach also make a difference. The parentage of alcohol in the drink and to some extent, some psychological factors like who one is drinking with are also important. Past experience of drinking and attitude to drinking is another pair of important variables. Alcohol affects the brain directly showing down its activities as well as those of the spinal cord. It acts as a depressant, i.e. it slows down responses. It gives the false impression of being a stimulant because it lowers inhibition and makes people lively. Contrary to popular conceptions, alcohol contains only empty calories, without any nutritive value.

Alcohol leads to dependence in the case of several people. This causes serious difficulties in occupational and family life. It also causes problems in financial areas, social interaction and physical and mental health of the addict and his/her family.

The short-term effects of alcohol consumption in small quantity can lead to a lowering of inhibition. It also leads to increased anger, forgetting of unpleasant events and a feeling of relaxation,. Regular, frequent, excessive and inappropriate use of alcohol leads to moodiness and loss of judgment. It leads to lack of control over body movements, and absence of alertness. It also creates loss of clarity of speech, absence of judgment and even chronic illness and death.

15.5 FACTS ABOUT NARCOTIC DRUGS

A drug is a substance that affects feelings, thinking or behaviour, initially due to chemical reactions in the brain. Alcohol is also a drug in that sense. Drugs are consumed by eating, smoking, inhaling, sniffing, drinking or by injections. Excluding alcohol, drugs an be classified as follow:

i) Stimulants–Drugs that increase the activity of the brain.

ii) Depressants–Drugs that slow down the activity of the brain.

iii) Hallucinogens–Drugs that change the way we see, hear and feel.

iv) Cannabis–Drugs like Ganja, Hashish and Bhang produced from the hemp plant.

v) Opiates or drugs obtained from opium or artificially produced substitutes which have opium like effects.

15.5.1 Stimulants

Stimulants are popularly known as 'uppers', pep pills or 'speed' as they give a feeling of excitement and elation. Amphetamines are the most common ones in this category. They are used often by students and sportsmen to increase

alertness temporarily and give instant extra energy to study, or participate in sport for long periods. The body can consume and tolerate large amount of its intake. Stimulants are usually swallowed. Cocaine is the most dangerous stimulant. Prepared from the coca plant in South America, Cocaine is snorted, i.e. inhaled through the nose. 'Crack" is another form of cocaine and heroin that is becoming increasingly popular in the West. Though cocaine is physically not addicting, it is highly additive psychologically. Some of its effects include anxiety, depression and fainting. Long-term effects include weight loss, feeling of being persecuted, loss of sleep and restlessness.

15.5.2 Depressants

Depressants are popularly known as 'downers'. Tranquilizers and sedatives fall in this category as they make us relaxed and calm. Usually they come in the form of tablets like Mandrax, Valium and Librium. Alcohol, which also falls in this category is dangerously combined with tablets; this combination can lead to death. Another type of depressant pill contains chemical called barbiturates which are often found in sleeping pills. These are stronger than tranquilisers and produce dependence. An over-dose to these can lead to death while sudden withdrawal of the drug can be dangerous, if unsupervised medically.

15.5.3 Hallucinogens

These drugs are often all "psychedelic drugs". They cause one to see and hear things in a highly detailed but different way. The type of company has a great deal of influence on the effects experienced. Intense emotions can be experienced, sensations can be heightened, and lack of awareness of time, place and identity can occur. LSD (Lysergic Aids Diethylamide) or 'Aid' is the best known of these drugs, the effect of which (called 'trip') can last for several days. A tiny amount of it is adequate to give a feeling of being 'high'. Mixed with 'speed', it can result in a 'bad trip'. Also, taken without proper guidance from others, it has been known to lead even to death. In India, 'datura' a plant, is known to have even a stronger effect than LSD, sometimes leading to mental instability. Datura can be smoked as dried leaves, eaten or drunk as an extract of the stems, roots and seeds.

15.5.4 Cannabis

Ganja, hashish (charas), and bhang are all known as cannabis drugs as they are produced from different parts of the hemp or cannabis plant. These drugs are the most widely used in the world. Ganja (known also as grass, pot, joint, weed, marijuana, reefer and dope, etc.) is smoked with cigarettes while charas is prepared in black 'golis' and is put into cigarettes for smoking or eaten with food. Bhang is usually smoked or drunk and even eaten in a paste form.

The immediate effects of smoking cannabis are a sense of relaxation, and a tendency to feel and see more sharply. It increases the current emotion and lowers inhibition. More strikingly it may hang one's sense of time and movement. It may damage one's ability to perform tasks that require concentration, quick action and coordination. It may produce psychological dependence. Its major danger, however, is that its consumption leads to taking of stronger or 'hard' drugs, after some time.

15.5.5 Opiates

There are three major types of opiate, viz. opium itself, heroin and morphine, all of which come from the poppy plant. Opiates can be natural or produced in the laboratory. Opium itself is commonly taken by villagers in India and does not always cause social problems, if rarely consumed. However, for many, it becomes an addiction, leading to mental and physical dependence.

Morphine which is used as a pain-killer is highly addictive. Heroin, however, is the most devastating laboratory product of morphine, and the most commonly used. Heroin is several times stronger than morphine, both in its effect and in the addition that is caused. Pure heroin is expensive. Therefore, its unrefined form viz. 'brown sugar', 'smack' or 'gard' had become very popular. Its initial price is cheap, making it easily available to the poor. It can be injected or smoked, but is usually "chased". i.e. it is placed on a spoon or silver foil and the smoke that comes out when the foils is heated from below, is taken in through the mouth. A highly addicting drug—both physically and psychologically—it is the most abused drug in India these days.

In addition to the above, there are other artificially produced opiates known as 'methadone' and 'pethidine', the former being used in the West to replace the more addictive substance i.e. heroin for addicts.

Box 15.01

Four thousand urban students on Saugar University Campus (M.P.) were studied through the network sampling technique. They shared a common liking for psychoactive drugs. Two typologies were developed. The first was 'Dependence typology' based on the frequency of drug use. The other was "Persistence typology" based on duration of use.

It was found that most drug users came from urban areas with an average age of 23.72 years. Most of them were Hindus. A vast majority came from service, agriculture and business backgrounds. Economically they were well off. Four-fifths of them were 'senior' students pursuing graduate or doctoral programmes. About forty per cent were in the Faulty of Technology. The rest were studying non-professional Courses. Alcohol and tobacco were fond to be the most widely used substances although cannabis and several other drugs were also used. The students were multiple drug users. Alcohol and tobacco users amounted to 46.7% of the sample. While 67.7% of the respondents were casual users, a little less than one third were habitual users.

Infection from non-sterile or unclean needles or water, and improper injecting causes several other health problems among the opiate-addict. Additionally, malnutrition and self neglect are typical of the opiate abuser.

Check Your Progress 1

i)   What is drug abuse? How does it differ from addiction? Answer in 8 lines.

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ii) What are the different types of drugs? Answer in 8-9 lines.

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15.6 THE PROCESS OF ADDICTION

It is generally recognised today that addiction is a disease and not simply a sign of moral weakness or of a lack of will power. It this section, the process of addiction to alcohol and drugs are examined separately, though the general path is similar.

15.6.1 Addiction to Alcohol

Alcoholism has been described as chronic illness which is characterised by repeated drinking of alcoholic drinks, to the extent that it

i)   exceeds customary use and social standards of a community.

ii)   interferes with the drinker's health and social or economic functioning and leads to continuing problems.

An alcoholic is unable to take note of these problems or if he/she takes note, is not able to stop drinking completely.

Alcoholism has been described in the following way:

i)   It is a disease by itself and not just a symptom of a psychological problem. The disease itself causes psychological and physical problems, which can be handled, only if the alcoholism itself is treated.

ii)   It is a progressive disease, i.e. in the absence of treatment, it worsens.

iii) It can be a terminal illness, i.e. if untreated for medical problems like cirrhosis, the person can die.

iv)   It is a treatable disease, i.e. it can be checked or its progress stopped with proper treatment, which aims at totally giving up alcohol. An alcoholic thus cannot drink one in a while, i.e. he/she cannot become a 'social drinker'. This is so even if he/she has remained sober, i.e. without alcohol, for many years. Even if he/she takes a small quantity of alcohol he/she will return to frequent drinking.

As a progressive disease, it goes through various phases. The signs of these phases are described below:

i) **Early Phase**

   a) Need for more alcohol for the same effects, as earlier.

   b) Avoid stalk about alcohol due to guilt.

   c) 'Blackouts', i.e. forgetting all that one did under the influence of alcohol.

   d) Preoccupation with drinks, i.e. thinking of how, when and where one can get the next drink.

ii) **Middle Phase**

   a) Loss of control over the quantity, time and place of consumption.

   b) Giving excuses for one's drinking to others and self.

   c) Grandiose behaviour, i.e. doing things beyond one's capacity, e.g. spending too much or showing off.

   d) Aggression through words and action.

   e) Guilt and regret.

   f) Temporary periods of giving up drink.

   g) Changing the drinking pattern, e.g. changing the type of drink, the time/place of drinking, etc, to limit one's drinking, which does not give any positive results.

   h) Problems in social relationships and increase of problems in family, job and financial matters.

   i) Morning drinking in some cases in order to handle the hangover i.e. the feeling of illness and unpleasant physical symptoms the morning after an evening of heavy drinking.

   j) At times, the alcoholic may seek help for alcoholism at this stage.

iii) **Chronic Phase**

   a) Decreased tolerance i.e. now get 'drunk' even with a very small quantity.

   b) Physical complaints.

   c) Binge drinking, i.e. continuous drinking for days together.

   d) Keeping a constant watch over the quota of one's drinks, due to fear of being without a drink.

   e) Criminal behaviour to get alcohol and ethical breakdown, i.e. unable to live up to social values.

   f) Paranoia or suspicious feelings that everybody is against him/her.

   g) Loss of sexual desire/functioning in men which increases their suspicion about their wife's fidelity.

   h) Fears of simple things, e.g. being alone.

   i) Lack of motor coordination, i.e. shakes and tremors, prevent him from performing simple acts.

j)   Hallucinations, e.g. imagining voices speaking, seeking what does not exist, or feeling sensations in the absence of external stimuli.

k)   If alcohol is discontinued, severe physical discomfort and pain follows.

l)   Either death or mental illness at the final stage.

15.6.2 Addiction to Drugs

Addiction to drugs is similar to alcohol addiction, in terms of its characteristics. The stage of addiction to drugs are also similar and are described below.

i)   **Early Phase**

a)   The amount of drug and the number of times it is taken, goes up.

b)   The person begins to spend more time and money on drugs and less on other activities in life.

c)   Thoughts about drugs and the need to have them become important.

ii)   **Middle Phase**

a)   The person needs the drug in larger quantity than before to feel well, i.e. addiction occurs.

b)   Loss of control over drug use in spite of repeated efforts and decisions to stop or reduce the taking of drug.

c)   Begins to hide drug supplies.

d)   Problems in all areas of life, e.g. educational, work, family, etc.

e)   Neglect of personal hygiene.

f)   Staying away from friends and earlier interests.

g)   Change in personality.

iii)   **Chronic Phase**

a)   Total loss of control over drug use.

b)   Almost constantly under the influence of drugs.

c)   Needs people to attend to own needs, e.g. eating.

d)   Remains only with other drug taking persons.

e)   Possibility of early death.

Drug addition thus leads to changes and deteriorations in behaviour, and social life, as well as in mental faculties like judgment, thinking and emotions.

15.7   CAUSES OF ADDICTION

Addiction is a complex phenomenon that research indicates is likely to be caused by a variety of factors rather than a single one. It was earlier believed that people who were of a certain type, viz. deviant were more likely to become addicted. There is no fixed type of personality which is addiction prone. Some factors may however, create a favourable environment or the development of addiction, while some factors may make it more difficult to give up addition. These are looked at in the following sub-sections.

15.7.1 Physiological Causes

It has been found that if both parents of a child are addicted, the child has greater chances of developing addition. While this does not mean that children of all addicts will become addicts, it suggests a greater possibility. Alcoholism, in particular, tends to run in the family, suggesting that the predisposition to be an addict may be inherited. However, several other factors may also effect the development of the problem, viz.

i)   amount of drug taken and frequency

ii)   the route of intake (injected drugs and more addicting)

iii) the availability, access and price

iv)   the influences in one's environment, other than familial.

Several other physiological factors are believed to contribute towards the development of addiction , e.g. in the case of alcoholism, nutritional deficiency, dysfunction of different body system, e.g. endocrine system, etc. However none of these have been conclusively proved.

15.7.2 Individual or Psychological Causes

For several years, addition has been viewed as a mental abnormality, caused by individual problems. Studies have indicated that addicts are insecure people. Many addicts report symptoms that range from mild to severe mental disturbance. However, it is not clear whether mental disturbance causes addiction or addiction causes mental problems. Whatever the relationship, there is enough evidence to indicate that addicts suffer from deep personality problems, feelings of inadequacy, dependency, powerlessness, isolation and low sense of self-respect–Childhood-related problems are observed among addicts as well as current stresses before the setting in of addiction.

It is also argued that addiction is the result of learning. After taking drugs initially, there is a pleasurable feeling or experience. This acts as a reward, and may lead to a continuous increase in the intake. Thus, initial experience, if pleasant, may lead to addiction. However, the generally believed theory is that some personalities are more prone to addiction than others.

15.7.3 Sociocultural /Environmental Causes

Several theories are offered today which claim that addiction has sociocultural origins. People in societies that view that consumption of drugs and/or alcohol a acceptable, and where drugs are easily and cheaply available are likely to have high consumption of drugs/alcohol. In some tribal societies, the consumption of alcohol is a part of religious rituals and ceremonies. Such regular consumption may cause some people to become addicted. This does not mean that only availability and acceptance encourages addiction. In societies where this consumption is not accepted, some people turn to drugs/ alcohol because they suffer normalessness. Youth often take drugs as a rebellion against adult norms and values. The cultural defiance theory thus, indicates that drug addiction develops because of these emotional and social ties, with a nonconventional group.

To add to this is the factor of social acceptance of alcohol and milder forms of

drugs in certain sections of society. In India, tradition has accepted the use of alcohol, bhang, ganja on certain religious and social occasions like marriage, death, celebrations, etc. and more so among certain sociocultural groups. Today, the social consumption of alcohol in particular has risen in all sociocultural groups and it is considered to be a sign of social prestige to drink. In certain Western countries, taking alcohol is socially the norm and taking pills to reduce pain or improve performance, in the regular practice.

The legal status of the addicting substance is also an important factor in determining the incidence of addiction. Whether a culture accepts the consumption of a drug or punishes it, is also believed to be closely related to the extent of addiction in that culture. Thus, both legal and cultural approval of drugs are believed to increase rates of addiction. However, if milder forms of drugs are legally permitted, the number of persons addicted to "hard" drugs will reduce. Such persons hold that classifying all drugs into one broad category has had a negative impact on attempts at preventing addiction.

Among young people, growing up is a stage of proving oneself to one's peer i.e. those in the same age group, who help to shape one's sense of identity. Since ability to tolerate alcohol is equated with one's manhood, boys often begin to consume alcohol and at times drugs at a young age, due to peer pressure.

As in the case of age and cultural background, occupation too has been found to be related to addiction. Persons in jobs that create stress—physical and/or mental are known to become addicted. Those prone to addiction thus include:

i)   persons in conservancy jobs, morticians and morgue workers, ragpickers, etc. whose job is associated with unpleasant activities,

ii) those performing excessively exhausting, monotonous, laborious work e.g. load-carriers and porters, drivers, etc.

iii) persons in competitive target-oriented jobs, where many deals may be struck around alcohol, like marketing and sales, etc.

Family influence is believed to be another important environmental factor in addiction. Imitation may occur if the family has an adult addict. Other factors that operate are:

i)   the aggravating of stress by the family at periods of transition, e.g. adolescence,

ii) the absence of reasonable parental control.

iii) a disunited and dysfunctional family.

Peer group influence in initiating drug abuse and encouraging it to the point of addiction is even more decisive, as mentioned earlier. Socialisation determines the extent to which people choose to conform to the larger social norms or to break the social bonds and choose deviance, living a life of addiction.

Different cultures provide diverse means to their members of gaining satisfaction and of handling tensions. If a culture provides many healthy ways of reducing tensions, and of gaining pleasure, e.g. sports, creative arts, rituals and ceremonies, etc., especially to young people and those under physical or mental stress, they are less likely to turn to alcohol or other drugs and thus be less prone to addiction.

Sociological theorists offer other explanations as well. The theory of strain holds that people turn to drugs and alcohol because social conditions in their environment do not provide them adequate opportunity for achievement. This is particularly so for lower socio-economic groups and other socially disadvantaged groups.

It is also believed that people, because of their consumption of alcohol and other drugs and life-style become labeled as "deviants", tend to become dependent on drugs and/or alcohol, as these become the most important aspects of their lives.

It, therefore, is clear that several sociocultural, psychological and physical factors can contribute towards alcoholism, often in combination, rather than singly.

Check Your Progress 2

i) What are the four characteristics of alcoholism as a disease? State the answer in about ten lines.

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ii) How is family influence one of the causative factors in addiction? Answer in about nine lines.

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15.8 DRUGS, CRIME AND POLITICS

Addiction poses a danger not merely to the health of people but also a law and order, and national security. It has serious implications for the larger society.

Most countries regulate the production, consumption and sale of drugs through laws, that range from being mildly discouraging to highly punitive. However, drug production and selling (trafficking) are big business. The product is attractive and customers keep demanding more. Quite naturally, criminal organisations run drug trafficking business.

They do it, ruthlessly, cutting down all attempts at restricting their activities. When governments make strict laws, traffickers go into temporary hiding but carry out hidden campaigns against the 'harmful' effects of government policies. When laboratories that process the drugs are identified and destroyed, new or mobile ones appear. Corruption, bribery and violence often leading to death are not uncommon in the field of drugs, crime and politics.

Consumption of drugs itself, often leads to crime of both, petty and serious nature. Desperate for a 'fix', i.e. a single dose of the drug to enter his/her body, an addict will not hesitate to steal. He/She will cheat or sell his/her belongings or even kill somebody. Addiction also influences people to commit violent crimes due to the chemical condition created in their body. However, one needs to condemn even more strongly the big time drug traffickers. They are usually camouflaged by the small-time peddler or 'pusher' as he/she is known. The latter is often an addict himself/herself who sells drugs and is always looking to create new converts to drug-abuse, to support his/her own drug-taking habit. The traffickers in turn, are ruthless business men, interested in easy and big money. They are difficult to hunt down as they often have links with the underworld of crime, money and power. Large trafficking organisations use schemes that disguise the real source of their earnings viz. drug-selling via bogus corporations in countries, like Hong Kong, and Switzerland. These countries are quite far away from drug-producing countries.

By 1985, most of the 81 government which submitted annual reports to the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs reported the existence of illicit drug trafficking. Well-established routes exist for the distribution of drugs, e.g. some countries are used for sale, some for transit, others for production. However, drug addiction rates are high in all the three types of countries.

Seizures of drugs by the authorities are on the increase but they represent the tip of the iceberg. However, nations are coming together.

i)   to plan strategies to prevent international drug trafficking,

ii)   to reduce production, and

iii) to lower the general public attraction for drugs, through harsher penalties and prevention programmes.

To conclude, it must be noted that while there is a united and strong effort to combat drug production, sale and consumption, no such serious attempt is witnessed in the case of alcohol. A source of revenue for most governments, alcohol is largely controlled through the ban on advertisements or public endorsements on the mass-media. However, in India itself the contradictions in the policy are glaring—prohibition is a valued ideal but many state governments earn an important portion of revenue from alcohol licences and sale.

As a drug, alcohol is equally if not more addicting and dangerous as other drugs. Drunken driving leads to many deaths. Addiction to alcohol can lead to

involvement in criminal activities. It destroys families and individuals and causes industrial losses and accidents.

It is thus unfortunate that most governments hesitate to look upon it as the most damaging drug and thus public enemy number 1.

Box 15.02

The goal of education on drugs is to diminish the use of drugs. This goal could attract moralists, legal groups and politicians in their role as legislators. The problem that we face is that in a medical sense, why should we probhit drug use? Again some variety of "high" has been used ritually since ages. This use of psychotropic agents is not easy to ban.

The prevention of drug abuse aims at a middle range of action by

i)   reducing drug victims

ii)   removing the harm of the drug

iii) providing an easier reconciliation for the ex-addict.

All the goals are easier articulated than put into practice.

15.9   INTERVENTION : TREATMENT, REHABILITATION AND PREVENTION

It is fortunate that addiction is a treatable disease. Like a physical illness, it requires some medication. However, this medication does not cure addiction. It can be used to encourage appetite, build up stamina and strength, handle withdrawal symptoms and recover from other illnesses developed due to the addiction. The aim of treatment is basically to give up alcohol or drugs totally (abstinence) over a period when relapse (or a slip into taking alcohol or other drugs) will occur at sometime or the other as a natural event.

This phase begins after detoxification i.e. the period during which the patient is medically supervised and managed, through his physical withdrawal from the substance. During this phase, psychological help via counseling to the patient and family, individually, in groups, on couples or in the family is given. This is aimed at overcoming problems in the area of job, finance, recreation, family and daily living. The focus is on changing attitudes, improving life-styles and restoring the place in society that the addict had lost. This is done by helping the ex-addict to locate a job, be accepted in his family and society, take up recreation and hobbies, etc. Related emotional problems need to be handled as well as concrete details of daily living, e.g. managing money, and finding alternative way to relax.

Various methods and resources are being used for the above phases. Physical management may be organised in hospitals (special/general), special centers or even at homes, under guidance. Psychological help is provided in :

i)   professionally run places like hospitals, general hospitals, mental hospitals, private hospitals, or units specially meant for de-addiction, i.e. moving away from addiction.

ii)   institutions (day-care or residential) run by recovering addicts and/or professionals,

iii) by Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous fellowships of recovering. Addicts that help others and self to stay sober and to help others to achieve and retain sobriety or to remain 'dry' i.e. stay away from the addicting substance.

The entire process of helping addicts to physically, psychologically and socially cope with situations that are likely to be encountered after detoxification to find one's place in society, so as to take us one's duties and fulfil one's rights may be described as the process of rehabilitation. Vocational placement or integration thus, forms an important aspect of this process, which may be organised via income-generating projects, and job placement services.

To sum up, the goals of rehabilitation may be defined as follows:

i)   total abstinence

ii)   improving one's physical condition

iii)   taking up responsibility for one's behaviour

iv)   developing faith in onself, others, and a higher spiritual power

v)   learning to develop a healthy self concept and understanding oneself

vi)   developing socially acceptable and meaningful goals in life

vii)   developing internal control

viii) resuming one's education, job and social roles

ix)   re-entering the family.

Activity 2

Read Section 15.9 carefully and list the reasons why the sale of drugs is difficult to control. Now write some points on what steps are needed to reduce the sale of drugs in our society.

All of these goals and stages are difficult ones. In view of the number of known addicts and the large number that remain camouflaged, the available therapeutic services in most countries are inadequate. Just as identification and building the motivation of an addict is a difficult task, so is handling relapse (which is very common) and providing aftercare. Vocational placement is even more difficult, especially in view of the social stigma and, in many countries, limited resources.

The task of preventing drug abuse, thus, becomes a matter of paramount importance. For this, one needs to reduce both the supply and demand, i.e. ensure that drugs and alcohol are not sold or are not available easily (supply) as well as convince people to stay away from them (demand). Adequate facilities to keep people away from drugs are needed on the one hand, e.g. recreation facilities, employment services etc.

On the other hand, uniform and strict laws against the sale of drugs and their implementation are needed. Education of vulnerable groups (i.e. those most likely to turn to drugs) on the problems of addiction and life-skills (i.e. abilities to cope with life's regular and special problems), can help to keep them away from drugs. Time, effort and money spent on preventive programmes will be of immense value in curbing addiction.

Check Your Progress 3

Tick mark the correct answers

i)   Who among the following are not responsible for the increasing use of illicit drugs in society.

    a)   Western music singers

    b)   Drug traffickers

    c)   Peddlers of drugs

    d)   Government policy-makers.

ii) The goals of the rehabilitation of addicts are:

    a)   To take up one's education, job, family and social roles.

    b)   Total abstinence.

    c)   Self-confidence and self-control

    d)   All of the above.

15.10   LET US SUM UP

This unit began with a description of the worldwide situation on drug and alcohol abuse. It then described in detail what drug and alcohol mean and explained the difference between key concepts like abuse, addiction, alcoholism, dependence, tolerance and withdrawal. The details of different drugs and the process of alcoholism and addiction were then explained. The physiological, psychological and sociocultural causes of alcoholism and addiction were then described. The unit ended with a discussion on drug and crime and of the important areas of treatment, rehabilitation and prevention in addiction and alcoholism.

15.11   KEY WORDS

Addiction	:	Inability to lead a regular life in the absence to use of the chemical substance; is defined as a disease.
Alcohol	:	A drug that is addictive and affects the way the body and mind works.
Alcoholism	:	A chronic illness involving excessive and repeated drinking beyond customary use, such that it interferes with work, family, social and economic life of person.
Cannabis	:	Drugs produced from different parts of hemp plant.
Dependence	:	The body cannot perform its normal functions without taking the drug (physical). One constantly thinks about the drug, its use, how to get the drug and one is unable to emotionally lead a normal life without taking the drug (psychological).

Depressants	:	Drugs that slow down the activity of the brain.
Detoxification	:	The process through which the person's body gradually gets used to being without drugs.
Drug	:	Any chemical substance which when put into the body affects the way the body works and the mind thinks due to chemical reactions in the brain.
Drug Abuse	:	The use of chemical substances (medicinal and non-medicinal) in an amount, strength, frequency or manner that damage the physical or mental functioning.
Hallucinogens	:	Drugs that change the way we see, hear and feel.
Opiates	:	Drugs obtained from opium or artifical substitutes that have opium-like effects.
Rehabilitation	:	The stage after detoxification when one is helped to take up responsibilities and enjoy one's rights in society as its functioning member, which the addicts had been deprived of, when addicted.
Stimulants	:	Drugs that give a feeling of excitement as they increase the activity of the brain.
Tolerance	:	The need for more quantity of the drug and frequent use of the drug to produce the same effect from the drug, as earlier.
Withdrawal Symptoms	:	Painful physical reactions ranging from physical discomfort to severe vomiting and cramps, when the drug consumption is suddenly stopped, in the case of an addict.

15.12 FURTHER READINGS

Singh, Gurmeet, 1984. "Alcoholism in India", in Alan and D.A. DeSouza (ed.) *Psychiatry in India*, Bhalani Book Depot, Bombay : pp.240-251.

TTK Hospital. 1999. Addiction to Alcohol and Drugs : *Illustrated Guide for Community Workers*, TTK : Madras.

TTK Hospital. 1989. *Alcoholism and Drug Dependency*, TTK : Madras.

15.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

i) Using drugs either those prescribed by a doctor for medicinal purposes or others, in a quantity, frequency, or manner that damages the physical or mental functioning of an individual is called drug abuse. This abuse in turn leads to addiction, i.e. inability to live life without drugs.

ii) The different types of drugs are :

a) stimulants, i.e. drugs that increase the activity of the brain. (Amphetamines)

b) depressants, i.e. drugs that slow down the activity of the brain. (Alcohol is a depressant). e.g. Vatuim.

c) hallucinogens, i.e. drugs that change the way we see, feel and hear. e.g. LSD.

d) cannobis, i.e.drugs produced from the hemp plant. e.g. Bhang, Charas.

e) opiates, i.e. drugs produced from opium or producing effects like opium. e.g. Smack, Heroin.

Check Your Progress 2

i) The four characteristics of alcoholism as a disease are:

a) It is not just a symptom of a psychological problem but is a disease by itself, causing physical and psychological problems of its own.

b) It is a progressive disease i.e. it worsen if untreated.

c) It can be a disease that if untreated leads to death.

d) It is a treatable disease, i.e. it can be checked with proper treatment.

ii) The family may increase the stresses at certain periods of stress in life, e.g. adolescence, leading to addiction. Excessive control or absence of control by the family may also be a causative factor. A family that is disunited and in which communication is not healthy can also influence the member to turn to drugs and alcohol. Imitation of an addict in the family may be yet another factor leading to alcoholism/addiction.

Check Your Progress 3

i) b

ii) d

UNIT 16 VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM

Structure

16.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this unit is to enable you to :

- explain the concept of violence and terrorism;

- discuss the underlying causes of violence and its changing patterns;

- examine the relationship between political violence and maldevelopment;

- describe ethnicity and violence; and

- narrate violence against weaker sections.

16.1 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit we described and analysed drug addiction and alcoholism, and now we are going to analyse violence and terrorism. First of all we will analyse the concept of violence and go on to analyse that of terrorism. We then examine the causes of violence and terrorism. Following this we will discuss politics and terrorism. Related to the above and examined next is violence in the context of maldevelopment. After this is discussed ethnic identity and violence. An aspect of this theme is state violence and human rights. Next come the measures to deal with violence and finally steps to tackle terrorism. Let us now turn to the beginning of our unit.

16.2 CONCEPT OF VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM

Violence is as old as the history of mankind. In mythologies and legends it is presented as some thing linked to the beginning of history and always looked as deeds of heroes. Historically, violence is considered as a "human phenomenon" Violence, as defined in the Dictionary of philosophy is "the illegitimate or (at all events) illegal exertion of force. It is a function of the evolution of the democratic spirit". For violence is a phenomenon opposed to freedom and happiness; it must be fought. But it remains an aspects of human, non-animal behaviour and it is some times the last resort against violence itself. In other words violence is an encroachment on the freedom of others. Violence is the use of force in order to gain from the individual or the group something which they do not like to give away of their own free will.

Rape for example is always conspicuous and is considered a total form of violence, because it is obtained by force. Violence is horrifying but also fascinating. This is because it enables the strong to establish a profitable relationship with a weaker person or group without incurring much loss to themselves.

Violence itself has many meanings. However a recent study (Mackenzie, 1975. 39) defines violence as "the exercise of physical force so as to inflict injury on or cause damage to persons or property; action or conduct characterised by this, treatment or usage tending to cause bodily injury or forcibly interfering with personal freedom."

Violence is considered to be 'pathological' behvaiour.

A three-tier typology explains violence in terms of:

i)   turmoil, e.g. riots, political strikes

ii) conspiracy e.g. small scale terrorism, political assassination

iii) internal war, e.g. highly organised political violence.

The causes of violence include:

i)   The frustration anger theory feels that the anger produced by frustration causes violence.

ii) Relative deprivation theory (Gurr, 1970) points out that deprivation is a spur to action.

iii) It is believed that a revolutionary outbreak of violence occurs when frustration due to lack of achievement manifests itself. They are often fueled by generated expectations that have failed.

iv) Some scholars talk about systemic frustration. This is experienced by societies as a whole. These frustrations lead to social change.

v)   Other scholars feel that lack of viable political institutions does not allow for control of violence particularly when there is social change. Traditional and modern societies are less prone to violence than transitional ones. Revolutions and insurrections are common in transitional societies.

All these theories are based on the postulate of stable political systems. They also look for stability than change. Moreover they do not deal with decolonisation which is very important in the present context.

Decolonisation generates tremendous violence. As Fanon has pointed out violence can both be a catharsis and a harbinger of change. For Fanon (Fanon, 1965) the colonised man finds freedom in violence. It is viewed as a cleansing force.

Though violence has existed within society from time immemorial, yet in recent years the emergence of the problem of terrorism has become a burning issue. The headlines of newspapers, news bulletins on television and radio broadcasts tell us how people were shot dead, injured, or kidnapped, planes are highjacked with many passengers, are looted and so on. The photographs portrayed the killed or injured. They display property destroyed, and arms and ammunitions in varying quantities seised from the terrorists etc.

During the last three decades the problem of terrorism has increased manifold. Terrorism has been defined in several ways. In United States it is defined as "Those acts of violence or threat, aimed at a state or organisation with the intention to damage its interests or obtain concessions from it." Another definition is that "Terrorism is the threat of violence, individual acts of violence or campaign of violence designed primarily to instill fear to terrorise."

It is better to explain the definitions that we have given with some examples of terrorism as they will describe it better. In 1953 Dec. 17, as car bombing took place outside Harrod's in London, six people were killed and ninety four were wounded. Paul Karanaph of Belfast was charged with conspiring in this attack. He had conspired five times before. This was an IRA (Irish Republic Army) bombing and randomly aimed at Christmas shoppers, and not directly political. The idea was to underline the IRA fight and to demand withdrawal of England and Northern Ireland.

Another care was the Maoist guerila movement Shining Path of Peru. From 1980 onwards they have involved themselves with attacks on the whites in cities and on Police Stations. They have been blowing up power lines, and raiding attachments as well.

The guerillas number is uncertain—anywhere from hundreds to thousands. They have been known to take over enclave villages. They stage trials which they call "People's Court". They have executed administrative personnel in these villages.

The military campaign against them, launched by President Belaunde Terry resulted in many casualties. However even after four years the numbers of the Shining Path seem to keep growing.

Terrorism is an ancient practice. The terrorists using fear as the key have often been successful in manipulating and intimidating large numbers. The effects of violence are not usually predictable. Terrorists have various motives. They say their fight is against inequitable distribution of income. However most of them are little more than bandits and are in it for the spoils. It is also a way out of personal frustration. Some terrorists are also pathological cases deriving pleasure from killing innocent people like K030 Okamoto, the surviving terrorist of the Lydda Airport Massacre.

Terrorists use shocking and outrageous methods. One wonders what would happen if they get hold of unclear weapons.

From the foregoing discussion it may be possible to term certain activities as terrorist activities. These are:

i)   use of threat or violence to commit murders, arson, highjacking, sabotage etc.;

ii)   political motives behind an operation or act;

iii) to terrorise and coerce the government to achieve certain goals;

iv)   select important targets, and

v)   they have no limits for their activities.

16.3   CAUSES AND PATTERNS OF VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM

Terrorism and violence are destructive social phenomena. They are caused by various interrelated social factors. Violence and terrorism are having specific patterns in different types of societies. In the following subsections we shall be taking to you on the causes and patterns of this social phenomenon with special reference to India.

16.3.1   Causes

As regards causes, studies in America show that nature provides us only with the capacity for violence. It is social circumstances that determine whether and how we exercise that capacity. Studies also show that violence and instabilities is more prevalent in countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America which are undergoing rapid economic and social change but have yet developed viable political institutions. Traditional and modern societies are less prone to political violence and instability. Military coups, insurrections, guerilla warfare and assassination are common features of the transitional societies.

Many sociologists are of the view that deprivation leads to discontent among people and this when coupled with politicisation leads to discontent which is expressed in the form of violence. This phenomenon may be indicated as below:

Deprivation

↓

Development of Discontent

↓

Politicisation of discontent

↓

Expression of discontent in the form of violence
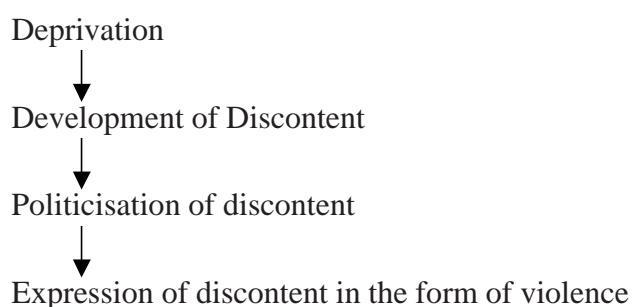
Deprivation may be in the form of lack of opportunity for education, training, employment or lack of ways to meet physical or social needs. For example, if legal means for attaining jobs are not available, people may resort to smuggling of arms, trafficking in drugs etc. If these illegal activities are not controlled, other problems will creep in. Deprivation will be felt at different levels and a feeling that the political system is incapable of meeting the situation will arise. Deprivation is likely to lead to discontent. Discontent may be in the form of strikes, bandhs, demonstrations, morchas etc. If these methods do not invite the attention of the state there is politicisation of these demands. When that happens the due process of the law may be bypassed.

The expression of discontent at this juncture may be in the form of murder,

arson, bank robberies, looting of personal property, kidnapping etc. The indiscriminate killing of innocents spreads wave of fear among the people. The release of those arrested on political consideration have given way for exploiting the situation by the terrorists.

However, religious fundamentalism and growing intolerance to other religion have emerged to be a crucial factor for the emergence and sustenance of terrorism at the international level. The religious indoctrination has led to the emergence of Taliban in Afghanistan in 1990s, Al Quida Forces in the Middle East. The attack on the World Trade Centre in the US on Sept, 11, 1999, Indian Parliament on Dec., 12, 1999 and on the foreign Embassies and High Commission in several state capitals of the world. All these have marked the emergence of global terrorism. The global terrorism has threatened the very basis of democracy of the world. Along with the emergence of global terrorism, there has also been the phenomena of cross-border terrorism, of which India has become a victim. Here terrorist were trained from across the border of the neighboring countries to destabilise the democratically elected Government. Thus there has been a slogan for fight against global terrorism. Indeed cross border terrorism is a part of global terrorism. Unfortunately in the fight against terrorism even the states who themselves sponsor terrorism in disguise, have emerged to allies of such fight. In this regard unfortunately terrorism has not been uniformly defined by the west, who are spearheading the fight.

At the local level there have been the attacks of the Maoist terrorists in Andhra Pradesh, Bengal, Orissa, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and in many ohter states. There have also been terrorism of regional kind spearheaded by various ethnic groups.

16.3.2 Patterns

During last three decades violence and terrorism have become major issues. The word violence has been used differently in different phrases like:

i) 'violent crimes' (physical assault or threat thereof),

ii) violence in the streets (provocation, demonstration, police violence, partisan counter-violence, internal war),

iii) violence to self (suicide, alcoholism, drug addiction etc.),

iv) violence at the wheel (killing by vehicular accidents).

v) violence in the media (a syndrome : news or fiction of violence stimulating further violence),

vi) social violence (repressive to toleration).

Activity 1

If possible collect newspaper or magazine clippings on terrorism and violence for four weeks. Now study them and note down:

i) types of violence

ii) types of terrorism

Compare your notes with other students in the Study Centre if possible.

Though violence is most frightening and at times most reprehensible yet it becomes less scandalous when it remains for a longer time in the community,

and more, so if it is protected by respectable institutions or ideologies. In other words it is interpreted in terms of sensitivity to violence. Sensitivity and tolerance to violence are recent phenomenon or at least have recently assumed very significant dimensions.

In fact there are different viewpoints on dealing with the phenomenon of violence/terrorism. Certain countries including India have suffered the repressive activities by colonial rulers, and racist regimes have been terroristic. For example the freedom struggle in South Africa can be termed as terroristic.

16.4 POLITICS AND TERRORISM

A totalitarian state makes use of violence as a system of government. But a democracy resorts to it only selectively during a period of crisis, when they even overlook the international convention that insists on respect for human rights. The gravity of situation is assessed by the government and such situation is prone to possible abuse. The term crisis implies a threat to the regime. In weak democracies also rulers resort to direct or indirect violence to continue in power. In order to stay in power, rulers who had reached a point at which their follower is disowned them or because a minority, may overturn democracy. The military may help them behind the scenes. Every democratic constitution has provisions to enable the Government to assume special powers. Here again there is danger of abuse of power.

Terrorism demoralises the population of a region or state. In some instances however it serves as an integrating factor. However terrorism itself always invokes problems of law and order. Yet it is not capable of disrupting the entire social system. Terrorism is not a revolutionary movement and so far terrorists have not succeeded in fulfilling their aims. Terrorist killings do not change the structure of politics. However this is not to say that they have no effect on the social and political fabric. They do loosen it somewhat. Mechanisms have to be created to prevent acts of terror.

Box 16.01

Terrorist operations often involve systematic planning, which resemble a minor military operation. The intended victim (or other terrorist plan) is studied carefully. All habits and movements of the people involved are studied. The terrorists need transport to and from the scene of crime. They have to have false identity papers, weapons and money. Again to make a success of their criminal activity they need a publicity unit. All major terrorist groups have a central high command, which is either very professional or could be amateurish. Terrorism always involves an element of improvisation. Finally even the most careful planning cannot possibly make provision for all eventualities.

Individuals and group take to violence when their legitimate demands are not met through legitimate means. For example when there is

i) corruption

ii) malpractices

iii) exploitation

iv) failure on the part of state to protect law-abiding citisens

There is a likelihood of people taking to violence to fulfil their demands. When the use of conventional methods such as protests, dharnas, demonstrations, strikes, etc. become ineffective, then alone do the nonconventional methods for example murder, arson, looting of banks, personal property, kidnapping etc. are resorted to. This apart, terrorising people and assassination of important persons follow.

Check Your Progress 1

i)   Give five phrases which have been used to express violence:

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ii) When does an individual group take on violence? Explain in about five lines.

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16.4.1   Violence and the Law

There is much evidence available to indicate that maldevelopment results in tensions, conflicts and violence. The frequency of outbursts in a number of countries over a period of time indicate that rapidity of social change is associated with violence. The higher rate of social change is associated with instability. Social change may result in imbalance of privileges in a society and hence change can affect some people in a society adversely.

Activity 2

If you have seen some TV Programme or a movie or read a novel made on violence and terrorism, then note down how outlaws indulge in terrorism and violence. What does the law do to prevent these activities? Note down your observations and if possible compare with other students in the Study Centre.

Countries with a colonial rule background have inherited the problem of

i)   poverty

ii) inequality, and

iii) the lack of equal opportunity as a legacy.

This legacy has been prolonged as there were no structural change in the system we have inherited. This has furthered the levels of exploitation, by the elites who wield power in the new political set-up. Poverty, inequality and exploitation have remained intact with us. The new political power group has legitimised exploitation with the new political order.

In a unequal society (divided by tribal, caste, class, religious or other clevages), maldevelopment means unequal opportunities in the competition for jobs, services, educational and social facilities. These factors also aggravate groups and class conflicts and accentuate individual frustration. This has led to the rich becoming richer. The middle class has expanded activities in different spheres of life and the poor have either remained poor or in some cases have become poorer. This is because of the increasing gulf between the "haves" and the "have nots".

The regulatory laws, and the provisions in the Constitution to prevent exploitation and any kind of discrimination have not been of much avail. The terrorist activities in Punjab, Assam, Jammu and Kashmir, and the naxalite problem in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Orissa, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh are examples of perceived maldevelopment and people taking to arms. The State policy of reservation has further aggravated the situation in many states and there have been incidents of violence.

16.5 ETHNIC IDENTITY AND VIOLENCE

There have been instances where it is clearly seen that violence is directed towards a specific group. Studies show that there are social, economic and political disparities between the races in the United States of America. They are sufficient to justify the fear that the Blacks would be found to have higher crime rate than Whites. Similarly it can be seen from the population in the Indian prisons that most of the inmates come from lower socio-economic background. This may mean two things:

i) that those who belong to lower socio-economic strata of the society are more involved in criminal activities than others,

ii) that the law is enforced more vigorously in the case of the poor rather than the rich.

If we look at the situation in India we have concrete examples of ethnic violence. This is so particularly in the case of the communal riots which take place sporadically in different parts of the country. The riots are often between the Hindus and the Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, Shia and the Sunni Muslims. Besides, there are intercaste and intracaste conflicts. There is heavy loss of property and life during these conflicts.

When there are difference between the different segments of society violence may occur. This happens when they feel insecure or that they are being exploited by the other group(s). The killing of persons belonging to one segment by another brings out very clearly the ethnic nature of violence.

16.5.1 State Violence and Human Rights

Violence on the part of the State usually has the cover of legitimacy. There is also approval (at various times and places), of certain forms of violence under certain conditions. Justification for violence is just often an excuse. It is often reported that there was an encounter with terrorists or with the naxalites and so many of them were shot dead. There are also allegations that the encounters have been fake. The individuals or the group of people were killed without sufficient cause. Violence on the part of the State, particularly the police always finds some justification.

Totalitarian states use violence as a part of the system. In democratic states it functions as a control mechanism during crises. During crisis, even in democratic countries, almost all the fundamental rights are suspended and there is no place for human rights. The international conventions are kept at bay. The situation is usually measured by the State. Because of crisis, the threat to the regime is contained by using violence with the help of the police and the military. Most of the Constitutions in the democratic countries have provisions to enable the government authority to attain special powers. This, in fact negates all the conventions for the protection of human rights.

The proclamation of Emergency during 1975-77 and Operation Blue Star (1984) in Punjab are much discussed issues. These acts of the central government are considered as terroristic. Time and again such instances are repeated and the human right of the individual and group are taken away by the government.

16.5.2 Measures to Deal with Violence

A spurt in international activities by terrorists led to various conventions to tackle the problem. These conventions are :

i) The 1937 Convention for the prevention and punishment of terrorism

ii) The 1971 Convention to prevent and punish acts of terrorism, crimes against persons and related extortion that are of international significance.

iii) The 1973 Convention on the prevention and punishment of crime against internationally protected persons including diplomats.

In the same year there was an European Convention on : (i) suppression of terrorism; and (ii) the 1979 International Convention against the taking of hostages. This apart there were conventions on air hijacking. They are:

i) The Tokyo Convention, 1969

ii) The Hague Convention

iii) The Montreal Convention to tackle the problem of commission of offence on board, seizure of aircraft and it also includes offences in air or on ground and permits the State to take action for preventing the offences.

Box 16.02

Nuclear terrorism does not only pose a threat to a single nation. It could lead to a major international crisis. The potential of nuclear blackmail is very dramatic. However other equally lethal weapons do exist : these include poisons like OPAS : Nerve gases like the monofluoroalipathic compounds (BTX) which is lethal no matter how it enters the body.

Anthrax, bubonic plague, encephalitis and psittacrsis can all be produced by chemical terrorism. An epidemic of these diseases could spread far and wide. These weapons however are more likely to be used by a madman than a terrorist.

Terrorists can possibly gain nuclear weapons (a bomb) by theft or gift. Another possibility for terrorists is to manufacture a nuclear bomb with the help of scientists and engineers having the right specialisation. The potential/ possibility of such nuclear terrorism is that it may turn into nuclear war.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Write short notes on state violence and human rights. Use five lines for your answer.

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2) Various conventions were held to reduce or eliminate terrorism and one of these Conventions was (Tick the right answer):

   i)   1937 Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism

   ii) 1990 Law Against Violence and Terrorism

   iii) Neither is right

   iv) Both are right.

16.5.3   Steps to Tackle Terrorism

India has enacted a law known as "Terrorists and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1985 to tackle such problems. This Act has special provisions for prevention of, and for coping with, the terrorist and disruptive activities and matters related with it. The Act provides abundant powers to the law enforcement agencies to deal with the terrorists and disruptive activities. The major provisions under the Act are : that whoever commits a terrorist act and causes death of any person shall be punished with death. In other cases of terrorist activities the term of imprisonment shall not be less than five years. This may extend to a life-term and also be liable to a fine. In case of conspiring, the minimum punishment shall not be less than three years. This may extend to life and also include fine.

As regards disruptive activities, the punishment is similar to conspiring to commit terrorist activities. The disruptive activities, whether directly or indirectly, which may affect the sovereignty or territorial integrity of India, cession or secession, by action or speech and so on, are considered as disruptive activities. The Central Government may, by notification in the Offical Gazzette, make rules to prevent or to cope with, terrorist and disruptive activities. Section 5 of this Act gives vast powers to the Central Government, the state governments and the administrators of the Union Territories, for dealing with the terrorists and disruptive activities. Section 6 of the Act provides for enhanced punishment. Where there is contravention of the Arms Act, 1959, the Explosive Act, 1884, or the Explosive Substances Act, 1952. Any contravention of these provisions by any person shall be liable for a term which may extend to 10 years or term for life and also be liable for fine.

All proceedings before a designated court shall be in camera. The identity of
the witnesses may be kept secret. The proceedings may be held at a protected
place. Any record which is accessible to public contains no names and addresses
of the witnesses. In a nutshell it may be mentioned that the Act provides enough
tooth to deal with the problem of terrorists and disruptive activities.

POTA:

16.6   LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed various aspects of violence and terrorism. We
began with the concept of violence and terrorism. After this were described
the causes of terrorism. Next we turned to politics and terrorism. After this we
turned to maldevelopment of society in relation to violence and the law.
Following this we discussed ethnic identify and violence. The other three
aspects discussed are state violence and human rights; measures to deal with
violence and finally steps to tackle terrorism.

16.7   KEY WORDS

Deprivation	:	Not to have something which is regarded as a common necessity.
Exploitation	:	The use of power and intelligence to take unfair advantage of those people, groups and communities which are weak.
Kidnapping	:	Forceful and unlawful lifting of a person and keeping him or her in criminal custody.
Maldevelopment	:	In the context of unequal society it means unequal opportunities in the competition for jobs, services etc.

16.8   FURTHER READINGS

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16.9   ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) i)   Violence in the streets

    ii)   external war

    iii) violence in the wheel

    iv) violence in the media

    v)   social violence

2) Individuals in groups take to violence when their legitimate demands are not met through legitimate means. For example if there is a failure on the part of the state to protect law-abiding citisens, violence may erupt in various ways.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Violence on the part of the state has a cover of legality. Totalitarian states use violence as part of the system. In democracies it is used during crises. Thus human rights do occasionally get trampled upon by the state.

2) 2 (i)

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UNIT 17   CHILDREN

Structure

17.0   OBJECTIVES

This unit deals with contemporary dimensions of some problems of children in India. After going through this unit you should be able to:

- describe the demographic composition of children and issues pertaining to their survival;

- discuss the characteristics of street children and orphans and measures undertaken towards the solution of their problem;

- explain the concept of child labour, its typology and the extent of child labour in India;

- analyse the concept of juvenile delinquency, conditions encouraging it and measures undertaken to ameliorate it;

- examine the rights of the children as proclaimed by the international bodies. Present a brief outline of the condition of the girl child in India; and

- describe National Policy on Children adopted in 1974 by the Government of India and provisions made in the Policy.

17.1 INTRODUCTION

It is possible throughout history to trace out a thread of increasing concern for the child. But it is at the turn of the twentieth century, particularly after the first World War that a concerted effort for recognising the rights of the child has been made all over the World. We have started realising that the future of a nation depends on the child. In the words of Abraham Lincoln, "a child is a person who is going to carry on what you have started. He is going to sit where you are sitting, and when you are gone, attend to those things which you think are important... the fate of humanity is in his hand, "Jawaharlal Nehru also reminded us of 'the supreme importance of the child. He said, "Somehow the fact that 'ultimately everything depends upon the human factor, gets rather lost in our thinking of plans and schemes. It is very important that we must have them, but ultimately, it is the human being who counts and if the human being counts well, he counts much more as a child than as a grown-up."

Against this humanitarian backdrop the present unit examines the social problems of children in contemporary India. We begin this unit with a brief discussion on the demographic composition of children in India. It draws attention towards the increasing imbalance between boys and girls. We then, dilate on the orphan and street children and look into the measures taken by government to rehabilitate them.

A large number of children are engaged in various types of work and this hinders their mental and physical growth. We focus on this in the section on child labour. This unit then, goes into the numerous reasons as to why some children lapse into delinquent behaviour. It also looks into the various measures required to prevent delinquency as well as rehabilitate the delinquents.

This unit also gives an idea about the rights of the child proclaimed at different periods of time. It attempts to show how there is a growing concern in the world about the rights of the child. The UN agencies involved in children's welfare finds mention next.

The girl-child constitutes nearly a half of the child population in India but a large section of them are neglected in every aspect of their life. The prevailing social, cultural and religious practices encourage discrimination against them. We discuss this in the section on International Year of the Girl Child. We conclude this unit by focusing on the national policy on children.

17.2   DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS

The word child has a variety of connotations. Sometimes it is used in the sense of physical or mental immaturity. But for all practical purposes, child is defined in terms of chronological age. Any person who is below the age of 15 years is called a child.

The number of children (0-14 years) in India has been increasing over the years. In the year 1971, there were 230.3 million children which had increased to 272 million, in 1981. According to the estimate by tile Expert Committee on the population projection, the child population had gone up to 297.7 million in 1991. However, in terms of percentage to the total population, child population had declined over the decades. For example, it had declined from 42.02 in 1971 to 39.7 in 1981. In 1991 they constituted around 37% of the population. According to Planning Commission in 2000, 33.61% population were in the age group of the children.

17.2.1   Sex Ratio

According to the law of human biology, both males and females are born in equal proportion. But the Census reports show that there are more boys than girls in India. In 1981 there were 131.7 million girls as against 140.3 million boys. In other words, there were 938 girls per thousand boys. In 2001 there were 156.6 million boys and 149.6 million girls in India showing a decline in the sex ratio.

The disproportionate distribution between sexes starts right from birth and continues almost throughout life. The proportion of women per thousand men has come down from 946 in 1951 to 933 in 2001. Numerous factors like maternal mortality, immigration of males and high rate infant mortality for girls are given for the sex imbalance. But these factors give a partial explanation of the phenomenon. Major reason lies in culturally sanctioned negligence and apathy towards the girl. She is discriminated against even before birth in the form of foeticide. She is compelled to live a life of deprivation, ill-health and exploitation.

Table 1: Percentage of population in the age group 0-14 years
By sex and residence, India and major states 1994

India and major States	Total			Rural			Urban		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
India	36.5	36.8	36.1	37.5	37.9	37.0	33.3	33.3	33.4
Andhra Pradesh	33.8	34.0	33.5	33.6	34.0	33.3	34.1	34.1	34.2
Assam	39.6	39.0	40.4	40.6	40.1	41.1	31.8	30.0	33.8
Bihar	41.2	41.5	40.8	41.6	42.1	41.0	37.9	36.9	39.1
Gujarat	33.8	34.4	33.2	34.1	34.7	33.5	33.2	33.7	32.8
Haryana	37.7	37.9	37.5	38.6	38.7	38.5	35.0	35.6	34.4
Himachal Pradesh	34.6	36.2	33.0	35.1	37.0	33.3	28.8	28.4	29.2
Karnataka	34.0	34.3	33.7	35.1	35.4	34.8	31.7	31.9	31.4
Kerala	28.8	30.3	27.4	29.4	31.0	27.9	27.1	28.3	26.0

Madhya Pradesh	37.9	38.0	37.7	38.4	38.6	38.1	36.0	35.8	36.2
Maharashtra	34.4	34.7	34.1	35.6	36.7	34.6	33.1	32.6	33.6
Orissa	34.2	34.5	34.0	34.4	34.8	34.0	33.1	32.6	33.6
Punjab	33.6	34.1	32.9	33.3	33.8	32.7	34.3	34.9	33.5
Rajasthan	39.1	39.6	38.5	39.6	40.1	39.0	37.0	37.6	36.2
Tamil Nadu	31.0	31.5	30.5	32.2	32.7	31.7	28.8	29.3	28.3
Uttar Pradesh	39.6	39.8	39.4	39.9	40.1	39.7	38.0	38.1	38.0
West Bengal	35.3	34.8	35.7	37.8	37.6	38.0	28.2	27.4	29.2

* Excludes Jammu & Kashmir and Mizoram

Source: Sample Registration System, 1995, Office of Registrar General, India

Table 2: Projected child population by age group In India 1996-2016

Sl. No.	Year	0-4 Yrs	5- 9 Yrs	10–14 Yrs	0-14 Yrs
1	1996	119546	123686	109545	352777
2	2001	108494	116145	122905	347544
3	2006	113534	105744	115488	334766
4	2011	119530	110968	105206	335704
5	2016	122837	117099	110461	350397

Sources : Census of India 1991, population projections for India and States 1996-2016

17.2.2 Infant Mortality

Infant mortality rate is considered an important indicator of child health and development. By infant mortality rate is meant the number of deaths of infants under one year of age in a given year per 1,000 live births in that year. In 1947 out of 1000 live births in India, 160 died before the age of one year. It had came down to 96.4 in 1986. In 2000 the infant mortality rate of India was 69. Though the infant mortality rate has decreased, it is till far higher than that of the developed countries of the world (for details see Human Development Report 2003).

The major causes of infant deaths are found to be the diseases peculiar to infancy which include premature births, respiratory infection, diarrhoea etc. The diseases such as cough, fever and digestive disorder are also important child killers.

The six most common causes for child morbidity and mortality are tuberculosis, tetanus, pertusis (whooping cough), diphtheria, poliomyelitis and measles. These are preventable through immunisation. The Government of India has launched Universal Immunisation Programme. (in short UIP) and it was expected that by 2000 A.D. all children would be "fully" immunised.

The gradual decline in infant mortality rate and in birth rate has pushed up life expectancy at birth. According to the estimate, life expectancy at birth during 1986-91 is .58.1 years for males and 59.1 years for females. By the year 2000 the average life expectancy at birth Indian has gone up to 63.3 years. For the male it is 59.9 years while for the female it was 64.7 years (UNOU 2003).

17.3 STREET CHILDREN AND ORPHANS

Considerable number of children in India are the victims of poverty, erosion of social values, unsatisfactory home environment and lack of social security measures to take care of the exigencies which lead to destitution. Street children and orphans are the by-product of these factors. Orphans are those children who are bereft of either parent or both parents and those who have been deserted or abandoned. They are also called destitute children. Street children are those who are homeless. These children come from different vulnerable groups. However, these groups are not always mutually exclusive. Some of these groups may be mentioned here.
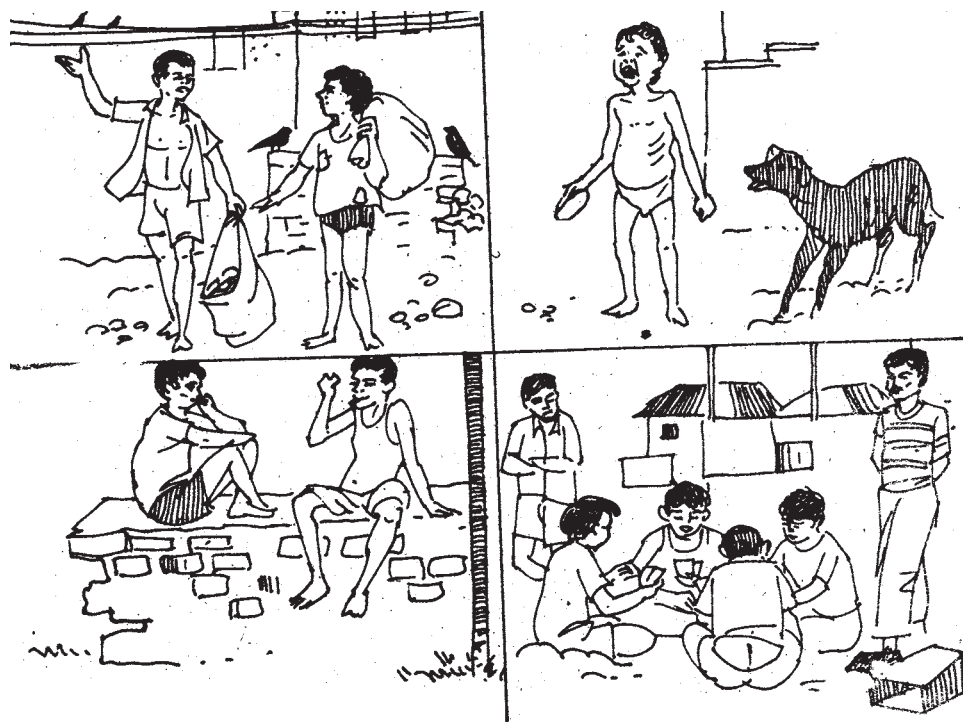
17.3.1 Major Groups

Here we may group these children under the following broad headings.

i)   children who do not get even minimal care in terms of food, clothing, shelter, education, medical aid, etc.

ii)   children who are in a sense "exploited" or "neglected" in their families,

iii) children who are without any means of subsistence and shelter or in a virtual state of destitution,

iv)   children who are orphaned, abandoned or deserted,

v)   children who run away from their homes and cannot be restored to their parents as they are untraceable,

vi)   children who are vagrant, delinquent or uncontrollable,

vii) children who suffer from ill-treatment, neglected or unsatisfactory home environment and are subjected to mental and physical suffering,

viii) children whose parents do not provide or are unable to provide proper home life to them on account of their immoral activities like alcoholism, gambling, drug addiction, crime, prostitution etc., and

ix) children who are found begging with or without connivance of touts or anti-social elements.

17.3.2 Measures for Rehabilitation

Both street children and orphans need food, clothing, shelter, love, affection and protection. They need opportunities for physical and mental development. The Government has already launched a scheme for children in need of care and protection. The main features of the scheme are as follows:

i) it provides institutional care by establishing orphanages or children's homes,

ii) it provides foster care by keeping a child for a certain period in a family which agrees to give him a substitute home,

iii) it is implemented through voluntary organisations which are given a grant-in-aid to the extent of 90 per cent of the expenditure on approved items (the grant-in-aid is shared on an equal basis by the Central Government and the State Government),

iv) children up to 18 years are covered in Children's homes, and

v) foster care is given to children up to 6 years which is extendable to 14 years in exceptional cases.

However, for providing care and protection to street children, the Government is contemplating to undertaken certain schemes in near future.

Activity 1

It may be possible for you to recall the population composition of 20 households of your relatives, friends and neighbours. If not, collect statistics of 20 households on population by sex. Now try to find out the sex-ratio of the child population of these households. Write a note on the cause of the variation in the sex-ratio in these households. If possible, exchange your note with other students of the Study Centre.

17.4 CHILD LABOUR

The term "child labour" is often used interchangeably with "working child" or "employed child". While all these terms are defined on the basis of age of the person working, the latter terms denote that the working persons get wages or income. According to the Constitution of India, child labourer may be defined as a person who is below the age of 14 years and is working for an earning. However, child labour denies children the opportunities for mental and physical development and consequently their life chances are marred. Children engaged in domestic work or helping their parents in agricultural or household pursuits do not get income but their work interferes with their childhood activities like education and recreation. Hence child labour needs to be defined in a manner which will include both paid and unpaid work. The Operation Research Group of Boards has defined a child labourer as a person who is in the age group of 5 to 15 years and who is at paid or unpaid work and remains busy for any hour of the day within or outside the family. The Concerned for Working Children

(CWC) of Bangalore defines a child labourer as "a person who has not completed his/her fifteenth year of age and is working with or without wages/ income on a part-time or full-time basis".

17.4.1 Types of Child Labour

The ILO has given a typology of child work which is applicable across the countries. The categories are as follows:

i) **Domestic Non-monetary Work**

Children in both rural and urban areas undertake unpaid work within the family for maintenance of the household. It is self- employed and is generally "time-intensive" The activities included in the category are: caring for younger siblings, cooking, cleaning, washing, fetching water etc. Such work in India is done mainly by girls.

ii) **Non-domestic and Non-monetary Work**

This type of work is usually done by children in rural areas. It includes activities like tending of livestock, protecting crops from birds and animals, hunting, weeding etc. This work is also time-intensive and is often intermixed with domestic work.

iii) **Wage Labour**

Children work as wage labourers in organised and unorganised sectors in rural and urban areas. They work in artisan production, small scale production, in trade, manufacturing and service occupations. They work in restaurants, as ragpickers, hawkers, newspaper vendors etc. They are preferred to adults because they can be paid low wage for the same quantum of work that an adult does.

iv) **Bonded Labour**

Children work as bonded labourers. They are pledged by the parents against a debt or loan till the loan with interest is repaid. They work in exchange of food or nominal wage. Sometimes, an agreement is made between the parents of the child and the employer to work for a specific period of time. The bonded labour system is found both in rural and urban unorganised sector. Although bonded labour is abolished by law, it is practised in many parts of India even today.

17.4.2 Child Labour in India

India has a large number of working children. According to unofficial figures there are child labour in the range of .44 to 100 million. In the 1981 Census work has been defined as "participation in any economically productive activity". A distinction between 'main workers' and 'marginal workers' has also been made. Main workers are those who have worked for the major part of the year (183 days or more) preceding the date of enumeration. Marginal workers are those who have done some work but cannot be classified as main workers.

Children in the age group of 0-14 years constituted 4.18% of male main workers and 8.35% of female main workers. Similarly children as marginal workers

constituted 10.32% of male marginal workers and 9.38% of female marginal workers. As many as 78.68% of the main child workers were engaged as cultivators and agricultural labourers. According to 1991 census there were 11.28 million working children in our country of which 85% are in the rural areas working in agriculture, live stock reining and fisheries.

According to a recent report in 2000 14% of the children of India belonging to the age group of 10-15 years are in the labour force.

Human Development in South Asia, quoting the UNICEF report of 1995, estimates the child labour force in the region as 134 million. About 100 million are in India. A very high proportion of children aged 10 to 14 work for a livelihood. In Bhutan it is 55 per cent in Nepal 44 per cent, in Bangladesh 29 per cent and in Pakistan 17 per cent.

Although poverty and adult unemployment are the main reasons for the existence of child labour, vested interests of employers also encourage its perpetuation. The employers pay low wage to child labour for the same quantum of work that adults can do.

17.4.3 Banning of Child Labour

There are two opinions on the question of continuance or banning of child labour in India. One group of people think that child labour should be banned since it is detrimental to physical and mental health of the child and is against the Directive Principles of the Constitution of India. The other group considers abolition of poverty as a pre-condition for abolition of child labour. They pled that child labour should be regulated so that children are not employed in hazardous work. The Government of India is taking steps to constitute a Technical Committee for identifying occupations which are hazardous for children.

Box 1

Child Labour in South Asia: Issues and Prostitution and AIDS

According to the report: "Child prostitution is widely known to exist in South Aisa but is rarely…discussed. Widespread poverty and in adequate social safety net have left many children with no choices but to sell their bodies simply, the number must be higher.

The report estimates that around 100,000 children are involved in prostitution. But according to the facts given in the report itself, the number must be higher.

According to the report, every year about 7,000 children are brought into India for prostitution. Quoting a Nepalese non-government organisation, the report says 100000 to 200000 Nepalese girls are working as prostitutes in India. Severe poverty in Nepal, dowry and other social problems facing teenage girls and a high school drop out rate have combined to condemn many girls to prostitution. Bangladeshi girls are also brought into India and Pakistan, while Indian girls are transported to other countries of the region to be sold for prostitution. 30,000 Sri Lankan children are being used as sex workers for foreign tourists. Children caught in the civil war in northern Sri

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Lanka. When breadwinners are slaughtered, orphans are compelled to sell their bodies to corrupt businessmen who exploit their desire to escape from the war zone. These children are regularly gang-raped, harassed and forced to perform dangerous sexual acts. They are also exposed to AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. The report goes on: "According to a recent survey of Nepalese sex workers who return from India each year, nearly 65 per cent are HIV positive. Their own communities often reject those who manage to escape and return their homes" (World Socialist Website).

In 1992 India has ratified the convention on the Rights of the Child which implies that India will ensure wide awareness on the issues of the children among the various governmental and the non-governmental agencies. India has also signed the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of the Children and thereafter the Department of Women and Child Development under the Ministry of Human Resource Development has formatted a National Plan and Action for children. As against this backdrop India's policy on child labour has tried to strike a balance the international standard and obligation on the one hand and that of the grass root reality of India. Hence there are several legislation and the policies.

The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986 prohibits the employment of child labour below age of 14 in factories, mines and in other firms of hazardous employment and regulates the working conditions of the children in other employment. Following another notification in 1993 under their law the government has prohibited employment of children in the slaughterhouses, printing, cashew de-scaling and processing, and soldering. In 1994 a National Authority for the elimination of Child Labour was set up under the chairmanship of the Labour Minister to co-ordinate the efforts of different arms of the government for the progressive elimination of child labour.

The Government of India has also adopted a National Labour Policy in 1987 in accordance with the constitutional mandate and the prevailing legislation on child labour. This policy consists of three complementary measures:

- Legal Action Plan to reinforce very strictly, the various provisions of the child labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act.

- Focus on general development programmes benefiting children wherever possible. It envisages the development of an exclusive system of non-formal education for working children withdrawn from work and increasing the provision for employment and income generation schemes meant for their parents. A special Child Labour cell was constituted to encourage voluntary organisations to take up activities like non-formal education, vocational training provision of health care, nutrition, and education for working children.

- Area specific projects: To focus on areas known to have high concentration of child labour and to adopt a project approach for identification, withdrawal and rehabilitation of working children. (http://www.indianembassy.org).

Check Your Progress 1

i) What are the major causes of infant and child mortality in India. Answer in about seven lines

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ii) Point out the measures taken for rehabilitating orphan children in India. Answer in about 10 lines

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iii) Answer each of the following in one line:

    a) Who has given a typology of child labour?

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        ....

    b) What is the population of children in India today?

        ....
        ....

17.5 JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Juvenile Delinquency has been defined as "some form of antisocial behaviour involving personal and social disorganisation". It is a form of conduct that goes against the norms and laws of society and that tends to affect people adversely. Some think that delinquency is any act, course of conduct or situation which might be brought before a court and adjudicated". Therefore, delinquency involves a pattern of behaviour which deviates from the normal and is forbidden

by the laws and sanctions of society. Hence juvenile delinquency is both a social and a legal concept.

17.5.1   Factors Promoting Juvenile Delinquency

Juvenile delinquency may arise out of numerous conditions or situations. The conditions or factors may be categorised into the following groups:

i)   Broken home, where children do not get love, warmth, affection and security,

ii)   Bad housing and lack of space for recreation in homes and in neighbourhood,

iii) Poverty and neglect by parents,

iv)   Child working in vocations and places which are congenial to delinquency,

v)   Undesirable companionship in school, work place and neighbourhood, and

vi)   Undesirable influence of cinema and literature and other mass media.

The causes mentioned here are not exhaustive but only illustrative. It does not follow that the presence of anyone or more of the factors will definitely lead to delinquency. These factors singly or jointly may promote delinquent behaviour.

17.5.2   Corrective Measures against Delinquency

In the discussion of juvenile delinquency, age is an important factor. The legal age for maturity, according to the Indian Maturity Act, has been fixed as 18 years. According to the Indian Penal Code, no act committed by a child under 7 years of age is an offence. However, there is a general tendency to regard all children between the age of 7 to 21 years as juveniles. But according to the Juvenile Justice Act 1986, a boy who has not attained the age of 16 or a girl who has not attained the age of 18 years is considered a juvenile in India. However, earlier according to Children Act this age was different in different states.

It is felt that juvenile delinquents need to be treated in a manner different from that of adult offenders. If a juvenile is punished and imprisoned in the same manner as the adult, he or she might come out of the prison as a confirmed criminal, whereas if we help him/her to live in different environment it is possible to change and save him/her from becoming a criminal. In view of this, laws have been enacted for taking up preventive and corrective measures. The Provisions made under these Acts are described below.

Juvenile courts have been formed to treat juvenile cases in very informal and simple atmosphere. These courts are headed by full time special magistrates, preferably women. The juvenile is brought before the court not in chains or handcuffs. Their cases are not pleaded by lawyers, but by special officers known as Probation Officers.

Persons who have had training in social work and correctional administration are appointed Probation Officers. Every Probation Officer is entrusted with a few juvenile delinquents. He/She investigates their cases by visiting their homes, schools, parents, friends and neighbours. He/She collects informations for

understanding their environment. He/She plans for corrective measures and rehabilitation of the children.

There are Remand Homes where juvenile delinquents are kept till the cases are decided, by the court. During their stay they remain under close supervision and adequate measures are taken to keep up their mental, physical and moral conditions. There are separate Remand Homes for boys and girls.

After the decision by the court Children with minor offence are handed over to parents and those who need constant supervision, are kept in approved schools or institutions for care, treatment, education and training. It is expected that by the time they would come out of the schools, their criminal tendencies would disappear and they would have inculcated the qualities of good citizenship.

17.6 RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

The child by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care before as well as afterbirth. The need for such special safeguards found its first expression as early as 1924 in the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child. It was drawn up by the then "Save the Children Fund International Unit". It was a five-point text which was taken on board by the League of Nations. It was expanded in succeeding years into what was to become the Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1959.

17.6.1 UN Declaration of 1959

The Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20th November 1959 proclaims to provide to the child "the best that mankind has to give". It reaffirms that the child should enjoy the rights for his own good and for the good of society. It calls upon parents, men and women and upon voluntary organisations, local authorities and national governments to recognise these rights and strive for their observance by legislative and other measures.

The principles or the rights set forth in the Declaration are as follows:

i) All children, without any exception whatsoever, shall be entitled to the rights set forth in this Declaration, without distinction or discrimination on account of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status whether of himself/ herself or of his/her family.

ii) The child shall enjoy special protection, opportunities, and facilities by law and by the other means, to enable him/her to develop physically, mentally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity.

iii) The child shall be entitled from his/her birth to a name and a nationality.

iv) The child shall enjoy the benefits of social security and shall be entitled to grow and develop in health. To this end, he/she and his/her mother shall be provided special care and protection including pre-natal and post-natal care. He/She shall be entitled to enjoy the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services.

v) The child who is physically, mentally or socially handicapped shall be given the special treatment, education and care required by the particular condition.

vi) The child, for the full and harmonious development of his/her personality, needs love and understanding. He/She shall wherever possible, grow up in the care and under the responsibility of his/her parents and in any case in an atmosphere of affection and of moral and material security. A child of tender years shall not, save in exceptional circumstances, be separated from his/her mother. Society and the public authorities shall have the duty to extend particular care to children without a family and to those without adequate means of support.

vii) The child is entitled to receive free and compulsory education at least in the elementary stages. He/She shall be given an education which will promote his/her general culture and enable him/her on a basis of equal opportunity to develop his/her abilities, his individual judgement and his/her sense of moral and social responsibilities and to become a useful member of society. The child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation which should be directed to the same purpose as education.

viii) The child shall in all circumstances be among the first to receive protection and relief.

ix) The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty, and exploitation. He/She shall not be subject to traffic in any form. He/She shall not be admitted to employment before an appropriate minimum age. He/She shall not be caused or permitted to engage in any occupation or employment which would prejudice his/her health or education or interfere with his/her physical, mental or moral development.

x) The child shall be protected from practices which may foster racial, religious and any other form of discrimination. He/She shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship, peace and universal brotherhood and in full consciousness so that his/her energy and talents could be devoted to the service of his/her fellow men/women.

To be precise, the child has been granted the following rights by the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1959, the right of affection, love and understanding, the right to adequate nutrition and medical care, the right to free and compulsory education, the Right to full opportunity for play and recreation, the right ot a name and nationality, the right to special care if handicapped, the tight to be among the first to receive relief at the time of disaster, the right to learn to be a useful member of society and to develop individual abilities, the right to be brought up in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood, and the right to enjoy these rights regardless of race, colour, sex, religion, national or social origin.

17.6.2 International Year of the Child

The United Nations General Assembly declared 1979 as the International Year of the Child. It provided an occasion to every country to review the condition of its children and to renew and intensify its programmes for developing the full potentiality of the children. It aimed at stimulating each government to

expand activities which would overcome adverse conditions affecting many children.

The year of the child had encouraged government, private organisations and individuals to do much more for the children who needed special help. Thus the year of the child provided an occasion for practical activities for making the rights of the child a living reality.

17.6.3 UN Convention of 1989

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted on 20th November, 1989 is the most comprehensive and greatest treaty of twentieth century on children's rights. It sets universally, agreed standards for protection of children and provides a valuable framework for the development of programmes and policies that will ensure a realistic and safer future for children in every country. In the Convention, a child is defined as a person below the age of 18 years, unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

The Convention includes all the rights set out in the declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1959. It also includes a number of rights which have not been incorporated in the earlier Declaration. Some of these new rights are noted below:

i)   The .right to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views, to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child. The views of the child will be given due weight in accordance with age and maturity of the child. He or she will be provided opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child.

ii)   The right to freedom of expression, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds.

iii)   The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

iv)   The right to freedom of association and of peaceful assembly

v)   The right to seek protection against illicit transfer to and non-return from abroad.

vi)   The right to protection against arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home and against unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation.

vii)   The right to protection against all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation.

viii) The right to protection against all forms of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

The rights set out in the Convention can be broadly grouped under the headings of survival, protection and development. The survival rights imply that children should be saved from preventable diseases. Protection connotes that every child should be shielded against physical, mental or sexual abuse. Development implies the rights to adequate nutrition, primary health care and basic education.

The Convention is a special one because for the first time in international law, children's rights are set out in a treaty which will be binding on those nations that ratify them. It is also special in the sense that there shall be an elected committee to examine the progress made by the nations in achieving the obligations undertaken in the Convention.

Activity 2

Read again the sub-sections 17.6.1, 17.6.2 and 17.6.3 very carefully. Based on your daily experience you have like to examine how far the rights of the children are implementation of these rights. Develop a note on these in about two pages and discuss it with the counsellor and other students at the Study Centre.

17.7 UN AGENCIES INVOLVED IN CHILDREN'S WELFARE

There are several UN agencies which have been working towards the cause and development of children in the developing countries of the world. The biggest of these organisations directly dealing with the problems of children are the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

17.7.1 WHO

The World Health Organisation was established and as specialised agency by the United Nations Economic and Social Council on 7th April, 1948. Its objective is the attainment of the highest possible level of health by all the peoples of the world. WHO assists the governments to strengthen their health services, to stimulate and advance work to eradicate diseases, to promote maternal and child health, mental health, medical research and the prevention of accidents, to improve standard of teaching and training in the health professions and of nutrition, housing, sanitation, working conditions and other aspects of environmental health.

17.7.2 UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1946 to give aid to child victims of war and for improving child health in war affected countries. It was an emergency measure and hence was called the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

In 1950, the programme was extended to children in underdeveloped countries. In 1953 it became a permanent organisation. It concentrates its assistance on development activities aimed at improving the quality of life for children and mothers in developing countries. The UNICEF has focused on popularising four primary health care techniques which are low in cost and produce result in a relatively short time. These include: oral rehydration therapy to fight the effects of diarrhoeal infection, expanded immunisation against six most common childhood diseases, child growth monitoring and promotion of breast-feeding. The UNICEF works in close collaboration with the WHO. The

UNICEF is the world's largest supplier of vaccine and "cold chain" equipment needed to deliver them, as well as, oral re-hydration salts.

Check Your Progress 2

i) Point out the major factors promoting delinquency. Answer in about eight lines.

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ii) Point out the corrective measures taken against delinquency. Answer around in ten lines.

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iii) Fill in the blanks with appropriate answers:

a) The declaration of the Rights of the child was made for the first time in the year

a) 1926   b) 1924   c) 1925   d) 1935

b) The year ……………was observed as the International Year of the Child.

a) 1976   b) 1989   c) 1990   d) 1979

c) The World Health Organisation was established on…………..

a) 7th April 1948, b) 7th April 1946, c) 6th May 1952, d) 9th June 1942.

# 17.8 YEAR AND DECADE OF THE GIRL CHILD AND INDIAN SCENARIO

The gender discrimination or injustice against the girl child has not received pointed attention in the UN Declaration of the Right of the Child of 1959 and in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989. Initially the SAARC Technical Committee on Women and Child Development did not focus on the girl child. It was only in its 1986 conference on children that the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) decided to examine the specific problems of children in every technical committee.

17.8.1 Initiatives of the SAARC Countries

The SAARC countries have agreed on a plan of action to create awareness about the low status of the girl and to initiate corrective measures to end discrimination against them. The SAARC workshop help in New Delhi in September 1989 decided to declare 1990 as "the year of the Girl Child" in the seven SAARC countries—India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives—in a bid to give a decisive thrust to the campaign against discrimination of the girl child. The decade of 90s was declared as "the Decade of the Girl Child".

17.8.2 Girl Child: The Indian Scenario

Notwithstanding the Decade of the Girl Child, the girl child in India have remained subject to low social status. The low status of the girl in India has to be seen in the context of religious, social, cultural and economic situations. These factors together perpetuate discrimination against the girl. The birth of a girl is not cherished it is rather mourned. If a woman gives birth to daughters, she is made to hang her head in shame.
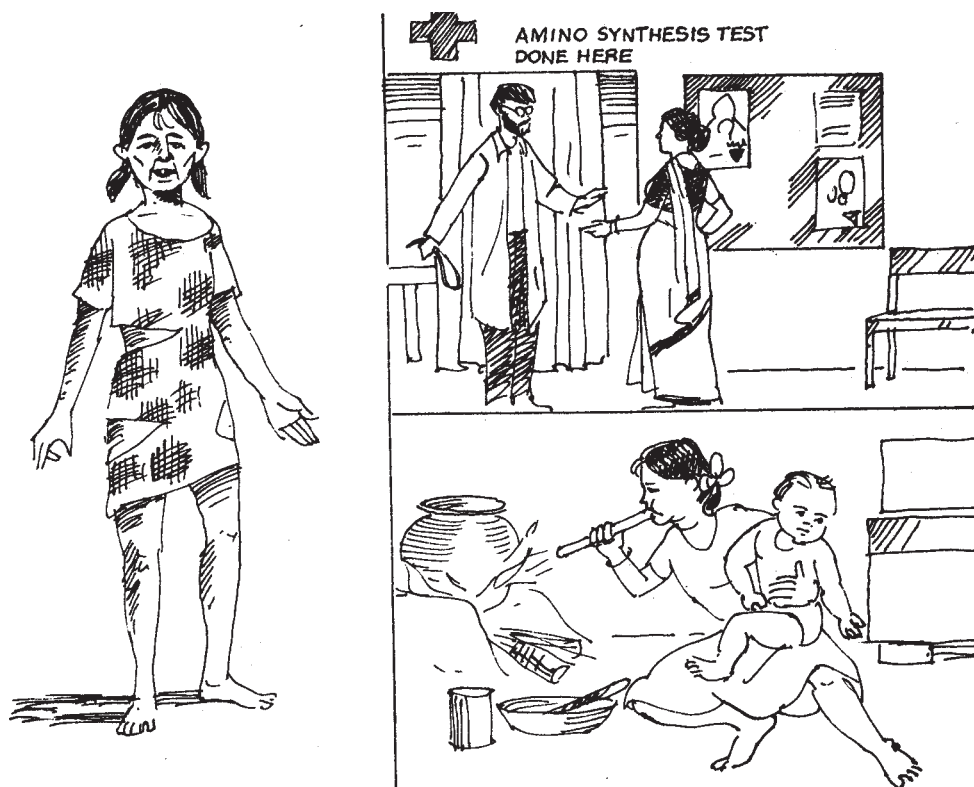
Girl Child in India

A girl is breastfed less frequently and for a shorter duration. Weaning practice starts much earlier for a girl. The parents give her inferior quality of food and do not let her eat to her fill, fearing that she will grow early and too big. Tall and large girls are unfeminine and it is difficult to find grooms for them, the traditional parents think so. Slow growth of girls gives time to the parents to collect dowry for their marriage. Thus the girl starves nutritionally.

The girl is considered a "paraya dhan" (other's property), hence any investment on her upbringing is considered wasteful. She is not given the opportunity to grow up into full personality. On the other hand, she is engaged in domestic work so that she equips herself to be acceptable to her in-laws. She is taught to cope with all odds that she may come across in the house of her in-laws. She is taught to be subservient and self-sacrificing. She is taught to develop the habit of austerity in thought, speech, dress and food.

Incidence of morbidity is higher among girls but they are given medical treatment less often. They are given lower access to immunisation. Enrolment of girls in schools is much lower. Low status of the girl is culturally designed. Social values and norms give sanctions to the perpetuation of gender inequality. It is hoped that during the decade of the girl child, suitable social and economic programmes would be launched which would minimise discrimination against the girl. In the meantime, voluntary agencies, Mahila Mandals, social workers and mass media have taken programmes for creating awareness among the people about the injustice done to the girl child.

17.9 NATIONAL POLICY OF CHILDREN

The principles set out in the Declaration of Rights of the child by the United Nations General Assembly do not carry any obligation on any country to ensure that they are indeed realised. However, the Government of India started taking steps through action oriented programmes to guarantee these rights consistent with the magnitude of the problem facing the country and the availability of resources. It was only for the first time in the third five-year plan that a programme for child development was introduced under the social welfare schemes.

In the year of 1967 the Government of India appointed a Committee to go into the extent of the problems to meet these needs. The committee identified areas requiring action and suggested appropriate action oriented programmes. It observed the necessity for devising a comprehensive national policy for child development and recommended the constitution of a high level committee on child welfare under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister to take a unified view of the needs of children.

After the consideration of the recommendations of the Committee, the Government of Children India adopted the Resolution on the National Policy on children on 22 August 1974. According to the Resolution children are a supremely important national asset. Children's programmes should find a prominent part in our national plans for the development of human resources so that our children grow up to become robust citizens, physically fit, mentally alert and morally healthy, endowed with the skills and motivations needed by society.

17.9.1   Policy and Measures

It has been enjoined upon the state that it shall provide adequate services to children both before and after birth and through the period of growth, to ensure their full physical, mental and social development. The state shall progressively increase the scope of such services so that, within a reasonable time all children in the country enjoy optimum conditions for their balanced growth.

The measures adopted for achieving these objectives are as follows:

i)   All children shall be covered by a comprehensive health programme.

ii) Programmes shall be implemented to provide nutrition services with the objective of removing deficiencies in the diet of children.

iii) Programmes will be undertaken for the general improvement of the health nutrition and education of expectant and nursing mothers.

iv) The state shall take steps to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14 for which a time-bound programme will be drawn up consistent with the availability of resources. Special efforts will be made to reduce the prevailing wastage and stagnation in schools, particularly in the case of girls and children of the weaker sections of society. The programme of informal education for pre-school children from such sections will also be taken up.

v)   Children who are not able to take full advantage of formal school education shall be provided other forms of education suited to their requirements.

vi) Physical education, games, sports and other types of recreational as well as cultural and scientific activities shall be promoted in schools, community centres and such other institutions

vii) To ensure equality of opportunity, special assistance shall be provided to all children belonging to the weaker sections of the society, such as children belonging to the economically weaker sections, both in urban and rural areas.

viii) Children who are socially handicapped, who have become delinquent or have been forced to take to begging or the otherwise in distress, shall be provided facilities for education, training and rehabilitation and will be helped to become useful citizens.

ix)   Children shall be protected against neglect, cruelty and exploitation.

x)   No child under 14 years shall be permitted to be engaged in the hazardous occupation or be made to undertake heavy work.

xi)   Facilities shall be provided for special treatment, education, rehabilitation and care of children who are physically handicapped, emotionally disturbed or mentally retarded.

xii) Children shall be given priority for protection and relief in times of distress or natural calamity.

xiii) Special programmes shall be formulated to spot, encourage and assist gifted children, particularly those belonging to the weaker sections of society.

xiv) Existing laws should be amended so that in all legal disputes, whether between parents or institutions, the interests of children are given paramount consideration.

xv) In organising services for children, efforts would be directed to strengthen family ties so that full potentialities of growth of children are realised within the normal family, neighbourhood and community environment.

Box 2

National Child Development Board

It was set up in December 1974 with the Prime Minister of India as its Chairman and the Minister of Human Resource Development as its Vice-Chairman. The main objectives of this board are:

a) to formulate and review the implementation of the programmes designed for the welfare and development for children

b) to coordinate efforts made by different government and private agencies in implementing these programmes

c) to locate gaps in the existing services and suggest measures to eliminate such gaps

d) to suggest the priority areas of action from time to time; and

e) to act as a high powered national body to symbolise the commitment of the nation to the welfare and development of children.

17.9.2   Priority Areas

In formulating programmes in different sectors, priority shall be given to programmes relating to:

i)   preventive and promotive aspects of child health,

ii)   nutrition for infants and children in the pre-school age along with nutrition for nursing and expectant mothers,

iii) maintenance, education and training of orphan and destitute children,

iv)   creche and other facilities for the care of children of working or ailing mothers, and

v)   care, education, training and rehabilitation of handicapped children.

In order to provide a forum for planning, review and proper co-ordination of the multiplicity of services to meet health, nutrition, education and welfare needs of children, the National Policy on Children has made provision for the constitution of a National Children's Board. Similar Boards may also be constituted at the State levels.

17.9.3   Voluntary Efforts

The National Policy on Children emphasis that voluntary organisations engaged in the field of child welfare will continue to have the opportunity to develop either on their own or with state assistance, in the field of education, health, recreation and social welfare services. It has been enjoined upon the state to

encourage and strengthen voluntary action so that state and voluntary organisations, trusts, charities and religious and other endowments would be tapped to the extent possible for promoting and developing child welfare programmes.

In order to achieve the aims mentioned above, the state will provide necessary legislative and administrative support. Facilities for research and training of personnel will be developed to meet the needs of the expanding programmes and to improve the effectiveness of the services.

In pursuance of the National Policy on Children an Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme has been started in the country. The scheme aims at providing a package of six services to children below 6 years and pregnant and nursing mothers. The services are supplementary nutrition, immunisation, health and nutrition education to mothers. These services are provided through Anganwadi Centres located in rural, urban and tribal areas. The scheme was started on an experimental basis in 1974 in 33 Development Blocks and by the year 1989-90 it has been functioning in 2438 blocks in the country.

Check Your Progress 3

i)   What is the basic objective of the National Policy on Children. Answer in about three lines.

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ii)   What are the measures adopted to achieve the objectives of the National Policy on Children? Answer in about ten lines

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iii)   Name the countries where the Year of the Girl Child was Observed? Answer in about three lines.

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17.10 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed the demographic composition of children in India. We have looked into the problems faced by street children and orphans and the measures taken by government to rehabilitate them.

We have, then, concentrated on child labour; from there we shifted our attention to juvenile delinquency. We then, focused on the rights of children adopted by UN agencies involved in children's welfare. Having done this, we moved on to explain the discrimination meted out to the girl child in India. Lastly, we have studied the national policy on children.

17.11 KEY WORDS

Demography	:	It is the science of vital statistics as of births, deaths, marriages, migration etc. of population.
Juvenile Court	:	It is a law court that tries the cases involving children under a fixed age.
Policy	:	A governing principle or a course of action.
Scheme	:	An orderly combination of things on a definite plan.
Programme	:	An outline of work to be done.

17.12 FURTHER READINGS

Mandai, B.B. 1990. *Child and Action Plan for Development.* Uppal Publications: New Delhi

Government of India, 1980. *Profile of the Child in India: Policies and Programmes.* Government of India: New Delhi

17.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

i)   The major causes of infant mortality are pre-mature births, respiratory infection, diarrhoea, cough, fever and digestive disorder. The major causes of child mortality are tuberculosis, tetanus, whooping cough, diphtheria, poliomyelitis and measles.

ii) In order to rehabilitate the orphan children, the Government has started a programme known as,the Scheme for Children in Need of Care and Protection. Under the scheme, children up to the age of 18 years are given care and protection including general education and vocational training. Besides, the provision for foster care has also been made, according to which, a child is kept for a certain period in a family which agrees to give a child a suitable home.

iii) a)   International Labour Organisation (ILO).

     b)   The child population in India in 1991 was 11.28 million.

Check Your Progress 2

i)   Factors promoting juvenile delinquency are broken homes, lack of privacy in homes, bad housing, absence of space for recreation in homes and neighbourhood, neglect by parents, and poverty of parents. In addition, undesirable companionship in school, work place and neighbourhood, and undesirable influence of cinema and literature and other mass media contribute to juvenile delinquency.

ii)   Laws have been promulgated for taking up preventive as well as corrective measures against delinquency. Under these laws, juvenile courts under the control of full time women magistrates have been formed. The juveniles are brought before the courts without handcuffs or chains. Their cases are pleaded by special officers known as Probation Officers. These officers are trained in social work and correctional administration. Till the cases are decided by the courts, juveniles are kept in Remand Homes. After the decision by the courts, those juveniles who need constant supervision, are kept in approved schools for care, treatment, education and training. It is expected that by the time they would go out of the schools, their mental, moral and physical conditions would have changed and they would have imbibed the qualities of good citizenship.

iii) a) 1924   b) 1979   c) 7th April 1948.

Check Your Progress 3

i)   The basic objective of the National Policy on Children is to provide full physical, mental and social development to children before and after birth and through the period of their growth.

ii)   The measures adopted for achieving the objectives of the National Policy on Children include a comprehensive health programme, nutrition programme and nutrition education, formal education, and informal education, facilities for sport games, cultural and scientific activities in scbools, community centres, special assistance to children belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and special programme for treatment, education, rehabilitation and care of physicall handicapped, emotionally disturbed or mentally retarded children.

iii) The seven SAARC Countries, which observed the year 1990 as the Year of the Girl Child, are Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

UNIT 18 YOUTH: IDENTITY AND ALIENATION

Structure

18.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we shall discuss the contemporary dimensions of youth in India. After going through this unit you should be able to:

- describe demographic condition of youth population in India;

- explain the difference between student youth and non-student youth examine traditional and changing value system of youth;

- narrate the problems of alienated youth;

- describe the factors and problems causing student unrest; and

- discuss some programmes for the youth in India.

18.1 INTRODUCTION

The study of youth in India involves consideration of several dimensions. Youth can be understood both in quantitative and qualitative terms. Qualitative

description means a discussion involving socio-cultural variables. Quantitative term means a consideration of estimates of the proportion of youth in a population, that is, a discussion of socio-cultural variables like education, occupation, income, standard of living, rural- urban differences. A sociological discussion would require socio-demographic and cultural approach 'to youth in India. We begin this unit defining the term 'Youth'. We shall, then shift our focus to the demographic variables of youth, namely, age, sex, urban-rural distribution, marital status, educational attainment and unemployment rate.

Confrontation of youth with the traditional value system, alienation, identity crisis are briefly touched upon. Causes of student unrest are dealt with next. Finally, we mention the observations of sociologists on future programme for youths.

18.2   DEFINITION OF 'YOUTH' AND 'YOUTH CULTURE'

At the very outset let us be aware of the notion of youth. Though apparently it is considered to be a biophysical stage, it has enormous sociological significance in the study of social problem.

18.2.1   Youth

The term Youth is not used technically but rather it nearly describes a series of characteristics in respect to persons belonging to age group 15-24 years of a given population. The term is illusive. Some consider youth as a stage characterised by factors of biological nature i.e. biophysical changes which occur in the transitional stage between childhood and adulthood, roughly between 15 and 24 years age group. Thus in many studies on youth persons of age group 15-24 years are considered.

Despite realising the inherent drawback in such a classification (for it cannot serve as a common denominator to cover many complex problems all over the country) social scientists including sociologists largely depend on this age group classification. In this unit the age group 15-24 years would be retained for discussion-on youth. Along with this classification sociologically the nation of "youth culture" is closely associated. However, the notion of youth culture has contextual relevance. Let us examine it's relevance in Indian context.

18.2.2   Youth Culture

Euro-American sociologists such Bennett Berger (1963) and many others often talk about 'Youth culture'. In Western societies youth culture is identifiable and hence it is considered to be a sub-social system like *Black culture, America-Mexican culture* etc., But in a country like India, the youth are intimately linked with certain other features of social system. Therefore, Indian sociologists reluctantly accept the very notion of youth culture as employed by foreign scholars. In our discussion on youth we shall treat youth as "socio-demographic or statistical categories" of Indian society, which has enormous sociological importance and relevance.

Sociological studies on youth in India involve a discussion on several dimensions, namely demographic, social, cultural, economic and political. It would be useful here to examine demographic characteristics of Indian youth in terms of residence, education and working force.

18.3 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INDIAN YOUTH

It would be useful to examine the population of youth in terms. of sex-composition, rural-urban distribution, marital status and educational attainment.

It is significant to note that the population of youth in the country at the turn of this century was 40 million. The proportion of youth in the total population since 1901 remained unchanged, it was around 17 per cent till 1971.

In 1981 the youth population was 122 million, i.e., a little less than 18.5 per cent of country's total population. During 1951-1981 the population almost doubled (from 62 to 122 million). According to 1991 census youth constituted 18.3% of the total population

18.3.1 Sex-Ratio of the Youth Population

According to 1981 Census, of the total population 52% was of male youth. In terms of sex ratio it comes to 929 female per one thousand male. It is significant to note that male youth per 1000 female youth in India has been increasing during the last 20 years showing a deficit of 7 per cent of female youth.

18.3.2 Rural-Urban Distribution

In 1991 of the total rural and the urban population 17.7 and 20.1% respectively were the youth.

18.3.3 Marital Status

By and large the youth remain unmarried till they reach 20 years. But in India the situation is different, for a sizeable number of youth population is married. In 1981 most half of the girls in the age group 15-29 years were unmarried in urban areas. As compared to the previous Census years, the current mean age at marriage has gone up. However, a sizeable number of girls in rural areas still marry at young age. During 1961-81 the proportion of the youth remaining single has increased both in urban and rural areas. Category wise age at marriage in India for youth has been indicated in the following table:

18.3.4 Educational Attainment of the Youth Population

The overall youth literacy rate in 2002 was 72.6% in India. In other words, in terms of sex and residence illiterates are predominant in the population.

Overall the literacy rate has gone up from 24 per cent to 36 per cent during the past 20 years. Youth educated up to matriculate were 3.6 million in 1961 and 20.2 million in 1981. In other words, a six-fold increase is apparent. The increase was obvious among the young women. In spite of the increase half of the male youth and three-fourth of the female youth in the country cannot read and write even today.

18.3.5   Working Population of the Youths

Usually the proportion of working population is expressed In terms of employment- unemployment rate. The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), in its periodical survey provides data in this respect.

i)   **Incidence of Unemployment**

Analysis of unemployment figures in the country clearly shows that the youth form a relatively significant group among the total unemployed persons. According to Visaria, the share of youth among the employed population in 1977-78 ranged from 48.5 per cent for the rural female youth to 79.8 per cent for the urban male youth.

When we analyse the unemployment rate among the educated youth, we get that among all educated youth the proportion of unemployed Secondary educated youth, both in urban and rural areas, is higher than others (see Table 3).

Table 3: Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment
1977-78

	Rural		**Urban**	
	M	**F**	**M**	**F**
All	3.6	4.1	7.1	4.4
Illiterate	2.5	3.6	3.6	4.4
Secondary	10.6	28.6	10.0	33.6
Graduates	16.2	32.3	8.8	31.0

Source: NSSO, India (1981)

It is obvious from the above table that overall employment rate among the urban youths is less than the rural. youth. It has reached a critical stage among the educated youth population.

Analysis of data on youth unemployed in the country indicates some useful trends, namely:

a)   Unemployment rates among the rural female youth in states of Karnataka, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala were higher than the national average which, for the year under consideration (1977-78), was 5.6 per cent.

b)   Among rural male youth, this rate was higher than the national average of 6 per cent in Orissa, Bihar, Haryana, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. :

c)   Among male youth in urban areas, the rate of unemployment was higher than the national average in Orissa, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Kerala.

d)   The incidence of unemployment was the highest among the urban female youth. In states like Assam, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala and Maharashtra this rate was higher than the national average, and

e)   The rural unemployment rates in many states were significantly lower than those of urban unemployment.

18.3.6 Implication of the Increase in Youth Population

The rate of increase in youth population has serious implication both for educational and work opportunity. Despite the differences existing between these characteristics of the youth in different regions, certain common problems can easily be identified.

The bulk of the rural youth in India is out of school. Some are drop-outs. However, among the different social strata education is spreading. The out-of-school youth exhibit a different character. These children are forced in one way or the other to enter the work in production cycle prematurely.

Despite the numerical preponderance of rural youths this sector has been exposed very little. It is obvious that rural youth have less opportunity for receiving education, self-expression and enjoyment compared with other young people.

Check Your Progress 1

i)   How is youth defined? Answer in four lines.

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ii) State some important dimensions of study of youth in India. Answer in about three lines.

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iii) Briefly describe some demographic features of Indian youth. Answer in eight lines.

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iv) Briefly state usages of demographic data on youth population in India. Answer in three lines

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18.4 CHANGING VALUE SYSTEM AND ALIENATION OF THE YOUTH

18.4.1 Changing Value System

In this section, we shall be dealing with the phenomena of changing value system and the facts of alienation among the youth.

In the last two centuries, there have been enormous changes in our traditional value system. Let us explain this phenomenon and find out whether it has any impact on the youth of our country with special reference to the alienation of the youth.

In the traditional Hindu system life is viewed in terms of four well-marked states with social obligations. The youth enjoyed no authority, but were given some tasks in the second stage (i.e. Grihastha).

It should also be noted that in Hindu society education was restricted to certain caste levels; therefore, socio-economic and occupational mobility was almost restricted. Viewed against this value today specially after Independence this phenomenon regardless of religion and region has changed. One of the important contributing factor to change in value system is of course development in mass education. New ideas and values are inculcated through education. This makes youth student receptive to change. Several sociological studies support the view that youth student are/keen on social change in the areas of family, caste, notions of hierarchical status (including untouchability), rationality, secularism, equality, social justice, position of women and so on (Damle, 1977:203). It should be emphasised that although there is difference between rural and urban youth, their traditional value system is almost the similar.

18.4.2 Alienation

The term 'alienation' denotes a feeling of estrangement from other people and of confusion about existing norms. Many writers include in the concept of alienation, to explain notions such as lack of power, meaninglessness, sense of isolation and self- estrangement. The causes of alienation are many. In the present context a few factors seem to be important.

i) **Generation Gap**

One of them is a cleavage between young and old generation. The youths especially of urban areas depend much on their parents. On the one hand, there has been considerable rise in their level of aspirations and expectations; on the other, they confront the forces of traditions. Majority of the modern Indian youth are not interested to be bound by the traditional norms and values. They are interested to adopt the secular life-style and a rational outlook. These causes conflict which at some later stage leads to alienation.
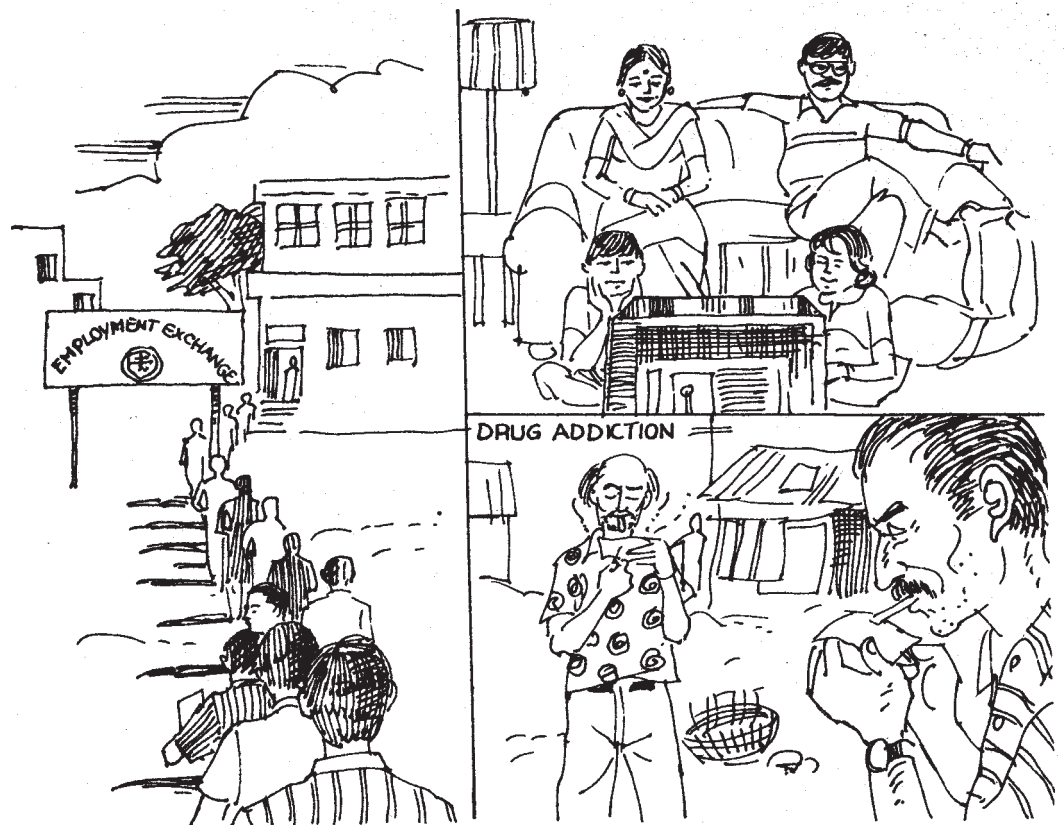
Youth and Alienation

ii)   Unemployment

The second important contributing factor to alienation is widespread
phenomenon of unemployment. Soon after completing a particular stage they
require economic security. But as they fail to find a job they feel like living in
an isolation. This is very crucial stage. Here they may become victim of other
evils, such as mental illness, criminal activities, drug addiction. Here both
rural and urban youth are almost in similar situation. Sachchidananda (1988)
writes:

> "Those (rural) boys who cannot go to the town for continuing their studies
> and remain in the village spend their time in idle gossip and in some cases
> turn to anti-social activities. It has been found that many such educated
> young men take active part in dacoities, road hold-ups which are extremely
> common in many parts of India".

Some studies carried on in parts of northeastern and central India have pointed
out widespread phenomenon of, 'drug addiction" in university and college
campuses. It is not well established those whether alienated youth are victim
of drug addiction or drug addiction alone leads to alienation. Both these factors
influence each other and operate together.

iii)   Identity Crisis

Identity signifies a sense of awareness that people consciously or unconsciously
assert for survival, recognition and reward in the existing social structures.
Youth in recent time try .to define their own identity in order to obtain the
resources for survival and try to get a place in the existing social order.

It is being felt that the youth have not satisfactorily been placed in the matter of education and occupation. Instead of being in search for identity youth are undergoing turmoil of identity crisis. This has led them to attract towards the forces of revivalism as remedy to inadequacies. In absence of adequate model to deal with rising identity crisis, the youth especially the educated unemployed youth indulge in non-institutionalised channels of socio-economic betterment.

Check Your Progress 2

Tick mark the correct answers:

i)   In the traditional Hindu system life is viewed in terms of four well marked stages with social obligations. In this system of life youth enjoyed

   a)   good deal of authority without any social obligation

   b)   good deal of authority with social obligation

   c)   no authority but were given some tasks in the second stage of life Griha

   d)   All are incorrect.

ii) There is difference between the rural and urban youth; and their traditional value system

   a)   is also different

   b)   is almost similar

   c)   cannot be judged in these two opposite scales.

iii) Which one of the following is not a cause of alienation among the youth?

   a)   Cleavage between young and old generation

   b)   Spread of unemployment

   c)   Drug addiction

   d)   Enormous scope of employment.

18.5   STUDENT UNREST

In recent decades, there have been considerable number of incidences of unrest in the educational campuses. Studies reveal that youth unrest and educational institutions are highly correlated.

According to a sociological study of unrest on the campuses in the country, it was noticed that during the period 1968 to 1971 almost all the states in the country were heavily affected by instances of student violence (Vinayak, 1972). Of 744 cases of student unrest, 80 per cent were violent and about 20 per cent were peaceful. All India average ratio of violent to peaceful agitations was 4:5 to 1:0 and it ranged between 2:3 to 1:0 in Bihar and Madras, to 31:0 to 0:0 in M. P. The universities in the southern states were comparatively more peaceful or less violent. The maximum number of cases of student violence were in Delhi, followed by U.P. and West Bengal. The least disturbed states were Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan.

18.5.1 Causes of Student Unrest

Two broad categories can be listed as the causes of unrest and violence, namely, 'On-campus' issues and 'Off-campus' issues. The 'On-campus issues' are both academic and non-academic in nature. On-campus issues are related to examinations, fees, residential facilities. The Off-campus issues are sympathetic strikes (Bandh) and confrontation between student youth and non-student youth.

Vinayak has observed that during the period 1968-71 more than 65 per cent cases of unrest were due to Off-campus issues, about 24 per cent due to On-campus academic issues, and about 11 per cent due to other factors. The state-wise analysis revealed that :here were 66 cases in Andhra Pradesh, 25 in Assam, 44 in Bihar, 128 in Delhi, 7 in Gujarat, 6 in Haryana, 7 in Himachal Pradesh, 15 in Jammu and Kashmir, 51 in Tamil Nadu, 14 in Maharashtra, 22 in Orissa, 50 in Punjab, 18 in Rajasthan, 109 in U.P., and 101 in West Bengal. This study revealed that almost all states were affected by student violence during 1968-71. There is no denying the fact that there have been several reported cases of agitations on campuses during the past decade.

Some specific studies have been directed to root out the causes of unrest.

i)   According to one source, the underlying cause of unrest is rooted in a general feeling of frustration among the youth. The educated students have come to believe that in the present set lp the government policies have ignored merits and abilities.

ii) The other important cause of student unrest has been interference of political parties with student union or organisations. Several studies have supported the views that the association of various political parties through the student wings in many ways are responsible for the outbreak of violence. The national political parties and their local bodies tend to use the students as their testing field for their strength for incoming elections.

iii) The third contributing factor to unrest is unemployment. It is a well-known fact that the present.day education system in the country does not guarantee suitable employment. The reasons are many: lack of proper guidance, training, career-oriented programmes and non-availability of jobs. .

According to a recent study by Parveen Visaria (1985) it is quite clear that in spite of the. efforts on the various fronts, the quantum of unemployment has continued to increase with the growth in population. Visaria has concluded that the unemployed' males in urban areas have outnumbered the unemployed females. This study indicated a marginal rise in unemployment rate for rural males but a sharp decline in the unemployment rate for rural females. The trend for the youth population (age 15-29) was similar. The unemployment rates showed a rise among urban youths of both sexes and also among the rural male youth.

18.5.2 Implications for Student Unrest

Youth form a relatively significant group among the total unemployed persons in India. The reasons for unemployment are many and they are closely linked with population growth, economic growth and expansion of education. The

consequences of rising unemployment among the youth are for themselves and their families. It has been indicated that the increase in the number of educated youth and the indifferent quality of education makes matter worse. This has implications for student unrest in particular.

Activity 1

Read Section 18.7 again and list the issues that have led to unrest and violence in university campuses in recent years. You may present your own observations about student unrest in your area and compare your observations with your friends at your Study Centre.

18.6 SOME POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO YOUTH QUESTION

According to Sachchidananda (1988), two Possible and complementary approaches could be thought of to discuss the youth question. It could be based either on an individual or socio-economic context in which one lives.

Despite the differences existing between characteristics of the youth in different regions, certain common problems can be identified. First, there is a high percentage of rural youth within the population. This sector must be given opportunity to play their role. A major obstacle in this connection is of lack of education. While education alone is not capable of bringing about socio-economic change on its own, it is nevertheless the condition, that is, educational opportunities which must be fulfilled if change is to occur. Therefore, the future programme, that is, educational policies, must be flexible and more sensitive than at present to regional and local traditions. Further, the youth are most affected by the erroneous process of development. As such future educational planning should take particular account of the situation and prospects of the employment including linking work with study.

Box 1

Youth Services

There are various youth programmes launched by the State and the Central Governments as well with a view to enabling the youth (a) "to improve their skills and personality for effective participation in the process of development and (b.) to provide them opportunities to participate in the process of national development". You may like to know about a few of these programmes

1) **National Services Scheme (NSS):** This scheme aims at the involvement of College Students on a voluntary and selective basis in the programme of social service and national development.

2) **Nehru Yuvak Kendra (NYK):** 'This scheme aims to serve the non-students and rural youth with a view to improving their personality and employment capability. These *kendras* organise youth leadership, training programmes, national integration camps, operation of bio-gas plants, bee keeping, para-military training etc. At many places the scheme of Training Rural Youth for Self Employment is implemented through the Kendras

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> 3) **Scouting and Guiding:** This is a part of an international movement which aims to building character of boys and girls.
>
> There are other numerous schemes viz. International Exchange of Youth Deligations, Promotions of National Integration, National Service Volunteer Scheme, Exhibition for Youth, Youth Hostels; National Youth Award Scheme etc. meant for the youth in India. (India 2000).

Second important point is related to position of youth in general population structure of the country. Life expectancy in India has increased considerably over the past five decades. It is expected to increase much more in the next twenty years. Therefore, it would necessitate a clear-cut division between youth and old. In sociological terms it would mean two broad but distinct types of groups: old and young. Since role and responsibilities are associated with persons this would involve some transfer of authority from one generation to the next, i.e. from older to the younger. So there is a possibility of clash or conflict in ideas and actions between two generations. Such clash, likely to come up in years to comes. However, there are ways to tackle the problem of clash. One is possible changes In the family ideology. A democratic type of family atmosphere can resolve the conflict. Similar radical changes in other social institutions such as kinship and caste system are also required.

Check Your Progress 3

i) What are the main causes of student unrest? Answer in about seven lines.

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Tick marks the *incorrect* statement.

ii) According to a recent study:

   a) unemployed males in urban areas have out numbered the unemployed females.

   b) there has been a marginal rise in the unemployment rate for rural males but a sharp decline in the employment rate for rural female

   c) the unemployment rates showed a rise among the urban youth
       d) none is incorrect.

iii) Discuss briefly anyone of the possible approaches to youth question in India with special reference to rural youth. Use seven lines to answer.

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18.7 LET US SUM UP

This unit highlights certain important issues related to youth in India. We pointed out the difficulties in defining the term youth. Though the term was defined as 'age-group' category, the emphasis was also on socio-cultural variables. These were treated as identifiable criteria in the study of youth. We discussed at some length a few demographic variables of youth, namely, age-sex, urban-rural distribution, marital status, educational attainment and unemployment rate.

Confrontation of youth with the traditional value system, alienation and identity crisis were touched upon briefly. Discussions on the situation and problems of youth were held at some length. Lastly, observations of sociologists on future programme for youth, were indicated.

18.8 KEY WORDS

Alienation	:	A feeling of estrangement from other people and of confusion about the existing norms.
Demography	:	Study of phenomena connected with human populations; such as births, marriages and deaths, migrations and the factors which influence them. It involves statistics.
Identity	:	The condition of being the same with something described or asserted.
Sex-Ratio	:	Number of female per 1000 male as defined in the *Census of India.*
Value System	:	Shared cultural standard according to which the relevance – moral, aesthetic – of objects, of attitudes, desires and needs can be compared and judged.
Violence	:	An extreme form of conflict.
Youth	:	Persons of age-group 15-24 year of a given population. It is a socio-cultural and simultaneously a statistical category.
Youth culture	:	An identifiable sub-social system of a larger social system.

18.9 FURTHER READINGS

Damle.. Y, B. 1977. "Youth". In S.C. Dube (Ed.) *India Since Independence,* Vikas: New Delhi.

De Mellow, R.C., 1978. "Youth". In Romesh Thapar's (ed.) *Change and Conflict in India.* Macmillan India: Delhi.

Sachchidanand, 1988. *Social Change in Village India,* Concept: Delhi.

18.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

i)   Youth is defined both as social and statistical category. Usually persons between 15 and 24 years age are considered youth.

ii)   Important dimensions of the study of youth in India are social demography and: cultural variables.

iii) Demographic features of the youth can be expressed in age-sex-residence distribution in the general population.

Rural-urban ratio is 3.1 (urban male 33 million, rural male 92 million). Youth mean marriage age is 22. Half of the male youth and three-fourth female youth are still illiterate.

iv)   Main usages are related to the areas of educational expansion and creation of job opportunities.

Check Your Progress 2

i)   c

ii)   b

iii) d

Check Your Progress 3

i)   The causes of the student unrest can broadly be categorised under two broad headings: on-campus and off-campus. The on-campus issues are related to examination fees, residential facilities etc. The off-campus issues are sympathetic strikes (Bandh), and confrontation between student youth and non-student youth. In general the feeling of frustration, unemployment and political interference have contributed substantially towards this unrest.

ii)   d

iii) Rural youth must be given the opportunity to play their role, Hence they are to be educated adequately, to bring change in the society. The educational policies, must be flexible and sensitive to regional tradition. The further educational planning should take particular account of the situation and prospects of the employment including linking work with study.

UNIT 19 WOMEN

Structure

19.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we shall discuss the issues relating to women's identity, dignity and social justice. After going through this unit you should be able to:

● discuss the various indicators of women's status;

● explain the structures and social processes that create and perpetuate women's subordination;

● examine the role of different forms of violence in the society;

● analyse women's issues in a structural and historical context; and

● describe the contemporary challenges and responses to women's issues in India.

19.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus on the status of women in India was drawn by the submission of the report titled 'Towards Equality' by the Committee on the Status of Women in India. This Committee, which was set up by the Government of India at the request of the United Nations, looked into various status indicators to evaluate

the status of women in India. The report had made shocking revelations of the regressive changes that women are faced as against the progressive changes that took place in various sectors of the country. Similar disclosures from other parts of the world made the United Nations declare the year 1975 as the Women's Year and the Decade 1975-85 for women.

The findings of the report and research studies thereafter, demonstrated the contradictions in the Constitutional guarantees of equality for women and the reality. Various issues like rape, dowry deaths, domestic violence, sati, desertion, female foeticide etc., were/are taken up for campaigning and seeking gender justice by women's organisations and human rights groups. The mid 70s and 80s had witnessed the resurgence of the second wave of the women's movement during this century. This new awareness of articulating the experiences of discrimination, subordination and neglect had also found its way into examining the existing body of knowledge. This had seen the heralding of women's studies research. Despite loopholes and inadequacies, there have been legislations, amendments to the existing Acts, policies and programmes for women during the 1970's and 80's.

In this unit we shall focus on some of the problems faced by Indian women. We begin this unit by identifying the indicators of women's status. We then, move on to concentrate on the family as an institution and its role in socialising a daughter to perform a secondary role. We will discuss different forms of violence that threaten the identity and dignity of women, like sexual harassment and rape, domestic violence and dowry deaths, prostitution and pornography and misrepresentation of women in the media. Lastly we shall explain the challenges faced by women's movement in India and various social responses towards the women's issues.

19.2 INDICATORS OF WOMEN'S STATUS

Ironical1y, in the Indian situation where women goddesses are worshipped, women are denied an independent identity and status. This is strongly ingrained in the social fabric, the culture, the economy and the polity. As the code of Manu states: 'A woman should never be independent. Her father has authority over her in childhood, her husband in youth, and her son in old age.' (Manusmriti, Dharmashastra, IX, 3). Women's identity, freedom, access to resources, opportunities, etc., are determined by the caste and class status of-the family. Marital status and their fertility provide an identity to women. Married women achieve status and respect in the family and society after attaining motherhood, especially after giving birth to sons.

Through various cultural processes in the family and society the selfhood of women is denied from childhood. Freedom, individualhood and identity for women is limited and stifled which have various implications. Though there are certain positive changes taking place in terms of women's education, employment, participation in panchayat, etc., there is still a long way to go.

In general, the status of women is evaluated in comparison to the status of men. The major empirical indicators that are utilised for this evaluation are the demographic status, the health status, the literacy status, the employment rates and patterns and the political status.

19.2.1 Demographic Status

The indicators like the sex ratio, the mortality and morbidity patterns and life expectancy enable the evaluation of the demographic status of a population. For purposes of understanding the demographic status of women, we will elaborate on sex ratio and mortality patterns. The sex ratio indicates the proportion of females for 1000 males in the population. In India, since1he beginning of this century, the proportion of women in the population has been declining. According to 1981 Census the proportion bas slightly increased, however, the provisional figures of the 1991 Census indicate a decline again, with a magical increase in 2001.

Table 1: Sex-Ratio from 1901 to 1991

Year	Ratio
1901	972
1911	964
1921	955
1931	950
1941	945
1951	946
1961	941
1971	930
1981	934
1991	929
2001	933

Mortality rate or the death rate measures the frequency of deaths. This is an annual rate and is calculated for different age groups as number of deaths for 1000 live births. The age-specific death rate data indicates high rate of female infant mortality (0-4 years) and maternal mortality (5-24 years). The high female infant mortality (36.8) as against male infant mortality (33.6) indicates the discrimination that young girls face in gaining access to adequate food and health care (Sample Registration System (SRS), 1987). The high rates of maternal mortality are because of obstetric risk at delivery and inadequate access to medical care. The low age at marriage and at consummation leads to early age at pregnancy and risk at delivery. The life expectancy rate represents the mean life length an individual is expected to survive given the prevailing mortality conditions. The life expectancy of females is 63.8. years and that of males is 62.8 years (as per 2000 view). It has been observed that the chances of longer life expectancy is higher among women during older years, whereas women in the younger years continue to have relatively higher death rates. (Also see Unit 33, Block 7 of ESO-12).

19.2.2 Health Status

Discrimination against women prevails in providing health care. Studies on hospital admissions and records have shown that men and boys get more medical care compared to women and girls. It is said that women and girls are

taken to "hospitals at much latest stages of ill-health compared to men and boys. Moreover, majorities of Indian women are anaemic. They expend higher levels of energy performing innumerable activities like cooking, cleaning, washing, fetching water, collecting firewood, taking care of the young and old, tending cattle, and working in agriculture field. However, their calorie intake is not commensurate with the energy expenditure. The calorie deficit takes a toll on women's health in general and reproductive health in particular.

It has also been observed that with environmental degradation women are walking longer miles to collect firewood and water which has increased women's work load. This has a negative impact on their health. Similarly, since women are the major water carriers, they are susceptible to water-borne infections. Cooking with inefficient fuel like crop wastes, dung cakes etc., and stoves, causes respiratory diseases like chronic bronchitis. Women engaged in agriculture, mines, plantations and in home-based production like rolling bidis, making paper bags, embroidery etc., face several occupational health hazards and are not covered by any health programmes.

19.2.3 Literacy Status

Education is regarded as an important instrument to bring about social change. Apart from its potential to bring about personality development, it also is a means to achieve financial independence and status mobility.

In India, from the post-independence period young women and girls are attaining higher education and entering male dominated fields. However, the overall literacy rates and the relative literacy rates are lower in comparison with male literacy rates. The total literacy rate in India is 65.38%, while for male it is 75.85%, for female it is 54.16% (Census 2001).

There are several factors that cause this situation. Firstly, due to low socio-economic status of the household, children are not sent to school. Even if children are admitted to school, daughters are withdrawn and are given the responsibility of the care of siblings and domestic work. The economic necessity, which compels households to send their children to perform labour, also deprives children of education. A high value is attached to daughter's marriage and motherhood, therefore, families are unwilling to invest scarce resources in daughter's education. Boys are more likely to receive such investments in order to improve their chances of employment. (See Unit 32, Block 7 of ESO-12 for further detail.)

19.2.4 Employment Status

Anthropological studies indicate that women were the major producers of food, clothing, crafts and many different tools through most of the human history.

The large majority of Indian women participate in innumerable activities for the survival of their families. However, definitions of 'work' and 'worker' fall short of capturing the variety of women's work and its importance to the family. According to 2001 census 25.7% of the female and 39.3% of the males are workers. Of the total female workers 32.5% are cultivators, 39.4% are agricultural labours, 6.4% in the household industry and 21.7% belong to the other category of workers. The majority of these are involved in agriculture,

plantations and mines. Despite the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, women are paid lower wages, occupy lower skilled jobs, have less access to skill training and promotion. Employed women in the urban areas occupy stereotyped jobs like that of teachers, nurses, doctors, clerks and typists. Women are also making inroads into predominantly male oriented occupations like engineering, architecture, aeronautics, manufacturing, police services and management. But cultural barriers, which view women as 'weaker sex', discriminate against their selection, training and promotion. Moreover, women have to work doubly hard to prove their worth. (You may like to read Unit 31, Block 2 of ESO-12 and Unit 11, Block 3 of ESO-O6 for further information.)

19.2.5 Political Status

Unlike many Western countries where women had to put up organised struggles to acquire the right to vote, women in India have the right to vote as citizens of this nation. Though India had a woman Prime Minister, the Late Indira Gandhi, it cannot be said that women are fairly represented in the Parliament and other State and local bodies. They occupy only 8.91% of the seats in the parliament. By and large women have remained passive voters in elections and their polling behaviour is determined by the decisions that the male members and the community take. The question of reservation of 30% seats for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies was widely debated recently. Though this bill has been placed in the parliament on several occasion, it has been withdrawn in one plea or the other. However participation of women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) has been ensured in India with the 73rd constitutional amendment. Taking, the advantage of 30% reservation the PRIs more than 30 million women are actively participating in the political decision-making process at the grass root.

Check Your Progress 1

i)   Do you see any contradiction in the constitutional guarantee of equality for women and the reaility? Answer in nine lines.

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ii) What are the implications of the low status of women? Answer in Seven lines.

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iii) Tick the appropriate answer

The percentage of women workers is low because

a)   Women are housewives

b)   Women are not enumerated as workers

c)   Women do not work

d)   Workers are always men.

19.3   SOCIAL STRUCTURE, SOCIAL PROCESSES AND WOMEN

In this section let us try to understand the various structures that create the secondary status of women and perpetuate the discrimination through various social processes.

19.3.1   The Caste Structure

The subordination of women was crucial to the development of caste hierarchy. The higher the caste the greater were the constraints on women. It is observed that the development of gender division, based on the control of female sexuality, was integral to the formation of the social structure.

It might be relevant to ask: What was the need to control women's sexuality? What was it that women's power would endanger? How was it linked to material resources? For unravelling these questions it is important to understand the system of caste.

To remind you, there are thousands of sub-castes regionally known as 'jatis'. However, the pan-Indian social hierarchy is based on the 'varna' hierarchy, which divides the Hindu population in four major groups: the *brahmin* (priestly caste) at the top, followed by the *Khatriya* (warrior caste), then the *vaishya* (commoners, usually known as trading castes) and at the bottom the *sudra* (agricultural labourers and artisan). Some who are beyond the caste hierarchy were considered to be untouchables. The caste boundaries are maintained through strict purity – pollution principles, rules of commensality and endogamy, commitment to caste occupation and ascribed life-style. Ritual purity is in the nature of religious status but also coincided with economic wealth and social esteem. That is, the upper castes own more property and the lower castes are property less or have the least property. Over the decades the association of ritual status and economic status has undergone change, The concept of 'dominant caste' demonstrates this. (This has been discussed in ESO-14, Block 5, Unit 18, p.15.)

Three of the major signs of purity: vegetarianism, teetotalism and tight constraints on women, indicate that a significant degree of ritual purity comes

through domestic activities. The control on women comes from two major aspects.

1) Women's disinheritance from immovable property, removing them from the public sphere and limiting them to the domestic sphere in the form of **seclusion or purdah.**

2) Far greater control is exercised by men over women's sexuality through arranged marriage, child marriage, the prohibition of divorce, and strict monogamy for women, leading to sati and a ban on widow remarriage, including infant or child widows.

These strictures were enforced most strictly by the upper castes to maintain ritual purity, biological purity, caste supremacy and economic power. Lower caste groups attempting to achieve upward status mobility with improvement in economic power, also imbibe upper caste norms of constraining women's freedom. M. N. Srinivas had observed this relationship as an index of 'Sanskritisation'.

The ideological and material basis for maintaining the caste system was closely regulated by religious scriptures and the patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal family ideology.

19.3.2 The Institution of Family

You must have learnt in your earlier lessons that family is the most important social unit in which members live in a network of mutual ties, roles and obligations, that it is a unit of procreation, it nurtures the young and socialises them (i.e. transmits tradition, culture, religious and social values) to enable them to perform various roles in the society. Family performs the function of continuity of generations and the transmission of private property. The role of the family in procreation is closely intertwined with the pattern of descent and religious prescriptions/priorities. Descents are of two types: patrilineal and matrilineal. In the patrilineal descent system the property of the family is transmitted through the male offspring for example, father to son. In the matrilineal system the property is transmitted through the women, for example, mother to daughter.

Research into various traditions of religious practices, the matriarchal heritage of the 'Shakti' (mother godesses) cult and beliefs indicate that the patrilineal form of descent, the existence of male gods and constraints on women's freedom were Aryan traditions imposed on liberal indigenous traditions. At present, barring the Nair community of Kerala, the Khasis of the north-east, the Garos of the North-eastern India, and certain tribes in the Lakshdweep, all the other communities practice patrilineal descent system. The worship of mother goddesses is prevalent in all parts of India.

Closely connected to the patrilineality is the practice of patrilocality, i.e., the transfer of residence of women to the village/residence/family of the husband, after marriage. The sons stay with the father. The property laws, therefore, forebade daughters from inheriting immovable property, since such property would pass to their husband's family on marriage. Instead women were given a portion of movable property (like jewellery) to take with then, known as dowry. This provides material reason for anxiety over the birth of daughters.

Moreover, the religious scriptures, especially the Hindu religion place a high preference for sons. According to the code of Manu, a man could achieve merit only by protecting the purity of his wife and through her, of his sons. A son is necessary for lighting the funeral pyre of the father, propitiating the souls of agnatic ascendants through **shradha** and thereby enabling the father and agnatic ascendants to attain **moksha** (to be relieved from rebirth). The role of the women is to beget sons, perpetuate the male descent and facilitate the performance of rituals. This hierarchy of male and female roles create differential evaluation of children with a strong son preference on the one hand and daughter neglect on the other, in terms of access to food, health care, education, freedom, rights and justice. The extraordinary preoccupation of viewing the family as harmonious, egalitarian and consensual unit, which enables the maintenance of social order, has blindfolded sociologists from several observations relating to women. The experiences of women within the family are different from that of men.

19.3.3   Socialisation within the Family

As mentioned earlier socialisation performs the function of transmitting culture, tradition, social values and norms. Apart from parental socialisation in the family, various agencies like the schools, peer groups, literature and films plaza role in early socialisation and adult socialisation. Girls and boys receive differential socialisation, which further perpetuate assymmetric roles and relationship. Boys are equipped with higher education and skills in order to perform the 'breadwinner's' role and the girls are initiated into domestic chores at an early age, given lesser education, trained to work hard and to develop low self-esteem. Boys receive a status of permanence as against girls who are seen as temporary members of the family. Very few families enable their daughters to develop an independent identity and dignity.

It has been observed that school books perpetuate images of mother as the 'housewife', father as the 'breadwinner.; boys playing with guns and trucks and girls playing with toys and dolls. Though several schools encourage involvement in sports for boys and girls, there are stereotyped patterns of playing. Boys play football, basketball and cricket and girls skip and involve in restricted games. Media messages about women and girls perpetuate stereotyped sexist images which enable the media industry to maintain its market. (Elaborated further in sub-section 19.4.4).

Activity 1

Write an essay based on your experience of (as a man or woman) socialisation at school and in the family. Compare your note, if those of other students at your Study Centre.

19.3.4   Class Structure and Women's Work

Class is defined primarily by the ownership of property or capital or economic resources. In simple terms, in a capitalist structure hierarchy is determined by wage, relation viz., people who work for a wage and people who hire workers for wages in rural areas, where the social, economic and political power coincide with caste structure. The constraints on women that vary from upper to the *lower* castes are reinforced by the class structure as well. Women of upper

castes/classes are secluded, and participate in activities in the domestic sphere. Women from *middle* castes with medium and small holdings are more likely to work on their own fields and in certain cases work for wages. Women from artisan castes/classes contribute to the home-based production. The women from the lower castes, also the property less ones, was labourers. They belong to the bottom of the hierarchy where seclusion and restriction on mobility are not practised.

In the urban context, where there is a transition to non-agricultural occupations (from an 'ascribed' to 'achieved' status situation) the upper castes form the predominant group among middle classes. Women of this class emerged from seclusion during the century to acquire education and employment. The important aspect is that the economic dependence on men is broken. However, this did not drastically change the subordination of women. The class structure appears to build upon the existing gender hierarchy in the caste structure. The family within the class structure also derives status from women's education and employment. Women perform status – maintaining and enchancing activities to the family – as educated housewives, mothers and earners. Advertisements in matrimonial columns are ample evidence of this trend. The family concern in this context is with the kind, quality and purpose of women's education, limiting the type and level of employment, and in retaining the requirement that women perform domestic roles as well as paid employment.

Women's subordination is entrenched in the caste and class hierarchies which have to be understood. Otherwise, women's issues will be misunderstood as mere cultural accidents and violence on women as stray incidents.

Check Your Progress 2

i) What are the constraints on women imposed by the caste structure? Answer in about seven lines.

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ii) What are the constraints on women imposed by the class structure? Answer in about seven lines.

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19.4 VIOLENCE ON WOMEN

There are different forms of violence on women which act as ideological threats to establishing a women's independent identity and dignity. The forms of violence that seek our attention here are:

i)   rape, sexual harassment and abuse,

ii)   domestic violence and dowry deaths,

iii) prostitution, and

iv)   pornography.

19.4.1 Rape, Sexual Harassment and Abuse

Rape, sexual harassment, eve teasing, molestation and abuse of women/young girls by men act as function of limiting women's freedom and perpetuate the notion that women need male protection at various stages in life. Eve-teasing in colleges, public transport and other public places are rampant. There have been cases of gang rapes in colleges and incidents of acid throwing on young girls for defacing them in several parts of India. Sexual harassment and abuse at the workplace is least challenged or reported for fear of losing employment and stigmatisation.

It is futile to argue that provocative dresses worn by women are responsible for sexual harassment or molestation. In many cases saree and salwar kameez clad women have been sexually harassed. It is the scant regard for women which is responsible for sexual harassment of women besides their being regarded as commodities with no feeling, to be played with.

Rape is a violent sexual intercourse performed against the will and consent of the woman. It demonstrates a power relationship between men and women. Rape diminishes the identity of the woman as an individual and objectifies her. In India, atrocities and crimes on women are increasing so is the incidence of rape. Every two hours, a rape occurs somewhere in India. What is most frightening and disgusting about this upward swing is that a large percentage of these rape victims are children below the age of 12. Even toddlers of two and three years of age are not being spared but are considered suitable objects of sexual gratification by the rapist.

Paradoxically in our society, the victims of rape get stigmatised in the society. The woman who is the victim of rape is blamed because, the notion is that, "she must have invited it", "she perhaps was dressed provocatively" etc.

Except in a few cases most acts of rape are not outbursts of perversion. There are several forms of rape:

a)   rape within the family (e.g. incest rape, child sex abuse and rape by the husband, which is not legally accepted as rape);

b)   rape as caste/class domination (e.g. rape by upper caste men of lower caste women; rape of landless/agricultural labourers / bonded labourers by landlords etc.)

c)   rape of children, minors and unprotected young women;

d)   gang rapes during wars, communal riots and political upheavals;

e)   Custodial rapes (e.g. in police custody, remand homes, in hospitals, at the work place etc.);

f)   Stray, unpremeditated rapes.

The major rape incidents in Mathura and Maharashtra, and of Ramazabee in Hyderabad, in the police custody, and the court verdicts in these cases which acquitted the policemen on the clause of 'consent', led to a nation wide campaign for reform of the Rape Law. A change was brought by the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1983. A man is said to have commited rape if he has sexual intercourse with a woman without her consent, or with her consent, but having obtained it in a state of insanity or intoxication or by putting her or any person in whom she is interested in fear of death or of hurt or when she is below sixteen years of age. The Act also introduced categories of custodial rape. In any case of custodial rape, if the victim gives an evidence that she did riot consent to sexual intercourse, the court would assume that she did not consent. The onus of proving that rape was not committed will be on the man. However, the aspect of going into the details of past sexual history of the woman, in order to accept or reject the charge of rape has been left untouched. That is, the law sets standards of morality for protection of women.

19.4.2 Domestic Violence and Dowry Deaths

Violence on women in the family in the form of wife-beating, ill-treatment, emotional torture and the like, were considered family 'problems' and never acknowledged as crimes against women. It has been observed that domestic violence is prevalent in all classes of the society. An analysis of newspaper reports by a research study has observed a rising preponderance of deaths of women in the first few years of marriage. The extreme form of this violence on young brides came to be known as 'dowry deaths' or 'bride burning' cases.

In most of the bride burning or dowry death or dowry murder cases the insatiable demands of the in-laws of the daughter which cannot be met by her parents is the main reason. The daughter-in-law is tortured for bringing insufficient dowry. The in-laws conspire to finish the daughter-in-law so that they can get their son married for another time and extract more dowries from the next bride's parents.

In many cases dowry death or dowry murder or even post-marriage suicides (abetted by the torture of the bride at the hands of her-in-laws) could be averted if only the parents or relatives of the bride would have been willing to keep their daughter with them after their repeated refusal to go to their in-laws house. Arveen (Gogi) Kaur the only child of her parents wrote to her father much before committing suicide, "Papa don't throw me away like this. I swear on your life Papa I can't live here. I want to be back. I don't want anything more than this. I'm sure Papa you can afford me. Won't you Papa? Say something Papa. You don't know how your daughter is living out here. Please call her back. She'll die, Papa, but she won't live here…. " And she died of course.

In the case of suicides committed by the brides, it is proximately by the harassment and torture of the bride at the hands of her in-laws/husband and

remotely by the expenses involved in the upkeep of the daughter with or without her children by her parents and the patriarchal *izzat* (honour which it is felt by the bride's parents that the staying of their daughters in their natal family after marriage would tarnish their reputation and status in society) for which the bride's parents are not willing to accept their daughter back.

Keeping this in mind the social activists and feminists have been demanding the right of a daughter in parental property both ancestral and self-acquired. This, it is felt would mitigate the dowry death or dowry murder menace. As economic security for a bride is of .the utmost importance like the emotional and moral support of her parents and relatives.

The existence, prevalence and ramifications of the practice of dowry is alarming. The incidence of dowry deaths which is in the increase in several cities, metropolitans and small towns was noticed by women's groups and there was a demand for an amendment in the Dowry Act during the early 1980s. Female foetuses are systematically aborted in North India and in Western India with the aid of Amniocentesis (a sex detection test) in order to avoid the future payment of dowry at the time of marriage.

It has been observed that the practice of dowry came into existence with hypergamy, i.e., a marriage between a lower caste woman and an upper caste man. The concept of 'stridhan', the share in property which women received at the time of marriage was slowly replaced by offering dowry by the bride's family to the groom's family. Instead of a share in landed (immovable) property, dowry is generally in the form of cash or kind on which young brides rarely have control. The growth of consumerism, i.e., the want to acquire consumer items like T. V., video, scooter, refrigerator etc., among the middle class has led further to the demand of dowry. This practice is now moving into the lower classes and non-Hindu communities where earlier it was non-existent. The prevalent notion about dowry is that it is compensation to the groom's family for taking over the responsibility of the woman's sustenance. This notion thrives on the assumption that a woman is a 'non-working' person and marriage entails the transfer of this 'burden' of maintaining a 'non-working' person from the bride's family to the groom's family. This notion is incorrect because (a) it undermines the multiple roles women play as housewives and mothers, and (b) does not explain why even employed women are expected to give dowry.

Some women's organisations provide counselling, legal aid and run support centres and short stay homes for women in distress. However, it is essential to reverse viewing women as 'expendable', 'dispensable' commodities and greater support for women should come forth from the community, neighbourhood and her parents.

There is a need to question the extraordinary value placed by parents and society on marriage and the pressure on women to-be-married-at-any-cost. The 'perpetuation of the practice of dowry undervalues women and make daughter unwelcome. The choice to remain 'single' (unmarried) should be respected and valued. Single women living alone or with the parental family should be nurtured as a 'norm' rather than a 'deviance'

19.4.3 Prostitution

Prostitution devalues women's dignity and stigmatises her as a 'fallen' woman in the society. The commodisation of woman's sexuality begins with the subordination of women. Women's identity as an individual is undermined by the objectification of her sexuality and the sale of sexual experience. In the urban context, where single male migration from rural areas is high the business of prostitution is rampant. In 1986, the earlier SITA Act was amended to prevent trafficking in prostitution. However, the new Immoral Traffic in Persons Prevention Act (ITPPA) has similar aims; objectives, logic and premises.

The ITPPA, however, continues to be biased against the prostitute. The clauses penalising the prostitute are retained. Simultaneously, the client is not made an offender.

Further, it makes little sense to raise penal measures without making provisions for strengthening the implementation structure. After all the reasons for the failure of SITA were:

a)   brothel management - political nexus,

b)   circumvention of arrest by racketeers with penalisation of prostitutes,

c)   sanctions incorporated in the .Act being utilised by police to extort bribes and fines from prostitutes,

d)   problems in producing evidence,

e)   sexist attitudes of magistrates,

f)   Paucity of reformatory homes, inadequate infrastructure facilities, poor quality of the staff and the corrective orientation towards rehabilitation. All these problems remain.

It is mainly situational compulsion, which gives rise to prostitutes and the problem of prostitution. Of the many situational compulsions, two stand out:

i)   social reprobates, and

ii)   economic paupers – who take to prostitution because of poverty and this is quite common.

In the former, we have those women who have been socially disowned, like widows, destitute and abandoned women, victims of deceit and cheating who were promised with marriage or were married and the person on whom they reposed faith sold them to a pimp or a brothel owner. Also amongst social reprobates we have women who have been discarded by their families, parents, husbands after becoming a victim of rape. Recently, in Bombay, a father refused to take back his daughter after she was raped. Not that he was poor, rather he was very rich. He did not want to take his daughter back because his honour and prestige would suffer. This happens in most of the rape cases. Ultimately, nowhere to go, they land up in brothels for no fault of theirs.

Prostitution is a serious and complex problem, which cannot be explained simplistically. Nobody joins it just for the fun of it. For there is no fun in it. Allowing every person to mutilate and violate your body, so many times a day

Violence against Women

round the year; year after year till one gets old is not a frivolous matter. It is humiliating and agonising. One is torn physically and mentally to such an extent that joining and knitting the threads and shreds of one's life anew is not only difficult but traumatically long and arduous.

Despite the Act several minor girls and women from rural areas and poor families are forced into the profession of prostitution, in which their living and working conditions are deplorable. They do not have control over their body, their earnings, their health deteriorates. Their children lack the support to receive education and other services. In the city of Bombay, certain non-governmental agencies, are running crèche facilities for the right care of these children and high schools for the working children. There are no governmental programmes to alleviate the problems of prostitutes.

The flesh trade, as it is known, is a thriving business where several groups of people like the pimps, procurers and police earn money at the expense of the women. The majority of these women/girls suffer from sexually transmitted diseases. Contraceptive precautions are not taken by them. It is found that many of them are victims of the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). However, the women in prostitution are targeted as bearers of the AIDS virus rather than victims of it.

19.4.4 Pornography and Misrepresentation of Women in the Media

The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986, prohibits indecent representation of women through advertisements or in publications, writings, paintings, figures or in any other manner, and for matters connected or incidental thereto.

However, pornographic literature, magazines, pictures, hoarding and films are published/printed which are seen as upholding the 'right to freedom of expression', in actuality violate woman's dignity. In turn these create and perpetuate patriarchal images of 'strong', 'aggressive', 'violent', and chauvinistic men on the one hand, and 'meek', 'submissive', 'vulnerable' women as sex objects on the other hand. These images are utilised in advertisements, like cosmetics, fabrics, domestic gadgets and various other commodities, for commercial gains. A woman is projected as sexy and enticing and the man as macho, violent and independent. The films too utilise a similar formula. There are pressure groups who protest from time to time against pornography and the misrepresentation of women in the media.

Check Your Progress 3

i)   Tick the appropriate answer:

Rape occurs because:

a)   Women dress and move freely

b)   Men do not protect women

c)   It is an expression of sexual aggression

d)   Men are pervert.

ii) Is it enough to condemn dowry deaths? What are the values that you have to imbibe? Answer in seven lines.

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iii) What is most frightening and disgusting about the upward swing in rape? Answer in four lines.

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19.5   WOMEN'S ISSUES: CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

In the last two decades there have been a good deal of awareness on women's issues in India both at the governmental and non-governmental levels. Most significantly there has been the emergence of a self-conscious women's

movement which has tremendously influenced the plans and policies of the government on women's issues in recent years. We discussed women's movements in details in Block 7 of ESO-12.

i) **Women's Issues in the Pre-Independent Period**

During the British period the struggle for women's right was considered as an integral part of the Independent movement by our nationalist leaders. It is important to mention here that in this period there emerged a good number of women's organisations as a result of the reform and nationalist movement. The Women's India Association (1917), the National Council of Indian Women (1926), All India Women's Conference (1927) etc. were spearheading the women's movement.

ii) **Women's Issues in the Post-Independent Period**

The constitution of our country followed the basic principle of women's equality as accepted in the Fundamental Rights Resolution of Karachi Congress. The provision of Article 15(3) empowered the state to make special provisions for women and children. The legal reforms in the 1950s sought to provide greater rights to Hindu women in marriage, inheritance and guardianship. The main thrust of development policies for women was provision of education, health and welfare.

iii) **Contemporary Women's Issues**

The women's issues came under sharp focus in the seventies. After the United Nation's General Assembly Declaration of the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (1967) and the subsequent UN request to its member states to submit report on the status of women in their countries. The Committee on the Status of Women in India was set up which submitted its report in 1974. In response to the UN call of Action (1975) and on the basis of the findings of the CSWI report, the Government of India has drawn up a Draft National Plan of Action for women. The Plan accords priority to the need of concrete action in the areas of education, health, welfare, and employment with special reference to the weaker section of the society. Besides the CSWI, Government of India also appointed various committees and commissions to suggest concrete action for the upliftment of the status of women in India. The most important of these have been that of the National Commission on the Self-employed Women 1988, National Perspective Plan for Women 1988-2000 AD, National Commission for Women 1991 etc. and very recently the 72nd and 73rd amendments to Indian constitution ensuring one third representation of women in the elected bodies. Based on the recommendations of these commissions and committees, and also in view of the popular demand of various welfare and women's organisation in recent years various concrete actions are initiated by the government in various areas.

iv) **Basic Legislations**

a) **Marriage**

The Government of India has banned polygamy for all the government servants. Monogamy has been accepted in the laws of other religions except Islam.

b) **Age at Marriage**

The special Marriage Act fixed the minimum age of marriage at 21 years for males and 18 years for females.

c) **Dowry**

Under the Dowry Prohibition Act now court is empowered to act on its own knowledge or on a complaint by any recognised welfare organisation on the dowry murder. The' Indian Evidence Act also amended to shift the burden of proof to husband and his family where dowry is demanded and the bride dies within 7 years of the marriage otherwise than under normal circumstances. Anti Dowry Cells are also established some important urban centres to tackle this issue effectively.

d) **Sati**

The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act 1987 declared the practice of sati unlawful.

e) **Rape and Indecent Representation of Women**

The Criminal Law Act also amended to provide protection to the rape victims from the glare of publicity during investigation and trial. It also introduced change in the definition of rape to remove the element of consent. It also enhanced the punishment of this crime.

The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act banned the depiction in any manner the figure of a woman, her form or body or any part thereof in such a way as to have the effect of being indecent or regatory or desigrating women, or is likely to deprave, corrupt or injure the public morality or morals." (NPPW: 1988)

f) **Sex-Determination Test**

In recent years there have been several agitations against the sex determination test. It is important to note that in Maharashtra and in several other states prenatal sex determination test has been declared illegal.

g) **Work**

According to the Equal Remuneration Act 1973, man and woman are to be paid equally for doing the same or similar work. The Act also forbids discrimination on the basis of sex at the time of recruitment and after.

Box 1

Maternity Benefits for Working Women

The Maternity Benefit Act provides for a maternity leave of 4½ months in the case of pregnancy, and 45 days for abortion for the working women in the factories, mines, plantations, government, and semi government establishments. It also makes provisions for creches to care for the children of working women

The Minimum Wage Act provides a mechanism for fixing up minimum rates of wages which should reflect the basic minimum needs of the workers.

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v) **Employment Programme for Women**

For income generation for poor women various programmes are also initiated. The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) has fixed a target of 30% women beneficiaries to be covered under this programme. The programme for Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) is meant to provide self- employment to rural women. The National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme are meant to provide wage employment in rural areas. Under the programme called training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment rural youth are imported new skill for generating self-employment. There are also special programmes for hilly and draught prone areas (see, for detail, Units 8,9,10 and 11 of Block 3 of this course). Women are given due considerations in these programmes. Besides, state governments have also introduced several programmes for employment among women through self-help groups etc.

Check Your Progress 4

Tick mark the correct answers.

i) Which one of the following Article of the Constitution India empowered the government to make special provisions for women

   a) Article 370

   b) Article 356

   c) Article 10

   d) Article 15

ii) The Maternity Benefit Act provides for maternity leaves in the case of pregnant women for

   a) 46 days

   b) 75 days

   c) 90 days

   d) 15 days

iii) The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRD P) has 'fixed certain target for women beneficiaries to be covered under this Programme. This target is

   a) 50%

   b) 60%

   c) 25%

   d) 30%

19.6 LET US SUM UP

This unit has presented a description of the status of women in India, through various indicators like the demographic, health, literacy, employment and political status. The caste structure and its role in curtailing women's freedom and the class structure and its perpetuation of women's subordination have been discussed. The family as an institution and its role in socialising a daughter to

perform a secondary role, the issue of dowry and different forms of violence that threaten the identity and dignity of women has been examined.

19.7 KEY WORDS

Hypergamy	:	A marriage between a lower caste woman and an upper caste man.
Mortality Rate	:	Measures the frequency of deaths.
Sex-ratio	:	Indicates the proportion of females per 1000 males.
Shradha	:	The death ceremony amongst the Hindus.

19.8 FURTHER READINGS

Chanana, Karuna, (eds.). 1988. *Socialisation, Education and Women: Explorations in Gender Identity,* Orient Longman Ltd.: New Delhi.

Desai, Neera and Maithreyi Krishnaraj, (eds.). 1987. *Women and Society in India,* Ajanta Publications: Delhi.

Government of India, 1974. *Towards Equality:* Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare: New Delhi.

19.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

i) Yes, there is a contradiction between the constitutional guarantee and the reality in the case of women. Though some women have made strides in certain fields the majority of women have to go a long way. The sex ratio has to be balanced, the life expectancy for women at all ages should be improved, women should gain access to health care, education, employment and have a greater say in political processes and affairs.

ii) The low status of women of the country has implications to the process of development. Because of the prevailing situation 50 per cent of the population is being neglected. The economic pressures of poverty have a greater effect on women and girls in the household, who work harder, longer, eat lesser, gain lesser access to social goods and services.

Check Your Progress 2

i) The caste structure controls women's sexuality and the economic resources of the community through strict control on women's mobility seclusion, disinheritance of immovable property and rules of marriage. The caste structure maintains ritual purity, biological purity (through the birth of legitimate heirs), caste supremacy and economic power.

ii) The class structure though not so strict, builds on the gender division created by the caste structure. The family draws status from women's achievements. Women enable to maintain and enhance the status of the

family. There are controls on type, equality and level of education imparted to a daughter. The respectability in the employment is evaluated and the dual role of the women are maintained intact causing extraordinary burden of family responsibilities on women. One of the major reasons why women (in the organised sector) occupy the positions of teachers, typists, nurses and doctors is because these professions are seen as an extension of their domestic roles.

Check Your Progress 3

i) c.

ii) It is important to respect women's right to property and inheritance. Extraordinary value should not be attached to marriage. If women choose to remain single, it must be seen as a valid alternative to marriage. Women are not expendable commodities. The birth of daughters should be welcomed. Their individuality, identity and dignity should be respected at all levels.

iii) What is most frightening and disgusting about the upward swing in rape is that a large percentage of the rape victims are Children below the age of 12. Even toddler of two and three years of age are not being spared, but are considered suitable objects of sexual gratification by the rapist.

Check Your Progress 4

i) d

ii) c

iii) d

UNIT 20   THE AGED

Structure

20.0   OBJECTIVES

In this unit we shall acquaint you with the problem of the aged in general and of the aged in India in particular. We shall do this by showing how and why this problem is becoming larger and more difficult, and by pointing out its different aspects.

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- explain why the situation of the aged is posing problems;

- describe how changes in the society are rendering the problem more complex and difficult;

- discuss the demographic, economic and health conditions of the aged;

- examine how the aged were able to adjust themselves in the society more satisfactorily in the past and how they are finding their adjustment less satisfactory now;

- contrast the situation of the aged women with that of the aged men; and

- analyse the public policies and programmes to help the aged.

20.1 INTRODUCTION

The situation of the aged in the world in general and in India in particular poses a dilemma. On the one hand, we find that the life expectancy is growing and the proportion of the aged in the population is increasing, which can be regarded as great achievements of modern civilisation. On the other hand, we also find that becoming old is increasingly perceived as a problem, the aged is finding it more and more difficult to adapt themselves to the changing situation. In this unit we shall discuss all these issues pertaining to the aged in India. We will begin this unit by discussing the nature of the problem of the aged. For any understanding of the problem of the aged, the demographic characteristics have to be understood, which we shall discuss next. We shall then go on economic characteristics, health condition and social adjustment of the aged. Lastly we will focus on and examine the public policies and programmes for the aged.

20.2 NATURE OF THE PROBLEM OF THE AGED

There is a manifestation of a growing degree of prejudice and discrimination against the aged, so much so, the term "old people" has itself acquired a derogatory connotation and in the English language, other terms such as "aged", "aging", "elderly" or "senior citizens" are used while making a polite reference to old people.

We come up against the complexity of the problem of the aged at the very outset when we ask the question, who are the aged? For practical purposes, people who have crossed a given span of life are regarded as the aged. In the developed countries in which the life expectancy is relatively longer, people who have-crossed the age of 65 are classified as the aged or the elderly. But in developing countries such as India in which the life expectancy is relatively shorter, the cut off point is 60 years. In either case the definition is arbitrary; it is as if you get up one fine morning and find yourself grown old. Growing old does not happen suddenly, it is a complex and gradual process.

20.2.1 Dimensions of the Problem

Growing old is a complex and gradual process having biological, psychological and social dimensions, which not only do not fully correspond with one another but also do not exactly coincide with one's chronological age. It is, however, true that the chronological age is an index of the growing and developmental process that goes on in the biological, psychological and sociological dimensions, and, therefore, the chronological definition of what constitutes old age is useful for purposes of study. But it is important to note that the aged of any given age group, say 60-64 years, do not constitute a homogeneous category as the pace of biological, psychological and social development again is not uniform in all individuals.

The problem of the aged boils down to their having to adjust in society when they are faced with certain crucial events in their life as they are growing old. Such events can be broadly divided into two categories, one consists of events related to the development of the older individuals, and the other consists of events of the historical time when the individual is growing old. Hence, the processes of demographic transition, industrialisation, modernisation etc. affect the status of the aged in the society.

20.2.2 Problems Faced by Individual Aged

Let us first consider the problems faced by the individual in his/her biophysiological, psychological and sociological spheres of life when she/he is aging. When an individual passes from childhood through youth and middle age to old age, his/her everyday behaviour changes markedly because of his/her experiencing certain important events which are characteristics of each phase of life.

a) In the bio physiological sphere, as the individual develops, she/he experiences, over the years, the attainment and the loss of reproductive capacity, the growth and decline of physical vigour, the loss of cells and functions and the growing susceptibility to disease in organs.

b) In the psychological sphere she/he experiences the development of cognitive capacities, the changes in his/her life goals and self-identity such that when she/he is growing old his/her life goals and his/her self-image tends to be rather negative.

c) In the sociological sphere, during the earlier phases of his/her life the individual enters into the major areas of interaction such as work, marriage, bringing up the family and membership of social organisations. In these events, she/he experiences increasing responsibility and power until the middle age, and during the old age she/he either loses roles or experiences a decline in responsibility and power. Thus in every sphere of life, as the individual becomes old, his/her/capacity to adjust himself/herself to the society declines.

However, the ability of human beings to adjust themselves to the society need not depend solely on their inherent attributes and capacities, because in their adjustment they can be greatly aided by the prevailing socio-cultural factors in the adjustment of the aged in the society, whether favourable or unfavourable depends upon the major historical events during the life-time of the aged.

20.2.3 Demographic and Socio-economic Changes and the Aged

There are sometimes epochal changes in history, which give rise to radical changes in the adjustment of individuals including the aged in their society. One such landmark in history having far-reaching consequences for the situation of the aged, resulting in their growing proportion in the population as well as their increasing difficulty of adjustment in society, is the transformation of the economy from the pre-industrial into the industrial form, with all its changes in the socio-cultural system, which we call modernisation.

a) **Demographic Transition and the Aged**

The growth in the proportion of the aged in the population is directly linked to the phenomenon of demographic transition. It is important to note that although it may appear that the growing proportion of the aged in the population is due to the increasing longevity or life expectancy, which is partly true, the main reasons for this phenomenon is the declining fertility, that is a reduction in the average number of children born to women in a society. On the other hand, the change in fertility is an aspect of the demographic transition.
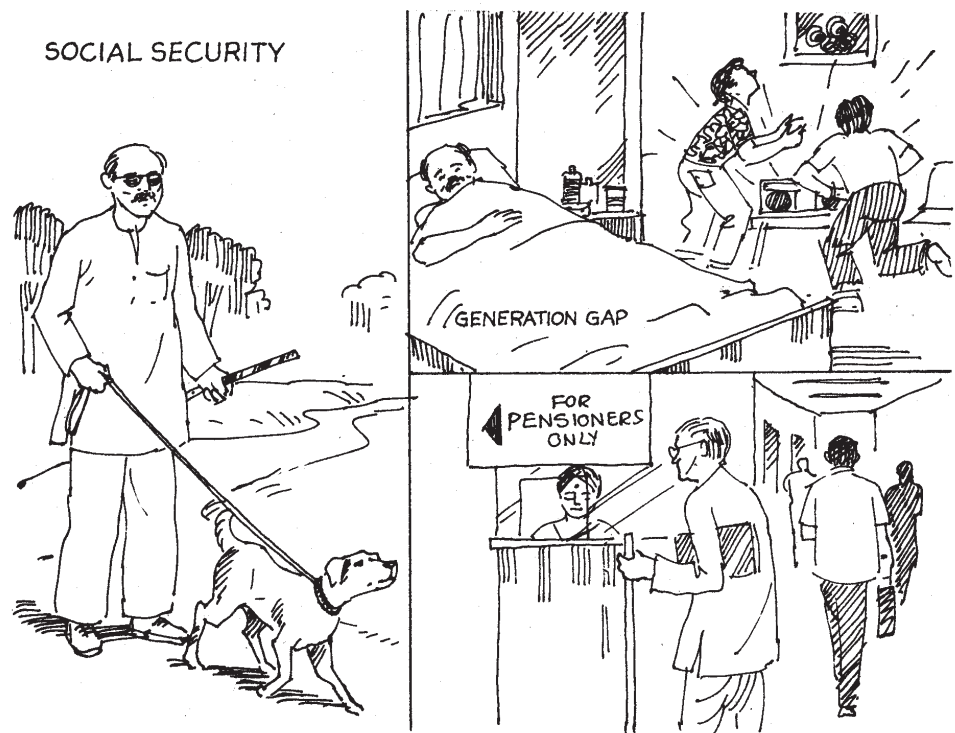
Aged and the Changing Society

Demographic transition refers to the social process whereby a country or society moves from a condition of high fertility and high mortality to one of. low fertility and low mortality, the former condition is known as the pre-transitional stage and the latter, the post-transitional stage. The period in between these two stages is known as the transitional stage, which is further, divided into the early, the middle and the late transitional stages. During the transitional stage, the mortality rate declines relatively faster than the fertility rate until gradually equilibrium is reached, ushering in the post-transitional stage.

The peculiar pattern in the change in the mortality and fertility rates give rise to a rapid growth of population as it is experienced in India during these last few decades. All the same, as the fertility rate is coming down, at the one extreme of the age variable of the population, the proportion of the children declines, and, at the other extreme, the proportion of the aged increases. Thus lower the fertility rate in a society, the higher, the proportion of the aged. Therefore, the developed countries which are in their post-transitional stage with the lower fertility rates, on the whole, have higher proportions of aged in their populations as compared with the developing countries such as India.

b) **Industrialisation, Modernisation and the Aged**

Industrialisation and modernisation, besides leading to demographic transition, also bring about radical changes in the institutional structure of the society, which affects the mode of adjustment of the aged in the society. This can be explained with reference to the changes in the institution of the family which was a major factor in facilitating the adjustment of the aged in the pre-industrial society. It may be recalled that in old age an individual, by virtue of his/her diminishing biological, psychological and social resources, runs the risk of experiencing a decline in his/her security and status in society. This risk, in the pre-industrial society, is covered by the peculiar character of its family and the special position occupied by the aged in the family.

In the pre-industrial society, the family was also the unit of production and the productive assets are controlled by the elders, which ensured their influence and status despite their declining individual attributes. So also in their family enterprise the aged can work as long as their condition permits and on task consistent with their diminishing capacity, which ensures a gradualness in their aging process. On the other hand, in the modern industrial society, as the family tends to lose its production function, the younger tends become economically independent of their elders, giving rise to a change in the family structure.

In the new type of family structure in the industrial society, the aged are often left to fend for themselves at a time when their capacity for social adjustment tends to decline. At the same time, in the industrial economy, on the grounds of economic rationality, the aged are involuntarily retired from gainful employment while their productive capacity is still intact or only slightly reduced. Such a predicament contributes greatly to their economic insecurity and accelerates the process of again.

On the background of the foregoing description of the problem of the aged in general, we shall next examine some of the aspects of the problem of the aged in India. The problem can be viewed from some of the trends discernible in the demographic, economic and health situations of the aged, in their living arrangements and adjustment in the society and in the public response to the solution of the problem.

Activity 1

You must be coming across a few aged people regularly in your neighbourhood. Based on your interaction with or observation on them write a note on the status of the aged in your neighbourhood. Exchange your note, if possible, with other students at your Study Centre.

20.3 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AGED

The decennial censuses conducted by the Government of India give information on the age break-up of the population, which gives us an idea about the trends in the demographic characteristics of the aged. As already pointed out, it is also necessary to bear in mind that, as in several other developing countries, the aged in India are defined as all those who have completed 60 years of age,

unlike the cut-off point of 65 years in the developed countries. The age of
compulsory retirement in the organised sector of employment in India is even
earlier in most cases, in government service it is 60 years and in the educational
institutions and in private corporations it is generally 62 years.

20.3.1   Growth of the Population of the Aged

The size of the population of the aged and especially its proportion in the total
population is an important factor in the adjustment of the aged in the society.
In general the smaller the size and the proportion of the aged, the better are the
chances of their satisfactory adjustment. In order to get an idea about the
proportion of the aged in India, you may familiarise yourself with the
information about the percentage distribution of the total population by broad
age groups shown in Table 1.

Table 1 : Percentage Distribution of the Total Population by Broad Age groups, 1901-2000

Census Year	Age Groups 0-14	15-59	60 +	All Ages
1901	38.60	56.35	5.05	100
1911	38.45	56.40	5.15	100
1921	39.20	55.55	5.25	100
1931	40.00	55.95	4.05	100
1941	38.25	56.85	4.90	100
1951	37.50	56.85	5.65	100
1961	41.00	53.36	5.64	100
1971	42.02	52.01	5.97	100
1981	39.54	53.93	6.52	100
1991	37.3	55.5	6.8	100
2000	—	—	7.6	——

Source: 1991-1971, ESCAP, 1982, Country Monograph Series No. 10, Population of India.
Table 43. For 1991 Census of India 1991. For 2000 Planning Commission.

If you focus your attention upon the 60+ group, you will notice that these
percentage, from 1901 to 2000, have ranged from 5.05 to 7.6. considering the
fact that in some of the developed countries, the people over 60 years are
above 20 per cent the percentage of the aged in India does not appear to be
impressive. But it is important to note that since the 1950s the percentage of
the aged in India has been rising steadily, reaching 7.6 per cent in 2000. The
upward swing in the percentage of the older population in keeping with the
fact that India, in recent decades, has been passing thorugh the transitional
stage of the global process of demographic transition, and accordingly in the
decade to come, the rate of growth in the percentage of the aged will be even
faster.

Another striking feature of the population of the aged in India is its impressive
absolute size. It was 43 million in 1981 and is estimated at 55 million in1991
and by the year 2001 A.D., it was touched the 75 million mark. By any standard
these are daunting figures when we bear in mind the efforts and resources that
are needed for enabling the aged to cope with their situation.

20.3.2 Dependency Ratio

There are different ways of bringing out the significance of the distribution of population in different age groups. One of the important ways which we cannot afford to overlook, is to see the size of the burden which the younger (0-14) and older (60 +) age population places upon the population of the working age (15-59). The burden constituted by the younger population is termed the young dependency ratio and is obtained by dividing the percentage of population in the 0-14 age group by the percentage of population in the 15-59-age group and by multiplying the quotient by 100. Similarly the burden constituted by the older population is termed the *old dependency ratio* and is obtained by dividing the percentage of population in the age group of 60. + *by* that in the age group 15-59, and by multiplying the quotient by 100. The basic information for obtaining the dependency ratios can be taken from Table 1, and as an Activity you may try to work out these ratios for different years yourself.

Because of the youthful nature of India's population, the country is faced with a very high young dependency ratio, which reached its peak in 1971 when it was over 80%. On the other hand, the old dependency ratio is much smaller, never going beyond 10% until 1951. But since 1961 it has been showing a progressive rise, reaching an all time high of 12.26% in 1991 during the past nine decades.

As shown in Table 2 dependency ratio is gradually going to increase for the aged in India. Although, trends in the young and old dependency ratios, which move in the opposite direction, may not make much quantitative different the overall dependency to be borne by the working age population, they make a qualitative difference for the type of services to be provided by the society. When the young dependency ratio is heavier, more attention has to be paid to the provision of facilities for the health care and school education of children, whereas the provision of facilities for geriatric health care and the housing of the aged assume importance when the dependency burden becomes heavier for the old.

Table 2: Gender wise Old Age Dependency ratio in India

Year	Total	Males	Females
1961	10.93	10.91	10.94
1971	11.47	11.39	11.57
1981	12.04	11.84	12.24
1991	12.26	12.16	12.23
1996	12.00	11.99	12.02
2001	11.88	11.72	12.05
2011	12.84	12.67	13.01
2016	14.12	13.94	14.31

20.3.3 Sex-Ratio

In the last several decades, the sex-ratio (expressed as number of females per 1000 males) has been adverse to females. This bias can be seen in the case of the aged also, except that the degree of preponderance of males tends to decline as the aged grow in years. For example, in 1981 there were 933 females per 1000 males in the general population, but in the different cohorts of the aged,

namely the age groups of 60-64, 65-69 and 70 +, the number of females per 1000 was 933, 985 and 974 respectively.

Notice also that within their respective gender, the percentage of the aged among the females is higher than it is among the males.

In the developed countries, the life expectancy at birth is about 6-8 years longer for women as compared with men, and the sex ratio is very much in favour of females both in the general population and among the aged. With the advancement of demographic transition the situation in India with regard to the sex ratio as well as sex-related differential in life expectancy, is likely to approximate that in the developed countries.

20.3.4 Rural-Urban Distribution

The percentages of the aged, both among the males and the females are substantially higher in the rural areas than in the urban areas. In 1981, among the males, whereas 6.83 per cent was made up of the aged in the rural areas, the corresponding percentage was 5.06 in the urban areas. Similarly, among the females whereas 6.85 per cent was made up of the aged in the rural areas, the corresponding percentage was 5.68 in the urban areas. Such a trend goes contrary to our assumption made earlier in this unit that the percentage of the aged in a population is negatively correlated with its fertility. For, the fertility in the rural areas is usually higher than in the urban areas.

The unexpectedly higher percentage of the aged in the rural areas as compared with the urban areas can be attributed to another phenomenon, namely, that of rural to urban migration. The urban population in India has a substantial proportion of rural immigrants, and often the migrant adults leave their aged parents in their home communities. So also, often, some of the retired aged persons from the urban areas, especially among the aged belonging to the lower economic categories, go back to their home communities in the rural areas, to settle down, because of the difficult housing problem in the cities. Accordingly, some of the regions which send migrants in large numbers to big cities, such as the Konkan region adjoining Bombay, are noted for relatively very high proportions of the aged in their population.

20.3.5 Marital Status

In India it is a common practice for everyone to get married in due course of time. Therefore, there are only very small percentages among the aged males and females who have never married. In 1981 about 2 per cent among men and less than 0.40 per cent of the women among the aged had never married. The marital status of aged in India is given below in Table 3.

Table 3: Proportions of Married, Widowed and Divorced or Separated persons among the Aged by Sex, 1991

Country	Age Groups (in yrs)	Males			Females		
		Married (%)	Widowed (%)	Divorced /Separated	Married (%)	Widowed (%)	Divorced /Separated
India*	60-69	85.4	12.0	0.3	52.5	46.3	0.4
	70-79	52.5	19.6	0.3	32.7	66.1	0.4
	80+	61.7	25.4	0.5	23.4	69.8	0.3

The phenomenally higher rates of widowhood among the aged women is all the more disturbing because women depend heavily on men for economic support and their husbands are their legal supporters. Therefore the widowed status, as a rule., is more distressing for women than it is for men in our society.

20.3.6 Educational Background

Education is a useful tool for adjustment in old age, especially when the aged are obliged to assume new roles because of reasons such as retirement, loss of the marriage partner or declining strength. In India, however, the educational background of the general population itself is not satisfactory, let alone the aged. It is only in recent decades that efforts have been made to raise the educational level of the population. The aged of today who had been brought up prior to these efforts, therefore, lag very far behind the general population in their educational attainments.

There is widespread illiteracy among the aged. In 1981, 53 per cent males and 75 per cent females were illiterate in the general population while the corresponding percentage among aged men and women were 65 and 92 respectively. Similar differences are found at all educational levels.

On the whole, the low educational background of the aged, especially, that of the aged women, puts them in a very vulnerable situation when they are required to assume new roles and that too in a fast changing society.

Check Your Progress 1

1) What are the main causes, which give rise to the problem of the aged? Answer in six lines.

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2) Explain why the percentage of the aged in the population has been growing in recent times. Answer in four lines.

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3) How are the young dependency and old dependency ratios obtained and how are these ratios changing in India? Answer in eight lines.

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20.4 ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AGED

One of the major factors in the social adjustment of the aged is their economic condition which may be broadly divided into their employment status and income. It is not merely the possibility of having reduced or no income in old age, but even the fact of having to give up one's occupation in old age, has damaging consequences for the aged. For, one's occupation is not merely one's source of income but also a mode of relating oneself to society. Occupation also plays an important role in giving an individual his/her self-identity and social status.

As already pointed out, the influence of the historical changes on the social adjustment of the aged is nowhere better felt than in their economic adjustment. Because of industrialisation and modernisation, there has been a qualitative change in the economic organisation in recent decades, which has been affecting the economic role of the aged in a marked way. Whereas in the unorganised pre-industrial economy of the past, the aged could engage themselves in their family enterprise as long as they chose, in the organised modern economy, the aged are compulsorily retired. Compulsory retirement brings many problems for the aged, of which the loss or reduction in income is only one. It is, therefore, very important to know about the participation of the aged in the work force.

20.4.1 Work Participation

It may be useful for you to know some of the trends in the participation in work force by the aged and to see how these trends are affected by the changes in the economy.

In general, there is a wide difference in the rates of work participation by men and women. Accordingly, in 1981, among the aged 63. 71 per cent of the men and 10.19 per cent of the women were in the work force. However, for the purpose of understanding the changing patterns of the work participation of the aged, it is sufficient if you pay attention to the relevant trends only among the aged men.

In general, when men reach the peak of their participation in work force, about 97 per cent are found employed. Therefore, the fact that only 63.71 per cent of the aged men were in the work force in 1981 would imply that about 33 per cent or one-third of the men had dropped out of the work force on account of old age. All the same the work-participation rate of the aged men in India is quite high considering the fact that in developed countries the corresponding rate is very much lower. The relatively higher work-participation rate of the

aged men in India can be attributed to the fact that the Indian economy more is still at a much lower level of industrialisation and modernisation. It can, however, be shown that in India also the work participation rate of the aged men is related to the level of industrialisation. For example, over the decades the Indian economy is being industrialised and organised more and more. So also the urban economy is relatively more organised compared with the rural economy. Accordingly we find that over the decades the work participation rates of the aged have come down both in the rural and urban areas, and at any point of time the urban rate is far lower than the rural rate. You will observe these trends from the information supplied in Table 4. Since the women's work participation rates are affected more by socio-cultural factors, there is no noticeable trends in their case that can be attributed in economic change.

Table 4: Work Participation Rates (per cent) by the Aged (60+) in Rural and Urban Areas by Sex, 1971, 1981, 1983, 1987 & 1995-96

	Rural		Urban	
	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
1971	77.5	11.5	53.4	6.5
1981	67.6	11.3	47.5	5.8
1983	64.2	15.6	48.8	11.8
1987	59.4	12.8	41.5	5.9
1995-96	60.3	17.3	35.3	9.2

Source: Information for 1971 and 1981 is from Census of India 1981, Series-l India (5% Sample), Statements 53 and 55, and for 1983 and 1987 and 1995-96 are from NSS 30th and 42nd and 52nd Rounds respectively.

It is therefore obvious that as the economy is getting more and more organised, there is going to be further erosion of the work participation rates of the aged men in the future. The aged who are still in employment, are working mainly in the informal sector of the economy and in occupations which are relatively less remunerative.

20.4.2 Economic Status

One of the major problems experienced by most of the aged persons is the decline of their income during old age because of their reducing or giving up altogether gainful economic activity. This is evident especially, in the case of the aged who are compulsorily retired from the organised sector and in the case of the aged among the poor who are engaged in the informal sector of the economy.

Although many of the aged, who retire from the organised sector such as government employment, are provided with partial income security by way of pension or provident fund benefits, even among them there are only a few who are free from financial worries. If the economic condition of the aged who draw pension is bad enough, that of the general run of the aged is even worse. The broad conclusions of the studies which have dwelled on the economic problem of the aged are that the majority of the aged has inadequate income and that even the families with which the aged live, mostly belong to low income groups. Therefore, financial worries are a nagging problem of most of the aged.

A broad idea about the economic situation of the aged can be had from the information obtained by the NSS 42nd Round. In 1987 only 51 per cent of the aged men in the rural and 46 per cent in the urban areas were economically independent, the rest were partially or fully depending on others. Among the aged women only 9 per cent in the rural areas and 5 per cent in the urban areas were economically independent. Even the economically independent aged men and women are saddled with the responsibility of looking after other members of the family. Both in the rural and urban areas 69 per cent of the economically independent aged persons had other members of the family depending upon them.

The worst sufferers from inadequate income in old age are the elderly from the poorer sections who, normally, work in the informal or unorganised sector of the economy and are not covered by pensionary benefits. They neither have savings of their own, nor their younger relatives, earning at a subsistence level, are able to support them. The pity is that the type of hard, physical labour the poor people have to do can hardly be tolerated in old age. Yet by force of circumstances the aged among the poor have to keep on working until they are physical worn out and die of starvation.

20.5 HEALTH CONDITION OF THE AGED

The health of the aged in India is one of the most neglected aspects of their problem. Not only the society at large but even the medical profession has failed to take note of the special nature of the health problems and diseases of aging. One of the major distinguishing features of the health problems of the aged from those of the younger population is that whereas the latter suffer more from infectious diseases, the former are handicapped more by chronic ailments.

Most of the available studies about the ailments of the aged have been made by non-medical investigators and they give us some rough idea about broad aspects of health and morbidity of the aged. Among them the National Sample Survey, 42nd Round, provides us with the most up-to-date information covering the entire country during 1986-87.

20.5.1 Chronic Ailments

The findings of this survey indicate that about 45 per cent of the aged both in the rural and urban areas and both among the males and the females, suffer from one or another kind of chronic illness. Among the more prevalent kinds of chronic diseases are problems of the joints, cough or respiratory problems and blood pressure. Other diseases reported are heart disease, urinary problems, piles and diabetes.

As you will notice from information given in Table 5, there are significant differences in the rates of incidence of chronic diseases in the rural and the urban areas, and among the male and the female aged. Respiratory problems of the joints are more prevalent in the rural areas, and on the other hand, blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes are more prevalent in the urban areas.

Table 5: The Percentage Distribution of Different Kinds of Chronic Diseases among the Aged who Suffer from such Diseases, 1986/87

Kinds of Disease	Rural		Urban	
	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
Cough (Respiratory problems)	25.0	19.5	7.9	14.2
Piles	3.3	1.6	3.2	1.8
Problems of joints	36.3	40.4	28.5	39.3
Blood Pressure	10.8	10.5	20.0	25.1
Heart disease	3.4	2.7	6.8	5.3
Urinary problems	3.8	2.3	4.9	2.4
Diabetes	3.6	2.8	8.5	6.6

Source: National Sample Survey, 42nd Round and 52nd Round

Similarly, both in the rural and the urban areas, respiratory problems, urinary problems, piles and diabetes are more prevalent among the males and problems of the joints are more prevalent among the females. Such a distribution indicates that the health problems have a bearing on the peculiarities of the socio-economic situations of the aged. The results of the survey referred to above, as well as, several other studies indicate that women whose life-style is more sedentary compared with men, complain more about ache in their joints, middle class persons living in cities and hence exposed to more stressful activity suffer more from high blood pressure and heart disease, aged from the poorer sections who are usually more malnourished, complain more about physical weakness, and the aged from the rural areas who are not accustomed to have periodical eye-tests are more often visually handicapped.

20.5.2   Temporary Ailments

Apart from chronic ailments the aged are also liable to fall ill with temporary ailments. The National Sample Survey (NSS), 28th Round revealed that in 1973, 29 per cent of the aged in the rural areas and 26 per cent in the urban areas were suffering from temporary ailments. NSS 36th Round specifically dealt with the physical impairments among the aged, and found that 11 per cent of the aged were physically handicapped of whom about one-half were visually disabled. On account of physical disability, health problems and advancing age, the aged are also likely to become physically immobile as compared with the people of other age categories. According to NSS, 42nd Round 5.4 per cent of the aged in the rural areas and 5.5 per cent in the urban areas were physically immobile. Immobility is prevalent more among the aged women than men and in both the sexes it is more marked among those who have crossed the age of 70.

There are many features which are unique to the health problems of the aged and in the developed countries where more attention is paid to the welfare of the aged, a special branch of medicine called geriatrics has come into being, which deals with the problems and diseases of old age and ageing people. Geriatrics is yet to make any headway in India although it is sorely needed.

Check Your Progress 2

1) How are the work participation rates and the economic status of the aged changing? Answer in eight lines.

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2) Describe briefly the health condition of the aged. Answer in four lines.

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20.6 SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGED

The foregoing discussion on the demographic, economic and health conditions of the aged has thrown up some of the important problems faced by the aged in India. You have learnt that the proportion to the aged in the population is steadily increasing and at the same time the aged are being expelled from the modern, organised economy, at an increasing rate. The aged who continue in the work force are confined more and more to the less remunerative informal sector of the economy. Therefore, the economic insecurity of the aged is being threatened more and more.

The women become especially vulnerable in old age. Compared with their male counterparts, the aged women possess a much lower level of education, a much lower degree of participation in gainful employment and own little or no economic assets. Hence, they are almost totally dependent upon their male relatives. They are further handicapped by the fact that the majority of them are without their husbands, their legal supporters. Therefore, the economic, social and psychological insecurity suffered by the aged women is immense.

The problems as the aged, as already pointed out, are inherent in the fact of their biological, psychological and sociological-aging, as well as in the far reaching historical changes in the society. Let us now examine how the aged are adjusting themselves in the society under these circumstances.

20.6.1 Living Arrangements in the Past

Aging in the past was not considered to be a serious social problem, not only because the aged comprised a relatively smaller proportion in the total population, but also because they were provided with the necessary care and

support by their families. But in the changing circumstances the ability of the family to look after the aged is diminishing.

In the traditional Indian society the aged had a privileged position in the family. Their privileged status stemmed from the peculiar character of the normative family type, known as, the joint family. The joint family consisted of core relatives of several generations but belonging to the same lineage, who lived together with their spouses and children. The joint family included various kinds of relatives and enabled even issueless, unmarried or widowed aged persons to live within the family household. However, the kinship pattern of the relatives in the joint family was determined by the principles of the kinship system whether patrilineal, which is followed in most parts of the country, or matrilineal, which is prevalent in some regions. For example, in the patrilineal kinship system, the aged parents do not live with their daughter and son-in-law.

But, what really made the joint family to function in favour of its aged members were the pre-industrial economic system and the medieval property concepts. In the pre-industrial economic system, as in the agricultural economy even now, the family was also a unit of production; and the medieval property concepts put the aged persons, especially the senior most male member in charge of the productive assets of the family. In such a set up the junior members were economically subordinated to the senior ones. Thus, filial love and duty buttressed by economic dependence obliged the younger relatives to take good care of the elder members of their family.

20.6.2 Changing Family System

The family situation in India, which provided for the satisfactory social adjustment of the aged is fast changing. It is the same forces of economic development and modernisation which are responsible for the rising proportion of the aged in the population, are also bringing about changes in the family system which diminish the capacity of the family to take care of its aged members. These forces are tending to deprive the family of its production function and, by doing so, are undermining the basis of the joint family system.

In the emerging economy, the earning members of the family, which is not a production unit, are obliged to find employment outside the family. In such cases not only the younger relatives are free from the economic authority of the elder members of the family but some of them may set up separate households of their own, and may even migrate to other places. In these circumstances, the aged persons have to fall back upon their own personal resources. If one's own income is not adequate, one becomes dependent on others as it is happening with increasing proportion of the aged. As you have already noticed in the section on the economic status of the aged, the vast majority of the aged are partially or fully/dependent on others.

The family system in India, as everywhere else in the world, is in a state of flux. The families conforming to the pattern of the classical joint family are fast disappearing. In its place simpler patterns of family are emerging, which do not depend upon the family being a unit of production. The emerging patterns of family are evolving round the type of nuclear family with the husband, wife and children as the unit. Because of the presence of the aged parents, the nuclear

family may give rise to the simple lineal joint family in which one of the aged parents lives with the married son or daughter. When all the children are married, and aged couple may stay together by themselves, or if the aged person is widowed, he or she has the option of living all alone.

These possibilities of living arrangements for the aged are actually reflected in the living arrangements of the aged in India as revealed in the findings of the NSS, 42nd Round.

The relevant findings are presented in Table 6. It will be worthwhile going the table with attention. You will observe that about 86 per cent of the aged both in the rural and urban areas are living in two types of arrangements either living with spouse or living with their own children. Living with grandchildren or other relatives is the case with 7 and 8 per cent of the aged in the rural and the urban areas respectively. About 7 per cent of aged in the rural areas and 5 per cent in the urban areas live alone. The percentages of the aged who live with non-relatives in homes for the aged are negligible both in the rural and urban areas. Thus overwhelming majority of the aged live with their relatives.

Table 6: Living Arrangements of the Aged in the Rural and Urban Areas by Sex, 1995-96

Type of Living arrangement	Rural			Urban		
	Male	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
Livingalone	2.5	6.1	4.3	3.0	6.0	4.5
Living with spouse and other members	75.0	39.0	56.9	75.1	35.4	54.9
Living with own children	17.9	48.1	33.1	17.8	51.2	34.9
Living with other relatives and non-relatives	3.8	5.9	4.8	0.4	0.4	0.4

Source: NSS, 52nd Round

Information from various other studies which deal with the aged in different regions and communities gives one the impression, that the percentage of the aged living with their own children was larger as we go back in history. And, going by the trends in other countries, which are more modernised than India, it would appear that the living arrangements of this category are going to reduce further and the categories of 'living alone' and 'living with spouse' are going to increase.

Thus, the immediate family circle of the aged is becoming more and more restricted. Which is giving rise to new problems for the aged. Your attention may be drawn to two such important problems. First, the interpersonal family ties in relation to the aged are becoming increasingly difficult even when the aged are living with their married sons, especially in the urban areas. In the past, when the family's resources were controlled by the aged, the sons were dependent upon their parents. The situation is being reversed nowadays, and more and more parents are becoming economically dependent on their sons, which is damaging to the self-respect of the aged. Second, the number of caregivers available in the family is diminishing. In their sons households the aged can no longer take for granted the services of their daughters-in-law who were their traditional caregivers.

In the developed societies the care-giving ability of the families for the aged has become much weaker and the place of the family is taken up to some extent by larger institutions such as the homes for the aged and day-care centres. There is much scope for such institutions in India, but their development is still at the infant stage. As you can see from Table 6, only 0.7 per cent of the aged in the rural and 0.4 per cent in the urban areas are living in the homes for the aged. The day care centres are still at an experimental stage and that too in big cities.

20.6.3 Living Arrangements of Males and Females

The living arrangements of aged men and women are so markedly different from each-other that you would like to know what causes the difference. A large majority of the aged women, 66 per cent in the rural areas and 67 per cent in the urban areas live with their own children compared with the corresponding percentages of 37 and 40 respectively among the aged men. In the categories of the aged living with their grandchildren and other relatives the percentages of women are also relatively larger. On the other hand, men live more often with their spouses compared with women. About 45 per cent of the men live with their wives both in the rural and urban areas, whereas, among the women only 25 per cent in the urban areas and 22 per cent in the rural areas live with their husbands. A substantial percentage of the men live alone, 11.8% in the urban areas and 8.2% in the rural areas, whereas, the corresponding percentages among women, 0.7 in the rural areas and 0.6 in the urban areas, are negligible.

The marked difference in the patterns of living arrangements between the aged men and women stem from two basic differences in their characteristics. First, as compared with men, a far greater percentage of aged women is without spouse, which explains why the percentage of women living with their spouse is much smaller. Second, the economic dependence of women on others is far greater than that of men, which explains why the percentage of women living alone is so low. Both of these reasons make it necessary for women to lean so heavily on others.

20.7 POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES FOR THE AGED

You would have by now realised that nowadays the problem of the aged is causing greater concern for two main reasons: the percentage of the aged in the population is rising and the ability of the family to support and take care of the aged is diminishing. Therefore, it has now become imperative for the society to accept greater responsibility to facilitate the social adjustment of the aged. You would, therefore, be interested in knowing what policies and programmes the various wings of the society such as the state, the government and the various organisations, for alleviating the problems of the aged have undertaken.

In the developed societies when the problem of the aged has become even more acute, there are well developed, support systems for the aged devised by the public institutions. There are institutional arrangements to look after the financial, residential and health-care needs of the aged, which greatly

supplement and even replace the support of the family. The special needs of the aged are specifically recognised in every branch of social activity.

In the Indian society also, there is recognition of the responsibility of the larger society to look after the aged. Article 41 of the Indian Constitution enjoins the state to make effective provision of public assistance for the benefit of the disadvantaged and weaker sections including the aged. However, the policies and the programmes, which the government has undertaken so far, touch only the fringes of the problem of the aged.

We may refer to three main steps the government has taken in connection with the problem of the aged. First, the government has enacted legislation to affirm the duty of every person having sufficient means to maintain and look after his aged or infirm parents who are not able to maintain himself or herself. This step of the government only boils down to overseeing the traditional role of the family of providing support for the aged. This legislation, however, is of no material use as no parent is willing to go to a court of law to extract support from an unwilling child.

Box 1

Social Security For the Aged

A section of the aged are the retired persons from the organised sector. They are provided social security by the employers in the form of pensions, provident fund, and gratuity etc. However these sections may not get sufficient emotional support from their families. Their families may not meet their entertainment needs. Hence they have to be accommodated somewhere by the state. Again, a major group of the aged is of those who retire from unorganised sector without any social security benefit. They have also to be accommodated and given social security in case they have no family. In India, there are few state-run homes for aged. The State and the Central Governments provide financial assistance to the voluntary agencies to set up such homes and to take up innovative programmes for providing services to them. There are also schemes of pensions of old age in all states and union territories. Through the criterion of eligibility differs, generally destitute, poor and infirm aged of 60 and above, are provided pensions at rates ranging from Rs. 30 to Rs. 100 per months (India 2000)

The second step the government has taken, is to assume partial responsibility for supporting destitute aged who do not have earning children or children with sufficient income to support them. The government provides old age pensions to the destitute aged, as well as, gives grants- in-aid to institutions, which take care of such persons. The old age pensions, however, consist of meagre amounts barely adequate for subsistence.

The third step the government has taken in respect of the aged is to pass legislation to ensure retirement benefits, such as, gratuity, pension and provident fund, to be paid by the employers to the aged who are compulsorily retired. Such legislation applies to the larger enterprises and, as such, these benefits are derived by only a small segment of the aged.

Besides the government, there are a number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which offer various kinds of services to the aged. The services provided by the NGOs include:

a) Institutional services in the form of old-age homes,

b) Vocational services and occupational therapy

c) Non-institutional support systems including medical, psychiatric and rehabilitation services, nutritional care, recreation, counseling, education, training and awareness, and

d) Day care centres.

Although this list is impressive; these services are available only in some nooks and comers of the country and that too in the big cities.

You will realise from the above discussion that the vast majority of the aged is not covered by any public provision of old-age support whether extended by the Government or the NGOs.

Check Your Progress 3

1) In what important respects the situation of the aged women is different from that of the aged men? Answer in eight lines.

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2) Why was the social adjustment of the aged more satisfactory in the past? Answer in six lines.

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3) Why is the social adjustment of the aged less satisfactory now a day? Answer in eight lines.

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20.8 LET US SUM UP

We may now sum up the main points discussed in this unit. In general the aged are faced with problems, because of adverse events in their biological, psychological and sociological spheres of life. Their adjustment in this difficult period of their life is either facilitated or rendered more difficult by the socio-economic and cultural factors during their lifetime, which are influenced by historical events.

The socio-economic and cultural factors in the past were conductive to a more satisfactory social adjustment of the aged. Their proportion in the population was small and their family was adequate to provide them with the necessary support and care.

In the present times, change in the socio-economic and cultural system has rendered the social adjustment of the aged difficult. Their percentage in the population is increasing, the family as their support system is becoming weaker, and alternative public support systems are not coming up fast enough.

Developing societies, such as India, which are subjected to economic development and modernisation are experiencing an increasing degree of deterioration in the situation of the aged. In India, although the percentage of the aged in the population is not very high compared with the developed countries. It is progressively increasing and their absolute number is enormous. At the same time, the economic, health-care and social needs of this enormous number of the aged are rapidly increasing. These changes are accompanied by the changes in the family structure which is losing its efficacy as a support system for the aged.

The problem of the aged in India has, therefore, clearly become a social problem which makes it incumbent upon the society to assume greater responsibility for the support of the aged. But the development of the public support system is still in a nascent stage.

In a nutshell, we have discussed the nature of the problem of the aged, demographic characteristics, economic characteristics, health condition and social adjustment of the aged, besides focusing on and examining the public policies and programmes for the aged.

20.9 KEY WORDS

Demographic transition : The social process whereby a society moves from the condition of high fertility and high mortality to one of low fertility and low mortality.

Fertility : Average number of children born to women in a society.

Geriatrics : The branch of medicine, which deals with the problems and diseases of old age and aging people.

Life expectancy	:	The average span of life which children born at a given point of time can expect to live.

Old dependency ratio : $\dfrac{\text{Per cent of Population of 60+ age group x 100}}{\text{Per cent of Population of 15-59 age group}}$

Young dependency ratio : $\dfrac{\text{Per cent of Population of 0-14 age group x 100}}{\text{Per cent of Population of 15-59 age group}}$

20.10 FURTHER READINGS

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20.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

i) The problem of the aged arises because the aged have to adjust in society when they are faced with certain crucial events while they are growing old. One type of these events are the changes which take place in their biological, psychological and social spheres of life. The other type consists of socio-economic changes which take place during the historical phase in which they are living.

ii) The growing proportion of the aged in the population is due to the declining fertility and increasing longevity of the population. These are the characteristics of the demographic transition which is brought about by economic development and modernisation.

iii) The young dependency ratio is obtained by dividing the percentage of the population in the age group 0-14- by that in the age group 15-59, and by multiplying the quotient by 100. Likewise the old dependency ratio is obtained by dividing the percentage of population in the age group 60+ by that in the age group 15-59 and by multiplying the quotient by 100. In recent times the young dependency ratio has begun to decline and the old dependency ratio has begun to increase.

Check Your Progress 2

i) In general, the aged tend to withdraw voluntarily from the work force when their capacities decline very much. But when the economy gets organised, the aged are non-voluntarily made to retire even when they are capable of performing their duties. Thus, as the Indian economy is becoming more and more organised the percentages of the aged who are withdrawing from the working force are increasing continually. As a result of this process more and more aged are becoming dependent on others.

ii) The aged suffer more from chronic diseases than infectious ones as compared with the general population. They also tend to be physically

handicapped to a greater extent. The pattern of incidence of the chronic diseases among the aged varies according to rural-urban and genders differences.

Check Your Progress 3

i) The aged women as compared with aged men are less educated, participate in the work force to a lesser extent and are economically more dependent on others. The percentage of aged women, who are without spouse, is far greater, than in the case of aged men. There is a marked difference in the patterns of living arrangements of aged men and women; whereas men live with their spouse of all alone to a larger extent, the women live more often with their own children or other relatives.

ii) In their social adjustment in the past, the aged was greatly aided by their families. The peculiar structure and function of the family in the past were advantageous for the adjustment of the aged. In particular, the fact that the family was also a production unit and that the productive assets of the family were controlled by the aged, protected the status and security of the aged.

iii) Nowadays, the economy is becoming increasingly industrialised and organised, which is depriving the family of its production function. The younger relatives are less economically dependent upon the aged and on the contrary the aged are becoming more dependent upon their younger relatives. In the changing circumstances, the number, ability and disposition of the care-givers to the aged in the family are declining. The aged-are, thus, finding their social adjustment more difficult.

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UNIT 21   SCHEDULED CASTES

Structure

21.0   OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the discrimination faced by the Scheduled Castes;

- discuss various reasons as to how they were scheduled by the Government for the purpose of reservation or constitutional benefits and to what extent they have benefited from the Government's development programmes; and

- analyse how the Scheduled Castes have organised themselves socially and politically vis-a-vis the upper castes.

21.1   INTRODUCTION

In this unit we shall analyse the Scheduled Castes as a separate and socially stratified category. We shall look at their historical background and examine the problems faced by them vis-a-vis the other upper castes. Following this we shall deal with Scheduled Castes and their social mobility. Then we shall examine the various constitutional measures and development programmes which have been adopted for the Scheduled Castes. Finally, we shall wind up this discussion by examining the working of the reservation policy and the position of the Scheduled Castes in the contemporary India.

21.2   SCHEDULED CASTE AS A COMMUNITY— THEIR STRENGTH AND THE BACKGROUND

You must have come across the term Scheduled Caste and untouchables several times. I am sure you must have wondered what the term meant or who these people are? You must be having an idea that these people are from the lowest

strata most of them working as menial labour. But do you know exactly who the Scheduled Caste are and how they came to be, what their composition is? In the sections to follow you will get to know who Scheduled Caste are, their strength and occupation. You will also familiarise yourself with explanations on the origins and the historical background of the Scheduled Caste.

21.2.1 Scheduled Castes: Social Backgrounds

Caste system forms the essential component of stratification system in India. The Varna system, constitutes a status-hierarchy with the Brahmins on the top followed by *Kshatriyas, Vaishyas* and *Shudras*. The secheduled fall out of the fourfold Varna System.

The Scheduled Caste is a politico-legal-term. It was first coined by the Simon Commission and then Government of India, Act, 1935. When India became independent this term was adopted by the Constitution for the purpose of providing them some special facilities and the constitutional guarantees.

Yet Untouchables or the Scheduled Castes do not constitute a homogeneous group. They are internally differentiated in terms of occupation, numerical segregated on the criteria of untouchability.

Another term used for the Scheduled Castes or Untouchables is "Harijans" (the children of God). This term was first used by Mahatma Gandhi, which refers to an aggregate of castes which may differ from each other and which have been reduced to the lowest ritual and social status in the caste hierarchy. Another term which comes into currency almost at the same time is depressed class or classes. This term was used by Dr. Ambedkar and it refered to those classes of categories or people who were poor, exploited and socially and ritually or religiously degraded. They were treated as *pariah* or socially defiled. In term which is currently popular and is preferred by the scheduled caste is the term *dalit*. The word dalit is inclusive, in the sense that it includes also those communities groups of people, who are marginalised and subjugated it is used in a generic sense to the untouchable or the scheduled caste.

21.2.2 Strength of the Scheduled Castes

Each Indian state has its own list of Scheduled Castes many of their names are synonymous. Some of the castes number several million members each.

The total population of the Scheduled Castes according to 1991 census was 138.22 million which constituted 16.5% of total population of the country. The largest of these castes are the Chamars who form – one quarter of the number of Scheduled Caste – *Banghi, the Adi-Dravida, Pasi, Madiga, Dusadhi Mali, Parayan, Koli Mahas, Adi-Karnataka, Namashudra* etc. almost half of the total number of Scheduled Caste people live in the five states of Hindi belt in U.P., Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Haryana. In the south they are concentrated mainly in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. In the East in West Bengal. The highest ratio of the Scheduled Caste is in Punjab 28.3. About 84% of the scheduled castes live in rural areas and are working as agricultural laborers, share-croppers, tenants and marginal farmers. Among the, Harijan the ratio of agricultural workers is particularly high in Bihar, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Kerala. More, than one-third of the agricultural workers of India belong to the untouchable castes. A vast majority of the scheduled caste do not possess land, 32.2% have less than 1 hectare.

Almost all persons engaged in jobs like sweeping, scavenging and tanning are from Scheduled Castes. About 2/3rd of the bonded labour are from Scheduled Castes. Literacy among the Scheduled Castes is extremely low. Most of the Scheduled Castes live below the poverty line and are victims of social and economic exploitation. Let us see what the justifications are for the origins of this exploitation.

Distribution of Scheduled Caste Population (1991 Census) in 15 States which Account for 97.2% of Their Total Population

	Total population in 1991	SC population in 1991	SC population as % of State population	SC as % of total population	Cumulative SC population
India	838,583,988	138,223,277	16.5	16.5	
15 most populous states					
Uttar Pradesh	139,112,287	29,276,455	21.0	21.2	21.2
West Bengal	68,077,965	16,080,611	23.6	11.5	32.8
Bihar	86374,465	12,571,700	14.6	9.1	41.9
Tamil Nadu	55,858,946	10,712,266	19.2	7.7	49.6
Andhra Pradesh	66,508,008	10,592,066	16.9	7.7	57.3
Madhya Pradesh	66,181,170	9,626,679	14.5	7.0	64.3
Maharashtra	78,937,187	8,757,842	11.1	6.3	70.6
Rajasthan	44,005,990	7,607,820	17.3	5.5	76.1
Karnataka	44,977,201	7,369,279	16.4	5.3	81.4
Punjab	20,281,969	5,724,528	28.3	4.2	85.6
Orissa	31,659,736	5,129,314	16.2	3.7	89.3
Haryana	16,463,648	3,250,933	19.7	2.4	91.7
Gujarat	41,309,582	3,060,358	7.4	2.2	93.9
Kerala	29,098,518	2,886,522	9.9	2.1	96.0
Assam	22,414,322	1,652,412	7.4	1.2	97.2
Total for 15 major states	811,260,994	134,323,785	16.6	16.6	97.2
Other smaller states	27,322,994	3,899,492	14.3	14.3	2.8
India	838,583,988	138,223,277	16.5	16.5	100

Source : Census of India 1991

21.2.3 The Untouchable Castes and their Origins

The term Scheduled Castes signifies those groups of people who were out of the caste system or the varna hierarchy. They comprise the bulk of "untouchables" or untouchable castes. These groups or castes have been discriminated against by the superior castes through the ages and they have never had any kind of social acceptance from the majority of the people who belong to the upper castes. The Scheduled Caste were deemed untouchable and polluting by the upper caste due to their so called polluting activities like

**Projected Scheduled Caste Populatio in 2001
(assuming same proportion of states' population as in 1991)**

	Total population in 2001	SC population in 2001	SC population as % of State population	SC as % of total population	Cumulative SC population
15 most populous states					
Uttar Pradesh	175,626,000	36,960,838	21.0	21.2	
West Bengal	80,312,000	18,970,397	23.6	11.6	
Bihar	102,423,000	14,907,545	14.6	9.1	
Tamil Nadu	62,400,000	11,966,667	19.2	7.7	
Andhra Pradesh	76,773,000	12,226,896	15.9	7.7	
Madhya Pradesh	81,666,000	11,879,094	14.5	7.0	
Maharashtra	92,314,000	10,241,959	11.1	6.3	
Rajasthan	54,816,000	9,476,670	17.3	5.5	
Karnataka	52,922,000	8,670,993	16.4	5.3	
Punjab	23,858,000	6,755,026	28.3	4.2	
Orisssa	36,284,000	5,878,509	16.2	3.7	
Haryana	20,204,000	3,989,508	19.7	2.4	
Gujarat	49,194,000	3,644,463	7.4	2.2	
Kerala	32,605,000	3,234,359	9.9	2.1	
Assam	26,589,00	1.968,478	7.4	1.2	
Total for 15 major states	967,968,000	160,771,375	16.6	16.6	
Other smaller states*	49,558,000	7,036,794	14.3	14.3	
India	1,017,544,000	167,858,169	16.5	16.5	

Source : Population estimates for 2001 are official estimates based on projections by the Expert Committee.

scavenging, cremation, skinning and hiding, etc. Not only because of their unclean occupations, but also due to their so called 'dark complexion' they were placed at the bottom of the ritual and social hierarchies of the caste and varna system. Since the *Varna ashram darma* – the philosophy and the religious duty demanded that each *jati* was to follow one's traditional occupation – like priest's son becomes a priest and a shoe-maker or tanner's son or a becoming a shoe maker or a heriditory tanner. It was impossible for the untouchable castes to better their position by changing their occupation. The association of occupation with caste became inseperable, so much so, that the very fact of being born into a community, whether you engaged in clean or unclean activity had become irrelevant. Thus untouchables are those castes which were outside the pale of varna system. They were said to be polluting and marginalised and consigned to the lowest rung in society. Several ideological justifications existed for the sustanance of these hierarchical system, which kept everybody in their place.

The untouchables had no share in the social, political and judiciary powers and their position was almost like that of a slave. Various scholars have given different viewpoints and explained why untouchability was practised in the Hindu caste society.

G.Hanumantha Rao in his book *Caste and Poverty* says that low social status attached to certain occupations is the cause of untouchability. It relates to impure occupations such as removal of carcass, spinning, tanning, scavenging etc. While analysing the origin of caste, system J.H. Hutton suggests that ideas of ceremonial purity were first applied to aboriginals in connection with sacrificial, ritual and certain occupational activities. Max Weber, also has described certain occupations as ritually impure. He states, that the lowest caste structure was considered to be absolutely defiling and contaminating. Thus, the ideas of purity, whether occupational or ceremonial, is found to have been the factor contributing to the genesis and evolution of caste and the practise of untouchability,. The Vedic literature has referred to the Dharmashutras that declare *Chandalas* (cremators) as a progeny of the most hated people of the reverse order of mixed unions, that is of a Brahmin female with a Shudra male. Kautilya agrees with the Dharmashutra writers and he says that people born out of mixed unions were separate castes. He recommends that marriage between different castes should not be allowed and people of such unions should be treated as Shudra.

Manu, the earliest law giver, has very explicitly talked about a caste called *svapathas*, who were grouped with Chandalas and were prescribed to live outside the villages, use of shrouds of corpses as their clothing, broken pot-for meal, iron for ornaments and dogs and donkeys for their wealth. *Mritapas* were also another type of Shudras. The food vessels of *Chandalas* and *Mritapas* could not be used by others because no known method of cleaning pots was regarded as adequate to purify them.

Patanjali, who lived before Manu the great grammarian, had said that both the *Chandalas* and the *Mritapas* resided like other Shudras such as carpenters, blacksmiths, washermen or weavers, within the limits of the towns and villages of the Aryans. In the days of Manu they were not only excluded from the village but were assigned duties of cremators or hangmen which were totally unclean.

In about 1020 AD the *Doms* and Chandalas were two groups not reckoned among any caste or guild. They were-occupied with works like cleaning of the villages and similar other services. They were considered as one sole class and were distinguished by their occupations. The first group of the *Antyajas* who had further sub-divisions following certain crafts were totally eight in number. They lived near villages, they were jugglers, basket and rope makers, sailors, fishermen, and hunters of wild animals and birds. They could freely intermarry though they belonged to separate caste groups. They could not marry with the shoemakers and the weavers however. The shoemakers and weaver were another group of Antyajas who could marry only among themselves. In the past the untouchable castes as a whole were barred from any of the rituals. They did not have any sanctity to perform or participate in any religious or sacred ritual.

It was thought, that the untouchable is unclean by birth; he is born into a caste every member of which, irrespective of birth or occupation, is an untouchable.

Hinduism does not provide any means to him to become clean by the performance of any ritual. They were assigned to their unclean task and never allowed to come out of it. The main condition of their survival was the strict observance of a code of conduct established for them. The bounds of which they were not permitted to cross. Not only did they not have access to public places, but they were not allowed any physical contact by their breath and glance as well. The use of force occupied a main place in keeping the untouchables in their place. Punishment for any breach of rule was mutilation and even taking away life.

Another important explanation to the origins of untouchable caste has been that of the materialists. According to the materialist untouchability grew out of a social class who are in the lowest rung who did not possess the right of holding and usage of land. These landless workers were semi-slaves and were in debt bondage, who not only toiled on other pepole's land but were forced to carry on unclean occupations. They were secured by the social bondage and by the concept of destiny or karma where they were ordained to be doomed to sub-human living.

These castes are referred even today in different regions according to the dialects and languages, which they speak. These people have occupied a very low social and economic position in the caste and class hierarchies.

Besides, they were subjected to various types of social disabilities. For instance, they were not allowed to enter the house of the higher castes. However, they were allowed to work as labourers during construction or repair, stoning the grain, etc. But later the houses so constructed were purified by sprinkling cow urine or cow dungs. In the event of their touching the utensils and other non-inflammables, these things were to be put on fire and then purified by sprinkling cow urine. They were also not allowed to walk on streets or public roads, or enter the temples, or heard in the court of justice. These practices have remained inherent part of the Hindu caste society. Such disabilities of the Scheduled Castes have posed tremendous obstacles for their progress as well as of the society as a whole.

The segregation based on occupation has slowly narrowed down and instead it is primarily based on birth in the low castes. Even if the person is not engaged in the traditional occupations but since he/she is born into the caste, it became his/her status and position in the society. On the basis of their birth in the low castes, untouchables were always pushed into the background and their socio-economic contribution was never recognised in the history. Manu had always proclaimed superiority of the Brahmins which closed the channels of upward social mobility for any other castes and the worst affected groups were the untouchables. Even today the Scheduled Castes lag behind the upper castes in almost all fields and they undergo hardships, sufferings and oppression by the upper castes.

It can be seen from the preceding discussion that various justifications, reasons have gone into placing the Scheduled Castes in a exploitative situation and that this exploitation has gone on for centuries. Modern India realised a need to redress this marginalised state of the Scheduled Caste. In our next section. We will examine the various measures, which are institutionally provided to improve the status of Scheduled Castes.

Check Your Progress 1

1) When was the term Scheduled Caste first used?

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2) What are the various names used to address the Scheduled Caste?

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3) What explanation is given by materialist class analyst to explain the origin of untouchable caste?

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21.3 CONSTITUTION AND THE SCHEDULED CASTES

Before being scheduled and embodied in the Government of India Act 1935 and later in the constitution of free India in 1950, these castes were classified as "exterior" or "depressed" castes or classes. A caste was classified exterior or depressed if it was found subjected to a set of social disabilities or restrictions. According to the 1931 census, these disabilities or restrictions were: (1) inability to be served by clean-Brahmins; (2) inability to be served by the barbers, water carriers, tailors, etc. who served the caste Hindus; (3) inability to serve water to caste Hindus; (4) inability to enter Hindu temples; (5) inability to use public convenience such as roads, ferries, wells or schools; and (6) inability to dissociate oneself from despised occupation.

Ambedkar played key role in the fight to give Scheduled Caste a dignity and their rights. He among others championed the cause of Scheduled Caste. During independent India certain reforms were undertaken to remove the discriminatory practices of intouchability.

With the coming into force of the Constitution of India the Scheduled Castes were guaranted certain essential rights and benefits. Under Article 341(l), the Constitution after consultation with the governor of a State may specify,

"The castes, races, tribes or, parts of groups within castes or races, tribes which shall be deemed to be scheduled castes for the purpose of the constitution."

However, according to the Article 341 (2) the Parliament of India, can include or exclude any group from the list of Scheduled Castes through an enactment of law.

The Scheduled Castes are socially and economically backward groups and, therefore, the constitution gives special protection to them. Under Article 46 of the constitution, it is the responsibility of the State to promote with special care the educational and -economic interests of the weaker sections of people and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in particular, and to protect them from social injustices and all forms of exploitation. The Preamble reflects the basic philosophy of the Indian constitution which stands by the Scheduled Castes.

There are a number of articles included in Part-III of the constitution which provides fundamental rights to the citizens, Article 14, 15, 16 and 17 provide rights to equality. Article 14 of the constitution provides right to equality before law that means, every citizen in the country is equal before law. Article 15 prohibits social and educational discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. This article provides that no citizen shall be prevented from access to shops, public restaurants, hotels, place of entertainment, use of public facilities like wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads, places of public resort, etc. This also empowers the State to make special provision for advancement of the socially and educationally backward classes of the citizens.

Article 16 prescribes the equality of opportunity in matters of public appointment. It provides that the State can reserve posts in public services for members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Then, finally Article 17 of this part of Constitution legally abolishes the practice of untouchability in any form against the Scheduled Castes. This article treats practice of untouchability as a legal offence and the offender is to be punished in accordance with the law. The offender may be imprisoned and or be subjected to fine. Later the provisions made under this article of the Constitution were strengthened and made more stringent under the Untouchability Offences Act in 1955.

Article 46 mentions specifically that the State must endeavour to promote the educational and economic interests of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes among the weaker sections of the society.

More precisely, the State shall reserve the public jobs for the members of the Scheduled Caste and Tribes. Two Articles, 330 and 332, lay down that there shall be reservation of seats in the Lok Sabha (Article 330) and State Legislative Assembly (Article 332) in proportion to the number of the Scheduled Castes in various states. And finally, according to Article 340, the President can appoint a commission to investigate the difficulties of the socially and educationally backward classes of the citizens and to make recommendations to remove such difficulties. The commission is also empowered to take stock of the progress made by these classes of citizens due to provisions made under various articles for their welfare, protection and development.

21.3.1 Reservation Policy for the Scheduled Castes

We have mentioned various articles enshrined in the Constitution for welfare, protection and development of the Scheduled Castes. Here, we shall discuss some articles which specifically provide reservation to these castes.

The aim of the reservation policy is to help Scheduled Castes to come up, within specified time, at par with others in the society. The reservation policy has three major components.

These are:

1) reservation in government appointments,

2) reservation in admission to educational institutions and

3) reservation of seats in the House of People (Lok Sabha) and the Legislative Assemblies of the States.

There are other progressive measures to boost employment and steps are taken to eliminate poverty. Further, 15% and 7.5% posts are reserved for the Scheduled Caste and Tribe candidates in government jobs. Such reservations of posts are applicable in all the categories of jobs both in the Central and State Government services. In the recent years, such reservation has been extended to the services in the public undertaking units.

In addition to these, the State Governments have also adopted other measures for school children of the Scheduled Castes. These are:

a) provision of books;

b) provision of educational equipment;

c) provision of mid-day meals;

d) provision of stipends;

e) provision of school uniforms etc.
   Besides, 15% seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes and 7.5% for tribes' in admission in public schools. Similar provisions are also available for the SC/ST students in their admission to colleges, universities and other educational institutions. Then equal percentage of hostel seats are also reserved for them. There are post-matric scholarship by the various state governments to the students belonging to these castes and tribes.

Out of 542 Lok Sabha seats 79 seats are reserved for the Scheduled Castes. Similarly, out of 3997 seats 541 seats in the State Legislatures are reserved for Scheduled Castes.

The bulk of the Scheduled Caste constituencies contain 10 to 30% of the Scheduled Castes population, and around 75% of the Scheduled Castes population live in scattered fashion outside the constituencies reserved for them. This means, the elections of the Scheduled Caste candidates even from the reserved constituencies are largely dependent on the non-Scheduled Castes. Besides, the Scheduled Castes in rural areas are politically less conscious and are influenced by caste politics. Many of them do not exercise their franchise or they are absent during the time of voting due to reasons of migration for employment. In the urban areas, the Scheduled Castes are relatively in a better position. But in spite of the reservation and other developmental measures the deprived sections who are less in number and who are uneducated continue to

remain backward. The caste class nexus works strongly and allows only a few castes to be politically or socially mobile. This has defeated the very purpose of the reservation and the intention of the constitutional measures for development of the Scheduled Castes.

21.3.2 Developmental Programmes

Besides the above mentioned provisions and measures, a number of other developmental schemes have been adopted for the people in general and the Scheduled Castes in particular in the rural areas. Some of these are: integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), the new 20 point programme etc. But incidentally these programmes have not properly been implemented at the block level. A comprehensive strategy was worked out during the -6th Five Year Plan which had 3 aspects:

1) Special Component Plans (SCP) for the Central and the State Governments for monitoring various programmes for development of the Scheduled Castes.

2) Special Central Assistance (SCA) for Special Component Plans for the Scheduled Castes in the different states.

3) Scheduled Caste Development Corporations (SCDC) in the States.

The SCP identifies schemes for welfare and development of the Scheduled Castes and provides financial assistance to the State Governments to various programmes under these schemes, it acts as an interface between the Scheduled Caste families and financial institutions in respect of bankable schemes of economic development. The corporation provides subsidy loans and other kinds of assistance to these families, and thereby, helps to increase the flow of funds from financial institutions to the Scheduled Caste families. In the Seventh and Eighth Five Year Plans also the Central and State Governments have set up a large portions of the plan outlays for the welfare and development of the Scheduled Castes under the special component programmes.

While the constitution emphasises on social and educational backwardness of certain castes and tribes for their being eligible for the benefits of the constitutional provisions, the present controversy centres around the definition of backwardness itself. According to this, the criteria for identifying those deprived sections of population who are eligible for the Government's privileges and concessions have not been clearly identified in the present reservation policy. There are many socially backward castes who are economically forward and are reaping the fruits of reservation while the majority of the needy population have no access whatsoever to these constitutional measures. The experience in the last fifty years or so has shown that the reservation policy has not delivered the desired results to the right people. The policy has generated conflicts and tensions between those who are beneficiaries of reservation and those who are out of the purview of the policy. We have to accept the fact that the opposition of the weaker sections by the stronger sections of the society has not ended. The benefits of development in every aspects of life have been appropriated by about 20% of the population who are at the top and are drawn more from the nonscheduled and less from the scheduled castes.

The intended benefits of the reservation policy as well as of the other developmental programmes are not, made available to those people who rightly

deserve them. There are various infrastructural levels at which these benefits are appropriated as the caste and class politics works very strongly given the existing social circumstances. At the operational level, there are innumerable barriers, which have to be removed. Against this backdrop, it is realised that the Scheduled Castes have to organise themselves socially and politically in order to get their due share and rights and to fight against the dominant castes or class and remove the caste differences among themselves.

The attitudes of the upper castes towards the reservation policy and other developmental measures have also to be positively directed so that the goal of social progress, social justice and social equality can be achieved. The Government and the power elite have to understand the socio-economic factors which seem to make reservation necessary for those people who have been victims of social discrimination and social injustice for over centuries. Their attitudes and perception towards the lower castes have to undergo radical change for getting the above goals realised.

The analogy of footrace here is applied for minorities facing disadvantaged and the need for affirmative action therefore. This analogy was used in the United States to reassert the need for affirmative action.The analogy can also apply to Scheduled Castes who are saddled with all kinds of disadvantages. The minority female that the box talks about could well be a Scheduled Caste woman or man who has been wearing the weights of discrimination for centuries.

What Makes a Fair Foot-race?

Imagine two runners in a 20 mile race. One of the runners must start with a 10-pound weight on each of her feet. As a result, she cannot run as fast, tires more quickly, and falls far behind. Almost anyone would agree that this is not a fair race. So, halfway through the race, the judges decide that she can take off the weights. Is this enough to make the race fair? Does she have any realistic change to win from her present position? Would it not be fairer to allow her to move ahead to the position of the other runner to compensate for the disadvantage of wearing the weights for the first half of the race?

This analogy had been used to illustrate the reasoning behind affirmative action (Farley, 1988, pp. 265, 336). The runner represents a minority of female individual seeking a good job or entry into graduate or professional school. The weights represent the effects of both past discrimination and the institutional discrimination she encountered in her elementary and secondary education. Examples of such discrimination, which may or many not be intentional, include low teacher expectations, tracking, biased tests and classroom materials, lack of minority and female role models, and under funded and segregated schools. Just as the runner is disadvantaged by the weights, the minority applicant is disadvantaged by poverty and institutional discrimination. Just as the other runner was not encumbered by weights in the first half of the race, the white male applicant was not burdened by these disadvantaged in early life. Most people would agree that is would not be fair to expect the runner to catch up after having to run half the race with weights. Could the same argument be made in the case of the minority or female applicant who often has to run the first half of the "race" of life with the "weight" of poverty and educational disadvantage? Is it fair, when that minority person applied for college or employment, to say "Now the weights are gone, so it's a fair race?")

Source: *Sociology* by John E. Farley. 1990. PrenticeHall: New Jersey.

21.4 IDENTITY AND SOCIAL MOBILITY AMONG THE SCHEDULED CASTE

From our discussion in the preceding pages it is very clear that Scheduled Caste or the dalits have always been kept at the fringes of society, treated as untouchables they have been exploited for centuries. To improve their conditions the constitution has not only banned untouchability but gave various provisions which have offered an avenue for a mobility and new identity among the Scheduled Caste. Besides this, the Scheduled Caste as a community have tried to forge a new identity and also, found ways of moving upwards both at socio-cultural as well as political level. In the section to follow we will talk about social mobility and identity among the Scheduled Caste.

21.4.1 Scheduled Castes and Social Mobility

Besides, the various constitutional provisions and welfare and developmental measures for socio-economic progress of the Scheduled Castes after independence, the dalits and their sympathisers have carried out a number of social movements. In the modern times some major movements were led by Gandhi and Ambedkar. Here, we shall examine the movements led by Ambedkar and Gandhi as well as constitutional provisions and measures which have been able to bring a direct influence on the status or positional uplift of the Scheduled Castes.

Yogendra Singh, in his book *Social Stratification and Change* in India has argued that there are two kinds of social movements. One is with the integrative orientation and the other is with the alienating orientation. The efforts made by the lower castes to sanskritise themselves may be called a movement with an integrative orientation because it does not renounce caste as a system of social stratification. The motive force for the backward and the Scheduled Castes to sanskritise was just to ventilate their deprived feelings of status and position which were denied to them for centuries. By imitating the higher castes they tried to find a position as that of the upper castes. But they have not always succeeded in their efforts, as there is no legitimate acceptance by the upper castes.

The movements of the Scheduled Castes with integrative orientation have changed the emphasis in the present time. From imitating the upper castes, the Scheduled Castes have started looking at them (upper castes) with disdain. This has led to a horizontal level caste consolidation. The evidence is provided by many sociological studies. The sub-castes within the scheduled castes have started coming together to form a 'homogeneous' caste group and exploring a new identity. There is change from sanskritisation to consolidation of power and to acquire a positive identity. The consolidation of power is also seen in the increasing presence of dalit based parties, especially BSP in the Indian political arena. In turn, this has contributed to independent identity for Scheduled Castes and has made them less dependent on the upper castes.

Ambedkar has led another movement which was a move from the caste affiliations to embracing Buddhism. In.1956, he launched the drive for mass conversion of the Scheduled Castes to Buddhism, within a few months after his death, his followers organised the political wing of the Scheduled Castes in the name of the Republican Party of India. Both these reflected the alternate

religio-political orientation of the scheduled caste movement with respect to caste based social stratification and political mobilisation. In this regard, Yogendra Singh concludes that Scheduled Caste movements for social mobility has oscillated, on a tendency of integration to sanskritisation and of alienation, conversion from Hinduism to Buddhism or Christianity to Islam.

Undoubtedly, there is relative improvement in terms of upward mobility of certain Scheduled Caste families and individuals. There are also favourable shifts in the political and social awakening among the Scheduled Castes. But the constitutional measures have helped only those Scheduled Castes who have a dominant minority position in a particular region. An analysis of the enforcement of the Untouchability (Offences) Act in various courts indicate that most cases are not against individuals or specific castes but only against institutions. It is also revealed that the enforcement of various measures under the Act is more effective only in those places where the Scheduled Castes are politically more conscious of their rights or have high literacy rates. Relatively speaking there has been a considerable improvement in the social and economic status of the Scheduled Castes but they still lag behind, in many ways, in relation to the upper castes.

Activity 1

Visit the nearest settlement around your house which has predominant Scheduled Caste population and ask them their problems and write them down. Compare your note with others at the Study Centre.

21.4.2   Scheduied Castes Seeking a New Identity

Untouchability is a cultural problem related to the Hindu religion and the caste system. Many social movements were launched by social reformers and religious leaders against untouchability. A number of such movements launched by the *dalits* or the Scheduled Castes under the leadership of B.R. Ambedkar gained strong momentum. This was, reflected in the growing self consciousness of the Scheduled Castes which continues even today. However, the spontaneous revolts and organised struggles launched in different parts of the country against the practice of untouchability and their economic exploitation are not recent phenomena. There had always been anti-untouchability movements throughout the history. But their numbers had increased since the British rule in India and especially during the freedom struggle.

a)   **Anti-untouchability in Bhakti and Arya Samaj movements**

The anti-untouchability movements may be classified into two categories: (1) reformative movements and (2) alternative movements. The reformative movements aim to reform the caste system in order to put an end to the problem of untouchability. The alternative movements aim to create 'an alternative cultural environment by conversion to' another religion. The reformative movements arrived out during different periods in India are broadly of three types: (1) bhakti movement (2) neovedantic movement (3) sanskritisation movement. Bhakti movement was popular during the medieval period in India when there was a succession of foreign invaders like the Mughals, Turks, Arabs and the Afghans. The bhakti movement tried to bring some sort of cultural and emotional integration between the upper castes and the. lower castes. Kabir, Ramanand, Chaitanya, Tukaram and Ramanujam were the noted saints,of that

period who spread the spirit of brotherhood among all human beings. They preached that every caste member could attain salvation through Bhakti to God. In spite of all this, the socio-economic position of the Sudra/untouchable castes remained unchanged. Even the temples constructed by the members of the bhakti movement did not allow the untouchables to enter their premises.

Neo-vedantic movement assumed two forms namely neo-vedantism and sanskritisation. Vivekanand, Dayanand and Gandhi emphasised on secularisation of profession. Dayanand Saraswati the founder of the Arya Samaj believed that the caste system was a political institution created by the ruiers' for the common good of society and not a natural or religious distinction.

b)   **Gandhi and the Movements of Untouchables**

Gandhi also said that all the four varnas were equal in status but not equal in opportunity and occupational division. For him, the varna system was not a hierarchical order. A scavenger had the same status as a Brahmin. As stated earlier in this unit, he symbolically called untouchables as "Harijans", that is "the people of God". Gandhi believed in the unity of various social groups. This was reflected in all his actions like his adoption of a harijan girl as his own daughter. He voluntarily decided to live with the untouchables to become one with them in appearance and in the standard of living. He even opposed separate electorate for the untouchables because, in his opinion, it could intensify the social division, which already existed in Hinduism. Gandhi had organised the Harijan Sevak Sangh for improving the life of the Harijans. The Sangh started hostels for the school untouchable children and improved work conditions of Harijans.

c)   **Sanskritisation: Anti Untouchability Movements in South India**

Further, there were quite a few movements launched by the untouchable castes in different parts of the country which successfully mobilised the people of these castes to forego their traditional way of life, food habits and even name of the castes. These were very much in tune to sanskritisation. In some cases sanskritisation encouraged upward status mobility to honour castes. By abandoning their traditional occupations many of the lower castes had struggled for a higher status in the caste hierarchy. They followed Sanskritic norms and rituals and justified their claims to a higher status by creating their own mythologies according to the local traditions. However, how far their claims for equality with the upper castes was accepted in a particular region was always a question. Those castes who have tried to seek a new identity by identifying with and imitating certain customs and practices of upper castes are still treated as untouchables in their places of residence. But there are a few caste groups like the *Nadars* in Tamil Nadu, *Ezhavas* in Kerala and the *Jatavs* of Agra in Uttar Pradesh who have somehow been able to organise themselves to fight against the oppression meted out to them.

Hardgrave has studied the *Nadar* community in Tamil Nadu. The Nadars who were traditionally engaged in toddy-tapping were treated as untouchables. They rejected their title or surname of *Shanan* and *shavar* to adopt a new title or surname of *Nadar*. This attempt was mainly to dissociate themselves from the traditional occupation of the community. They followed Sanskritic rituals and made attempts to enter temples as early as in 1970. A section of *Nadars* in some villages and towns also converted to Christianity and formed organisations to strengthen unity among them. Many of their attempts to enter temples were

not fulfilled in the beginning because there were lot of restrictions and resentment posed by the caste Hindus or the upper castes. Some cases were taken to the court which delivered the judgement against the *Nadar* community and they were asked to pay Rs. 500/- for purification of the temples in which they attempted to enter. Despite all these failures, the *Nadars* continued their efforts for status elevation and undertook many secular activities. They formed the *Nadar Mahajan Sangham* which carried out literacy programmes and campaigned against toddy-tapping within the community. They also participated in political activities and even obtained political positions. In the 1921 census they got themselves registered as *Nadar Kshatriyas*. M.N. Srinivas has noted that the census operations introduced by the British made every caste self-conscious of its rights and status. This activated the process of sanskritisation.

Similar to *Nadar*, the *Ezhavas* in Kerala also tried to achieve upward social mobility. The *Ezhavas* were also traditionally toddy-tappers. They were led by Shri Narayanan Guru and the S.N.D.P. Yogam, forming an association called *Shri Narayana Guru Dharma Paripalayan*. In the latter part of the 19th century the association launched activities for sanskritising the norms and customs of *Ezhavas*. It undertook secular programmes such as establishing schools and co-operative societies. The *Ezhavas* also joined hands with Christians and Muslims for achieving their aims.

d) Anti-untouchability movement in U.P.

The Jatavs of Uttar Pradesh also tried to sanskritise themselves by giving up their traditional occupation which were directly linked with the Jajmani system, that is, hereditary occupational services to the upper castes by the lower castes. The Jatavs of Agra were urban dwellers and the majority of them were also engaged in the leather work (shoe making). So, many of the Jatavs could improve their social and economic conditions once the shoe industry developed in and around Agra. Like the *Nadars* and *Ezhavas* the *Jatavs* and *Mahars* also formed organisation to spread sanskritic norms and customs among their caste members. They started schools and distributed scholarships to deserving students of their jatis, in order to identify themselves as a higher caste, like the Nadars, the Jatavs also claimed for a new and separate identity (from the rest of the Scheduled Castes). O.M. Lynch in his book "Politics of Untouchability" has shown that the Jatavs claim to be recognised as a separate caste among the scheduled castes without being amalgamated with other castes under the list of scheduled castes which the Jatavs claim not to have any connection.

e) Anti-untouchability movment in Maharashtra

The *Mahars* in Maharashtra under the leadership of Ambedkar demanded, in 1919, separate electorate for the depressed classes.

Many of the militant Mahars also got extremely frustrated with their abortive attempts towards sanskritisation and even gave up Hindu religion completely. Many Jatavs also followed this example later. In the early fifties, Ambedkar found that Buddhism was appropriate as an alternative religion. He preferred Buddhism primarily because in his opinion, it is an indigenous

Indian religion of equality, a religion which was anti-caste and anti-Brahmin. Consequently, along with him a large *Mahars* of Maharashtra converted to Buddhism. The Militant Mahar youth organised the Dalit Panther Movement

in 1942 because the religious conversion did not make any significant change in their socio-economic condition. Now, the scheduled castes are involved in civil rights movements, students movements in the university and college campuses, and also in the ecological movements in many regions. Thus, they are collectivity endorsing their identity in various ways to pave a brighter future for themselves. The new identities of the scheduled castes are being accepted by others. Because of their educational development and the westernisation the practices of untouchability and discrimination against them are slowly becoming less. The welfare and developmental measures undertaken for the improvement in their economic position and upliftment of their social status have been responsible for opening new vistas for the depressed classes. In spite of all these, we cannot say for certain that the Scheduled Castes are enjoying an equal status at par with the others. Their present generation has just set the stage for development and we can hope that the Scheduled Castes would acquire a new and a positive identity vis-a-vis rest of the castes and communities in years to come.

A few more untouchable castes left Hinduism and developed their own separate religion. The *Chamars* and *Chuhars* of Punjab formed the *Adi Dharm* which believed that they were not part of the Hindu caste system. Later, the followers of *Adi Dharm* were politically aligned and absorbed in Ambedkar's Scheduled Caste Federation in the late 1940s. Some Untouchables followed Christianity, Islam or Buddhism, and all those who were converted to Christianity or Islam did not make any attempts to sanskritise them. The classic case is of the *Nadars* of Tirunelvelli in Tamil Nadu who converted to Christianity. However, all those who have become Christians have not ceased to be untouchables. Caste differentiation has permeated itself even within the Church.The economic differentiation between the *Pulaya* Christian (traditional untouchables) and the Syrian Christians in Kerala still persists. Earlier, the Syrian Christians considered themselves to be more superior to *Pulaya* Christians in terms of education and employment. But now their situation is gradually improving. K.C. Alexander who has made a noteworthy study of social mobility among the *Pulaya* Christians has observed the *Pulayas* who now are university graduates and who are employed in white collar jobs are rarely treated as untouchables.

Check Your Progress 2

1) The scheduled castes are:

    a) Kshatriyas

    b) Brahmins

    c) Shudras

    d) Untouchables outside the four-fold division of various systems or the caste system.

2) Antyajas was referred in the Writing of ....

3) Which of the statements is right? Put a (✓)mark in front of the correct statement:

    i) Untouchables do not constitute a homogeneous group.

    ii) Ambedkar called the untouchables Harijans.

    iii) Sanskritisation is process of alienation.

21.5   LET US SUM UP

We have analysed the problems of the Scheduled Castes from the very early times till date. We have seen how untouchability as a phenomenon is inherent in the caste-ridden Hindu society and social mobility for the untouchables is hampered because of their low caste status.

The Scheduled Castes are slowly trying to recover from their disabilities of untouchability of and discrimination. We have seen that there are a number of constitutional provisions made for them in the independent India. We have looked at the operational inconsistencies of the governmental measures adopted for enhancement of the status of the Scheduled Caste. We have also the possible measures to be adopted and properly implemented for a better future of the depressed sections of the people in India.

21.6   KEY WORDS

Scheduled Castes	:	The untouchable castes listed in the Schedule for the purpose of constitutional measures and concessions for their welfare, protection and development.
Chandalas, Mritapas	:	Particular categories of untouchable castes who performed unclean occupations in the past and were regarded the most down-graded people in the Hindu society.
Antyajas	:	Another term used for untouchables who live outside the habitations of the caste Hindus in the past.
Alienation-orientation	:	The untouchable castes getting out of caste system and converting to Buddhism, Christianity or Islam.
Integrative-orientation	:	Assimilation into the upper castes through sanskritisation process, i.e. imitating the culture, behaviour of the styles of life and upper castes.
Homogeneous	:	United whole, without differences.
Infrastructure	:	The facilities available in the existing structure.
Reservation	:	Special concessions and privileges granted by the constitution for the socially and educationally backward sections of the society. Reservation is applicable in admission to educational institutions, hostels, fee concessions etc. for recruitment in government services; and in representation in the Lok Sabha and the State Legislatures.

21.7 FURTHER READINGS

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Benjamin, Joseph. 1989, *Scheduled Castes in Indian Politics and Society,* ECS Publications

Kamble N.D. 1982, *The Scheduled Castes,* Ashish Publishing House, New Delhi.

Ghurye G.S. 1969, *Caste and Race in India,* Popular Prakashan, Bombay.

21.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) The term Scheduled Caste was first used by the Simon Commission.

2) Some of the terms used to address the Scheduled Caste are Untouchables, *Harijans*, *Chandalas* and *Dalits*.

3) According to the materialist class analysis Untouchability grew out of a social class who did not possess the right of holding and usage of land. These landless workers were semi-slaves and were in debt bondage. They toiled for other peoples land but were forced to carry on unclean occupations. They were secured by the social bondage and by the concept of destiny or Karma.

Check Your Progress 2

1) The scheduled castes are:

   a) Kshatriyas

   d) Untouchables outside the four-fold division of various systems or the caste system.

2) "Antyajas" was referred in the Writings of Alberuni.

3) The correct statement is :

   i) Untouchables do not constitute a homogeneous group.

UNIT 22   SCHEDULED TRIBES

Structure

22.0   OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you should be able to :

● Explain who are tribes and what makes them different from non-tribes;

● Relate the occupation of tribes within the environment that they live;

● Understand the problems of tribes within the environment that they live; and

● Analysis the various ways in which their problems are being tackled.

22.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit of this block you have acquainted yourself with the problems of Scheduled Castes. In this unit we shall be talking about the problems of Scheduled Tribes.

To understand the problems of Scheduled Tribe we think it necessary to define tribes in terms of their general characteristics and to explain what is meant by Scheduled Tribes. We shall also describe the constitutional safeguards which are provided to them. The unit also discusses their demographic profile with regard to geographical area, racial and linguistic affinities. Next we will try to understand their economic pursuits and their relationships with regard to land and forest. We will also discuss their educational status and show how the low rate of literacy is contributory factor for their exploitation. Tribal struggles and movements are manifestations and vent to their frustration. In the end, the unit presents the various opinions as to what should be the proper approach to their development.

22.2 DEFINITION OF TRIBE AND SCHEDULED TRIBE

In this section we shall be dealing with the definitions of tribes and the Scheduled Tribes. Let us begin with the definition of tribe.

22.2.1 The Tribe

A universally acceptable or applicable definition is lacking. However the word tribe is widely used. Purely for the sake of classification, the British Government used the word tribe, along with prefixes like jungle and hill, aboriginal, indigenous to describe, the people who seemed to have little contact with the main culture. The word tribe has been used by European historians to refer to distinct groups like the Gauls and Anglo-Saxons and autonomous political groups such as Lichchavi,. Mulla, Khasa, etc. in ancient India. British social anthropologists like Radcliffe-Brown, Evans-Pritchard,. Fortes and Nadel have used the word tribe to refer to autonomous political unit which lives in its own territory and possesses its own distinctive way of life.

Efforts have been made to look for some generalisation and common denominators if not a proper definition. In the Indian context the Commissioner for, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in his report for the year 1952 has listed sudh common features. These are that the tribes: (i) live away from the civilised world in the inaccessible parts lying in the forest hills, (ii) they belong to either one of the three stocks–Negrito, Australoid or Mongoloids, (iii) they speak the same tribal dialect, (iv) they profess 'primitive' religion known as 'Animism' in which the worship of ghosts and spirits is the most important element, (v) they follow 'primitive' occupations such as gleaning, hunting and gathering of forest products; and (vi) they are largely meat eaters. The list also includes their love for food and drink.

A.R. Desai commenting on the above features, says that of 25 million people described as tribal only 5 millions possess these features. D.N. Majumdar states that, except for the tribes of Eastern India, everywhere else ethnic strains have crisscrossed in the sub-continent. Thus, it is very difficult to say with certainty

what is tribal. Yet, in spite of the social and cultural differences that exist among the tribal people dispersed over India. In their social life kinship is the principal unit of organisation. They are often the units for land ownership, economic production and consumption. In spite of the differences some common features do exist.

In the subsistence economy very few tribal groups are still hunters and food gatherer but many of them practise shifting agriculture or cultivation. And still others are pastoral nomads. Tribes do not usually take to trading or financial transactions. Thus, the society is more or less homogeneous with little sense of hierarchy and subordination.

Politically, tribal societies are relatively simple and egalitarian. Lineage, clan and kinship tend to overlap with their political organisations. Tribal religion tends to be less systematised, less specialised and elaborated.

These above mentioned characteristics are very general and preliminary and are often shared by non-tribals also. Keeping in mind the problem of definition, F.G. Bailey thus suggests that the definition of tribe should be seen in a continuum: the tribe at one end and caste.at the other end.

We have discussed so far about the problem of conceptualising the tribe. It still leaves us with the question as who are Scheduled Tribe?

22.2.2 The Scheduled Tribes

For ages, the tribes had little more than a casual contact with so called civilised or advanced cultures and societies. When the British consolidated their position in India, their expansionist operations necessitated the opening up of the entire country through an effective communication system. The British consolidated the money economy, acquired lands and introduced cash-cropping, land tenure, a new legal system, administration etc. All these measures opened the tribal land to outside influences. Though all these changes brought.relief to the tribes these systems gradually became exploitative. Along with these the Christian missionaries in India exposed these communities of people to much quicker tempo of modern life by providing them formal, education, making them conscious about health and so forth.

The social, cultural and economic exploitations, of the tribals prompted them to go on wars and agitations. With increasing feeling of deprivation their agitations, struggles and movements also increased. In the wake of tribal upheavals and for variety of other reasons, the British thought of protecting the tribes by having regulated areas for which normal rules were not applicable. Along with the distinct and special arrangements made for areas populated by tribals, there also emerged the concept of tribe as a social category to differentiate them from the Hindus, Muslims and other distinct religious groups. The Government of India Act 1933 incorporated some provisions and the policy of reservation for the tribes notified in the Schedule.

The concept of Scheduled Tribe emerged henceforth and was included in the Constitution of independent India. A list of tribes was incorporated in the Eighth Schedule of the constitution. In 1971, the list contained names of 527 tribes. The reservation policy or the policy of protecting discrimination for the notified or Scheduled Tribes has been made a constitutional obligation

+---+
| **Box 1** |
| |
| **Constitutional Safeguards** |
| |
| Under Article 15(4) special provisions are made for educational advancement of the Scheduled Tribes. These provisions are like reservation of seats and relaxation in marks in admission to educational institutions, scholarships, etc. |
| |
| Under Article 46 the State is enjoined upon to promote with special care to education and economic interests of SC and ST and protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. |
| |
| Articles 330 and 332 seats are reserved for SC and ST in Lok Sabha State Vidhan Sabhas. |
| |
| Under Artcle 339(1) the President may at anytime appoint a Commission to report on the administration of the Scheduled Area and the welfare of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes in the State. |
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22.3 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE TRIBES

Scheduled Tribe population, according to 1991 census was about 3.7 million and comprised 8.1% of the country's total population. They are spread over the various regions of India and we find various races represented among them.

22.3.1 Geographical Zone

The tribal population can be demarcated in the following three geographical zones:

i)   North-North-Eastern Zone : It includes the tribal areas of Ladakh (Jammu & Kashmir), Himachal Pradesh, Northern Uttar Pradesh, Sikkim and the North East comprising seven states (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur and Tripura).

ii) Central or Middle Zone: It includes West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar, Southern Uttar Pradesh, Southern Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra.

iii) Southern Zone: It includes Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and the two Union Territories of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.

The Middle zone has the largest tribal population and the tribal communities residing therein are better known than those in the other zones.

22.3.2 Racial Affinities

On the basis of racial affinities the Indian people are classified into various groups. The ancestry of the present tribal population is traced chiefly to the following three races:

i)   The Negrito : This shorter version of the Negro is found in the Andaman islands. There are four Scheduled Tribes in this area, viz., the Andamanese (now settled in Strait Island, the *Onge* in Little Andaman Island, the *Jarawa* on the western coast of Middle and South Andaman Islands and the *Sentinelese* in the two Sentinel Islands.

States	Total population	ST population	ST population as % of State population	ST population as % of total ST population
India	838,583,988	67,758,380	8.1	100.0
Madhya Pradesh	66,181,170	15,399,034	23.3	22.7
Maharashtra	78,937,187	7,318,281	9.3	10.8
Orisssa	31,659,736	7,032,214	22.2	10.4
Bihar	86374,465	6,616,914	7.7	9.8
Gujarat	41,309,582	6,161,775	14.9	9.1
Rajasthan	44,005,990	5,474,881	12.4	8.1
Andhra Pradesh	66,508,008	4,199,481	6.3	6.2
West Bengal	68,077,965	3,808,760	5.6	5.6
Assam	22,414,322	2,874,441	12.8	4.2
Karnataka	44,977,201	1,915,691	4.3	2.8
Meghalaya	1,774,778	1,517,927	85.5	2.2
Nagaland	1,209,546	1,060,822	87.7	1.6
Tripura	2,575,205	853,345	30.9	1.3
Mizoram	689,765	653,565	94.8	1.0
Tamil nadu	55,858,946	574,194	1.0	0.8
Arunachal Pradesh	864,558	550,351	68.7	0.8
Kerala	29,098,518	320,967	1.1	0.6
Uttar Pradesh	139,112,287	287,901	0.2	0.4
Himachal Pradesh	5,170,877	213,349	4.2	0.3
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	138,477	109,380	79.0	0.2
Sikkim	406,457	90,901	22.4	0.1
Lakshadweep	51,707	48,163	93.1	0.1
A & N Islands	280,661	26,770	9.5	0.0
Daman & Diu	101,586	11,724	11.6	0.0
Goa	1,169,793	376	0.0	0.0
Punjab	20,281,969	0	0.0	0.0
Haryana	16,463,648	0	0.0	0.0
Delhi	9,420,644	0	0.0	0.0
Pondicherry	807,785	0	0.0	0.0
Chandigarh	642,015	0	0.0	0.0
	838,583,988	67,758,380	8.1	

ii)   The Proto-Australoid : The tribes of the Middle and the Southern zones are generally assigned to this race and they form the bulk of the tribal population in India.

iii) The Mongoloid : The tribes of the North and North-Eastern zones generally belong to this race which is divided into two sub-types, viz., Palaeo-Mongoloids (long-headed and broad-headed) and TibetoMongoloids.

Besides these three main racial groups, some tribal communities trace their ancestry-to the Palaeo-Mediterranean stock also.

Projection of Scheduled Tribes Population in 2001

(assuming the same proportion of Scheduled Tribe as in 1991)

	Total population in 2001	ST population	SC population as % of State population
India	1,017,544,000	84,465,196	8.3
Madhya Pradesh	81,666,000	19,002,044	23.3
Maharashtra	92,314,000	8,558,448	9.3
Orisssa	36,284,000	8,051,352	22,2
Bihar	102,423,000	7,846,349	7.7
Gujarat	49,194,000	7,337,822	14.9
Rajasthan	54,816,000	6,819,778	12.4
Andhra Pradesh	76,773,000	4,847,638	6.3
West Bengal	80,312,000	4,493,218	5.6
Assam	26,589,000	3,409,807	12.8
Karnataka	52,922,000	2,254,080	4.3
Tamil Nadu	62,400,000	641,432	1.0
Kerala	32,605,000	359,645	1.1
Uttar Pradesh	175,626,000	363,468	0.2
Punjab	23,858,000	0	0.0
Haryana	20,204,000	0	0.0
Total For 15 Major States	967,950,000	73,985,081	7.6
Other Smaller States*	49,594,000	10,480,115	21.1
India	1,017,544,000	84,465,196	8.3

22.3.3 Linguistic Affinities

On the basis of linguistic affinities, the Indian people are classified into four speech families, viz., the Indo-European (Aryan), the Dravidian, The Austric (*Kol* or *Munda*) and Tibeto-Chinese. The Scheduled Tribes speak about 105 languages and 225 subsidiary languages, or dialects. The linguistic classification of the Indian tribal population is as follows:

i)   **Sino-Tibetan** : In the North and North-Eastern zones most of the tribal speak some form or the other of Sino-Tibetan and Tibeto-Burman. In certain north eastern areas there is an admixture of the Mon-Khmer (Austric) speech, e.g., among the *Khasi*. In Nagaland, sixteen languages apart from numerous dialects are spoken.

ii) **Kol or Munda** : In the Central zone the Austric family of languages is dominant. The Munda languages lack the verb and gender differentiation. The only classificatory device is the differentiation between animate and inanimate. Some of the important Munda languages are *Santhali, Mundari, Ho, Kharia, Korwa, Korku* and *Gadaba*.

iii) **Dravidian** : The tribal people of the Southern zone speak some form or the other of the Dravidian languages, viz., Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Tulu. The *Kedar*, one of the oldest inhabitants of India, speak a Malayalam dialect. There has been Dravidianisation of significant South Indian tribes like the *Chenchu* and the *Yenadi*. Some of the important Dravidian tribes are *Gond, Oraon, Maler, Kandh, Saora, Parja, Koya, Kolam, Paniyan, Irula, Malser* and *Malaryan*.

Thus, the geographical zones described earlier correspond roughly to the three linguistic zones. But there-is no correlation between race and language. People belonging to one race may speak different languages. Likewise, people speaking one language, or languages of one speech-family, may belong to different races. The Aryan languages are spoken by some tribal communities as a result of cultural contact. In the Middle zone most of the tribes have become bilingual, speaking their own dialect as also some form of Hindi, Oriya or Bangali as spoken by the neighbouring rural population. The *Baigas* have completely lost their original language and they speak Chhattisgarhi, though culturally they continue to maintain certain distinctive traits of their tribes.

Activity 1

Try and see if you can identify the recial and linguistic origins of some of the tribal people who you happen to know.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Name some of the important Dravidian Tribes.

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2) List out the three racial groups to whose ancestry the present tribal population is traced to.

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3) Name a few tribes from the Central Tribal zone.

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22.4   TRIBAL ECONOMY

The tribal communities are engaged in hunting and food gathering. They are also pastoral people and nomads, shifting cultivators, settled agriculturists, artisans and plantation, mining and industrial labourers. In Koraput District of Orissa we find the spectacle of co-existence of primitive groups like *Bondas* and *Didavais*. Also, there are tribals from two different communities who work in the HAL factory at Sunabad manufacturing supersonic MIG engines. Thus, there is wide divergence in the economic status of the tribes from region to region and within a region.

22.4.1   Hunting and Food Gathering Tribes

These tribes depend for their livelihood on gathering food (edible roots, tubers, fruits, nuts, flowers, leaves, honey) from the forest, hunting and fishing. The

important tribes in this category include: *Jarawa, Onge, Chenchu, Birhor, Kadar, Maria, Kuki, Bonda, JuAng, Palliyan, Raji* among others.

They use poor indigenous tools like digging sticks, iron jungle knives, earthern, wooden or bamboo pots and vessels, bamboo baskets and sticks for food gathering. For hunting purposes they possess different types of traps like rope nets used by Birhors to catch monkeys and hares. Pit traps are used to catch big animals like wild boar. Three types of weapons are used: hand missiles like *bhala, barchhi, labeda* (thick wooden ends), *qulel* and hand operated implements like axe and knive. Dogs are used by *Kadars* and *Chenchus* for hunting. For fishing they have a variety of traps made of rope, yarn and bamboo. Harpoons, *bhalas* and sticks are also used. Fishing by hand is also common. In food gathering, hunting or trapping and fishing operations tribals may take part individually as well as in groups.

22.4.2 Pastoral and Cattle Herding Tribes

The classic pastoral tribes include *Todas* of the Nilgiris in Tamil Nadu, *Gujjars* and *Bakarwals* of Jammu & Kashmir. and *Gaddis* and *Gujjars* of Himachal Pradesh. In middle India *Kisans* or *Nagesiag* of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh are considered to be pastoral to a certain extent. *Bharwad* or *Maldhari* and *Raisipotra* of Gujarat and *Rabaris* of Gujarat and Rajasthan are the cattle herders of western India. *Gollas, Kurubas* and *Labadas* are the herders in south India. *Bhotias* of the U.P. hills depend on cattle rearing. Some tribals are loosely called 'pastoralists' and they treat the occupation as a subsidiary one. Todas of the Nilgiris have attractedworld-wide attention on account of their economy and religion being centred around the buffalo and their practice of polyandry. Pastoralists have adopted themselves in many ways in different parts of India. Some earn out their living by selling items like milk and its products, wool, hair and so on and others rear livestock and earn their livelihood by selling animals. They also consume milk and milk products themselves. The livestock provides them food usually not so much in meat as in milk, dung for fuel, hides for leather and utensils and wool or hides for clothing.

22.4.3 Cultivators

Agriculture among the tribes is of simple and poor nature. They do cultivation at subsistence level and are unable to meet their minimum daily needs. In the low-lying land, raising paddy crops is easy as artificial irrigation is not needed. In the uplands only coarser varieties of rice as well as pulses, millets and other products of minor value are grown. Their agricultural implements are indigenous and made by local ironsmiths. A few tribes use cow dung manure as well.

An important characteristic of tribal agriculture is cooperation seen at the time of transplanting of paddy and on other occasions. Help is rendered among the relatives or among the villagers or among the people of an area reciprocal basis. Some prominent agriculturist tribes are *Khasis* and *Jaintias* of Meghalaya; *Khasas* (*Jaunsaris*) and *Tharus* of Uttar Pradesh; *Kinnauras*, *Pangwals* and *Swanglas* of Himachal Pradesh; *Bhumijs, Koras, Bhuiyas, Santhals, Mundas, Oraons, Hos, Kharwars, Baigas, Gonds*, etc., in middle India; *Bhils, Meenas, Garasias, Damarias, Koli Mahadevs, Varlis, Thakurs, Korkus, Dublas*, etc., in western India; *Koyas* of Andhra Pradesh; *Malayalis* of Tamil Nadu and so on.

Besides these plain cultivators, there are the hill cultivators who are -engaged in shifting cultivation. Hill cultivation is a seasonally regulated sequence of procedure designed to open up and bring under cultivation a patch of forest land. After one or two seasons of staple cropping the plot is left fallow for years together with a view to restoring fertility of the soil through forest growth. Following this the plot is again cleared and vegetations are burnt and another cycle of cultivation begins. Hill cultivation goes under a variety of names: *Jhum* in North-East, *Kurwa* or *Khallu* in Santhat *Paraganas*, *Bewara* in Ranchi and *Palamau* in Bihar, *Podu, Rema, Dahi, Kaman, Bringa, Gudia*, *Dongarchas* in Orissa, *Penda, Dahiya, Biwar, iguharh, Farhha, Dippa, Marhan or Erka* in Madhya Pradesh, *Kondapady* in Andhra Pradesh.

Approximately more than 6 takh Scheduled Tribe families are engaged in shifting cultivation covering about 10 million hectares of land. Tribal people inhabiting in the hill forests of all the seven states in the North-East, Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh are dependent on hill cultivation for their livelihood. These tribes include *Garos, Tripuris, Noatias.*, a few *Halams* and *Riangs, Chakmas, Mags* and *Nagas* with their different nomencatures in the North-East, *Malers* or *Sauria Paharias* of Santhal Paraganas, *Hill Kharias* and a few *Korwas, Parhaiyas* and *Birjias* in Bihar, *Saoras* and *Kutia Kandhs* in Orissa, *Kamars, Baigas* and *Maria Gonds* in Madhya Pradesh, *Konda Dhoras* and *Nooka* or *Mukha Dhoras* and a few *Bagatas* in Andhra Pradesh and *Malaikudis* in Karnataka.

22.4.4 Simple Artisans

Most of the tribal people know matting, basketry, bamboo work, spinning, etc., which serve as subsidiary occupations for them. But a number of tribes subsist on crafts and cottage industries like basket making, tool making (iron and wooden).Other tribes use, spinning and weaving, metal work, ironsmithy, etc. They visit the periodical markets *(haats)* with their finished goods and dispose them off by barter or on cash.

Some of the tribes whose primary occupation is craft are mentioned below. Gujjars and Bakarwals of Jammu & Kashmir and *Gaddis, Gujjars* and *Kinnauras* of Himachal Pradesh produce wool products. In Bihar *Lohras, Karmafis, Chik-Baralks* and *Mahalis* are artisans. *Lohras* and *Karmalis* fulfil the needs of agricultural tribes or other people by making and repairing their agricultural implements and other tools. *Chick-Baralks* supply hand-woven cloth to *Mundas, Oraons*, etc. *Mahatis* make baskets and other bamboo products to earn their livelihood. *Asurs* of Bihar and *Agarias* of Madhya Pradesh were traditionally ironsmiths. Now, they have adopted agriculture and hunting. *Kolams* of Maharashtra were formerly engaged in basket and mat making from bamboo strips and also from paratya (remnants of cotton). This traditional occupation is still practised though they have adopted agriculture. *Vitolias* of Maharashtra are engaged in making bamboo mats, baskets and winnowing fans. *Irulas* of Tamil Nadu and *Thotis* of Andhra Pradesh make bamboo mats and baskets and subsist on this. *Kotas* of the Nilgiris depend on carpentry, tool making and pottery.

22.4.5 Labour: Agricultural and Non-agricultural

Traditional agriculturists or artisans amongst tribals have adopted an economic life of casual labour. Agricultural work is mostly available in the locality itself

within a radius of a few kilometres. Non-agricultural work potentialities are situated in the local as well as at distant places in different states. Non-agricultural labourers are mostly engaged in different industries. Tribals have taken to such work on account of pressure on land due to population growth and opening of mines and industries in tribal areas. They go out as seasonal migrants to nearby or distant towns, mines, mills and tea gardens to work as labourers. They work in railway and road construction, forestry, -construction work like civil work in emerging factories, houses, dams, bridges, etc. Their men and women move to the working places in bands. The proportion of tribals is progressively increasing in categories like factory workers, plantation workers, trade, commerce, business, transport, mining, construction, political or social work, Government service, municipal service, teaching, priesthood, entertainment art, etc. The core of industrial India falls in middle India and the tribals of Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh from the bulk of industrial labour in this zone. The tribals of Chhota Nagpur also work in the tea garden of Assam and West Bengal and at the same time are engaged in forestry and other works of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. *Santhals* are said to be good pick miners and coal cutters. Half of the labour force in the manganese industry of Madhya Pradesh tribal.

Santhals and *Hos* dominate in iron mines and industry in Bihar. Most of the tribals are unskilled labourers in quarries, mines and industries. Landless labourers have accepted this work as their main occupation while for others it is a subsidiary occupation. Occupational changes are obvious among village artisans. There is gradual disappearance of village craft due to the impact of industrialisation. Along with occupational changes there is considerable increase in income and expenditure patterns of the families of industrial labourers. Material culture has undergone much change.

22.4.6 The Skilled White-collar Job Holders and Traders

Some individuals or families of tribal communities of all the regions are working for their livelihood in offices, hospitals, factories, and business enterprises. Some of them are engaged in commercial trade of their own. The reservation for the Scheduled Tribes in services and post in Government offices and Public Sector Undertakings as laid down in the Constitution has helped a lot in creating this type of economic life among tribals. It is observed that mostly the educated and the converted Christian tribals are engaged in offices, hospitals, administrative 'jobs, etc. The representative tribes of traders are *Bhotias* of the Indo-*Tibetan* border and *Valmikis* of Andhra Pradesh.

22.5 TRIBE, LAND AND FOREST

It is evident from our discussion on the tribal economy that the majority of the tribes depend on land and forest to make a living. Their social life is also interwoven around the land they live on. They have thus a physical and. emotional attachment and dependence on land and forest. Most problems faced by these people arise out of their relation to land and forest. Let's have a look at the land and agrarian situation to understand their problem better.

22.5.1 Land and Agrarian Situation

According to the agricultural census of operational holdings held in 1981, the

holdings of the Scheduled Tribes amount to 167.04 lakhs hectares forming 10.2% of the total holdings. Their share in the total number of operational holdings is low in proportion to their population. The decreasing per capita landholdings has resulted in scarcity of land and displacement of tribals from their land. Land scarcity and backwardness is, thus, one of the central aspects of the agrarian situation.

The process of land alienation among the tribals has been going on for a long time. After the advent of British rule, with opening up of means of communication and increased expansion of British dominion there was infiltration by non-tribals into tribal areas. The tribals increasingly came into contact with non-tribals. Some of the effects of their contacts were healthier but the tribals were invariably exploited because of their ignorance and innocence. Frequent needs for cash in lean times and famines forced the tribals to get into the clutches of money lenders. Inadequate credit facilities led to unscrupulous money-lending. Loans were advanced to them in cash at exorbitant interests. The tribals being ignorant and illiterate didn't maintain records of such transactions and were not aware of the malpractices of the money lenders. Often they parted with practically all they produced to payback debts and interests or gain their land in lieu of payment. The money-lenders invariably got the land transferred to their name. This exploitation was sought to be checked by various Acts adopted by the Government. But because of the cunningness of the money-lenders and their collusions with politicians, bureaucrats and police administration the provisions of the acts proved to be ineffective and the exploitation of tribal steadily continued.

Land of the tribals has also increasingly been taken over by the Government for mining and industries. The tribals are uprooted and displaced from their land. They have also not benefited from industrialisation. As the tribals have remained mostly unskilled, their claims for getting government jobs have been overlooked. Those few who are employed are invariably in menial jobs. Industrialisation, thus, hasn't provided an alternative employment to the tribals.

In the matter of agricultural practice, the tribals are still lagging behind as stated earlier. The majority of the tribes practise shifting agriculture. They clean patches of forests and slopes of hills by burning the trees and bushes and then dibbling the seed in ash-covered soil. For the first few years, good crops are produced but the fertility of the soil is soon lost out. Cultivators then shift to other areas and the cycle continues. It is generally agreed that this is not an ideal method. Experts have described this practice as being wasteful and primitive causing soil erosion and floods and thus causing ecological imbalance.

A lot has been said about the improvement of shifting cultivation and weaning people away from it. But it is so not easy for shifting cultivation is a way of life of the tribals. Their social and physical climate, terrain habits, customs, etc. are interwoven with this system of cultivation. Any improvement or replacement of shifting cultivation must therefore take into account the socio-economic conditions of the people. Attempts were made to bring the shifting cultivators or *Jhumias* down to the flat regions in Tripura. They were provided with, subsidies to arrange the basic requirements for a settled agriculture.

This arrangement had proved to be a failure. However, the people who practised subsistence economy were placed in direct competition with largely monetised economy. Thus, the Renuka Ray Committee has been very critical of this. The

Dhebhar Commission visited some such areas and remarked some of these attempts as 'absurd'. Thus, weaning people away from it does appear to be not the only solution. The problem in case is to be understood in the backdrop of the peoples' sociocultural and economic relations.

Another problem which accentuates the situation of land scarcity and land alienation among the tribals is their growing population.

As in other matters of agriculture the tribals also suffer from terrible inadequacies. They do not have access to credit facilities, irrigation works, etc.. On the whole, in matter of planned development the tribals have been neglected.

The situation of tribals is also worsened by the fact that their fields have low productivity. Talking about the poor yield of land, especially in central India, 'Stephan Fuchs (1972) has pointed out various reasons. 'Poor stony soil, paucity of irrigation facilities and employment of very crude techniques and implements of cultivation are some of the main reasons for the poor quality of productivity.

22.5.2   Forest and Forest Produces

Most of the tribal areas is covered with forest. The tribals are very heavily dependent on forest not only on account of the geographical configuration but because of unproductive agriculture. Despite the popular cliche that "tribals are forests" and the symbiotic relationship between them and forest, there is almost constant friction between tribals and the Government (Forest Departments). There is a basic difference in the perceptions of the tribal people and the Government in respect of forests. The tribals regard forest as their mother. Those forests produces which are important for the tribal people may have little value in the eyes of the Government. On the other hand, the tribal may not have much concern about timber or such other items which the Government may consider as the main produce of forests. After reservation of forests the tribal people had to seek permission of Government officials even for the use of those resources which were a part of their long tradition. Then there was competition for their use from outsiders. Restrictions were imposed on tribals even on use of bamboo forests and collection of firewood.

In the new forest policy the needs of the local people have received some appreciation. Yet certain provisions therein cast a heavy burden on tribal economy. The Forest Conservation Act, 1980 brought a basic change in the management of forest. Earlier, after clearing natural forests, the plantation of single species like teak, for meeting the needs of outside economy for timber, was accepted as scientific management of forests. But now forest is taken to mean natural forests comprising all sorts of trees, plants, creepers, etc. This new perception serves the interests of tribals. In a bid to convert ordinary forests into full-bloom natural forests and protect environment, the entry of the people has still been banned and they are being denied even their ordinary requirements from the forest. The Government gives contract to others of minor forest produces like bamboo, *tendu leaves, mahua, kusum, karamy* and *sal* seeds etc. This contributes to the state revenues. This is meant in away to eliminate the middle-men who exploit the tribals. But the take over has adversely affected the customary practises of Tribals like their weekly market. Earlier, this weekly market was a place of tribal collective activity which has been disrupted. The takeover of forests by Government has affected the tribals in other ways too.

In times of famine, scarcity and lack of returns from agriculture the tribals used to arrange items for their basic survival from the forest. They killed small game, gathered tubes, leaves berries, etc. which helped them tide over the period of stress. The ecological link between tribal, and nature has suffered a great deal with rapid destruction of forest and by Government controls.

In many cases due processes of law have not been followed for notifying reserved forests. This has led to serious problems in Sonbhadra (U.P.), Garhchirol (Maharashtra) and Singhbhum (Bihar). There are also disputes regarding demarcation not only between the people and the Forest Department but also between the Forest Department and the Revenue Department. In some states the problem of Forest Villages has still not been solved. At present, there is direct confrontation between the Government and the tribal people in some areas like Adilabad, Khammam and Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh, South Bastar in Madhya Pradesh, Garhchiroli, Chandrapur and Nasik in Maharashtra and Singhbhum in Bihar. In many areas the forests are not out of effective control of the Forest Department. In the light of these it seems necessary to consider justifiable demands of the people and avoid superimposition of laws unilaterally as well as to check authoritarian and oppressive behaviour of the departmental officials.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Describe in few words the relationship the tribals have with the forest.

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2) Name the tribes whose primary occupation is craft.

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3) Hill cultivation goes under a variety of names what are those names?

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4)   Who are the pastoralists?

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22.6   TRIBES AND EDUCATION

Education is considered not only one of the important inputs or factors for social change but an index of social change. Thus education was one of the means sought to uplift the tribes from their deplorable conditions. Articles 46 of our Constitution is looking after the educational development of Scheduled Tribes as stated earlier. It states "The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation."

Accordingly special assistance has been given to promote education among the Scheduled Tribes. A number of schools and hostels have been opened in tribal areas. Free education, tuition fees, hostel fees, distribution of text books, reservation of seats in schools, colleges and universities, etc. are some of the facilities made available to them. In spite of the specific constitutional provisions made and the various grants and facilities available for the promotion of education among the tribes we do not get a satisfactory picture, The statistics show us how dismal the literacy rate is among the Scheduled Tribes over the years.

22.6.1   Literacy Rates

We find that the Scheduled Tribes have doubled their literacy level in the previous two decades (1961-1981). Yet, their achievement in literacy is not comfortable when we compare it to the rates of literacy among other communities.

The gap between tribals and non-tribals in the field of education has not decreased. Instead, it has widened in some areas. This is so in spite of the promotional scheme of tribal development adopted by the Government. Now, the question is why is this so? We shall discuss this in the following section.

22.6.2   Problems of Education

The problems of education among the Scheduled-Tribes have been studied by various committees, institutions, organisation and many individuals. They all could find some basic problems of education among the tribes. One of the basic problems plaguing the tribals is their economic, deprivation and backwardness. A large number of tribals are living below the poverty level. To them, education is a luxury. Moreover, in the case of those people who are engaged in agriculture their minor children are also engaged in it. This is one of the reasons for the few enrolments of children from the families of the tribal cultivators. A very few tribal parents are educated. The illiterate parents do

not realise the value of education. They feel little urge to educate their children. Many tribals like – *Gujjars, Bhotia, Gaddi* etc. are nomads who move from place to place. There are others who migrate from one place to the other in search of employment. It is inevitable under the circumstances that education in both the cases is neglected.

The medium of instruction is another hindrance for promotion of education among the tribes. The medium of instruction in schools in tribal areas is not the mother tongue of the tribals inhabiting there. Many a times it is found that tribal languages do not have a script of their own. In almost all the schools in tribal areas there is lack of sufficient number of tribal teachers. The curriculum of education is another important problem. The existing curriculum as experts rightly feel, is not suited and has little relevance to the tribal people.

These and many other such problems haven't really been kept in mind when various schemes for tribal development have been adopted. There is often neutral formalism in bureaucracy about many welfare and development schemes formulated for them. The tribals are still at fringe and the various types of development have hardly touched them. They remain discontented to a large extent. A number of agitations and struggles among the tribes are expression of their discontent.

22.7 TRIBAL MOVEMENTS

Numerous uprisings and movements among the tribes especially in Bihar had occurred as early as in 1772. Some of the important movements among the tribes in British India were *Mizos* (1810), *Kols* (1795 & 1831), *Mundas* (1889), *Santhals* (1853), *Muria Gonds* (1886) and so forth.

When the British came to India and expanded their rule, they came into clash with the tribes also. The British interfered in many of their customs which was resented by the tribes. But more than anything, the oppressive and exploitative landlords, middlemen, money-lenders, forest officials and princely chiefs contributed much to tribals rise in a revolt. They were eventually subdued, disarmed and or many a times appeased.

The tribes who were in close proximity to Hindus and who were influenced by the Hindu customs and traditions had their own preoccupations, their movements were directed to raising their social mobility. Their movements have been compared to the status mobility movements among the lower castes. The tribes like *Bhumij, Kond, Juang* and number of other tribes were influenced by caste associations of Hindus. In Madhva Pradesh, for instance, there were movements among the Gonds claiming Kshatriya status. The sought to purify and cleanse their social and religious institutions in tune with the practice of high caste Hindus.

After Independence the Scheduled tribes, whether Hinduised or Christianised, were granted certain economic, educational, political and administrative privileges. This made them aware of themselves as unified groups who could hold on their own against all sorts of oppressions. They also could claim higher status because of education, economic benefits, political power etc. There are intances of movements among tribes seeking their ties not only with fellow tribes but also with the other oppressed sections of people.

As we can see, coming together for collective actions among tribes has found range of variations, But when we examine a social movement in all its aspects, we find that a tribal movement does not fit neatly into a type. A movement tends to serve several interests at the same time, apparently political movement has social, economic and cultural even if its such objectives are not formulated. For instance, the Jharkhand Movement was a political movement fighting for a homeland – a federal state. But it has an ideological base like a cultural reawakening, attempts to common religion, habits, traditions, etc. which supply the infrastructures for the political grouping of tribals in South Bihar.

For the purpose of study, the tribal movements have often been classified into 3 types on the basis of their orientation. These are : (1) Movements for political autonomy, the Jharkhand Movement is a good example of this (2) the agrarian and forest based movements, the naxalite movements others involving tribes of Bihar, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh are fighting for their customary rights of land and forest. It can be are the results of oppression, discrimination, neglect and backwardness of the tribal people. (3) The third kind is socio-cultural movement.

While it is true that tribals are fighting to have their access to the fruits of development, there is also a growing realisation among them to preserve their cultures, customs, traditions etc. Thus there are revivalistic, nativistic and millenarial trends of movements among the tribes in India. This brings us to the questions as whether the tribals should be assimilated into the mainstream or whether they should be protected? And in what way they will benefit from the development taking place in the country? Let us see what various scholars have to say on this.

22.8 APPROACHES TO THE TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT

Under the British rule the policy of maintaining the status quo was followed. Hutton and others condemned too much of isolation as also of complete assimilation of tribals. V. Elwin wanted a revivalist policy to be adopted. His scheme of "National parks" pleaded for the complete non-interference of the British rule and its withdrawal from the tribal areas. In reaction to these conservative or revivalist views, G.S. Ghurye, a senior sociologist, made a case for the complete assimilation of tribals with the rest of the people in India. He said that it was misleading to call the tribes aborigines as they were actually only backward Hindus and the solution of all their problems cultural as well as economic and social, lay in their complete assimilation into the Hindu society. In fact, the tribal folks have distinct cultures and their complete assimilation with Hindus may not be possible without disruption to their culture, customs, traditions etc. Tribal culture has many happy and useful facets and the same must be preserved.

D.N. Majumdar opines that the best policy for tribes would be for their controlled (planned) and limited assimilation. By limited assimilation he implied; the need and desirability of preserving their useful institutions, customs, practices etc. though these are to be tribal in origin and character. The transcultural borrowing should be encouraged. For example, instead of forcing child marriage upon the tribal folk Hindus should adopt the tribal

practice of marrying late. It would not only improve average health but also put a check on the alarming rise in India's population.

A plan for tribal development must be holistic. It should tackle all cultural, social, economic and political, problems of the tribals. Priorities must be fixed in terms of quick results. At the outset, the tribal support for planning has to be enlisted by demonstrating to them that an attempt is being made-to change their life for the better and not at destroying whatever they have. The first focal point on which to concentrate is to their health any hygiene besides their economic life. No plans for change can succeed without their proper education. Instructions should be imparted in such knowledge as helps a person to be a better number of his / her own community much as possible the traditional system of imparting instruction should be retained. It is a human problem of immense magnitude for the solution of which administrators, social workers and social scientists must pool their resources together.

The informal approach towards development was laid down by Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India. In his foreword to the second edition of 'A Philosophy of NEFA' by Dr. Verrier Elwin, Nehru wrote on 9th October, 1958:

"We cannot allow matters to drift in the tribal areas or just not take interest in them. In the world of today that is not possible or desirable. At the same time, we should avoid over-administering these areas and, in particular, sending too many outsiders into tribal territory. It is between these two extreme positions that we have to function. There has to be such developments as communication, medical facilities, education and better agriculture."

Nehru added that these avenues of development should be pursued within the broad framework of the following five fundamental principles:

1) People should develop along the lines of their own genius and we should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and cultures.

2) Tribal rights in land and forests should be respected.

3) We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development. Some technical personnel from outside will, no doubt, be needed, especially in the beginning. But we should avoid introducing too many outsiders into tribal territory.

4) We should not over-administer these areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes. We should rather work through, and not in rivalry to their own social and cultural institutions.

5) We should judge results not by statistics or the amount of money spent but by the quality of human character that is evolved.

These five principles have since come to be known as Tribal Panchsheel.

It is often, stated that the objective of tribal development is to enable the tribals to join the mainstream of national life. The word mainstream, however, is a nebulous expression. Similarly, the other commonly used expression of 'integration' is open to different interpretations. What is desirable on the part of non-tribals is not to make any conscious or deliberate efforts to assimilate

or even acculturate the tribals. Let the non tribals acquire some of the good and healthy traits of the tribals cultures as relations is not possible in a system based on exploitation. The processes of socio-economic transformation have got to be duly regulated.

The tribal society has largely been egalitarian and democratic. The triabal elite today have the only model of larger national life comprising socially and economically structured society where there are the poor and the rich. In the tribal areas we still have an opportunity of strengthening an egalitarian society. Development in the tribal areas should be so guided that deprivation processes do not set in. B.D. Sharma, the former Commissioner for the SC/ST has observed that the entire question of tribal development boils down to two basic issues : (i) whether the traditional command of the community over resources can be preserved, and (ii) whether the egalitarian structure of the tribal communities can be retained and their social milieu can be taken advantage of to initiate a process so that their socio-economic transformation can be negotiated without deprivation. This process cannot be superimposed but has to be stimulated by the tribal commuinity itself which has a tradition of self-governance.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Enumerate in few lines the problems faced by tribals in the area of education.

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2) Match the following :

	A	B
1)	*Jaintia*	Himachal Pradesh
2)	*Koya*	Andhra Pradesh
3)	*Tharus*	Meghalaya
4)	*Swanglas*	Uttar Pradesh

3) List out some of the main provisions provided in the constitution for the upliftment of tribes.

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22.9 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have tried to define the term tribe and have enumerated some of their characteristic so as to understand who really constitute the tribe. We have also talked about the term Scheduled Tribe and how it came to be. To have a better understanding of the problems of tribes, we have thought it necessary to discuss their demographic profile and describe their economic pattern. Besides, we have analysed the land and forest, the important components of the tribal economy. We have mentioned the problems that the tribal face in regard to their relationship to land and forest. In the section on land and agrarian and forest situations we have attempted to look at the roots of alienation, backwardness and exploitation of the tribals in India.

Besides analysing some problems relating to tribal education, we have mentioned about their repeated upheavals, revolts, struggles and movements which are expressions of their discontent, oppression and exploitation from all levels. As much as the tribals are fighting for their economic and political rights for their participation in the developmental process, they are also fighting for their cultural and social rights. We have seen the rise of many revivalist movements too. In spite of all these, the question that still remains is 'what kind of development is best suitable for the tribals'.

22.10 KEY WORDS

Aborigines	:	The original inhabitants of a country or of a region or a place.
Assimilation	:	In the sociological context, it means the ethnic process of being similar or the process of being absorbed into the system. For instance, we can say that the Parsis, who came from Iran centuries ago, have got assimilated into the Indian culture though they still maintain their distinctiveness in some of the customes, traditions, dress, etc.
Gleaning	:	An agricultural practice specially among the tribes where they pick up the grain with patient labout after the reaping.

22.11 FURTHER READINGS

Majumdar, D.N. and Madan, N., 1956. *An Introduction to Social Anthropology.* Asian Publishing House: Bombay.

Majumdar, D.N. 1958. *Races and Cultures of India.* Asian Publishing House: Bombay.

K.S. Singh, 1972. *The Tribal Situation in India,* Mohanlal Banarasi Dass: Simla.

22.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Some of the important Dravidian Tribes are *Goud, Oran, Malas, Kaudh, Saora, Parja, Koya, Kolam Paniyan, Irula, Mauses* and *Malaryan*.

2) The ancestry of the present tribal population is traced chiefly to the following three reaces: (1) Negrito–the tribes of Andaman belong to this racial stock (2) the Proto–Austrloid-the tribes of middle and southern zone are assigned. to this tribe (3) the Mongoloid–the tribes of the North and North-Eastern Zones generally belong to this race.

3) The *Mundas, Santhals, Ho, Kharia, Kol* are some of the tribes from that central tribal zone.

Check Your Progress 2

1) The tribal way of life–social, cultural and physical is interwoven with the forest. A majority of tribes depend on the forest for their livelihood, not only because of geographical configuration but because of unproductive agriculture. This depends on forest has a made forest an important face their life, they regard forest as their mother. Lately this relationship of theirs with forest has got disturbed because of governmental restrictions on the use of forest resources.

2) Some of the tribes whose primary occupation is craft are : *Gujjars* and *Bakarmals* of Jammu and Kashmir, *Gaddis, Gujjars* and *Kinnaurs* of Himachal Pradesh, *Holras, Karmalis, Chik Baraiks* and *Mahlis* of Bihar *Kolams* and *Vitolias* of Maharashtra, *Irulas* of Tamil Nadu and *Thotis* Andhra Pradesh.

3) Hill cultivation goes under a variety of names: *Jhum* in North-East, *Kurmas* or *Kallu* in Santhal Paraganas, *Bewara* in Ranchi and *Palamau* in Bihar, *Odu, Rama* and *Dahi* in Orissa *Dippa, Marhan* or *Ekka* in Madhya Pradesh.

4) Tribes whose main occupation is cattle rearing and whose economy is dependent on these are called the pastoralist. Some of the pastoral tribes are : *Todas* of Nilgiri Hills, *Gujjars* and *Bakarmals* of Jammu and Kashmir and *Gaddis* and *Gujjars* of Himachal Pradesh. *Kisans* of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, *Maldhari* and *Raisi Potra* of Gujarat and *Rabaris* of Gujarat and Rajasthan, *Bhotias* of North-East.

Check Your Progress 3

1) In the field of education tribals are lagging far behind when compared to non-tribals. One of the main reasons for this state of affairs is economic and social backwardness of the tribal people. A large majority of the tribal people are living below the poverty level. To them education is a luxury. Lack of access to schools is another problem for there are verv few schools in the remote tribal areas. The life-style, customs and traditions of the tribal do not really encourage a culture for pursuit of education. The medium of instruction is another major problem in the promotion of education among the tribes. Very often they are taught in a language which

they are not familiar with.

2) Match the following

	A	B
1)	*Jaintia*	Meghalaya
2)	*Koya*	Andhra Pradesh
3)	*Tharus*	Uttar Pradesh
4)	*Swanglas*	Himachal Pradesh

3) To protect the Scheduled Tribes from exploitation and injustice, the Constitution has made provisions to safeguard their interests.

Article 46 of the-Directive Principles of State Policy enjoins upon the State "to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of SC/ST and protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation."

Accordingly, under Article 15(4) provisions are made for their educational advancement by reserving seats in educational institution, granting scholarships, etc. Article 16(4) provides for their -reservation in services.' Under Article 330 and 332 seats are reserved for SC and ST in Lok Sabha and State Vidhan Sabhas. Under Article 330 and 332 seats are reserved for SC and ST in Lok Sabha and State Vidhan Sabhas. Under Article 339(l) the President may at any time appoint a Commission to report on the administration of the scheduled areas and welfare of the scheduled tribes in the states.

UNIT 23 MINORITIES

Structure

23.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit deals with the problem of minorities in India and also minorities in contemporary societies the world over. The study of this unit should enable you to:

- understand the conceptual and the theoretical explanations of minority;

- analyse the rights of minorities and the need for that; and

- discuss the problem of minorities in the contemporary Indian society.

23.1 INTRODUCTION

We have discussed in the previous unit, the problem of Scheduled Tribe which is a problem essentially of the disparities and deprivations. The problem of minorities is also similar to that of many tribal groups. The minorities, because, of their relatively less numerical strength feel that their rights are persistently ignored. This unit discusses how minorities have emerged and the problems they face and also their rights. We will also talk about the social composition and rights of minorities and the constitutional provisions for them in India.

23.2 THE PROBLEM OF MINORITIES IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

The problem of minority or minorities came to the fore-front after the World War-I when a number of new-states were carved out of the wreckage of the

Central European Empires and quite a few majority communities found themselves turned overnight into minorities in these states. For example, the Germans were reduced to a minority in Poland and the Austrians in Czechoslovakia. Lest the peace of the world be disturbed on account of ill-treatment of minorities treaties called the Project Guarantee Treaties had been entered into to instill a sense of loyalty among the new States under which they were placed and to enjoin upon the new governments to own the citizens of the erstwhile enemy countries as their new nationals and citizens.

23.2.1 The Dimensions of the Problem

In the past one hundred years or so the minority problems have occupied a very important place in the politics of countries the world over. Many issues have, however, remained unsolved. Even today minority problems in different forms appear very frequently in the West. Thus, race riots occur in England and the USA. Chechnya has been problem for Russia. In erstwhile Yugoslavia the Serbs and the Croats have fought wars of secession.

The position of the developing societies or the Third World is the same. Ethnic and communal riots are chronic part of their politics. The Indian case is one of the saddest ones. India has a record of over hundred years of minority problem. The major problem has been of the Muslims which split the country in 1947. Communal riots have become a recurring phenomenon in the present day Indian society.

23.2.1 Who are the Minorities?

In a very general sense, we can say that when a group of people is divided on any issue or approach or characteristics the difference usually produces a bigger sub-group and a smaller sub-group. The smaller sub-group is called minority whereas the bigger sub-group is called the majority. It is also possible that the two groups could be of equal strength or the smaller group may have control over power and other resources. So, it is not always the numerical strength or non-strength, which is the deciding factor for a group to be called a minority.

It is now widely felt that population size is not the only feature of minority status. If a group is discriminated against on the basis of religion, race or culture it can be considered a minority group. The sub-commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities set up under the Human Rights Commission which drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, has defined minorities as only those non-dominant groups in a population which possess or wish to preserve stable, ethnic, religious or linguistic traditions or characteristics markedly different from those of the most of the population.

In the International Encyclopaedia of the Social Science, Arnold Rose has defined minority without any quantitative connotations. He defines it as 'a group of people differentiated from others in the same society by race, nationality, religion or language, who think of themselves as differentiated group and are thought of by others as a differentiated group with negative connotations. Further, they are relatively lacking in power and hence are subjected to certain exclusions, discrimination and other differential treatments.'

In any country religious groups may now be divided into linguistic groups and vice-versa. This phenomenon is known as cross-cutting cleavage. Accordingly, a person may be a member of a religious minority and yet of a linguistic majority

or vice-versa. How such a person would behave depends on his or her interest from issue to issue.

Jagnath Pathy (1988) has also listed out the defining properties of minority group. In his opinion, the minorities are:

● subordinate in someway to the majority,

● distinguishable from the majority on the basis of physical or cultural features,

● collectively being regarded and treated as different and inferior on the basis of these features, and

● excluded from the full participation in the life of the society.

He further says, discrimination, prejudice and exclusion by the dominant group and self segregation by the subordinate or minority constitute the basis for minority identification (Pathy, 1988 : 28).

The wish to preserve distinctive features of one's social and cultural life is an essential feature of a minority community. As a consequence there are always groups which are different from other group in terms of language, religion etc. The dominant group tries to assimilate the minority groups. The non-conformist very often, are likely to be persecuted. This attitude of the majority group generates a greater consciousness among the members of the minority community for preserving their separate identity.

The wish to have separate identity often gives rise to political demands. The demands are for either special treatment, recognition of the need for preserving minority identity or in extreme cases for autonomy or secession from the area.

With these general properties a group can be identified as being a minority group. There are, however, operational problems of applying such specifications with minority, because a great deal depends on the situation existing in a particular society at a particular time. Social groups can only be properly identified in terms of their relationship to other groups. The nature of such relationship is determined largely by the system of control over economic and political resources prevailing in that society and the historical development of those relationships. The numerical strength is, thus, not an objective criterion to distinguish one group from the other. The concept of minority is, therefore, dynamic depending on the relation of domination and discrimination.

A minority group very often organises into a coherent group drawing on the shared values culture, language or religion. For example, the Muslims in India are a minority group on the basis of their religion in comparison to the majority of Hindus. But they constitute a majority in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Similarly, Christians are a majority in Nagaland,. Meghalaya, Mizoram and so on. Besides having an identity on the basis of religion, a group may also identify itself on the ethnic basis. Thus, a Muslim may identify not only on the religious basis but also on the ethnic basis. He or she could consider himself or herself a Bengali or a Malayalee. A great deal depends on the politics of the situation. Thus, many minority groups are all ethnic groups for they group around shared values and culture.

The Constitution of India uses the term minority but does not defines it any where. The Supreme Court and various High Courts have so far depended on

the statistical criterion. Any community that does not constitute more than 50% in the state is thus called a minority. Furthermore, the Indian Constitution recognises two types of minorities based on language and/or religion. Thus in India about 82% people are by religious designation Hindu. The Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists and Parsis and other from smaller group of minorities.

The Constitution does not recognize minorities based on culture, race or nationality.

Percentage of Population of Major Religions, 1991

State /UT	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Sikhs	Buddhists	Jains	Others	Religion not stated
INDIA	82.00	12.12	2.34	1.94	0.76	0.40	0.39	0.05
States								
1. Andhra Pradesh	89.14	8.91	1.83	0.03	0.03	0.04	-	0.02
2. Arunachal Pradesh	37.04	1.38	10.29	0.14	12.88	0.01	36.22	2.04
3. Assam	67.13	28.43	3.32	0.07	0.29	0.09	0.62	0.05
4. Bihar	82.42	14.81	0.98	0.09	-	0.03	1.67	-
5. Goa	64.68	5.25	29.86	0.09	0.02	0.04	0.04	0.02
6. Gujarat	89.48	8.73	0.44	0.08	0.03	1.19	0.03	0.02
7. Haryana	89.21	4.64	0.10	5.81	0.01	0.21	-	0.02
8. Himachal Pradesh	95.90	1.72	0.09	1.01	1.24	0.02	-	0.02
9. Karnataka	85.45	11.64	1.91	0.02	0.16	0.73	0.01	0.08
10. Kerala	57.28	23.33	19.32	0.01	-	0.01	0.01	0.04
11. Madhya Pradesh	92.80	4.96	0.65	0.24	0.33	0.74	0.09	0.19
12. Maharashtra	81.12	9.67	1.12	0.21	6.39	1.22	0.13	0.14
13. Manipur	57.67	7.27	34.11	0.07	0.04	0.07	0.77	-
14. Meghalaya	14.67	3.46	64.58	0.15	0.16	0.02	16.82	0.14
15. Mizoram	5.05	0.66	85.73	0.04	7.83	-	0.27	0.42
16. Nagaland	10.12	1.71	87.47	0.06	0.05	0.10	0.48	0.01
17. Orissa	94.67	1.83	2.10	0.05	0.03	0.02	1.26	0.04
18. Punjab	34.46	1.18	1.11	62.95	0.12	0.10	0.01	0.07
19. Rajasthan	89.08	8.01	0.11	1.48	0.01	1.28	-	0.03
20. Sikkim	68.37	0.95	3.30	0.09	27.15	0.01	0.09	0.04
21. Tamil Nadu	88.67	5.47	5.69	0.01	-	0.12	0.01	0.03
22. Tripura	86.50	7.13	1.68	0.03	4.65	0.01	-	-
23. Uttar Pradesh	81.74	17.33	0.14	0.48	0.16	0.13	0.01	0.01
24. West Bengal	74.72	23.61	0.56	0.08	0.30	0.05	0.67	0.01

(**Souce:** Census Data Online, 1991)

23.3 APPROACHES TO THE MINORITY PROBLEM

We can see that the problem of minorities has assumed importance all over the world. We have already mentioned that a minority issue is not just related to its numerical representation in a society. It is related to its oppression. Besides, it is to be perceived on the basis of language, culture, religion, etc. in relation to that of a dominant group which is, very often, a majority group in a society.

A whole lot of theories have been advanced about the nature, causes and implications of the problems of minorities. Many scholars have tried to understand the problems of minorities in various ways. Some consider, that ethnic identity among minority groups is natural and primordial. The scholars

who stress the cultural differences say that primordialism and linguistic differences among minority groups tend to generate conflict rather than cooperation among them. Other scholars consider the utilitarian bent of minority groups and state that it is representing a power struggle. They feel that cultural factors are incidental to this process. These scholars feel that the minority identity should be seen in the context of development where each group tries to forge an identity in its Struggle for scarce resources.

Various Approaches have been adopted towards a solution of the minority while some suggested assimilation, others suggested protection and for some the way out was to get rid of the minority community itself, by persecution, deportation etc.

23.3.1 Assimilation

The issue of minority and majority has been going on for centuries. Earlier the problem was seen as one of the conflict: of religions and ethnic groups. These days the problem is essentially related to national minorities. The concept of nation assumes that political boundaries must coincide with the characteristic of people living within it. A nation state prefers if possible a homogenous religion, language, ethnic identity etc. In the words of Clude "The rise of the problem of minorities was a logical consequence of the ascendancy of nationalism. It is injected into politics ... the principle that the state should be nationally homogeneous and a nation should be politically united." (Clude, 1955. p. 81). This gave rise to unrestricted control over given territory, uniformity of laws, languages, customs etc., irrespective of differences. Homogeneity is never a reality thus there are constant efforts by the majority to assimilate the minority. The minorities are made to abandon their ethnic, religious cultural and linguistic characteristics which differentiate them from the dominant group. For instance in the erstwhile Soviet Union, this kind of homogeneity was imposed with the interntent of making the national state secure and its institutions stable. The welfare and security of the state were primary consideration. As a result the minority considerations were sidelined. It was not long before the various majority ethnic groups realised this kind of subjugation and fought for their rights.

The assimilation of heterogenous groups through coercion is not so bluntly adopted, states now prefer adopting other indirect methods. Discrimination is one such method.

23.3.2 Discrimination and Annihilation

While the minority groups are allowed to preserve their distinct characteristics they are also subjected to a great deal of discrimination. The discrimination may be in the form fewer government funds for minority educational institutions etc. Very often they are discriminated in their social life. They are subjected to ridicule and segregation which further compels them to stay away from the majority. That is why we find that minority groups stay together in ghettos away from the majority.

This discrimination in fact leads to assimilation among some ambitious members of the minority community. These people in order to advance themselves seek to rid themselves of their disabilities by deliberately surrendering their typical features. These disabilities may, many times, be

sufficient to induce assimilation, also certain encouragement is given to induce this change.

In case assimilation is found to be impossible, some states resort to the very direct method of annihilation. The members of minority group ire eliminated by expulsion or by massacre. Genocide of the Jews by the Germans is a best example of this.

23.3.3 Tolerance and Equality

The policy of tolerance and fair treatment is adopted by many states when dealing with minority community. A great deal of leeway is given for the preservation and persuance of the minority social and cultural life. Though the state may have in mind the assimilation of various minority groups as the final goal. It will nevertheless adopt a tolerant attitude towards minority groups as long as the minority communities do not cause any destabilizing effect on the nation state.

We find this policy of tolerance and fair treatment guiding the provisions in our Indian Constitution. The Constitution establishes no state religion, guarantees equal opportunity to all irrespective of caste, creed and religion. The Constitution was not in favour of forced assimilation to preserve the rich harmony in Indian culture within the framework of national unity. The Constitution forbids discrimination against minorities. Thus, we find that Constitution envisages fair treatment for all.

However the question that has been asked many times is how are the minority groups faring under the Constitution? It is true that there is equality on the paper, but is it really practiced?

It is a contention of the many minority groups, also studies have revealed, that these groups suffer a great deal of discrimination in social life. They are often discriminated in all walks of life, in securing a job, in getting funds for educational institutions, in their social interaction and so on, inspite of the constitutional guarantees. In any case a great deal seems to depend on the bargaining power a particular disadvantaged group has. Some are at disadvantage in their effort to bring to state's notice that certain of their sociocultural rights need protection. For example, the tribals of central India-Santhals, have been unable to get state recognition for their tribal language, inspite of the fact that there are large number of people speaking the language.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Name some of the major minority conflicts which have troubled and are troubling the world politics.

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2) What are the various approaches adopted to understand and resolve the problem of minorities?

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23.4 MINORITIES AND THE POLITICO-LINGUISTIC VARIATIONS

Geographically, a minority may either be spread all over the country or concentrated in some regions. If a minority community is spread, it can carry out only some agitations for its rights. When it is geographically concentrated, it often resorts to movements for autonomy or even for secession. For example, the contemporary Jharkhand movement was a movement for regional autonomy while the Phizoite Naga movement is for secession. Further, if minorities are not found numerically spread in many areas but are influential in a few localities, they may field or sponsor their own candidates in elections and may form even their.own political party. If they are weak, they support the candidates belonging to other communities in the elections. They support, however, those parties and candidates who, they think, are most likely to protect their interests. When,minorities consistently support other individuals or political parties in the elections, they are said to constitute 'vote banks'.

In India as elsewhere linguistic groups are regionalised. Most of North Indians speak Hindi in different dialects., In South India the different Dravidian languages, namely Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam, are spoken. Further, in Western India Marathi and Gujarati are major languages and Punjabi is spoken in Punjab. In Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh there are some smaller linguistic groups. In Eastern India Assamese, Bengali and Oriya are major languages. In the fringe areas and in between the major language groups of India there are small but distinct language groups. We cannot, therefore, call any Indian language group as the majority population. Hindi is spoken by the largest number about 30% of people. However, if we take the linguistic regions within India, we frequently find minority language groups. Amost all the Indian states have been reorganised to bring about some linguistic homogeneity of the regions. Yet a few minority languages exist in a state. For example, Konkani is found in South Western India where Marathi is the main language or the various tribal languages are spoken in Central and in the Northeast India.

Because of the peculiar political history, the Hindu-Muslim relation has emerged as the gravest political problem in modern India. During the British rule the economic condition of the Muslims deteriorated. The Muslims avoided English education and fell behind the Hindus in the competition for services and other avenues. A section of the Muslim elite advised the Muslims to accept English education and government services and to move away from the Indian National Congress which, they thought, was dominated by Hindus. The British followed their famous "divide and rule" policy and granted separate electorate for the Muslims as mentioned in the earlier sections of this unit. Separate electorate was later extended to the other minorities too. On the other hand, the insistence of the All-India -Muslim League upon the two nation theory led to the partition of India and large scale migrations from and to the country. Mostly the wealthier section of the Muslims went over to Pakistan and a substantial number of Muslims continued to live in India.

As already noted, the Indian Constitution did away with the concept of political minority. That is to say, under the Indian Constitution the minorities (except the Anglo-Indians) have no separate political rights apart from those which they enjoy as ordinary citizens of India. Every member of a minority-group enjoys rights only as a citizen of India. He/she is protected from all kinds of discrimination on the basis of race, religion, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them. Every citizen has equality before the law and the equal protection of law. They also enjoy equality of opportunity in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.

There is, however, the provision of the affirmative action of the State aimed at ameliorating the condition of the weaker sections of the people. Thus, legislative seats are reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Special protection of land and wealth is provided through the restriction on their movement-from the places where they normally live. Government services and other facilities are reserved for members of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes.

Yet, there is another set of rights which relate to the minorities. These belong to the domain of freedom. Specifically they are the freedom of speech and expression, to form associations or unions, to assemble peacefully and without arms, at a place or places, to move, reside and settle in any part of the territory of India. Minorities are also provided to acquire, hold and dispose of property and to practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business. There is, of course the right to life and liberty besides the freedom of religion. However, the State can regulate or restrict any economic, political or other secular activities which may be associated with religious practice. The State may make any law providing for social welfare and reform of Hindu religious institution. The Sikhs have the right to wear and carry *Kirpans* (swords) but like the Jains and the Buddhists, they are regarded as Hindus, with reference to reform of Hindu religious institutions.

The second kind of rights of the minorities are group rights. Any section of citizens living in any part of India and having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve that. No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or aided by the State on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language, or any of them.

Activity

Based on your observations and experiences, write a few lines on how you perceive the minority problems.

23.5   MINORITY RIGHTS IN MODERN INDIA

We have said that after World War I, a number of minority treaties were adopted for the new States. In India also before the transfer of power, the British thought of binding the successor regime to some special provisions regarding the minorities. But such treaties and provisions could not be effectively imposed upon sovereign States in Europe nor the special provision for Muslims could be successfully carried out in independent India.

The minorities, might, however, seek to ensure their group rights within the States of the sovereign constitutional systems. For example, the first representative system was introduced at the local government level in British India in 1872-83. Right at that time some Muslim leaders of Bengal and Punjab demanded separate electorate in which they wanted to elect their leaders themselves and not with the help of votes of other communities. They got, their rights with the support of some British officials though the Indian nationalists strongly opposed the political separation of the minorities. The separate electorate was introduced, more or less in the same way, in the provincial and central legislatures, when they were created by the Indian Councils Act of 1909. Thus under the Government of India Act, 1935 altogether 18 separate constituencies were created through the provisions of the separate electorate and reservation for minorities.

The modern sovereign States in the world do not favour the separate electorate system formalities. But there are two other constitutional devices. These are collegial executive and proportional reservation. The independent India not only abolished the system of separate electorate but also removed the concept of political minorities. Instead, it has granted special cultural and educational rights to the minorities over and above the rights to equality and freedom that they enjoy as individuals. The cultural and educational rights enable the minorities to run their own educational and cultural institutions or foundations, We have mentioned in Section 23.3 of this unit the various provisions laid in the Indian Constitution to safeguard interests of the minorities, the state has no authority to undertake social reform which tamper with the cultural and educational rights of the minority communities.

The question may arise here as to why a minority community should specialty be given a group right when the majority community has no such right. The answer is that a majority community by virtue of its number can guard its interest. But a minority community needs protection from the dominance of the majority community. The minority treaty or the system, of separate electorate or minority rights are but some legal-constitutional provisions for protection of minority. Both these two systems have operated in Switzerland successfully under the proportional representation system, multi-members constituencies are created and the voters are given as many preferences as there are seats. Those candidates who get the prescribed quota of votes are elected. The quota is fixed on the basis of dividing the number of votes by the number of seats. This enables the minority communities to send their representatives to legislatures in strength proportionate to their number in the total electorates of the country. Similarly, the collegial executive is elected by a legislature through proportional representation. This enables the communities to be represented in the executive in strength proportionate to their number in the legislature.

23.5.1 Equality for Minorities

Minority problem can politically be conceived in two broad forms: 1) in a democratic set-up, wherein all members of a given society or country have political freedom, and 2) in a colonial set-up where a minority is either the ruling class or being ruled in the social condition of slavery.

Thus in a democratic set up a minority community may compete as well as collaborate with the majority. The basic desire of the minority in such a situation

is for political, social and economic equality. Political equality takes the form of equal rights. Social equality takes the form of equal status. Economic equality takes the form of equal opportunity and prosperity. The liberal democratic constitution can furnish the principles of equality before law and equal protection of law besides equal opportunity in the affairs managed by the government. But they cannot guarantee equal prosperity or even social status to all which largely depends upon economic prosperity. Objectively, in a country like India, containing several minority groups, the economic status may vary from group to group. Thus, the Parsees and the Sikhs in India are as affluent as some of the majority community of the Hindus. The Muslims are less affluent. But the condition of the tribal groups is generally much worse. Such conditions may easily promote disaffection particularly in a situation with the increased communication facilities and frequent interaction among the different groups.

Contrary to this, in a colonial situation the ruling class, which is often in minority is mostly privileged, the example may be given of the British in India fifty years ago or of the white community in South Africa in recent. When the ruling class is in a majority like whites in North America the condition of the minority is like that of the American Indians which is miserable.

All religious and linguistic minorities have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. The State, while granting aid to educational institutions, shall not discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority whether based on religion or language.

23.5.2   Controversies over Minority Rights

Some of the minority rights have become subjects of controversy. Regarding social reform among the Hindus, two kinds of grievances have been expressed. First, a section of the Sikhs resent being regarded as Hindu for 'this purpose. Actually, they are opposed to the reforms like the Hindu Marriage Act and the Hindu Succession Act which grant equal right to women and forbid bigamy of males. A section of the Hindus, on the other hand, demand that minorities like the Muslims and the Christians be brought under the scope of such reforms and all sections of the citizens be governed by a common civil code. But many Muslim leaders are opposed to it on the plea that the Muslim Personal Law is a part of the Muslim religion. However, by insisting in retaining the Muslim Personal Law they are also stopping progress of the Muslim women. The government of India regards it a sensitive issue and prefers to wait until the Muslim public opinion is sufficiently aroused in favour of bringing some change in it.

On the question of minority educational institutions too, there is some controversy. Many such institutions allege governmental discrimination against them. On the other hand, there are allegations of corruption and oppression of teachers in such institutions by their authorities. Moreover, many such institutions insist on religious or traditional education and thus oppose the modern scientific education. This keeps the minority youth deprived of modern education and thus lagging behind others.

For historical reasons, the Hindu-Muslim relationship has emerged as the central minority problem in India. We have mentioned earlier that the British fostered conflict and brought it ahead by partitioning the country. That was preceded

and followed by communal riots which had taken hundred of thousands of the lives of either community. Poverty and unemployment of the people have intensified conflicts among communities. Over and above all this, communal politics has become a part of the electoral strategy of most of the political parties in India. There is increasing intolerance of the rights of minorities in the country. While society needs to be tolerant of minorities, the State should be absolutely impartial about the different communities. Therefore, the principle of secularism has been enshrined in our Constitution according to which the State should keep away from the religious affairs and controversies of any community. Instead, it should strictly maintain law and order. This alone may maintain unity of the people and the unity of nations.

Check Your Progress 2

1) List out some of the minority group of our country.

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2) What are the provisions for minority rights enshrined in the constitution?

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3) What are the defining properties of minority group?

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23.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have discussed the problems of minorities. We find that it is a problem which is affecting practically every country. Though the problem is seen essentially in terms of numerical representation. We find that it goes beyond that, the problem arises because of subjugation, exploitation and discrimination by a stronger group towards the weaker group.

The status of minority group is defined not only by certain characteristic features but by the dynamics of politics which are prevalent from time to time. In a

democratic set up if a group is heard louder than others and if it can mobilise itself it often achieves some rights that it demands.

The unit discusses the various approaches adopted to tackle the problem of minority. We can see that no single approach is used at one time, often it is a combination of assimilation, discrimination and a policy of tolerance that is being followed.

We also talked about the minority rights, the controversies regarding this and the prevailing situation of minority problem in India.

23.7 KEYWORDS

Consensus	:	Agreement in opinion of all people concerned.
Differentiated	:	To cause difference or to change what was similar between things or people.
Dominant	:	A dominant group is one which exercises control over other groups.
Discrimination	:	To treat one with difference and prejudice.
Genocide	:	A deliberate extermination of group or a race. The extermination of Jews by the Germans during Hitler's regime is a good example of genocide.
Segregation	:	To keep apart, to isolate a group from others.
Utilitarian	:	Concerned with looking at the usefulness of a thing.

23.8 FURTHER READINGS

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Furnivall, J.S. 1953, *Colonial Policy and Practice,* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge

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Shakir, Moin. 1980, *Politics of Minorities,* Ajanta: Delhi

23.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) The recent conflicts in Yugaslavia between the Serbs the Croations assumed a major significance for the world politics. We heard about the race riots in America where there was backlash from the American blacks. The ethnic struggles by various minority groups in the erstwhile Soviet Union has resulted in a change in the configuration of the state itself.

2) Some of the major approaches which are often adopted as a solution to minority conflicts is assimilation, discrimination, annihilation and attempts to a fair treatment.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Some of the major minority group in India are Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Parsees, etc.

2) There are only two specific Articles (29 and 30) in the Constitution that explicitly guarantee the protection of the interest of minorities in India.

3) In the first instance the minority group is distinguishable from the majority on the basis of physical or cultural features. They are exclude from full participation in the life of the society, and are subordinate in someway to the majority. Discrimination, prejudice and exclusion dominant group constitute the basis for a minority group identification.

UNIT 24 ETHNICITY

Structure

24.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you should. be able to:

- understand what the term ethnicity means;

- explain various perspectives on ethnicity;

- analyse the major reasons for the emergence of an ethnic movement; and

- relate it to various factors which come into play.

24.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you read about the problems of minorities. In this unit, we will get to know about ethnicity, a phenomenon which has become a thorny issue. This unit will start with the definition of ethnicity and outline some of the perspectives on ethnicity. We will also be explaining the importance of identity for a group which provides an ethnic movement the impetus and a motive. Towards the end of the unit we will explain to you how ethnicity is greatly shaped by disparities and deprivations; a modern problem of development initiatives.

24.2 ETHNICITY: THE PROBLEM, DEFINITION AND IDENTITY

You must have heard the word ethnicity or ethnic problems. The word ethnicity comes from the root word ethnic which loosely means race. An ethnic community does not strictly have a racial connotation. A community can be distinct from others in many ways: their racial stock or origin being one of them. A community may distinguish itself from others by way of a particular or distinctive culture, language, religion or a combination of all these. Because of this distinctive aspect the ethnic communities often come in conflict with other communities with whom they come in contact.

In this section we will understand this problem of ethnicity by first understanding what ethnicity means and the nature of identity of ethnic communities.

24.2.1 The Problem of Ethnicity

Ethnic activity and separation came in a big way in the post colonial, newly emerging nations like Malaysia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nigeria etc. This was easly and crudely explained away as tribalism, backwardness etc. But ethnic activity affected even the developed West; the problem of Welsh and the Scots, Wallon-Flemish conflict in Belgium, the Basques in Spain, to name only a few. Even the seemingly egalitarian conflict-free melting pot America has been shattered by black ethnic activity. The erstwhile Socialist block, now, and for a long time, has been cauldron of ethnic crisis, with Crotian, Serbians, Bosnians, Slovak, Czech etc. in a conflict. In fact, ethnicity has now become a worldwide phenomenon.

The problem of ethnicity and national building has been widely discussed over the past few decades. The phenomenon of ethnicity has become all intrinsic component of the socio-political realities of multi-ethnic or plural cultural societies, specially in a country like India.

In India, with its variety of pluralities, in terms of language, race, religion and so on ethnic conflict has become a part of the political scenario. In most countries, including ours, the processes of development and change have generated conditions for ethnic conflict, as the fruits of these development processes have come to be distributed unevenly. Also the nature and character of the 1ower structure and rule of the political leadership have their role to play.

24.2.2 Definition of Ethnicity

The definition of concept in any field of social science is usually difficult. And a term such as ethnicity is loaded with meanings, values and prejudices and therefore, is even more difficult to define.

Ethnicity pertains to the word ethnic which is a distinction of mankind based on race. Ethnicity has now lost the original connotation. "It is now employed in a broader sense to signify self-consciousness of a group of people united, or closely related, by shared experience such as language, religious belief, common heritage, etc. While race usually denotes the attributes of a group, ethnic identity typifies creative response of a group who consider themselves marginalised in

society" (Barun De and Sunanjan Das, 1992: 69). Barth and Benedict Anderson feel that boundary is an important criterion for self defintion by ethnic group, to separate themselves from 'others'.

Let us see how the identity of a group is defined *vis-a-vis* another Community and how this identity becomes psychologically and socially important for a member or members of the community.

24.2.3 Ethnic Identity : A Psycho-sociological Reality

William G. Sumner observed that people have their own group as the center of their lives, and rate all other groups with reference to their own. He called this tendency of individuals to cling to their clan ethnocentricism. It is a generalised prejudice.

Why do human beings slip so easily into ethnic prejudice? Human beings have a natural tendency to form generalisations, concepts and categories. Their categories are close to their first-hand experiences. They also categorise basing on hearsay, fantasy and emotions. This process of social categorisation leads to the formation of an "in-group" and "out-group". All groups develop a way of living with characteristic codes and beliefs. Therefore, the formation of ethnic attitude is functionally related to becoming a group member. According to the social categorisation theories given by H. Tajfel (1981) as well as J.C. Turner (1982), every social group attempts to achieve an identity in contradiction to the "out-group" Identity can be broadly characterise as the process by which an individual is bound to his/her social group and by which he/she realises his/her social self. In the context of the Indian political identity, such a formulation has several implications. The emotional fervour associated with linguistic issues can perhaps be viewed in the context of this definition of social identity structure of the different language groups in the country.

The normative character of ethnic prejudices involve far more than the fact that attitudes are shared by members of a majority or minority group. Each member is expected to hold such attitudes and various kinds of pressures are brought on those who fail to conform to it. A sense of identity is a very natural human tendency but when an ethnic identity is consolidated and used as a reference point for mobilisation to share in the power structure, the mobilisation becomes far more effective.

While ethnic attributes are categorisation for the purpose of classification which is a static formulation, ethnicity is a dynamic process, whereby a group of people or community regroups itself as an adaptive strategy in response to specific demands of the situations.

Various scholars have looked at this phenomenon in various ways. We will have a quick look at some of the approaches to the study of ethnicity in our next section.

Check Your Progress 1

1) What are the various basis on which a community considers itself as distinct and different from others?

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2)   Write in few lines what you understand by the concept of identity.

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24.3   ETHNICITY: THE VARIOUS PERSPECTIVES OF ANALYSIS

Ethnicity has given new forms and meanings with changing process such a imperialism and modernity. Consequently ethnicity has become an important field of study for social scientist. There are varieties of assumptions regarding ethnicity.

There are some scholars who see the ethnic problem in terms of assimilation and integration; wherein an ethnic group is absorbed into the mainstream group or a dominant ethnic group : an assimilation of this kind in effect is homogenisation to create a nation state. To diffuse tension and to protect the dominated group it is also suggested to co-opt the marginalised group.

There are social scientists who see ethnicity as a natural bond between people, immutable or primordial (Geertz 1963:109). Thus the formation of political identity is seen by them as stemming from this primordial loyalty.

There are still others who essentially see no difference between class interest and ethnic interest. They argue that ethnicity is another alternative avenue for mobility (Berge 1976). Loyalty which goes in the way of mobilisation.

In this section and sub-section which will follow, we have given few ideas on ethnicity by some scholars who have worked in this area. Though there are conflicting and differing opinions on ethnicity some common points can be gathered from these various understanding.

24.3.1   Perspectives on Ethnicity

The conception that ethnicity is culturally pre-determined with its primordial loyalties and sentiments is largely discounted among social scientists. By and large scholars agree that an ethnic group is essential a social group when it is mobilised for collective action in pursuit of the interest of the group.

Writing on the politics of ethnicity in India and Pakistan, Hamza Alavi feels that the boundaries of ethnic categories are not 'objectively' pre-given, for whenever there is change of interest or situation, realignment has occurred as is evident from experiences. A so called objective criterion like, religion can be abandoned in favour of another like region or language. Alavi further states that the ethnic community, therefore, is not simply a politically mobilised

condition of a pre-existing set of people, described as an ethnic category. The ethnic categorisation itself is dependent in some way in the very emergence of, the community. Experience shows that both ethnic category and ethnic community are simultaneously constituted in a single movement.

Writing about ethnicity and nation-building in Sri Lanka, Urmila Phadnis says that ethnic identity is a significant but not a sufficient requisite for evoking ethnicity. It is the mobilisation and manipulation of group identity and interest by the leadership that leads to ethnicity. Ethnicity is used as an ideology and also as a device to wrest greater concessions and shares in the power structure. Dipankar Gupta also argues that the manifestation of ethnicity in Indian politics is not so much an outcome of popular grass-root passions as it ts a creation of vested political interests. He applies the notion of 'conspiracy' to ethnic politics in India to draw attention to the deliberate and calculated manner in which such politics is fashioned. He justifies his approach by asking the question as to, why from a variety of ethnic identities that abound in one society only certain ethnic dyads are politically activated and that too very selectively at certain points of time?

K.S. Singh and Sandra Wallman (1988) feel that ethnicity is being increasingly used to denote people with a distinctive set of bio-cultural and bio-social characteristics. Ethnic differences is recognition of contrast between us and them. In their opinion. ethnicity is an excellent tool for identification of the aspirations of a community for delineating its boundary, and for preserving its identity. These are some perspectives or approaches to study ethnicity.

24.3.2   Some Characteristics of Ethnicity

Following are some of the characteristics of ethnicity.

1)   Ethnicity relates to ascriptive identities like caste, language religion, region etc.

2)   Inequality in terms of sharing power between two ethnic groups results into conflict. The ethnicity is socially mobilised and territorially confined. It has numerically sufficient population, and is a pool of symbols depicting distinctiveness. It has a reference group in relation to which/whom a sense of relative deprivation (real or imagined) is aggregated

3)   Being left out of the developmental process or even being a victim of uneven development, ethnicity causes ethnic movements.

4)   Ethnicity is manifested in Indian politics not merely due to grassroot discontent but is also a creation of vested political interest.

5)   Ethnic groups that use ethnicity to make demands in the political arena for alteration in their status, in their economic well-being, etc. are engaged very often in a form of interest group politics.

Before we try to understand the role of ethnicity in Indian politics, it is important to stress that whatever the difference between ethnic groups, the focus of their interaction finally boils down to the centrality of politics of who gets what, when and how? As already stated the focus of interests of an ethnic group, is to get some benefits for itself. The group often uses ethnic criterion like religion, language or caste to mobilise itself to give identity to itself which separates it from other group or groups. Thus, delineation of boundary of an ethnic group

of community is an important aspect of ethnicity markers. But exactly which one will get projected at a specific point of time would usually depend on where or how the person draws the boundary. Since delineation of the nature of boundary rests on the conditions existing at a given moment, the whole exercise becomes a response to the specific conditions. This adds fluidity to the situation and makes the identity projection a dynamic phenomenon. The nature of identity shifts along with changing circumstances and calls for change in boundary or a change in identification. The seeming singularity of identity, by and large, conveys a notion only. In reality, plurality of identities appears much more widespread than it ordinarily appears to be.

24.3.3 Latent and Manifest Identities

With plurality of identities, it is important to appreciate that all the identities of individuals or groups cannot be noticeable at a time. In fact, among various identities only one becomes manifest or apparent at a given point of time and the rest of the identities remain subsurface or latent. It may be repeated here that exactly which type of identity becomes manifest at a specific hour would depend on the nature of the immediate boundary delineation. It is, thus, through the interplay of latent and manifest identities that ethnicity expresses itself in a dynamic process. In general, whether an individual would identify himself/ herself as a Hindu Rajput or a Bihari would depend, by and large on the existing conditions and felt needs of a given moment. A person ordinarily exercises his/her in order to work out what response it would be most appropriate at the given situation and acts accordingly. Thus, he/she contributes to the overall dynamics of the process.

Activity

Do you feel a sense of identity with the community you belong? If so, write in few lines the reasons why you have this feeling of identity?

24.4 PLURALITIES AND LARGER IDENTITY

India as we know has cultural economic and social heterogeneity. The complex ethnic plurality of our nation is a known fact. The ethnic groups vary in sise, culture, consciousness of group identity etc. and very often clear boundaries can be demarcated between group. The system on the whole is highly segmented and heterogeneous.

In such a system what are the ways in which these groups have incorporated into a nation state?

In the sections to follow we will discuss this constant dynamics; the quest for a larger identity at one level and pursuance of ethnic identities at the other level.

24.4.1 Quest for a Larger Identity

There is a general notion that narrow loyalties are expression of retrogradation or prejudice. This originates from the concern for broader identity and lack of appreciation of the fact that plurality of identity is a reality. In fact, emergence of ethnicity all around primarily on cultural counts has put the boundary of any nation-state under severe stress. Implicitly assuming the political boundary as something very sacred, the quest for larger identity is usually emphasised.

No doubt, this serves some immediate political purpose,(s). But at the same time, this emphasis on a large identity like nation ignores the reality of plural identities and their possible interplay and thus reverts back to the nation where religion, language etc. become static categories of ethnic attributes. At this stage, will be beneficial to understand how nationality or a nation has originate India. This we hope will clear, some confusions regarding the conflicting relationship between ethnicity and nationality.

24.4.2 The Emergence of India as a Nation

Geographically, Indian Sub-continent has facilitated the existence of numerous groups belonging to various racial stocks, speaking different languages and having different patterns of culture. Centuries of living together has not removed these differences. At the same time, the different groups moved in a unison in the political, economic and social spheres. The different groups were united by a common historical destiny which created a psychological unity. Though diverse practices were allowed, Hinduism retained a pan-Indian quality. Language too played its role in uniting the diverse elements: Sanskrit in ancient India provided the bridge between various pluralities, while Urdu, English and Hindi sought to do the same in later times. Thus, there existed a pan-Indian culture as well as various diverse, regional, local and ethnic culture what we may call as great and little traditions respectively.

Politically and administratively, India came under one umbrella under the centralised rule of Ashoka's Kalinga empire. Later the strong centralised monarchy under the Moghals created a pan-Indian sentiment. At the same time, several political powers, small identities had emerged in India. These were like the kingdoms of Marathas in Maharashtra, Sikhs in the most of Punjab in the North-West and in Bengal in the East. These territorial identities were not always well defined.

By the time of the British took over the reign of India, the change was enormous. With the British came the printing press, new system of education, new means and modes of communication and transportation and ideas of secular state, fraternity and liberty. Years of discontent with the British rule and its policies resulted in the first indigenous revolt in 1857. "The failure of the movement of 1857 to drive British out of India led to rethinking amongst educated Indians about alternative ways and means of getting rid of foreign domination. They commented that new education, science and technology had to be accepted in order to forge a new Indian national identity. If Indians could strive as a single entity. The task wold be easily and quickly accomplished. Thus, in the second half of the 19th century, organisations with the prefix 'Indian' began to appear" (Gopal, 1992: 42). The growth of national feeling was facilitated by infrastructural facilities and conditions such as printing press, new means of communication and transportation, etc. as mentioned above. This growing consciousness was implicit in the growth of such pan-Indian organisation like British Indian Association and later the Indian National Congress in 1885. Indian nationalism reached a maturity and became the uppermost concern, though there were occasions when ethnicity and plural identities were in conflict with nationalism. The latter, very often, appeared as integral part of Indian nationalism. Although secular ideas of nationalism were on the rise the question of regional identities were not dead and buried, rather, they were just relegated to the background. Thus, we not only had pan-Indian organisations like Indian

National Congress, there were organisations at the regional level like the Justice Party with its undertones of ethnic chauvinism in the Madras Presidency. However, "Secular nationalism, in the face of foreign rule kept ethnic and caste identities under control. It did not subdue them, but made compromises" (Ibid).

Once the freedom was won all the subduced forces surfaced again in the independent democratic India. Political power came to be the key to economic prosperity and enhanced social status. Henceforth, conscious attempts have been made by vested interests to whip up ethnic identity and invariably all political parties have made compromises with ethnic demand. Thus, we can see that the articulation of ethnicity or ethnic movements has closely been related to the power structure, the democratic process and initiation of socio-economic development.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Write in few lines the opinions of K.S. Singh and Sandra Wallman on ethnicity.

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2) Who coined the word ethnicity?

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3) What are the principal arguments given by the tribals for their demand of a separate state of Jharkhand?

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24.5 DEPRIVATION, DISPARITY AND THE STATE'S RESPONSE

A careful observation will reveal that ethnic movements are generally the expressions of deprivation and disparities in sharing of privileges. The Jharkhand Movement, for example, was a movement essentially to fight the exploitation of tribes by non-tribes not only in terms of natural resources but in terms of subjugation of their culture.

24.5.1 Regional and Ethnic Identities

What can be gathered from the above is that state is essentially accommodative of some of the ethnic demands. This has diffused the ethnic tension and conflicts in the country. And in some sense this enhanced the mobility and bargaining power of the ethnic group.

The post-Independent India has seen a lot of changes. We have made some new strides in development activity. Amidst this, there have emerged new classes and groups which have asserted for their separate identity and have enabled them to claim a larger share in the fruits of development. They have also realised that in a federal political structure like ours, which has a strong central state. the best way of carving out more power is to capture power at the state level.

Soon after Independence the most powerful manifestation of ethnicity in India was the demand for creation of state or province on linguistic basis. The State Reorganisation Committee was formed in 1956 and boundaries of the states were redrawn on the linguistic basis. This forming of linguistic states was a manifestation of ethnic identity. This process reinforced the regional and linguistic identity and ethnicity. Thus, the demand for separate state on various accounts like ethnicity, language, etc. soon became a part of the political scenario. Various political parties were formed at the state level which were, by and large, identified with ethnic elements.

24.5.2 Jharkhand Movement as an Example

The tribal belt of Central India comprising the portion of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa has seen the rise of the Jharkhand Movement, which agitated for the formation of a separate state for tribals and which they succeed in achieving. The Jharkhand Movement is a good example of politics of ethnicity. The movement drew its sustenance mainly from the growing discontent among tribals on account of their land alienation, exploitation and political neglect of their problems at the national level.

The Jagirdari system in the 18th century turned tribals into more tenets. And they were exploited shamelessly by non-tribals. In the wake of this there were a series of tribal uprisings between 1789-1900 A.D.

The Christian Missionaries entered the area of the middle of the 19th century. They made available for the tribals the facilities of education and helped, increase employment opportunities and economic improvement for them. A few educated tribal Christians organised Chhota Nagpur Unnati Samaj (CNUS) in 1928 for the tribal upliftment.

The turning point came when a separate province of Orissa was carved out of Bihar in 1936. The Chhota Nagpur Unnati Samaj and its new incarnation was Adibasi Sabha in 1938, emerged as the dominant political party under the leadership of Jaipal Singh, a British educated tribal of the area and this party demanded, for the first time, a separate tribal province.

The principal arguments given for the demand of separate state were: the physical characteristic of the area is such as there is a large concentration of the tribals. Their mental make-up, language culture and values are totally different from those of non-tribals. Also, the tribals felt that the welfare and

developmental works both provided and carried out for them are pittances in comparison to the mineral wealth and forest resources exploited from the region. The tribals had a strong fear of losing their identity as they were in minority surrounded by the non-tribals.

The tribals were marginalised at all levels. This had generated tremendous frustration among them. This harsh reality had provided the ground for effective propaganda which had facilitated the growth of an internal solidarity and out-group antagonism. There was an antipathy among them towards the non-tribals or Dikus. Interestingly, the definition of Dikus has changed with changing context. Originally Dikus were Zamindars and their non-tribal employees. Later non-tribals of upper castes background were identified as such. At present, the people from North Bihar are branded as Dikus.

24.5.3 The Indian State's Response

The Indian constitution, has recognised the ethnic diversities and ensured that these diversities may not be obliterated. At the same time, the constitution has also felt that ethnicity should not stand in the way of political, social, economic and cultural progress of people in the country. Provisions such as universal adult franchise granted to the people irrespective of their caste, race, language etc. granted to the people secular participation in various social and economic activities. The state has also turned to be reformist and has intervened to promote the lot of weaker sections and minorities.

Let us have look at some of the government policies to have an idea of the nature of ethnic demands and the State's response. "The most important of such demands came from religion and linguistic groups the resultant fear of dismemberment of the nation, appears to have made such demands totally unacceptable to the government. Whereas, demand for linguistic reorganisation of the State have been considered despite initial reluctance. Further, a policy of accommodation is clearly visible on the official, language issue. Brass (1978) lists down four rules which regulate the attitude of government towards ethnic demands. They are: (1) All demands short of secession will be allowed full expression, but sessionist demand will be supressed, if necessary, by armed forces (2) Regional demands based on language and culture will be accommodated but those demands based on religious differences will not be accepted. (3) An ethnic demand will be accepted only when it achieves broad popular support in the region and (4) the views of other groups involved in the dispute is essential for problem solving" (Nair, K.S., 1985: 106).

24.6 LET US SUM UP

One often hears a great deal about ethnicity and ethnic movement without really knowing what these mean. In our unit on ethnicity we have attempted to bring across to you the meaning of ethnicity. We have also mentioned about various perspectives on ethnicity and we hope that you would realise that ethnicity can be looked from various angles. The problem of ethnicity cannot be seen only as an identity problem but a problem of deprivation and lop-sided development. By presenting the case of the Jharkhand movement, we have drawn attention to the underlying basic problem of deprivation and exploitation covered in any ethnic movement.

It can be said in the end that ethnic movements are basically movements demanding for a larger share of the fruits of development and for this they adopt various strategies of mobilisation. The ethnic identity having a strong emotive appeal mobilises people into strong cohesive groups which then go on to make their demands felt whether real or imaginary.

24.7 KEY WORDS

Boundary	:	A line that marks a limit in terms of identity. A boundary separates one group from the other by pointing to the distinctive aspects of each group.
Ethnocentricism	:	It is a word coined by W.G. Sumner and used in his book 'Folkways'. It is a technical term for the view of things in which one's own group is the centre of everything and all other groups are scaled and rated generally inferior to it.
In-group	:	A social group of people having the same interests and attitudes.
Out-group	:	A social group of people other than those of in-group and their interests and attitudes are also different from those of the former.
Latent	:	Concealed and not visible, lying undeveloped but capable of developing.
Manifest	:	That which is clearly seen.
Mobilisation	:	In this context, it would mean to mobilise people into active participation in an ethnic movement.
Primordial	:	Existing from the beginning. That is why it is said to, be very basic. For example, identity to one's group by way of language, ethnic stock etc. is primordial because it seems to have always existed.

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24.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) An ethnic community may consider itself distinct and different from other on the basis of a shared culture, language, race, religion or combination of all these.

2) William G. Sumner observes that people have their own group as the centre of times and rate all other groups with reference to their own. Identity is this process where an individual is bound to his/her social group by which he/she realised his/her social self.

Cbeck Your Progress 2

1) K.S. Singh and Sandra Wallman feel that the word ethnicity is being used to denote people with distinctive set of bio-cultural and bio-social characteristics which draws a line between us and them. They are of the view that ethnicity is an excellent tool for identification of the aspirations of a community for delineating its boundaries and presenting its identity.

2) The term 'ethnicity' was first used by W.G. Sumner in his book *'Folkways' (1906)'*.

3) Some of the principal arguments given by the tribals for the demand of a separate state-of Jharkhand were that the tribals are different from non-tribal in terms of language, culture, values, physical and mental makeup. They feared that they will lose their identity of being minorities. They also argued that the welfare and developmental measures provided by the government are pittances as compared to the mineral wealth and forest resources extracted from the tribal dominated areas.

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UNIT 25   LAND: ACCESS, CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT

Structure

25.0   OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you should be able to:

- Describe physiographic features of land in India;

- Discuss the land use pattern and ecological problems related to grazing lands, wastelands and croplands;

- Outline the nature of access to land and legal measures for land reforms;

- Explain the rise of agricultural labourers;

- Relate land use to urban development in India; and

- Analyse the form of people's participation in control and management of land in the rural land urban areas.

25.1 INTRODUCTION

This is the first unit of Block 7 on **Ecology and Resources.** As has been explained to you in the Block Introduction, we need to act well in time to stop depletion of such resources as land, water and forests. This is to maintain the ecological balance on which rests the survival of life on the earth. Unit 25 is devoted to a discussion of land as a basic resource. Land is a significant factor in any society and in India it is in a special way tied to people's imagination and livelihood. In this unit we have shown the difference between availability of land and its access to people. Similarly, we have also discussed the problems related to control and management of a resource. As Indian people are still dependent on an agricultural economy, relatively more attention is paid to rural land use.

The first section of the unit describes physiographic features of land in India. It is followed by a long discussion of ecological problems related to utilisation of grazing lands, wastelands and croplands. This discussion provides a context to analyse access to land, its control and management by the people. Agricultural reforms, meant to improve people's access to land has in fact resulted in creation of a class of agricultural labourers (Section 25.5). The next section of the unit draws our attention to issues related to land and growth of the urban sector in India. Finally, we have discussed people's participation in the control and management of land in rural and urban areas.

25.2 PHYSIOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF LAND IN INDIA

The landmass comprising the Indian subcontinent is a large peninsula, which covers an area of 328 million hectares (mha). It is the world's seventh largest country and supports a population of 1002 million (2001 figure). Its physiographic features (see Chaturvedi 1985: 13-19) are as follows:

i)   In the north, India is bordered by the Himalayan mountains which stretch 250 kilometres in length and 200 to 400 kilometres in width. It has a coastline 5,700 kilometres long. India, a large peninsula with high mountain on the north, presents an unparalled hydrologic-climatic environment.

ii)   The great Indo-Gangetic Plains stretch at the feet of the north Himalayan mountains. These plains are built up from rivers flowing from the Himalayas. The alluvium, or the sedimentary matter deposited in the valleys of large rivers, was laid down in many geological phases. The plains are thousands of metres deep and form one fourth of the total land area of India. They have an area of 652,000 square kilometers.

iii) The Central Highlands comprise a block of mountains, hill and plateaux. The area is intersected by valleys which are covered with forests (now disappearing at a fast speed). The Centre Highlands cover one-sixth of the total land area of India.

iv)   The triangle shaped peninsular plateau covers a little more than one-third of the total land area of India. Its elevation ranges from 300 to 900 metres and extensive plains cover its surface. The area is fairly well drained by several rivers which flow from west to east.

25.3 LAND UTILISATION AND RELATED ECOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

The land mass, described above in terms of its physical features, can be broadly divided into four categories from the point of view of land use. These parts are:

i)   grazing lands,

ii) wastelands,

iii) croplands, and

iv) forests.

Of these, the forest lands are the subject of Unit 27. This is the reason why we will talk in this unit only about grazing lands, wastelands, and croplands. Our focus in this unit is on the human and environmental problems arising out of the present state of India's land, its access, control and management. Most of the information about the three types of land given in this unit, is based on *The State of India's Environment 1984-85,* the Second Citizens' Report (1985) and Report of the National Commission on Agriculture, 1976 (volume XV). We now begin with the present state of the grazing lands.

25.3.1 Grazing Lands and Problems Dependent on Animal Husbandry

Of all the components of India's land, especially the grazing lands face the greatest danger of losing their identity. Large portions of former grazing lands have not come under regular farming. You may ask 'Where are grazing lands in India?'

The best grazing lands in India exist in areas which report an unusual rainfall of more than 1,200 mm and a dry season of just about four months. Grazing lands or vegetation formation of typical grasslands are found in the temperate climate zone of the Himalayas. The remaining grass lands of India are the steppes and savannas.

At altitudes of about 1000 metres, grazing lands take the shape of savannas. A savanna is an extensive open grassy plain or meadow with scattered shrubs and trees. Savannas with trees and all tall grasses shelter large wild animals (cattle). The steppes are extensive level plans without trees. They are found in areas of sandy and saline soils in western Rajasthan. Here, the grass layer is quite thin and woody plants are few and far between. The forage or fodder in the steppes is available only during the brief wet season.

Forage in the savannas (extensive open grassy plains or meadows with scattered shrub and trees) of central and eastern parts of Rajasthan is mainly available from grasses which grow during the wet season. Some fodder or forage in the dry months is also obtained from the regrowth of grasses, in the dry months. As a result of overgrazing, the savannas reach a stage of degradation which makes them look like steppes. For example, in the Deccan the largest savanna comprises shrubs, but the soil has now become almost bare on the slopes of hills.

The ecosystems of both savannas and steppes are generated under pressure from human populations. In India only in inaccessible and remote hill areas

we do find a naturally formed savanna or a steppe. Mostly due the extensive use by animals and/or human beings various forest ecosystems degenerate and take the shape of savannas. The savannas in turn degrade into pseudo-steppes.

Activity 1

On a map of India, indicate first the areas where you find the presence of savannas and steppes in their natural form. Then show the degraded forests which have now become savannas and also show the degraded savannas which have become pseudo-steppes.

Much of India's grazing land is now under agriculture. Only about 13 million hectares are officially classified as permanent grazing lands. If you look at India's animal population (see Table 25.01), you can easily make out that this large mass of livestock population would need fodder in really huge quantities. The available 13 million hectares of grazing lands are simply not enough. As a result, the animals search or look around for fodder. They eat whatever they can find on fallow and uncultivated lands. They also scrounge in tropical forest lands and uncultivable wastelands. It is claimed (see CSE 1985: 3) that 'almost all accessible vegetation in more than half of the total land area of the country is grazed by livestock'. Only one district in Mizoram and a few in Gujarat, Haryana, Maharashtra and Punjab have enough green fodder. In the rest of India, most animals feed on crop residues and forage on follow lands, unused *panchayat* lands, riverbanks, roadsides, wastelands and forests. Surviving on this kind of access to food, nine out of ten animals in the country still go hungry.

Table 25.01: Livestock Population in India (in millions)

	1951	1961	1972	1977	1982	1991	2001
Cattle	155.24	175.56	178.87	180.00	192.50	203.50	219.64
Buffaloes	43.40	51.20	57.94	91.96	69.80	82.70	94.13
Sheep	38.96	40.22	39.99	40.91	48.80	49.70	58.20
Goats	447.00	60.08	67.52	75.62	95.30	114.20	17.50

Source: Data from 1951 to 1961 from the National Commission on Agriculture and the rest from the Twelfth All-India Livestock Census. In this unit, the table is, with due acknowledgement, taken from Agrawal 1985: 3); for 1991, 2001 FAO cf. www.cifti.com

Degradation of land owing to overgrazing generates desert-like conditions. This causes a chain reaction because of lack of grazing lands reduces animal productivity, which in turn proves to be economically disastrous for human beings who practice animal husbandry. This is the process through which pastoral nomadic groups are forced to become landless labourers. The culprit is 'overgrazing' which is caused by the fact of too many animals and too little grass.

As the grazing lands have decreased in area, the planners, policy makers and implementers in the government have taken little action to save the quality and extent of even the existing grazing lands. Many irrigation schemes launched into croplands without paying attention to the rehabilitation of graziers. Lastly, we can also say that extreme pressure on grazing lands was built up because of

no organised and sustained programme of producing and managing fodder in India.

Check Your Progress 1

i) How much of India's land is covered by the great Indo-Gangetic Plains?

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ii) Identify the name of the one-sixth of India's total land area, comprising a block of mountains, hills and plateaux. It is intersected by valleys which are covered by forests.

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iii) From the point of view of land use, in how many parts can you divide the land mass of India?

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iv) What is the difference between a steppe and a savanna?

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25.3.2 Wastelands and their Effect on Rural Population

An area of uncultivated or devastated land is generally called wasteland. It is the land affected by salinity, alkalinity and wind and water erosion. An estimated area of one third of India's land is covered by wastelands. It measures well over 100 million hectares. This estimate does not include data relating to degradation of forest lands into wastelands.

i) **Salinity and Alkalinity:** Nearly 7.17 million hectares of wastelands are affected by salinity and alkalinity. This kind of land is generally referred to as barren and unculturable waste.

PROTECTION OF TREES BY AN
ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP

ii) **Wind Erosion:** The total area eroded by wind comes to 12.93 million hectares. Because of lack of properly worked out data, this figure does not include the estimated one to two million hectares of coastal land, affected by sand dunes. Shifting sand dunes, coastal sand dunes and extreme moisture stress cause wearing away of land by wind. Eleven western districts of Rajasthan and three districts of Gujarat and Haryana are affected by wind erosion.

iii) **Water Erosion:** Land is also eroded by water in the form of sheet erosion, ravines, waterlogging, revering lands, gully erosion and shifting cultivation. Such erosion of land totals to about 73.6 million hectares. Of the above forms of erosion of land by water, ravine and gully erosions are most spectacular along the river Chambal in Madhya Pradesh, Yamuna in Uttar Pradesh, Sabarmati in Gujrat and their tributaries. A few words about ravines.

Ravines also affect the adjoining productive flat lands. Because of ravine formations more than ten per cent of villages in the districts of Chambal valley have been depopulated. People in such villages have gradually moved to unaffected villages which were already overcrowded. You may be curious to know how ravine and gully erosion take place. See box 25.01 for interesting details of ravine and gully formation.

Box 25.01

Ravines are formed when it rains on soil which is not protected by a cover of sustained growth of vegetation. The rain creates muddy water and particles of soil flow down along the moving body of water. This movement of sheets of water is called 'sheet erosion'. Instead of being absorbed into the soil, rain water concentrates and makes small brooks or streams. These brooks develop into gullies. When small gullies grow bigger they turn into ravines. Ravines are deep gorges which have many gullies running paralled to each other and carrying a heavy load of soil particles. They flow much lower than the nearby table lands and enter a nearby river depositing alluvial soil into it. This kind of fall of water into a river cause the river to cut deep channels along the banks. This process again forms more ravines.

It appears that India loses nearly 8,000 hectares of land to ravines annually. Ravines cause erosion and affect the stability of table lands. Besides this loss

of soil by erosion, ravines of the Chambal valley are notorious as hideouts of dacoit gangs. The production potential of the area lost to ravines in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan is estimated to be the extent of Rs. 157 crore per year. By failing to retain and develop the area lost to ravines, the potential of growing 3 million tones of foodgrain and other products like fruit, timber, fodder is lost each year. Experts advise that a process of reclamation should be started on a war footing.

iv) **Mining:** Besides the above processes, the mining too turns arable lands into wastelands. Apart from land, mining affects also water, forests and air. Here we will talk about how it affects land. The total land used for mining in India is a few million hectares. In addition, every mining enterprise needs lands for roads, railways, ropeways, townships for housing miners and executives administrative offices, stockyards and for initial processing operations. This results in wastage of land many times larger than the simple lease are allotted for mining.

In the initial stages of surface mining, vegetation and topsoil are removed and after the mining operations are completed the mined area is abandoned. As a result, over time land under mining becomes infertile. Additionally, also land surrounding mines becomes barren because mini debris is disposed off in this area. Often rain water washes out this waste material into the nearby fields and streams. On drying the residue becomes hard and makes the fields difficult to cultivate.

v) **Underground Mining:** Crater-like depressions are formed in the land by underground mining. After as much ore as possible is extracted the mine is abandoned, the land sinks and becomes unsafe for living, farming and grazing. Such land is officially treated as derelict land. It is unfit for productive purposes.

vi) **Mining of Minerals:** In the arid lands of Rajasthan, mining of minerals depriving the land of its biological potential. This leads to the creation of desert like conditions. Removal of vegetation and topsoil increases the arid land's susceptibility to erosion and starts the process of desertification. For some examples of this kind of erosion of land see Box 25.02.

Box 25.02

Soil salinity due to mining in the districts of Jodhpur, Udaipur, and Barmer has reduced the fertility of land in these areas. Uncontrolled quarrying for limestone in the Doon Valley has reduced the area's tree cover to 12 per cent. As a result, grazing lands are lost and the number of cattle in the area has dropped.

Check Your Progress 2

i)   Name the areas in India, affected by wind erosion.

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ii) Identify the various losses suffered by the people due to erosion caused by ravines. Use four lines for your answer.

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iii) How do the mining operations create wasterlands? Use four lines for your answer.

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25.3.3 Croplands, the Main Source of Sustenance for the People

India's land utilisation pattern is characterised by a continous increase in the net sown area. This has been at the expense of grazing and forest lands. For example, large areas of land in the Ganga Valley, previously covered by forests till the Moghul Period, have been brought under cultivation of crops to meet the food need of the region's fast growing population. The net sown area cover nearly half of the country's total area. In 1960-61, the net sown area was 133.1 million hectares. It increased to 141.6 million hectares in 1972-73. In 1998-99 it has increased to 192.6 million hectares (CMIE 2004).

You will be surprised to note two processes happening in opposite directions. I have already mentioned that land use in India is characterised by a continuous increase in the net sown area. This mainly caused by reclaiming barren and uncultivable lands.

The persistent need for growing more food will lead to either an increased cropped area or to an intensity of cropping. As there is little scope for further expansion of the net sown area, food production is increased by growing more than one crop per year. This is exactly what we find if we look at land utilisation figures for 1986-87. The total cropped area is 177 million hectares. This achieved by sowing an area of 37 million hectares more than once. This how the total cropped area registered an increased of 12 per cent on the existing 46 per cent.

i) **Population Supporting Capacity of Land in India**

You may ask what is India physically capable of producing? Or, what is population supporting capacity of land in India? This is not an easy question to answer because there are numerous ecological variables to consider while trying to put a figure to the number of human or other living beings, a piece of land can support. Agrawal (1985: 157-162) has discussed in details in a study, *Potential Population Supporting Capacity of Lands in the Developing World,* published by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). This study is the result of research of a decade. According to this study, in 1975 'India had 119 million more people than its land could support' (Agrawal 1985: 158). The

study shows that with appropriate management of the agricultural land's potential capacity to support population can increase three and half times its present level in India.

But you will be surprised to find that in actual term, India is at present experiencing the 'familiar phenomenon of diminishing returns to inputs in agriculture' (Shah quoted in Agrawal 1985: 160). This means that inputs in agriculture are higher than outputs. Between 1970-80, inputs increased at the rate of 4.2 per cent per annum. Expectations were that the outputs in agriculture would also increase in the same proportion. The real output increased by only 2.3 per cent annum. Let us look at the way agricultural production increases. It is usually achieved by increase in (i) the area under cultivation and (ii) yield per hectare using advanced technology.

As half of India's geographical area in already under cultivation, we do not have much scope for increasing it further. Agricultural production has not indicated any major increase. In fact, the current rate of growth in agricultural production is just about equal to the rate of growth in population. In other words, per capita agricultural production is stagnant.

Table 25.3: Extent of Desertification in Some of the Countries in Asia

Country	Total surface Area (in mha)	DEGRADATION (in mha)	DEGRADATION %	Total Population (in millions)	Population Density (No./Sq. km) (in ha)	Cultivated Area per Capita
China	932	260	27	1150	123	0.08
India	328	173.6	-	1012	324	0.18
Kazakhstan	271.1		60	16.9	6.2	2.13
Mongolia	156		41	2.3	1.5	0.16
Turkmenistan	48.8		66.5	4.2	8.6	0.35
Uzbekistan	44.7		59.2	21.7	48.5	0.21
Pakistan	79.6		52	131.6	165	0.16
Syria	18.5		75	14.3	77.3	0.42
Jordan	8.9		96	4.2	48	0.1
Islamic Republic of Iran	163.6		43	67.2	41	0.27

Source: UNCCD, 1998: The Social and Economic Impact of Desrtification in Several Asian Countries

Table: 25.4: Decline in Arable Land in the World, in Asia and in India

Per capita area of arable land	1950-55	1981	1992	2000	2025	Source of Inf.
World	0.32	n.a.	0.25	n.a.	n.a.	M/o Agriculture, GOI
Asia	0.48	n.a.	n.a.	0.25	n.a.	CCD Report, Beijing 1997
India	0.9	0.5	n.a.	0.15	0.08	M/o Agriculture, GOI, 1997

Source: Status of Drylands and Deforestation in the world.

ii) **Indifference of Ecological Base of Agriculture in India**

According to Agrawal (1985:160), agricultural technology of India does not

take 'into account the ecological base of the country's agriculture'. What we need is a thorough understanding of ecological resources and constraints. For example, the FAO study argues that there is a close link between rates of soil loss and loss of productivity. This study considers soil conservation an integral part of agricultural management. As India has large tracts of arid and semi-arid lands and lands under higher slopes, it is not surprising that it has a serious problem of soil loss. If soil loss is not checked, it causes fast decrease in rainfed croplands. As a result, production of rainfed crops falls. This is exactly what we face in India.

It is well known that around seventy per cent of farmers in India practice dry-farming and only one-third are engaged in irrigation farming. Dry farming requires conservation of both soil and water. Very little of budgetary allocation is devoted to dry-farming. More than seventy per cent of India's expenditure relating to agricultural development goes to irrigation-based farming. The low level of inputs in dry-farming results in taking no measures for soil conservation. This has implications for loss in productivity and also for the choice of crops. At low level of inputs where the rate of soil loss is 51 to 100 per cent, farmers engaged in dry-farming grow a mixture of crops regardless of the total calorie-protein production. Only at the intermediate level of inputs (where the rate of soil loss is only 50 per cent), one can expect grow crops with high calories. At the high level of inputs (where the rate of soil loss is negligible) a minimum protein requirement is always present in the optimal cropping mixture.

iii) **Problem of Soil Erosion**

It is apparent that India has enough natural resources in terms of climatic suitability for agriculture. Eighty-five per cent of India's land has both rainfall and temperature conditions adequate for growing crops. A number of restraints to this ecological resource exist and they provide the level of productivity on a sustainable basis.

Most important factor in agriculture, as mentioned above, is degradation of land in India. This occurs from soil erosion. In other words soil conservation can stimulate agricultural production. So far we have discussed the natural aspects of land resources. Now we turn to the complexities of social organisation and land reform in India.

Access to land, its control and management in India cannot be fully understood without a birdseye view of land policies and land reforms. Much has already been documented on the topics in socio-economic histories of India. You will come across many reference to these works in the following section. If interested in knowing the details you should consult the references. As our focus in this block is on ecology and resources, we have discussed the resources of land mainly from the point of view of ecological balance which ensures sustainable development. Agrawal (1985: 162) writes, "If India's people were to go hungry, it can be said with authority that it would not have anything to do with their number but with the callous mismanagement of the country's natural resources."

Check Your Progress 3

i) What is the phenomenon of diminishing returns to inputs in agriculture?

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ii) What are the ways to increase agricultural production in a country like
India?

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25.4 ACCESS TO LAND AND ITS CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT BY THE PEOPLE

The majority of the people in India live in its rural and the majority of its working population is engaged in agriculture-based economics activities. You can fairly conclude that agriculture plays a significant role in India's economy and in its people's social life. Agriculture in basically dependent on three factors of production namely, land labour and capital. A discussion of three factors in terms of agrarian reforms in India can give us a good idea of people's access to and how they control and manage it. In the context of this unit, by the term 'access' we mean capacity or ability to obtain or make use of a particular resource.

We have already talked about the land use pattern, and the productivity of each. We will now look at the landholding pattern.

25.4.1 Inequitable Access to Landholding by the People

Since ancient times, cultivation has been the main occupation of the people in India. This is why access to land has been a matter of foremost importance for the people and for cultivators in particular. Unit 10 of our elective course, **Society in India (ESO-02)**, gives, in its sections 10.3, 10.4, 10.5, a sketch of rural economy during the various phases of Indian history. I will not repeat the contents of these pages and would advise you to refer to them and form an idea of the importance of land for the people of India.

i) **High Degree of Concentration of Land with Upper Levels of Society**

According to the Report of the National Sample Survey in 1954, in India households owning land up to 5 acres or 2.02 hectares constituted 74.21 per cent of the total households and they held only 16.77 per cent of the total land. On the other hand, households with 25 acres (10.12 hectares) or more constituted 3.71 per cent of the total households but owned as much as 34.27 per cent of the total land. In an unequal society that India is, such skewed access to the resources of land by the poor as shown above indicates meager impact of the legislation of the last four decades for the rural poor.

The table 25.2 shows that the pattern of land ownership, at all India level has been characterised by the unevenness with the high concentration of the marginal cultivators at the bottom on the agrarian hierarchy. Their proportion in the rural households has been increased from 62.62% in 1971-72 to around 72% in 1992. These 72% of the households controls only 17% of the lands. While the increase in the percentages of these households has been to the

extent of over 9% in this period and their control over land increased only by 7%. On the other hand the large and the medium land owners accounting for only 5.5% of the household has a combined share of about 40% the total lands. There, however, has been a steady decline of the large cultivators from 2.12% to 0.88%; their area of the ownership has also decline from about 23% to less than 14% over these period. It is significant that, there has been a marginal decline in the proportion of the households in the categories of small and semi-medium cultivators. However, there has been noticeable increase in the percentage of the area owned by these categories.

Table 25.5: Percentage Distribution of Households and Area Owned by Categories of Households in Rural Area in India in 1971-72, 1982 & 1992

Categories	% of Household			% of area owned		
	1971-72	**1982**	**1992**	**1971-72**	**1982**	**1992**
Marginal	62.62	66.64	71.88	9.76	12.22	16.93
Small	15.49	14.70	13.42	14.68	16.49	18.59
Semi Medium	11.94	10.78	9.28	21.92	23.38	24.58
Medium	7.83	6.45	4.54	30.73	29.83	26.07
Large	2.12	1.42	0.88	22.91	18.07	13.83
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: NSS, 1971-72, 1982 & 1992.

ii) Land Policy during the Pre-British Periods

We find that during the pre-British phases of Indian history, the land policy was geared either to maintain or expand agricultural production or to gain political power. This policy allowed the agriculturists some freedom to control and manage their holdings. During the British rule the prevailing land tenures were transformed to secure the maximum revenue from land tax. The legislation/agreements on land, during the British rule in different parts of India created conditions of pauperisation among the cultivators, leading to recurring famines. Traditional systems of control and management of land were allowed to crumble down. Indian peasants protested against this injustice in the form of mass revolts – big and small in nature.

Even before India achieved independence, a strong public opinion had been formed against the role of feudal landlords. It was felt that a class of big landowning intermediaries was wasting away the country's agrarian wealth by the directing it into unproductive channels. A National Planning Committee of the Indian National Congress with Jawaharlal Nehru as its president was formed in 1936. It had a sub-committee on Land Policy. On the basis of its interim report, presented in 1940 by the National Planning Committee, the latter decided to derecognize intermediaries between the State and the cultivators.

The Congress Agrarian Reforms Committee, with J.C. Kumarappa as its chairperson, submitted its report in 1949. The Report made a number of recommendations, including those on the size of the holdings. (For the details of this committee's report see the Report of the National Commission on Agriculture, Vol. XVI 1976, pp. 21 to 23.). The report introduced the concept on an economic holding which refers to a holding 'which affords a reasonable standard on living to the cultivator and provides full employment to a family of normal size and at least a pair of bullocks.

Before ending this sub-section, it is important to mention that the rural poor have also a limited access to common property resources (CPRs). A Study by Jodha (1990) defines the CPRs to include "community forest, pasture/ wasteland, pond/tank, river/rivulet, watershed, drainage/river banks and river/ tank beds". This shows that common lands are of vital importance for income-generation by the rural poor. In other studies (see Rao, 1992), it has been found that the rich have better access to CPRs and only in backward villages (where there are no rich farmers) the poor are able to make use of CPRs. Driven out of their landholdings by the rich, now the poor have to face competition even in the use of CPRs.

Land reform policy recommendations, made by successive Five Year Plans, beginning in 1951, present a new perspective on land use, land tenure and agrarian relations. We will, therefore, analyse and evaluate, in the next sub-section, legal measures for land reforms introduced after India's Independence in 1947.

Check Your Progress 4

i)   Define, in two lines, marginal and small land holdings in terms of acreage.

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ii)   Who can legislate about land tenure and rights in land?

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iii)   What were the main aims of land policy in British India?

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iv)   What initiated the conditions of pauperisation among the cultivators in India?

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v)   Define the concept of 'economic holding'.

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25.4.2   Legal Measures for Land Reforms, Implications for Cultivators and for Effective Use of Land

Legislative enactments for land reforms during the nineteen fifties, nineteen sixties and the seventies focused on (i) abolition of intermediary tenures, (ii) security of the tenancy rights, (iii) fixation of ceiling on land holdings, and (iv) consolidation of holdings. Enactment of legislation has to be followed by its implementation. We will now consider this aspect with regard to each of the above programmes.

i)   Abolition

In the context of land reforms, intermediaries refer to holders of property which had its origin in the system of landlordism instituted by the British. Land reforms is a subject included in the State List. This means that each state of the Indian Union had to implement the legislation. This why we find that abolition of intermediaries took place with slight variation in each state. Here we will not go in the details of enactments in each states. It is however to be noted that in such states where statutory landlordism was deeply entrenched as Utter Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Orissa, legislation for abolition of intermediaries was criticised for two reasons. The first reason was that the intermediaries were given a very high rate of compensation. The second reason was that they were allowed to retain in their possession large areas of land in the name of self-cultivated holdings.

ii)   Tenancy Rights

During the initial years of land reforms after Independence the then existing tenancy laws were amended giving tenants more protection. This stimulated another social process. Landlords evicted tenants, sub-tenants and sharecroppers on a mass-scale. They did this in the name of saving for themselves the maximum land as self-cultivated land. Their drive was so strong that very soon the old system of tenancy broke down (see Khusro 1958: 73-75; Dandekar and Khudanpur 1957-187). To counteract this situation which had fairly spread by the middle of the sixties, the State amended tenancy laws. Tenancy reforms affected tenants of farm lands of the intermediaries, sub-tenants of the intermediaries, tenants holding land from the ryots in the ryotwai areas, and sharecroppers who were mostly not considered tenants. The objectives of tenancy legislation were related to (a) security of tenure, (b) fair rents to be fixed for tenants, (c) landowners to retain only limited measure of land for self-cultivation and (d) on non-resumable areas, landlord-tenant relationship to be ended and tenant cultivators to become peasant proprietors of these areas.

Because the term tenant could not be defined properly the tenancy legislation could not be implemented effectively. Besides this, landlords managed to evict tenants of many grounds, making their tenancy rights ineffective. Again,

landowners used the provision of 'voluntary surrender' and in reality coerced their tenants to surrender their tenancies voluntarily. In addition to this, in many states (Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Kerala, Gujarat, Karnataka and Orissa) landowners were allowed to resume tenanted land within a limited period. Under this provision, many landowners had made tenancy rights of tenants insecure and ineffective.

Regarding fixation of rents, we have not yet come across a uniformly set fair rent. The procedure of fixing rent is cumbersome and a tenant demanding fixation of fair rents faces the threat of ejectment from land. Lastly, a tenant can acquire the status of peasant proprietor only after occupation of a holding for a number of years. Landlords manage to mainpulte records, rotate tenants from plot to plat etc. These result in a break in occupancy. Obviously, tenants do not then actually benefit from legislation on tenancy rights, until and unless there is a political will be implement the tenancy reform, on the part of the state.

iii) **Fixation of Ceiling on Land Holdings**

As a redistributive measure, fixation of ceiling on land holdings has been viewed as an almost compulsory step. For nearly fifteen years after independence ceiling on large land holdings continued to be a important item but was not taken up seriously for implementing. Even up to 1960 it was only a vague concept, a possibility. Between 1960 and 1972 ceiling laws were enacted and enforced in each state. Some states applied ceiling on the individual as the unit while others accepted the family as the unit for fixing ceiling limits. Each state has its own list of the classes of land which did not come under the ceiling laws.

Big land holders were able to escape these legislative measures which were full of the loopholes. Anticipating implementation of ceiling laws, big landowners partitioned their holdings and resorted to 'benami' transfers. The ceiling limits were usually fixed quite high. As a result land was still largely in the hand of rich cultivators. Exemption from ceiling made ceiling laws useless. In 1970, the then Prime Minister of India emphasised the need for land reforms. This did not facilitate the process of implementation of land reforms. In 1973, the failure in the area of land reforms was admitted in the Task Force Report of the Planning Commission, 1973 (Report of the National Commission on Agriculture, 1976-79).

The following have been identified as the main cause of ineffective legislation:

a)   exclusive dependence on legislation as an instrument of agrarian reforms

b)   the lack of political will

c)   sole responsibility for land reforms put on certain administrative agencies

d)   low degree of consciousness and organisation of the potential beneficiaries

e)   use of laws and implementation procedures in their own advantage by powerful landowners.

As a result, we find that even in the nineties, the Prime Minister of India has to give a call for seriously assessing the impact of land reforms on recipients (see The Time of India, 10.10.62, p.1). In a very clearly written article, Land Reform Experiences, Rao (1992): A-50-A64) has shown that 'the performance so far

various measures for land reforms,....., has ranged from modest to disappointing.' Now we turn to the last part of legislative enactments for land reforms, i.e. consolidation of holdings.

Activity 4

Read the above-mentioned newspaper reporting of the Prime Minister's speech (referred above) on land reforms and his call for implementation of legal measures in this regard. Write a note of 250 words about your own views on this .... Specify if you agree with the Prime Minister that land reforms have not been effectively carried out in India. Give reasons for your agreement or disagreement.

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iv) **Consolidation of Holdings**

Successive Five Year Plans recognised the value of the consolidation of holdings for increase in productivity. In India, the law of inheritance among both the Hindu and Muslim communities refers to the succession to immovable property by all the heirs. This leads to excessive fragmentation of land, resulting in the small size of the average farm in India. Fragmentation produces the following disadvantages.

a)   small size of holdings is uneconomical to cultivate

b)   wastage of resources of money, time and labour in carrying out different operations from one plot to another

c)   supervision of farm operations is not easy

d)   expenditure on irrigation, drainage, farming increases

e)   during crop season, access to different plots is difficult and a source of quarrel and tension over trespass

f)   division of holding causes loss of land on demarcation of boundaries.

Recognising the problems arising out of fragmentation of land its consolidation was sought as far back as 1905 when Central Provinces undertook consolidation. Later other states too introduced measures to consolidate land under the Cooperative Societies Act. After Independence, almost all the States opted for compulsory consolidation. States such as Punjab , Haryana and Utter Pradesh have made considerable progress in this field.

The total area to be consolidated is about 137 million hectares . Of this , by the end of the Fourth Five Year Plan , the total area covered by the consolidation programme was about 39.3 million hectares. The Planning Commission (1989) reported that about 40 per cent of total cultivated land had been consolidated by 1989.

In the Southern and Eastern States, this programme has not found much favour. Most of these states have very small sizes agricultural holdings. It has been argued that land use capability, classification and consumption patterns of the local population as well as the topography of the land in these states present problems in the way of consolidation. One can also argue that many paddy growing areas in these States have a uniform cropping pattern, thereby providing an ideal setting for consolidation. That is why we can only hope that in due course of time the consolidation programme should find favour in these parts.

Let us now consider another important aspect of this programme. It relates to the cost of consolidation.

It depends on such factors as topography of the region, extent of division of agricultural holding, level of agricultural technology and participation of beneficiaries. Obviously, the cost in the hill tracts would be more than it would be in the plains. The cost of consolidation in each area in bound to be linked with several complex issues and therefore cannot give a uniform figure applicable throughout India. In many parts of the country, the cost of consolidation is partly met by the beneficiaries. This reduces the burden of the consolidation process of the State. All the same, it is expected that the State government would not make the small and marginal farmers share the cost of consolidation.

It should also be kept in mind that the advantages of consolidation are neurtralised if fragmentation is not curbed. The cost of consolidation is justified only if there are curbs imposed on fragmentation by sale, gift and mortgage.

Check Your Progress 5

i) Who introduced the system of landordism (zamindari) in India?

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ii) Why did landlords evict, after Independence, their tenants, sub-tenants and sharecroppers on a mass scale? Use three lines for your answer.

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iii) How can a tenant acquire the status of peasant proprietor? Use two lines for your answer.

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iv) Is it possible of effectively carry out such agrarian reform as ceiling on landholdings by legislation alone? Give reasons for your answer.

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v)   What is the rationale behind consolidation of landholding?

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25.5   RISE OF THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS AND OTHER CONSEQUENCES OF LAND REFORMS

The foregoing discussion on the implementation of land reforms does not gives us much hope for the well being of cultivators of small sized landholdings. Their problems have not been solved despite extensive legislation on agricultural reforms and despite the so-called green revolution in some parts of India. Consequently, we find rapid growth of the class known as agricultural labourers. It is a result of a process of disintegration of the rural economy. Marginal farmers and destitute artisans have been forced to become agricultural labourers. The wages are low and they are subjected to innumerable exploitative practices in the regions of the 'green revolution'.

In the rural economy, land is not only a site – it is the prime means of production. As such it supports the owner, his servants, the village artisans. The merchant who buys the produce and a host of others. When the cycle of agriculture is disturbed, all these activities are disrupted and the livelihood of all the landless endangered (NCHSE 1986: ii).

However, those who do not own land, but depend on it for instance, are rarely taken into consideration. For example, data relating to changes in agricultural wage rates over the decades of 1960-61 to 1969-70 show that each State has reported an increase in money wage-rates. But in real terms, the wage-rate declined in most places. This means that the money received as wages did not carry enough purchasing power. In other words, wages did not match increase in the prices of essential commodities. So even if the money wage increased, it did not benefit the labourer who had to pay more to purchase food and other things. The rate of change in money and real earnings is mostly affected by the level of agricultural development, availability of agricultural labour and the organisational power of agricultural labourers. For example, Punjab has registered an increase in both money and real wages. This has been so because of the fast development of a agriculture in this State. Similarly, in Kerala, we find that effective unionisation of agricultural labour has helped agricultural labour to get increase in wages.

Another feature of the wages of agricultural labour is the male-female differential. Women are paid at a lower rate. Secondly, you may be surprised to know that on an average, in as many as 12 out of 17 States, on average a male agricultural labourer earns more than a small cultivator earns. This shows the poor socio-economic conditions of marginal farmers, most of whom are eventually forced to become landless agricultural labourers. Further, it has been found that casual workers receive the highest wages, followed by seasonally attached and permanently attached labourers (see Johri and Pandey 1972).

Relatively speaking, wages in the agricultural sector are less monetised than in the industrial sector. Although we find a considerable degree of monetisation in the rural areas, even then in many cases, wages are paid in kind in different part of India. This is more likely to be the case during the harvesting season.

The household income of wage earners depends largely on the level of wages, duration of employment and the number of earners in the household. This is why no generalisation can easily be made in this regard.

It was assumed by policy makers that the supply of agricultural labour exceeds its demand. It was felt that if there were no rules of the minimum wages the labourers would get only the bare subsistence wages. Here come several factors relating to the variety of labourers, their employers and regional peculiarities in the way of deciding the minimum wages for agricultural labour in India. It also includes conditions which make for persistent poverty in agriculture, in both absolute and relative terms and those conditions which enable the employer to exploit the labourer. Obviously, the policy for upgrading wages in agriculture needs to consider wide varietiy of the problem.

There are already programmes to mobilise surplus labour in the rural areas. This labour is directed to upgrade such agricultural and other rural structures as roads, wells, check dams etc. Welfare programmes are aimed to upgrade drinking water supply, sanitation, health and housing in the rural areas. Economic rehabilitation programme operate to reclaim any wasteland. There are other programmes to help agricultural labourers to move out of agriculture by training them to take to village industries. To remove caste and cultural biases and spread literacy there are social rehabilitation programmes. These programmes mentioned here only by name. For detailed information on them you may refer to Block 3 and 4 of this course.

After the above section on agricultural labour, we will briefly mention, in the next section, problems relating to land in the urban areas.

Check Your Progress 6

i)   In terms of economic status, whom would you place higher – a marginal farmer or an agricultural labourer? Why?

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ii) Explain the differences between money wage-rates and real wage-rates.

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25.6 LAND AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

Considering the rate at which the urban sector is developing in India, we need to look at problems arising out of tendencies of land-grab, encroachment, unauthorised structures on government and non-government land, slum dwellings as well as skyscrapers without adequate precautions against fire and the other hazards. This can in fact be the subject of another unit. Here we will only touch upon this theme in order to make you aware of these problems in relation to access to land, its control and management. Land use in an urban area indicates the spatial dimensions of urbanisation. Human use of land or human activities on land in a town or city are characterised by a complexity of socio-economic needs of urban dwellers. In India, most urban areas reflect a pattern of land use marked by the area's past history. Further growth of these areas is guided, under varying pressures by contemporary functional needs. Intricately interwoven patterns of land use develop in today's towns and cities of India.

In the urban areas, a large chunk of better quality land is occupied by the state/ central government administration the armed forces and other defence departments. The fast developing sector of commerce, trade industrial manufacturing, transport etc. take up the remaining land. These organisations develop both horizontally and vertically. Many bodies set up their offices, warehouses on the outskirts of towns, thus extending their boundaries. Such organsiations also house themselves in multi-storeyed buildings. Then you have the various educational recreational and the other services which need accommodation to function in a congenial atmosphere. With urbanisation, we have to make land available for all these purposes.

As the urban population is fast increasing, both the residential buildings and the amenities remain short of demand. As a result, shanty towns multiply to accommodate the poor. The more the urban affluent sections indulge in land grab the higher the prices of urban properties soar. Some of these problems have been touched in Unit 6 of Block 2 of this course.

Here, we may indicate that laws regarding ceiling on urban property need to be implemented more vigorously and social justice be given to slum dwellers who contribute substantially to the growth of the urban sector in India. Corresponding to legislation imposing ceiling on agricultural lands, the All India Congress Committee adopted, in 1964 a resolution on suitable legislation to impose ceiling on urban property. More than a decade later, the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act, 1976, came into force on Februray 17, 1976. Towns and cities, classified into four categories, come under the purview of this Act which is viewed by its critics as a watered down version of the proposal earlier presented in 1969. The purpose of the Act seems to be confined to better use of land resources. With the contemporary practice of multi-storeyed construction of urban buildings, there is now need for a different type of legislation on ceiling on urban property. More than land, we need not to look at the users of land in the urban areas.

Activity 5

Imagine you are in-charge of land use in an urban area. What three steps will you take for making ecologically balanced land use in that area? Write a short not on 250 words on your plans.

25.7 PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN THE CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT OF LAND IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS

You would recall that in sub-section 25.4.2 of this unit, it was mentioned that one of the main causes of ineffective legislation on land reforms is the low degree of consciousness and organisation of the potential beneficiaries. Some Western scholars as Moore (1976) and Stokes (1978) consider that protest movements are only rarely found among the Indian peasants. Other scholars, like Gough (1974), Desai (1979), Dhanagare (1983), Guha (1983) and Singha Roy (2005) hold that during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries peasant revolts were quite common in almost every corner of India. It is true that the poor peasants and landless labourers have in many cases successfully fought against their exploiters. Yet, this is also obvious that while organised movements among the Chinese and European peasants led to fundamental changes in their societies, in India peasant movements do not have an all-India character. They have not so far resulted in any remarkable and fundamental change in Indian society. Similarly, in the urban areas too, we have just begun to notice the arrival of some people's movements. They have yet to make their presence felt in the sense of bringing about noticeable social change in terms of control and management of land. In the following two sub-sections, we will only briefly bring to you notice, in relation to land resources, some of the peasant movements and emerging people's movements in the urban areas.

25.7.1 Peasant Movements

Again, as in section 25.6 on urban land, we have here a topic which deserves to be discussed in a separate Unit if not in whole Block. By including this sub-section in this Unit, our intention is to draw your attention to the nature of peasant movements which are found in large numbers in different parts of India.

Regarding people's access to land and their desire to control and manage agricultural operations, we can take as examples those peasant movements which revolved around agrarian conflicts between tenants and landlords. As shown by Dhanagare (1983), Pankhar (1979) and Namboodiripad (1943), the Moplah rebellions of the nineteenth and early 20th century in the Malabar region of Kerala were largely a result of the poor economic conditions of the peasantry. Similarly, the Wahabi and Faraidi (or Farazi) agitation of Bengal in the 1930s was also partly, if not solely, a consequence of agrarian discontent among the Muslim peasants.

More than simply rise in prices of essential commodities, organisational and ideological inputs have triggered and sustained peasant movements (Henningham 1982). Peasant uprising in Andhra Pradesh, from time to time, and especially in its Telengana region between 1946 and 1951, were organised on the basis of the intervention of political parties.

Agitation against forced labour (variously known as beggar, veth or vethi), performed by peasants, marks many a movement. For example, peasant movements in Rajasthan between 1887 and 1941, in Andhara Pradesh between 1922-23 and in Oudh during 1921-22, were basically against forced labour (Surana 1979). Further, control by the landlords in the form of various taxes on the peasants, raised land rents and eviction of tenants as cultivators were some factors in peasant uprising in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh (see Siddiqui 1978, Surana 1983 and Saraswati 1979).

A demand for two third share of the Produced Crops for the sharecroppers and land to the tillers were the main features of such peasant movements as the Tebhaga movement in Bengal in 1946-47 (Dhanagare 1976), land grab movement (Prasad 1986) and the Naxalite movement (Banerjee S. 1980, Barnerji T. 1980, SinghaRoy, 2004). The Bhoodan movement was started by Vinoba Bhave in the 1950s. Peasant revolts occurred also due to change in the management of agricultural operations. The shift from subsistence to commercial crops entailed changes in agricultural practices and thereby also in traditional agrarian relationships. This gave an impetus to demands for higher wages by agricultural labourers. The Naxalite movement in West Bengal, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh (Mukherji 1979, Balgopal 1988) mobilised several peasant struggles on this issue.

Most of the revolts among the peasants took up the issues of small peasants, poor tenants, sharecroppers and landless labourers. Regarding active participation in these movements, we have a variety of peasants taking up of roles of leading and active participants. For example, Siddiqui (1978) shows that in the Eka movement in Uttar Pradesh, the rich peasants played a major role. So also was the case in North Bihar where peasant movements during 1917 and 1942 were led by rich peasants. On the other hand, Hardgrave's (1977) study of the Moplah Rebellion of 1926 shows the active participation of the poorest tenant cultivators of Kerala.

Hardiman (1981) shows that the Kheda Satyagraha was mainly supported by the middle peasants who owned three to five acres of land. Clearly, we do not have any basis on which to claim that one or the other class or category of peasants spearheaded and sustained protest movements in India. Because of a lack of documentation we are also not in a position to assess the extent of women's participation in these movements. We do, however, know about their heroic and remarkable role in some cases. For example, SinghaRoy (1992) shows that women played a radical role in sustaining the Tebhaga peasant movement in certain regions of West Bengal.

With this brief account of peasant movements we now turn to movements relating to urban land use.

25.7.2 People's Awareness of Problems Related to Urban Land Use

Acts of human beings, more than those of nature, make their residential land prone to various forms of calamities. People at large become vulnerable to the effects of these man-made calamities. In the urban areas because of lack of planning, slums develop mainly on public land. For example, side space of railway tracks, low-lying undeveloped land, construction cities of building, riverside lands are generally illegally occupied by poor people who migrate to

urban areas in search of jobs. Often these areas provide open ground for their children and space for daily ablutions.

These settlements do not have basic provisions of water, drainage, sanitation, toilets and transport etc. This situation creates a polluted environment. The pollution is further aggravated by air, noise, industrial dust and lead pollution found in cities. We do not have reliable data regarding land pollution produced by solid wastes from household, municipal and industrial operations. Liquid wastes are, of course, not exactly discarded and unusable matter. The earth has inbuild systems of recycling liquid wastes. In the case of solid wastes, we have to worry a lot because we have to spend our resources of money, time and energy in recycling them. Dumping them may be cheaper but not the final solution. In some urban areas, people are now slowly becoming aware of this problem. In the Western countries, students and other young persons take upon themselves the task of collecting, separating and processing solid wastes. In India, we have yet to wake up to these problems. There are some voluntary organisation, working in the urban areas for improving the environment of slums. For example, in some areas mobile latrines (Sulab Shauchalaya) are provided for slum-dwellers.

Such schemes at the Environmental Improvement of Urban Slums (EIUS, item 10A of Twenty Point Programme) have not been able to make much headway according to a report of the Ministry of Works and Housing Review of the New 20 Point Programme (19.07.1984). This is mainly because

i) local bodies lack funds and human power to maintain the improvements once introduced in slum areas;

ii) the state governments do not release funds in time for implementers to carry out improvements; and

iii) some of the states have not been carried out surveys for identifying the slums in the town and cities of their states.

It is often expected that voluntary organisations will come forward and carry out the improvement programmes. The beneficiaries of improvements do not however participate in such schemes and therefore even voluntary organisation are unable to cary out sustained activity. Many cities have a kind of Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) to provide better environment (see Gowda and Sridhara 1987). These schemes are by and large, generated at the level of local/state governments an die natural deaths in due course, achieving very little. People's participation in them is not at all visible. Policy-makers and planners hardly seek people's participation. People on their own cannot undertake improvement of the urban environment because it requires large funds, infrastructural support and sustained interest of administration and people.

Urban forestry, introduced in Mysore city in 1986 (see Gowda and Sridhara 1987: 178-179), needs to be evaluated after a period of eight years. Urban forestry refers to planting and maintaining forests in the urban areas. The urban forestry programme is carried out by a division of the Forest Department, which distributed in Mysore city more than 50,000 seedlings produced in the urban forestry nurseries in 1986-87. The success of this programme depends largely on people's awareness and their support. In some urban areas, we hear of a science movement. This too has a potential of developing an environmental education input.

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Check Your Progress 7

i) 'Peasant movements in India share a common organisation and common ideology'. Comment by using three lines for your answer.

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ii) Match the following items in the two colums.

a)	Equal distribution of land	1.	Pollution in the environment
b)	Poor condition of peasants	2.	Chinese and European peasant movements
c)	Fundamental changes in society	3.	Tebhaga movements
d)	Lack of basic amenities	4.	Moplah uprising

iii) What is urban forestry? Use two lines for your answer.

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25.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have in section 25.2, dealt with physiographic features of land in India. This description is followed by a discussion of land utilisation and related ecological problems. This is a rather long section with three sub-sections dealing with grasing lands, wastelands and crop lands. Each sub-section is again divided into sub-sections focusing on particular ecological problems affecting the people. As India is largely a land of agriculturists, we have discussed in some detail the nature of access to land, and its control and management. We have also looked at legal measures for and consequences of land reforms.

In a brief section we have talked about the pattern of land use in the urban areas. Lastly, we have looked at people's participation in the control and management of land in the rural and urban areas. This unit gives you a chance to build your own framework for evaluating the use of the resources in India. In the next two units we will discuss the resources of water and forests.

25.9 KEY WORDS

Access   :   Freedom or ability to obtain or make use of a particular resource.

Alkaline   :   A mixture of soluble salts obtained from the ashes of plants and consisting of potassium or sodium carbonate. These salts are present in some soils of arid regions in quantity detrimental to agriculture.

Alluvium	:	Deposit of earth, sand etc. left by floods.
Ecosystem	:	A complex dealing with the habits of living organisms, their modes of life and relations to their surroundings.
Gully	:	A deep artificial channel, gutter, drain/ a water-worn ravine.
Hydrologic	:	Of the science of properties, laws etc. of water.
Peninsula	:	Piece of land almost surrounded by water or projecting far into the sea.
Physiographic	:	Relating to the description of nature, or natural phenomena.
Ravine	:	Deep narrow gorge.
Salinity	:	The quality of being impregnated/soaked/saturated with salt or salts.
Savanna	:	Grassy plain with scattered trees in tropical and subtropical regions.
Steppe	:	Level plain devoid of forest.
Unculturable	:	Uncultivable; and not capable of development.

25.10   FURTHER READING

Agrawal, Anil and Sunita Narain, 1985. *The State of India's Environment, 1984-85: The Second Citizens' Report.* Centre for Science and Environment: New Delhi.

Singh, Pramod, 1987. *Ecology of Urban India.* Volume II. Ashish Publishing House: New Delhi.

25.11   ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

i)   Indo-Gangetic plains form one fourth of the total land area of India, and cover an area of 65,200 square kilometers.

ii)   The area comprising a block of mountains, hill and plateaux and intersected by the valleys is called the Central Highlands which covers one-sixth of the total land area of India.

iii)   In terms of land use, the landmass of India can be divided into four parts, namely, grazing lands, wastelands, croplands and forests.

iv)   The Savannas are extensive open grassy plains or meadows with scattered shrub and trees while the steppes are extensive level plains without trees. Sometimes, due to overgrasing, the savannas reach a stage of degradation which makes them look like steppes.

Check Your Progress 2

i)   Eleven western districts of Rajasthan, and three districts of Gujarat and Haryana are affected by wind erosion. In India, the total area eroded by wind is 12.93 million.

ii) Because ravines affect the adjoining productive flat lands, people cultivating those lands and living in that area have to move out of it. Secondly, the ravines are made into shelter places by gangs of dacoits. This creates feeling of insecurity among villagers of the adjoining areas.

iii) When mining operations are over, the mined areas cannot be cultivated because vegetation and topsoil are removed in the initial stages of surface mining. In underground mining, after extracting ore, the mine is abandoned. Here, the land subsides and becomes unsafe for living, farming or grasing. Mining of minerals deprives the land of its biological potential. This leads to the process of desertification of the area.

Check Your Progress 3

i) It means that inputs in agriculture are higher than output.

ii) Agricultural production in India can be increased by either expanding the area under cultivation or receiving higher yield per hectare.

Check Your Progress 4

i) Marginal holdings measure less than 1 hectare and small holding measure 1 to 2.0 hectares.

ii) Land tenure and rights in land are governed by the both the central and the provincial apparatuses of administration.

iii) Land policy in British India was aimed to secure the maximum revenue from land tax.

iv) The various land settlements in different parts of India during the British rule created conditions of pauperization among the cultivators.

v) An 'economic holding' refers to a holding which affords a reasonable standard of living the cultivators and provides full employment and at least a pair of bullock to a normal size family.

Check Your Progress 5

i) The British introduced the zamindari system in India.

ii) Because, during the initial years of land reforms, after Independence, then existing tenancy laws were amended to give more protection to tenants and other categories of non-owners working and subsiding on land. Landlords were afraid of losing their ownership of land.

iii) A tenant can acquire the status of the peasant proprietor only after occupation of a land holding for a number of years.

iv) It is not possible to effective secure land reforms through legislation alone because after the laws are made the administration has to implement them. For implementation, there has to be a political will and an efficient administrative machinery with sufficient resources. Also, the potential beneficiaries of reforms need to organise themselves and demand their legal rights. Only then, the laws can be effective.

v) The reasons behind consolidation of land holding are as follows

   a) small size of plots are uneconomic to cultivate;

   b) money, time and labour are wasted in carrying out different operations from one small plot to another;

c) supervision of farm operation is not easy;

d) expenses on irrigation, drainage increase;

e) during the crop season, access to different to plots is difficult and a source of quarrels and conflicts over trespass;

f) division of a holding causes loss of land for making boundaries.

Check Your Progress 6

i) An agricultural labourer occupies a higher economic status because he/she gets daily wages which can be at times higher than the earning of a marginal farmer form the produce of his/her land.

ii) Broadly speaking, money wage rates refer to the rates of money received as wages while real rates refer to the purchasing power of the money.

Check Your Progress 7

i) Peasant movements in India are organised on local basis with different aims and objective. They do not so far voice their demands from a single forum.

ii) a=3; b=4; c=2; d=1

iii) Urban forestry refers to planting and maintaining trees in urban areas. It is carried out by a division of the Forest Department.

UNIT 26 WATER: ACCESS, CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT

Structure

26.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you should be able to:

- describe the present state of access to water by the poor, particularly women;

- describe the water management and distribution systems in India;

- analysis the policies that have resulted in monopolisation of the water resources by a few powerful sections;

- understand the consequences of this situation on the weaker sections, particularly women; and

- explain possible solutions to this situation.

26.1 INTRODUCTION

In Unit 25, we were concerned with the problems relating to the resource of land and its access, control and management. Equally important is the resource of water which is an essential component of human survival. Unit 26 focuses on social problems arising out of differential access to, and monopolistic control and so-called 'scientific management' of water resources in India.

Access to water is a fundamental right, since it is required for the very survival of every human being. Beginning with a discussion of the nature of the its access to various groups of society, we go on to analyse the traditional water management and distribution systems, and compare them with the British and post-independence policies of water management. This leads us to such questions as to who has gained greater access to water, who has been deprived of it and who pays the price of the present day water development policies. If it is found that a few classes have monoplised this resource at the expense of many other, it is important for the National Water Policy to deal with this problem. This is the reason why at the end of this unit, we look at the National Water Policy to deal with this problem.

26.2 THE PRESENT SITUATION OF ACCESS TO WATER

There is a certain contradiction in the management of and access to water in India today. There is an abundance of water in the country. The number of dams have grown enormously during the last four decades. At the same time, the access of the majority to this resource has decreased and, thereby, created a number of social problems on several fronts. In this section, we shall first discuss the fact of abundant supply of water in India, and then examine the state of the reduced access to water by the users.

26.2.1 Abundance of Water

According to a water flow chart, prepared by **Nag and Kathpalia (1975)**, India's total average annual precipitation is estimated to be 394 million hectare metre (mham). Precipitation is a term, denoting deposits on the earth, of hail, mist, rain sleet or snow. This figure is rounded off to 400 mham after including the snowfall which is not yet properly and fully recorded. To this figure of 400 mham you may like to add 20 mham of water, which comes from rivers flowing in from the neighbouring countries situated in the Himalayan watershed. We shall now see what happens to this 400 (or 420) mham of water resource that India gets every year.

Out of the 400 mham, nearly 40 mham is lost to the atmosphere through evaporation from soil. This leaves 330 mham, of which 215 mham percolates into the ground as soil moisture and groundwater recharge. Of this, only about 45 mham regenerates as surface flows. Besides 45 mham of the regenerated surface flow, 115 mham is the portion of the precipitation on the land that ultimately reaches streams and other surface water bodies. Adding 20 mham brought in by rivers originating in Nepal and Tibet, we have total surface flows of 180 mham available in the country.

Of 180 mham of surface flow, 150 mham goes to either the sea or some adjoining countries. Only about 15 mham is stored in reservoirs and tanks.

But about 5 mham of this water is lost by evaporation, resulting in the availability of only 10mham. Of the river flow, about 15 mham is used through diversion works and direct pumping. So we have a pattern of utilisation of only 25 mham out of 180 mham of surface flows. It is estimated that even on full development of the use of water through diversion works, direct pumping and storage facilities, 105 mham would continue to go to the sea and other countries (CSE 1987).

About 165 mham of 215 mham percolating into the soil is estimated to be retained in the soil as moisture and only 50 mham percolates as groundwater. According to scientists like Chaturvedi and Rogers (1985: 29), the groundwater recharge has to be and can be substantially increased. It is estimated that, at present, out of the total 67 mham of groundwater, only 13 mham is utilised while 45 mham becomes river flows and the remaining 9 mham goes into raising of the water table and loss of water from the soil both by evaporation and the passing off in the form of vapour from such living bodies as plants.

While nothing much can be done about such process of the hydrological cycle as evaporation and percolation into the soil, the current availability of 180 mham of surface flows can be analysed in terms of its access, control and development.

Before undertaking this analysis, let us also say a few words about the factors of flood and drought in India. Every monsoon season we read reports about the catastrophic occurrences of droughts and floods in different parts of the country. They indicate the wide range of seasonal and spatial variations in water resources of India. Floods cause damage to crops, houses, property and loss of human and animal population. High floods destroy railways, roads, communication lines and public utilities. In this way, they destabilise economic activity and also socio-economic and political relations.

Similarly, droughts also adversely affect the population. Droughts mean extended periods of sub normal precipitation. Their impact depends very much on the people's adaptation of their environment. In India, nearly 16 per cent of the total area of the country is drought – prone and about 11 per cent of the country's population is directly affected by drought conditions (see Saint 1988: 129-137; Murishwar and Fernandes 1988; 162-178).

Last but the least is the issue of water pollution. Whenever water is taken away from its original place and put to domestic, agricultural and industrial use, and later when the used water is returned to a water deposit, we face the large-scale problem of water pollution. Due to massive utilisation of water for agriculture/industry and rise in population at the same time and developmental activities, we are likely to face the problem of water pollution along with the age-old problems of floods and droughts.

Let us to back to our main focus, and examine how the availability of 180 mham of surplus flow is utilised for sustaining life in general and the Indian agrarian economy in particular. In a nutshell, we need to find out if availability means access.

Activity 1

Try to identify, on a map of India, the rivers which flow into India from the neighbouring countries situated in the Himalayan watershed. Write a short note of about 250 words about the course of these rivers.

26.2.2 Reduced Access

According to the Sixth Five Year (1980-85) Plan Document (1981), only 10 per cent of the rural population had access to safe drinking water, and only about 30 per cent of the cultivated land could be irrigated. Out of 123 million hectares of net cropped area, about 70 per cent still remains rainfed. Even with more development in the sphere of irrigation, experts estimate that at any point of time 50 per cent of India's cropped area will remain under the rainfed farming system. Hence, the water management and policy would have to ensure access to water by the farmer surviving on the rainfed system. As a matter of fact, access to water resources by the majority has considerably decreased for the following reasons:

i) The groundwater table has decreased and the small farmers can afford only open wells and shallow village tanks most of which have dried up as a result. Any lowering of the groundwater table thus deprives them of access to irrigation.

ii) The common water resources of villages that were carefully maintained till a few decades ago are neglected today. This deprives the small farmers of the water they require to ensure at least one crop, and deprives the family of water for domestic use. In fact, nearly half of the villages in India do not have a source of safe drinking water. Moreover, it is estimated that 70 per cent of the river water in India, which is used for human consumption, is polluted. Several thousand springs dry up every year.

iii) Environmental destruction has disturbed the country's water balance. Droughts and floods are recurring more frequently and with higher intensity. In other words, while the availability of water for irrigation may have increased for the big farmer, it has not made much of a difference as far as access to it by the majority is concerned. This resource, like most others, seems to be controlled by a few, and more and more of it is monpolised by the medium and big farmers. (CSE 1987).

In this unit, we are looking at the process that has resulted in this situation and its consequences for the majority. It is in this context that we shall study the National Water Policy, 1987 and see up to what extent it deals with this situation. In order to understand the two points, we shall first study the water management systems in pre-British India and then discuss the water policy in India during the colonial and contemporary period. Before going on to the water management systems, please complete the exercises.

Check Your Progress 1

i) Mark True or False against each of the following statements:

   a) The increase in the number of dams has ensure equal access to water for every citisen of India.   (True/False)

   b) Small farmers have less access to water than in the past because the ground-water level has gone down.   (True/False)

   c) The drinking water is easily available in all the villages. (True/False)

   d) The village tanks are not maintained properly.   (True/False)

ii) Why do floods and droughts occur so often in India? Use one line for your answer.

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26.3 WATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN PRE-BRITISH INDIA

In this section, we first discuss the various forms of water management systems in India. Then we explore the possibility of water being treated as a common property in ancient India. This discussion is followed by the finding of limited access to water by common people. Next, we examine the nature of people's participation in the distribution and maintenance of the resource.

26.3.1 Various Water Management Systems

In India, the systems of water management themselves differed from place to place because the precipitation varied from the east to the west. Eastern India has very high rainfall with Chirapunji in the north-east having the highest rainfall in the whole world. The annual precipitation goes up to nearly 4,000 mm, in some parts of the north-east, diminishes gradually as it comes westwards till it reaches about 800 mm a year in Rajasthan. Most parts of India have an annual rainfall of 1,000 mm. or less, the average for the country being 1150 mm.

Secondly, most of the annual rainfall is within a few months of the monsoons. As a result, for as many as eight months most of India has to depend on water that is stored in tanks, bunds, wells and streams. Consequently, the maintenance of these sources and equitable distribution are crucial for the survival of the communities in the rural areas (Sen Gupta 1991: 35-37).

Most parts of India are different from countries closer to the equator, for example the Philippines, where rainfall is more or less equally distributed throughout the country and every month there is some rainfall. This enables small rivulets to remain operational throughout the year. So in the Philippines , cooperation is mainly around distribution of water and maintenance of the distribution system, mainly canals. In India, on the contrary, cooperation has to begin in ensuring the very storage of water in tanks, bunds and wells etc., which are the main source in dry months. Nature has provided a cushion against this uneven availability through the forest that hold back the monsoon water and release it slowly into rivers, streams and groundwater systems. People have designed storing mechanisms through wells, ponds and tanks. In India, therefore, traditions of water management revolved not merely around distribution but also around the maintenance of the storage facilities. This has led to a peculiar pattern of access to water by various sections of society in India. Let us look at its peculiarities. It is peculiar because access to water is, like other resources, monopolise by powerful groups of society. But, because water in an essential element for human survival, it has to be made available to everyday. This is why we come across various mechanisms which ensure some availability of the resources even to the poorer and weaker sections.

26.3.2 Water as a Common Property

Archaeological evidence and historical records show that there existed a number of waterworks in India for providing drinking water and irrigation. They were of varied sises, from small wells and tanks to big canals. In India, the technology of building small reservoirs with the help of earthen dams is quite old, and both in the northern and southern parts of the country tank irrigation was quite widespread.

One may perhaps speculate that in ancient India, water was, by and large, considered to be a common property. In other words, it belonged to the community, and individual could use it according to their needs. But this should not lead us into believing that in ancient times, every user had an equitable share of this resoucrce, and participatory management of water was the tradition before the coming of the British. We do not have any evidence of this ideal state of affairs. All the same, one can perhaps argue that the concept of common property and its community character was maintained through sacredness attached to water.

Such sacredness is not specific to any one religion and can be located in almost every faith. Jews and Muslims think of it's a symbol of new life and Christians use it in the ceremony of baptism as sign of freedom from sin. The Hindu tradition of *gangajal* is well-known. Most tribal communities speak of divine presence in water. All these facts show that through the mechanism of attaching sacredness of water, the principle of ensuring its access for the use of common people was enunciated. We may also argue that the very fact of the existence of such a mechanism indicates that water was not in reality accessible to everybody, and, as it is a vital component for one's survival, it has to be made available by other means. This was done by imposing religious sanctions and by turning the giving of water to the thirsty into a pious and merit-earning act.

The concept of water being a common property does not necessarily imply that it was an open access resource. Among most tribal communities, resources such as water and the forest produce have traditionally been regarded the common property of the group, and its members have an open access to them. But even among the tribals not all tribal communities around the world today observe this as a rule. Many tribal groups even in India are today divided into high and low sections and sub-section, and also access to resources is among them inequitable. But that was not their tradition (Fernandes, Menon and Viegas 1988: 224-228). Let us discuss in the next sub-section the case of the caste communities and examine the access to water among the different castes in India.

26.3.3 Limited Access

As different from the traditional tribal village, most caste villages ensured access to this resources only to the powerful, and excluded the weaker sections. The control and management of water resources was largely limited to the land-owning groups which were also the powerful castes in the villages. The low castes and other landless categories were excluded from its management. There certainly was equitable distribution among the land-owning families. But those who did not own land and other assets, did not have any power in the village and were excluded from decisions concerning water management and hence also from equitable access to the resource. Secondly, the same source

of water was normally used both for drinking and irrigation purposes. The housewives were responsible for ensuring regular supply of water for domestic consumption while men occupied themselves mainly with agriculture and, as such, thought of water mainly for irrigation. Social organisation, including those dealing with water management, were controlled by men. As such, greater participation was ensured in the management of water for irrigation and much less organisation was involved in water meant for domestic consumption (Sen Gupta 1991: 119-120)

In essence, one cannot really call it equitable distribution as can perhaps be the case with the forest produce in the tribal tradition. Caste villages in India are an alliance of many communities with unequal power. Assets are owned by the more powerful castes and most decision-making is in their hands. Consequently, they ensure that there is equitable distribution within their own caste but not to the others. Moreover, most social groups in India are male-dominated and women's point of view is not always taken into consideration. The limited access to water was symbolic of limited access to other assets and to power in the traditional upper caste male-dominated Indian villages. Thus we can say that it was a common property, but not of the whole village. It was the common property of the powerful castes.

At times a few powerful individuals, even from among these dominant castes, tried to gain exclusive control over this resource. Tanks and irrigation resources were built by feudal lords, and emperors for their exclusive use. But such efforts as monopoly by a few individuals were not specific to water alone. They also enclosed some forests and other common properties for their personal use.

26.3.4 Participation in Distribution

As mentioned earlier, in most cases the same source of water was used both for domestic purposes and for irrigation. Both needed social mechanisms for equitable distribution. Relatively little is known about the social mechanisms for equitable access to drinking water.

When it comes to irrigation, around 20 large dams built in the Mughal era are in use even today (CWS 1990). The best-known pre-British irrigation system is the weir on the Cauvery known as the Grand Anicut. It is in use even in our days and in its heyday it must have irrigation around 2,40,000 hectares of land. In Uttar Pradesh too there is a fairly good canal system coming down from the Mughal times. These dams and canals were subsidised by the State and a distribution system was established. But in most cases the exact nature of the organisation is now known.

What is known is that most irrigation was from tanks, bunds, ponds and wells and in some cases from stream. A list in the 1880s shows that there were at least 32,000 tanks in the ryotwari areas of the Madras Presidency alone, and many more in its zamindari areas. There were similar tanks also in other parts of India. These tanks and many canals were managed by the "village irrigation community", i.e. the users' organisation. This participatory management ensured access to the users' but may have perhaps excluded the less powerful. It is estimated that around 7 million hectares were irrigated by tanks and cannals before the arrival of the British as against 40 million hectares today.

There is a difference in the type of tanks in different parts of the country. By and large, the tanks in Western India, particularly in Gujarat and other areas

away from the coast are relatively small and used by five or six families. There are definite rules recognised by the village panchayat for these families to share their water. Since most of these tanks are refilled by springs, local regulations ensure that after every family uses it, it is left free for water to refill in a course of several hours.

In other parts of India, the tanks are much bigger, often irrigating more than 100 hectares and in some cases two or three thousand hectares. Consequently, water from one tank may be shared by more than a hundred families, sometimes from several villages. Acceptance of the rules of distribution by all of them and mutual cooperation have been coming up recently, particularly when some villages want to grow more hybrid varieties of rice or commercial crops that need more water. There are cases where some bigger farmers appropriate for themselves a bigger share of the resource than is their due. There have also been inter-village conflicts, because many of these tanks are inter-linked, and if one village neglects their maintenance or uses more than its share of the resource, its impact is felt by the others.

The traditional method of ensuring equitable distribution of water differed from place to place. Most of Tamil Nadu had a functionary, called **neerpaichy** in some places or **madai kudumban** in others to supervise the allocation and distribution of water. The **neerpaichy** usually belonged to a low caste that did not own land. Consequently, he did not have any vested interest in getting a bigger share for himself. He was, in practice, an employee of the village to ensure that water flowed according to the plan worked out by the committee. Since he had to be paid by all the families, he had to ensure that all of them received water according to this plan. In parts of Andhara Pradesh the **neerpaichy** was called **neeru kattudar** and was supervised by a **tennadedda**. There was an employee of the village and was paid in kind by the farmers, while the **tennadedda** represented the farmers to ensure proper distribution (Sen Gupta 1991: 97-120).

Such control was essential in water shortage regions like Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. On the other hand, in areas like Gaya, in Northern Bihar, where there was an abundance of water, such close supervision was not needed. The farmers had to ensure only the maintenance of the irrigation system and not its distribution, which was not a problem.

Activity 2

Find out if a traditional water distribution and maintenance system exists in your region or somewhere known to you and visited by you. If you have not known about such a system, interview an elderly person who is above 60 years of age. She or he may be able to tell you about it. Basing on any of the above sources of information, write a note of about 250 words on traditional water distribution and maintenance system in pre-British India.

26.3.5 Participation in Maintenance

For distribution to be meaningful, the water resource had to refilled through regular rains and maintenance of the tanks. The main part of maintenance was desilting the tank every year and in some cases rebuilding its bunds in order to ensure that it retained water. This was done in every region by creating in people a vested interest in the silt itself in such a way that they had to desilt the tank in order to meet many of their other needs.

To begin with, a festive day was declared once a year in most communities, for all the villagers to come together and catch the fish in the tank just before the desilting season. After this followed the desilting season. Every region of the country found a definite use for the silt thus collected. In most part of the South, silt was used as manure for the fields. In many parts of interior Karnataka, the only manure that a coconut palm gets annually is one cartload of silt from the village tank. And in these areas coconuts are the main source of income for the people. Consequently, all the villagers had a vested interest in desilting the village tank since their livelihood depended on it. In Bengal and most of the East the desilting season coincided with the house repair and house building season and preceded the marriage season. The silt was, therefore, use to repair the existing houses in the village and to build new ones for the couples that would need them after their marriage (CSE 1987).

One should add, however, that neither the share of the benefits nor of the work was equitable. Much desilting work was done by the landless agricultural labourers. But they did not get much benefit out it other than drinking water. Even this benefit was denied to those who were known as untouchables. They were not allowed to draw water from the main tank reserved for the upper castes. They had to go to pond that was rarely well maintained since the powerful sections in the village did not have a vested interest in it.

Briefly, though there was participation in the distribution and management of the water resource, access to it was limited to the powerful. Those who did not have the same power, such as women, even those belonging to the powerful castes, and the landless from the low castes, had only limited access to it. One can still argue that as long as water remained a community resource, in some form or the other, its distribution to everyone was ensured, though it was not necessarily equitable for all the communities. In order to study changes in this situation, we need to look at water policy in India during both the British rule and the contemporary period. This will be the focus of the next section, .i.e. 26.4.

Check Your Progress 2

i)   Mark whether the statements given below are True or False.

   a)   The irrigation systems began only with the coming of the British.

                                                                    (True/False)

   b)   The main source of irrigation before the arrival of the British was tanks.   (True/False)

ii) For each of the following statements select the correct answer out of the option given below.

   a)   Before the arrival of the British most irrigation system were managed by

      1)   the State

      2)   all the landowners

      3)   committee of users.

   b)   The irrigation system evolved a management which paid attention to

      1)   only irrigation waster distribution

      2)   drinking water and irrigation

      3)   only drinking water.

c) The pre-British irrigation system ensured equal access to water by

  1) men and women like

  2) all the villagers

  3) the land-owning castes alone.

iii) Describe, in about seven lines, the traditional water distribution and maintenance systems in India.

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26.4 WATER POLICY IN THE COLONIAL AND CONTEMPORARY INDIA

As far as access to water by the majority is concerned, the water policy in India appears to benefit the powerful and the rich. During the British rule, this was in favour of the imperial powers. Later, after Independence, the development planning evolved strategies for increasing productivity, which in turn, mean major benefits of development going to the rich and the affluent.

26.4.1 The British Policy

The water policy of the British was limited to the aspect of irrigation. One cannot state with any certainty that they had a policy concerning drinking water. The irrigation policy itself was closely linked to the British land settlement system which was mainly for revenue and not for production (see Unit 25). The Permanent Settlement of 1793 which was implemented in most of Eastern India, was to ensure permanent revenue to the British. Hence the land revenue was fixed once and for all. As a result, the Government had little interest in encouraging irrigation as such. It was left to the Zamindars. However, the zamindar was for all practical purposes only a tax collector who did not have an interest in developing the land under his jurisdiction. The tenants could not invest much on their land since they have no ownership right. Whatever the production, 50 to 65 per cent of the produce went to the land land-owner, leaving no surplus to invest in the land.

However, when North India was annexed, the British found many functioning irrigation systems. Besides, based on the lessons of the Permanent Settlement of Bengal, they did not fix the revenue once for all. Hence, it was possible to maintain the canals and in some cases to extend them. In the South and West, smaller areas were annexed gradually and then joined to the Madras or Bombay Presidency. The land settlement in these areas was different from that of the East and the North. Instead of Zamindari (which gave land to the highest bidder who sublet it to the tenants), the State entered into direct contract with individual cultivators (ryots), who had to pay the rent directly to the Government. This

was the ryotwari system (Sen 1979: 9-12). The State had to intervene to ensure the maintenance of common resources like tanks and canals, since they could not be handed over to individuals. Besides, the Grand Anicut and other irrigation systems, already existing, had to be maintained. In Madras Presidency alone, more than 50,000 kilometres (km) of embankments had to be maintained.

To ensure this, the British formed a Department of Irrigation, as they would not recongise the traditional irrigation communities. However, in order to maintain the Grand Anicut, the British engineers had to learn indigenous technology as their engineering model was not useful there. Moreover, in order to ensure maintenance at a low cost and to learn the indigenous technology, they had to involve the local people. Hence, there was the possible of a model with people's participation evolving in the South.

However,, between 1860 and 1921, irrigation was declared a central (not a state or provincial) subject. During these years, irrigation in the North was taken over by the British engineers who viewed maintenance only as a technical problem, and did not think of either local technologies or the involvement of the people. During these years this model was imposed on the whole country. With this, focus shifted to what was considered "scientific management" of water, and access to the majority decreased. Also the involvement of the people decreased the and the maintenance of the tanks suffered, though some maintenance continued since the people needed the tanks. Only a few of the more than 30,000 tanks suffered every year. But the effect began to accumulate, and the access to their source of water by small farmers began to the reduced.

26.4.2 Water Policy after Independence

With independence began what in known as the era of planned development. The industrial, land, forest and water policies had to be changed accordingly. Higher productivity was one of the principles on which all these policies were based. The Five Year Plans kept repeating that productivity and distributive justice had to be combined in national development. Drinking Water, Drought-Prone Area Development, Small Farmers' Development, became part of this double approach to water management.

As in other resources, so also in water, the policy reflects the pressure coming from different sectors. And where there is pressure from contradictory forces, there is often an inclination to choose the strongest. This had happened in the forest policy (see Unit 27), in land management (see Unit 25) and was bound to happen also in water management. Higher productivity was essential. Only 9 per cent of the country's cultivated area was irrigated in 1950, and it was important to increase the area under irrigation. This had to be done fast, and the method found was to build large dams. Moreover, other forms of energy, mainly electricity, were needed, and water had to be exploited for this purpose too.

In this quest for fast development, it was assumed that the Western model was the only one available. The technology was, therefore, imported and major dams were built in order to make the natural resources as productive as possible. Little effort was made to study indigenous systems and to update them rather than replace them (see Gupta 1991: 140-145).

Slowly but surely, focus shifted towards the big farmers, since production had to be increased. This was done through the hybrid seeds, fertilisers, irrigation and mechanisation. Since dam water could not be made available to everyone, the farmers, were encouraged through subsidies to develop their own irrigation systems. Tube-wells became the norm for the farmers, who could afford them. India has a groundwater potential of 42.3 mham, and only 23.73 per cent of it is used. But what had hapended in recent decades is overexploitation of deep tube-wells and neglect of shallow sources. The number of tube-wells bored has increased from around 5,000 per year in the 1950s to around 2,00,000 per year today. Because of this, the water table has declined in many parts of India and open wells have dried up. The Central Water Board had identified 645 blocks where this had reached serious proportions.

In Unit 27, you shall see that industrial clearfelling of frorests had resulted in massive deforestation. Its consequences are soil erosion, droughts and floods. Many perennial streams like the Chos in the Shivalik Range in 'North-western India have become seasonal streams (CSE 1987).

26.4.3 Low Access to Water by the Majority

One finds that the overexploitation of water and of forests had combined to reduce the access to water by the poor and by women. Since many more tube-wells are bored, the water table has gone down considerably. Consequently, open wells and tanks are drying up. At the same time, also the village tanks previously maintained by the panchayat are now neglected. Most of the panchayat leaders are big farmers, who can afford their own tube-wells. As a result, they have lost the vested interest in the maintenance of the local drinking water and irrigation systems. As a result the poor do not have access not only to irrigation but also in many cases even to drinking water (Fernades 1988:92).

It was assumed by the policy-makers that productivity and justice could be combined. However, priority has been given to productivity and the policies have gone in favour of the big farmers. Around two-thirds of the India farmers are engaged in dry farming, and two-thirds of the agricultural development budget is devoted to irrigation and irrigation-based farming. This has resulted in a decline in overall agricultural productivity.

26.4.4 Displace: Who Pays the Price?

The big farmers and the better-off classes have gained access to water, and in the process, have deprived the small farmers, the poor and the housewives of access to the resource. The price of the big dams has been paid by the rural poor, particularly the tribals, the Scheduled Castes and other landless. They have paid the price in terms of their dislocation and consequent dispossession in the event of meager compensation by the state of their losses. The exact figures of the numbers of displaced are not available. But preliminary estimates indicate the around 140 lakh persons have been displaced by dams alone between 1951 and 1990.

The displaced are rarely the beneficiaries of the schemes. More than 40 per cent of those displaced by these schemes are the tribals, who form only 7.85 per cent of the total population of the country. Another 40 per cent are from the Scheduled Castes and other landless categories. None of them benefits from the dams and other development schemes that displace them (see Fernades and Thukral 1989 and Jain 1993).

It is not merely that they do not get the benefits of these schemes but also that their situation detreriorates. All the studies indicate that fewer than 30 per cent of the persons displaced by these schemes have been rehabilitated even 30 years after their displacement. Most of them are forced to rehabilitate themselves. Some of them do it by resorting to environmentally destructive practices, such as, cutting trees for sale as firewood. Many other migrate to the cities to fill the slums and are exploited further. A large number of them become bonded labourers. It is estimated that such bonded labourers form more than a quarter to the 5 million construction workers in the country (Fernades 1986: 269). Thus, those who pay the price of the development are deprived not merely of access to water, but also of their freedom and of their right to live as human beings.

Check Your Progress 3

i) "The British water policy alone is responsible for the low access to the resource by the majority." Is this true? Use six lines for you answer.

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ii) Link causes with effects

	Cause		Effect
a)	Sharecropping	1)	Water management with peoples participation
b)	Too many tube-wells	2)	Groundwater level goes down.
c)	Grand-Anicut to be maintained	3)	Displacement, mainly of the landless
d)	Competition between higher productivity and distribution justice	4)	Need to lean native technology.
e)	Major dams	5)	Department of irrigation organised
f)	Scientific management imposed on all	6)	Policy favours big farmers who can produce more.
g)	Tanks and canals to be maintained	7)	Lack of incentive to invest on irrigation

26.5   THE NATIONAL WATER POLICY 1987: DOES IT INCREASE ACCESS?

In the introduction, we mentioned the National Water Policy, 1987. The point has come for us to examine it in relation to the monopolisation of the resource by the few. We first observe what the national policy has set out to achieve, then we find out what happens at the level of its implementation. In the end, we offer some alternatives which, we hope, do provide possible answers to the problem of reduced access to water by the majority.

26.5.1 Setting of Priorities

It is the context of the strengthening of those who were already strong and further marginalisation of the weak that one has to examine in National Water Policy, 1987. To begin with, the priorities it sets are as follows. It speaks of

- Drinking water

- Irrigation

- Hydropower

- Industrial use, in that order.

But the policy document states immediately that these priorities can be modified in particular regions, according to their needs. It also sets

- a target of 1991 to provide adequate drinking water to the entire population

- that persons displaced by irrigation projects should be rehabilitated

- that in water management special attention should be paid to the needs of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes (see Fernades 1988: 92-93).

26.5.2 Strategy for the Strong

When it comes to planning a strategy, it concentration seems to be primarily on irrigation and hydropower, i.e. on what the British called "scientific management" of water whose benefits have till now reached only to the powerful. The policy statement speaks of the need to exchange water between rivers, and to utilise the existing resources to the maximum. Not once are women mentioned in the statement though in the present division of labour in the country, they are responsible for ensuring the regular supply of water the family.

Similarly, focus is on irrigation dams, most of which will be in the forest areas, particularly in those inhabited by the tribals. While passing references are made to the need to give priority to the development of the tribals no concrete policy has been worked out either in this document or elsewhere for the rehabilitation of the displaced persons. Finally, the policy statement does not give any importance to dry and arid zones. Water utilisation, is, thus, only for those who can afford irrigated lands.

WATER A SCARCE COMMODITY
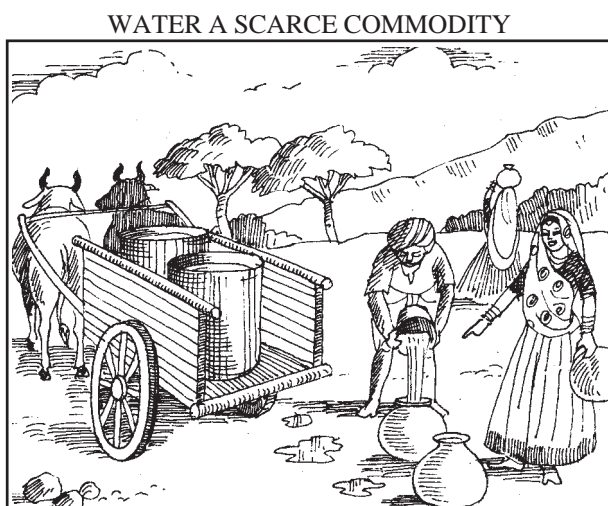
26.5.3   Possible Alternatives

Alternatives to this situation of marginalisation are possible. Only the Western model of sophisticated technology and engineering models is so far taken as the norm in planning development strategies in India. Dams are thought of as the only possible source of water. Consequently, the tribals and other rural poor are displaced in order to supply irrigation water to the farmers in the coastal areas, to industry and for household consumption in cities. The following are some of the suggestions.

i)   **Desalinisation of Water**

A suggestion is that as India has a 6,000 km. long coastal line, it should be possible to desalinate water for use in the coastal areas of even in its immediate hinterland. The present desalination technology is extremely expensive because in belongs to the 1950s. There is no reason why research should not be done on new low-priced technology for desalination which can solved the water problem of most of the coastal areas and several other regions in the hinterland.

ii) **Increase Use of Solar Energy**

Similarly, another suggestion is that most regions in India have 300 days of sunshine in a year. But the solar energy has only marginal importance in today's energy policy. The present solar technology is expensive. In fact, in 1988 the creation of the infrastructure for 1 megawatt (mw) of soalr electric power cost Rs. 4 crores as against Rs. 3 crores for thermal plants and Rs. 2 crores for hydel power. But very little research in being done on solar technology meant for the new century. What we have belongs to the 1970s and 1980s. Instead of displacing more people and depriving the poor of access to water and to livelihood itself, it is important to invest on energy saving devices, such as, solar power.

iii) **Diversion of Polluted Water as Fertiliser**

The pollution of water, too, is preventable. The Industrial, as well as human waste is diverted to rivers and the sea, thus, polluting the water the human beings need for their survival. Instead, it can be treated and used as fertiliser, resulting in both savings of foreign exchange and unpolluted water. Quite a bit of the foreign currency wasted for importing fertilisers either in its finished form or as raw material can thus be saved while reducing water pollution.

iv) **Ban on Wastage of Water**

Much water that can be made available to the poor is wasted in the cities to water its gardens, to clean middle class houses, etc. Electric power is wasted for street lighting. Do not think that we are against watering grarden , cleaning a house or lighting a street . All this is necessary and must be done . We suggest that it should be done in a more environment –conscious manner. One sees no reason why sewage treatment plants should not become the norm, why biogas thus produced should not light the city streets, the water cleaned form it used for watering gardens and for fields. Better implementation of anti – pollution laws can prevent industrial pollution. You would be interesting to inform you that the residential campus of IGNOU is having Swage Treatment Plant. Here all the used water is treated and thereafter used for the gardening and the horticulture purposes in a very big way.

v) Watershed Management

Afforestation schemes as part of the watershed management are crucial for increased access to water. Where this had been done, one has noticed a rise in the groundwater table. At G.R. Hally of Karnataka, for example, where 199 ha in a watershed of 314 ha were afforested, groundwater increased considerably and the irrigated area rose by more than 50 per cent. Water harvesting through a combination of soil conservation and collection of water in tanks built in areas with more than 500 mm of rain per year can, according to one estimate, harvest 90 mham of water. Experience in Sukhomajri near Chandigarh and other experiments in parts of Himachal Pradesh have shown that these tanks can be built at the cost of Rs. 5,000 per hectare irrigated. The comparative figures per hectares irrigated are Rs. 15,000 to 25,000 spent by major dams (Agarwal, D. Monte and Samarth 1987).

vi) Construction of Small Dams

There are also indications that a large number of major dams are utilised at only about 30 per cent of their capacity and their lifespan has been reduced by half, because of siltation of their reservoirs (Singh, Kothari and Amin 1992: 173-174). Instead of building more dams that displace people and destroy the environment, the capacity utilisation of these dams can be doubled by desilting their reservoirs and afforesting their catchment areas. Less destructive smaller dams are yet another alternative. It is possible to use indigenous technologies for these dams since local artisans have a tradition of building them. These measures can create many jobs in the locality instead of displacing millions and abandoning them without rehabilitation.

Activity 3

If the water policy does not provide an access to water by the manority, list, in an order of priority, possible alternatives to provide it. Select one of the alternatives which you consider to be appropriate to your region. Now imagine that you are a member of the committee responsible for implementation of water policy in India. Work out, in a note of about 300 words, how you would like to develop in your region the alternatives selected by you.

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vii) Water as a Community Resource

Many other alternative can be thought of. What is important, is to fix one's priorities and get away from the policy of the further strengthening the already powerful. Water has to be thought of as a community resource and not as individual property. Restrictions have to be put on its overexploitation by a few powerful individuals at the cost of the majority. The vested interest of big farmers and building contractors seems to prevent these alternatives. Efforts to control overexploitation of water by a few individuals have failed in most cases. For example, in 1975 a bill introduced in the Gujarat Assembly declaring water a common resource whose use by individuals should be regulated for common good. This bill was not allowed to be passed into law, and no effort has been made since then to reintroduce it either in Gujarat or in any other state (Bhatia 1988: 156). It is important to take decisions concerning common resources, according to the criterion of Mahatma Gandhi: "Recall the face of the poorest and the most helpless man who you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him."

Check Your Progress 4

i)   Why has the National Water Policy, 1987, not increased the actual access to the water resource by the majority? Use two lines for your answers.

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ii) Should the national water policy statement mention the role of the women in the division of labour in the context of supply of drinking water? Use three lines for your answer.

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26.6   LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we discussed at first the present situation of water management in India, and noticed that access of the poor to this resource is much less than that of powerful. To understand this, we went back to the water management systems in pre-British India and studied British and post-independence water policies. We noticed that water was relatively speaking more of a common property before the British evolved their revenue-based policy. However, unlike other resource like the forests, even in pre-British times, access to water as a source of irrigation was limited to the powerful land-owning groups. Water distribution and maintenance were participatory, but only as far as the asset owning communities were concerned. The assetless and the weaker sections were excluded. Even this participation was later reduced by the revenue-based British irrigation policy.

The trend has been further strengthened by the post-independence era of planned development. Focus has been on maximizing the productivity of the natural resources. In order to increase power generation and the area under irrigation, concentration has been mainly on the big dams that have displaced people particularly from the weaker sections. The beneficiaries are the already powerful categories.

26.7   KEY WORDS

Common Property Resource (CPR) : An asset belonging to the whole community which it uses with definite rules of distribution in such a way that every user gets his/her share.

Evapotranspiration : Evaporation of water through transpiration by plants.

Hectare Metre : 10,000 cubic metres.

Permanent Settlement	:	The settlement of the land-ownership pattern carried out by the British in the Bengal Presidency in 1973. In this system, a whole area or several villages were auctioned to the highest bidder (zamindar). The zamindar was to pay a fixed amount of the revenue to the government every year. He collected this tax by subletting the land to the tenants.
Precipitation	:	Fall of rain, sleet, snow or other forms of water.
Ryot	:	The cultivator (ryot) who entered in direct contract with the government and paid taxes to the State instead of being a tenant of zamindar. This system was practiced, mainly, in the southern regions of India.
Ryotwari	:	The tenant of the area where the ryots entered into direct agreement with the government..
Sharecropper	:	The tenant to whom the zamindars in the Permanent Settlement area sublet their land not at a fixed rent but a share of the produce. The share ranged from 50 per cent to 75 per cent of the harvest.
Transpiration	:	The process of water passing off in the form of a vapour from such living bodies as plants.
Watershed	:	It is a natural geographical unit drained by a natural stream within a catchment area with the upper boundary marked by a ridge line and the bottom boundary extending along the valley up to a point beyond which the lands do not require immediate attention. The sise of a mini-watershed varies from 100 to 500 hectares and may be inhabited by 100 to 300 families.
Weir	:	Wall or barrier across a river to control the flow of water. Fence of stake or broken branches in a stream as a trap for catching fish.
Zamindar	:	The highest bidder to who the whole area was given at the Permanent Settlement. He sublet the land to tenants and sharecroppers.

26.8 FURTHER READINGS

Agarwal, Anil, Darryl D'Monte and Ujwala Samarth (eds.) 1987. *The Fight for Survival: Peopl's Action for Environment.* Centre for Science and Environment: New Delhi.

CSE, 1987. The Wrath of Nature: *The Impact of Environmental Destruction on Floods and Droughts.* Centre for Science and Environment: New Delhi.

Fernandes, Walter and Enakshi Ganguly Thukral (eds.), 1989. *Development, Displacement and Rehabilation: Isses for a National Debate.* Indian SOcial Institute: New Delhi.

Sen Gupta, Nirmal, 1991. *Managing Common Property: Irrigation Systems in Idnia and the Philippines.* Sage Publications: New Delhi.

26.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

i)   False

ii)   True

iii) False

iv)   True

Check Your Progress 2

i)   a)   False

    b)   True

ii)   a)   2

    b)   1

iii) Traditionally, the same source of water was used both for domestic purposes and for irrigation. Both needed social mechanisms for equitable distribution. Little is know about equitable accounts for drinking water, while some historical monuments provide the evidence of wide-scale arrangements for irrigation. Large dams were built during the Mughal period and we find remains of many tanks, bunds, ponds and wells. Some are still in use. The village Panchayat decided rules for governing use of water from these sources. Equitable distribution was ensured by appointing official to supervise operations involved in distribution of water for irrigation fields.

Check Your Progress 3

i)   The British water policy is partly responsible for the lack of access to the resource by the majority. It is clear that in India the water policy during the period of post-Independence has also resulted in the lack of access to water by the majority Even now, the powerful and the affluent have relatively more access to almost all resource including the water resources and the poorer and weaker sections of society are deprived of even the minimum access to as essential a resource as water.

ii) **Link causes with effects.**

a=7; b=2; c=4; d=6; e=3; f=1; g=5

Sharecropping	-	Lack of incentive to invest on irrigation
Too many tube-wells	-	Ground water table declines
Grand Anicut to be maintained	-	Need to learn native technology.
Competition between higher productivity and distributive justice.	-	Policy favours big farmers who can produce more
Major dams	-	Displacement, mainly of the landless.
Scientific management imposed on all	-	Water management with people's participation discouraged.
Tanks and canals to be maintained	-	Department of irrigation organised.

Check Your Progress 4

i) The National Water Policy, 1987 has, **on paper**, accepted the need of access to water by the majority. At the level of implementation of the policy, even now most water management is in the fields of providing irrigation and hydropower. Both give benefits to the already powerful and rich.

ii) Both in rural and urban areas, women are, by and large, responsible for housekeeping which requires an adequate supply of water for domestic use. Women are, therefore, directly linked to ways and means of acquiring water for domestic use. It is then natural to expect that the national water policy should recognise and mention the special role of women in the area of use of water. Further, it should also spell out how women can get better access to water, without being forced to carry it on their head from far off sources of water to their dwellings.

UNIT 27   FORESTS: ACCESS, CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT

Structure

27.0   OBJECTIVES

In this unit we are discussing the present situation of forests in the country and attempting to understand it by going back to its historical background. After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- describe the situation of forests as it exists today;

- outline the traditional link between the tribal and forests till the First Forest Policy;

- understand and describe the main features of Forest Legislation from 1854 to 1988;

- discuss the role played by industry, revenue and the forest dwellers in the depletion of this resource today;

- discuss the environmental impact of deforestation;

- evaluate the impact of deforestation on the people; and

- suggests possible solutions of deforestation and the alienation of forest dwellers.

27.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous two units of this block, we talked about the resources of land (Unit 25) and water (Unit 26). Both these resources are vitally linked to the state of forests in the country. As long as we have plenty of forests, we do not realise their importance. It is only after their depletion and its impact on our survival that we begin to pay attentions to the causes and result of disappearing tree cover.

During the last two decades more and more persons in this country have become aware of the serious harm caused to the environment and to the people, particularly the tribals who live, by and large, in and around forests, by massive deforestation in India. The first part of the unit (section 27.2) discusses the state of India's forests today. The beginning of the problem can be traced back to the 19th century when the traditional constructive link (section 27.3) was broken and a new Forest Policy was introduced. With every new step in this Policy, the forest dwellers were further alienated from their life support system till they were declared enemies of the forest (section 27.4). Slowly the people who had till then safeguarded forests, began to destroy them. Forests are thus being depleted and its consequences are felt in the form of soil erosion, floods, droughts etc. (section 27.5). More than that, it has a major negative impact on the people, particularly the communities like the tribals who had traditionally depended on it as a life support system and had established a constructive relationship with it (section 27.6). We shall, in the end, suggest possible solution to deforestation (section 27.7).

27.2 THE SITUATION OF FORESTS TODAY

According to the National Forest Policy of 1952, as well as the one of 1988, the country should have 33 per cent of its land under tree cover, namely, 60 per cent in the hill areas and 20 per cent in the plains. In reality, however, only 22 per cent of the country's landmass or 77 million hectare (ha) are controlled by all the forest departments of the States. But less than half of this area has a tree cover. The rest of it can be described as forests without trees. What is worse, every year the country is losing around 1.3 million hectares of forests and only around 5,00,000 hectares are replanted. At this rate, most of the country's tree cover may disappear within the next 20 years. In this Unit, we want to understand the implication of this situation.

The depletion of forests is attributed to:

- population explosion among the forest dwellers

- shifting cultivation, i.e. slash and burn cultivation

- fuelwood consumption – since around 100 million tonnes of it are used every year

- the industrial orientation of the Forest Policy.

We shall first examine the traditional forest management systems of the forest dwellers and then look at recent policy measures. We will then analyse deforestation within this historical perspective. This exercise will help us to appreciate

a) the gravity of the current crisis in the area of control and management of forests

b) the need for seeking better alternatives for a Forest Policy for India.

INDIA FORESTRY STATISTICS 2000
AREA

Distribution of Geographical Area and Actual Forest cover			
State/UT	Geographical Area (sp km.)	Actual Forest cover (Sq. km.)	Actual Forest Cover as % of Geographical area
1	2	3	4
Andhra Pradesh	275068	43290	15.74
Arunachal Pradesh	83743	68602	81.92
Assam	78438	23824	30.37
Bihar	173877	26524	15.25
Goa, Daman & Diu	3814	1255	32.91
Gujarat	196024	12578	6.42
Haryana	44212	604	1.37
Himachal Pradesh	55673	12521	22.49
Jammu & Kashmir	222235	20440	9.20
Karnataka	191791	32403	16.89
Kerala	38863	10334	26.59
Madhya Pradesh	443446	131195	29.59
Maharashtra	307690	46143	15.00
Manipur	22327	17418	78.01
Meghalaya	22429	15657	69.81
Mizoram	21081	18775	89.06
Nagaland	16579	14221	85.78
Orissa	155707	46941	30.15
Punjab	50362	1387	2.75
Rajasthan	342239	13353	3.90
Sikkim	7096	3129	44.10
Tamil Nadu	130058	17064	13.12
Tripura	10486	5546	52.89
Uttar Pradesh	294411	33994	11.55
West Bengal	88752	8349	9.41
A & N Islands	8249	7613	92.29
Chandigarh	114	7	6.14
D & N Haveli	491	204	41.55
Delhi	1483	26	1.75
Lakshadweep	32	-	-
Pondicherry	493	-	-
All India	3287263	633397	19.27

Source: Government of India 2000. Ministry of Environment & Forest.

27.3 TRADITIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

The National Remote Sensing Agency reported in 1984 that India was annually losing 1.3 million hectares (ha) of forests and the end of 1985 it was estimated that India lost 34 per cent of its forest area. Does this mean that India has a vigorous tradition of destroying its forests? Far from it, the fact is that about a hundred and fifty year ago, India was quite green and its tree cover was adequate in terms of ecological balance and the needs of its industry and people. Let us here examine the traditional relationship between forests and the people.

27.3.1 Extent of Dependence on Forests

Such massive destruction of forests has not been the tradition of India. It is estimated that when the first Forest Policy of British controlled India was promulgated in 1854, the subcontinent which then comprised also the present day Pakistan and Bangladesh, had 40 per cent of its territory under tree cover. A hundred years later, when the first Post-Independence Forest Policy was promulgated in 1952, the tree cover had gone down to an estimated 22 per cent. In other words, during the one century, the country had lost tree cover of around 18 per cent of its territory or 0.18 per cent year. Thirty years later, during the Sixth five Year Plan (1980-85), the tree cover of the country was estimated to be around 10 per cent and today it is probably around 9 per cent. In other words, the loss during the first 30 years of planned development was of the order of 12 per cent or 0.4 per cent of the country's landmass per year. One cannot say that the loss of the tree cover has been only because of population increase. Other, probably more important, causes exist and these must be properly listed.

When we go back to the history of forests in India, we realise that before the first Forest Policy of India in 1854, the forest dwellers in rural India in general and the tribals in particular, had developed what has come to be known as a symbiotic relationship between forests and people. Symbiotic relationship refers to the living together, in close association of two dissimilar organisms. In this case, the forests and the people depended on each other. Because of this dependence, most rural populations in India developed a whole series of practices and beliefs geared to preserving the forests and other natural resources. The traditional thinking was that resources such as forests, land and water belonged to the whole community and not to any individual. Every family was allowed to use the resources for its needs. These resources were to be preserved for posterity, i.e. for all the generations to come.

27.3.2 Protection of Ecosystems in Traditional Management

To ensure that forests were treated as a community resource, every rural and forest dweller community in general and the tribals in particular, followed four modes of protection of forests.

i) **Protection of Sacred Groves**

Most tribal and rural communities give evidence of holding certain patches of forest land as special and therefore to be protected. Some ecosystems were identified as special, as such to be preserved from all destruction. Most

communities along the West Coast had such forests. they were called **devaranya** (God's grove) in Maharashtra, **nagaranya** (serpent's grove) in Karnataka, and **serpakkadu** (serpent inhabited jungle) in Kerala. These were considered sacred. As such, no sickle or axe could be used in them. Only fruits that could be plucked or dry twigs that could be broken with one's hands or dry leaves and other material that had fallen down were allowed to be used.

Most tribals in India are known to have preserved three such systems. In Chotanagpur they were known as sarna, sasan and akhara and by other names elsewhere (Gupta, Banerjee and Guleria 1981: 9). Sarna is the place where the teenager boys were traditionally sent for training into adulthood. During these months of training they had to live in the forest and survive on what they could cut or kill with their hands. These young men were considered the future warriors of the tribe and as such provided continuity to it. The sasan was the burial ground in the forest. The ancestors were buried in these places and as such it was the sign of the continuity of the tribe. In many places such as Chotanagpur in Bihar, the tombstone of an ancestor was the only "document" a family required to prove its right to cultivate land in that village. The akhara was the dancing ground, a clearing in the forest, where young men and women met. On the annual festival day known as Dongora-dongari among the Konds of Western Orissa and by other names in other tribes, they chose their life partners, as such, that was the place where the future couples were chosen and children to continue the tribe were ensured (Fernandes, Menon and Viegas 1988: 161-163). Thus, the tribals preserved these ecosystems by linking them to the continuity of the tribe and by declaring them the house of their gods. These practices are, in many cases, a part of totemic beliefs among the tribal groups. To know about what is a totem and what are totemic beliefs, you are advised to read Block 3 of ESO-03 and Block 1 of ESO-05. You are also advised to watch the video programme, **'Religious Symbols'**, prepared for Block 1 of ESO-05. It will suffice here to say that in the world view of many tribal groups certain birds, animals, vegetation, groves, places are linked to the way they conceptualise their social structure. They worship these particular species and therefore also preserve them.

Activity 1

Myths associated with forests are part of each region's folklore. Collect two stories related to forests in your area and show how they reflect the close links between forests and the people.

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ii) **Protection of Important Species**

The second methods was to declare some economically crucial trees sacred and ban their cutting. Also some animals that were important for the survival of the tribe were declared sacred. Forest and rural populations in all parts of India, declared peepal (which is a very important medicinal plant), Tulasi, banyan etc. sacred and preserved them. The tribals added a much bigger number of economically important trees to the list, for example, sal, mahua, sahada, salap, etc. Besides, they created myths to link these economically important trees to the origin of the tribe. The Kond tribals of Kalahandi of Orissa believe that when the whole world was sub-merged in water and all the people died, two children survived on a hill and the salap tree gave them its juice and saved them from starvation. From these two children emerged the Kond tribals. As such salap is linked to the origin of all the tribals. The Gonds of Koraput

believe that their ancestors were born from the cow's feet (or god) from which comes the name of the tribe. The Konds of Ganjam speak of the first ancestors coming from **bel** fruit, **sarai wood**, **karela** etc. Hence, all these are declared sacred since they are linked to the origin of the tribe. The tribals are, therefore, told that their tribe itself will disappear if they allow these trees to be cut. Here, it is not out of place to refer to the theories of origin of religion among the primitive people. You may like to read Block 3 of ESO-03 and Block 1 of ESO-05, where under Durkheim's theory to totemism you will read about this very link between flora and fauna and the people.

iii) Equitable Distribution of Forest Produce

The third way of preserving the forests and other resources was through rules concerning distribution with justice. There were definite rules governing the use of fuelwood. For example, among the tribals of Dhenkanal in Orissa, every family was allowed to take one headhoad of fuelwood per week and in most of Chhattisgarh in Eastern Madhya Pradesh, every family was allowed one cartload per month. Similar regulations existed also in other parts of India. Every area found its own method of ensuring distribution of forest produce in such a way that everyone's needs were met but the resource was not destroyed by a few persons trying to get for themselves more than their due. Mahatma Gandhi echoed the essence of this culture when he said: "The world has enough for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed."

Among the tribal communities women played an important role both in use and in the preservation of forests and other natural resources. They controlled the family economy, the work around shifting cultivation and other resources. You can say that they had a bigger vested interest in preserving these resources than men had and this gave them control over much of the decision-making in the family. This indicates also the relatively higher status of women in most tribal societies (Fernandes and Menon 1987: 72-80).

iv) Appropriate Technology

Finally, the forest dwellers preserved forests also through appropriate technology. This can be seen, for example, in shifting cultivation which is considered the best form of cultivation for slopes up to 20 degrees where either settled or terraced cultivation is not advisable. The tribals cultivated the highest slopes before the monsoons in such a way that the roots grew and soil was preserved when rains came. After that they would sow other crops in such a way that shifting cultivation provided some food every month from October to March, giving them a balanced diet. They cultivated an area for three years and left it fallow for 18-20 years for forests to grow again. Similar appropriate technology can be noticed in the cutting of trees and bamboos which they did in such a way as to ensure coppicing, i.e. new shoots coming out of the old one without damaging the surroundings (Gadgil 1989: 15-167).

Check Your Progress 1

i) State, in a few line, the extent of India's tree over when the British stated their first Forest Policy in 1854.

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ii)   What is a symbiotic relationship? Use two lines for your answer.

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iii)   What is a sarana? Use one line for your answer.

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iv)   What was the use of a sasan among the tribals of Chotanagpur? Use one line for your answer.

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27.4   FOREST POLICY, STATE CONTROL AND DENIAL OF ACCESS TO FORESTS

The ownership pattern with forests as a people's community resource changed to one of State ownership with the first Forest Policy of British controlled India in 1854. The trend has continued also after independence and it is getting stronger now to such an extent that the people who have treated forests for centuries as a community resource are today considered enemies of forests. Why has this happened? That is what we shall try to understand in this section.

27.4.1   Forest Policy and State Ownership

The first feature of the British Forest Policy of 1854 and of the others that have followed till 1988, is state ownership. This is essentially alienation of the communities from forests which they had till then preserved as a community resource. The Forest Policy of 1854 was dictated by the British need for timber mainly as a source of revenue and for ship building for colonial wars in other countries. Later, timber was also required for railway sleepers. They had already destroyed the forests in Britain and in their colonies in southern Africa and needed more timber from India. Consequently the Forest Policy declared forests a national asset. They therefore, ceased to be the life support system of the tribals and other forest dwellers.

Efforts were made to introduce what was called **scientific management** by which was meant getting the highest possible revenue from forests. With this in view, the species that would give revenue were to be planted in preference to those that the people needed for survival. A German, Dietrich Brandis, was appointed the first Inspector General of Forests (IGF), in order to ensure "scientific management". Some village forests were kept apart for the people and the rest were declared reserve forests that belonged to the State. No prior survey was made to people's needs before making this division. In most cases what was left for the people was inadequate to meet their needs. Besides, the people were given some rights in the forests, such as the right to collect flowers, fruits and fuelwood for personal consumption (Gadgil 1983: 166-119).

27.4.2 Conflict Between State and People

With this trend towards State ownership, the foundation was laid for the conflict between the State and the people on the one hand and alienation of the people from the forests on the other. This conflict intensified as the tree cover decreased and the British needed more revenue from forests. This became evident in the Forest Policy on 1897. In this document, what was earlier referred to as **rights of the people** was changed to "rights and privileges". Slowly the rights of the people began to be underplayed and what they required was viewed only as privileges. This approach was enacted into a law in the **Indian Forest Act 1927.** Much more than in earlier documents, it spoke of the forest dwellers as encroachers on State property.

27.4.3 National Forest Policy after Independence

One would have expected this to change with independence, i.e. with Indians running their own country. In reality the, trend has been intensified. The very first Forest Policy after Independence, the National Forest Policy 1952 , changed the terms "right and privileges" to "**rights and concessions**". It certainly spoke about safeguarding people's interests, environmental needs as well as industrial and revenue requirements. But the focus appeared to be on **concessions** rather than on **rights.** This list of rights (known as **nishtar**) remained with the Division Forest Officers and was rarely communicated to the people. What the forest dwellers needed from the forest was thought of as concessions from the State, the owner of the forest. The National Forest Policy continued to favour the industries and manage forests with their interests in focus (Fernades 1988: 88-91). It results were as follows:

i)   **Industry and Forest Management**

This trend itself is understandable. Apart from being a source of revenue, national development had industrialisation as its cornerstone. It viewed the natural resources, such as forests and water as a raw material whose productivity has to be maximised. In order to encourage industrialisation, particularly in the backward areas (and forest areas were also backward), industrial raw materials were highly subsidised. For example, in the mid-1970s, in Karnataka a notional tonne (that is 2,400 running meters) of industrial bamboo was sold to the paper mills at Rs. 15/- while the ordinary people paid the equivalent of Rs. 1,200/-. Even in 1981-82, the paper mills in Madhya Pradesh got a four metre bamboo for 54 p. while ordinary people had to pay more than 2/- for it (Fernades, Menon an Viegas 1988: 204-207).

The result is that industrialists got the raw material so cheap that they had no vested interest whatever, in reforesting the area from which they cut bamboo or timber. Moreover, in many cases they gave up the coppicing technology which they considered too slow and expensive. The resource had to be exploited in the most economically profitable manner. So they often resorted to clearfelling, i.e., cutting trees and bamboos from a whole plot at one stroke. Besides, the industrialists began by cutting the trees that were the closest to the village from which the people got most of the produce they needed, since the area was accessible at least by bullock carts. Once the resource close to the village was exhausted, they would move away from the there and keep exhausting tones of bamboo and timber produced in the country (Gadgil 1989: 8-10). India's 175 paper mills consume 50 per cent of the bamboo. The people

are often deprived of what they need. Moreover, 4.5 mha of forest land is estimated to have been used up for building developmental infrastructure such as dams, mines and industries.

ii) Industrial Clear-felling and People's Impoverishment

With the clearfelling of forests near their villages the people were gradually deprived of their food and other daily needs. The consequence was their impoverishment. This began a vicious circle that broke the symbiotic relationship between the people and forests. Because of impoverishment the forest dwellers fell into the clutches of the moneylender whose appearance coincided with introduction of the industrialist. As the tribals were deprived of access to more and more forests, their impoverishment and indebtedness increased. Slowly they lost their land to the money lender, became overdependent on shifting cultivation and started to overexploiting their plots. Increased population only added to the problem. As a result of all these factors, the shifting cultivation cycle has come down from 18-20 years 30 years ago to as little as 6 years in Orissa, 12 years in the North-east and 3 years in many parts of Western India. Many tribals now resort to the sale of firewood as the only source of survival, or work as wage labourers under timeber contractors and smugglers (Fernades, Menon and Viegas 1988: 224-230).

One can thus notice that the forest dwellers, particularly the tribals, who had developed a culture of preserving forests while using them for their needs, are today destroying the same resource for survival. Formerly they had what can be called a constructive dependence on forests. Today because of the vicious circle of their impoverishment and indebtedness caused by the industrialists the tribals are deprived of their access to forest products. They are forced into what can be called destructive dependence. In other words, they destroy or overexploit the forest for survival. Before discussing other consequence of this management and control of forests on behalf of industry, we shall study the environmental consequences of this approach.

Check Your Progress 2

i) What were the main British legislative measures regarding forests in India and why were they enacted?

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ii) What vicious circle has led to the change of tribal culture due to the national policy on forests? What post-independence measures led to it?

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27.5   ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The above mentioned state of the country's forests has brought about the following environmental degradation.

27.5.1   Depletion of Tree Cover

The first consequence of this vicious circle is depletion of the tree cover which is today estimated to be around 9 per cent of the total area. It has resulted in soil erosion. Trees with large leaves protect the oil from wind, sun and rain. They preserve also the moisture in the soil required to maintain the water table. Studies in Russia have shown a 4 per cent loss in precipitation with 10 per cent reduction change in the tree cover. At distance of 100 meters from a forested area, soil erosion per hectare was 2.1 tonnes. It was 14.6 tonnes at 300 meters and 38.4 tonnes at 600 meters. Hills in the vicinity of Chandigarh were found to be releasing 900 tonnes of soil per year after trees were cut (CSE 1987).

Studies, like those of Madhav Gadgil (1989) of Bangalore, indicate that India loses around 6 billion tones of soil annually. 10 per cent of it is washed out into the sea, 69 per cent is deposited in rivers and the reservoirs of large dams. In the Maithon Dam, Bihar, for example, it was assumed that 1.62 hectare metres (ham) would be silted in every 100 sq. km. But later observation has shown that it is 13.10 ham. In Nazim Sagar it is 6.55 hectare meters against the original assumption of 0.29 (CPR 1985: 6). Similar figures can be produced for all the major dams. Consequently, their life span has probably been reduced by more than half. To this should be added the silting of rivers because of deforestation and soil erosion in the catchment area. The level of the Brahmaputra has risen by 1.98 meters in 20 years and the Ganga by more than 5 meters.

27.5.2   Floods and Droughts

The inability of the soil to absorb water, due to the rise in the river bed and siltation of dams causes massive flooding. According to the National Flood Commission, the flood-prone area of the country has increased from 19 mha in 1960 to 59 mha in 1984. The number of persons affected by flood rose from 5.2 million in 1960 to 15.4 million in 1970. In 1978 as many as 70 million persons were affected. In 2002 more than 100 million persons were affected by flood. To this should be added the damage caused by disruption of communications and from loss of production.

Along with floods, droughts too seem to be on the increase. During the last 30 years there have been three or four drought years per decade in the country as a whole, as against a total of four years in the four decades from 1920 to 1960. Studies like those of the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE 1987) and of India Social Institute (Fernandes 1987), New Delhi, show the situation is worse in the tribal areas where there was thick forest a few years ago. In southern Rajasthan, Saurashtra and Kutch in Gujarat, the Kalahandi district of Orissa and in parts of northern Karnataka and southern Tamil Nadu, there have been 6 to 8 successive years of drought.

The expenses incurred on flood and drought relief keep increasing. During the first Five Year Plan, the country spent as average of Rs. 5.64 crores a year on

it. In the late 1980s, it was around Rs. 1,200/- crores per year. To this should be added money that is spent on reconstructing all the facilities and communication systems that are destroyed by floods. The amount thus spent becomes enormous. This amount could better be spent on people's development.

Activity 2

What is, in your opinion, the most important environmental consequence of degradation of forests. For answering this question, observe your invironment for various consequences of depletion of tree cover and read about it in old newspaper-clippings and other sources of information. You can also discuss the matter with your friends and the IGNOU Counsellor before writing a note of 250 words on this theme.

27.5.3 Deforestation and Rainfall

Some studies like those of B.C. Biswas (1980) in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, S. Kalitha and S.K. Sharma (1981) in Assam, P.C. Agarwal (1976) in Madhya Pradesh and V.M. Meher-Homji (1988) in the South indicate that there is a link between deforestation and reduced rainfall. More studies are required in this field before reaching definite conclusions. However, most of us do know about the link between trees and rain. This known, in technical terms, as the hydrological cycle. Forests protect and stabilise soils. Rainwater in a forested area is clear and carries only 5 per cent of sediments while in an area denuded of forest the rainwater is opaque and carries 60 per cent of sediment.

27.6 CONSEQUENCES FOR THE PEOPLE

We have already mentioned the change of culture among the people. Those who had treated forests as a renewable resource and had used them in a balanced manner in order to preserve them for future generations, have today started destroying them for survival. They have been forced into this vicious circle by impoverishment and indebtedness. In a study in Orissa (Fernandes, Menon and Viegas 1988), for example, it is found that around 20 per cent of the tribals have lost their land to the moneylender because of impoverishment caused by deforestation. Today they survive through destructive practices. Briefly, people's impoverishment is a major consequence. Many of them are forced by it into destroying forests by overexploiting shifting cultivation plots, or by selling firewood for fuel or by cutting trees as wage-labourers. In the following sub-sections we will discuss some more consequences of the present state of forests on the people.

27.6.1 Migration and Exploitation

In the above mentioned study on the tribals of Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, an enormous increased was noticed in the number of bonded labourers as a result of impoverishment and indebtedness. A large number of them migrate to other States as plantation, construction or road labourers and often are not allowed to return to their families. This has also been seen in studies of migrant labourers in Manipur, construction workers during the Asian Games in 1982 in Delhi and others elsewhere. A recent study in Delhi shows that there has been a major migration of tribals and other forest dwellers to the city slums during

the last two decades because of deforestation and displacement by development projects. They can only become unskilled urban labourers and be further exploited (Fernandes 1990).

27.6.2 Malnutrition, Ill health and Break-up of the Community

Another consequence is the deterioration in the physical condition of the tribals. It has been calculated by persons like Almas Ali (1980) in Orissa that the average daily food intake of tribals like the Konds in around 1,700 calories as against the minimum requirement of 2,400 calories. This loss is the highest in milk, meat, fruits and nuts in which the area abounded before deforestation. As a result of this deficiency, their physical condition deteriorates. Moreover, because of ecological destabilisation, new diseases related to pollution and other factors in environment appear. Besides, for centuries tribals had depended on medicinal herbs that grew in the forests. With deforestation they are deprived of these herbs. The primary health centres are in towns 10-15 km. away. As a result they are unable to visit them except when their illness reaches a dangerous point (Agarwal and Narain 1985).

Shortage of resources leads to competition for them creating conditions for the break up of the community that had earlier enforced the practice of equitable distribution of the forest produce. A few better off persons not merely from outside, but even among the tribals and other forest dwellers, gain for themselves access to a bigger share of the resources than is their due, thus depriving the poor of the little that would have been available to them (Fernandes, Menon and Viegas 1988: 226-227).

27.6.3 Tension with Forest Officials

With the shortage of resources, and the poor being forced to sell firewood for survival, the already bad relations between the forest officials and the people deteriorate further. Greater exploitation of the poor by the forest officials follows: On the exploitation of forest dwellers, Joshi (1983) writes.

> The various kinds of restrictions imposed on the forest dwellers virtually put them at the mercy of the FD (Forest Department) especially lower level functionaries. Illiteracy and poor economic conditions make their situation more vulnerable. Taking advantage of the cold attitude of the officials of the FD the lower levell functionaries, such as forest guards, exploit the local people in the collection of forest produce. For example, in some areas in Andhra Pradesh, the forest guards have their cut (6 paise per rupees) on MFP (Minor Forest Produce) and in some areas the tribals are often made to work without payment. In spite of the rest houses spread all over the block, the forest rangers or high level functionaries could not find it convenient to inspect the area. This is not an isolated instance.

27.6.4 Greater Marginalisation of Women

While all the forest dwellers suffer, the situation of women gets worse than that of men (see Fernandes and Menon 1987). The task of ensuring the supply of food, fodder, water, medicinal herbs and fertilisers remains, traditionally the responsibility of women. But the distance between the forests and the village

increase. In eastern Madhya Pradesh and in Orissa the average distance of forests from the village was around one kilometer in the early 1950s. It went up to around 7 kilometers in the early 1980s. In the Garhwal Himalayas it is more than 10 km. This results is a higher workload for women. When forest was close to the village, children and older women helped the housewife in tasks such as the collection of fruits, flowers, leaves and other forest produce. With the distance increasing, the children and older women are unable to be of assistance. Hence, the housewife has to travel these additional 5-10 kilometers everyday to collect the produce. But despite the additional workload she collects less.

This results in shortage of food. In most tribal communities, the whole family used to eat together. But in the context of these shortages, many tribal communities have introduced the custom of the woman eating last after feeding men, boys and girls in that order. As a result, often the women has to survive with very little food (or none at times) since not much is left over for her.

Activity 3

In your own culture area observe and make a record of all those activities which women carry out and which are related with forest produce. Write a short note of 250 words, analyzing women's access to forest produce and their control and management of these resources.

The situation gets worse during droughts and famines. Formerly, years of shortage could be got over with the help of roots and tubers which were abundant in the forest. With deforestation, the number of drought years has increased and the tubers and roots that were their famine food have disappeared. The mutually supportive community has been weakened. Hence, the housewife has no support in periods of shortage (Fernandes 1987: 433-435)

27.7 POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

It is from the point of view of the lack of access of the poor to the resources which they need for their survival that one has to look at forest management today to find solutions in favour of the people. Solutions are being attempted in the form of legal action and replanting of forest trees. We will first discuss, in this section, legal action and the Forest Conservation Act and the new forest policy. Then we will consider the measures to plant trees and people's participation in them.

27.7.1 Legal Action

Legal action is an attempt to deal with the reduced tree cover. With the depletion of forests, there is competition from various sectors and pressure on the State deprive the weakest of access to this resource. The first sign of this pressure was noticed in the report of the **National Commission on Agriculture,** (which was formed in 1971 and gave its report in 1976). In volume 9, which is dedicated to forests, the Commission speaks about the diminishing tree cover and states that serious measures should be taken to protect existing forests. The thinking of the Commission seems to be that the forest dwellers are the main culprits. "Fee supply of forest produce to the rural population and their rights and privileges have brought destruction to the forests and so it is necessary to reverse the process" (NCA 1976: 354-355). It, therefore, recommends that

48 million out of 70 million ha of forests should be set aside for industrial needs. It recommends also that State depots should be set up to supply people with their needs and that the forest populations should not be allowed direct access to the forest produce. Following this step, there were set up various committees. Let us examine them more closely.

i)   Based on this report, a new Forest Bill was drafted in 1980. It tried to protect forests by

   ●   redefining forest produce to include many more items in the category of MFP (minor forest produce);

   ●   giving the forest officials additional powers to arrest and punish real or suspected offenders of the Forest Act; and

   ●   increasing punishment for offences.

Public opinion prevented the introduction of the Bill in the Parliament. But several committees were formed to study the link between forests and tribals. The first of them was constituted in 1981 by the Home Ministry (which was then looking after tribal development) with B.K. Roy Burman as its Chairperson. While understanding the extent of deforestation, this Committee emphasised the importance of forests in tribal life and reviewed the existing Forest Legislation in the light of this understanding. The Committee recommended that

●   the Forest Policy and the system of running forests should be directed to turning them into a renewable resource,

●   the individual tribal, the local tribal community and national interest should be the three corners of such a policy,

●   it should fulfil needs of ecological security, the food, fuel, fodder, fibre, and other domestic needs of the rural population and raw material needs of cottage, small medium and large industries, of defence and communications.

It suggested the involvement of the people in forest production and regernation and stated that the forest department alone cannot renew the resource.

ii) **The National Committee on the Development of Backward Area** was constituted by the Planning Commission in 1980. Its report, given in June 1981, recognised the importance of forest produce in providing substantial sustenance to tribal communities and the rural populations. It also recognised the exploitative role played by middlemen and the State which viewed forests as sources of income. It stated that the commercialisation of forest produce should be only to ensure the maximum returns to the tribals and other forest dwellers. The Committee felt that creating such a vested interest in the tribals would help them to preserve forests. But the Committee did not respect the tribal community as such which has been safeguarding forests for generations but suggested only dealing with individuals. This would in practice break up the community and so remove the real source of protection besides depriving the weaker among them of access to forest produce. Its predominant view was the same as that of the National Commission on Agriculture which has viewed the people alone as destroyers of forests. Hence, it recommended that the rights of the tribal communities over forest land and forest produce should be reduced.

iii) Finally, in October 1981, the Ministry of Agriculture set up the **Committee for Review of Rights and Concessions in the Forests Areas of India**, with M.S. Choudhury, former Chief Secretary of Madhya Pradesh, as its Chairman. Its reports presented in 1984, begins with the settlement that though the 1952 National Forest Policy had recommended that national interests should be given more importance than individual needs of tribal communities, "the implementation of the policy has not taken place in the desired manner". In its analysis of deforestation the Committee makes no mention of the large scale clearfelling for industrial raw material and only proposes to place further restrictions on the forest dwellers. It states that it should be compulsory for the forest dwellers to protect forests and that their needs should be satisfied mainly through social forestry on 48 million ha of degraded and deteriorated forest areas. It recommends at the same time, using a part of the funds set apart for social forestry, for production forestry (which is meant for industrial needs).

27.7.2 The Forest Conservation Act and the Forest Policy

The Forest Conservation Act was enacted in 1980 to prevent diversion of any forest land for non-forest use. This Act was further amended in December 1988 to make any diversion of forest land without permission from the Government of India a congnisable offence. The forest officials who thus divert land can now be punished with imprisonment for up to 15 days. Secondly, fruits, medicinal and other commercial species are excluded from what are considered forest species. The intention is to prevent industry and commerce from using forest land for commercial plantation in the name of reforestation programmes. However, while enacting this legislation with such a good intention, policy makers do not seem to have been aware of the people's culture. The local populations need for their survival, mainly fruit, fodder, fuelwood and medicinal species. As such, by forbidding the plantation of these species on forest land, the Act not only prevents control by commercial interests, but also deprives the local forest dweller communities of access to the forest produce.

A new forest policy was promulgated in December 1988. This document begins by acknowledging the need to keep a balance between environmental, industrial and people's needs. It also states that there has been a symbiotic relationship between the people and forests and that forests cannot be safeguarded without people's movement.

In India several schemes were introduced to ensure production of fuel wood and fodder and attaining maximum sustained yield of timber for railways, defence, industries and communication. Forests, which were over exploited during world wars, were rehabilitated. In the second and third Five Year Plans commercial planatations for pulpwood were established. The number of sanctuaries and national parks increased over the next two decades.

The Indian National Forest Policy of 1988 gave conservation orientation and a human face to forestry. The policy emphasised the protective role of forests in maintaining ecological balance and environmental stability. The basic objectives that should govern the National Forest Policy were enlisted as follows:

- Maintenance of environmental stability through preservation and, where necessary, restoration of the ecological balance that has been adversely disturbed by serious depletion of the forests of the country.

- Conserving the natural heritage of the country by preserving the remaining natural forests with the vast variety of flora and fauna, which represent the remarkable biological diversity and genetic resources of the country.

- Checking soil erosion and denudation in the catchment areas of rivers, lakes and reservoirs in the interest of soil and water conservation, for mitigating floods and droughts.

- Checking the extension of sand dunes in the desert area of Rajasthan and along the coastal tracts.

- Increasing substantially the forest/tree cover in the country through massive afforestation and social forestry programmes, especially on all denuded, degraded and unproductive lands.

- Meeting the requirements for fuelwood, minor forest produce and small timber of the rural and tribal populations.

- Increasing the productivity of the forests to meet essential national needs.

- Encouraging efficient utilisation of forest produce and maximizing substitution of wood.

- Creating a massive people's movement with the involvement of women, for achieving these objectives and to minimise pressure on existing forests.

(Balaji, 2001: 3-4).

However, the document makes it clear that what it calls national needs should get precedence over people's requirements. In the tradition of the last several decades, national needs usually coincides with industrial needs. Thus, on the one hand, the document states that every decision should be taken with environmental preservation in mind, and on the other, it gives priority to national needs over people's requirements. Thus, it puts the people's needs last. Moreover, the overall thinking of the document is in favour of State Control over forests rather than genuine people's involvement. For example, keeping in view the recommendations of the **National Commission on Agriculture, 1976,** it suggests State run depots to meet people's needs. Thus, the document seems to have tried to put all the needs together and has in reality ended up by giving much lower priority to the people than the earlier documents had done.

27.7.3 Various Types of Plantations and People's Participation

The other solution that has been thought of is in the form of planatations. Based on the recommendations of the National Commission on Agriculture, 1976, the forest department has been encouraging various types of forestry, particularly production forestry which is meant for industrial needs, social forestry to cater to people's needs, and other such as those meant for soil conservation, wind protection etc. Some of them are discussed here in the following sub sub-sections.

i) **Social Forestry**

Social forestry is meant for meeting people's needs. To be viable, it should

respond to the causes of deforestation which we have mentioned above and solve problems such as the break up of people's communities. All the data at our disposal would indicate that social forestry has in reality become commercial and even production forestry. First of all, more than two thirds of the total area in planted under production forestry. Of the rest which comes under schemes such as economic plantations, quick growing species plantations, rehabilitation of degraded forests and social forestry, it is estimated that around 80 per cent is planted with commercial species and not what the people need though that was the original purpose of these plantations. In fact, speaking at a seminar at the India International Centre, New Delhi, in May 1983, the then Inspector General of Forests, Government of India, acknowledged that 80 per cent species planted under these schemes of social forestry were of the commercial variety and that 80 per cent of them are planted by the 20% of the big farmers and the remaining 20% were distributed among the 80 per cent small farmers (Roy 1983). In other words, neither are the people needs met nor is inequality reduced.

The Conclusion drawn in a study of farm forestry on agricultural land in Gujarat by S.Jain (1988:47) is relevant. Farm forestry is a component of social forestry. Jain writes,

> It is apparent that capitalist agriculture is the main trend in rural development in Gujarat in particular and of India in general, there is no escaping of the fact that the cultivation of forest trees is inevitably based on the rationale of profit-calculations. The market for polewood is then obviously linked with industrial and/or commercial enterprises. This explains why a large farmer with sufficient capital and a better entry into the timber market successfully adopts farm forestry on his agricultural land. On the other hand, due to the lack of capital resources and market information, small farmers face problems both in growing trees and selling timber.

From this perspective, non-cash benefits and ecological gains of farm forestry become subsidiary for the farmers and a kind of alibi in the hands of the government for promoting commercial development of tree plantations.

ii) **People's Involvement in Social Forestry**

All the decisions on the scheme of social forestry and its components have been taken during the last several years by the forest department or by other governmental agencies with very little people's involvement. Often the local forest dwellers are used as wage labourers and not as decision-makers and in most cases not as beneficiaries of the produce. This goes against the statement that the programme should be turned into a people's movement. In fact, based on this statement of the National Forest Policy, 1988, on June 1, 1990, the Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, has sent a circular to the forest departments of all the States. The circular asks them to ensure that the local population gets involved in decisions concerning the afforestation and reforestation schemes. It states that land need not be given out either on lease or in some other form to the people, but that the whole scheme should be one of partnership between the forest department and the people. It states that the people should be involved in decisions concerning the choice of species, arrangement of work and the benefits to be reaped. Based on this the State Governments of Bihar, Orissa and Rajasthan have already

made new rules concerning afforestation schemes, and a few other states are in the process of getting them ready. The educational institutions also need to encourage habits of planting and caring of trees. Practical steps, as shown in the following illustration, are not hard to learn.

STAGES OF PLANTING A FOREST TREE

PLANT OF SEEDLING IN A BAG

REMOVING OF THE BAG

PLACING OF THE PLANT IN A HOLE

PACKING SOIL AROUND THE PLANT
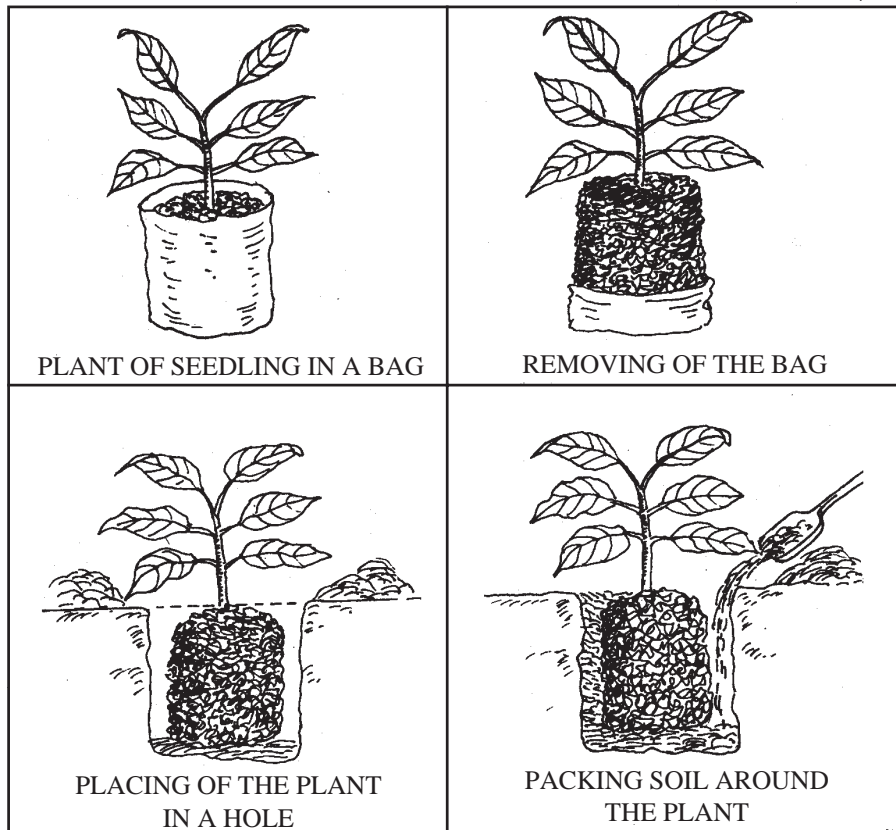
One would think that afforestation schemes on the part of the forest department are crucial. However, such schemes demand partnership between the forest department and the people, and that is not going to be easy. A major reason for the failure of social forestry is precisely that close cooperation between forest officials and the people could not be brought about. Foresters do not want their power to be curtailed and they think that the people are enemies of forests. The forest dwellers do not trust forest officials and consider them exploiters. Moreover, as we have mentioned above, among the people there has been a transition from constructive to destructive dependence on forests. This has added to the tension between the people and the forest officials.

iii) Role of Voluntary Organisation

These attitudes have to be changed and a constructive attitude towards forests recreated. For this to happen, the people have to have a stake in afforestation schemes. Most existing schemes of the forest department are of the commercial variety. The people get neither food nor income from them. Voluntary organisations can perhaps become the catalysts in this. They can help the people to recreate in themselves a vested interest in forest regeneration and the forest department can given them the technical support they need. These organisations can also relate the real needs of the people in terms of species. This has been proved in the successful schemes of organisations such as Bana Bharati in the Koraput District of Orissa. Harivallabh Parikh's Ashram at Rangpura in Gujarat, several groups in Uttaranchal and elsewhere. These organisations have been

attempting schemes that combine people's involvement with overall environmental regeneration. Many of them speak in terms of watershed management. Such schemes are being attempted mainly in Karnataka and Maharashtra, most of them as partnership programmes between voluntary organisations and people's communities with technical support from government departments. Several groups in Rajasthan are attempting environmental regernation schemes in the form of drought-proofing (see Agarwal and Narain 1989).

iv) **Women's Involvement**

As essential element in these schemes has to be women's involvement as the experience of Chipko and others elsewhere has shown (see Jain 1984). However, a major shortcoming of many of these peoples and voluntary organisations is that they do not easily understand the role of women as an integral part of the community. Often, decisions are taken only by men or sometimes imposed on the people by voluntary agencies. And yet, women have been more instrumental than men in preserving the environment for centuries and they are also bigger suffers of its deterioration than men. As such, their involvement is essential both from the point of view of rebuilding the community that has been destroyed and for genuine long-term recreation of ecological balance.

Activity 4

Find out about the state of the tree cover in your area and possible measures and you can be involved in an attempt to improve it.

Briefly, one would conclude by stating that any environmental regeneration programme should keep people's needs, industrial requirements and ecological balance in mind. These needs should not be treated as those of individuals but as those of communities that have broken up and have to be rebuilt. In this process, special focus should be on the weaker sections, particularly those communities that have suffered the most, for example the tribals and other forest dwellers. Even among them women's role should get special importance.

Check Your Progress 3

i)   Describe, in about seven lines, recent legislative measures on forests.

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ii) What was involved in the new Forest Bill, drafted in 1980s? Use four lines for your answer.

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27.8   LET US SUM UP

In this unit we discussed first the present state of forests in India. We then situated this depletion of tree cover in India in the context of the policies during the last 150 years in general and the four decades of planned development in particular. Going back to the history of forests before the arrival of the British, we noticed that till some decades ago there was what can be called symbiotic relationship between the people and the forests. Because of this mutual dependence, the forest dwellers had developed a culture and tradition geared to keeping a balance between human and environmental needs.

This mutual dependence disappeared when the British turned forests into State property and alienated from the communities that had preserved them for centuries. To the revenue orientation of the British, post-Independence India policy asserted the right of the state to use forests for industrial raw materials. As a result, the tree cover in the country had diminished enormously.

Today there is a realisation that forests cannot be saved without the involvement of the local communities. Solutions are, therefore, being attempted with the people as the major partners. However, various interests work at cross purposes and the policies often go against the people. It is, therefore, essential to experiment with new solutions that can put all these interests together.

27.9   KEY WORDS

Afforestation	:	Planting a new forest in an area where no forest existed earlier.
Clearfelling	:	Cutting down trees or bamboos on a whole plot at one stroke.
Constructive Dependence	:	Dependence because of which the users keep a balance and ensure that human needs are met without destroying the forest (or any other resource on which they depend).
Destructive Dependence	:	The type of dependence caused mainly by the shortage of a resource or by a profit motive, because of which the user destroys the resource (e.g. forest for fuelwood or industrial' raw material) without allowing it to renew itself.
Ecosystem	:	An integrated system of crop lands, forest lands, grazing and waste lands- each of these land use components interacting with each other in such a way that when one component it affected, it has an impact on all the others.
Environment	:	Surroundings that include forests, wildlife, air, water, land etc. on which human beings depend.
Production Forestry	:	Forestry meant to produce commercial species of timber needed in industry and commerce.

Reforestation	:	Planting forests in an area that once had forests that have disappeared now.
Shifting Cultivation	:	Also known as slash and burn cultivation is the form of cultivation on slopes. The existing trees (in most cases only branches) are burn to provide fertilise. The land is then cultivated for two or the three years and left fallow for 18 to 20 years for forests to grow again. In the north-east it is known as **jhum**. In southern Orissa and most of South India it is called **podu**. About 25 per cent of Indian tribals practice it.
Symbolic	:	A relationship of very close and mutual dependence between two dissimilar organisms as between the mother and the foetus in her womb.

27.10   FURTHER READINGS

Agarwal, Anil and Sunita Narain, 1989. *Greening India's Villages: Strategy for Environmentally Sound Participatory Rural Development*. Centre for Science for and Environment: New Delhi

Fernades, Walter and Geeta Menon, 1987. *Tribal Women and Forest Economy: Deforestation, Exploitation and Status Change*, Indian Social Institute: New Delhi

Fernades, Walter, Geeta Menon and Philip Viegas, 1988. *Forests, Environment and Tribal Economy: Deforestation, Impoverishment and Marginalisation in Orissa*. India Social Institute: New Delhi.

Jain, S. 1988. *Case Studies of Farm Forestry and Wasteland Development in Gujarat*, India. FAO: Bangkok.

27.11   ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

i)   During 1854, India's (including present day Pakistan and Bangladesh) tree cover comprised 40 per cent of its landmass.

ii) Symbiotic relationship refers to living together, in close association, of two dissimilar organism.

iii) *Sarna* refers to a sacred plot of forest in the rribal village. The young men (teengagers) of the trige were sent to this sacred place for training into adulthood.

iv) The term *sasan* refers to the burial ground among the Chotanagpur tribals. Since the sasan was used for burying the ancestors it was also used as a sign of the continuity of the tribe in a particular area.

Check Your Progress 2

i)   One of the main measures of the British Forest Policy was the itroduction of State Ownership of forests. The second measure was the application of scientific managemet' of forest resources. The third measure was the

concept of people's 'right' in the forests. These measures were mainly adopted fo providing timber as a source of revenue to the British government and for ship building for colonial wars in other countries and later for railway sleepers.

ii) The post-Independence Forest Policy continued to encourage the use of forests for industrialisation. At the same time it undermined the common person's use of forest produce. This resulted in the impoverishment of those previously dependent on forest produce for their vital needs. As a result, they turend to moneylenders and found themselves trapped in an unending debt-cycle. This in trun resulted in marked changes in tribal culture.

Check Your Progress 3

i) **Source**

a) Large leaves and roots of trees
b) Roots and tubers
c) Symbiotic relationship between forests and people
d) Maisture in soil
e) Shifting cultivation
f) Appropriate technology
g) Control over family economy

Benefit

i) Soil conservation
n) Famine food
j) Constructive dependence
m) Water level
k) Balanced diet
l) Coppicing
h) Women Status

ii) **Causes**

a) Large leaves and roots of trees desappear
b) Siltation
c) Industrial clearfelling

d) ahortage of and competition for resource
e) Distance of forests
f) Depletion of tree cover
g) Forest near village clearfelled

Consequences

m) Soil erosion

n) Floods
k) Vicious circle resulting in destrutive dependence on forests

l) Break up of community
h) Extra workload for women
j) Reduction in rain
i) Food shortage and impoverishment

Check Your Progress 4

i) Recent legislative measures on forests include

a) diversion of any forest land for non-forest use is prohibited;

b) any diversion of forest land without permission from the Government of India is a cognisable offence;

c) afforestation programmes should become a people's needs movement.

d) social forestry is to be introduced for taking care of people's needs;

ii) The new Forest Bill, drafted in 1980, protect forests by redefining forest produce in order to include many more items in its list. It gave the forest officials additional powers to arrest and punish real or suspected offenders of the Forest Act. It increased punishment for offences.

UNIT 28 ROLE OF THE STATE AND OTHER ASSOCIATIONS

Structure

28.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you should be able to:

● discuss the concept of State as an association;

● describe the role of the State;

● distinguish between the state and non-state associations, voluntary organisations (VOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs);

● discuss the role of the VOs in development;

● identify problems faced by VOs; and

● suggest ways to promote voluntary efforts.

28.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding three units of this block, we talked about the resources of land, water and forest and discussed access to them and their control and management by people. In all three units, we reviewed the role of the State and of other associations in the control and management of these resources.

We will take up in this unit the theme of 'role of the State and other associations' in greater details, so that we become aware of the alternatives available for

solving problems related to ecological imbalance. (About the concepts of ecology and ecological imbalance you are advised to read Unit 37 of Block 8 of ESO-02). This will also create in us an awareness of **our role** in solving social problems in India. As Unit 28 is that last unit of both of the course (ESO-06) and of the Block (Ecology and Resources), it addresses to concerns of both the course in general and the Block in particular. In other word it deals with social problems in general and with ecological problems in particular. Taken together both ecological and socio-economic and political problems provide a context of most of the activities and associations. Participation in the processes of both the State and other association interests the individual and the wider society. It is interesting to understand how this happens. Unit 28 will explain this process.

The Unit begins with a brief discussion on viewing on viewing the State as an association and its role. Then we proceed to explain the concept of other associations which play an equally important role in the process of development. This is followed by identifying the problems faced by voluntary organisations and suggestions for promoting voluntary efforts.

28.2 STATES AS AN ASSOCIATION

Before discussing the role of the State, we need to say a few words on what is the State? A preliminary definition can be that it is an association. You may ask-what is an association. You may ask – what is an association? The answer is that association refers to a group of persons who associate and organise themselves for a common goal. In this sense, the state is an association just like the family or political party or business firm. It comprises a group of members who are organised in a certain manner and for certain goals. You may also ask how is the State as an association different from an institution or society of community? For the answer of this questions see Box 28.01.

Box 28.01

The state is found within society. But the state is not a form of society. The state is a system of order and control and its business includes to the conservation and development of human abilities and of economic resources. Society is, on the other hand, a relational concept insofar it is viewed as a chain of social relationships. It is not a substantial concept and it does not denote a concrete reality, rather it refers to social relationships.

To explain the difference between association and institution, it will suffice here to say that an association refers to a group of persons who associate and organise into a unity of will for a common goal. The term institution does not denote persons. It denotes the form along which those persons, activities are related.

Lastly, let us also look at the difference between association and community. One spends only a part of one's life within an association. But one's whole life is spend within one's community. As organisation of the state is not all social organisation, we can say that the state is a partial unity and in that sense it is an association. Communities, like a country, city, village, nation, tribe, are integral unities.

The common point between the state and other associations is only that both comprise groups of members, who are organised in a specific manner for

common goals. Because of its special features the State is different from other associations. It is an association of a type of its own. Other or non-state associations do not share with the State those special features which make it a category by itself.

These features are as follows:

i)   One feature is that the state includes under its control all those who live within its territory. It does not matter whether these people are deliberately its members or not. The state maintains social order within a territory.

ii) The second features of the state is sovereignty which is an attribute of common will. In its aspect of sovereignty, the state has the decisive right of force.

iii) The state has coercive framework of political law and, therefore, has a permanence and fixity.

These characteristics apply only to the state and not to other associations. As the state is an associaton which forms a type by itself, its role in relation social problems is not similar to that of other associations. Because of this difference we have, in this unit, first discussed the role of the state and then taken up the role of other association. But remember that both the modern state and other non-state associations play an equally important role in regulating and managing societies.

28.3   ROLE OF THE STATE

In broad terms, the state upholds social standards and prevents exploitation and injustice. It works towards the removal of socio-economic problems and improving general well-being of its members. The role of the state is not fixed, rather it changes with the conditions. Such Marxists as Lenin argued that the State does not work for general well-being of all its members. It represents only the private property owners and there by becomes an instrument of promoting the interests of dominant classes in a society. You may or may not agree with this point of view but you will certainly agree with this point that even Marxists hold that the state plays a comprehensive role in modern societies. You may further raise a point that if the state plays such a major role, there is perhaps no need for other associations to enter the scene. Is it that the state is unable to perform its comprehensive role and, therefore, other associations step in?

Scholars like Bhambri (1987: 36) hold that the existence of non-state associations in developed countries represents the rejection of the modern state system, which has over time become oppressive and dehumanised. In developing countries, the state is considered to play an active role in removing the burden of backwardness. It is held that only the state can perform this role. According to him, planning process of the Indian State has already broken the 'the essentials of a stagnant economy'. The Indian state has provided 'a social space' to its disabled and deprived strata. Bhambri (1987: 397) holds that 'the hold of the state is visible in whatever limited successes have been achieved by the poorest of the poor'. For him, other associations like voluntary agencies 'are a footnote in India development' and the 'the problems of development of India require more of state intervention and not less of it'. In Unit 25, 26

and 27, we have also discussed at length the land, water and forest policies of the government and legislative measures adopted from time to time in matters related to the control and management of these resources. Clearly, the role the state in the case of India is very such similar to what Bhambri holds. We should however questions his view of other associations as 'mere footnotes in India development'. It is not a questions of either one or the other. Taking a balanced view of the giving relative importance to both, we find that both the State and non-state associations play significant role in the socio-economic well-being of a society. Again, roles of both the state and other associations work for particular and sectoral interests. But they are not opposed to each other. Only in certain situations, when voluntary organisations involve themselves in confrontationist action, they may take a posture of direct opposition to the State. Similarly, when a State becomes too oppressive and dehumanising, non-state associations may take a distance from it or even oppose it. These possibilities apart; we need to consider the role of both, especially in the context of Indian society. In India, the state plays a major role in changing the existing social power structure when other associations are there to challenge the pressurise the State to accelerate its machinery for preventing exploitation and injustice.

Among the chief roles of the state we may have here consider promotion and regulation of such physical conditions as hygienic requirements, housing, occupational recreational conditions of health. These are closely linked to conservation and economic utilisation of the natural resources. As we have already noticed this role of the state is manifest in the planning and general control of urban and rural development. The state has a command over resources and it is expected to curb the selfish aims of those who waste resources for immediate gains. The state can undertake vast construction whose benefits can be enjoyed by all for a long time. It has the authority of preserving the natural resources which are threatened by the growth of industrialism. It is a separate matter if a state fails to carry out these activities. There is no political principle to stop the state from playing the role of a legitimate protector of the natural resources and of exploiting natural resources only in judicious manner, in an-environmentally conscious manner.

In conserving and developing human capacities as well as economic resources, the State in expected to promote education and cultural life. In this fashion we can go on describing the state's role because its range as a social agent is vast and limited by only the instruments at its command. One conditions of an ordered society is that it shall be protected by a power which can punish violations. The State has a negative role to play when it has to use force. The force at the State's command makes the community to learn and to entrust to the state the right of enforcement. In a way, the state's role is also to prevent, by using the weapon of force, interruptions in its work. So you can say that the state has both a positive and negative role to play.

Within the comprehensive structure of the state, from time to time, appear temporary collectivities. They lead separate and independent life in the form of associations. They serve the interests for which the state does not or cannot play role. We will now turn to the role of these associations.

Activity 1

Describe, in a note of 300 words, the Indian State's role in solving the problems of illiteracy, overpopulation, low standard of health, poor state of medical facilities and disregard for environmental issues. For preparing the note, read daily newspapers and weekly magazines. Also, interview politically active leaders in your area.

28.4 NON-STATE ASSOCIATIONS

Neither parts of the state nor its mere subjection, non-state or other associations exist in their own right. In certain cases, role of the state and that of other associations overlap. For example, in the sphere of education, the Constitutions insists on universal education and the State is expected to make provision for primary education. At the same time we find also the existence of independent voluntary bodies imparting elementary education through various methods. Further, some areas in which other associations have traditionally played a role, have been transferred to the state. For example, previously trade unions provided relief to the unemployed. Now in many societies the State has taken over this responsibility.

One can assert that the state plays an overwhelming role in development with social justice and promotion of the interests of the disadvantaged. This does not, of course, imply that the role of the other associations is reduced to insignificance. In most areas of social problem, the importance of efforts of other associations has in fact increased, and not decreased. Let us now discuss the nature of other associations.

i)   **Nature of Other Associations**

Associations other than the state are recognised by their voluntary nature. Taking part in the activities of voluntary associations, like political parties, trade union and professional bodies is considered a way of forming a link between the marginal groups and the rest of society. In countries such as the United State of America, voluntary associations are held as significant components of participatory democracy. They integrate the individual or family with the wider society. By the voluntary nature of an associations we mean that it members participate in its activities as a result of their own volition. But you should not equate voluntarism with people's participation in the process of socio-economic development/change.

ii)   **Difference between Voluntary Effort and People's Participation**

Often, associations mobilise people to help themselves by exploring their own potential to solve their problems. But people's participation should not be treated as identical to voluntary effort. It is possible to find that some individuals decide to form an association for undertaking a certain programme. The association many work out its plans and strategies to carry out the programme. This would be known as a voluntary effort. Only when in addition the association seeks participation of members of the community and gets it in full measure, we can legitimately add the term people's participation to the voluntary effort of some individuals. Keeping this important distinction in mind, its is hoped that you will not use the two terms interchangeably. Let us now turn to the main characteristics of voluntary bodies.

28.4.1 Features of Voluntary Organisations

Associations formed on the basis of voluntary efforts are generally called voluntary organisations (VOs). In the terminology of the United Nations, such organisations are known as non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Many use the two terms interchangeably. It is true that both VOs and NGOs are non-state associations; but the element of voluntarism is not necessarily present in all the NGOs. We shall first look at the features of voluntary organisations and then at the differences between VOs and NGOs. Material on both these points in based on Unit 1 of Block 3 of an IGNOU course on Rural Development Planning and Management: RD. D-3. You are advised to consult Block 3 of RD. D-3 for further information on this topic. Voluntary organisations are characterised by the following features.

- Voluntary membership

- Non-profit making

- Formed by the initiative of those inspired by social consciousness about the welfare on the disadvantaged people of society.

- Own set of rules and regulations and outside the administrative control of the government

- Registered VOs are entitled to received grants in-aid from the government. They may have to accept terms and conditions of the grants-in-aid provisions.

Often it is assumed that most VOs are familiar with the social problems at the grassroots and, therefore, they are also closer to the people. Further, they are supposed to be more committed and zealous than the bureaucratic systems of the government. For the same reason, VOs are also supposed to be more cost-effective than a bureaucratic body. You may have to find out for yourself as to what extent particular VOs conform to these assumed roles. Let us now examine how VOs are different from NGOs.

Check Your Progress 1

i) In which ways are voluntary organisations different from the State?

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ii) Give five examples of voluntary organisations and of non-government organisations in India.

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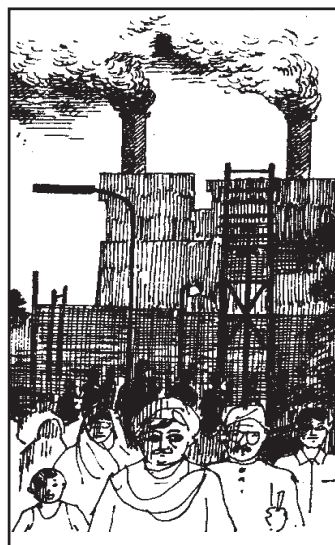
28.5   ROLE OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

As we mentioned above, voluntary organisations may be both non-political and politically oriented. In this section, we will be discussing mainly those voluntary organisations which are non-party and non-state. Pre-independence efforts as voluntary action turned out to be politically motivated action. Today, India has a wide range of voluntary organisations. Some are directly political groups while some others operate under the government's directives. The rest are of the non-political type. Kothari (1987: 441) calls that first two 'agency style groups' and the last one as 'small groups working at the grassroots'. We are going to focus on the activities of non-political small groups working at the grassroots. Involvement of voluntary organisations in the process of development is a kind of strategy of the government for mobilizing people's participation in developmental programmes of the State. In this context, voluntary action in development and social transformation has assumed a variety of roles. We will now discuss some of these roles of voluntary organisation..

28.5.1   Voluntary Organisations and Ecology

As we have already learnt in Units 25, 26 and 27 the developmental strategy through industrialism has altered the relationship between nature and human beings. This alteration threatens the survival mechanisms of nature. In the name of protecting forests, the tribal groups have been denied access to their traditional habitat. Due to the government's insistence on building large dams as 'temples' of industrial India, millions have been displaced, without receiving adequate compensation for their losses. It is quite clear that modern industrial growth disturbs the ecological balance which have been evolved by different cultural patterns of living. Most industrial civilisations are now fund to be inherently anti-ecological (see illustrations below). The irony is that the very people who worked to nurture their natural environs are now forced to destroy them for the sake of their own survival (See Unit 27)

POWER STATION POLLUTION

We have to also look at the social implications of technologically inspired industrial growth. In developing countries, of such development are inequitably distributed. Consequently, many voluntary organisations have sprung up at the grassroots to ask for better compensation and rehabilitation programmes.

In fact, among the developing countries, India has the largest number of voluntary groups involved in environmental issues. Many of them are concerned with

i)   creating awareness of issues relating to the environment

ii)   protesting against public/private sector projects which are harmful to either the environment or to the people dependent on it.

iii) solving such environmental problems as deforestation , depletion of grazing land, creation of wastelands, desertification etc.

Among the groups which focus on (i) we can name the centre for Science and Environment, Kalpavriksh, Delhi Science Forum, Lokayan, Bombay Natural History Society. There are also groups involved in but are scattered all over the country, opposing the present forest and wasteland policies , big dams, nuclear stations, missile testing ranges.Organisations such as Appropriate Technology Group, Lucknow; ASTRA, Bangalore ; MCRC, Madras;DGSM,Chamoli,are involved in using technologies which are environment friendly and ecologically benign. They can be grouped as those involved in (iii) of the above listed concerns. The Kerala Shastra Parisad is an example or a group which is involved in almost all of the above three concerns.

Apart form the above mentioned better known groups, there are many small ones operating to save endangered species, preserving old monuments, planting useful tress and repairing old tanks and bunds.

Groups involved in voluntary action to focus interest on environmental issues use a wide range of strategies, ranging form the media to protest meetings, petitions in court and building networks. Stopping of the proposed Forest Bill in 1982 was the result of such strategies. The debate on the construction of the Narmada Valley Project, Tehri Dam, the Munna Dam and Inchampalli Dam or the Koel Karo Dam is another example of voluntary efforts at the grassroots. The efforts are aimed at giving a direction to development which is pro-people and pro-environment. Efforts of DGSM at Chamoli have demonstrated how a mixed species tree plantation scheme with people's participation can provide an alternative to government sponsored and unsuccessful schemes of afforestation. This description should not give you an impression that all is well with voluntary groups working for environmental protection. Like all other voluntary groups they too face many problems which we will discuss in section 28.6 of this unit. We will now move on the voluntary organisation's role in the area of social problems faced by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

28.5.2   Role of Voluntary Organisations for Development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

You have already learnt in Block 6 of this course about the problems of denied opportunities in the case of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. As shown by Prasad (1987: 588-612), among these groups, missionaries have played a remarkable role in areas of education, health and human rights. For example, the American missionaries opened schools in Nagaland as early as 1830. Lutheran missionaries opened schools in the latter part of the 19th century for both boys and girls in the Chotanagpur area of Bihar. They started dispensaries to serve the Christian and non-Christian public (see Vidyarthi 1977: 40). Later, the Roman Catholic missionaries began their work in the Chotanagpur area.

The missionaries did initially make an effort to convert the people to Christianity. They did not succeed in these efforts. So, to attract the tribals they began to help them in such non-religious affairs as land rights and services. They even took their cases to court and won them in favour of the tribals. This established their credibility in the eyes of the Chotanagpur tribals. According to Roy (1931) the tribals were also protected by missionaries from the clutches of moneylenders. Father Hoffman, a Catholic missionary, organised a cooperative society in 1909. The network of this society in the whole of Chotanagpur provided a strong foothold to the Catholic missionaries in this area. In the tribal area of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, the missionaries worked for improvement in education and health of the tribals.

Later, during the freedom movement, in 1921, Thakkar Bapa, a Gandhian, established an Ashram at Mirakhedi in Panchmahal District. He set up another organisation, known as Bhil Seva Mandal at Dohad in Gujarat. Not only these two, he established 21 such institutions in various parts of India. Dhebar (1961: 303) has described the history of his role in social service as 'a romance of social work in India'. Thakar Bapa's organisations worked in the field of education and public health. Following this, voluntary efforts to solve the socio-economic problems of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Bihar were initiated at Seva Kendra. In the 1939 session on the All India Congress at Ramgarh, national leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Patel resolved to work for the well being of the primitive and backward sections of Indian society. Rajendra Prasad and his colleague, Sri Narayanji, started Seva Kendra and encouraged people to learn to read and write.

The Banvasi Seva Mandal at Mharajpur in Mandla, another voluntary organisation in Madhya Pradesh, was established in 1945-46. It worked in the area of education among the tribals. It managed also an agricultural farm, three cooperative societies, a mobile dispensary, a training centre for Panchayati Raj etc.

We find that throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, voluntary efforts played significant role. This role was primarily in the area of religion. But in order to increase its appeal, action took place outside the realm of religion. Such organisations as Harijan Sevak Sangh, Nai Talim Sangh and Leper Society represented the humanistic tradition in voluntary action (Prasad 1987: 593).

In India, voluntary efforts after 1947 received a further impetus from governmental support. The government made efforts to work with voluntary agencies for solving the socio-economic problems to backward communities. Many organisations came to the forefront in the tribal areas. These organisations received financial supprt from the government and the public. For example, Bharatia Adimjati Sevak Sangh was established in 1948 with the purpose of bringing tribal communities into the mainstream of socio-cultural development of India. This institution had its affiliated bodies all over India. It played a significant role in the formation of government policy for tribal welfare.

Further, organisations such as the Ramkrishna Mission, the Servants of India Society, Seva Sangh, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, Kasturba Samarak Nidhi, Bharatiya Lok Kala Mandir have made a noticeable impact on public life in India. Educational and medical institutions run by these organisations are quite well-known for their successful role in producing well-trained personnel in the areas of education and health.

Most voluntary organisations play a role in aiding participatory democracy. They take away much of developmental effort from the governmental to the voluntary sector. If allowed they play a successful role in planning, implementation and evaluation of development projects. It has been felt that voluntary organisations can further play important roles in several field of development of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. For example, as Prasad (1987: 607) suggests, they can work for correctly recording the landholdings of tribals. They can identify the nature and extent of bonded labor in the tribal areas of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. Ecological study of primitive tribal groups by voluntary organisations would tell us about their social organisations and the relationships they have with their physical environment. They can also look in the agricultural practices of shifting cultivation in the tribal and hilly areas. There are very few studies of tribal women, who have not yet benefited from developmental efforts.

We have, in the above two sub-sections, discussed the role of voluntary organisations in ecological movements and in the development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Now we will look at the nature of problems faced by voluntary organisations.

Activity 2

Select a voluntary organisation of your choice and find out about its activities. Write a note of 250 words on its objectives and method of functioning.

28.6 PROBLEMS FACED BY VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

We find that voluntary efforts in India are represented by a variety of groups and individuals. Differences in sise, ideology, concern, focus and impact characterise the voluntary sector. Functioning of voluntary organisations is often sporadic and appears in interrupted sequences. This reflects poor planning of ill-conceived programmes. As soon as some kind of momentum is gained and a take-off stage is reached, there comes a long spell of inactivity. Often, voluntary effort remains alive as along as outside help is forthcoming. It stops with the withdrawal of outside source of support – financial or organisational or inspirational. Why it is so?

A striking fact about voluntary action in India is that nearly all of its initiated by outsiders who have to sooner of later leave the place. By and large, as soon as the outside element departs, the developmental effort crumbles and vanishes. Old structures reappear and the status quo is once again ruling the scene. In order to avoid this, it is necessary for voluntarism to grow at grass-roots. The leadership need to come from within the group rather than outside it. Besides this major problem, other factors in the way of voluntary action are as follow:

i) Most voluntary organisations are happy to work among accessible and relatively better-off groups. Here, they need to make little effort to get results. They do not take on challenges of acute poverty-ridden areas.

ii) Majority of voluntary groups lack in independent source of income. They depend on an external financial base. Haunted by lack and uncertainty of funds, many of them are compelled to stop functioning mid-way. Whenever funding comes from the government, perennial delays and

cumbersome procedures in the bureaucracy hit the smooth functioning of their projects. Even well planned projects suffer from delays at the implementation stage.

Today we have a very large flow of funds from foreign donor agencies to non-governmental organisations in India. Such bodies, in order to receive funds from foreign agencies, have to register with the Home Ministry. According to Maheshwari (1987: 506), in 1984, foreign contributions to Indian voluntary sector were Rs. 254 crores and increased to 350 crores in 1986. the major donor countries were USA, West Germany, Great Britain, Switzerland, Canada, Holland and Italy. In India, the states of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, West Bengal, Karnataka, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh were the main recipients of foreign funds. In case any misuse of funds is proved, the Home Ministry can revoke the registration of the erring agencies. For example, in 1986, registrations of 27 voluntary groups were revoked for violation of rules. It is alleged that often foreign funds are a cover for spy-activity and/or religious conversion efforts. Voluntary organisations in this situation are faced with a real dilemma of accepting or not accepting foreign funding.

iii) At present, voluntary action is not always initiated by inspired individuals. It has now acquired the status of professionalism. Its focus has shifted from individuals to communities, demanding various skills of trained personnel. Professionalised experts with appropriate training have come to expect corresponding high returns for their skills. Not all organisations can afford them. With the emergence of a certain pattern of employment in the voluntary sector, many young persons join a voluntary group only to move up the ladder. Some of them have little regard for the needs of their particular projects.

iv) Maheshwari (1987: 567) has pointed out that voluntary organisations are often harassed by the governmental machinery. Only a common platform from by solidarity of bodies may force the governmental bureaucracy to behave more responsibility. In some areas, local landlords, state level legislators and other power holders have threatened voluntary agencies which happen to challenge their unjust supremacy in all spheres of life. Again, in such circumstances, an isolated voluntary body can do little to survive while of federation of voluntary bodies may successfully support its member organisations.

v) In the case of environmental movements, voluntary bodies are often faced with the problem of lack of expertise and knowledge of environmental problems. Awareness about the problem of ecological balance is of recent origin. Lack of systematically recorded data about ecological disasters in terms of the depletion of forests, soil erosion and over consumption of natural resources dilute many arguments offered by voluntary groups against the government's so-called development projects. Usually, voluntary groups have limited budgets and cannot undertake surveys and environmental impact analyses. For example, voluntary groups, active in the case of Bhopal gas disaster, could not even test samples of water, plant life and food, affected by the gas leakage.

The small sise of environmentalist voluntary groups denies them a sympathetic hearing. For example, groups agitating against the building of

dams over the Narmada have been active for the last ten years. Their leaders are arrested and released after a few days and the authorities do not seem to take them seriously. Protest efforts of some groups are considered anti-national, a threat to law and order. The state comes down on them with punitive action.

vi) Strategies of protest and public interest litigation (see Key Words) by voluntary groups prove to be of little use. This shows the little impact of voluntary action on very important issues of public concern. For example, the government of India gave a clearance to the construction of Tehri Dam while a case against its construction was listed for hearing in the Supreme Court. There is little public debate on issues taken up by voluntary organisations. Many such bodies are active in asking for the rehabilitation of persons displaced due to development projects. No public debate has taken place on the multiple displacement of 150,000 people in the Singruli region (see Jain 1993).

vii) The politics of utilisation of the natural resources is played by very strong lobbies of powerful interests. The voluntary sector is not able to acquire a 'hearing space' in this power-game. Environmentalists try to explain that issues related to the natural resources are not only those of just distribution. They are fundamentally linked to our understanding of human survival and nature. In a mad rush for consumption oriented cultural practices, nobody wants to give a hearing to environmentalists. This takes voluntary groups to a dead-end. They have to remain satisfied with the their efforts to sensitise the public and policy makers to the negative impact of development projects. More than this they cannot expect. They cannot expect to modify governmental policies about its cherished development projects.

Problems faced by the voluntary sector are many as well as formidable. The question is what can be done about this situation. In the next section we will discuss some of the strategies voluntary bodies can employ to improve their effective

Check Your Progress 3

i) In your opinion, should a voluntary organisation receive funds from foreign donors? Give reasons for your answer.

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ii) Has the State already played an important role in solving the problems of socio-economic backwardness of the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes? Give reasons for your answer.

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28.7 SUGGESTIONS FOR PROMOTION OF VOLUNTARY EFFORTS

Our discussion so far has focused on the role of voluntary organisations in the area of socio-economic problems. We have also looked at difficulties faced by the voluntary sector in India. In the last section we spoke about the need of a common platform which can be formed by a federation of voluntary bodies. In fact, in states like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, voluntary agencies have formed a federation. This will bring about a feeling of solidarity among them, giving impetus to gather some clout for gaining influence in political terms. Let us see in what other ways they can strengthen their efforts.

i) **Culture and Community Orientation**

People's participation in the Chipko movement (see Jain 1984) has proved that grassroots can provide a strong and sustainable basis to a movement. Without a widespread organisational structure and without a top heavy pattern of leadership, this movement has successfully achieved its objectives of conserving forests and providing the local people control over community resources. The common people of the area have been able to impress upon the outsiders that forests are not a resource for commercial exploitation. The forests are givers of life, livelihood and of water and healthy air. This world-view of Himalayan people has provided them the strength to fight the outsider who have destroyed the culture of their area. The Chipko movement has now risen above the mainstream discourse. It is solidly keeping alive the cultural traditions of the area and undertaking ambitious programmes of afforestation. We can say that this is a way of finding one's way out of the problems mentioned above.

ii) **Organisations of Beneficiaries**

There has been a tradition of voluntary organisations entering certain territories for their activities . Perhaps now the time has came for voluntarism, to grow form within. Those who wish to derive benefits from welfare action need to organise themselves. They need to demand at a political platform and pressurise the administration to provide them amenities and other benefits. For example, agrarian laws have in many states remained mere showpieces. Small and marginalised farmers need to organise and demand effective implementation of agrarian laws.

iii) **Inbuilt and Ongoing Evaluation**

Groups interested in not only the improvement of socio –economic conditions of the deprived sections of society but also in the way of functioning of those involved in the work need to have a process of inbuilt and ongoing evaluation of their projects. In addition a time bound and overall evaluation of projects can provide a cumulative assessment of achievements over a project of time. The final judges of a project and its success are the people themselves. All evaluatory exercises bring to the forefront problem areas and a need to improve on performance by all concerned. Techniques for evaluating such tangibles as economic status, improved health are available and must be used by voluntary bodies to examine their performance. It is necessary to develop methods to evaluate intangibles such as people's participation and democratic processes of decision making, greater awareness of issues etc.

Further, it is important for voluntary agencies to strike a balance between qualitative and quantitative analysis of issues. When a group's focus is on material development, quantitative analysis will be more useful. Similarly when the focus is on people's growth and their organisation, the group will need to undertake qualitative analysis. As material development and the development of people's awareness of their rights and corresponding duties go hand in hand, it would be advisable to pay sufficient attention to both the qualitative and quantitative analysis. Every material gain for the deprived sections must also accompany the ability of the people to receive benefits and to increase their bargaining power. Often, voluntary organisations reject one aspect in favour of the other. But to be effective in the long-run, they need to have a balanced approach of combining gains in economic development with corresponding gains in the organisational power of the beneficiaries.

Activity 3

Imagine you are planning to start an environmental group which will get involved in recycling of waste material. What kind of waste material would you first collect? What will be your order of priorities if you are going to recycle three types of waste material? Write a short note on your plans.

28.8 LET US SUM UP

We started this unit with a discussion of the state as an association. The state was defined as a special category of association. Its characteristics distinguish it from other associations. This was followed by a destruction of the role the state plays in maintaining laws and order within a territory and in maintaining the general well being of its inhabitants. Then we examine the nature and role of non-state or other associations.

Differences were explained between voluntary and non-governmental organisations. We selected two areas, environmental movements and development of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes, for illustrating the role of voluntary organisations. Then we discussed some of the problems facing voluntary bodies. Finally suggestions were offered to promote voluntary efforts in India.

28.9 KEY WORDS

Association	:	An organisations of persons with a common interest.
Ecology	:	A branch of science dealing with the interrelationship of organisms and their environments.
Participatory Democracy	:	Active partnership of the common people in a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people.
Public Interest Litigation	:	Intervention by a social action group to make judicial system or courts accessible to the deprived, the poor and victims of social oppression.

Voluntarism	:	Intentions or motives of those who are assumed to act by their own will and not as determined by the social structure.
Sovereignty	:	An autonomous state, free from external control.

28.10 FURTHER READINGS

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28.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

i)   The state in not like other association. It is a category by itself. It is because the state has certain characteristics it does not share with other associations. These are (i) territory, (ii) sovereignty, (iii) coercive power.

ii) The state is found within a society and, therefore, the state is a narrower entity than a society. It is possible to find a state which encompasses several societies within its territory. Society is also taken as a concept which refers to the chain of relationships between individuals, between individuals and groups and between one group and another. In that sense, the concept of state refers to only particular types of relationships.

Check Your Progress 2

i)   A voluntary organisation seeking funds from foreign donors is the one which has no or little sources of income of its own. Such a body has to depend on funds from national/international donors. In the light of the globalisation of issues, particularly ecological issues, it makes good sense to pool both resources and efforts for creating a better ecologically balanced world.

ii) It is neither proper to expect the state to solve all the problems of any group of society, nor it is possible for the state to solve all the problems of any group of society. In this sense, we do not find that the state has already solved the problems of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Their problems are many and they need to be solved by both the state and voluntary efforts.

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