
UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION TO RURAL SOCIETY

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, you will be able to:

- define rural society;
- differentiate between tribal, peasant, and urban societies;
- identify the types of village in India; and
- talk/write knowledgeably about a few important rural studies conducted in India.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This is the first unit of the course, 'Rural Development—Indian Context'. The purpose of this unit is to acquaint you with the concept of rural society. According to 2001 Census, 72.22 per cent of Indians live in about 6,38,691 villages. You know that in 1901, 89.2 % of Indians resided in villages and by 1961 this percentage had reduced to 82.03. It shows a declining trend which is bound to continue. There is, however, no doubt that even today a significant proportion of Indians lives in and derives livelihood from villages. Thus, 'rural society' assumes a considerable significance in any form of discussion on development.

In this unit we discuss the concept of rural society; we will also attempt to answer some questions like what is meant by the terms like 'village', 'countryside', or 'folk society'? The unit will also discuss the distinctions between different types of rural society, relationships between rural and urban societies and also some of the important rural studies conducted in India. In the remaining units of this block we will discuss *rural demography*, *rural social and economic structures* and finally *rural poverty*.

1.2 THE CONCEPT OF RURAL SOCIETY

The Bureau of the Census of the United States defines a rural community on the basis of the size and the density of population at a particular place. In India, on the other hand, the term 'rural' is defined in terms of *revenue*: the village means the 'revenue village'. It might be one large village or a cluster of small villages. According to the Census Commission of India, a village is an entity identified by its name and a definite boundary.

You may have observed that the Indian villages exhibit a great deal of diversity. Different states in India have different numbers of villages. According to the Census of India – 1991, the largest number of villages (1,12,566) is found in undivided Uttar Pradesh, followed by undivided Madhya Pradesh (71,352), undivided Bihar (67,546), Orissa (46,553), and Maharashtra (39,354). The smallest villages having the smallest populations are in the states of Sikkim (440) and Nagaland (1,112).

We see that on the one extreme are the 'affluent villages' of Punjab, where many families receive handsome amounts of money regularly from those of their young members who live and work abroad. Some writers have preferred to call these villages 'gray villages' because they have large populations of old people whose children are away. At one time many of these old people also were away working in foreign lands, and after making sufficient wealth, they returned to their soil to lead retired lives or to work as commercial farmers.

On the other extreme we have the extremely poor villages of Bihar, Orissa, or Chhattisgarh, where for one square meal, the parents are sometimes forced to sell their children to liquor vendors or moneylenders. Several villages in arid parts of Rajasthan are now uninhabited because of inhospitable environment. Villages at the outskirts of towns and cities are usually known as 'fringe villages', which undergo gradual transformation as they lose their identity by and by, and eventually become parts of the urban world. Take the example of New Delhi, where many residential colonies, such as Wazirpur, Patpar Ganj, Mohammad Pur, Chandrawal, etc., are named after the villages that used to exist there earlier, but have now been completely assimilated within the expanding universe of urban life. Some villages have now grown into towns, such as Kohima. All this points to the diversity of Indian villages.

In other words, while speaking about the Indian village, one has in mind several types of communities, some multi-caste, some having the members of just one caste. Some are close to the centers of civilization, the towns and cities, while some are situated in remote backward areas, and some are more developed than others in terms of material possessions and facilities (such as electricity, schools, dispensaries, etc.). If you move from one region to the other, from one state to the other, you will come across immense diversity in the lifestyles and material conditions of villages. Notwithstanding the huge variations, which are bound to take place in a vast country like India, there are certain general features that all rural communities have in common.

The term 'rural' is used in contrast with the term 'urban'. Some scholars think of a continuum, i.e., a kind of continuity from the rural to the urban. The left end of the continuum consists of the rural, whilst the right of the urban. Societies having all, and also 'pure', characteristics of the rural or urban are found at the poles. In between are placed societies, which are in bulk, having a mix of the characteristics that are attributed to the rural and urban worlds. Societies tilted more to the rural end of the continuum have more of the rural characteristics; similarly, societies placed more towards the urban end display more of the urban characteristics. Change takes place from rural to urban, rather than in the other way. This change is called urbanization, which is defined as the almost permanent migration of populations from rural areas to the urban. The changes that result because of urbanization are irreversible; so,

when ‘urban people’ migrate to rural areas, as has happened and is happening in the villages of Punjab, because of one or the other reason, they carry with them the stamp of urban influence.

What then is the ideal nature of a rural society? As a consequence of the constant interaction between the rural and the urban societies, most of the societies deviate considerably from the ideal models of either the rural or the urban society. Thus, the societies that are designated as *rural* bear the influence of *urban* areas invariably.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Write your answers in the space provided.

b) Check your answers with the possible answers provided at the end of the unit.

1) Define the concept of the degree of urbanization?

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1.3 THE IDEAL MODEL OF THE RURAL SOCIETY

You might have noted earlier that the term ‘rural society’ is used almost interchangeably with terms like ‘village’, ‘countryside’, or ‘folk society’. Of these, the term most commonly used in sociological literature on rural society is the *village*. The term ‘countryside’ is chiefly popular in the western world. It primarily denotes a quiet place, away from the hustle and bustle of the city, where one is in close proximity to nature. One chooses to retire to the countryside. It is not a place bereft of facilities, as villages are in the developing world. There are ‘pubs’ and recreational centers in the countryside. What it lacks is the ‘fast life of the city’.

Let us now look at the term ‘folk’, which attained popularity through of the works of Robert Redfield. It implies a person or persons belonging to a small traditional and homogeneous community. By implication, a folk society is traditional and homogeneous. This category is best understood in terms of culture and stands in contrast with the fast-changing and heterogeneous urban society. As we spoke of the rural-urban continuum earlier, in the same way, Redfield has written about the folk-urban continuum. A folk society is ‘past-oriented’, so said Redfield, in the sense that its members are content with their lot, with what they have, and they proudly hold their *tradition* high. By *tradition*, sociologists mean the ‘conventionalized modes of social behaviour and thought’, i.e. the behaviour and thought that were established long time back are considered valuable and applicable at all times, present and future.

In comparison with a rural society, we find that an urban society is ‘future-oriented’. Here, people are not satisfied with what they have, and they unceasingly want to change virtually everything they have. If urban dwellers are ‘forward-looking’, the folks are ‘backward-looking’. If *change* is the catchphrase of urban living, *stability* is that of the folk society. Let us now turn to the term, ‘rural society.’

From sociological point of view, the term ‘rural society’ implies the following:

- In comparison with the urban society, it is a small society, meaning thereby that it has a small population and extends over a shorter physical area. Various

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institutions (such as police stations, hospitals, schools, post-offices, clubs, etc.) may or may not be there, and if existent, they are not available in plenty.

- Density of the rural population is also low, and it may be clustered according to the criteria of social status. In other words, people occupying the same status may share the same neighbourhood, and may observe considerable social, and sometimes physical, distance from others, especially those lower in hierarchy.
- A sizable number of rural people are engaged in agriculture, which is the mainstay of their lives. In addition, a rural society has several other groups, engaged in various other occupations of arts and crafts, usually known as artisans and craftsmen, who regularly supply their services to agriculturalists in exchange for grains and cereals.
- Rural society has some full-time and a large number of part-time specialists. Craftsmen and artisans also indulge in agricultural pursuits, especially during the monsoon and the agricultural produce of such specialists and small agriculturalists is mainly for domestic consumption.
- Rural society is regarded as the repository of traditional mores and folkways. It preserves the traditional culture, and many of its values and virtues are carried forward to urban areas, of which they become a part after their refinement. When scholars say that 'India lives in villages', they mean not only that villages constitute the abode of three-quarters of Indians, but also that the fundamental values of Indian society and civilization are preserved in villages, wherefrom they are transmitted to towns and cities. One cannot have an idea about the spirit of India unless her villages are understood.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Write your answers in the space provided.

b) Check your answers with the possible answers provided at the end of the unit.

1) What is an 'affluent' village'?

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2) Give three salient characteristics of a 'rural society'

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1.4 TRIBES AND PEASANTS

The term 'rural society', as we said previously, includes a wide variety of people and villages of differing sizes and compositions. Generally, a rural society is an agrarian society, which includes agriculturalists, artisans, craftsmen, and other occupational groups, and they are all dependent, in one way or the other, upon agriculture, but these are not the only people who live in villages. Communities of people, who are called 'tribals', also live in villages, and some of them have been having long-standing relations with other non-tribal communities. Then, there are villages exclusively of tribespersons. To bring out this distinction clearly, sociologists have introduced the concepts of 'tribes' and 'peasants'.

According to the recently circulated Draft of National Policy on Tribal Populations of India, there are 67.8 million Scheduled Tribespersons, constituting about 8.08 per cent of India's population. There are 698 Scheduled Tribes spread all over India barring the States of Haryana and Punjab and the Union Territories like Chandigarh, Delhi and Pondicherry. Orissa has the largest number (sixty-eight) of Scheduled Tribes. By definition, the Scheduled Tribes are those people who are notified as such by the President of India under Article 342 of the Constitution of India. The first notification, in this regard, was issued in 1950. The President considers several characteristics such as the primitive traits of the tribe, its distinctive culture, its geographical isolation and social and economic backwardness before notifying it as a Scheduled Tribe. Seventy-five of the 698 Scheduled Tribes are identified as Primitive Tribal Groups. They are more backward than the Scheduled Tribes. They continue to live in a pre-agricultural stage of economy and have very low literacy rates. Their populations are stagnant or even declining.

It is clear from the foregoing that in defining *a tribe*, emphasis is laid on the isolation of its members from the wider world. Because a tribe has almost negligible relations with the other communities, it tends to develop its own culture, which has little resemblance with the culture of those communities that have enjoyed long-term interaction among themselves. That is the reason why tribal communities in anthropological literature are known as 'cultural isolates'. The implication of this metaphor is that one can understand a tribal society without bothering to study the external world, of which the tribe may be an 'island'. A tribal society is characteristically a 'holistic' (i.e. complete) society.

The term 'peasant' also shot into prominence with the works of Robert Redfield. For the first time, however, the term was defined in the writings of the American anthropologist, A.L. Kroeber. His oft-quoted definition of peasants is as follows: "Peasants are definitely rural – yet live in relation to market towns; they form a class segment of a larger population which usually contains also urban centers, sometimes metropolitan capitals. They constitute part-societies with part-cultures. They lack the isolation, the political autonomy, and the self-sufficiency of tribal populations; but their local units retain much of their old identity, integration, and attachment to soil and cults."

If tribes are isolated, *peasants* are not. *They* are agriculturalists – attached to soil, as Kroeber observes – who intend to produce primarily for their subsistence, but they have to produce a little more, because they do not manufacture and produce everything they need for their survival. They have to transfer and sell whatever little surplus they have to the markets located in urban areas so that they acquire the things they do not produce. Peasants are dependent upon urban markets, the consequence of which is that they are constantly in touch with urban societies. Therefore, for understanding them, we need to look at their relationship with the outside world of which they are a part. Kroeber's words that peasants are a 'part-society with part-culture' imply their constant interaction with other communities. The impact of these interactions

can be seen on all the aspects of their life. Along with Kroeber, one remembers George Foster's words: 'Peasants constitute a half-society.'

Now let us try to find out as to whether the tribal societies, which were isolated, exist in India? We infer that they might have existed in the distant past, but whatever historical material we have been able to garner indicates that there have always been relations of exchange between communities of tribespersons and others. Do you know that tribals supplied honey, medicinal plants, toys, baskets, nets, medico-religious knowledge and supernatural healing to other communities. In exchange, they got salt, grains, cereals, clothes, etc. In fact, their isolation increased when harmful external contacts with moneylenders, land-grabbers, liquor vendors, and other usurpers of resources led to devastating effects on tribes. The only option for tribes to escape from these exploiters was to move to isolated areas, so that they could have a temporary respite from their exploiters and oppressors.

Several tribal communities in India practice settled agriculture, with the result that it is difficult to distinguish them from peasants. Some sociologists propose the term 'tribal peasants' to designate them, for they combine the characteristics of both the tribal and peasant societies. In several cases, tribes or their sections have settled down close to villages, and started supplying certain services to other communities. With the passage of time, they have become inseparable parts of those villages. That is how tribespersons have got incorporated into villages.

In India, tribes are associated with other modes of production as well, such as hunting and food gathering, shifting cultivation, fishing, horticulture, and the practice of arts and crafts. Instead of relying on just one way of acquiring food, they combine various economic activities. The combination of different economic pursuits is dependent upon the ecological cycle of the area they inhabit, as their habitat provides them with the seasonal economic avenues that condition their practices such as hunting, fishing and/or gathering. In comparison with full-fledged agrarian villages, tribal habitations are small and spread over large areas. Each habitation is a cluster of few huts inhabited by people related by the ties of kinship. For such clusters, the term generally used in sociological literature is 'hamlet'. A hamlet may be a part of a large village, or a group of several hamlets spread over a large area may be administratively classified as a village.

Check Your Progress III

- Note:** a) Write your answers in the space provided.
b) Check your answers with the possible answers provided at the end of the unit.

1) Define the term Scheduled Tribe.

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1.5 RURAL AND URBAN SOCIETIES: DIFFERENCES AND RELATIONSHIPS

After having learnt about the various characteristics of the rural society, it will now be easier for us to compare it with the urban society. Just to revise: rural and urban societies, or the village and the city, constitute two ends of the continuum. Over a

period of time, rural societies undergo a variety of changes. Some of them are assimilated into urban societies; some start resembling urban societies in certain material and social terms, but retain their identity as *a village*; while some remain less affected by the forces emerging from cities. It may be so because of their location. Villages closer to the centers of urban growth are likely to change appreciably and faster than their counterparts located in interior areas. With the passage of time, villages may grow into towns, which later on grow into cities. Continuity may, thus, be unmistakably noticed in the transition from the village to the city.

For cities, which grow from the village, the term used by Robert Redfield and Milton Singer is ‘orthogenetic cities’. These cities ‘emerge from below’, i.e. from the village, rather than get imposed on a population from outside. When a city is imposed on a populace, as happened during the colonial period in India, it is called ‘heterogenetic city’. Such a city, ‘emerging from above’, does not have its origin in local villages. The social consequences of these two types of city are not alike. In an orthogenetic city, the migrants coming from villages will have less of a ‘culture shock’ on encountering the city and will not suffer much from any sort of ‘cultural inadequacy’ while dealing with the city dwellers. By contrast, both the experience of a culture shock and the feeling of cultural inadequacy will be tremendously high for rural migrants in a heterogenetic city. It is so, because an orthogenetic city carries forward the traditions of the village and the villagers can identify the segments of their culture in it and can relate with them easily. In a heterogenetic city, by contrast, members will feel completely out of place, because such a city contains the elements of a tradition which grew somewhere else, with which the local people have no familiarity. Consequently, they will feel out of place in it.

The point that has been stressed through out this lesson is that generally rural and urban areas are dependent upon each other. There is a mutually supportive relationship between them. Sociologists have analyzed these relations in economic, political, social, and cultural terms.

Check Your Progress IV

- Note:** a) Write your answers in the space provided.
 b) Check your answers with the possible answers provided at the end of the unit.

1) List three main differences between a rural and an urban society.

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1.5.1 Characteristics of Villages

Villages are principally food-producing units and they are agriculture-based. They produce not only for their own subsistence but also for the urban societies, which are non-food producing units. An urban society is not an agrarian society. A tribal society, in theoretical terms, has subsistence economy; people produce primarily for their own consumption. Tribal economy does not generate surpluses. A peasant society, in contrast, has to generate surpluses not only for acquiring things that it does not produce, but also for the city. Those who produce on a commercial basis, on a mass scale, with the basic objective of multiplying their gains, are known as *farmers*.

Whether the producers are peasants or farmers, they all supply food to cities. City dwellers, once their economic needs are met with, devote themselves to the development of arts and crafts, and other non-agricultural pursuits. The innovations that take place in cities diffuse to villages. Thus, in economic terms, land is the primary means/unit of production in rural societies, which is not the case in urban areas. In industrial-urban cities, however, the production and distribution of industrial goods and services becomes the primary resource base. So, the occupational structure is highly diversified in cities. Also, there is a greater degree of occupational specialization needed there. Thus, full-time specialists, whose occupations require higher education and skills, characterize urban societies invariably. In addition, semi-skilled and unskilled workers who support specialists in various ways are also found in cities.

Economic interaction is closely linked with the political. Although each village has its own council (called a *panchayat* in India), which takes up and resolves disputes between/among the people and communities in the village, the ultimate seat of authority, controlling villages, is situated in urban areas. The political power centered in cities controls villages. Prices of goods that villagers bring to city markets to sell are decided by urban political powers. Often, villagers protest against such controls. We are familiar with the protests made by Indian farmers when the prices of sugarcane or oil-seeds are fixed much below the expectation of their producers. When the prices of furs were reduced sometime back, the agro-pastoralists (those who practice agriculture as well as rear animals for profit) also launched protests.

The practice of internal mobilization for achieving their objectives is not unknown among village communities, but sometimes it does not build up enough strength because of a lack of support or poor publicity. The result is that villagers' exploitation at the hands of the city powers continues unabated. Marshall Sahlins has called peasants 'underdogs', who are not able to muster enough revolutionary fervour to bring about a change in their state of existence. Along with economic dependence, villages are also politically dependent upon cities. In both economic and political terms, the city enjoys supremacy over the village.

Let us now come to the third aspect dealing with the social and cultural factors pertaining to rural societies. We have learnt previously that rural societies are relatively more homogeneous in terms of their social and economic characteristics. Their technological and organizational aspects are also simpler, in the sense that they can be learnt easily. Also, changes among rural societies occur at a slower pace. The geographical, social and economic areas of interaction of the villagers are restricted. That is why some people call rural societies 'small-scale societies'. The role of tradition in controlling the behaviour of people is very strong. Religion also plays a significant role in governing the lives of people and individuals have limited freedom to choose their occupations or mates. In other words, the range of choice among the rural people is highly restricted. Their territorial, occupational, and upward social mobility also is limited.

1.5.2 Characteristics of Cities

In contrast, urban societies are characterized by, as Louis Wirth noted, large size, high density of population, and heterogeneity. Cities have a large population, and its growth is much faster because of the migration of people from rural to urban areas. In villages, the rate of growth of population is slower, and the population mostly increases as a result of high birth rate. Migration of people to villages is comparatively much less. Surely, there have been cases of tribal people migrating to villages in search of subsistence, but their number is too negligible to bring about any significant change in the village. Cities are 'cultural mosaics'; they have people from different cultures and backgrounds. Thus, the way of life of people shows a wide variety. The range with respect to income, housing, education, etc., is quite large. Technology is quite

complex, and its knowledge cannot be acquired at home, as happens in rural societies. The son of a blacksmith, for example, in a village learns the art of smithy at home, observing his father and other male relatives at work and holding apprenticeship under them. In urban societies, these crafts become highly sophisticated, and their teaching and learning is transferred to specialized institutions. As technology becomes complex, so do the organizations and the societies that use them.

You know that change in urban societies takes place at a fast pace. Urbanites have a larger area of interaction. They interact with people who live in different territories, and work in different organizations. In a nutshell, they come in contact with people who hail from different walks of life. For regulating such a wide variety of interaction, the urban society needs to impose, as Wirth said, formal mechanisms of social control. Mechanical time, records, and formal rules become essential for purposefully regulating the urban living. This is in sharp contrast to villages, which have face-to-face relationship. Here, the same people meet everyday, time and again, with the outcome that each adult knows most of the aspects of the life of the other. Relationships in villages are informal, by comparison to formal and specific relationships in urban societies. The same urban dwellers may meet everyday for business, but will not achieve the kind of intimacy that villagers possess because of regular and socially intense interaction. Relationships in villages are not of *the means to ends* type, as they are in cities. Mobility, both in space and occupations, is highly pronounced in urban societies as compared to the rural ones.

To sum up: rural and urban societies can be distinguished in terms of a number of variables, each of which exercises its impact on the other. Cultural features from villages are carried forward to cities where they are refined, systematized, and developed. They are then sent back to villages. Similarly, innovations taking place in cities percolate down to villages.

Check Your Progress V

- Note:** a) Write your answers in the space provided.
 b) Check your answers with the possible answers provided at the end of the unit.

1) Elaborate on the meaning of the phrase ‘folk-urban continuum’.

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1.6 LITTLE AND GREAT TRADITIONS

For analyzing the relationship and the ceaseless interaction between rural and urban societies, the concepts of *little and great traditions*, which Redfield proposed on the basis of his study of Mexican communities, have been found to be quite useful.

Redfield proposed the concept of ‘little community’, which may be imagined to be like a village. A little community has the following characteristics: small size, largely self-sufficient, homogeneous, and relatively isolated. Its members are generally unlettered, i.e. their tradition is not based upon reading and writing. They accept their tradition as it is, without subjecting it to any critical scrutiny. If there are contradictions

and paradoxes in their tradition, they continue to remain. People make no attempts to remove or reconcile them, or to answer questions that have remained unanswered in their tradition. In a little community, the tradition is accepted as infallible and transcendental, and it forges and maintains unity among the people.

1.6.1 Characteristics of Little and Great Traditions

The tradition of the little community is known as 'little tradition'. It may be defined as:

- the tradition of the *unlettered* (i.e.. non-literate and illiterate) *many* people inhabiting a particular area,
- who are *unreflective*, i.e. they do not critically examine or comment upon it, and accept it as it is;
- this tradition is *cultivated at home*; and
- is *transmitted* from one generation to the next as part of the *process of socialization*.

The type of society with which the little community unremittingly interacts is the city. Redfield, and many other scholars, have viewed city as the center of civilization. In fact, both these words – city and civilization – come from the same root in Latin. City is also the abode of a group of intellectuals whom Redfield calls 'literati', whose job is to create the tradition of a higher level by refining and systematizing the little tradition. The tradition of the literati is known as the 'great tradition', which has the following characteristics:

- It is the tradition of the *lettered* people who are *few* in number.
- They are *reflective*, i.e. they think about the tradition, make it sophisticated and systematize it, thus making it *universal*.
- This tradition is *cultivated in separate and distinct institutions*, such as temples, mosques, churches, synagogues, etc.
- It is *transmitted* as a part of the *specialized, rigorous, and long learning*, in which the individual is expected to internalize the tradition correctly.

If the little tradition is of villagers and the unlettered people of cities, the elites and scholars, such as the Brahmins, Imams, priests, rabbis, etc., guard the great tradition. The tradition of these scholar-elites is universally held. At the same time it is to be realized that *little* and *great* are ideal types, while in reality the situation is complex. Let us now analyse the whole concept critically.

1.6.2 Critical Assessment

Redfield's approach is popularly known as the 'cultural approach', because he looks at the interaction of the lifestyles of the two communities, the village and the city. This interaction is an outcome of the relative dependence (economic and political) of one on the other. Little traditions and great traditions interact constantly, as a result of which continuity is established between them. Cultural traits from the little tradition are carried forward to the great tradition where they are systematized. As great traditions have universal applicability, the cultural elements they systematize also become universal. Accordingly, the process whereby cultural features of the little traditions become parts of the great traditions is known as *universalization*, a term proposed by Redfield. The reverse process of the mobility of cultural traits from the great tradition to become parts of the little tradition is also possible. A little tradition has a narrow coverage and is confined to a local area. When it accepts elements from the great tradition, it might modify them so that they are compatible with the characteristics of the society in general. As the incoming cultural traits are changed

and coloured to suit local conditions, knowledge and thoughts, the process is termed localization or parochialization. These terms were used for the first time in McKim Marriott’s famous article on the village of Kishangarhi in Aligarh.

Many scholars think that Redfield’s analysis is extremely simple for understanding the complexities of Indian civilization. Some propose the idea of multiple traditions in India, rather than just two traditions. But, the concepts of little and great traditions help us greatly in understanding the cultural continuity between villages and cities in India. In this context, certain observations of Milton Singer, which are given below, are highly relevant:

- The Indian civilization has evolved out of the folk and regional cultures. The local stories and folklore have evolved into great epics such as Ramayana, Mahabharata, and other religious scriptures after being refined and systematized over a long period of time.
- Cultural continuity is a major feature of the great traditions. It is based on the idea that people throughout the country share common cultural consciousness.
- Consensus exists in India about sacred books and sacred objects. It is one of the major bases of a common cultural consciousness that people in India share.
- Cultural continuity with the past is a major feature of the Indian society. As a result most of the modernizing thoughts and ideologies of progress do not lead to a linear form of social and cultural change. Rather, the modern institutions are ‘traditionalized’ in India. They adapt to the social organization of communities instead of constraining them to adapt to modernity.

Check Your Progress VI

- Note:** a) Write your answers in the space provided.
 b) Check your answers with the possible answers provided at the end of the unit.

1) Enumerate three salient characteristics of the *great tradition*.

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1.7 TYPES OF VILLAGE

You know that villages have been classified on the basis of size. According to the Census of India – 1991, 94.7 per cent of villages had less than five thousand people. According to the size of population, the villages were divided into three categories:

- 26.5 per cent villages were inhabited by less than five hundred people;
- 48.8 per cent villages had a population falling between 500 and 2000; and
- 19.4 per cent villages had a population falling between 2000 and 5000.

It is clear that villages of the medium-size were almost fifty per cent of the villages in India.

Another classification of India villages divides them into *nucleated* and *dispersed* villages. It is well known that villages comprise homestead land (*âbâdî*) and cultivable land. In nucleated villages, all the households are clustered together in a compact unit,

surrounded on all sides by cultivable land. When households are distributed over a large area, and each cluster of a few houses is separated by cultivable land, it is known as a dispersed village. Most of the villages in India are of compact nucleated type. Dispersed villages are found in the coastal areas of Kerala in south India, in Bhil settlements to the east and north of Gujarat, and in Coorg and western Mysore.

M.N. Srinivas proposes that detailed studies of these two types of village need to be carried out to see differences in their respective organizational patterns. For example, he notes that in nucleated villages the responsibility of defending the village from robbers and wild animals falls on all the inhabitants. In dispersed villages, each farm has to protect itself against the enemies. The kin group owning the farm must have enough people to defend itself when the need arises. It is quite likely that houses in dispersed villages are built with an eye to defense. One may hypothesize that dispersed villages are associated with large kinship groups and martial traditions.

1.8 IMPORTANT RURAL STUDIES CONDUCTED IN INDIA

The year of 1955 is of tremendous significance for *village studies* in India. For the first time, in that year, four books and several papers on the Indian village were published. The four books were: S.C. Dube's *Indian Village*, D.N. Majumdar's *Rural Profiles*, McKim Marriott's *Village India*, and M.N. Srinivas' *India's Villages*. In the same year, a conference on the state of Indian society was held in Madras under the chairpersonship of Irawati Karve in which Robert Redfield also participated. In this conference, village studies and their scope were discussed. The proceedings of this conference were disseminated in the form of a book titled *Society in India*.

The late 1950s produced certain monographs on villages, and they are still regarded as of crucial importance. They were: G.M. Carstairs's *Twice Born* (1957), S.C. Dube's *India's Changing Villages* (1958), D.N. Majumdar's *Caste and Communication in an Indian Village* (1958), F.G. Bailey's *Caste and the Economic Frontier* (1957), and Oscar Lewis's *Village Life in Northern India* (1958). Albert Mayer's book titled *Pilot Project India* (1958) summarizes the main achievements of the Etawah project. In 1959 came A.R. Desai's edited volume titled *An Introduction to Rural Sociology in India*. Adrain Mayer's work *Caste and Kinship in Central India* (1960) was the first book length study of kin relations in an Indian village. André Bêteille's *Caste, Class and Power* (1964) was a study of the changing dimensions of rural stratification. A general description of a village in Rajasthan was provided in B.R. Chauhan's 1967 book titled *A Rajasthan Village*.

Since then, there have been a number of monographs on villages. Among the recent books, one may look at Gloria Goodwin Raheja's *The Poison in the Gift* (1988), which is an examination of the nature of caste system in a village of Saharanpur. For students of rural history, A.M. Shah's *Exploring India's Rural Past* (2002) will be of tremendous value. One of the most recent anthologies on the rural society in India is Vandana Madan's *The Village in India* (2002).

Check Your Progress VII

Note: a) Write your answers in the space provided.

b) Check your answers with the possible answers provided at the end of the unit.

1) Define a nucleated village.

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1.9 LET US SUM UP

This unit intends to introduce the basic features of the rural society in relation to other kinds of society, such as tribal and urban societies. Their relationship has been analysed in terms of the concepts of folk, urban societies, little traditions and great traditions. It has been shown that rural/folk and urban societies are characterized by significant differences of attitudes and values. However, while using this differentiation we have shown that villages in India are of many types. A major distinction is made between nucleated and dispersed settlements. We also discussed the useful idea of a *continuum*, where we conceptualized one of its ends consisting of rural societies and the other of urban societies. These two types of society have always been interacting. An Indian village was never a self-sufficient unit, as many British colonial officers tended to believe. It was always dependent upon the outside world – other villages and cities – for various things. As a result, the rural society was always absorbing various types of changes that were being introduced in it from outside. Though with the passage of time the rural population in India has reduced, yet seventy-two per cent of our people live in villages. Towards the end of the unit, we have also made a mention of some important rural studies conducted in India .

1.10 KEY WORDS

- Rural Society** : This term is used for a small society, which comprises only a few hundred households, who mostly produce their own food. Agriculture is the mainstay of their life. In this society, the number of people engaged in non-agricultural pursuits is small, but these members also practice agriculture.
- Tribal Society** : This term is used for a small society, smaller than the typical agriculture-based society. It is largely isolated from other societies and the centers of civilization. The tribal communities practice a large number of economic pursuits, ranging from hunting and food gathering to settled agriculture. There are many villages in India where tribes and non-tribal people live together.
- Urban Society** : This term is used interchangeably with two terms—towns and cities. Characterized by a much larger area and population, an urban society grows faster because of the migration of people from villages to cities. An urban society, whether pre-industrial or industrial, is basically a non-agrarian society. It is heterogeneous, complex, and future-oriented.
- Great Tradition** : It is the tradition of the intellectual class called ‘literati’ who live in cities.
- Little Tradition** : It is the tradition of the unlettered people in villages and cities.
- Universalization** : The process, by which cultural traits from the little tradition get carried forward, reflected upon, and systematized to become a part of the great tradition, is called universalization.
- Parochialization** : The process, by which cultural traits from the great tradition get carried downwards to the village where they become a part of the little tradition, is called parochialization.
- Fringe Villages** : These are the villages that are found at the meeting points of typical rural and urban areas. They depict the characteristics of both the types of social organization.

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1.12 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) The degree of urbanization is arrived at by dividing the number of people living in towns and cities by the total population of that country, and then, multiplying the fraction thus obtained by one hundred. If a country has a large population dwelling in villages, then its degree of urbanization will be low, whatever the absolute number of people living in urban areas. India has a low degree of urbanization in comparison to Australia, although the number of people living in Indian cities is far more than their counterparts in Australian cities.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) The general impression of an Indian village is that it is a conglomeration of mud-and thatched houses inhabited by people of different castes who struggle to make both ends meet with highly limited resources. Although scarcity and poverty are differentially distributed in Indian villages, on the whole they are rampant, that is why, the programmes of poverty-alleviation and development are urgently needed for them. Contrary to this image are the 'affluent' villages in Punjab and Haryana where, speaking in relative terms, there is no scarcity, resources are in plenty, and facilities generally found in cities are easily available. Out-migration from these villages is usually to the developed world, where people wish to go with the sole intention of maximizing their assets and affluence.
- 2) The three salient characteristics of a rural society are:
 - i) It is small in size with a low density of population.
 - ii) Members of the rural society are engaged in agriculture, which is the mainstay of their life; and
 - iii) A rural society is 'tradition-bound', i.e. the same way of life, norms and folkways, customs and practices, and beliefs and values, tend to perpetuate over time, and the extent of change among them is considerably low. That was the reason why Robert Redfield characterised a rural society as 'past-oriented'.

Check Your Progress III

- 1) 'Scheduled Tribe' is a constitutional term. There is an all-India list of Scheduled Tribes. Each of the Scheduled Tribes is a community of people that has been relatively isolated, because of which it is backward, less developed, and sometimes suffers from acute poverty and scarcity. In order to bring it at par with other developed communities, it is essential that its interests are protected and taken care of. All the states provide such protection and the needed extra support under the policy of what is known as 'compensatory discrimination', 'protective discrimination', or 'positive discrimination'. The list mentioned above lists the names of the tribes/communities that need such discrimination and each of the listed communities is called a Scheduled Tribe.

Check Your Progress IV

- 1) The three main differences between rural and urban societies are:
 - i) Villages are primarily food-producing units, while urban society is non-agricultural.
 - ii) Villages are small in size and their growth rate is slow. In their case, out-migration is higher than in-migration, which in many cases may touch zero. Cities are larger in size and their growth rate is high. In-migration is considerably higher than out-migration, because of which cities keep on growing.
 - iii) Villages are relatively homogeneous. They have some kind of cultural uniformity. The extent of cultural variation among communities inhabiting a village is not discernible. By comparison, cities are heterogeneous. They comprise communities with different cultures, where each one of them tries its best to maintain its identity and cultural purity. City is a cultural mosaic.

Check Your Progress V

- 1) Continuum means 'continuity'. By folk-urban continuum is meant 'continuity from the village to the city'. One end of this continuous scale is the village; the other is the city. Both these social formations are in ceaseless interaction. That is the reason why villages show the profound impact of city life on them, and certain cultural traits from villages are developed in cities. The continuum also shows that the development is from the village to the city. Over time, villages are transformed into towns and cities.

Check Your Progress VI

- 1) The three salient characteristics of the great tradition are:
 - i) It is the tradition of the literate people.
 - ii) It is the tradition of the people who are fewer in number.
 - iii) It is the tradition of the people who are reflective. They critically think about the tradition, remove the glaring contradictions it suffers from and make it sophisticated by systematizing it.

Check Your Progress VII

- 1) A nucleated village is one where all the households are clustered together forming some kind of a nucleus, and all around it are the fields that belong to those households. It is distinguished from a dispersed village where the houses are distributed over a large area, in which each cluster of a few houses is surrounded by fields generally belonging to them. Most of the villages in India are nucleated villages.

UNIT 2 RURAL DEMOGRAPHY

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Meaning of Demography
- 2.3 Demographic Data Base
 - 2.3.1 Census
 - 2.3.2 Civil Registration System (CRS)
 - 2.3.3 Sample Registration System (SRS)
 - 2.3.4 Sample Surveys
- 2.4 Size, Growth and Distribution of Rural Population
 - 2.4.1 National Picture
 - 2.4.2 Picture in the Major States
 - 2.4.3 Distribution and Density of Rural Population
- 2.5 Sex Composition of Rural Population
- 2.6 Age Composition of Rural Population
- 2.7 Marital Status of Rural Population
- 2.8 Fertility and Mortality Patterns
- 2.9 Migration Patterns
- 2.10 Size of Rural Settlements
- 2.11 Literacy Rate
 - 2.11.1 State-wise Variations in Literacy Rate (*the rural scenario*)
- 2.12 Demography and Development
- 2.13 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.14 Key Words
- 2.15 Suggested Readings and References
- 2.16 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- define demography and explain how it is related to development;
- outline the growth and distribution of rural population in our country;
- explain how sex and age compositions of the rural populations and their marital status have undergone changes;
- outline and explain the patterns of internal migration;
- explain the implications of the size of rural settlements for development; and
- describe the state of rural literacy.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The basic objective of development is to improve the quality of life. We know that building a modern nation depends on the development of people and the organization of human activity. It is the development of human resources that unlocks the door to modernization and is one of the necessary conditions for all kinds of growth – social, political, cultural or economic. This principle applies to India as well, particularly as she is poised to emerge as a world political and economic power.

A country therefore plans for its people only. While planning for overall development and for providing services to the people, information regarding the size, growth, composition and quality of population plays an important role. Suppose schools or hospitals are to be opened in an area. To decide as to how many to set up, information regarding the total population of the area, their age and sex is needed. It is in this context that the study of *demography* assumes significant importance.

This unit is aimed at familiarizing you with the population scenario of rural India. An attempt has been made to give you an overview of the rural population in our country, so that you may have a reasonable idea about its size, composition and growth as well as the related phenomena like migration and the size of rural settlements.

2.2 MEANING OF DEMOGRAPHY

Now let us understand the term *demography*. Demography is the scientific and statistical study of population and in particular the size of various types of population, their development and structure.

There are various branches of Demography like Historical Demography, Social Demography, Economic Demography, Mathematical Demography, Medical Demography and so on. Though it is not the practice among demographers to study the Rural and the Urban Demography separately, it is useful to consider the demographic characteristics of the rural population separately, as it will help in providing a better understanding of the issues in rural development. This is important in a country like India, which is predominantly rural in character and will continue to remain so for several decades to come.

2.3 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA BASE

Let us now discuss the different sources of demographic data available in India and their usefulness in making developmental decisions. The various sources of data commonly utilized for demographic analysis are presented briefly as follows.

2.3.1 Census

You know that Census is generally a decennial affair. The first census in India was conducted in 1872 and since 1881 it has been undertaken regularly every ten years.

Census is a valuable and authentic source and can provide information at the lowest possible aggregation. In addition to the age-sex-marital status of the various types of population, it provides information about their socio-economic characteristics such as literacy and education, religion of the head of the household, occupation and industrial classification of the labour force, the available household and community amenities (health facilities, post offices, banks, schools etc.) and housing conditions. The compositions of the scheduled caste and the scheduled tribe households are also made available. This information with varying degrees of elaboration at the village level is thus available to decision maker.

2.3.2 Civil Registration System (CRS)

Civil registration is the continuous recording of vital events such as births, deaths, marriages etc. It is generally a compulsory recording done according to the legal requirements of the country as per the provisions made by official orders or rules.

2.3.3 Sample Registration System (SRS)

This system was initiated by the Registrar General of India in 1969-70. Conducted on a regular basis at the national level, it is in essence a demographic survey based on a dual recording system. It provides estimates for both rural and urban areas at the state (major states) as well as the national level. Both the estimates of birth and mortality are made available on an annual basis. But the problem is that SRS does not provide estimates at lower levels of aggregation and the sample units selected remain fixed for a long period of time.

2.3.4 Sample Surveys

Surveys, in which information is collected on a sample basis, are particularly suitable for providing a variety of information with a fair degree of precision. Sample surveys have become a major means for collecting information on a variety of demographic and health related indicators.

In India, since 1990 there has been a noticeable change in the availability of large-scale surveys in the field. Two rounds of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) have been conducted on the lines similar to Demographic Health Surveys (DHS). NFHS -1 was conducted in 1992-93 and NFHS-2 in 1998-99. They provide information on fertility, family planning practices, mortality including infant and child mortality, utilization of maternal and child health care services, nutritional status of children, apart from the usual socio-economic and demographic characteristics of a household. Information from NFHS has been widely used by planners, policy makers and academicians.

Having learnt what *demography* is and what the different sources of demographic studies are, let us take up for discussion the size, growth and distribution of the rural population.

2.4 SIZE, GROWTH AND DISTRIBUTION OF RURAL POPULATION

2.4.1 National Picture

According to the 2001 census, the total population of our country was 10,27,015,247 in 2001, of which 7,41,660,293 or 72 per cent was rural (see Table 2.1). Though the percentage of the rural population shows a moderate decline over the years, the absolute number shows a large rural base even during the last census. Obviously, no development policy in India can succeed unless it centers around rural development.

Table 2.1: Rural Population of India, 1901 –2001

Year	Total Population	Rural Population	% of Rural Population
1901	238,396,327	212,544,454	89.16
1911	252,093,390	226,151,757	89.71
1921	251,321,213	223,235,046	88.82
1931	278,977,238	245,521,249	88.01
1941	318,660,580	274,507,283	86.14
1951	361,088,090	298,644,156	82.71
1961	439,234,771	360,298,168	82.03
1971	548,159,652	439,045,675	80.09
1981	683,329,097	523,866,550	76.66
1991	846,387,888	628,836,076	74.30
2001	1,027,015,247	741,660,293	72.22

Source: Census of India 1981, 1991 and 2001

Let us now look at the growth rate of rural population. The growth of population is often used to connote *the change* in the number of people living in a particular area during a specific period of time. It is positive if there is increase in population and negative if there is a decrease in population between any two given points in time. Table 2.2 presents the growth of rural population in India over a period of ten years.

Table 2.2: Growth of Rural Population 1901-2001

Year	Rural Population	Decennial Variation in Population	% Decennial Variation
1901	212,544,454	-	-
1911	226,151,757	13607303	6.40
1921	223,235,046	-2916711	-1.29
1931	245,521,249	22286203	9.98
1941	274,507,283	28986034	11.81
1951	298,644,156	24136873	8.79
1961	360,298,168	61654012	20.64
1971	439,045,675	78747507	21.86
1981	523,866,550	84820875	19.32
1991	628,836,076	104969526	20.04
2001	741,660,293	112824217	17.94

Source: Census of India 1981, 1991 and 2001

If you look at the table carefully, you will find four distinct phases of population growth from 1901 to 2001.

- i) Phase I : 1901-1921 Very Slow Growth
- ii) Phase II : 1931-1951 Steady Growth
- iii) Phase III: 1961-1981 Rapid High Growth
- iv) Phase IV : 1991-2001 High Growth with definite signs of slowing down.

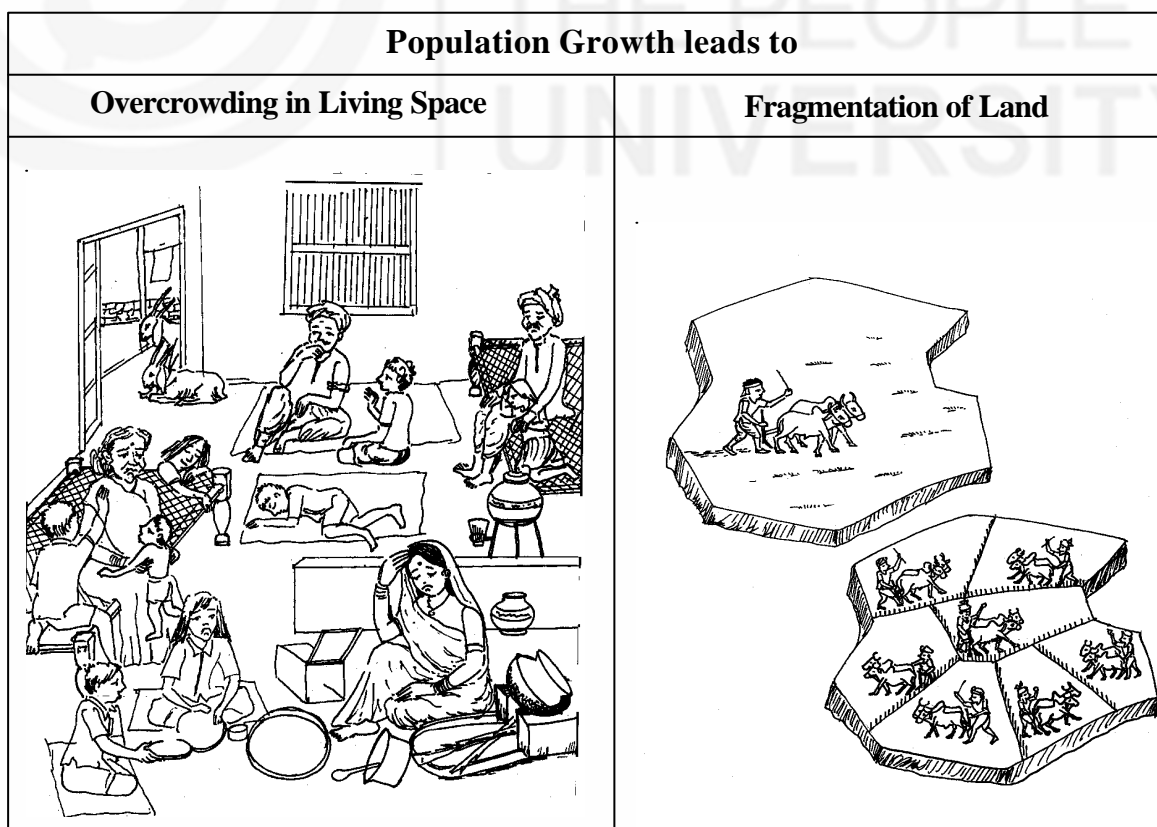


Fig. 1

2.4.2 Picture in the Major States

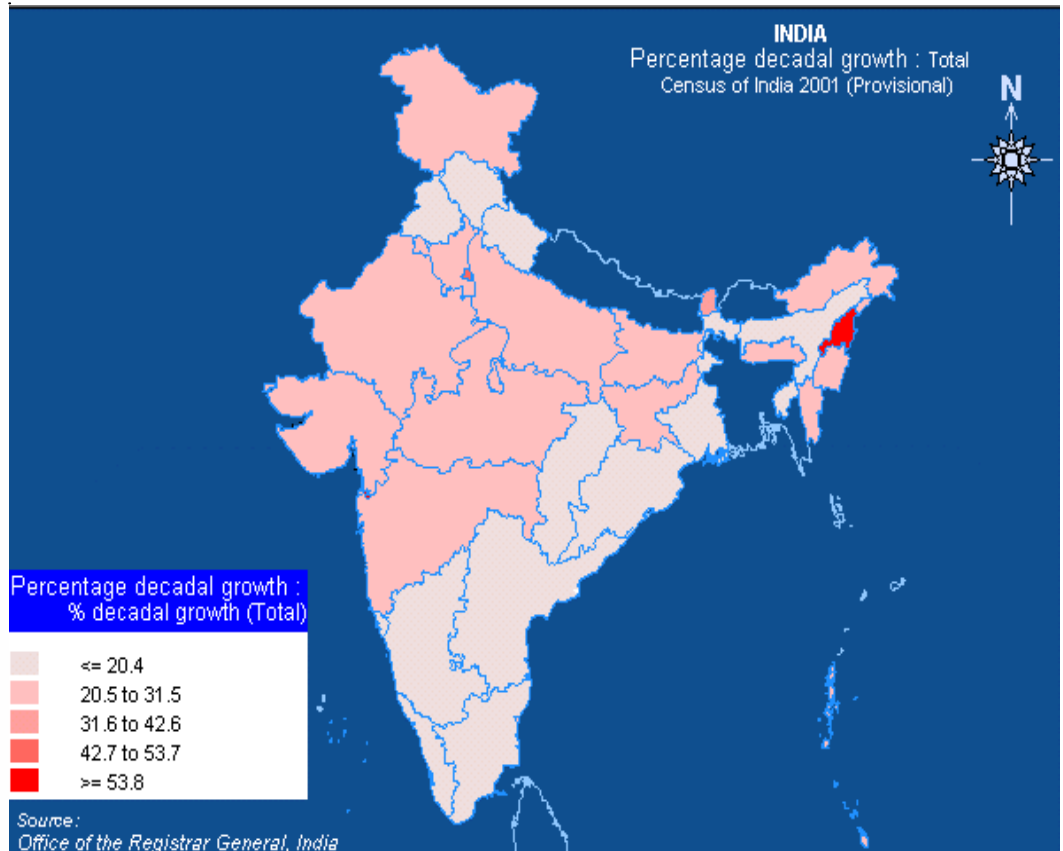
Population growth needs to be viewed not only in the context of increase in numbers but also within the broader perspective of its patterns in the different states of India. An analysis of the population growth patterns at the state level in India will help in understanding the regional contrasts in the growth pattern. Table 2.3 presents the state-wise growth of rural population.

You may also look at the variations in the growth rate as depicted in Map 1. The highest growth rate has been recorded by Nagaland (63.37%) and the lowest by Madhya Pradesh (-12.90%). Of the 28 states in the country, as many as seven recorded growth rates higher than the national average (19.08%). From the table you may also note that the so-called four BIMARU (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh) states belong to two different categories. Bihar and Madhya Pradesh show negative growth rates, indicating *out* migration from their villages. Of course, Madhya Pradesh has also lost some of its rural population due to the formation of Chhattisgarh. Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, however, have recorded positive growth.

Table 2.3: Statewise Growth Rate of Rural Population

State / UT*	Rural Population: growth per cent		
	1991	2001	1991-2001
Nagaland	1001323	1635815	63.37
Lakshadweep *	22593	33647	48.93
Chandigarh *	66186	92118	39.18
Manipur	1331504	1818224	36.55
Dadra & Nagar Haveli *	126752	169995	34.12
Sikkim	369451	480488	30.05
Meghalaya	1444731	1853457	28.29
Rajasthan	33938877	43267678	27.49
Mizoram	371810	450018	21.03
Haryana	12408904	14968850	20.63
INDIA	622812376	741660293	19.08
Uttar Pradesh	111506372	131540230	17.97
Gujarat	27063521	31697615	17.12
West Bengal	49370364	57734690	16.94
Assam	19926527	23248994	16.67
Andaman & Nicobar Islands *	205706	239858	16.60
Himachal Pradesh	4721681	5482367	16.11
Arunachal Pradesh	753930	868429	15.19
Maharashtra	48395601	55732513	15.16
Orissa	27424753	31210602	13.80
Andhra Pradesh	48620882	55223944	13.58
Tripura	2335484	2648074	13.38
Punjab	14288744	16043730	12.28
Karnataka	31069413	34814100	12.05
Pondicherry *	290800	325596	11.97
Kerala	21418224	23571484	10.05
Delhi *	949019	963215	1.50
Bihar	75021453	74199596	-1.10
Goa	690041	675129	-2.16
Tamil Nadu	36781354	34869286	-5.20
Madhya Pradesh	50842333	44282528	-12.90
Jammu & Kashmir	N.A	7564608	-
Uttaranchal**	N.A	6309317	-
Jharkhand**	N.A	20922731	-
Chhattisgarh**	N.A	16620627	-
Daman & Diu *	54043	100740	-

Source: Census of India 1991, 2001



Map 1



Map 2

2.4.3 Distribution and Density of Rural Population

Now, you have a clear idea about the growth of rural population in the various states and union territories as well as the country as a whole. Why do some states have more population than some others? Let us address this question in some detail.

It is the unevenness of distribution, which is a significant feature of India's rural population. The factors that have guided the distribution pattern of population are the availability of cultivable land, depth and fertility of soil, depth of the underground water table, availability of water for irrigation, etc. Depending on these factors, the density of population varies from place to place. As per the 2001 census, India has an average density of 324 persons per square kilometer, but the rural population density is 254, which has increased from 214 in 1991. Table 2.4 shows the density of population in some of the major states of India and Map 2 brings out the variations in density. Though there are variations in density, the overall increase in the density of population is a matter of great concern as it puts immense pressure on our natural resources (see Fig. 1).

Table 2.4: Density of Rural Population

States	Density of Rural Population	
	1991	2001
INDIA	214	255
Andhra Pradesh	180	205
Assam	257	300
Bihar*	441	436
Gujarat	142	166
Haryana	287	346
Karnataka	166	186
Kerala	603	664
Madhya Pradesh**	117	102
Maharashtra	161	185
Orissa	179	204
Punjab	292	328
Rajasthan	101	128
Tamil Nadu	297	281
Uttar Pradesh***	386	455
West Bengal	576	674

* 1991 density includes both Bihar and Jharkhand while 2001 is only for Bihar and excludes Jharkhand

** 1991 density includes both Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh while 2001 is only for Madhya Pradesh and excludes Chhattisgarh

*** 1991 density includes both Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal while 2001 is only for Uttar Pradesh and excludes Uttaranchal

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Write your answers in the space provided.

b) Check your answers with the possible answers provided at the end of the unit.

1) What is the reason for the decline in population in Bihar and Madhya Pradesh in contrast with the situation in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh in 2001?

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2) Why is the density of Kerala or West Bengal higher than Madhya Pradesh or Rajasthan?

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2.5 SEX COMPOSITION OF RURAL POPULATION

This section provides details that should help you in understanding the various aspects of demographic dynamics, which influence the growth of population and its distribution. The most significant aspect of demographic dynamics is *the sex ratio*. It is an important social indicator used to measure the extent of the prevailing equity between males and females in a society at a given point in time. It is an outcome mainly of the interplay of sex differentials in mortality, sex-selective migration, sex ratio at birth and at times the sex differential in population enumeration.

According to the 2001 census, the *sex ratio* in India stands at 933 females per 1000 males, which is an improvement of 6 points over 927 recorded in the 1991 census. Though it has been improving since 1901 (see Table 2.5), it continues to be the lowest in the world. Let us see why? Some of the important reasons for this declining trend, specific to our country, are: i) neglect of the girl child resulting in their higher mortality at younger ages, ii) high maternal mortality, iii) sex selective female abortions, and iv) female infanticide.

Table 2.5: Sex Ratio in India 1901-2001

Year	Combined	Rural	Urban
1901	972	979	910
1911	964	975	872
1921	955	970	846
1931	950	966	838
1941	945	965	831
1951	946	965	860
1961	941	963	845
1971	930	949	858
1981	934	951	878
1991	927	948	935
2001	933	935	903

Source: Census of India, 1991 and 2001

Viewed in its regional perspective there is a phenomenal diversity in the sex ratio (see Table 2.6) in India. The highest sex ratio (1058) has been reported in Kerala, mainly because Kerala has been experiencing male-selective out migration to other parts of the country for employment since long, and the high literacy rates contribute to a low female mortality rate. The states that display more or less balanced sex ratio include Uttaranchal, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, and Himachal

Pradesh. Haryana on the other hand has reported the lowest sex ratio. It is so mainly because of the increasing trend of female foetal abortions guided by sex determination tests as well as a strong preference for the male child at the cost of the female child. The other states with fairly large paucity of females are Punjab, Sikkim and Uttar Pradesh.

Table 2.6: State-wise Sex Ratio 2001

States	Total	Rural	Urban
Kerala	1058	1059	1058
Uttaranchal	964	1007	850
Chhattisgarh	990	1005	932
Tamil Nadu	986	992	980
Himachal Pradesh	970	991	797
Pondicherry*	1001	990	1006
Goa	960	988	933
Orissa	972	986	895
Andhra Pradesh	978	983	965
Karnataka	964	976	940
Meghalaya	975	972	985
Manipur	978	969	1009
Jharkhand	941	963	870
Maharashtra	922	959	874
Lakshadweep	947	957	936
West Bengal	934	950	893
Tripura	950	948	962
Gujarat	921	946	880
Assam	932	940	878
Nagaland	909	932	809
Rajasthan	922	932	890
Madhya Pradesh	920	927	899
Jammu & Kashmir	900	927	822
Bihar	921	927	869
Mizoram	938	925	951
Arunachal Pradesh	901	915	850
Uttar Pradesh	898	904	879
Punjab	874	887	848
Sikkim	875	881	828
Haryana	861	867	847
Andaman & Nicobar Islands*	846	862	815
Dadra & Nagar Haveli*	811	850	691
Delhi*	821	806	822
Chandigarh	773	621	792
Daman & Diu*	709	585	983
Assam	932	940	869

Source: Census of India 2001

Child Sex Ratio

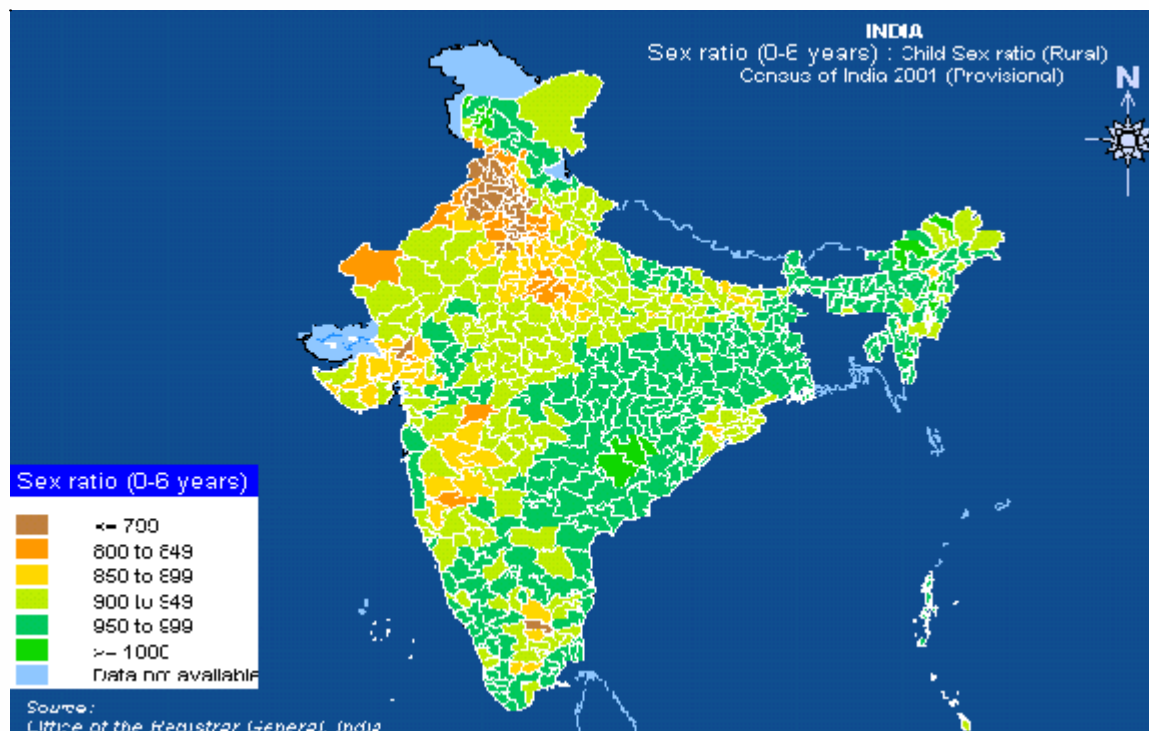
To understand the imbalances it is necessary to have an idea of the *child sex ratio* in India. In contrast to the overall sex ratio, the sex ratio of the child population (0-6 age group) fell from 945 in 1991 to 927 in 2001 (see Table 2.7). The sharpest decline in the sex ratio of the child population has been observed in Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Uttaranchal, Maharashtra and Chandigarh.

Table 2.7: Child Sex Ratio 1991 – 2001

State/ UT	Child sex ratio			
	Rural		Urban	
	1991	2001	1991	2001
India	948	934	935	903
Jammu & Kashmir	NA	952	NA	872
Haryana	877	824	884	809
Punjab	878	795	866	789
Delhi	900	853	917	866
Chandigarh	910	852	897	844
Rajasthan	919	914	909	886
Gujarat	925	905	908	827
Uttar Pradesh	927	922	928	880
Daman & Diu	933	920	996	935
Madhya Pradesh	944	941	931	906
Tamil Nadu	945	931	955	951
Lakshadweep	951	1,010	932	920
Uttaranchal	952	914	936	874
Bihar	953	940	949	924
Maharashtra	953	923	934	908
Kerala	958	964	958	958
Karnataka	963	954	951	939
Pondicherry	963	971	962	951
Himachal Pradesh	966	900	904	858
Sikkim	967	991	936	925
Tripura	968	978	959	948
West Bengal	969	967	955	948
Orissa	969	954	949	927
Goa	972	948	953	919
Mizoram	973	978	965	961
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	973	976	970	940
Manipur	975	956	972	980
Assam	977	967	955	931
Andhra Pradesh	979	965	962	958
Arunachal Pradesh	986	957	946	981
Jharkhand	986	973	950	931
Chhattisgarh	988	982	960	941
Meghalaya	989	977	968	964
Nagaland	1001	983	959	935
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1015	995	977	885

Note: The table excludes Jammu and Kashmir where census was not held in 1991.

The above table shows that in 1991, Punjab and Haryana registered a child sex ratio below 900 in their rural areas. At the 2001 Census, Delhi and Chandigarh were the two new entrants in this category. The number of states recording a child sex ratio above one thousand has reduced from two to one. Map 3 shows the distribution of the child sex ratio in the country at present.



Map 3

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Write your answers in the space provided.

b) Check your answers with the possible answers provided at the end of the unit.

1) The decreasing sex ratio can be attributed to several factors. In what way do you think would the data on sex ratio at birth have helped us in judging the situation better?

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2) Name three states, which have low sex ratio. Please state the reasons?

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3) What does the decline in the child sex ratio indicate?

.....

2.6 AGE COMPOSITION OF RURAL POPULATION

The age composition is another basic characteristics of a population. It not only influences the *rate of growth* but also enables us to determine the *proportion of labour force* in the total population as well as the *dependency ratio*.

Basically the age composition of a population is determined by three factors, i.e. fertility, mortality and migration. These factors are interdependent and any change in one of these may influence the other two.

Table 2.8: Age Composition

Age Group	Percentage	
	2002	2003
0 - 14	32.7	32.2
15-64	62.6	63.0
65 and over	4.7	4.8

Source: CIA The World Fact Book 2002, 2003

Table 2.8 shows the age composition of the population of India. It shows a broad base and a tapering top indicating a higher population growth and also an increasing number of unemployed.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Write your answers in the space provided.

b) Check your answers with the possible answers provided at the end of the unit.

1) What is the relation between the age at marriage and the birth rate in a country?

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2.7 MARITAL STATUS OF RURAL POPULATION

In India, one of the most important factors responsible for the present high population growth is the persistence of markedly low level of age at marriage in many of the Indian states. In India, the Child Marriage Restraint Act 1978 has laid down 18 years as the minimum age at marriage for females. Yet, even today the age at marriage remains quite low—in certain cases below 15 years. Variations in the age at marriage are shown in Table 2.9.

Table 2.9: Percentage of Women Ever Married before the age of 15/18 in Rural and Urban areas, 1992-93

Region	State	Per cent of women ever married before 15/18 years of age			
		Rural		Urban	
		20-24	40-44	20-24	40-44
North	Haryana	20.2 (65.4)*	42.1	16.8(54.4)	25.0
	Himachal Pradesh	4.7 (25.4)	23.8	1.2 (12.2)	14.4
	Jammu & Kashmir	5.7 (23.6)	32.6	1.7 (7.3)	16.5
	Punjab	1.9 (15.7)	6.2	3.0 (12.5)	6.0
	Rajasthan	41.4 (77.0)	54.7	21.8 (42.4)	33.0
Central	Madhya Pradesh	52.3 (82.8)	68.7	19.7 (42.7)	42.3
	Uttar Pradesh	42.5 (73.3)	61.1	9.5 (30.5)	22.3
East	Assam	21.0 (46.4)	34.5	14.8 (31.0)	19.3
	Bihar	43.6 (73.8)	65.3	16.9 (44.2)	40.1
	Orissa	13.6 (48.0)	35.0	8.7 (32.5)	24.0
	West Bengal	27.7 (64.1)	54.3	15.8 (34.6)	33.7
West	Gujarat	13.7 (40.6)	20.8	5.3 (20.6)	13.2
	Maharashtra	37.6 (70.8)	58.5	9.7 (35.3)	29.4
South	Andhra Pradesh	45.7 (77.8)	59.9	14.2 (44.2)	34.6
	Karnataka	28.4 (59.0)	41.7	12.1 (35.9)	23.5
	Kerala	4.0 (20.7)	9.0	0.09 (16.0)	4.4
	Tamilnadu	9.1 (42.2)	20.7	4.5 (26.2)	20.3

Source: NFHS India, 1992-93

* Figures within brackets indicate the % age of women aged 20-24 married before attaining 18 years and the figures outside the brackets indicate the % age of women married before attaining the age of 15 years.

There is a clear trend of rising age at marriage in all the states. As expected the incidence of early marriages is much higher in the rural areas than in the urban areas. Only a few states like Kerala, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir are more homogenous in terms of lower incidences of marriage at younger ages. In these states early marriages are waning away in both the rural and the urban areas.

2.8 FERTILITY AND MORTALITY PATTERNS

Vital rates include mainly fertility and mortality of a group of population. Table 2.10 summarizes the decline in the vital rates in India from 1971 to 2001.

Table 2.10: Vital rates for India - 1971 – 2001

Year	Crude Birth Rate	Crude Death Rate	Infant Mortality Rate
1971	36.9	14.9	129
1976	34.4	15.0	129
1981	33.9	12.5	110
1986	32.6	11.1	96
1991*	29.5	98	80
1996	27.5	9.0	72
2000	25.8	8.5	68
2001	25.4	8.4	66

Source: Sample Registration System, Office of the Registrar General, India.

* The table excludes Jammu and Kashmir where census was not held in 1991.

It shows that with an improvement in the general health conditions the death rate has also declined. Since the decline in the *birth rate* is more than that in the *death rate*, the *rate of growth* of population has shown a rapid increase.

At the state level, however, the trend in the decline of vital rates shows a mixed pattern (see Table 2.11). In the Hindi speaking heartland comprising Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, where about 44% of the population of the country live, significant decline in the vital rates is still a far cry with the sole exception of Himachal Pradesh.

Table 2.11: Birth Rate, Death Rate and Infant Mortality Rate, 2001

India/State/Union Territory	Birth Rate			Death Rate			Infant Mortality Rate		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
INDIA	27.5	27.1	20.2	8.4	9.0	6.3	66	72	42
Andhra Pradesh	20.8	21.3	19.6	8.1	8.9	5.6	66	74	39
Assam	26.8	27.8	18.5	9.5	9.8	6.6	73	76	33
Bihar	31.2	32.3	23.4	8.2	8.5	6.3	62	63	52
Gujarat	24.9	26.6	21.5	7.8	8.8	5.6	60	67	42
Haryana	26.7	27.8	22.8	7.6	7.6	7.4	65	68	54
Karnataka	22.2	23.6	19.0	7.6	8.2	6.4	58	69	27
Kerala	17.2	17.4	16.6	6.6	6.8	6.1	11	12	9
Madhya Pradesh	30.8	32.8	23.0	10.0	10.8	7.2	86	92	53
Maharashtra	20.6	21.0	20.1	7.5	8.5	5.9	45	55	27
Orissa	23.4	23.9	19.6	10.2	10.7	6.8	90	94	60
Punjab	21.2	22.1	18.7	7.0	7.2	6.4	51	55	37
Rajasthan	31.0	32.3	24.7	7.9	8.3	6.2	79	83	57
Tamil Nadu	19.0	19.6	17.8	7.6	8.4	6.0	49	54	35
Uttar Pradesh	32.1	33.2	27.0	10.1	10.6	7.8	82	86	62
West Bengal	20.5	22.8	13.8	6.8	7.0	6.4	51	53	38
Arunachal Pradesh	22.0	22.9	12.8	5.5	5.9	2.3	39	41	11
Chattisgarh	26.3	29.0	22.4	8.8	10.1	7.0	76	88	56
Goa	13.9	14.0	13.9	7.5	8.1	6.5	19	21	16
Jharkhand	26.3	28.3	19.5	8.8	9.7	6.0	62	67	40
Himachal Pradesh	21.0	21.3	16.8	7.0	7.1	5.3	54	55	32
J & K	20.1	21.1	16.3	6.1	6.1	6.0	48	50	39
Manipur	18.2	19.0	15.9	5.1	4.8	6.1	20	19	23
Meghalaya	28.3	30.7	15.0	9.0	9.9	3.9	56	57	41
Mizoram	15.7	17.7	13.2	4.4	5.2	3.4	19	23	12
Nagaland	NA	NA	12.4	NA	NA	2.6	NA	NA	13
Sikkim	21.6	21.8	16.7	5.1	5.2	3.2	42	43	31
Tripura	16.1	16.6	13.5	5.6	5.6	5.2	39	40	30
Uttaranchal	18.5	21.1	16.6	7.8	10.0	6.1	48	69	26
Andaman & Nicobar islands	16.8	17.8	14.2	4.7	5.0	4.1	18	21	8
Chandigarh	16.1	20.6	15.6	3.5	2.2	3.7	24	28	23
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	29.3	30.1	20.0	6.5	6.8	2.9	58	62	9
Daman & Diu	22.3	22.6	22.0	6.7	7.6	5.9	40	42	35
Delhi	18.7	23.2	18.1	5.0	5.4	5.0	29	34	28
Lakshadweep	20.4	22.1	18.7	5.0	4.7	5.2	33	34	33
Pondicherry	17.9	18.7	17.3	7.0	7.7	6.6	22	31	15

Source: Sample Registration System Vol 36, No. 1, April 2002.

So, by now you know what factors influence the growth and the distribution of the population. They are *low age at marriage*, *high birth rate* and *distorted sex ratio*. All of them have a bearing on the rural population of India.

Now, let us try to understand the migration patterns as they obtain in rural India.

2.9 MIGRATION PATTERNS

According to some economists migration is considered to be a function of labour reallocation in response to market demands. Others explain it in terms of the push and pull caused by *higher man-land ratio*, underemployment at the place of origin and the pull of higher wages, opportunities for education and training, etc. Of the different streams of migration in India, *rural to rural* and *rural to urban* are important in the present context. Table 2.12 shows that according to 1991 census 81.76 per cent of the rural-rural migrants were females, who moved from one rural area to the other mostly due to marriages.

Table 2.12: Stream and Volume of Migration 1991

Last Residence elsewhere in India	Total Migrants ('000)			Percentage		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Rural - rural	145045	26452	118593	100	18.24	81.76
Rural - urban	39910	18237	21673	100	45.70	54.30

Source: Census of India, 1991, Migration Tables, Vol. II, Part I.

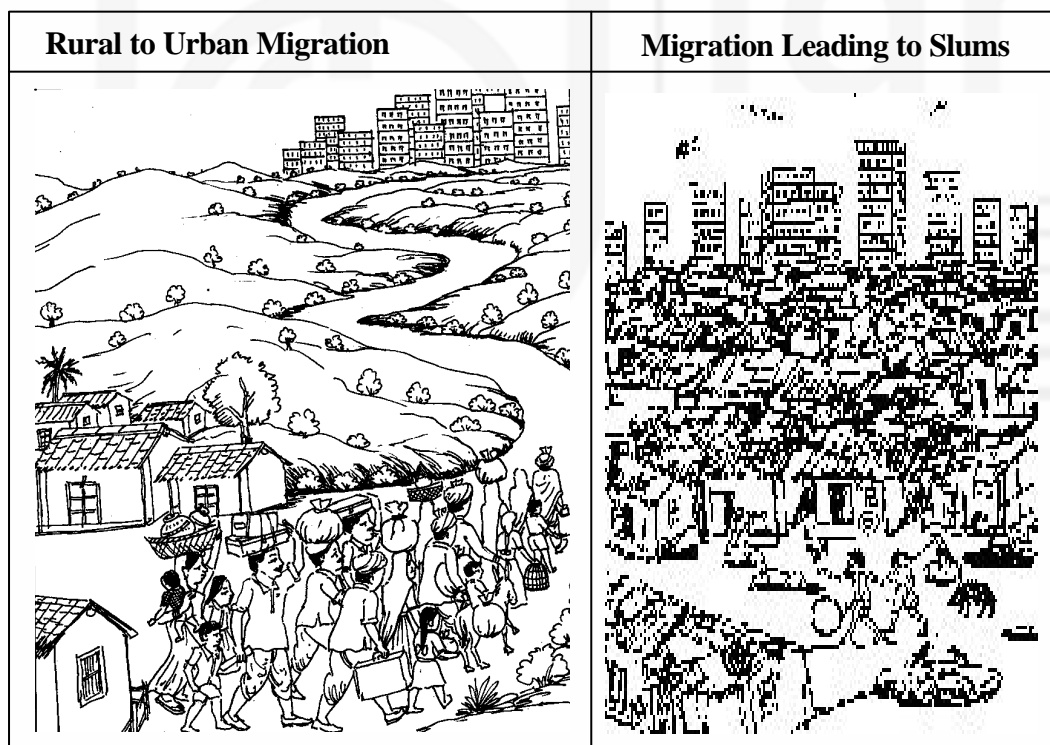


Fig. 2

On the other hand, only 18.24 per cent of the migrants who moved from one rural area to the other were males. They may be labourers or some service castes. The number of male migrants who moved from rural to urban areas was more and they moved mostly in search of jobs. If you look at Table 2.13, the reasons for migration become very clear. It is not difficult to see that the lack of employment opportunities in rural areas is pushing more and more migrants to cities or towns resulting in the rise of slums and overall urban explosion (see Fig. 2).

Table 2.13: Reasons for Rural to Urban Migration 1991

Reasons	Male/ Female	Within the district	Within the state in other districts	Between states
Employment	Male	37.73	31.82	51.81
	Female	3.96	3.55	4.45
Business	Male	8.59	8.46	12.55
	Female	0.90	0.82	1.24
Education	Male	7.91	8.99	3.37
	Female	2.25	2.40	1.38
Family movement	Male	24.19	26.21	19.29
	Female	22.29	20.14	34.17
Marriage	Male	2.53	2.99	1.12
	Female	59.42	61.88	48.57
Natural Calamities	Male	0.56	0.61	0.27
	Female	0.26	0.25	0.23
Others	Male	18.48	20.93	11.59
	Female	10.92	10.97	9.96

Source: Census of India, 1991, Migration Tables, Vol. III, Part I.

2.10 SIZE OF RURAL SETTLEMENTS

In the census, rural settlements have been divided into seven categories according to the population size of villages. These range from hamlets with less than 200 persons to large villages with more than 10,000 inhabitants.

Table 2.14: Inhabited villages classified by population size, 1991

Size Groups by population	Villages in the Size Group				Population living in those villages			
	Number		Per cent		Number (Millions)		Per cent	
	1981	1991	1981	1991	1981	1991	1981	1991
Less than 200	120073	103952	21.5	17.9	12.17	10.53	2.4	1.7
200 – 499	150722	141143	27.0	24.3	51.19	48.46	10.0	7.8
500 – 999	135928	144998	24.4	25.0	97.10	104.36	19.1	16.8
1,000 – 1,999	94486	114395	16.9	19.7	131.54	160.29	25.9	25.7
2,000 – 4,999	46892	62915	8.4	10.8	137.30	185.57	27.0	29.8
5,000 - 9,999	7202	10597	1.3	1.8	47.14	69.84	9.3	11.2
10, 000 and above	1834	2779	0.3	0.5	31.17	43.76	6.1	7.0
Total	557137	580779	100.0	100.0	507.61	622.81	100.0	100.0

* Excludes figures for Jammu and Kashmir where the 1991 census could not be conducted due to disturbed conditions.

Source: Table A3, Census of India 1991, Part II A (i) General Population Tables

According to the 1991 census more than 55 per cent of the rural population was concentrated in 30 per cent of the villages with populations ranging from 1000 – 4999 inhabitants (see Table 2.14). The corresponding figures for 1981 were 53% and 25% respectively. The inference is that population concentration in the larger villages is increasing while the number and the population of small villages and hamlets are decreasing. Also notice that in 1991 more than 60 per cent of the villages had less than 1000 inhabitants. This is a very important observation, because many rural

development schemes do not reach such small villages where accessibility is a serious problem. Therefore, a consideration of the *distribution of population* is equally important in formulating plans and programmes for rural development.

Table 2.15: Average Size of Villages by Population

State	No. of Villages		Rural Population		Average Population per Village	
	1991	2001	1991	2001	1991	2001
INDIA	634321	638,691	622812376	741,660,293	981	1161
Himachal Pradesh	19388	20118	4721681	5482367	244	273
Punjab	12795	12729	14288744	16043730	1117	1260
Haryana	6988	6955	12408904	14968850	1776	2152
Rajasthan	39810	41353	33938877	43267678	853	1046
Uttar Pradesh	107327	107452	111506372	131540230	1039	1224
Bihar	45077	45113	75021453	74199596	1664	1645
Assam	25590	26247	19926527	23248994	779	886
West Bengal	40889	40793	49370364	57734690	1207	1415
Orissa	51057	51349	27424753	31210602	537	608
Madhya Pradesh	55842	55392	50842333	44282528	910	799
Gujarat	18509	18544	27063521	31697615	1462	1709
Maharashtra	43025	43722	48395601	55732513	1125	1275
Andhra Pradesh	28000	28123	48620882	55223944	1736	1964
Karnataka	29193	29483	31069413	34814100	1064	1181
Kerala	1384	1364	21418224	23571484	15476	17281
Tamil Nadu	16780	16317	36781354	34869286	2192	2137

Source: Census of India, 1991 & 2001

Notes: The Number of Villages in both the 1991 & 2001 Censuses includes uninhabited villages.

The Number of Villages indicated for each State/Union Territory for 2001 is provisional.

Table 2.15 shows the average size of villages in some of the major states. In Kerala the average size of the village is 17281 as per the 2001 census while in Himachal Pradesh it is 273 and in Orissa 608. In such a situation particular rural development programmes launched on an all-India basis are bound to fail because of the problems of physical accessibility as well as cost-effectiveness, as generally the small villages tend to be in difficult and remote areas. Therefore while planning for rural development adequate attention needs to be given to these factors.

Check Your Progress IV

Note: a) Write your answers in the space provided.

b) Check your answers with the possible answers provided at the end of the unit.

1) Illustrate how the distribution of rural population in relation to the size of rural settlements is an important factor in the implementation of rural development programmes.

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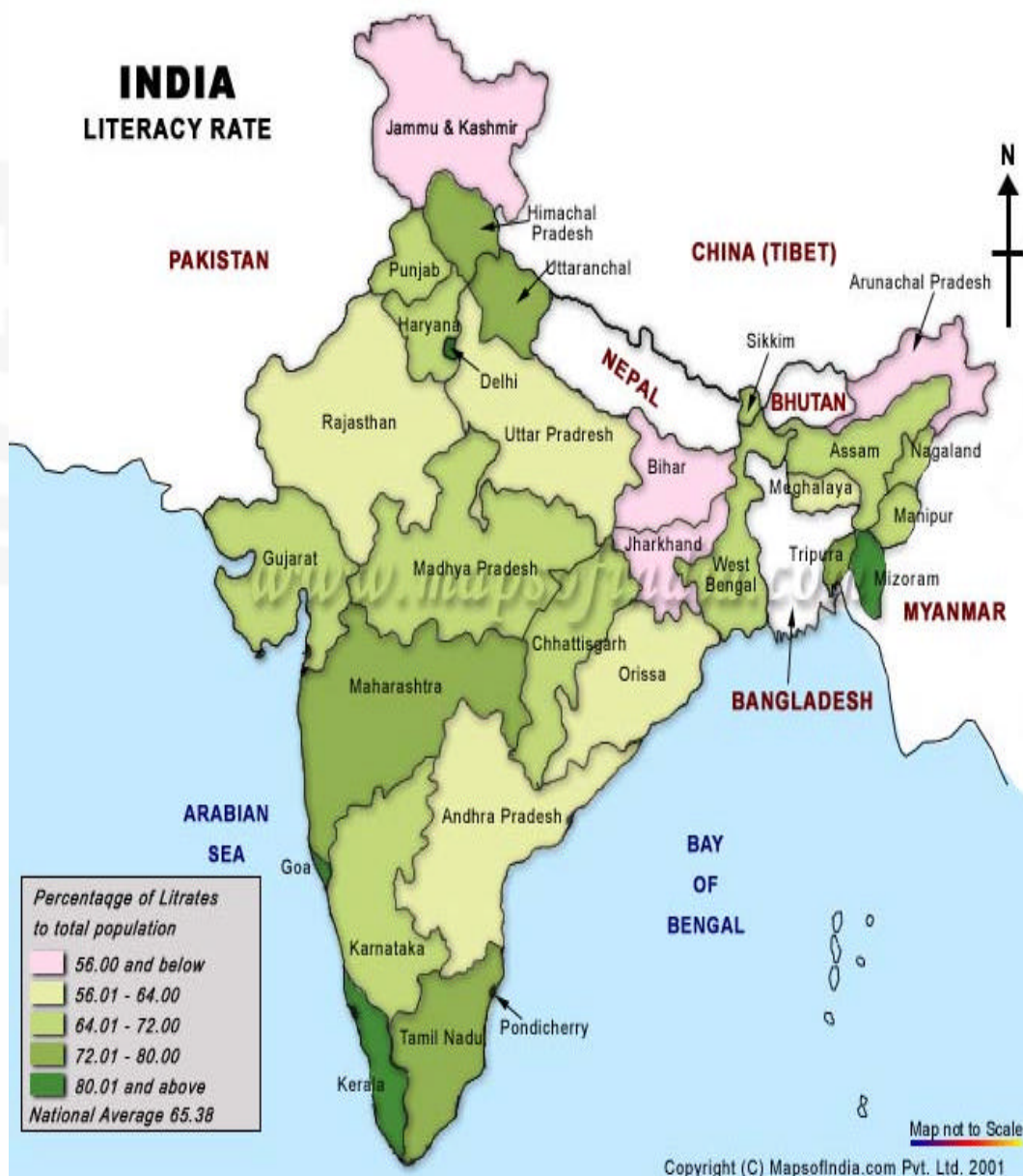
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2.11 LITERACY RATE

Literacy is an important driving force behind economic and social development and it is a powerful influence that tends to reduce the birth rate, thereby reducing the pressure of population. According to 2001 census, the literacy rate in the population seven years and above stands at 65.38 per cent *for the country as a whole*. The corresponding figures for males and females are 75.85 and 54.16 per cent respectively (*again, these figures are for the country as a whole*).

2.11.1 State-wise Variations in Literacy Rate (*the rural scenario*)

As you can see from Table 2.16, and Map 4, the literacy rate varies considerably across the states. Kerala continues in the top position followed by Lakshadweep and Mizoram. Bihar on the other hand has recorded the lowest literacy rate. The rural *male* literacy is more than 70 per cent in 24 states/UTs of India. It is only if we consider the male-female differential that *our rural literacy rate comes to be as low as 59 per cent*. The only positive sign seen in the 2001 census is that the gender gap has decreased, though marginally, in comparison with that shown in the earlier two censuses.



Map 4

Table 2.16: Rural Literacy in India

State/UT	1981			1991			2001		
	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons
Andhra Pradesh	38.72	16.80	27.85	47.28	23.92	35.74	66.13	44.36	55.33
Arunachal Pradesh	32.12	11.89	22.81	47.00	25.31	37.02	58.09	37.56	48.34
Assam	NA	NA	NA	58.66	39.19	49.32	69.02	52.25	60.92
Bihar	42.37	12.39	27.70	48.31	17.95	33.83	57.70	30.03	44.42
Goa	73.00	50.40	61.63	81.71	62.87	72.31	87.69	71.55	79.65
Gujarat	57.76	28.80	43.57	66.84	38.65	53.09	70.71	45.75	58.53
Haryana	53.35	18.78	37.26	64.78	32.51	49.85	76.13	49.77	63.82
Himachal Pradesh	62.39	35.29	48.89	73.89	49.79	61.85	83.58	65.23	74.38
Jammu & Kashmir	38.97	13.08	26.86	NA	NA	NA	60.34	35.09	48.22
Karnataka	51.11	23.84	37.63	60.30	34.76	47.69	70.63	48.50	59.68
Kerala	86.73	74.17	80.31	92.91	85.12	88.92	93.54	86.79	90.05
Madhya Pradesh	40.77	17.29	29.33	51.04	19.73	35.87	72.10	42.96	58.10
Maharashtra	61.71	29.49	45.65	69.74	40.96	55.52	82.17	59.12	70.84
Manipur	59.66	30.03	45.09	67.64	43.26	55.79	74.50	55.88	65.33
Meghalaya	38.59	30.00	34.39	44.83	37.12	41.05	59.90	54.02	57.00
Mizoram	74.89	62.92	69.17	77.36	67.03	72.47	84.38	76.17	80.46
Nagaland	54.15	35.95	45.62	63.42	50.36	57.23	67.73	57.87	62.99
Orissa	53.54	21.99	37.77	60.00	30.79	45.46	73.57	47.22	60.44
Punjab	49.64	32.73	41.77	60.71	43.85	52.77	71.70	57.91	65.16
Rajasthan	36.97	6.78	22.47	47.64	11.59	30.37	72.96	37.74	55.92
Sikkim	49.01	22.52	36.94	63.49	43.98	54.38	75.11	59.05	67.67
Tamil Nadu	60.08	29.80	45.00	67.18	41.84	54.59	77.47	55.84	66.66
Tripura	57.76	33.02	45.78	67.07	44.33	56.08	78.89	61.05	70.23
Uttar Pradesh	43.42	11.70	28.53	52.05	19.02	36.66	68.01	37.74	53.68
West Bengal	52.76	26.77	40.18	62.05	38.12	50.50	73.75	53.82	64.06
Andaman & Nicobar Island	65.79	47.59	58.12	75.99	61.99	69.73	83.90	72.23	78.55
Chandigarh	61.35	40.79	53.24	65.67	47.83	59.12	81.54	67.17	76.23
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	42.22	18.08	30.29	50.04	23.30	37.00	67.13	34.08	52.24
Daman & Diu	66.90	35.50	50.60	75.23	46.70	61.55	86.48	63.31	78.31
Delhi	72.55	39.14	57.83	78.46	52.15	66.90	87.15	68.23	78.75
Lakshadweep	78.69	52.16	65.47	88.66	68.72	78.89	92.56	79.86	86.39
Pondicherry	69.83	42.19	56.17	76.44	53.96	65.36	83.87	64.63	74.28
Uttaranchal	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	82.74	55.52	68.95
Jharkhand	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	51.57	30.33	46.26
Chhatisgarh	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	74.58	47.41	60.93
India	49.59	21.70	36.01	57.87	30.62	44.69	71.18	46.58	59.21

Notes:

- 1) Census was not held in Assam and Jammu & Kashmir in 1991
- 2) Literacy Rate is defined as the proportion of literates to the population in the age group 7+.
- 3) For the 1981 census, Literacy Rate was defined as the proportion of literates to the population in the age group 6+. To ensure comparability in this exercise it has been re-estimated for the age group 7+.
- 4) For 1981 and 1991, the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh also include data from Jharkhand, Uttaranchal and Chhattisgarh respectively.

Source: 1981- Census of India-social and Cultural Tables; 1991-Paper2 of 1992, series 1, Census of India 1991; 2001-Based on Preliminary census 2001 estimates.

In Rajasthan, *Jumbish* and *Shiksha Karmi* projects, and in Madhya Pradesh, the *Education Guarantee Scheme*, the *District Primary Education Programme* and programmes like *Mahila Samakhya* have made some visible impact.

In respect of female literacy, Bihar and Jharkhand, are at the bottom. Even though the states with very low female literacy have made good progress in bridging the gender gap over the years, they require some more concerted efforts to reduce the gap further in the years to come. The enrolment and retention of girls in these states must increase and there should be more emphasis on adult literacy programmes for females.

Check Your Progress V

Note: a) Write your answers in the space provided.

b) Check your answers with the possible answers provided at the end of the unit.

1) How does literacy rate affect the growth of population?

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2.12 DEMOGRAPHY AND DEVELOPMENT

The developmental problems related to the growth of population will not end with migration. An increasing population in the face of an already low supply of resources and land can only result in diminishing returns in the absence of other requirements such as more capital, better trained labour and technological innovations.

Let us understand how the growth of population retards the betterment of our material conditions.

- 1) It increases the pressure of numbers on a nation's land resources.
- 2) It tends to accelerate this pressure through time by accelerating the rate at which the store of exhaustible and non-replaceable natural resources are used up and the costs of their use are increased.
- 3) It diminishes the rate at which capital can be accumulated, and this diminution is greatly accentuated when much of the potential capital is utilized in maintaining the children who eventually die before they reach a productive age.
- 4) Given the rate of capital formation, the rate at which the labour force can be increased is reduced.

Fortunately while the demographic problems are formidable, the solutions are not so difficult as to be unmanageable or impossible. In India, the states of Goa, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh have shown that education particularly of the girl child, reduction in infant mortality, reasonable health care, information about and adequate supply of family planning services and empowerment of women are some of the effective means which reduce the birth rate in a relatively short span of time.

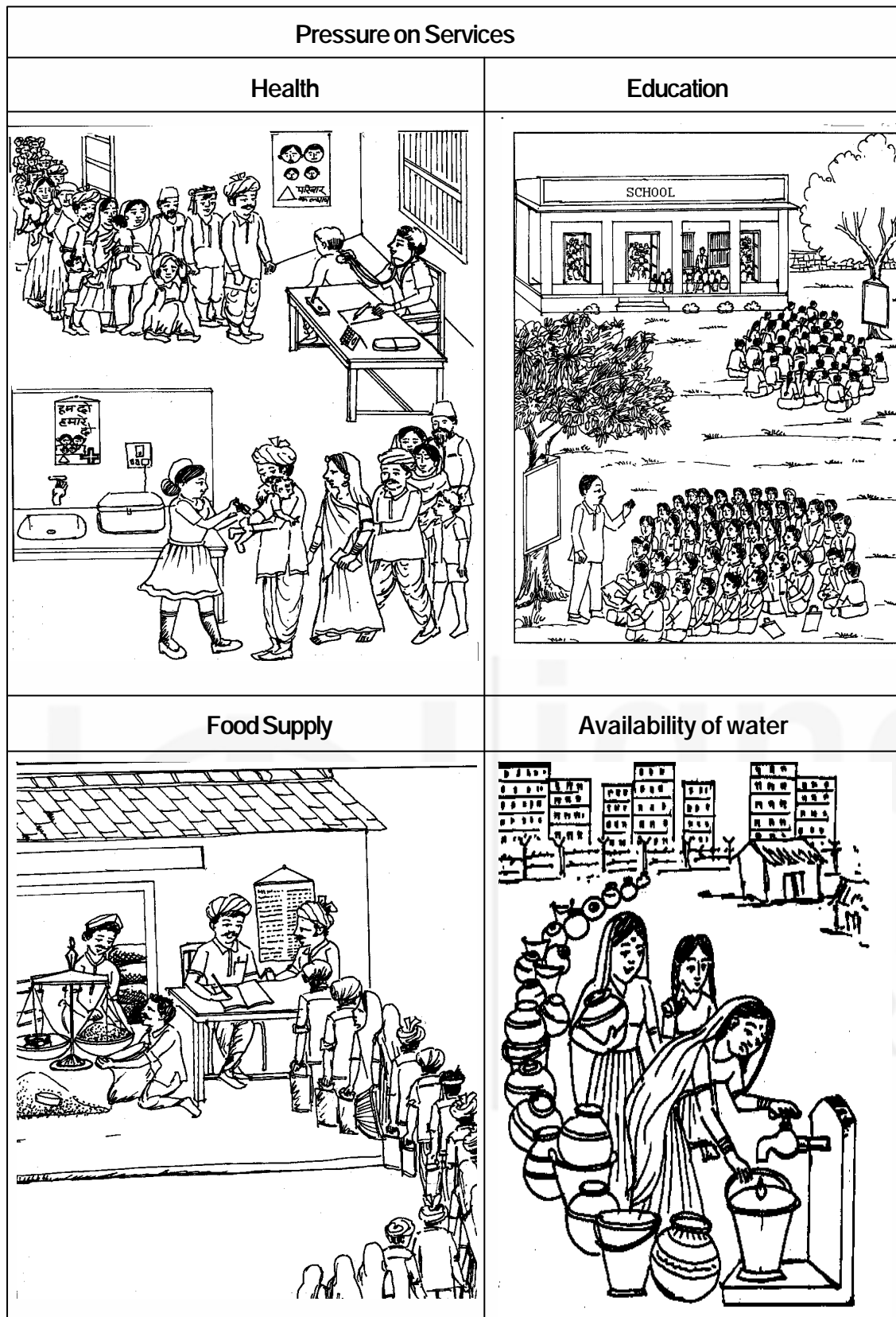


Fig. 3

2.13 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have learnt the meaning of demography and about the different demographic data sources that are commonly utilized for understanding the various aspects of Indian demography. We have also studied that even though the proportion of rural population in our country has gradually declined over the years, from 82 per

cent in 1951 to 72 per cent in 2001, there has been a considerable increase in the absolute number of people living in rural areas. This is indicated by the fact that the number of people living per square kilometer has increased from 214 in 1991 to 254 in 2001. The sex ratio in India is of great concern as it shows continuous decline both in the rural and the urban areas. The child sex ratio is particularly shocking as it reveals a strong preference for the male child throughout the country and more so in the northwestern states. Coming to the age composition of population, not much difference has occurred. As of now the base is quite broad with the productive age group gradually swelling out with a tapering top. The only silver lining is that the age at marriage of females is rising, though very slowly, all over the country. This will perhaps be able to arrest the birth rate and hence the growth of population. Unfortunately, however, this positive change is not uniform and particularly in the Hindi speaking heartland the decline in vital rates is very slow which is adversely affecting the overall efforts for growth in this region. Analyzing the migration data, we have seen that rural to urban migration mostly for employment purposes is significant. This highlights the lack of employment opportunities in the villages. We can assume that the size of the villages also guides this process, as in comparison with large villages such as those in Kerala development is slow in small villages and hamlets, which are inaccessible. Development is directly related to awareness and it comes only through literacy as we have seen it in Kerala. Though there are huge gaps between male and female literacy rates in both the rural and the urban areas, the gender gap has decreased as is indicated by the 2001 census, which brings some hope for population stabilization and overall development. In the last section we have also seen how development is related to demography, which if not favourable can retard it.

2.14 KEY WORDS

- Crude Birth Rate** : Number of births in a year per 1000 population.
- Crude Death Rate** : Number of deaths in a year per 1000 population.
- Demography** : Science of population basically concerned with the statistical study of the size, distribution, characteristics, growth and structure of population over time.
- Dependency Ratio** : The number of children (aged under 14) and old people (aged 60 or 65 and over) in a population as a ratio of the number of adults (aged 15-59/64).
- Depopulate** : The decline in the total population of an area.
- Infant Mortality Rate** : Number of deaths of infants (below one year) in a year per 1000 live births.
- Migration** : Migration is a shift in the residence for some length of time. While it excludes short visits and tours, it includes different types of both voluntary and involuntary movements.
- Population Density** : Persons per square kilometer at a particular place.
- Population Growth Rate:** The rate at which a population is increasing (or decreasing) in a given year due to natural increase/decrease and net migration, expressed as a percentage of the base population.
- Sex Ratio** : Number of females per 1000 males in the population.

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2.17 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) According to the 2001 census, the BIMARU states, excluding the new states formed recently, accommodate 39.54 per cent of the rural population of India and if the rural population of the new states is also included the figure comes to 45.45 per cent. Moreover, if the population of all the four states including the new three states is added together, the growth rate registered between 1991 and 2001 was 24.26 per cent, i.e. above the national growth rate of 19.08 per cent. The rural demographic situation has thus not changed dramatically in Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. It is only because of the new states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Uttaranchal carved out from Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh respectively that the picture is distorted. The fact is that the growth of rural population in these states is still a cause of concern.
- 2) The land available for agriculture, fertile soil, irrigation facilities, and proper transportation networks have contributed significantly to the density of population in Kerala and West Bengal. On the other hand, thickly forested areas and rocky uplands unsuitable for agriculture in Madhya Pradesh and the extreme climate

of Thar Desert in Rajasthan have restricted settlements and thus the population density in these states. Rural development policies should therefore address the needs of these areas differently.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) Data on sex ratio at birth would have enabled us to find out whether the number of girls is more than, equal to or less than the number of boys at birth in our country. With this knowledge, we would have been able to assess the reasons for adverse sex ratio more realistically by ascertaining the extent to which the sex ratio at birth is carried forward. For instance, if the numbers of male and female children at birth were about the same, then the adverse sex ratio is likely to be due to the neglect of the girl child resulting in premature deaths of more girls than boys.
- 2) According to the 2001 census, Haryana (861), Sikkim (881) and Punjab (887) reported the lowest sex ratio among the major states. In Haryana and Punjab the important reasons behind this decline are sex selective abortions in favour of the male child, female infanticide, neglect of the girl child resulting in their high mortality at younger ages and high maternal mortality. In Sikkim, which is dominated by tribals, low sex ratio is mainly due to sex selective migration into Sikkim.
- 3) The decline in the child sex ratio between 1991 and 2001 is due to a very definite social bias against the girl child causing female foeticide and infanticide. The only solution to this problem is social awareness, which can be brought by education.

Check Your Progress III

- 1) Low age at marriage implies that the reproductive span of girls is comparatively longer, and so the birth rates are quite high. This is particularly true for the rural areas where contraception is not practiced, resulting in a high growth rate in these areas. In Kerala and Tamil Nadu, where educational attainments of males as well as females are high, the age at marriage also is high and, as a consequence, the birth rates are in transition, leading to population stabilization.

Check Your Progress IV

- 1) In most of our Rural Development programmes there are provisions for facilities and services to be made available per unit size of population. Suppose, one facility center (whatever type) each is to be provided for every set of 1000 persons. If, in a particular area, the size of rural settlements is large, just one village may have 1000 inhabitants. In such a situation, one center would be located in that village itself, rendering the services easily accessible to the people of that village. On the other hand, if in some other area, the rural settlements were generally around 250 persons strong, four villages would be entitled to one center, which would be located in one of these four villages. As a result, because of the distances involved, the services provided through this center would not be readily accessible to the people of the other three villages. Thus, the distribution of rural settlements by size emerges as an important factor that influences the extent to which the intended beneficiaries make use of the services provided.

Check Your Progress V

- 1) Literacy is an important driving force behind economic and social development and also a powerful influence that tends to reduce the birth rate, thereby controlling the growth of population. Kerala is the best example in this regard. Education in Kerala has resulted in a favourable sex ratio, rise of age at marriage, declining birth rate and improved health and hygiene, which collectively have provided better living conditions for the rural population.

UNIT 3 RURAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Caste System
 - 3.2.1 The Concept of Caste
 - 3.2.2 Caste in Villages
 - 3.2.3 Caste and Class
 - 3.2.4 The Jajmani System
 - 3.2.5 Social Mobility in Indian Villages
- 3.3 Families in Rural India
- 3.4 Nature of the Distribution of Power in Rural India
- 3.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.6 Key Words
- 3.7 Suggested Readings and References
- 3.8 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers

3.0 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this lesson is to introduce you to the different aspects of rural society in India. After having worked through this unit, you should be able to:

- Describe the organization of Indian villages;
- Describe the nature of castes and classes, and the cases of upward social mobility;
- Define jajmani system;
- Talk/write knowledgeably about the family system in rural India; and
- Analyse the nature of power in villages.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Village community, family and caste are the basic components of the rural social structure and they bind the economic and social life of people in rural areas.

In order to understand this social structure, it is necessary to understand the nature of society. Each society consists of different parts, such as individuals, groups, institutions, associations, and communities. The simplest analogy one can think of at this point is that of an organism that has different components working together as a whole. Society is a system like any other system, such as the solar system, the chemical system, a mechanical system or an organic system. Of these the most suitable analogy for elaborating the concept of society is that of an organism. This is usually known as the 'organic analogy'.

You are perhaps aware that the basic unit of an organism is the cell; similarly the basic unit of a society is the individual. As cells combine, a tissue is formed. In the same way, an individual exists in relationship with other individuals. A collection of individuals is called a group, and the smallest group comprises two individuals; it is known as the *dyad*. In an organism, the tissues aggregate and the resultant entity is an organ. In the case of human society, like the individual, no group exists in isolation. The collectivity of the groups is termed the community. In an organism, the organs

combine to form the organism, which is the whole. In a similar fashion, the aggregation of several communities makes the whole called *society*.

What is *social structure*? Sociologists use the word ‘social structure’ to refer to the inter-relationship, inter-connectedness, and inter-dependence of the different parts of society. In terms of their form, all societies have the same parts. Thus, there are groups and communities in all societies, but the nature and substance of these groups and communities differ from one society to another. For instance, an Indian village is unthinkable without the caste system, while a Chinese village does not have castes. Its units are the people of different families and occupational groups. The sense of identity that the people of different groups have is also seen at the level of the people of different families and occupational groups in Chinese villages. The inter-relationship of the different units constitutes the structure of the society.

All the units of a society are supposed to be important, for each one of them makes a contribution to the functioning of society. In other words, none of them can be dispensed with. But, in each society, some of its elements are regarded as crucial, because the society is structured around them. Sociologists think that for defining an Indian village, its population, physical structure, and modes of production are definitely important. Usually, a village has less than five thousand individuals. As a physical entity, it is an aggregation of houses of mixed architecture (some of mud and thatch and some of cement) in the midst of surrounding agricultural fields—the mainstay of village life is agriculture. Of course, there may be some exceptions to the image of village that is presented here: for instance, a village may have more than ten thousand people, as is the case in Kerala. Or, the village may be a conglomeration of beautifully built cement houses inhabited by people who may predominantly be in service or may be self-employed non-agriculturalists, as is the case in a number of villages situated near towns and cities in Himachal Pradesh.

In addition to these indices, sociologists think that the social structure of an Indian village is understood best in terms of the interrelationship of different castes, as a common proposition is that the caste system has weakened in urban areas, but not in the rural areas, where even the members of non-Hindu communities, which have opposed the caste system, have continued to be treated as ‘castes’. In the section that follows, we shall discuss the caste system in detail.

Check Your Progress I

- Note:** a) Write your answers in the space provided.
b) Check your answers with the possible answers provided at the end of the unit.

- 1) Define the term *social structure*.
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- 2) Where do you find the most populous villages in India?
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3.2 CASTE SYSTEM

3.2.1 The Concept of Caste

Caste is the main social institution of Indian villages. Referred to as *jâti*, *jât*, *zât* or various other local terms, it is a collectivity of people, related also by the ties of kinship and marriage, which has a 'monopoly' over an occupation. It provides its specialized services and the products of its occupation to other caste groups. Harold Gould characterizes caste as a 'monopolistic guild'. The occupation on which a caste has monopoly may be very simple. It may not involve any elaborate technology and skill, and may be learnt easily without much arduous work, such as the occupation of the caste of messengers, or drumbeaters, or vegetable-peelers. But no caste will ever venture to usurp the occupation of any other caste howsoever simple and less specialized it may be.

Under the *ideology of caste*, one's merit lies in subscribing as conscientiously and diligently as possible to the duties prescribed for one's caste. The political bodies of the village strictly deal with any case of usurping the occupation of other castes. Among other things, the occupation related to it gives identity to a caste. Sometimes, the castes are also named after the corresponding occupations. For example, those who 'supply oil (*tél*)' belong to the *téli* (oil-man) caste; those who beat drums (*dhols*) are *dholis*; and those who dye (*rangnâ*) clothes belong to the *rangrez* caste. The occupations are hereditarily transmitted.

Members of a caste marry within their own caste, but usually outside their own village. In other words, the village is *exogamous*, while the caste is *endogamous*. At one time, in some upper caste communities of Bengal (such as the Rarhi Brahmins) and Gujarat (such as the Patidars), the men had the privilege of obtaining spouses from lower castes in addition to spouses from their own caste. Such a system of marriage, in which the men of upper castes marry women of lower castes allowing the lower caste women to move up the hierarchy, is known as *hypergamy* (*anuloma*). The contrary system, where women of the upper stratum marry men of the lower stratum (i.e. where women move down in the hierarchy), is called *hypogamy* (*pratiloma*).

That the classical Hindu tradition permits *hypergamy*, but not *hypogamy*, is clear from **Manusmriti**, the Hindu law book authored by a sage known as Manu. It allows a Brahmin man to have spouses from Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Sudra castes in addition to a spouse from his own caste. Kshatriya men are permitted to have three wives: one of their own caste and the other two from Vaishya and Sudra castes respectively. A Vaishya can have two wives: one from his own caste and the other from Sudra caste. A Sudra can have only one spouse belonging to his/her own caste. Children born out of *hypergamous* marriages are legitimate but they do not have the same rights over the property of their father, as do the children from *endogamous* marriages. One of the consequences of *hypogamy* is the excommunication of the couples concerned. With the passage of time, such couples established new castes.

A person acquires the membership of his or her caste by birth, i.e. caste is *ascriptive* in nature, and theoretically, it cannot be changed, i.e. it is immutable. The chief good of a person lies in living according to the culture and duties (*dharma*) of his caste. According to this ideological system, leading a life according to the dictates and commands of one's caste not only ensures one's existence in this world, but also the world hereafter, as one will have an improvement in one's caste status in the following births. Why one is born in a particular caste is explained in terms of the deeds (*karma*) one had done in his or her previous birth. It may be noted that basically caste system is a 'system of ideas' derived from the classical tradition of Hinduism. M.N. Srinivas once wrote: 'The structural basis of Hinduism is the caste system.'

3.2.2 Caste in Villages

A village may be conceptualized as an aggregate of castes, each traditionally associated with an occupation. Members of a caste are generally clustered together, occupying a particular physical space in the village, which may come to be known after the name of the caste like *dhobîbârâ* (i.e. the settlement of the laundrymen), *jâton ka gudâ* (i.e. the habitation of the Jats) or *raikon rî dhânî* (i.e. the hamlet of the Raikas). Each caste has its own style of living, its own types of clothes, its own distinct pattern of houses, and mutually acceptable common grounds for existence. It also has its distinct dialect, folk deities, lore, and ceremonies. The members of a caste are spread over a region in more than one village. The members of a caste living in nearby villages have matrimonial relations among them. Each caste has its own council (*panchayat*), which is a collective body of the members of that caste living in different villages, but situated close to each other. This body takes up all disputes between the members of the caste and discusses all instances where the identity of the caste is abrogated and is in danger. Thus, for political purposes, social control and matrimony, the members of a caste in a village are dependent upon their co-caste fellows in other villages. These relations result in the unity of the members of a caste spread in different villages. M.N. Srinivas has called this type of unity 'horizontal solidarity'.

In Rajasthan, a common saying is that generally there are thirty-six castes (*chattris quam*) in a village. But, in actual fact, no village is found to have all the castes. Moreover, the total number of castes far exceeds thirty-six. Two points need to be remembered here.

First, since all the occupational and service castes are not stationed in one and the village, the members of a caste in a village depend upon the services of castes situated in other villages. In such a context, the village market (*hât*) plays a significant role, because a large number of artisan castes come to it with their specialized products. For instance, Surajit Sinha studied the weekly market at a village called Bamni in Singbhum district of Jharkhanda. He found that the average number of castes in a village of this district is about six. In these weekly markets, however, goods and services of some sixteen artisan castes are available in addition to the products handled by specialized traders of some other castes. All this substantiates the point that the Indian village was never a self-sufficient unit. In a village, different castes depend on one another for various services. Such dependency relationships (i.e. those among the various castes living in one and the same village) result in what M.N. Srinivas has called 'vertical solidarity'.

Secondly, when Indian villagers talk of 'thirty-six castes' or 'thirty-three crore Hindu gods and goddesses', what they imply is that there are 'many' and 'very many' things of which they are speaking. These numbers should not be taken literally. As for the castes, their number is not stable; it keeps on increasing over time and in some cases small castes get merged into bigger ones. As noted earlier, often in the past, sections and sub-sections of tribes moved to multi-caste villages, adopted an occupation and acquired monopoly over it, and with the passage of time came to be known as a 'caste' in their own right. Thus, all along there has been a continuum from a tribe to a caste.

3.2.3 Caste and Class

Caste, as we have seen, is the fundamental principle of social organization in the Indian village. As Louis Dumont said in his work titled *Homo Hierarchicus*, castes are arranged in a hierarchy based on the principles of *purity and impurity*, which in fact give distinctiveness to the caste system, because no other system of ranking in the world makes use of these principles. The caste occupying the highest position

is ritually the purest, and as one goes down the hierarchy, purity decreases while impurity increases. Those placed at the bottom of the hierarchy, the people who at one time were called 'untouchables' (now they are called Harijans or Dalits) are considered to be the 'permanent carriers of impurity' within the idiom of the caste system. No other social system in the world incorporates the notion of 'permanent impurity' with such rigidity as the caste system. There may be notions of 'temporary impurity' (such as, impurity incurred by menstruation, death, or birth), which is overcome with the performance of rituals, but no ritual can neutralize 'permanent impurity'.

In the caste system, the styles of living are ranked. The way in which, for instance, the Brahmins are expected to live is regarded the most superior, and those who are Brahmins by birth have to follow only this lifestyle and no other. Ranking in this system is not based on economic facts, i.e. the ownership or non-ownership of the means of production. It is also not based on control over political power. Thus, both economy and polity are subordinate to the *ideology of caste*, according to which ranking is facilitated. The classification based on economic facts is called the *class* system. *Class* is an indicator of the distribution of economic inequality in the society. The term '*power stratification*', on the other hand, is used for inequality in terms of the decision-making ability, by which some, as Max Weber says, are able to impose their will on others and seek compliance from them.

Ideally, *class* and *power*, as said previously, are subordinated to *caste*. A Brahmin, even if poor, occupies the highest position in the caste hierarchy and commands unlimited respect from other castes. At one time, the Kshatriya kings wielded power, but the Brahmin priest officiated in the ritual that accorded them legitimacy to rule. The producers of economic wealth, the merchant castes (the Vaishyas) pursue different wealth generating occupations, and are placed just above those whose jobs are principally menial, i.e. 'to serve the other three upper castes', as the classical texts put it. In some parts of India, there was a clear overlapping of the three ranked orders of caste, class, and power. For instance, both André Beteille and Kathleen Gough, in their respective studies of villages Sripuram and Kumbapettai, found that the Brahmins, who numbered around four per cent of the total population of South India, owned around ninety-eight per cent of the land, which they abstained from tilling because of religious injunctions that did not allow Brahmins to touch ploughs. The Brahmins, who lived in their separate quarters called *agraharam*, were also in control of political power. Therefore, being a Brahmin also meant occupying the highest position in class and power hierarchies. This was an example of what after Robert Dahl one would call 'cumulative inequality'. In this case, social status together with economic and political power are all concentrated in one group, the Brahmins. The typical 'Brahmin villages' of South India have also been locally called *agraharavadai*.

Surely, not all the villages in India followed the pattern characteristic of villages in South India. In many other parts, the caste that controlled economic resources was certainly not of Brahmins, nor even of Kshatriyas. In Rampura, the Mysore village that M.N. Srinivas studied, the landowners were the peasants, the members of the caste called Vokkaligas. In North India, the principal landowners were and are the Jats. In such cases, economic stratification is independent of the other principles of ranking, and can in fact influence them. Thus, those who control political power may also be the landowners. In this case, different ranked orders do not overlap; they rather exist independently. For such a system, one can use the term 'dispersed inequality', for the group that occupies the highest position in one ranking system is placed lowly in the other. Keeping this in mind, many sociologists make a distinction between 'ritual status' and 'secular status' – the former emerges from the caste, which is essentially a 'ritual hierarchy', while the latter emerges from the ownership of economic and political power. When these two statuses exist independently, it is a case of *dispersed inequality*; and when they overlap, it is *cumulative inequality*.

Although myriad varieties of social change have affected social stratification in Indian villages, perhaps one will not be wrong in saying that at one time, South India generally had 'Brahmin-centred villages' whereas North India had 'non-Brahmin centred villages'. For the villages where non-Brahmin castes control economic resources, the term *pandaravadai* is used in contrast to *agraharavadai*, the 'Brahmin-centred villages'.

3.2.4 The *Jajmani* System

Earlier, it was observed that the various castes living in a village are interdependent because each one of them has a monopoly over an occupation. If some occupational caste is not found in the local area, then some other caste may take up its occupation, and develop specialization in it. For instance, the blacksmiths of Senapur, a village in Jaunpur district of Uttar Pradesh, also worked on wood because there were no carpenters in that area, and so they made and repaired agricultural implements for the landowner-peasants, the Thakurs. The interdependence between castes obtains in two ways:

- i) A caste provides its goods and services to other castes in exchange for payment in kind or cash, but this payment is done instantly, and if deferred, it is for the shortest period of time. A lot of haggling also enters this exchange. The relations here are largely contractual and impersonal. They are quite like the relations one will expect to find in cities and towns. In villages, such relations may exist between the merchant caste and the other castes. The latter buy goods and commodities from the shop of the local merchant, a man of the Vaishya caste, and pay him instantly. If instant payment is not made, the shopkeeper may advance credit, but before further merchandise is acquired, the buyer will have to settle all the previous accounts. In some cases, the merchant may charge interest for the amount on credit.
- ii) By contrast to the first type of interdependence, the second type comprises relations that are broadly supportive, group-oriented, long-term and continuing, and they involve multiple bonds between people involved in the exchange. These relations are *durable*, unlike the relations between the shopkeepers and the buyers, where after one has bought the product and paid for it, the relation comes to an end.

In villages, durable relations obtain mainly between food-producing families and the families that supply them with goods and services. These relations are called *jajmani*, the Hindi word for them as used in William H. Wiser's study of a village in Uttar Pradesh. In other parts of India, they are known by other names. For instance, in Maharashtra, they are known as *balutdari*. Notwithstanding the differences in the terms used, certain features of the system are common throughout India. Although the *jajmani* system is regarded as a characteristic of rural India, it has also been reported from urban areas. Sylvia Vatuk described the *jajmani* system that was in operation in Meerut City.

In the *jajmani* system, at the center is the family of the agriculturist (zamindar). It receives services from the families of occupational castes. One who receives services is known as *jajman*, the patron. The families that provide services are known as *kamin*, *kam karne waley*, or *kamgars* (*workers*). In other parts of India, terms such as *parjan*, *pardhan*, *balutedar*, etc., are also used for the providers of goods and services. All these words literally refer to the same people, i.e. *those who 'work' for others*, and one may call them *clients*. The implication is that those who do not 'work' (like *zamindars*, the big landowners) occupy the highest position in the secular ranking; those who 'work' for themselves, the self-employed workers, come next; and at the bottom of the system are placed those families that 'work' for others,

carrying out various menial jobs. The castes, which happen to provide services to the agriculturalists, vary from one village to another. And, not every caste in the village happens to be a part of the *jajmani* system. The simplest definition of the *jajmani* system can be: it is a patron-client relationship.

Although the *jajmani* relationship seems to be between castes, in reality, it is between particular families belonging to particular castes. It is the relationship between families that continues to exist over time. *Jajmani* ties are hereditary, i.e. various families (belonging to various castes) keep on providing their specialist services to particular agriculturalist families generation after generation. The latter do not have the right to discontinue the services of the families of serving occupational castes. If they are not satisfied with the quality of the service, or they notice slackness on the part of the service-providers, they are expected to bring this matter to the attention of the council of the caste to which the erring family belongs.

These relations are not like wage-relations, which can be terminated after the transaction is over. They are durable, in the sense they continue over generations. They are exclusive, in the sense that one family will carry out its relations with only one particular family of the particular occupational caste. Because of whatever reasons, if a family is to move out of an area, it is its moral duty to find an alternative service provider for its patrons. Many sociologists have found that *jajmani* rights are also sold. The point is that no family (whether of the *jajman* or *kamin*) will move out of the relationship unless it has provided an alternative to the other.

Earlier, it was noted that there are multiple bonds between the patron and the client. The patron looks after all those families that work for him. He advances loans or gifts to them at the time of festivals and other similar occasions. He safeguards their interests and saves them from exploitation at the hands of others, i.e. the *jajmani* system is based on the *ideology of paternalism*.

The clients continue to provide services throughout the year to their patrons. At the time of the harvest, the patrons give their clients a portion of the produce, which in North Indian villages is known as *phaslana*. The *jajmani* system is an example of 'deferred payment', which is entirely different from that in the wage labour. Further, there is no bargaining on the amount of crop/produce given to a client. If the season is lean, all suffer, be he the patron or the client. And, if there is a bumper crop, then all are equally benefited. Generally, *jajmani* payments are made quietly, but there can always be situations where the patrons publicize the size of payments they are making, or the clients may show their unhappiness on receiving not-so-satisfactory payments.

Some sociologists think that the *jajmani* system is exploitative. The agricultural castes, which are invariably upper castes, seek the services of occupational castes, which are generally lower castes, without reciprocating adequately. The exploitation of lower castes continues under the garb of paternal ties. The opposite argument is that the *jajmani* system is functional. It gives security to lower castes that they will never go hungry. For the upper castes, it ensures a regular and uninterrupted supply of services. Because of these relations, the village emerges as a unified body, where the patrons organize rituals and activities that symbolically effect the unity of the village. For instance, it is believed that some deities (known as *Bhumia*, *Kshetrapal*, etc.) guard the boundaries of the village. The patrons regularly organize collective worship of these deities. The overall picture is that those who receive the largest number of services are the ones who are expected to care the most for the welfare of the village.

In the last fifty years, the *jajmani* system has undergone many significant changes. It has already been said that not every caste of the village participated in this system. In addition to the *jajmani* relation, there has always been contractual, wage-labour

type of ties between the providers of goods and services and their buyers. Further, with the rise of the backward class movements in the recent past, certain castes that were a part of the *jajmani* system have withdrawn themselves from it. The introduction of cash economy has also brought about changes, because payments in the *jajmani* system were always in kind rather than in cash. With the ever expanding commercial frontiers, new opportunities have come up in towns and cities, and many occupational castes have sought to take advantage of this situation. They move to participate in these opportunities after seeking withdrawal from the *jajmani* ties.

3.2.5 Social Mobility in Indian Villages

As discussed earlier, a person born into a caste is expected to live according to its lifestyle and perform duties that characterize it. Thus, being allocated by birth, one's caste cannot be changed. A person born into a caste will always belong to it as a life-long member. In his/her future births, because of good deeds, he/she may be born into a superior caste. In other words, theoretically, upward mobility is not possible within the caste system, except for women who may move up by means of *hypergamous* marriages. Similarly, downward mobility results from *hypogamous* marriages.

Economic opportunities are considerably limited in villages. Agricultural surplus is not significant either. Virtually nothing is left with the peasants after they have made the *jajmani* payments. Barring the big landlords, others in villages live rather precariously, often hand to mouth. Those, who have been able to move out to towns and cities for work, have been able to make some money, which they have invested in buying agricultural land, but the number of such families is not large. The point to be emphasized here is that class mobility was also non-existent in the village. Power hierarchy in villages depends on the control over economic resources. Therefore, those who lagged behind economically would never hope to get any significant place in political bodies. By considering the factors of caste, class, and power, one may say that the Indian village was a 'closed system', i.e. it did not provide any avenues for anyone to move up in the caste, the class, or the power hierarchy.

Undoubtedly, it is true that in villages the position of an individual is fixed once and forever. This is in sharp contrast to urban areas where the individual is mobile, and upward mobility is a cherished value. In spite of the formidable restrictions on one's mobility in the rural areas, there have been cases of the sections of lower castes moving up in the hierarchy. There are cases of individuals becoming rich after their having participated in the newer economic activities emerging in towns and cities. Mobility from villages to urban locales has always been there. Whether this mobility was triggered by rural poverty or the concentration of lucrative opportunities in urban contexts is a different question.

The first person to show that the caste system was not truly immutable and that it was not as stagnant as it was made out to be, was M.N. Srinivas. In his study of Coorgs in Karnataka, he showed that originally they were tribals. With the passage of time, they were able to find a place in the caste system, where they rose to the position of the Kshatriyas. Srinivas termed this process of upward mobility in the caste system '*sanskritization*'. It can be defined as the process of ritual mobility whereby a lower caste or a tribe (wholly or partially) emulates the customs and practices of the upper caste with an explicit intention of improving upon its own status. It envisages its eventual merger with the caste whose customs and practices it endeavours to follow.

Srinivas shows that the evidence for the existence of the process of *sanskritization* is available in the ancient as well as the medieval literature, but it became an important process of upward mobility with the advent of the British. A significant

change that occurred in the Indian society under the British regime was that land became a marketable commodity; it could be sold and acquired in the market. Earlier, it was inherited through the ties of kinship; it passed down in the family line, but could not be sold and bought.

The other change that took place was the emergence of towns in the vicinity of villages. These towns provided several opportunities, offering caste-free and class-free occupations. The only occupation that happened to be caste-free in villages was agriculture. Further, the pressure of population in villages, along with the emergence of opportunities in towns, was sending people out to towns and cities, where they participated in cash economy. Within a space of few years, they were able to earn substantial amounts of money with which they could buy agricultural land in their native villages. And, once they had attained economic power, they claimed a higher ritual status, which they would certainly achieve, provided originally they were above the *line of pollution*. There have been cases of castes below the *line of purity*, which claimed upper caste status, but could not succeed in acquiring it mainly because of their 'polluting status'. Srinivas wrote that 'Sanskritization does not help the untouchables'.

Thus, changes have occurred in the position of castes by means of *sanskritization*. It may be noted, however, that *sanskritization* was of no consequence to the upper castes, such as Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas, for they were already *sanskritized*, i.e. they already followed what Srinivas has called '*sanskritic Hinduism*'. These castes were the first ones to opt for a Western way of life that came along with the advent of the British. Srinivas has called the process of adopting the Western lifestyles 'Westernization'.

The castes below the *line of purity* tried, from time to time, their level best to move up in the ritual hierarchy. They also had the pre-requisites for *sanskritization*, such as control over the local economic resources. But, being below the *line of purity*, they failed to establish marital and commensal (i.e. eating together) relations with the castes whose lifestyles they were trying to emulate. Once their attempts to move upwards failed, they had no option but to adopt the political path for bringing about changes in their status. In other words, their mobility was not along the 'axis of caste status', but along the 'axis of political power'. Initially for these castes, but later for all the castes, the route of politics grew in importance for purposes of upward social mobility. All the castes realized that in a democratic setup each one of them constituted a 'vote-bank', and they could exercise their pressure on the state for a better deal. Thus, the caste became 'an interest and a pressure group' and politicization, i.e. the process of adopting various political values, became a functional alternative to *sanskritization*.

Thus, *sanskritization* was meaningful only for castes lying in the middle level of the hierarchy, but then, these castes constituted the majority of them. In addition to the cases of upward ritual mobility, sociological literature also acquaints one with the cases of downward mobility in ritual hierarchy. In the study of a village in Haryana, S.K. Srivastava found that the Brahmins were gradually assimilating the lifestyles and occupational aspects of Jats, with the explicit intention of becoming one with them. This case was the converse of the process of *sanskritization*, and Srivastava termed it '*de-sanskritization*'. In Udaipur villages, S.L. Kalia found that some castes were adopting the lifestyle of the Bhils, a tribal group. This was also a case of downward ritual mobility. Kalia called this process '*tribalization*'.

To sum up, the Indian village was never a self-sufficient social or economic unit. It had relations with the outside world. Benefiting by the changes emerging in it, many people were able to find respectable places in villages. As a consequence, different units of the village were able to move up. Upper castes adopted the Western way of living and institutions. Castes below the *line of purity* had no option but to follow

the political path for ameliorating their status and conditions. Middle castes followed the process of *sanskritization*. Also, some upper castes tried to seek their identification with lower castes. In terms of these four processes (*viz sanskritization*, Westernization, politicization, and *de-sanskritization*), one may formulate a composite model of social mobility in India.

Check Your Progress II

- Note:** a) Write your answers in the space provided.
b) Check your answers with the possible answers provided at the end of the unit.

- 1) Write briefly about the concept of *caste*.
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- 2) What do you mean by *a class* in the context of an Indian village?
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- 3) What do you understand by the *jajmani* system?
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- 4) Do you think that *sanskritization* is still a relevant process of upward mobility for lower castes in contemporary rural India?
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3.3 FAMILIES IN RURAL INDIA

Family is the cornerstone of *human society*. It is a universal social institution. Of the many functions, the most important and non-transferable function it performs is the socialization of children. Along with the changes occurring in the human society, the functions of the family have also undergone change. In traditional societies, the family performs many economic, political, and religious functions; thus, it is not a specialized entity. With the passage of time, however, these functions are transferred to other

specialized institutions. The family, which is the unit of production in simple societies, ceases to be so when the market and the other specialized institutions take over the function of production. In modern societies, the family becomes a unit of consumption.

During the course of its evolution, the family has shed many of its function in favour of other institutions, and so, it has become a truly specialized institution in modern societies. Talcott Parsons says that its first function in the contemporary American society is to carry out the task of providing basic learning to children; this is the function of 'primary socialization'. Its second function is to help in the process of stabilizing adult personalities. As the family is a primary group, resting on the sentiments of affinity, love, and concern, it combats the strains and stresses that are generated in the modern society, which is pivoted on means to ends relations.

Writing about India during the colonial times, Henry Maine stated that mainly two cultural traits characterized India: the caste system and the joint family. The latter was described as being found predominantly in villages. It was also considered an ideal – a supreme value – to which every family aspired to approximate. In many surveys, it was found that people preferred to live in joint families because of several advantages that it offered. For example, both the old and the young could be looked after well in joint families.

A joint family is defined as an aggregate of kinspersons who share a common residence, a common kitchen, a common purse including property, and a common set of religious objects. Generally, a joint family has a name, which in many cases is given/taken after the name of its founder. It has a depth of more than two generations. It is not uncommon to come across joint families that have members of four generations living together. Joint families in India are *patrilineal* (i.e., descent is traced in the male line, from father to son), *patrilocal* (i.e., all the males of the family live together, while the females born in the family move out when they get married), and *patriarchal* (i.e., men exercise authority).

The chief textbook of Hindu law, written in the twelfth century, the **Mitakshara**, has codified the most significant characteristic of the joint family. Under this code, each male is entitled to an equal share of the household property from the time of his birth. Thus, all the male members of the family have equal rights in relation to the family property. The oldest male called *karta*, however, has the exclusively right to manage it on behalf of others. One of his main duties is to see that the family property is not divided. The equal rights that all males have on the property are known as *coparcenary rights*, which constitute the prime characteristic that defines the Indian joint family.

When speaking of an extended family, one's emphasis is on the size of the family. An extended family is a conglomeration of two or more nuclear families. On the other hand, when one speaks of the joint family, one's emphasis is on the fact that all brothers/males are *coparceners*.

Although joint families are found more in the rural than in the urban areas, where most of the families happen to be nuclear, one should not conclude that all castes in a village have the tradition of joint families. It has been observed that upper castes, which are also land owners in many cases, have a higher proportion of joint families than the lower castes, the less propertied as well as the non-propertied ones, which tend to have a higher number of nuclear families. Undoubtedly, there is a direct relationship between the ownership of land and the joint family, because property remains one of the important unifying forces.

The ideal of a joint family, as an institution in which each individual surrenders his or her personal interests for the sake of the family and its unhampered continuity, is hardly ever achieved. Till the time the head of the household is alive, he can succeed in keeping all his sons together and the family property may continue undivided. After

his death, his eldest son would succeed him by the right of primogeniture, but it might become difficult for him to keep all the brothers and their wives together. Sooner or later, they would all separate, each getting an equal share of the family property, and each nuclear family, thus formed, would start its process of expansion, becoming a joint family in course of time, and then breaking up once again and so on.

This process of 'expansion-depletion-replacement' of the family is known as its developmental cycle. One of the suggestions that emerge from this analysis is that a family should be studied as a process, as this approach promises a better understanding of the issues at hand.

As in cities, the forces of modernization have also affected village societies, leading to both occupational differentiation and geographical mobility. Members from the same family take up different occupations. Once this occurs, it becomes extremely difficult for brothers to live together; and being in different occupations, there is bound to be inequality in their respective earnings. Such a situation does not arise when they are all working as agriculturists on the same land, as whatever is produced is for the consumption of the entire family. This system works well in situations that do not have individualism and 'individual consciousness' is subordinated to 'collective consciousness'. With occupational differentiation crystallizes individualism and inequality, making it difficult for the joint family to continue undivided for years and years.

Geographical mobility fits quite well with the nuclear family. When a married son gets a job abroad or away from the village, he moves to his new locale alone, leaving behind his wife and children under the care of his joint family. When he gets a place to live, or is allotted family accommodation, he takes with him his wife and children, rather reluctantly, because it is the beginning of the disintegration of the joint family and the establishment of a nuclear family. This explains the preponderance of nuclear families in urban areas.

Lastly, it should be kept in mind that the nuclear families emerging in India because of the break up of joint families are very different from the nuclear families in the Western world, where the expression 'nuclear family' implies a family that is 'structurally isolated', i.e. a family that has no dependency relations with any other family whatsoever. Indian nuclear families are still embedded in strong kin bonds; they are not isolated as are their counterparts in the West. In India people may live in nuclear families, but they are dependent on their relatives, living in different types of families, for varieties of help.

Thus, the Indian nuclear family is not 'structurally isolated'. If 'structural isolation' is the main characteristic of nuclear families, then the Indian phenomenon needs to be designated differently. Some sociologists are using the term 'nuclear households' to differentiate Indian nuclear families from their Western counterparts. They say that so far 'structurally isolated' nuclear families have not emerged in India; instead what has emerged here is a variety of 'nuclear households'. Each one of them comprises a man, his wife and their unmarried children. And each of these units has long-term, stable, and multiple relations of interdependence with their kinspersons.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Write your answers in the space provided.

b) Check your answers with the possible answers provided at the end of the unit.

1) Give three salient characteristics of an Indian joint family.

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- 2) Explain one of the major reasons behind the break up of the joint family in rural India.

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3.4 NATURE OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF POWER IN RURAL INDIA

The popular image of an Indian village is that it is free from conflicts and thefts. During the course of their fieldwork, scholars have noted invariably that villagers nostalgically remember the days when they did not need to lock their houses, for each one respected the dignity and the goods of others. Consensus prevailed on almost all issues, but if disagreements cropped up, they were amicably sorted out with the intervention of the elderly. The rich parted with their excessive wealth for the welfare of the poor. In some cases, people praised their villages for having never been visited by policemen. Women were safe in all respects, and people adhered to religious values and led a god-fearing existence.

Although it is an idealized version, which of course is far from being exact, there undoubtedly is a grain of truth in much of what has been and is being said about the village. In comparison with the situation in towns and cities, inter-personal conflicts are fewer in villages. The rich may not part with their wealth in favour of the poor, but they certainly display a guardian—like supportive attitude towards them. General consensus prevails with respect to the norms and values, which in any case are largely uniform and hardly contradictory, and this is one of the reasons why there are fewer cases of dissent and conflict in villages. Certainly, the hold of religion on traditional societies is greater than it is on complex societies.

The conclusion one reaches from a comparison of the idealized view of the village held by its inhabitants and the reality that exists, is that the village is not a stable, stagnant, and changeless entity.

Conflicts emerge between the members of a caste and also between different castes, and the contending parties do not always find it easy to solve them. Villagers in North India say that conflicts between different people pertain mainly to the matters of land (*zamin*), wealth (*zar*) and women (*zanani*). For reaching a solution to these conflicts, each village has a council called *panchayat*, consisting of knowledgeable and upright people, who pronounce impartial judgements, supposed to be binding on all.

In addition, as has been noted earlier, each caste has its own *panchayat*, which takes up matters it is confronted with. For the sake of distinguishing one from the other, one may call the village panchayat a *gaon panchayat*, and the caste panchayat, a *jati panchayat*. The functions of each one of them are different, for they serve different bodies. Besides resolving the conflicts between different families, a *gaon panchayat* is also entrusted with undertaking the collective tasks of the village, such as performing rituals for the welfare of the entire village, or organizing programmes pertaining to the donation of voluntary labour (*shramdana*) for building a road or a granary. A *jati panchayat* deals exclusively with the issues pertaining to the caste concerned. For example, it may further the interests of the caste or, in some literate contexts, it may publish a caste periodical.

A traditional caste council called *panch* (i.e. five) comprises a small but always an odd number of members. It listens to the cases of dispute and takes decisions democratically. The odd number of its members helps in deciding cases by the rule of majority when they do not reach a consensus. It is not necessary that a *panch* will always have just five members, as is sometimes proverbially said. The idea of *five* implies that the council is a small group and that the number of its members is always odd.

Srinivas says that in villages, it is invariably the members of one particular caste who exercise their dominance on others. To explain this phenomenon, he introduced the concept of the 'dominant caste', which is defined in terms of the following criteria:

- numerical predominance;
- control over economic resources;
- control over political power;
- high ritual status; and
- the first-ones who have taken advantage of the Western education system.

It is not necessary that all these criteria have to be met for designating a group as dominant. A dominant caste may not have numerical preponderance or it may not tilt towards Westernization. The more important criteria, it has been emphasized, are control over the factors of production and political power. In villages, the dominant caste is usually associated with agriculture. Let us refer to Jan Breman's data on peasants and migrants belonging to Surat (Gujarat). He says that in the whole district of Surat, the Kanbi Patidars occupy the highest status in the field of agriculture. They own large portions of land, and with the passage of time, they add more and more land to their already massive land holdings. Consequently, in this area, lower castes have been reduced to a marginal status. In Rajasthan, even after the land reforms, the ex-landlords (*jagirdar*) continue to own vast tracts of land and remain dominant socially. It has also been seen that the dominant castes resort to violence to keep the other castes in a state of submission.

Take an example to illustrate this. In Wangala, a village in Mysore that Scarlett Epstein had studied, in the plays that the Harijans of the village organize, the actor playing the role of a king does not sit on a prop throne but squats. The idea is that his head should not appear at a level higher than that of the dominant caste members among the audience. On one such occasion, their drama company announced that in their forthcoming production, a stage throne would be used, and the king would sit on it. There was a strong reaction to this idea. The Vokkaligas, the dominant caste of Wangala, stopped employing Harijan labourers. Eventually, the Harijans had to tender an apology and pay a fine for their assertion. Only after this expression of submission peace came to prevail. Similarly, in Madhopur in Uttar Pradesh, when the lower caste people (of Noniya caste) started donning the sacred thread, the dominant caste adopted violent methods to make them stop assimilating the traits of upper castes. The point being made is that the dominant castes do adopt methods of all descriptions in order to maintain their status unassailed.

Often, the dominant castes display uniformity in terms of their behaviour and interests. Although with the emergence of Panchayati Raj and land reforms, the nature of dominance has changed in rural India, there is no doubt that certain castes still exercise decisive dominance in villages. In many cases, the studies point out that people have become disillusioned with their traditional councils. There was a time when the council members were compared to gods (the idea of *panch pameshwar*), and it was said: 'Where there is a panchayat, there is god.' But now, people prefer to approach formal institutions (such as the courts, police, and other administrative bodies) for the settlement of their disputes.

Check Your Progress IV

- Note:** a) Write your answers in the space provided.
 b) Check your answers with the possible answers provided at the end of the unit.

1) What are the different types of the traditional council (*panchayat*) found in Indian villages?

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2) Define the concept of ‘dominant caste’.

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3.5 LET US SUM UP

An Indian village is composed of *endogamous* units, each following its own occupation traditionally associated with its caste, locally known as *jati*. The number of castes a village has varies from one context to another. Large villages have more castes than small villages, but no village has all the castes. Thus, the members of one village depend upon others in their neighbourhood for various services. The Indian village was never self-sufficient as some colonial officers believed. Each village has its own dominant caste, which has very high representation in the political bodies of the village. Often, the decisions they take serve their own interests. At the local level, each caste comprises a set of families, and it has been noticed that there is a close relationship between *caste* and *kinship*. Generally the upper, propertied castes usually have joint families, whilst lower, non-propertied castes have nuclear families. With changes occurring because of urbanization and modernization, the families are becoming smaller all over India, but it does not imply that joint families have disappeared.

3.6 KEY WORDS

- Ascriptive** : This term means ‘by birth’. Ascriptive status is that social position which one acquires by birth.
- Caste System** : Practised in India, it is the main traditional system of social stratification, which is ascriptive and based on the notion of mutually opposing characteristics—*pure and impure*.
- Client** : While translating the words, *jajman* and *kamin*, the terms used are ‘patron’ and ‘client’. The meaning of the word ‘client’ in this context is ‘one who provides the services of an occupation to the other caste.’ The term ‘client’ can be used interchangeably with the term ‘occupational caste’.

- Panchayat** : It is a small body of elders that takes up the cases of dispute among people, and pronounces its judgement, which the contending parties are expected to follow.
- Horizontal Solidarity:** It is the unity of the people who belong to the same caste or social stratum, but are spread across a number of neighbouring villages.
- Vertical Solidarity** : It is the unity of the people who belong to different castes or hierarchical social strata, but belong to one and the same village.

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3.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) The term 'social structure', originally coined by Herbert Spencer, refers to the inter-connections of different parts of society, such as individuals, groups, institutions, associations, organizations, communities, etc.
- 2) The most populated villages in India are found in Kerala; some of them have above ten thousand individuals

Check Your Progress II

- 1) *Caste* is a system of social hierarchy found in south Asia, especially India, and all those countries where Hindus have settled down, such as Fiji, Trinidad, Mauritius, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States of America, etc. In this system, the society is divided into clearly bounded units called castes, locally called *jatis*, each exercising monopoly over a particular occupation. A person becomes the member of a caste by being born into it. In other words, caste is *ascriptive*. The members of a caste share a common lifestyle – they live in houses that look alike, they dress up in a similar manner, they speak the same dialect, they repose faith in the same set of deities, they have the same set of rituals, and in a village, they are generally clustered together. Each caste is *endogamous*, i.e. each one of its members seeks its spouse from the families of its own caste that are settled in other villages. Each caste has its own political body called *panchayat*, which is entrusted with the task of amicably resolving the conflicts that surface between the members of the caste. In running the systems of production in a village, each caste is dependent upon other castes. It is because of the inter-caste dependence that a village develops bonds of social unity.
- 2) By comparison with *caste*, *class* has an economic referent. *Classes* pertain to the system of production and there are basically three *classes* that make an Indian village:
 - i) those who own the means of production (i.e. land, livestock and/or capital);
 - ii) those who lease the needed resources from the first *class* and use them on condition that in return they would pay the relevant rent or a part of their produce; and
 - iii) those who do not have any resources at their command, nor do they enter any economic arrangement to procure resources, but work as labourers to earn wages for the service they render.

The first *class* is of the owners (*malik*), the second of the tenants (*kisan*) and the third of the labourers (*mazdur*). Theoretically, *class* relations are independent of *caste*, but it has been seen that in Indian villages, there is often an overlapping between the two. Those who happen to own land also happen to be from the upper *castes*, and those who are landless labourers are from the lower *castes*.

- 3) William Wiser introduced the term *jajmani* system in his study of a village in Uttar Pradesh. It is a system of patron-client relations. At the center of the system are the agriculturist communities, which are served by various occupational castes, such as the carpenter, the barber, the laundryman, the potter, the blacksmith, etc. These occupational castes provide their services to the agriculturist caste for the entire year but are paid in kind at the time of harvest. These relations are hereditary and happen to be between families belonging to different castes. Sometimes, a family has *jajmani* ties with the entire village. For instance, the family of the village guard (*chowkidar*), who serves all the different castes of the village, receives payments in kind from only some of them, as it may not receive any payments from the *castes* below the *line of purity*.
- 4) The impact of the process of *sanskritization* as a process of upward mobility has considerably reduced because backward castes have found the political route to upward mobility far more effective in the present-day India. Mobility along the axis of status (i.e., *sanskritization*) has been replaced by mobility along the axis of power (i.e., politicization). It is so mainly because *sanskritization* has not helped the *castes* below the *line of purity* to move up the *caste* hierarchy.

Check Your Progress III

- 1) The three salient characteristics of the joint family in India are:
 - i) Kinspersons belonging to the joint family share common religious beliefs, common property and a common residence.
 - ii) All the descendants of the joint family (male and female), recognized by the principle of descent, have an equal right on the family property. These rights are called coparcenary.
 - iii) The head of the household in a patrilineal family is usually the eldest male, who is called *karta*. His main job is to work towards the unity and integrity of the family. He is the manager of the property and is supposed to supervise it well and keep it together by saving it from all forces that try to break it.
- 2) Many reasons have been given to explain the break up of the joint family in India. 'Occupational differentiation', however, seems to be the strongest of them all. When members of a joint family follow the same occupation, it is easier for them to live together than when they branch out into different occupations. When in different occupations, they are also differentially placed in terms of their respective incomes. This inequality at the level of economy does not create viable conditions for different members of the household to live together and pool in their resources. Occupational differentiation is also closely connected with geographical mobility. Occupations take individuals away to different places. Obviously, in such migrations, it is the nuclear family that travels together instead of the entire joint family which goes on losing its sub-groups by and by.

Check Your Progress IV

- 1) Indian villages have two types of traditional council. The first to which an individual is affiliated is the council of one's caste, called the *jati panchayat*; and the second is the council of the village, which is known as *gram/gaon panchayat*. Caste councils extend beyond the boundary of a village. They comprise members of the same caste distributed over the region in neighbouring villages. In other words, a caste council cuts across the villages in the neighbourhood. It is one of the principal factors contributing to solidarity among members of the same caste, called *horizontal solidarity*. A village council, as the name suggests, is of the village. Its jurisdiction is confined to the village concerned. It takes up matters pertaining to the village, thus contributing to the solidarity between the members of different castes living in one and the same village. This type of solidarity is called *vertical solidarity*.

- 2) It was M.N. Srinivas who introduced the concept of *dominant caste*. This term is used for the *caste* that has numerical preponderance in a village. It also exercises control over economic resources, such as land, livestock, houses, instruments and implements of production, etc., because of which it has political power. Its members constitute the best represented group in the village council. In other words, in the case of the *dominant caste*, there is a close association between economic and political factors. Also, it enjoys a high ritual status, and has often been the first to take advantage of the education system that the British introduced in India.

