

Chapter – 7: Rural Livelihoods

Kalpattu Village

- Village – close to sea coast – Tamil Nadu
- People – perform different work
- Like other villages – non-farm work – making baskets, utensils, pots, bricks, bullock-carts etc.
- People – provide services – blacksmiths, nurses, teachers, washermen, weavers, barbers, cycle mechanics
- Also – some shopkeepers and traders
- Main street – looks like bazaar – variety of small shops – tea, barber, grocery, cloth, tailor, fertilizer and seed shops
- Some tea shops – sell – breakfast (idli, dosa, upama) in morning, snacks (vada, bonda, mysorepak) in evening
- Next to teashop – blacksmith family – home serves as workshop
- Next to their home – cycle repair shop
- 2 families – wash cloth – earn living
- Some people – travel to nearby town – construction worker, lorry driver
- Village – surrounded by low hills
- Paddy – main crop – irrigated here – most families – earn through agriculture
- Some coconut groves – around the village
- Cotton, sugar cane, plantain – also grown – mango orchards also available
- **Thulasi**
 - Works at Ramalingam's land (20 acres of paddy fields) – like all others
 - Even before marriage – she worked in paddy fields – parental village
 - She works from 8.30 (morning) to 4.30 (evening) – Karuthamma (Ramalingam's wife) supervises
 - One of the few times – she finds regular work – plants grow a bit – Ramalingam will call them again for weeding – after some time again for harvesting
 - When she was young – work was easy – now a days – bending all day with feet in water – difficult
 - She is paid Rs. 40 per day – less than what's paid in her home village
 - BUT – she works at Ramalingam's field – she can depend on him – he never looks for cheap labour from other villages
 - Her husband – Raman – also a labourer – sprays pesticides – they don't own any land
 - When there is no work – he finds work outside the village – loading sand from river or stone from the quarry – sent by truck to nearby town
 - Apart from working on field – she works at home – performs all the chores – cooking, cleaning, washing clothes
 - She also visits forest with others – collect firewood – village borewell – 1 km away – she fetches water there – husband helps in groceries, etc
 - Her daughters – goes to school
 - Last year – one of them fell ill – taken to hospital in town – they sold their cow – pay back money they borrowed
- Poor families – rural areas – spend lots of time – collecting firewood, getting water, grazing cattle

- They do not earn money – these activities – required for their household
- Family need to do this – cannot survive on little money they earn
- Nearly 2/5th – rural families – agricultural labourers
- Some – own small lands – others – like Thulasi – landless
- Not able to earn money – travel long distances – search of work – particular seasons
- **Sekar**
 - He has to carry paddy to his house
 - His family – just finished harvesting
 - They own small land – 2 acres – work done by themselves
 - At harvest time – he takes help from other farmers – helps them in harvest in return
 - Trader – gave him seeds and fertilizers – as a loan
 - To pay this loan back – sell paddy to him at lower rate than market – trader sent agents – reminder to sell only to him
 - He will harvest – 60 bags of paddy – some – sold to trader – others – used at his home
 - Whatever he earns and have – sufficient for 8 months only
 - Works at Ramalingam's rice mill – helps in collecting paddy from other farmers
 - He also has a hybrid cow – they sell its milk to local milk cooperatives

On Being in Debt

- As read above – small farmers – borrow money – purchase basic things – seeds, fertilisers, pesticides
- Often borrow money from moneylenders
- Sometimes – seeds – not of good quality or pests attack – crop failure
- Sometimes – bad monsoon – not enough rain – crop failure
- In such situations – for survival – may have to borrow more money – soon loan increases so much – unable to pay
- Recent years – major cause of distress – among farmers – resulted in suicide cases
- **Ramalingam and Karuthamma**
 - Along with land – Ramalingam and family – owns rice mill and agricultural shop
 - For rice mill – some money of their own – some money borrowed from government bank
 - They buy paddy – own village and neighboring village – rice produced – sold to traders – nearby towns – substantial income

Terrace Farming in Nagaland

- Village – Chizami – Phek district, Nagaland
- People – belong to Chakhesang community – perform 'terrace' cultivation
- Land on hill slope – made into flat plots (steps) – sides of each plot – raised to retain water
- People – own individual lands – work in each other's field – form groups – clean mountain side
- Each group – completes work – eats together – several days – until work is completed

Agricultural Labourers and Farmers in India

- Kalpattu village – agricultural labourers – Thulasi – small farmers – Sekar – big farmers – Ramalingam
- India – 2/5th rural families – agricultural labourers – work on other's fields – most of them landless – some own small lands

- Case of Sekar – their land not enough to meet their needs – India – 80 % farmers – this group – 20 % farmers – like Ramalingam
- Large farmers – cultivate most of the land – produce sold in market
- Some farmers – started other businesses – shops, moneylending, trading, small factories, etc.
- Apart from farming – many people depend on – collection from forest, animal husbandry, dairy produce, fishing, etc.
- Central India – some villages – farming and collection from forest – both sources imp.
- Collecting mahua, tendu leaves, honey – sold to traders – imp. source of additional income
- Selling milk to milk cooperatives – main source of income
- Coastal areas – fishing villages
- **Aruna and Paarivelan**
 - Pudupet – village near Kalpattu
 - People – earn through fishing
 - Houses – close to sea – rows of catamarans and nets – lying around
 - About 7 o'clock (morning) – lot of activity on the beach – this time catamarans return with fishes – women gather – buy and sell fish
 - Aruna's husband Paarivelan, her brother and brother-in-law – returned late – she was worried
 - They told her – they were caught in storm
 - Aruna – took aside some fish – auction rest – money earned – divided into 4 parts – one for each person and one part for equipment
 - Since they own fishing equipment – last share also kept by them
 - They took a loan from bank – purchased engine – reach much farther inside sea – get better catch
 - Women – buy fish – carry them in baskets – sell them in nearby villages
 - Traders – buy fish – sell them in their shops
 - She finishes the auction by noon - in the evening – her husband and relatives – untangle nets – early morning 2 a.m. – set to sea again
 - Every year – 4 months of monsoon – cannot go to sea – fish breed
 - These months – they survive by borrowing from trader – later on – forced to sell to trader
 - These months – most difficult

Rural Livelihoods

- People – rural areas – earn living – various ways
- Some work on farms – others earn through non-farm activities
- Working on farm – preparing land, sowing, weeding, harvesting – depend on nature – growth of crops
- Life – revolves around seasons
- People – busier – sowing and harvesting – less busy – other times
- Rural people – different regions – grow different crops – similarities in life situations and problems they face
- Many – depend on land – daily labourers
- Most farmers – grow crops – for their own and to sell – some – sell to traders – borrowed money
- Some families – own large lands and businesses
- Small farmers, agricultural labourers, fishing families, crafts persons – do not find enough work – keep them employed throughout year