UNIT 4 RURAL - URBAN CONTINUUM

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4.2 Rural-Urban Continuum: Concept and Importance
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4.1 INTRODUCTION

Urbanisation is a process of increasing the proportion of people living in towns and cities, as a result, people move from rural areas (countryside) to urban areas (towns and cities). Usually urbanisation and economic development go hand-in-hand, reinforcing the upward trend from both the sides. People migrate from rural areas to urban areas looking for employment opportunities and as a result of this, the density of population in urban areas increase. The mismatch between the trend in urbanisation and the development of basic services results in scarcity of housing, drinking water, sanitation and other basic services leading to the emergence of slums in urban sector. Thus, an offshoot of urbanisation is emergence of slums.

Kerala is an urban village. The pattern of urbanisation in Kerala, the rural-urban continuum (rurban), is facilitated, to a greater extent, by ‘provision of social infrastructure’, in spatially distributed manner, based on careful public policy of the State Government. It is a continuum of rural and urban areas. The human development approach of the State, popularly known as the Kerala Model, resulted in developing social infrastructure like public distribution system, schools, hospitals, agriculture offices, etc. spatially distributed all over the State. It is important to underline the fact that all these achievements have been made without high level of industrialisation and urbanisation characterised by rural-urban migration. Thus, entire Kerala has become an urban village and whatever the achievement in development is found to be spatially distributed. The Kerala experience, therefore, underlines the importance of ‘Provision of Social Infrastructure’, in spatially distributed manner, will facilitate the settlement pattern towards ‘rurban’ (rural-urban continuum). Such a pattern of urbanisation avoids emergence of slum settlements and deprivations.

After studying this unit, you will be able to:
• describe the process of urbanization
• discuss the rural-urban continuum of Kerala
• explain the features of Kerala Model of Development
• narrate the importance of social infrastructure for encouraging rural-urban continuum
4.2 RURAL-URBAN CONTINUUM: CONCEPT AND IMPORTANCE

Rural-Urban Continuum and ‘Trickle Down’ Effect

The diffusion of the fruits of growth in an economy to all section of the people is known as ‘the trickle down’ effect. Looking at the effect, in terms of space, the diffusion may be seen as the change from the industrial urban centers to the rural countryside resulting in a rural-urban continuum. In other words, the rural-urban differences developed in a unilinear fashion which led to a breakdown of rural urban differences. Thus one can delineate three inter-related aspects of urbanization. One is the sequential sectoral development of the economy. Second is the growing concentration of population in areas where secondary and tertiary activities are located. Third is the diffusion of the development process leading to the disappearance of rural urban differences.

‘rural’ means far away from large towns of cities.

‘continuum’ – each thing is closely related to the thing that is next to it in the order, but the things at the beginning and end of the order are very different from each other.

‘urban’ means belonging to a town or a city. ‘urbanisation’ – it is made more like a town, with more buildings, industry and business.

Thus, the rural-urban continuum may be defined as a dynamic equilibrium wherein the development process involves the people in both rural and urban areas and the returns of development are also distributed to the people whose settlement pattern is distributed spatially.

As noted earlier, the state of Kerala can be described as an urban village with hardly any demarcation between urban and rural area. Thus, one of the notable features of Kerala’s development performance is that there is no significant disparity between achievements in the urban areas and the rural areas. The absence of disparity is mainly because of the targeted public policy in developing infrastructure, particularly social infrastructure. The special geographical configuration of towns and villages in Kerala has been favourable for the development of the rural-urban continuum. The distinction between rural and urban areas is less sharp in Kerala than in other parts of the country.

In the case of Kerala, the urban quality of life has improved in terms of availability of water and sanitation, power, health, education, telephones, and the like, while poverty has fallen. These improvements must be viewed against the fact that they have been achieved under the difficult fiscal situations, and with strained human resource for the emerging needs of public management. The policy of the government has been to spatially distribute the settlements by means of providing connectivity to all villages so as to provide maximum convenience to the citizens. In this effort, co-operation of the people and the local self-governments are substantial.

4.3 RURAL-URBAN CONTINUUM – THE KERALA MODEL (RURBAN)

A feature of Kerala’s development performance is that there are no great disparities
between achievements in the urban areas of Kerala and its rural areas. The absence of great disparities is because, public action policy is so targeted, public policy has been helped in this regard by the special geographical configuration of towns and villages in Kerala. The distinction between rural and urban areas is less sharp in Kerala than in other parts of the country. The literature is full of references to Kerala’s ‘rural-urban continuum’; a new Kerala coinage is ‘rurban’.

The occupational structure of Kerala’s villages also distinguished them from villages elsewhere. There is larger proportion of workers outside agriculture, in waged and salaried non-agricultural occupations, in Kerala’s villages than in villages elsewhere. In other parts of India, the inhabited part of a village and the cultivated part – that is, where people live and where the fields are – are easy enough to distinguish. Not so in Kerala, where houses are scattered, not clustered, and are located near cultivated fields. That Kerala’s habitation pattern was distinct was noted by writers as early as Ibn Batuta. The origins of the present pattern have been ascribed to the relationship between landowning castes and the unfree tillers of the soil; they have also been traced to features of Kerala’s distinct topography, hydrology, and cropping pattern.

The development of road transport since the nineteen-sixties, and particularly after the mid-seventies, has had the effect of accentuating the urbanisation of Kerala’s villages. Every village in the state is connected by motorable road. There are, as a result, increased opportunities for commuting to work for members of the non-agricultural work-force who live in villages and work in towns. The growth of retail trade, construction, and other forms of economic activity in villages after the sharp increase in the volume of remittances from workers in the Gulf countries has also contributed to the urbanisation of Kerala’s villages.

Kerala’s villages are not the same kind of distinct socio-economic unit that village in other parts of the country are; boundaries between villages, which have been demarcated for purposes of administration, are somewhat arbitrary. The average size of a village at the Census of 1981 was 16,967 persons (the all-India average was 911 persons) (Ramachandran, 1996).

An idiosyncratic feature of the development trends in Kerala is the absence of rural-urban polarisation. The public policy has been so targeted that the disparity between the rural and urban area is reduced to the minimum. These developments in Kerala – ‘rural-urban continuum’ – have resulted in the coinage of a new term ‘rurban’. Woodcock, during the late Sixties, described the situation very beautifully in the following way.

Kerala villages bear little resemblance to the tight, squalid settlements of North India which huddle along a single street or in a knot of houses for mutual protection. In spite of their unorganised appearance, the Malayali villages have quite elaborate social structures. Each will have at least one school and a public library; it will have a public health service, trade union branches and political party groups, places of worship (often a temple, a church and a mosque) and always a few tea shops which serve as meeting places for the various communities. Many Malayali intellectuals and officials return to their native villages in middle age and take an active part in local activities, so that there is a cultural sophistication about rural life in Kerala. In many respects, it is urban (Woodcock, 1967, pp.44-45).
About twenty five per cent of the population in Kerala live in urban areas. This is a little less than the National average. However unlike the other parts of the country the Urbanisation in Kerala is not limited to the designated cities and towns. Barring a few Panchayats in the hilly tracts and a few isolated areas here and there, the entire state depicts the picture of a rural-urban continuum. The Kerala Society by and large can be termed as urbanised (Govt. of Kerala, 2002).

Now that you have studied what is meant by trends in urbanization and the rural-urban continuum, answer the questions given in Check Your Progress-1.

Check your Progress 1

Note: a) Write your answer in about 50 words

   b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit

1) Describe the Trends in Urbanisation in the State of Kerala.

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2) Give a Brief Account of Rural-Urban Continuum of Kerala Model.

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3) Describe rural-urban continuum.

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4.4 SALIENT FEATURES OF THE KERALA MODEL

The important salient features of Kerala model of rural-urban continuum are:

4.4.1 Human Development

Kerala’s achievements in development are legendary, particularly in quality of life measured in terms of human development index. The index of human development of Kerala is found to be comparable to that of the middle-income countries in the world whereas its per capita income is lower than that of the average per capita income of the low-income countries. Thus, the Kerala model
shows how an economy can achieve high quality of life with low per capita income. Many of the development trends/features in Kerala have been tending towards the capacity building of local level planning, and recently, these centrifugal forces have gained momentum and resulted in sustained improvement in the quality of life, despite very low per capita income.

**HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX**

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary measure of human development. It measures the average achievements in three basic dimensions of human development. As per United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), these dimensions are as follows:

1) A long and healthy life, as measured by life expectancy at birth.
2) Knowledge as measured by the adult literacy rate.
3) A decent standard of living, as measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita.

Kerala rank at the top among Indian states with respect to the human development index. The HDI of Kerala found to be continuously increasing from 0.685 in 1991 to 0.773 in 2001. It is interesting to note that there exists an almost uniform distribution of the development within Kerala. Table 2 shows that the district-wise distribution of human development indices of Kerala all lie above 0.740. The highest HDI is recorded in Ernakulam with 0.801 and lowest index is observed for Malappuram with 0.749 which itself lie far above the index compared with other regions in India.

**Table 2: Human Development Index (HDI), by District, Kerala, 2005**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of District</th>
<th>HDI</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ernakulam</td>
<td>0.801</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kottayam</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Pathanamthitta</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Alappuzha</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Thrissur</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kollam</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Kannur</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Kozhikode</td>
<td>0.781</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Thiruvananthapuram</td>
<td>0.773</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Palakkad</td>
<td>0.761</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Kasargod</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Idukki</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Wayanad</td>
<td>0.753</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Malappuram</td>
<td>0.749</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>KERALA STATE</strong></td>
<td>0.773</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4.4.2 Public Action

Kerala’s accomplishments show that the well-being of the people can be improved, and social, political, and cultural conditions transformed, even at low levels of income, when there is appropriate public action. In Kerala, the action of mass organisations and mass movements against social, political, and economic oppression and the policy actions of government have been the most important constituents of public action. When understanding the sources of Kerala’s current levels of achievement, it is apparent that Kerala has special features in respect of a host of social circumstances. There are many lessons to be learned from Kerala experience for the rest of India and, perhaps, for other developing societies (CDS, 1977).

The support-led process does not wait for dramatic increases in per capita levels of real income, and it works through priority being given to providing social services (particularly health care and basic education) that reduce mortality and enhance quality of life. Amartya Sen has observed that, ‘Despite their low levels of income, the people of Kerala, or China, or Sri Lanka enjoy enormously higher levels of life expectancy than do much richer populations of Brazil, South Africa and Namibia, not to mention Gabon’ (Sen 2000).

4.4.3 Developing Social Institutions

Social development of a society depends to a greater extent on the development of social institutions and social capital. Social capital is the networking that helps create linkages which in turn forge rules, conventions and norms governing the development process. When a society undergoes change certain institutional factors, which has a spiralling effect on deepening democracy, may gain ground, if the unleashed energy of people deliberately consolidated by the intelligentsia.

In the case of Kerala, after the formation of the State in 1956 a notable development in the area of participation of the people was people’s science movement. It was basically a conscientisation of the mass; the activists worked above interests of their political affiliation/inclination. This was followed by a total literacy movement. Apart from making the people capable of reading and writing, it was a mass movement for understandings the ‘self’ and the ‘society’ in the background of democratic principles. The ordinary people came to understand the importance of human development and to some extent the concept of sustainable development. With emerging demand from below the Government had to provide basic services like education, health, sanitation, etc. Media also played an important role by means of highlighting activities relating to development and also reporting the apparent failures in providing these basic services. The State Government has allocated a substantial portion of its investment for developing social infrastructure like schools, hospitals, etc.

In 1996, as noted earlier, participatory planning was introduced and the responsibility of local level development entrusted with local bodies. Again, in 1998, for ensuring comprehensive social protection, Kudumbashree (the poverty reduction by prosperity of family through empowerment of women) was introduced.

Now that you have studied what is meant by human development index (HDI) and the importance of Social institutions for development, answer the questions given in Check Your Progress-2.
4.5 FACTORS PROMOTING RURAL-URBAN CONTINUUM IN KERALA

Kerala’s achievements are an outstanding example of the power of public action. Now we may look at some of the important areas wherein these public actions are taken. Human insecurity is both cause for, as well as an outcome of poverty. Kerala State has been providing a range of welfare programmes aiming to enhance socio-economic security of her people (CDS, 2005). Some of the factors promoting rural-urban continuum in Kerala are described below.

i) Public Distribution System (PDS)
Kerala has universal coverage of public distribution system for providing food-grains, sugar, and other essential materials. The system began even before independence under the rule of Maharajas. By 1965, the system was expanded to cover the entire households. In addition to PDS, the State Government intervenes in the market through procurement and distribution of essential commodities with a view to controlling prices. This is done through the Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation (KSCSC), which has its outlets scattered all over Kerala for distributing the materials. The prices in these shops are lower than the open market prices by a reasonable margin. In addition, by their strong market intervention to sell essential items during festival seasons, such as Onam, Christmas, and Ramzan, the State is able to provide a measure of stability to the prices of essential commodities.

ii) Free Noon Meal Scheme for School Children
Under this scheme food is distributed free to the targeted groups. The origin of this programme may be traced to the mid-fourties, when the princely states of
Travancore and Cochin had established a system of free mid-day meals for poor children in the lower primary schools. The Noon Meal Scheme was reoriented in 1961 and spread throughout the State.

A supplementary nutrition programme is implemented with the help of a large number of women’s welfare organisations called Mahila Samajams and other organisations in the State. Anganwadis and Balawadis have been set up with the help of these organisations. Young educated women in rural and urban areas are recruited as volunteers and receive only a monthly honorarium for their service. There is one Anganwadi centre for every 1000 population in rural and urban areas and one for every 700 population in tribal areas (Government of Kerala 2005).

iii) Old Age Pensions to Destitutes and Rural Labourers

The scheme is targeted at the poor, based on their social or physical vulnerability or their status as labourers in the unorganized sector. The system of giving old-age pension has come to occupy an important place in the social security provisioning in Kerala because of its coverage progressively being extended to most rural labourers. The four important old age pension for the poor are: 1) Pension to Destitutes and Widows, 2) Pension for the Handicapped, 3) Pension for Old Aged Agricultural Labourers, and 4) Pension for Old Aged Fish Workers. The number of pension schemes now operating in Kerala is around 17.

More than 90 per cent of the aged poor in the State are covered with pension schemes. The assured assistance in old age and other contingencies acts as an incentive to spend on children’s continued education, better health care, etc. It also raises the beneficiary’s status in the family. There are also schemes for providing marriage assistance to daughters of widows and destitute mothers. There is an insurance scheme called Mangalya under which assistance for marriage of adult daughters up to Rs.10,000 is paid.

iv) Housing Security Schemes

Kerala’s initiatives in providing housing security deserve special attention. In 1971, the landless labourers were given the right to retain and own 10 cents of land belonging to landed households for whom they worked. Those who could not get such land and were homeless were brought under a massive programme called ‘One Lakh Housing’ through mobilizing resources from the State Budget, public institutions and voluntary labour. This housing scheme is considered as a landmark in the history of Kerala in social development. At present, various housing schemes, including the provision for purchasing land for the landless, is being implemented by the local self governments.

v) Welfare Funds for Unorganized Sector Workers

Kerala has a unique experience in providing protective social security arrangements for its workers in the informal sector. Successive Governments in Kerala perceived the problems of workers in the informal sector as due largely to lack of definite employee-employer relationships and insecurities arising out of fluctuations in their income. The welfare funds and boards were an attempt to solve this through institutional innovations, including the tripartite fund, with the employer, worker and Governments as its constituents. At present, there are 23 welfare fund boards for unorganized/informal workers in Kerala (in addition,
to the Centrally-administered fund board for beedi and cigar workers). They cover a wide range of occupations and have come to be seen as an important institutional arrangement for providing a measure of social security to informal workers. The benefits vary across funds. However, they seem to cover a number of aspects. Some of the major benefits provided are: Provident fund, gratuity, monthly pension (old age), disability and accident cover, health cover, unemployment relief, educational allowance, housing assistance, marriage assistance and funeral expense.

vi) **Kudumbashree - Poverty Reduction Programme**

The poverty reduction programme in Kerala is known as ‘Kudumbashree’. In Malayalam (the vernacular language in Kerala), ‘Kudumbashree’ means prosperity for family. It is a participatory poverty eradication programme (such programmes are legion in India) of Kerala. What makes a difference in this programme is that it is a community initiative using women’s agency with legal backing, implemented as part of Panchayati Raj System (both rural and urban). Since it is structurally and functionally related to local bodies leakages are minimized. Basically it is an women empowerment programme; but equal importance is given to delivery mechanism. Kudumbashree has an economic base of its own which guarantees autonomy and sustainability. The project is implemented through neighbourhood groups of poor women. It is through a survey, based on nine risk factors, the poor families are identified. It is envisaged that the service of different government and semi-government agencies are to be converged in the programme.

The mission of Kudumbashree is “to eradicate absolute poverty through concerted community action under the leadership of local governments, by facilitating organization for the poor combining self-help with demand-led convergence of available services and resource to tackle the multiple dimensions and manifestations of poverty holistically”.

A major departure from conventional poverty alleviation programmes is the process of identification of poor by means of survey based on nine indicators of risk factors. The risk factors are: (1) poor quality of house (2) lack of access to drinking water (3) lack of access to sanitary latrines (4) number of illiterate adults in the family (5) single income households (6) number of individuals getting barely two meals a day or less (7) number of children below the age of five in the family (8) number of cased of alcoholism or drug addiction in the family and (9) Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe family (socially disadvantaged groups). The households with four out of nine factors are considered as poor.

The organizational structure of Kudumbashree has a three-tier system. At the lowest level there are Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs) of 15-40 adult women, one each from the identified risk families. Area Development Societies (ADS) are formed at the middle level by federating the NHGs within a ward of a local body. At the local body level, there are Community Development Societies (CDS), federating the ADS in the local body.

Government of India, National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD), and UNICEF support this programme. Two bank-linked self employment programmes of Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY), viz., Development of Women and Children in Urban Areas (DWCUA) and Urban
Self Employment Programme (USEP), provide Kudumbashree financial resources to encourage beneficiaries of the project to set up micro-enterprises.

A major function of the organization is to act as an informal bank for the poor. Women pool their savings at the weekly NHG meetings. The ADS is authorized to open bank accounts in banks to deposit the savings.

In the decentralised planning process Kudumbashree plays an important role. The NHGs prepare a micro plan based on the surveys and discussions. The ADS puts together the micro plans and prepare a mini plan for the ward of Panchayat/ Municipality. A Monitoring and Advisory Committee is formed under the chairmanship of the elected member of the village Panchayat or municipality representing that ward. The CDS is co-terminus with the village Panchayat or Municipality and prepares development plans at the local level by consolidating the plans prepared by the ADS.

vii) Ashraya – Programme for Destitutes

This programme is for providing all types of support for the destitute identified by the Kudumbashree. Destitute families are the ones which fulfill seven of the following nine criteria: 1) Kucha houses, 2) No access to safe drinking water, 3) No access to sanitary latrine, 4) Illiterate adult in the family, 5) Having not more than one earning member, 6) Getting barely two meals a day, 7) Presence of children below five years, 8) Alcoholic or drug addict in the family, and 9) Scheduled Caste of Scheduled Tribe Family. Ashraya is the first integrated programme for addressing issues affecting the poorest of the poor who generally are not covered by any of the designated poverty alleviation programmes and who live in the margins of economy and society and polity. An estimated 2 per cent of the population are reckoned to be under this category. The Kudumbasree Mission, through community-based organisations of the poor, had been entrusted with the task of destitute identification, rehabilitation and monitoring under its poverty eradication mission.

The Grama Panchayats, Municipal Councils and Municipal Corporations are providing a package of care services for destitute families under the Ashraya. This will cover food, health, education, water, etc. The care services are designed in such a manner as to dovetail part of the poverty eradication programmes, both centrally and State-sponsored, to meet the specific requirements of the hapless segments of society.

Now that you have studied the factors behind the development of rural-urban continuum in Kerala, answer the questions given in Check Your Progress-3.

Check your Progress-3

Note: a) Write your answer in about 50 words
b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit

1) Give a brief account of one social security programme.

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2) Give a brief account of Public Distribution System.

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3) What is Kudumbashree?

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4) How the Free Noon Meal Programme for Children is organised?

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4.6 LET US SUM UP

Understanding the process of development with special emphasis on spatial dimension is very important for policy making. It is generally believed that urbanisation and economic growth go hand-in-hand – one reinforcing the other. Indeed, cities are considered to be the ‘engines of growth’. However, unfettered growth of cities will usually end up with growing slums and poverty.

Public policies, aiming to providing social infrastructure and social security schemes are having an impact on the trends in urbanisation, particularly migration to rural people to the urban areas. Kerala is a model in this respect. The State of Kerala is an urban village having spatially dispersed settlement pattern with social infrastructure equitably distributed. Despite significant development in the area of human development there is no tendency towards the development of mega cities. But what is important to underline the fact that the entire area is having an urban nature, having around fifty per cent people living in urban areas. People are not migrating to cities; with the connectivity, they go to the city and come back and stay at the villages. The balanced growth approach has resulted in development of infrastructure both in rural and urban areas. As a result, the entire area of Kerala is having potential for further development without the evils related to urbanisation like slums. Kerala does not have any slums.
The pattern of development of Kerala may be described as a rural-urban continuum wherein one may not be able to distinguish between rural areas and urban areas. It may be described as *Rurban* (neither rural nor urban).

Looking at the factors behind the development of such a *Rurban* pattern, one can observe very targeted public policy towards the development of social infrastructure and social security measures. Social infrastructures like schools, anaganawadis, health centres, etc. are developed with government investments. Social security measures like pensions, free noon meals, housing schemes, etc. are introduced for reducing insecurity.

### 4.7 REFERENCES AND SELECTED READINGS


4.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Describe the Trends in Urbanisation in the State of Kerala?

The urbanization process in Kerala acquired a faster pace during the latter half of the last century. Now about 47.72 per cent of the population in Kerala live in urban areas as against the all India level of 31.16 per cent. Barring a few Panchayats in the hilly tracts and a few isolated areas, the entire state depicts the picture of an urban rural continuum.

2) Give a Brief Account of Rural-Urban Continuum of Kerala Model.?

An idiosyncratic feature of the development trends in Kerala is the absence of rural-urban polarisation. The public policy has been so targeted that the disparity between the rural and urban area is reduced to the minimum. These developments in Kerala – ‘rural-urban continuum’ – have resulted in the coinage of a new term ‘rurban’.

3) Describe rural-urban continuum?

Thus, the rural-urban continuum may be defined as a dynamic equilibrium wherein the development process involves the people in both rural and urban areas and the returns of development are also distributed to the people whose settlement pattern is distributed spatially. The diffusion of the fruits of development of the economy to all sections of the people may be seen as a change from the industrial urban centres to the rural countryside resulting in rural-urban continuum.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Define Human Development Index.

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary measure of human development. It measures the average achievements in three basic dimensions of human development. They are 1) a long and healthy life, as measured by life expectancy at birth 2) knowledge, as measured by the adult literacy rate and 3) a decent standard of living, as measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
2) Describe the role of social institutions and social capital in development.

Social development of a society depends, to a greater extent, on the development of social institutions and social capital. Social capital is the networking that helps create linkages which in turn forge rules, conventions and norms governing the development process. When a society undergoes change certain institutional factors, which has a spiralling effect on deepening democracy, may gain ground, if the unleashed energy of people deliberately consolidated by the intelligentsia.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Give a brief account of one social security programme.

Free Noon Meal Scheme is an important Social Security Programme. Under this scheme food is distributed free to the targeted groups. This can be organised with people’s participation. In Kerala a supplementary nutrition programme is implemented with the help of a large number of women’s welfare organisations called Mahila Samajams and other organisations in the State. Anganwadis and Balawadis have been set up with the help of these organisations. Young educated women in rural and urban areas are recruited as volunteers and receive only a monthly honorarium for their service.

2) Give a brief account of Public Distribution System.

Public distribution system is for providing food-grains, sugar, and other essential materials to the people, particularly poor. It is very popular in Kerala which began even before independence under the rule of maharajas. By 1965, the system was expanded to cover the entire households. In addition to PDS, the State Government intervenes in the market through procurement and distribution of essential commodities with a view to controlling prices.

3) What is Kudumbashree?

The poverty reduction programme in Kerala is known as ‘Kudumbashree’. It is a participatory poverty eradication programme based on community initiative using women’s agency with legal backing, implemented as part of Panchayati Raj System (both rural and urban). Since it is structurally and functionally related to local bodies leakages are minimized. Basically it is a women empowerment programme; but equal importance is given to delivery mechanism. Kudumbashree has an economic base of its own which guarantees autonomy and sustainability. The project is implemented through neighbourhood groups of poor women. It is through a survey, based on nine risk factors, the poor families are identified. It is envisaged that the service of different government and semi-government agencies are to be converged in the programme.