

## CHAPTER 4

---

# CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL SOCIETY

---

1. Indian Society is primarily a rural society. Agriculture and related occupations are the source of livelihoods for the majority of rural population.

- Many of our cultural practices and patterns can be traced to our agrarian backgrounds.
- Pongal in Tamil Nadu, Bihu in Assam, Baisakhi in Punjab and Ugadi in Karnataka.

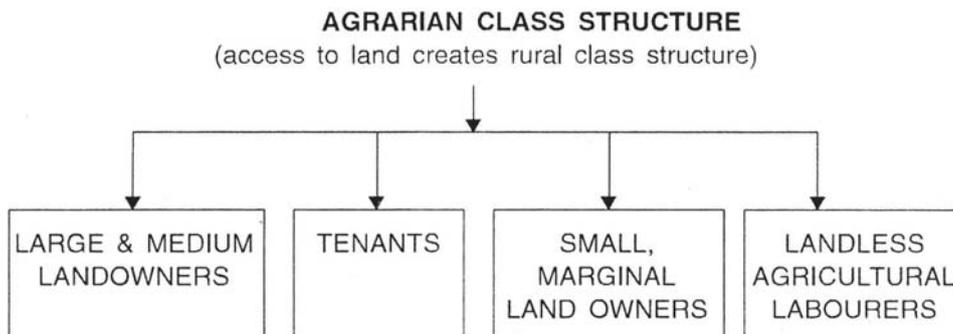
### 2. Occupation of the rural population

- Agriculture is the single most important sources of livelihood for the majority of the rural population.
- Many activities also support agriculture and village life and are also sources of livelihood for people in rural India. For example, a large number of artisans such as potters, carpenters, weavers, ironsmiths, and goldsmiths are found in rural areas;
- Rural life also supported many other specialists and crafts persons as storytellers, astrologers, priests, water-distributors, and oil-pressers.

3. **Diversity of occupations in rural India is reflected in the caste system. Explain.**

- The diversity of occupations in rural India is reflected in the caste system which in most regions includes specialist and 'service' castes such as Washermen, Potters, and Goldsmiths.

4.



- In rural areas no straight forward relationship exists between caste and class. In many cases there is a correspondence between caste and class as one moves down the hierarchy but in some cases it is not so for eg. Brahmins the higher castes are not the major landowners.
- The term agrarian structure is often used to refer to the structure or distribution of landholding.
- Examples of the dominant landowning groups are the Jats and Rajputs of UP, the Volkkalingas in Andhra Pradesh and Jat Sikhs of Punjab.
- In most regions a **proprietary caste group** owns most of the resources and commands labour from low ranked caste group.

5. **Begar** is free labour

- It is prevalent in many parts of northern India.
- Members of low ranked caste groups had to provide labour for a fixed number of days per year to the village zamindar or landlord.
- Lack of resources, and dependence on the landed class for economic, social and political support, meant that many of the working poor were tied to landowners in hereditary' labour relationships (bonded labour).
- It is known by different names such as the Halpati system in Gujarat and the jeeta system in Karnataka.
- **Colonial Period** : Most rural areas were administered through Zamindari System and Raiyatwari System.

## 6. Primary objective of land reforms in India

- To remove the obstacles which arose from the inherited agrarian structure of the past.
- To eliminate all elements of exploitation & social injustices that existed within the agrarian system, in order to ensure equality of statuses and opportunities to all sections of the population.
- Various land reforms introduced after independence. (1950's to 1970's)
  - **Abolition of Zamindari System** : removed the layer of intermediaries, rights taken from zamindars weakening their economic & political position.
  - **Tenancy Abolition and Regulation Acts** : More security to the tenants, granted land rights to tenants (West Bengal and Kerala).
  - **Ceiling Acts** : Limits to be imposed on the ownership of land. Ceiling depended on the productivity of land i.e., High productivity land had low ceiling, while low productivity land had higher ceiling.

### Drawbacks of Land Ceiling Act / "Benami Transfers"

- Most landowners were able to escape from having their surplus land taken over by the state.
- Some very large estates were broken up and landowners managed to divide the land among relatives and others, including servants, in so-called '*benami transfers*' - which allowed them to keep control over the land (in fact if not in name).
- In some places, some rich farmers actually divorced their wives (but continued to live with them) in order to avoid the provisions of the Land Ceiling Act. which allowed a separate share for unmarried women but not for wives.

## 7. A Green Revolution : (1960's & 1970's)

- The Green Revolution was a government programme of agricultural modernisation.
- It was largely founded by international agencies that was based

on providing high yielding variety (HYV) or hybrid seeds along with pesticides, fertilisers and other inputs to farmers.

- Green Revolution programmes were introduced only in areas that had assured irrigation, because sufficient water was necessary for the new seeds and methods of cultivation.
- It was targeted mainly at the wheat and rice-growing areas.
- Hence, only certain regions such as the Punjab, western U.P., Coastal Andhra Pradesh and parts of Tamil Nadu, received the first wave of the Green Revolution package.

### **B. Social transformations that were brought about as a result of Green Revolution**

- Agricultural productivity increased sharply because of the new technology.
- India was able to become self-sufficient in food grain production.
- Increase in agricultural productivity especially in Punjab, Haryana etc. It has been considered a major achievement of the govt. & scientists.

### **C. The negative social and economic effects of Green Revolution**

#### **(1st Phase)**

- Only the medium and large farmers benefitted.
- Displacement of tenancy cultivators
- Displacement of service caste groups
- Worsening of economic condition for agricultural workers due to rising prices and shift in the mode of payment.

#### **(IInd Phase)**

- Commercialisation & market - oriented cultivation, leading to livelihood insecurities.
- Worsening of regional inequalities giving rise to intercaste violence.
- Traditional system of cultivation practices and seeds is being lost.

- Environmental hazards
  - The medium and large farmers benefitted from the new technology.
  - This was because inputs were expensive, and small and marginal farmers could not afford to spend as much as large farmers, to purchase these inputs.
  - It was only the farmers who were able to produce a surplus for the market who were able to reap the most benefits from the Green Revolution and from the commercialization of agriculture that followed.

### 8. Subsistence agriculture

When agriculturists produce primarily for themselves and are unable to reproduce for the market, it is known as 'subsistence agriculture'

- **Difference between Peasants and Farmers**

**Peasants** : Agriculturalists who primarily produce for themselves and unable to produce for the market are peasants.

**Farmers** : Those agriculturalists who are able to produce surplus over and above the needs of the family and are linked to the market.

### **Transformations in the Rural Society after independence.**

- increase in the use of agricultural labour
- shift from payment in kind to payment in cash
- loosening of traditional bonds between farmers and agricultural workers.
- rise of a class of free wage labourers.

### 9. Circulation of Labour

- The commercialisation of agriculture led to the growth of migrant agricultural labour that circulated between their home villages and more prosperous areas.
- Men migrated periodically in search of work and better wages, while women and children were often left behind in their villages with elderly grandparents.

- Migrants were more easily exploited by the wealthy farmers and were usually not paid the minimum wages.
- These migrant workers were termed as 'footloose labour' by Jan Breman.
- These labourers got employment only during a part of the year, i.e., the harvesting time.
- As migrant labourers are not locals and come from poor regions, they were in a weak position relative to employers.,
- Women are also emerging as the main source of agricultural labour, leading to the 'feminisation' of agricultural labour force.

### **Globalisation, Liberalisation and Rural Society Contract Farming.**

The policy of liberalisation that entails participation in the World Trade Organisation, aims to bring about free international trading system.

- Many farmers in regions of Karnataka and Punjab enter into contracts with multinational companies such as Pepsico to grow certain crops.
- The company identifies the crop to be grown
- provides the seeds and other inputs.
- the know how and the working capital is also provided.
- Company guarantees to purchase the produce at a pre determined fixed price.

#### **Negative impacts**

- It leads to greater financial insecurity as the farms become dependent on the company for their livelihood
- farming of export oriented products such as flowers and gherkins means that land is diverted from food grain production.
- It disengages people from the production process
- Indigenous knowledge of agriculture becomes irrelevant.
- Production of elite items requires high doses of fertilizers and pesticides which are ecologically not sustainable.

The agricultural 'extension agents' have been replaced by agents of fertiliser and pesticide companies who make the farmers dependent on expensive fertiliser and pesticides thus reducing profits and increasing debts and ecological crisis.

#### 10. Farmer Suicides

- Many farmers who committed suicide were marginal farmers because of loss of crop due to disease, excessive rainfall or drought resulting in 'matrix events'.
- Lack of adequate support of market price farmers were unable to bear the debt burden or sustain their families.
- Unable to meet the needs expected for marriage, dowries, education, medical care etc.

### 1 MARKS QUESTIONS

1. Many of our cultural practices and patterns can be traced to our agrarian backgrounds Which of the festival is not a part of it.  
a. Pongal in Tamil Nadu      b. Bihu  
c. Baisakhi                      d. Holi
2. Agriculture is the single most important source of livelihood for the majority of the rural population in India (true/false)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ castes such as washerman, potters, goldsmith, are examples of diversity of occupation in \_\_\_\_\_ India.
4. Cultivators who lease the land from landowners and have lower income than owner- cultivators are called \_\_\_\_\_
5. A system of tax collection in colonial India in which the government settled the revenue directly with the cultivator are called.  
a. zamindari system              b. raiyatwari system  
c. halpati system                  d. jeeta system
6. Jats and Rajputs of UP Lingayats in Karnataka are examples of dominant castes. (True / False)
7. Members of low ranked caste groups had to provide labour for

fixed number of days / year to the village zamindar or landlords is called \_\_\_\_\_

8. As a part of land reform initiative an act that prevents land rights to the tenants and gave them security were.
  - a. commercialization of agriculture
  - b. subsistence agriculture
  - c. capitalist agriculture
  - d. none of the above
9. A pattern of seasonal migration that emerged due to Green revolution where workers circulate between their home village and more prosperous areas is called
  - a. circulation of labour
  - b. subsistence agriculture
  - c. begar / begar
  - d. matrix events
10. Identify the sociologist who described the change in the nature of relationship between landlords and agricultural workers as a shift from patronage to exploitation
  - a. Karl Marx
  - b. Jan Breman
  - c. Hubert Risley
  - d. Max Weber
11. Workers are also emerging as the main source of agricultural labour, leading to the proprietary caste groups of agricultural labour force. (T/F)

## **2 MARKS QUESTIONS**

1. What are the various occupations followed in rural society?
2. What does 'agrarian structure' refer to?
3. What does the term 'Begar' mean?
4. What is 'Raiyatwari System'?
5. What was the condition of Indian agriculture after Independence?
6. What are 'Benami transfers'?

7. How did Green Revolution benefit Indian Agriculture initially?
8. Why have areas like Eastern UP and Telangana witnessed intercaste violence in recent years?
9. What are the various factors behind Kerala's 'mixed economy'?
10. What do you mean by 'Feminization of agricultural labour'?
11. Differentiate between Peasants and Farmers.

#### **4 MARKS QUESTIONS**

1. Explain the various factors behind the increasing farmer's suicide in India.
2. Explain the agrarian structure of Rural Society.
3. Examine the caste & class relationship in rural society.
4. Mention the loopholes found in the implementation of the land ceiling Act.
5. What were the major land revenue systems followed by the British in India?
6. Explain the 'Green Revolution' program.
7. Explain the regional inequalities created due to the Green revolution Program.
8. Mention the various aspects of social transformation in rural society as a result of the Green Revolution Program.
9. 'Commercialization of Agriculture is indicative of Capitalists Agriculture according to some scholars'. Explain.
10. Discuss the emergence of New regional elites of rural society.
11. Explain Jan Breman's concept of 'Foot Loose Labour'.
12. Describe 'Contract Farming'.

#### **6 MARKS QUESTIONS**

1. Enumerate the social consequences of Green Revolution.

2. Explain the various land reforms introduced in India after Independence.
3. Explain the agrarian structure of rural society and also examine the caste and class relationship that exists.