
UNIT 2 RURAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Structure

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2.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This unit aims at familiarizing you with major institutional features of Indian rural social structure like family, kinship, marriage, caste, class, tribe, religion, language, education and various occupational categories.

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- understand broad contours of rural & urban social structure,
- distinguish main features of Indian rural society,
- understand the roles of the institutional features in shaping the rural social structure, and
- identify the nature of the changes taken place in the social institutions of rural society.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit will acquaint you with important institutional features of rural social structure. It is important to understand and distinguish important features of rural social life. In this unit, efforts will be made to examine major institutions that comprise rural social structure and intricate network of relationships among them that binds them together. However, it is important to mention that no single explanation of social realities of rural society is possible because of enormous diversities in India in terms of regions, religions, castes, classes, linguistic groups, kinship and marriage. However, in spite of social diversities, Indian society remained united which is referred to as unity in diversity.

1) Rural Society

There are two divisions of Indian society. They are rural and urban. They are integrated but different from each other. They support each other but they are diverse in socio-economic and political aspects. With the passage of time, villages gradually acquire urban traits because of the processes of development and modernisation. The processes of change interconnect rural and urban areas. However, in practice the urban areas tend to dominate the rural areas because of better facilities and infrastructures in urban areas. Therefore, the emphasis is given in programmes of development to bring rural areas at par with urban areas. The rural society is constituted by the villages which are predominantly characterized by agricultural and allied activities. The villages are generally identified as small unit of settlement with maximum few hundred households and the lowest form of administrative unit, known as panchayats. The villages comprise of homestead land (abadi), cultivable land and small forest/grassland. The settlement pattern of the households of the villages is either of a compact nucleated type or of a dispersed type or a combination of the two. The predominant pattern in many parts of the country is the compact nucleated type household where houses are occupied by owners. It is quite common to find houses in the village, clustered according to kinship, caste or religious groups. In the villages, land is usually the primary source of production, distribution and consumption where predominant occupations are agriculture and allied occupations. The number of people engaged in non-agricultural pursuits is small. The Indian villages are basically agriculture based food producing units which produce not only for their own consumption but also for the urban societies which are non-food producing units. The villages have limited occupational specialization because of the demand for a wide variety of relatively unspecialized tasks. The village community has comparatively homogenous socio-economic features with simple technological and organizational pattern where the pace of change is slow.

2) Urban Society

The urban society is heterogeneous known for its diversity and complexity. It is large in size and high in terms of density of population with small family size and nuclear family norms. Cities are fast growing entities because of migration of population from rural to urban areas. It is dominated by relationships organized around class line, impersonal and practical goals. Such relationships are secondary in nature. The formal means of social control, such as, law, legislation, police, and court are needed in addition to the informal means for regulating the behaviour of the people in both rural and urban areas. The urban society is comparatively more mobile and open. It provides more chances for social mobility. There is widespread division of labour, skill and specialization based work related opportunities in pursuing occupations. Here, people are more class-conscious, progressive in outlook and

exposed to the modern developments in the fields of science and technology. Relatively better educational and health facilities are widespread in the cities. There are increasing democratization of organizations and institutions and the level of consciousness. To conclude, a distinction between rural and urban societies can be made on a number of variables like education, health, division of labour, specialized work, formal and informal relationship, family structure, caste and class features, etc. You can observe that the people migrant to cities along with their socio-cultural characteristic which are transformed, refined, modernized, developed and returned to villages. In this way modernization taking place in the cities are gradually percolating in the village.

2.3 RURAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE: MAJOR INSTITUTIONS

2.3.1 Family, Kinship and Marriage

Family

Family is a basic unit to organize a society. It is one of the most important social institutions, as well as, a social group, universally found in every society. Family broadly refers to the primary group comprising as a unit of husband, wife and their children. This concept gives emphasis on the following: (i) marriage between spouses, (ii) sibling relations between children and (iii) connectivity between the two through the genealogical links between parents and their children. However, the nature of familial structure is not uniform in all times, places and societies. It is flexible and subject to variations depending upon the character of the social structure in which it exists. However, we shall examine the definition given by Maciver. According to him, family is a group defined by the sex relationship sufficiently precise and enduring to provide for the procreation and upbringing of children. The sanction of procreation is given through marriage. Every family has a name and a common habitation. Some of the essential features which characterize the family are the following:

- It is a social group defined by sex relationship between partners in accordance with the form of marriage. It has social approval.
- It provides for procreation, upbringing and socialization of children
- It is generally characterized by common residence.
- It provides for the physical needs of its members and functions as an economic unit.
- It performs other functions like protective, recreational, cultural, etc. in varying degrees.
- It provides for an emotional bond of sustenance for its members and meets their psycho-social and emotional needs.
- It has a mode of decent and provides base for inheritance.
- It exercises informal social control over its members.

In addition, family as a social unit also plays a role in:

- Regulating labour requirements.
- Accumulating and distributing the material goods, produced or earned and,
- Defining the role and functions of each members of the unit according to the existing division of labour based on age, sex, customs and usage.

While the family is a universal institution, it is difficult to define it as there are many patterns of family. Moreover, it would be difficult to define the family in such a way as to include both the nuclear and the joint or the extended family. The most popular definition of a nuclear family refers it as a group consisting of a man, his wife and their unmarried children. The joint family is generally defined as the nuclear family plus all kins belonging to the side of husband and/or wife living in one homestead. The salient features of joint family are: commensality, common residence, joint ownership of property, cooperation and sentimental and ritual bonds.

Today, Indian rural, as well as, urban families are exposed to various forces of change. The transition that is taking place in the families has tremendous impact on the objective of family. The transition is brought about by various forces that have impact on the family composition, changes in the family and roles of family members. The details of the impact of the forces of changes in these aspects of the family are given below:

- i) **The family composition:** Every Indian family, on an average, has more than five members. The changes in the family size and composition may be the consequence of population growth & migration. We have to briefly examine the factors of population growth and the emerging problems affecting family composition in rural areas.

In our country major factor responsible for population growth is the type of production system which we have. In most of the village, big part of the land is owned by a few landlords who have the vast population of labourers in their control. The wages paid to the labourers by the landlords are meager and inadequate to meet the subsistence requirements of their family. In such a condition, family becomes vulnerable and the members of the family feel that if they have more children they can have more income to counter vulnerability. In addition to economic factor affecting the family size and composition of the rural labour force, the factors of lack of adequate and accessible health services gives little guarantee to the life of the children born in the family. To compensate the loss of children, the families are inclined to have many children. At the same time, several social and cultural factors, such as, the early marriage, the fertility status of women, illiteracy and the inadequate recreational facilities play vital roles in determining family composition. As a result of the increase in family size, many problems arises which leads to poverty, unemployment and cheap labour resulting into tensions in rural families.

- ii) **Changes in the Joint family:** The forces of changes have disintegrated the joint family system. There are many factors behind this type of

family transition. Economic factor is one of them. You are aware about the growing concern for the change of rural society into an industrial society which is one of the reasons for the growth of nuclear families. In the traditional rural families, occupation has been one of the factors binding the members to live in joint families but now the families are in a state of dilemma. The families which are engaged in the traditional occupations are also affected by the outcome of industrialisation. In their attempt to be benefited by modern industrial changes based on technology, the family deviates from its own traditional occupations and family structure.

The process of industrialisation and mechanization of agriculture has forced the rural workforce to migrate from rural to urban areas. Their skills and techniques in traditional occupation get adversely affected but the families which have access to modern ways of agricultural production prosper in their occupation enjoying a good standard of living. This widens the gap between the rich and the poor workforce in rural areas. The rural men, who have gone to urban areas in search of employment, bring back with them the remnants of urban life which get infiltrated into rural life, resulting into changes in the joint family system and formation of nuclear family in rural areas.

- iii) **Roles of family members:** The forces of change have drastically changed the roles of members of the rural families, especially the role of women. The rural women, who were mainly confined to household work are forced to work in the field at par with men. As a result, they do not get adequate time to devote to taking care of their children who get neglected. When the mother goes to field, the infants/babies are looked after by the elder ones, especially by the female children. In this case, while the infants receive less care from the mothers, the younger ones are deprived of even the informal education. The women also easily become vulnerable to various forms of illnesses and high morbidity. This is mainly because of their low income and low intake of calories which is not in proportion to the energy they spend for their hard labour. Thus, the change in the roles not only affects the harmonious relationship among the family members, it also limits the personal, as well as, economic development of each member to the family.

Kinship

One of the common features of a family is its kinship structure. Kinship is a vast web of relationship among families and their members. In every society there are certain general norms specifying what is familial and how familial relationships should be organized. These norms are established either through bond of blood or marriage. Hence, Kinship is a system of relationship which is formed, based on the bond of blood or marriage which binds people together. There are generally two types of Kinship, viz. affinal kinship or consanguineous kinship. The former is constituted by the bond of marriage and the latter is formed by bond of blood. Kinship is considered as an important factor in maintaining social unity because it provides a framework within which individual is assigned roles related to social, cultural, emotional, economic and political functions. It further provides

clarity in the context of acquired rights and obligations and in receiving community aids, etc. The unity and the integration of families depend primarily on the degree of relationship existing between parents and children and between the relatives.

Marriage

In India there is no greater event in a family than a wedding, dramatically evoking every possible social obligation, kinship bond, traditional value, impassioned sentiment and economic resource. In the arranging and conducting of weddings, the complex permutations of Indian social systems are best displayed.

Marriage is deemed essential for virtually everyone in India. For the individual, marriage is the great watershed in life, making the transition to adulthood. In this watershed, effective interest and effort play greater role than individual interest and efforts. In the family function, personal choice has little role. One gets the spouse without any personal preference. Arranging a marriage is a critical and collective responsibility for parents and other relatives of both bride and groom. Marriage alliances entail material and non-material resources, social allowances and realiances. The basic function of biological reproduction takes place only after the marriage is solemnized with public or social approval. Although, these days changes are taking place in the pattern of marriage where individual preferences are being given relatively more importance.

Marriage among Hindus

India is generally divided into two north and south with regard to Hindu kinship and marriage practices. There are various ethnic and tribal groups in northern, central and southern regions which follow a variety of marriage practices. The variations in these practices have been extensively described and analysed by social scientists like Irawati Karve, David G. Mandelbaum, Clarence Maloney and others.

In the northern region, a family generally seeks marriage alliances with people to whom it is not already linked by ties of blood. Marriage arrangements often involve looking for a new area. In the southern region a family seeks to strengthen existing kin ties through marriage, preferably with blood relatives. Kinship terminology reflects this basic pattern. In the north, every kinship term clearly indicates whether the person referred to is not a blood relation or a finial relation. All blood relatives are forbidden in the mate selection for marriage. In the south, there is no clear-cut distinction between the family of birth and the family of marriage. The marriage in the south, commonly involves a continuing exchange of daughters among the families. The married couples are ultimately blood kin. Dravidian terminology stresses the principle of relative age. All relatives are arranged, whether they are older or younger, without reference to generation. In the Indo-Gangetic plains, the rule of village exogamy is practiced. Under this rule marriages are contracted generally outside the village, sometimes even outside of large groups of villages, with members of the same caste beyond any traceable consanguine ties. In most of North India, the Hindu bride goes

to live with strangers in a home she has never visited. There, she is sequestered and veiled as an outsider who must learn to conform to new ways. Her natal family is often geographically distant, and her ties with her consanguine kin undergo attenuation to varying degrees.

In Central India, the basic North Indian pattern of marriage prevails, with some modifications. For example, in Madhya Pradesh, village exogamy is preferred, but marriages within a village are not uncommon. Marriages between caste-fellows in neighboring villages are frequent. Brother-sister exchange marriages are sometimes arranged, and daughters are often given in marriage to lineages where other daughters of their lineage or village have been married earlier.

In South India, in sharp contrast, marriages are preferred between cousins (especially cross-cousins, that is, the children of a brother and sister) and even between uncles and nieces (specially a man and his elder sister's daughter). The principle involved is to return a daughter to the family that gives a daughter as it expects one in return, if not now, then in the next generation. Such marriages are needed to bind people together in relatively small, tight-knit kin groups. A bride moves to her in-law's home, the home of her grandmother or aunt is often comfortable among these familiar faces. Her husband may well be the cousin she has known all her life that she would marry him.

Marriage among Muslims

Among Muslims of both the north and the south, marriage between cousins is encouraged, both cross-cousins (the children of a brother and sister) and parallel cousins (the children of two same-sex siblings). In the north, such cousins grow up calling each other "brother" and "sister", yet they may marry. Even when cousin marriage does not occur, spouses can often trace between them other kinship linkages.

Marriage among Tribals

Some tribal people of central India practice an interesting permutation of the southern pattern. Among the Murias of Bastar in southeastern Madhya Pradesh, as described by anthropologist Varrier Elwin, teenagers live together in a dormitory (ghotul), sharing life and love with one another for several blissful years. Ultimately, their parents arrange their marriages, usually with cross-cousins, and the delights of teenage romance are replaced with the serious responsibilities of adulthood. Among the Muria and Gond tribal groups, cross-cousin marriage is called "bringing back the milk", which means that the gift of a girl in one generation being returned by the gift of a girl in the next generation.

Almost all Indian children are raised with the expectation that their parents will arrange their marriages, but an increasing number of young people, especially among the college-educated, are finding their own spouses. So-called love marriages are deemed a slightly scandalous alternative to properly arranged marriages. Some young people convince their parents to "arrange" their marriages to people with whom they have fallen in love. The existence

of this old practice is still possible for South Indians and for Muslims who want to marry with a particular cousin of the appropriate marriageable category. In the upper classes, these semi-arranged love marriages increasingly occur between young people who are from castes of slightly different rank but who are educationally or professionally equal. If there are vast differences in the case with love marriages between two different religious groups and between different caste groups, parents are usually much less agreeable because of serious family disruptions.

Marriage and Dowry

In much part of India, especially in the north, a marriage establishes a structural opposition between the kin groups of the bride and groom-bride-givers and bride-takers. Within this relationship, bride-givers are considered inferior to bride-takers and are expected to give regular gifts to the bride-takers. The one-way flow of gifts begins at engagement and continues for a generation or two. The most dramatic aspect of this asymmetrical relationship is the giving of dowry.

In many communities throughout India, a dowry has traditionally been given by a bride's kin at the time of her marriage. In ancient times, dowry was considered a woman's property to the beloved daughter who had no claim on her natal family's real estate. The dowry typically includes portable valuables such as jewelry and household goods that bride could control throughout her life. However, over time, the larger proportion of dowry has come to consist of goods and cash payments that go straight into the hands of the groom's family. In the late twentieth century, throughout much of India, dowry payments have escalated, and a groom's parents sometimes insist on compensation for their son's higher education and even for his future earnings to which the bride will presumably have access. Sometime dowry demanded is quite oppressive, amounting to several years' salary in cash, as well as items such as motorcycles, air conditioners and fancy cars. Among some lower-status groups, large amount of dowry currently is replacing traditional bride-price payments. Even among Muslims, previously dowry custom did not exist but now dowry demands are increasing.

Dowry is becoming an increasingly enormous burden for the bride's family. Anti-dowry laws exist but are largely ignored, and a bride's treatment in her marital home is often affected by the value of her dowry. Increasingly frequent are horrible incidents particularly in urban areas, where a groom's family makes excessive demands from the bride's family even after marriage. If the demands are not met bride is continuously harassed and even murdered, typically by setting her clothes on fire and then making the case of murder. The groom is then free to remarry and collect further dowry. The male and female in-laws implicated in these murders are seldom punished. Indian state has initiated several measures at various levels to curb this evil social practice of dowry but it is still beyond control in the absence of strong public opinion and social awareness.

Check your Progress 1

- Note: i) Write your answer in the space provided below.
ii) Check your answer by reading the text once again.

1) What is kinship?

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2) What do you mean by dowry?

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2.3.2 Systems of Caste, Class & Tribe

The origin of caste in India can be traced back to Indo-Aryan civilization (2500 BC) when the people used certain words for certain groups. For example, the word 'varna' meaning colour was used to denote caste. Patanjali, the great grammarian wrote that the physical characteristics of Brahmin were fair skin and tawny hair. It is said that caste in India is a Brahmanic child of the Indo-Aryan culture, cradled in the land of the Ganges and Jamuna and thereafter transferred to other parts of the country.

In the Vedic period, the society was classified into four groups viz. Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras. This division was made on the basis of the functions performed by the members of the society. Today, the caste system in India exists not only in the form of 'varna' but also in the form of occupation that the communities are engaged in. It embraces not only a great majority of population of India but also forms the normal framework of society.

Caste can be defined as a group or a collection of groups of people having a common name and the membership based on birth alone. It imposes restrictions on its members in matters of social relationships (marriage, worship, custom, restrictions, feeding, etc.) and claims a common origin and assumes a common traditional occupation. This definition suggests that there are certain features that are common to the caste.

Among them, certain castes are known as dominant castes. A particular caste can have dominance not only by birth but also due by various other factors. For example, in a village there may be Brahmins but they may not be in a position to exert influence on the village community. At the same time, the members of other caste may enjoy a status of power by virtue of being

landlords or politicians or numerically strong. Having touched upon what we mean by 'caste system' we shall now look into the role it plays in the society.

Caste system has been performing a number of functions that are affecting the society, especially the rural society. It has been said that the caste structure constitutes the basis of rural society. Therefore, it is all the more important for us to examine how this system is shaping rural India and what are the factors which are operating within and outside the caste system. Following are the major functions of caste:

i) **Integration, as well as, division:** The very structure of caste system denotes that it is a source of integration as well as disintegration. The integration or cohesion exists among the members of the same caste as well as between different castes. There are certain practices that are common to a particular caste which do not permit the members of the caste to establish a relationship with the other caste, and thus, caste promotes division. For example, the inter-caste marriage is usually not encouraged. At the same time, marriage within the same caste is always welcomed. The cohesion also exists between different castes in a multi-caste village where different castes have to depend upon one another in various spheres of life.

By the very fact that the society is divided into different strata, we can easily understand that caste is a source of division. Moreover, the practice of untouchability is not completely rooted out from our country in spite of various legislative measures. Thus, the caste system still continues in rural communities, dividing and disturbing the co-existence and harmonious life of rural people.

ii) **Cultural & Educational mobility:** The caste system, despite playing certain negative roles, it also functions as a source of social mobility. The example of this may be found in the process of Sanskritiation, as noted by Srinivas, whereby, the lower castes seek to emulate the cultural styles, beliefs, rituals and ideologies of the upper castes and give up some of their own older modes of living to claim a higher status in the caste hierarchy. The People from the lower castes try to move up in the social ladder towards the upper castes by imitation.

However, this type of social mobility is not prevalent in all parts of our country. In the caste hierarchy, the members of a lower caste do enjoy the status of a higher caste by virtues of their acquired educational and occupational status. Thus, in the process of social mobility from within through imitation, the lower caste can attain higher status through their achievement of education from outside the caste structure.

iii) **Political Mobilization:** Caste plays the role of political mobilization. The caste sentiment is used and exploited in politics for political power at all the levels politics from local to national. In most of the rural areas, the candidates are nominated by political parties mostly on the basis of caste because it determines the voting behavior. The factor of caste as a dominant force determines the choice of the candidates. The dominant position of the upper castes limits freedom and right of the lower caste. Thus, the caste which is numerically, socio-economically, ritually, and

educationally dominant continues to control lower castes and occupy the political power. The caste identity plays political role and that identity has not changed. Thus, caste performs the functions of integration, as well as, division, cultural mobility, educational advancement and political mobilization.

2) Class

Caste and class are two basic social categories of social structure. They are greatly affected by the forces of change but they exist together. It is difficult to separate class and caste in Indian context because caste incorporates the elements of class and vice-versa. They are dynamic social categories. They co-exist and inseparable entities in the Indian social reality. They are hierarchical in character. The caste system has influenced the social life but social life is also influenced by class, economic & occupational categories. The relationship of caste and class is not a one-way-process.

3) Tribal

Tribe is an anthropological concept. Various authors have referred it as 'animistic', 'aboriginals' and 'adivasi'. Tribes have been viewed as semi-civilized people residing in hills and forests in groups, mostly engaged in agricultural activities. Tribe is generally defined as a social group usually living in a definite area, having their own dialect, cultural homogeneity and unified social organizations. The tribe as a social group usually comprises, of a number of sibling bonds, villages or other special groups with distinctive culture and a unified political organization. To conclude, a tribe is a territorial group with its own language, culture, religion and a unified social organization.

The tribal society has subsistence economy primarily agricultural production for their own consumption which does not generate surplus. There is no uniform pattern in the development and modernization of tribal communities. The Government of India Act 1935 has declared most of the areas inhabited by tribals as "Tribal Areas". After Independence these areas named as Scheduled Areas are included in the Schedule V and VI of the Constitution of India. Today, tribal communities living in different parts of the country have achieved different levels of socio-economic development. Despite varied cultural and socio-economic disparities, a tribe as a social entity continues to be a social reality which distinguishes it from general population. The Constitution of India has a number of provisions to safeguard the interests of tribes which prominently figure in the Schedule V and VI of the Constitution. Article 342 of Indian Constitution has enlisted tribal communities as Scheduled Tribes.

Check your Progress 2

Note: i) Write your answer in the space provided below.

ii) Check your answer by reading the text once again.

1) What are the important features of a tribe?

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2) What do you mean by caste system?

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2.4 RURAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE: RELIGIOUS, OCCUPATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL

Religious structure

India is the birthplace of four major religions, namely Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. History has witnessed that religion has always been an integral part of Indian culture. Religious diversity and religious tolerance both have acquired prominence in the country by law and custom. A vast majority of Indians associate themselves with religions. Census 2011 has identified Hinduism as majority religion with 80.5% of the population as Hindus but there are relatively & numerically smatter religious groups like Islam (13.4%), Christianity (2.3%), Sikhism (1.9%) and Jainism (0.4%). They are assimilated into Indian tradition followed by Indian people. The existence of diversity of religious belief systems in India is the consequence of various religions, assimilated and integrated into Indian culture. The ancient India is also the root of religious like Zoroastrianism and Judaism which have their followers in thousands only. India has the largest population the followers of Bahai faith anywhere in the world. Related to sanskriti Indian tradition, the notions of Karma, Dharma, spirituality renunciation, morality, divinity, yoga (meditation) indigenous medicine, etc. have received popularity in India and other countries. Several organizations like the Hare Krishna, Brahma Kumari are of Indian origin and have significant influence. The Constitution of India declares the right to freedom of religion as a fundamental right. Thus, Indian citizens are free to worship and propagate any religions or faith, subject to reasonable restrictions for the sake of morality, law and order. The Hinduism as a religion of Hindus in the most flexible and tolerant religion which has its influence on many religions, internal or external.

Occupational structure

In traditional rural society caste was important factor to determine the occupation of individual. The Jajmani is a know system of providing services to the society. It was a system of traditional occupational objectives. In rural society castes were economically interdependent on one another. The Jajmani system was based on durable relation between a landowning family and the landless families that supply them goods and services. In rural society other castes also existed but they were not part of Jajmania system. These castes were intermediary castes. The major occupations of these castes were agriculture and allied occupations.

Jajmania system has witness serious transformation because of several structural changes in the form of land reforms and various developmental plans and programmes initiated by the governmental and non-governmental organizations. In modern India individual is free to choose any occupation. Major occupations in rural society are agriculture and allied occupational

Educational Structure

Education is treated as one of the institutions of rural social structure. It is a means through which beliefs, knowledge and skills are transmitted from one generation to another. While in primitive societies these functions were carried out mainly through family and kinship structures, in modern societies it is done through formal educational institutions. Education is a process to shape the development of the younger generation in accordance with the social ideals of Indian culture and tradition. Education promotes formal training at the institutional sites of schools, colleges and universities. Like other social institutions, education also serves as a means for inculcating social values. Now we will discuss some of the functions of educational institutions.

- i) **Cultural preservation:** Our culture is preserved through education and the concept of 'culture', comprises components like beliefs, values, ideologies, knowledge, traditions, customs, language and technology. They contribute significantly in the institutional analysis of society. The preservation of cultural practices play significant role in the development of any society. It is necessary not only to know the past, but also to evolve certain new ways and methods of progress in our society. It can at least be achieved through education. It is education which passed our cultured traditions from one generation to the other. Today in the modern societies the institution of education impart an increasing proportion of information and knowledge
- ii) **Socialisation:** Socialisation is the process by which individuals internalize value system of the society. Education is considered to be one of the best agencies of socialization. It is said that no individual can be called a person if he is not socialized. Thus, socialization is a process by which the human beings are shaped into social beings because they learn social ways of acting and feeling. Socialization process is complex process of learning through interaction. Through this process, the individuals learn habits, skills, beliefs, values and entire cultural heritage. This is necessary for their effective participation in social life. It is said

that without socialization, the society cannot continue to exist and its culture would not survive.

iii) Social status and reform: It is through education, an individual achieves social status in the society. That social status brings respect, prestige and influence for the individual. This status is achieved through education irrespective of caste or religion. Education not only gives a status to persons in a society but also serves as a vehicle for social change and reform. The ill-effects of social evils can be controlled through education. Education is used as a tool for development and reform. The development of education benefits all the sections of the society. It promotes social inclusivity and equitable social-economic development.

Therefore in our country, Articles 41 and 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy are directly related to education. The new education policy states that education is a unique investment in the present and in the future because education is fundamental source of development. The objectives of the universalisation of education have to be achieved in order to ensure equal educational opportunities. Education is still largely unrelated to national needs and aspirations in spite of all the expansion achieved. Hence, if we believe that education is instrumental to development, educational inequality must be eradicated. Any attempt to create an integrated nation with wide participation of the people, assumes that more widespread literacy and education should be used as a major agency for promoting critical social awareness.

2.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit efforts have been made to acquaint you with important features of social structure of rural society. This unit has highlighted key features of social structure which have been divided into four parts namely: i) Rural and urban, ii) Caste, class and tribes, iii) Family marriage and kinship and iv) religious, occupational, educational, structures. In each part due emphasis has been given on main features and the changes taken place. This, the unit has focused on various aspects of rural society in India.

2.6 KEY WORDS

Abadi Land	:	Homestead Land in the village.
Aboriginal	:	Indigenous people.
Animistic	:	Believer in the existence of individual spirits that inhabit natural objects and phenomena.
Tribe	:	A territorial group with its own culture, language, religion and a unified social organization.
Nuclear Family	:	A group consisting of a man, his wife and their unmarried children.
Kinship	:	A system of relationship based on bond of blood or marriage which binds people together.

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