

## **RURAL AND URBAN LIVELIHOOD**

### **AS COMPARED TO THE PAST, LIFE TODAY IS VERY DIFFERENT**

Life in the remote past was very different from what it is today. Early man had very basic needs, he lived in Caves or on trees, and gathered food from his surroundings. He must have eaten fruits, tubers and edible roots. He caught fish from ponds and rivers, and also animal and birds. In course of time, early man started to grow food grains and began to lead a settled life. Even after coming of agriculture, his needs were quite limited. Rivers near his settlements provided him with water. He learnt to build huts with locally available material earth, dried grass and wood.

But that prehistoric world has vanished forever. Life has changed drastically. Modern man has more needs than he can fulfil. Villages, towns or cities in themselves cannot meet all his needs. His complex life demands that food be brought from other parts of the country. Similarly, building materials often come from distant places. Iron, cement, stone, wood, marble, hardware fittings have to come from other parts of the country. Besides, modern man does not merely require food, clothes and shelter. He also needs education, health care, transportation, communication, education, employment and recreation.



**Transplanting paddy is back-breaking work.**

### **WHAT IS RURAL LIVELIHOOD?**

Livelihood means occupation or employment, which is essential for fulfilling basic requirements. In rural India, agriculture is the main source of livelihood. However, some people are also engaged in other sources of livelihood, such as, making furniture, poultry farming and cattle rearing.

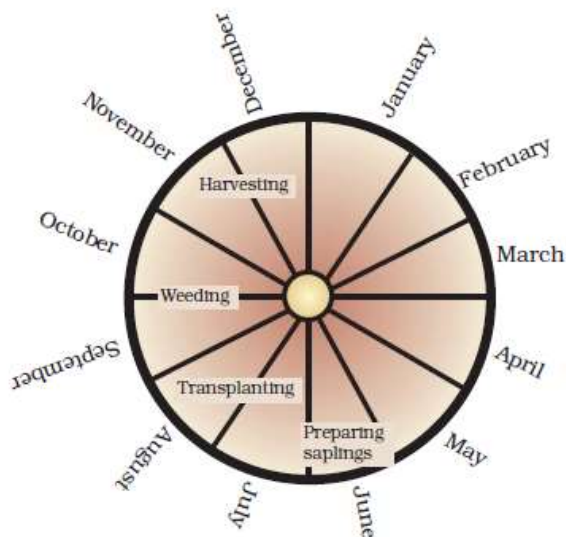
### **LIFE IN VILLAGES**

Indian villages have grown in an unplanned way. Few villages have proper roads, most still have narrow lanes. The villages are surrounded by fields. The inhabitants of the villages are mostly farmers. Besides farmers, carpenters, blacksmiths, potters, weavers and barbers also live in villages. The villagers live in houses which are generally made of mud and have thatched roofs. Very few of them can afford pukka houses. These houses are usually small, with only one or two rooms. There are barely any sanitary facilities. In many states, even today villagers lead a very simple life and are still quite backward. Many of them are totally illiterate.

Although households can be classified into different economic groups, but broadly, these households can be classified into four categories depending on their landholding. They are as follows:

- (i) **Landless Labourers:** This category has no land. 30% of our rural households fall in this category. They may own a few basic agricultural implements, which they use for cultivating other people's land. They get a share of the crops they cultivate. Such people are called 'sharecroppers'. Those who do not own any implements work as paid labourers. Their survival depends on getting rural work. They usually work on daily wages. They are the poorest lot of our rural areas who have been 'marginalised', which is a term for those who live at the very edge, or margin, of life. This segment of population is usually described as living 'below the poverty line'.
- (ii) **Small plot holders:** This group of people possess small plots of land and is much better off than landless workers. However, earnings from land are not enough to meet family requirements. Hence, they supplement their income by working as agricultural labourers on other people's lands. Such marginal farmers own less than 2.5 acres of land and comprise about 33% of all rural households.
- (iii) **Small farmers:** A small farmer is one who is self-dependent and meets his family expenditure from his own earnings. But he is not in a position to save much money. A farmer who is able to do so is called a progressive farmer. Such small farmers generally own between 2.5 and 5 acres of land. About 30% of rural households belong to this category.
- (iv) **Rich farmers :** They are relatively well-off. This category owns between 5 acres to 25 acres of good cultivable land. About 10% of rural households fall in this category. The financial position of these rich farmers is comparable to that of urban rich.

In this pie-chart, 12 months of a year have been given. If there is a farmer in your neighbourhood, ask him about transplantation, weeding and harvesting periods of paddy. In the given pie chart, mark when these activities are carried out.



#### ◆ WHY DO RURAL PEOPLE MIGRATE TO CITIES?

They do not find work throughout the year. They have to travel long distances in search of work. This migration takes place during the off season, when extra farm hands are not needed. The cities offer many advantages that villages cannot. This is why rural people migrate to urban areas.



## **MODES OF LIVELIHOOD IN URBAN AREAS**



### **GROWTH OF TOWNS**

There are more than five thousand (middle and small size) towns and many big cities in our country. These towns and cities have one outstanding feature or other. Some are religious towns, e.g., Bhuvaneshwar. Others are coastal, e.g., Kolkata, while some others are industrial, e.g., Kanpur, Agra, etc. The main cause for increase in number of towns is migration of rural folk to urban centres.

Villages move to cities because there they find better facilities, such as water, electricity, sanitation, educational facilities for children, employment opportunities, etc. These allow them to lead better lives. This is why most Indian cities are so densely populated. But this migration has lowered the quality of urban life . . It has put heavy strain on cities, and led to congestion, pollution, heavy traffic, breakdown of electric and water supplies, etc., in recent years. This urban migration is a clear indication that much improvement is still needed in rural areas. If villages, are happy with the quality of life, and facilities available in villages, they will never leave their homes to go and work in a strange, distant city.





## OCCUPATIONS

### ◆ DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRIMARY, SECONDARY OR TERTIARY OCCUPATIONS

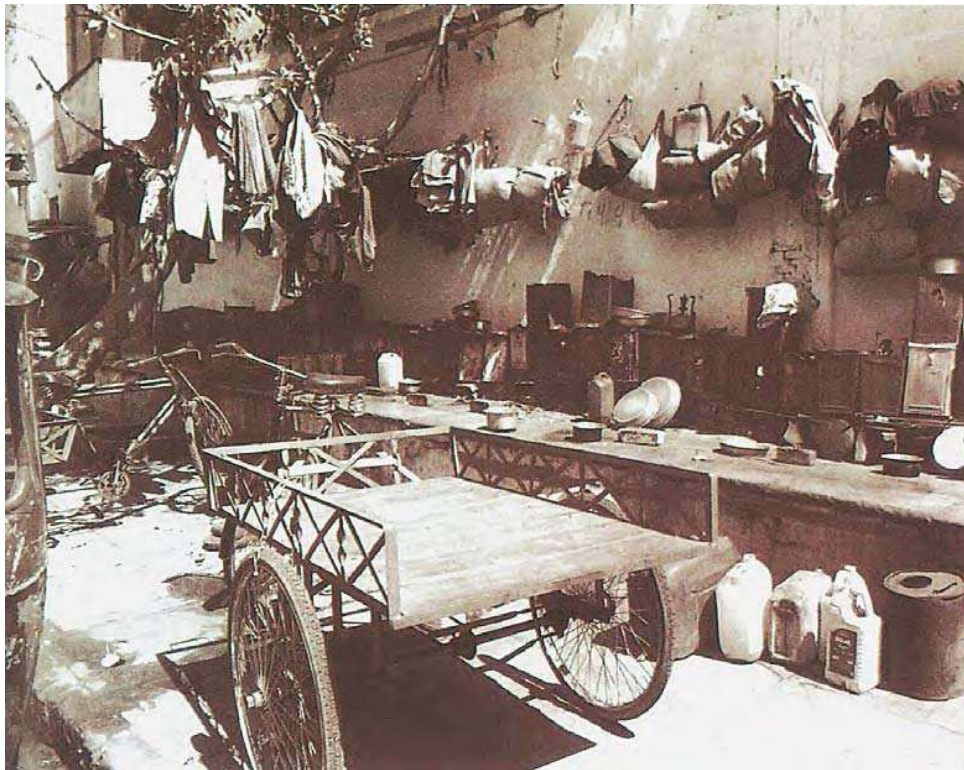
**Primary Occupations:** Such occupations in which people are engaged in deriving useful goods from natural resources are known as primary occupations. Agriculture, forestry, cattle-rearing, dairy-fishing, mining, etc., are some of the primary occupations.

**Secondary Occupation:** Secondary occupations include processing of raw materials such as agricultural produce, minerals, fish, etc., into utility goods by hand or by machines. Steel and iron industries, textile industries, leather industries, paper mills, etc., are all examples of secondary occupations.

**Tertiary Occupations:** The third type of occupations are the tertiary occupations in which no goods are made but people offer their services or expertise. Teaching, banking, railways, post offices, etc., are all tertiary occupations.

**Market-place:** A market is a place where people gather to buy or sell something. The rural institution of weekly haat is also a market. People gather in markets to either buy or sell goods. Markets are generally overcrowded, with shops, hawkers, high buildings and offices, industrial complex, etc.

Some markets are organised on weekly basis, e.g., a weekly vegetable market. Others are open every day, such as Palika Bazaar in New Delhi. The status of various social groups depends on their economic position. A roadside barber works on the pavement, while some shops function within air-conditioned buildings. A staggering variety of jobs and services on offer together constitute a market. Each component of a market has a role to play, and every customer is important.



Often workers who make a living in the city are forced to set up their homes on the street as well. Below is a space where several workers leave their belongings during the day and cook their meals at night.

**Street workers:** A market is a place where a variety of goods and services is on offer. There are selfemployed persons, such as vegetable vendors, barbers, rickshaw-pullers, coolies, etc. They are not employed by anyone..\_They eam their livelihood by their own hard work and business skill.

However, these pavement or street entrepreneurs have no fixed location. Sometimes, they violate local laws by blocking the pavements. The police may tell them to move to another place, e.g., roadside vegetable vendors, small traders, barbers or cobblers. Therefore, a roadside vendors shop is a makeshift affair. It Is made of plastic sheets, tin sheets, tarpaulin, etc.

Though it may appear that their activities are insignificant, these Small businessmen play a crucial role in markets as well as in the economy. There are about one crore street vendors working in urban areas in India. Owing to lack of capital, vendors sell articles made at home by their friends or families.

Accommodation is a big problem in cities. A person from a lower income group may sleep on the pavement, in a slum or at the work place itself. If you go for an early morning walk in a town, you can see people asleep beside (or under) tea stalls, on rickshaws or auto-rickshaws, taxis, etc. These workers fall under what is known as the 'unorganised sector'. There are no safety measures or supportive laws for them. The government is planning to modify laws that restrict street vendors from entering certain zones. It remains to be seen whether such laws can be successfully implemented.



### **RETAIL BUSINESS**

With recent spurt in trade and industry, large number of traders, bankers, artisans as well as shop-keepers are migrating to cities. Shops are the hub of a market. Different types of shops in a market fulfill different demands of customers. Shops are decorated with multi-coloured lights or attractive show-window. Today, many things are advertised through newspapers, cinemas, theatres, television and radio. Shopping Mall concept has added a new dimension to the retail sector. Everything one can possibly need is for sale under a single roof. Markets are regulated by urban administration, under the control of the city's Municipal Corporation.



### **FACTORY-WORKSHOP AREA**

Large quantities of refuse, effluents, waste products, excessive noise levels, and thick smoke from factory chimneys can pollute the environment in industrial areas. Factories usually operate six days a week, but during busy 'seasons' they may work non-stop throughout the week, even on Sundays and holidays. Workers are paid on monthly or contract basis or daily basis. They can be employed on permanent basis or as casual temporary worker.

A casual worker is employed on temporary basis, as long as the work demands. They have to be always on lookout for alternate jobs. On the whole, their jobs are seasonal. Permanent workers are employed on a long-term basis and their jobs are secure as long as they work efficiently and Sincerely. Despite job Insecurity, long working hours, congestion and pollution. needs compel people to work day and night in factories.



### ◆ OFFICE AREA

Unlike factories, office areas are neat and clean. Office areas are marked by huge, high-rise buildings, where educated people are engaged in white collar jobs. They are employed on the basis of their qualification and experience. A normal working day begins at 9.30 a.m. and ends by 6 p.m. Most of the staff in offices are employed on a permanent basis. Unlike factory workers, their jobs are secure. Office workers usually enjoy a variety of additional benefits such as medical allowance, maternity benefits, gratuity, provident fund, bonus, etc. In other words, people working in offices are better off than those working in factories.





**MIGRATION**

The majority of India's population lives in villages. Most villagers rely on income from agriculture. They lead leisurely, low stress lives as compared to those of busy city-dwellers. This does not mean that they are lazy or have no work to do. In fact, villagers are very hard working people. They have to work very hard to earn their livelihood. But since literacy among the villagers is very low, they cannot improve their lot.

As we have seen, the problems of those living in towns and cities are quite different from those who live in villages. City life is very different from village life. Both, however, have different problems. The towns are spread over large areas and are thickly populated. Arrangements have to be made to provide better standard of living, job opportunities, fast and economical transport and communication systems, pure drinking water, regular supply of electricity, basic educational facilities, and better medical facilities. These things are rarely available in villages. That is why people from villages are lured into migrating to big cities.

Migration means large-scale movement of people from one place to another. In this chapter, we have read about rural people migrating to towns or big cities in search of jobs. This phenomenon has put city services under huge pressure, and also resulted in slums, congestion and overpopulation in big towns, cities and metropolises.

As people from rural areas are increasingly attracted towards cities, the urban population continues to grow. Now there are less and less facilities per person. More housing, electricity, safe drinking water and better transport facilities are desperately needed. The problem of a swelling urban population due to influx of village people will continue as long as villages lack modern facilities.

Village life is simple and unhurried. Villagers have few needs and all they want is that their families should not suffer due to lack of basic necessities. But when villagers are exposed to the temptations of a modern lifestyle, with all sorts of facilities, they tend to migrate to urban centres. One way of curbing this trend is to maintain the rural environment at an optimum level and to provide more opportunities for growth, fulfilment and human betterment in rural areas. Barring a handful of such villages, this is still a distant dream.

