



**RURAL SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Discipline of Rural Development  
School of Continuing Education  
Indira Gandhi National Open University**

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April, 2023

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ISBN-

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*Further Information on the Indira Gandhi National Open University courses may be obtained from the University's Office and Maidan Garhi, New Delhi-110068*

Printed and Published on behalf of Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, by Registrar, MPDD, IGNOU, New Delhi

Laser Composed by: M/s. Tessa Media & Computers, C-206, Shaheen Bagh, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi



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**BLOCK 1**  
**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

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# BLOCK 1 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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## Introduction

Based on Western conception, 'development' was for long envisaged merely as economic development, measured by GDP. Through encounters with non-Western societies in the post-World War II era it has evolved into a comprehensive, holistic, dynamic and multi-dimensional concept, referring to expected changes not only in economic arena but also in political and social arenas. In the process of its evolution, the realization that development (economic or political) has inherent social characteristics to be dealt finally gave rise to social development which assumes a greater significance in rural society where rather ascriptive, traditional and conservative life deeply influences economic and political structures and processes and general attitude. Theoretically social development can be explained in two ways: First, modernization of developing societies based on the model of Western/developed societies and, second, underdevelopment of developing societies through their dependency on and exploitation by the developed societies. Caused and shaped by multiple factors like economic, social, cultural, political and psychological it manifests through the changes taking place over time in people's basic conditions such as health, education, employment, social security, etc. Components of these conditions are used as indicators to measure it. Social policy and social security have emerged as important instruments especially for rural social development. Essential qualities of 'social' issues and activities, levels of the qualities and their historical development help us understand the nature of social development while a wide range of social issues, agencies and welfare measures constitute its scope, today. This Block therefore attempts conceptual, theoretical and contextual understanding of social development along with its factors and indicators, and its instruments-social policy and social security instruments, as well as the nature and scope of rural social development.



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# UNIT 1 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: CONCEPTS AND THEORIES

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## Contents

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Conceptualizing Social Development
- 1.3 Social Development: Theoretical Formulations
- 1.4 Understanding Social Development: Approaches and Definitions
- 1.5 Characteristics and Dimensions of Social Development
- 1.6 Social Development: Facilitators and Challenges
- 1.7 Social Development in the Indian Context
- 1.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.9 Key Words
- 1.10 Suggested Readings

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## 1.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- define social development;
- understand different approaches to the study of social development;
- delineate characteristics of social development; and
- identify challenges to social development talk about social development in the Indian context.

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

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*“Social development is equality of social opportunities”- Amartya Sen, 1995 (cited in Tamilnadu Social Development Report 2000, 8).*

In contemporary time development is seen as an inescapable goal for developing nations as they are striving to catch up with developed nations. The concept of development has many connotations; its meaning varies across space and time. For long, development was seen in the form of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross National Product (GNP). However, the international institutions like United Nations and other organisations acknowledge that social development is an indispensable aspect of the holistic concept of development and it acts as the bedrock to the overall development of an individual and society at large. In this unit, our task is to understand what social development is all about. So conceptual and theoretical understanding of social development is required here. We shall also look into characteristics and various dimensions of social development as well as discuss what facilitates or hampers social development in a society. Towards the end, understanding of social development is attempted in the

context of India. As social development locates at the juncture of continuity and change in society continuity and change are comprehended as integral aspects of social development. Let us start with conceptualisation of social development.

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## 1.2 CONCEPTUALIZING ‘SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT’

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Development is understood in various ways. Gunnar Myrdal (1974) says, “By development I mean the movement upward of the entire social system, and I believe this is the only logically tenable definition. This social system encloses, besides the so-called economic factors, all non-economic factors, including all sorts of consumption by various groups of people; consumptions provided collectively; educational and health facilities and levels; the distribution of power in society; and more generally economic, social, and political stratification; broadly speaking institutions and attitudes to which we must add as an exogenous set of factors induced policy measures applied in order to change one or several of these endogenous factors” (Myrdal 1974, 729).

The World Summit for Social Development held at Copenhagen in March, 1995, recognized that “in countries throughout the world, the expansion of prosperity for some is unfortunately accompanied by an expansion of unspeakable poverty for others.” It defined social development in terms of three basic criteria; namely, poverty eradication, employment generation and social harmony. It situates people at the centre of development and holds that social development and social justice are indispensable to sustain peace and harmony (Report of the World Summit for Social Development 1995, 2).

Paiva (1977, 329) mentions three essential pre-requisites to achieve social development. Of these, the first one relates to political will and it emphasises the commitment of the government of any country to the objectives of social development. The second requirement is of ideology. Development, as Paiva points out, “can only gather meaning, pace, and momentum where ideology serves as a driving force toward the accomplishment of worthwhile national purposes. Leadership, national policy, plan and involvement of people at all levels contribute to this ideological purpose”. The third pre-requisite is the cooperation required in achieving development objectives. Cooperation helps in strengthening the overall relationships that humankind share and it is indispensable to provide the benefits of development to all. L.T. Hobhouse too writes that social development rests on the element of cooperation that serves mutual needs (1938, 87). The United Nations General Assembly Resolution, No. 41/128 adopted on December 4, 1986, states that development is a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process that aims towards constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population. The UN declaration on the Right to Development also acknowledges that the “right to development is an inalienable human right, by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political

development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realised (Article 1, Declaration on the Right to Development).

Social development can also be understood as an alternative to the unified approach to development as it connotes a human sense to the idea of development. The unified approach to social development as imparted by the United Nations is summarized here:

- i) No one should remain outside the scope of social development.
- ii) Social development emphasises that all the sections of the population shall become participants in the development process giving effect to structural change.
- iii) Social development seeks to minimise disparity and calls for egalitarian society where wealth and income are distributed by being mindful of the principle of equity.
- iv) Development of human potential is considered one of the key aspects of social development process. Employment opportunities, skill development, training in vocational courses and other technical and non-technical trainings shall help in advancement and realisation of human potential, making them agents of change.

Relationship between social development and economic development is well encapsulated by M.S. Gore (1985). He says that the concept of social development is inclusive of economic development but differs from it in the sense that it emphasises development of the society in totality, i.e., in its all aspects—economic, political, social and cultural. Here, in the broader sense of the term the key point about social development is its all-encompassing nature. In restrictive sense, social development shall relate to the welfare of society and humans in general.

Thus, 'social development' has a broader sense wherein it aims to maximise the extent of development and to widen its ambit by ensuring the well-being of all. For this, inter-systemic integration between economic and social development, or unified approach to development, becomes essential. However, Paiva cautions that "the economy will dictate some selectivity in the balance of social-economic components essential for a unified approach" (1977, 330).

Furthermore, structural change is also imperative to bring about social development. It is well evident that there is little relation between the economic growth of a country, as measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and the well-being of its masses. Structural changes help in creating long term changes and act as checks on the emerging pockets of power in the society. Few examples of such structural change may include reforms in the distribution of land, access to and allocation of available resources and constitutional/ legal checks on operation of caste, among others. Another important step towards social development is institutional development. Institutions themselves evolve over time and they act as actors of social change and development. Lastly, as social development is a story of

continuity and change, the role of innovation becomes extremely crucial as it prevents the society from nearing obsolescence (Paiva 1977, 331). Therefore, a constant evaluation of policies also becomes essential on the part of multiple stake-holders in achieving social development.

Briefly, one can better understand 'social development' by knowing its relationship with 'development'. 'Development' is a comprehensive, multi-dimensional and inclusive process of constant improvement in the well-being of all people in their life, consisting of various inter-related dimensions such as economic, social, cultural and political, which is accomplished by various institutions (economic, social, cultural and political) and individual attitudes in a society as well as policy measures undertaken with a view to change the institutional structures and individual orientations for their efficiency. Though 'development' basically aims to a holistic improvement in people's well-being, it often occurs in an imbalanced manner with overemphasis on one of the dimensions at the cost of others. Hence, it leads to a partial/restricted development, labelled specifically after the overemphasised dimension like economic development, social development, cultural development and political development. In restricted sense, economic development (GDP), social development (social welfare), cultural development (living style) and political development (democracy) will each have little relationship with the well-being of people and, in this sense, each one of these development variants is largely found devoid of a human sense which also contributes to making of the holistic concept of 'development'. In a way, each variant separately fails to accomplish the basic goal of development, i.e., all-encompassing well-being of all people. This failure owes to their partial/ discrete approach that each one of them adopts at the cost of a unified approach to the well-being as humans have a unified life, not a compartmentalised/ divided one.

However, in social sciences the concept of 'social development' has assumed a broader sense wherein it seeks integration of development in economic, social, cultural and political dimensions of all people in society. It believes that without a fair integration of these dimensions and its equal reach to all human beings/sections of people there is no possibility of development in true sense, i.e., holistic development (with justice). In this broader sense, social development provides both unified approach to and human sense of 'development' and it refers to a holistic and inclusive process of improvement in the well-being of people's all sections equitably (with a focus on social justice) and in all aspects/dimensions of their life (with a holistic view of human life). Thus, social development seeks two goals together; namely, holistic/all-embracing development (structural social change in integral manner) and equitability/reduction of disparity in development (change for egalitarian society). It is per se 'development' without dominance of economic or political or other kind of development and with orientation to minimise disparity in society. It is a process of uninhibited realisation of human potential through employment opportunities, skill development, training in vocational courses, other technical and non-technical training, poverty eradication, minimum level of consumption, health and nutrition, basic education, availability of shelter, political

participation and awakening, political freedom, social security, peace and social harmony and so on. Accomplishment of social development depends on three pre-requisites in a society; namely, political will, ideology and leadership. Without adequate presence of these three conditions a society cannot realise social development.

This conceptualisation of social development leads us further to its theoretical formulations in the next section. Before we proceed further let us check your progress.

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### **1.3 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: THEORETICAL FORMULATIONS**

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Social development that emerged as a distinctive and specialised sub-field of development studies in the era of 1950s (Midgley 1995) has however, its origin traceable in the development activities and programmes being undertaken locally in the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa continents like India, called developing countries, earlier the third world. Midgley informs that by the 1960s increase in the intensity of such development initiatives was visible. For these countries it was widely acknowledged that economic development must accompany social development. The colonial history and the associated socio-economic exploitation in these countries made it necessary for the state to play a crucial role in developmental planning. While understanding the Indian State's role in the post-colonial context and developmental planning, Partha Chatterjee (2000) argues that "a developmental state operating within the framework of representative politics would necessarily require the state to assume the role of the central allocator if it has to legitimise its authority in the political domain". Therefore, social development must accompany economic development as the ultimate objective of development is to achieve welfare of all. Besides these circumstances, the idea of social development got accentuated further in the post-second world war context where Japan and European countries had a recovery from the destruction and economic collapse caused by the war. Social development, thus, has continuously evolved and as such it is an ongoing process.

James Midgley (1995, 71) divides the process of social development into three stages: "First, relates to the pre-existing social situation which social development seeks to change. Second, relates to the social development process itself. Finally, there is the end-state or goal which the social development process seeks to attain".

For a better comprehension of social development, we must look at the theoretical formulations of development. The two most predominant theoretical paradigms of development are modernisation theory and dependency theory. Modernisation theory came into the picture at the end of the second world-war wherein the United States emerged as one of the two superpowers. Also, Soviet Union, the other superpower, was expanding the sphere of its influence. Another important event in this context was decolonisation of the countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, wherein

the newly independent and ‘underdeveloped’ and ‘developing’ states had an insurmountable task of pursuing development while protecting their hard-won independence and sovereignty.

For modernisation theorists modern societies are more productive than non-modern ones. Smelser, as noted by So (1990), held that modern societies have undergone the process of structural differentiation wherein a complex structure that performed multiple functions is divided into many specialised structures, each of which performed just one function. Family can be taken as an example of this structural change in modern societies. Family as institution has undergone a major change in its traditional role. It has become nuclear and smaller unit where its earlier functions have been taken over by other institutions of society (So 1990, 26). W.W. Rostow expounded the theory of five stages of modernisation. These stages include traditional society, precondition for takeoff, the takeoff process, the drive to maturity and the high mass consumption society. The aid extended by United States to the developing countries in the form of Marshall Plan and the Alliance for Progress in Latin America had been inspired by Rostow’s model of modernisation. Therefore, we must know that modernisation is a phased, homogenizing Europeanisation (or Americanisation), irreversible, lengthy and progressive process (ibid, 33).

Dependency theory emerged in the 1950s as a result of the combination of the ideas from the neo-Marxist theory and Keynes’ economic theory. Andre Gunder Frank (1967) said, “Underdevelopment was a condition characterised by an ongoing process of retrogression”. Frank and other social scientists such as Walter Rodney (1972) articulated the Neo-Marxist theory of dependency which claims that “the continued exploitation of the developing countries by the rich industrial nations was causing the underdeveloped regions to experience more underdevelopment” (Midgley 1995, 73).

These two important paradigms of development highlighted ‘distorted development’ amidst the existing disparities between different societies. James Midgley says that distorted development connotes “the way economic development without concomitant social development creates a severe imbalance between economic and social prosperity. The problem in most countries is not that there has been no economic development, but rather that economic development has not been accompanied by improvements in social well-being for the population as a whole” (ibid).

Achieving the well-being of the population and making development a holistic endeavour for all constitute the essence of social development. However, it must be known that under the garb of modernisation and development theory the western ideals have also been promoted to a wider extent. This poses a challenge to the distinctiveness of the non-western developing societies. Therefore, as Midgley (2014) emphasises, there is a need to engage with the non-western conceptions of social development and give wider scope to the local cultural conditions, making development a truly inclusive process.

In brief, social development is a concept that emerged in the post-second world war context of the newly independent nations where the modernisation model of development created a 'distorted development' reflecting imbalance between economic prosperity and social well-being in the form of the existing disparities between as well as within nations. The western model of modernisation is conceived in terms of economic development or Gross Domestic Product which, as believed, implies social development as well. As such, this model considers social development entailing economic development. In the given scenario the developing nations increasingly depended on the developed nations which exploited them and caused their dependency as well as underdevelopment rather than development. This situation highlighted by the dependency theory is basically a critique of the modernisation theory. The problem of the western model with the non-western nations in Asia and Africa is that economic development in these nations did not accompany social development. The social distinction of the non-western societies with the western developed societies has been not recognized. So, it needed to take into account the non-western conceptions of social development was felt in order to give wider scope to the local cultural conditions so as to make development a truly inclusive process.

This difference between the western and the non-western societies is quite apparent in the process of social development that, as James Midgley highlights, passes through three stages: First, a pre-existing social situation targeted for change; second, the social development process itself and, finally, the end-state of the process.

After having the phenomenon of social development formulated theoretically we can take up various approaches used to understand and define social development. Before we proceed further let us check your progress.

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## 1.4 UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: APPROACHES AND DEFINITIONS

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We have learnt that social development is multidimensional. Owing to this, it can be approached/defined variously. So, major approaches are being summarized here. In his recent work Midgley (2014, 13) defined social development as "a process of planned social change designed to promote the well-being of the population as a whole within the context of a dynamic multifaceted development process". Here, he conceives that social development takes place in the context of a dynamic multifaceted process of development and so it is a process of planned social change- an inclusive strategy to promote the well-being of all sections of people. He has also highlighted various approaches to social development. Midgley writes that "Myrdal made a major contribution to articulating a **statist approach** to social development exemplified by what was called the 'unified socio-economic planning' approach" (ibid, 8). The statist approach to social development as carried out through social planning has been a top-down approach. Nevertheless, with the help of bureaucracy the state has also

played a crucial role in implementing community development programmes that help increase participation of people in development process.

Another approach that defines social development from the **liberal economy perspective** stresses importance of market to achieve social development and seeks to achieve it by integrating needy people into market-based economic activities. This approach finds space in the works of de Soto (1989, 2000), Lal (1983, 2006) and Prahalad (2005)” (*ibid*, 12).

Pawar’s book *Social and Community Development Practice* (2014) that brings various scholarly definitions of social development under three broad headings and enunciates distinctive approaches/perspectives. Some of these approaches to social development are discussed below.

### 1) **Social development as systematic planning in conjunction with/inclusive of economic development**

Midgley (1995, 25) defines social development **in conjunction with economic development**, as a “process of planned social change designed to promote the well-being of the population as a whole in conjunction with a dynamic process of economic development”. Also, social development can be seen as **inclusive of economic development** but it differs from the latter in the sense that it emphasises development of the society in totality consisting of economic, political, social and cultural aspects (Gore 1973). Thus, social development is a planned process of promoting well-being of all sections in society in conjunction with or inclusive of economic development.

### 2) **Social development as structural change**

As a process of **structural change**, social development, Pathak (1987) says, is known to be a comprehensive concept that implies major structural changes – political, economic, social and cultural- introduced as part of a deliberate action to transform the society. Moreover, development should be perceived as a multidimensional process involving re-organisation and reorientation of an entire economic and social system that involves radical changes in institutional, social and administrative structures as well as in popular attitudes and even customs and beliefs (Todaro 1997, 69). Briefly, social development is a process involving change in social institutions and individual attitudes in order to transform the society as a whole into an egalitarian one.

An interesting structural view of social development is being taken with the emergence of a perspective called **New Social Development (NSD)**. NSD is a post-material process of human-societal transformation that seeks to build identities of people, communities and nations. Universalisation of equity and justice, on the one hand, and annihilation of violence, war and disease, on the other, constitute NSD’s substance, contours and contents (Mohan 2010). It is a strategy of social reconstruction that employs different models and modalities of social practice suited to ideological and other situational heterogeneity in a given society. It makes a critique of the duality of development model, centralised (top-down) and decentralised (bottom-up), and explores new horizons to suggest a third model in light of new realities of



the post-American world constituted by multiplicity of state and non-state actors.

### 3) Social development as the humane aspect of development

Social development holds crucial position as it emphasises the humane aspect of development. Paiva points out two integrated dimensions of the process of social development. The first relates to “the capacity of people to work continuously for their welfare and that of society; the second is the alternation or development of a society’s institutions so that human needs are met at all levels, especially at the lowest level, through a process of improving the relationships between people and social-economic institutions” (Paiva, 1982).

Aspalter and Singh (2008) define social development as ‘planned and directed change that enables people to achieve greater happiness, satisfaction and a peaceful life’ (Midgley 2014, 6).

Social development is also viewed as a participatory process of planned social change designed to promote the well-being of the people, which, as such, offers an effective response to the innate needs and aspirations of the whole population for the enhancement of their quality of life (Cox, Gamlath, & Pawar, 1997).

Sharma (1993), encapsulates the essence of social development by highlighting the concealed dimensions of social development. “The normative dimension is concerned with the set of norms and values, their upgrading, their vigour and their efficacy. The integrative dimension implies strengthening of social bonds and human fraternity. Sharma defines “social development as normative and integrative upgrading of the social order.” In the Indian context he identifies its three conceptions: “social development as increase in social well-being; social development as transformation in egalitarian direction and social development as normative and integrative upgrading of social order.” Sharma thus conceives of social development as improvement in two of the key factors (normative and integrative) of societal development (Baiju 2007, 6).

L.T. Hobhouse (1938, 75) warns that “false and partial views of social development are formed by taking persons apart from the society which they form, or society apart from the persons who form it”.

Succinctly, social development stands for a broader process of development that encompasses the economic aspect, the structural change approach and finally the human aspect within its ambit. It is an integral process of capacity enhancement of individuals and reorientation of institutions for welfare/ well-being of all people in the society.

So far, we have traversed through various features of social development. Now, let essential characteristics and main dimensions/ aspects of social development be discussed. Before proceeding to that discussion let me check your progress.

---

## 1.5 CHARACTERISTICS AND DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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Social development is a complex phenomenon that has evolved over decades through various factors involving continuity and change. Understanding of characteristics and dimensions of social development will help us comprehend its scope.

James Midgley has discussed important characteristics of social development in his two seminal works, *Social Development: the Development Perspective in Social Welfare* (1995) and *Social Development: Theory and Practice* (2014). These are as follows:

- Social development is viewed as a process aiming to bring about clusters of positive change.
- Social development is progressive as it seeks to improve the existing social conditions. It is associated with social change/ transformation of society positively through sets of programmes, measures and social policies.
- Social development is not a simple process, given the fact that it aims to transform various facets of society. Therefore, this process is multifaceted, involving various dimensions.
- Fulfillment of the social development goals requires intervention from external human agents or governmental and/or non-governmental organisations. Organised movements and efforts to consolidate actions help bring about social development.
- Social welfare of all people is the ultimate goal of social development. For its advocates, until and unless social well-being is guaranteed to people development remains incomplete. The objective of holistic development can be met only when the gains of economic development are utilised for well-being of all sections in the population.
- Social development is also productive as it adds positively to economic development of society.
- Social development is universal in its outlook as its goal is to promote well-being of all people and it is directed towards eliminating hindrances that prevent participation of all people in the development process.

These important characteristics make it clear to us that social development stands for progressive change that entails better social circumstances. Here, let us delineate the most general and key characteristics of social development as progressive change.

- Social development stands for providing better social conditions for human life, protecting the dignity of the people and entail social justice.

- Social development is primarily a development that focuses on the well-being of people and fulfilling basic human needs is essential to achieve it.
- Social development complements economic development as its aim is to achieve holistic development.
- Social development aims at securing social justice and therefore advocates the principle of distributive justice in society by guaranteeing equal distribution of resources that further boosts social capital.
- Social development essentially supports the idea of egalitarian society, aiming at equality of all individuals and preserving the right of equality in access to and in allocation of resources and opportunity to all the members of the society.
- Social development is a means for holistic development as it seeks to increase the capability of individuals so that they can themselves determine their future. In this sense, it views individuals acting as agents of social change.
- Its larger aim is to secure social welfare for all.

Based on these characteristic/ defining features we can extract main dimensions/ aspects of social development. Social development seeks to make development inclusive. It therefore argues for welfare of all members of the society. Its main dimension is fulfilment of basic needs of an individual with proper access to food, home and clothing. However, as the society moves forward on the trajectory of development its needs of a decent life also change. In contemporary time, access to affordable and quality education, water and sanitation, public health services, cheap public transport and electricity facilities are essential for a decent living. Furthermore, securing nutritious diet to children and adolescents along with their physical and mental well-being becomes crucial for social development.

A sense of moral responsibility is also associated with dimensions of social development as it attempts to instil a moral fervour in human beings that aims to give back to the society and also to enhance the character of the members of the society. In a society where gains of economic development are limited to a few people, distinctions are seen to have emerged in the form of different classes and sub-classes, rural-urban lifestyle, economic disparity and so on. Social development argues for an inclusive society by reducing the gap of inequality among members of society. It calls for equality of opportunity in all walks of life, ensuring the idea of holistic development.

It also aims to enhance the creative and cultural ethos of society by integrating people closely with their environment and surroundings. At the ecological front, for long economic development has excessively focused on resource extraction without assessing the ecological impact of 'development'. However, social development connotes the idea of harmonising the economic aspect of development with the ecological dimension. For fulfilling needs and bringing change for betterment in all people's life, economic, social, cultural

and political institutions and individual attitudes play an instrumental role. They also need change through policy measures to induce innovation in their structures and functioning.

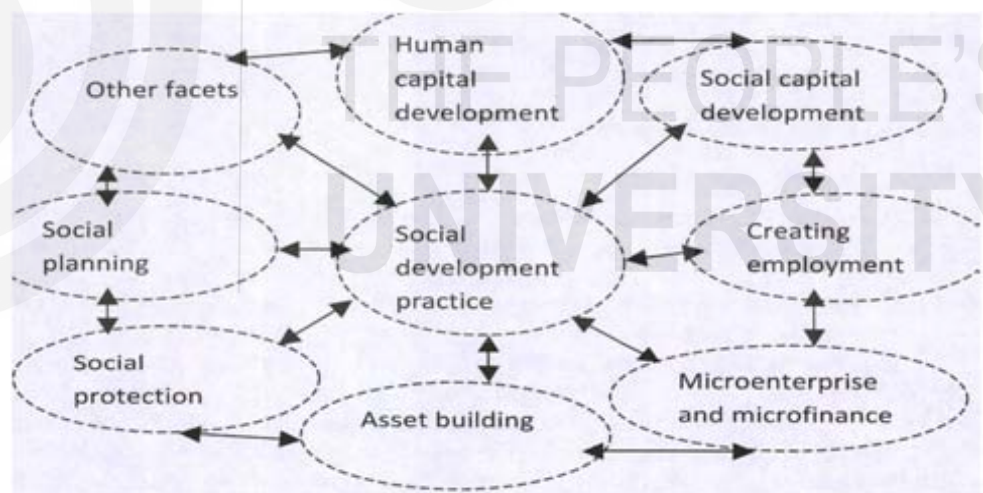
Therefore, social development with its social, economic, psychological, cultural, moral, political and ecological dimensions seeks to ameliorate the overall living conditions. It seeks to balance the material gains of development with its non-material implications on society. Indeed, social development is a means to attain holistic development rather than seeing development as an end. Being a complex process social development is not something that occurs smoothly. Practically there are factors that facilitate it as well as factors that challenge it. Let us now discuss facilitators and challenges or hindrances of social development.

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## 1.6 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: FACILITATORS AND CHALLENGES

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Social development has various facets, representing it in real life, and its accomplishment is not always fully smooth in case of all facets. It is because there exist both kinds of factors, facilitating and hindering it. Before we discuss such facilitators and hindrances/ challenges let us see its various facets as given in the following chart:



Source: Facets of social development practice (Pawar 2014, 96).

As seen in the preceding section, social development is a process wherein multiple events act as its factors / catalysts. Some of them are like spread of education and increased public awareness, firm commitment of the political leadership while others are like furthering the cause of social well-being, promoting equality among different sections in society, creating a level playing field by providing equal opportunity to all, protecting basic human rights of individual and strengthening the social fabric by making development inclusive of all people. A positive change or progressive behaviour of society helps the process of social development. With more people becoming aware of their surroundings and with increase in education,

a cultural change also becomes visible in society. Over a period of time the outlook of people undergoes a change that helps in social development.

Social development is challenged by a widespread ignorance and illiteracy among people. Further, lack of political will to bring about a positive change further decelerates its pace. Distinctions based on caste, class, linguistic and ethnic factors, gender discrimination, place of origin and so on in the society hinder social development when they come in the way of people's betterment and prevent their participation in the development process. Certain social stereotypes and prejudices on the part of the dominant groups and conservative behaviour in the society also hinder the process of social development that aims to alter the lives of people for better.

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## 1.7 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

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Social development has a great relevance for India which is the epitome of unity in diversity. More importantly, India being an ancient civilisation the traditions and customs that nurtured this land have passed on to several generations, evolving gradually. As a modern nation-state, India is also a vibrant and largest democracy in the world. Social development in India is, thus, not at all a new phenomenon. Rather, its roots are traceable to India's struggle for independence. Social reforms initiated by leaders like Rammohan Roy, Gokhale, Gandhi, Nehru, Ambedkar, Syed Ahmad Khan, among others, of that time were their attempts to bring positive social change in the society.

Mahatma Gandhi's most crucial contribution, his initiative of constructive programme, was the mantra of socio-economic development. Constructive work included programmes like promoting Khadi in Indian villages, emphasis on cottage industries, harmonious relations between Hindus and Muslims, social reform against the practice of untouchability and boycott of foreign goods. Gandhiji held that "the future of India lies in its villages". So he stressed on village reconstruction and initiated social reforms at the ground level that widened the scope of a long term change in the society (Rath, 2012).

India's socio-economic development was in consonance with Gandhiji's *talisman* that became a guiding light for resolving the biggest dilemmas. The *Talisman* suggests to "recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man (person) whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him/ her? Will s/he gain anything by it? Will it restore him/ her to a control over his/ her own life and destiny? In other words, "will it lead to *swaraj* for the hungry and spiritually starving millions?" (Pyarelal 1958, 65). Pt. Nehru in his address to the Indian Constituent Assembly on the eve of the Independence said: "The service of India means the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity". However, "in spite of the declaration in his speech of this comprehensive objective of development, the development strategy followed by India and most other developing countries at that time defined

development in terms of growth in material output” (Chandra 2004, ix). Social development was seen only as an embellishment to the economic growth. It was in the late 1960s and the early 1970s that social development was carved out as a distinct niche in the planning and developmental process.

Another stimulus to the social development process came as Amartya Sen’s (2001) seminal contribution to welfare economics that reinstated the humane and ethical considerations to the scope of economic challenges. Human, is the most important agent towards bringing positive changes. Development is the enhancement of individual’s capabilities that makes people able to live the life they desire and, therefore, expansion of their choices is a salient prerequisite of development. The conception of development as freedom led to widen the scope of development altogether, to which social development became an indispensable part.

Social development was infused with new vigour in India’s five-year plans. In contemporary time, it includes expansion of public health facilities, fulfilling food and nutrition security, poverty alleviation, family planning and population control, skill development, pursuing sustainable development, promotion of spirit of fraternity and acting against social ills like child labour, crime against women and protection of minorities and their rights. In its 2018 report, *Strategy for New India @ 75*, India’s official think tank, NITI Aayog, underscores that “development must become a mass movement, in which every Indian recognises her role and also experiences the tangible benefits accruing to her in the form of better ease of living.

Though discourses on social development have lately geared up, India still needs to speed up towards the goals of social development. At the time of its journey started to achieve growth under the mixed economy policy India emphasised infrastructure-building and industrial expansion, expecting a gradual trickle down of growth to bring about qualitative changes to the lives of masses. Yet, inequality, poverty and deprivation of basic needs and essential resources still remain high. In 2019 India acquired 129<sup>th</sup> rank in UNDP’s Human Development Index and has slipped downward to 131<sup>st</sup> rank, out of 189 countries, in 2020.

Rural development and checking the expanding rural-urban gap constitute another formidable challenge for social development. Rural development is a key objective and intrinsic goal of social development. In his book *Democracy, Development, and the Countryside: Urban-Rural Struggles in India* Ashutosh Varshney (1994) reveals a widely acknowledged fact about development that “industrialisation requires eclipse of agriculture” ; however, India defies it as its rural sector has a dominant role to play in the well-being of the masses. The rural sector is constrained from the “inability of economic interests to override abiding, ascriptive identities”. Further, the lack of substantial financial decentralisation of power at the rural level acts as a significant challenge to achieve rural development as part of social development process in India.

Social development is of utmost importance to secure a harmonious relationship between different segments of the society and accomplish social

welfare of all people. It makes development inclusive and holistic, not only in ideal sense but also in practice. Before we proceed to sum up the whole discussion let us now check your progress.

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## 1.9 LET US SUM UP

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This unit has introduced conceptual and theoretical formulations of social development; encapsulated some scholarly definitions and approaches to better understand the nuances of the concept and highlighted characteristics, dimensions, facilitators and hindrances of the process of social development. At the end, social development has been placed in the Indian context. Social development holds special significance in the context of the developing countries as amelioration of well-being of their people results not only in development of the masses but also it causes positive impact on the overall development of a country. Social development makes development inclusive, which requires a proactive approach on the part of the stakeholders.

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## 1.10 KEY WORDS

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**Social Development:** A process of planned, positive and progressive change in various aspects of society that seeks to achieve well-being of all.

**Right to development:** An intrinsic and inalienable right of an individual to achieve his/ her all-round development and where the basic human rights are held intact.

**Social opportunities:** The favorable circumstances, available to the people in their immediate social context, which increase and expand their potential, for example, access to education and adequate public health services.

**Modernisation:** A linear process of change or transformation of society from traditional (poor, obsolete, agricultural) to modern society (economically progressed, efficient, industrialised).

**Underdevelopment theory:** Based on Andre Gunder Frank's works it explains the peripheral nations' underdevelopment as the result of the development of the core/industrialised nations like US and UK, called the metropolis, which have exploited the former by colonisation and that continues through other means.

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## 1.11 SUGGESTED READINGS

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## UNIT 2 FACTORS AND INDICATORS OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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- 2.4 Let Us Sum Up
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### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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This unit aims to tell you about what forces determine social development and what exactly indicates it. After going through this unit you will be able to:

- know factors of social development; and
- explain indicators of social development.

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

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In the previous unit you have learnt that development is a multi-dimensional social phenomenon which refers to the process of expected changes not only in economic arena but also in political and social or socio-cultural arenas. You have also seen the way the comprehensive concept of development has historically evolved and realised, based on its different dimensions such as

economic, social, cultural and political. In the conceptual evolution of development, its social development emerged at last in the post-World War II era, out of the realisation that without social development neither economic development nor political development could work and that social development is a basic/ inherent component of the process of development as a whole, permeating all of its dimensions. Social development constitutes a set of essential conditions that includes timely fulfillment of basic needs like food, clothes and shelter; accessibility of basic facilities like pure drinking water, electricity, transportation and communication and equal employment opportunities for all, based on qualifications, skills and abilities; adequate facilities for maintenance of good physical and mental health, nutritious food, pollution-free environment and high quality medical facilities; social environment free from caste, creed, religion and colour based discriminations, decent standard of living, adequate quality of education for children of all genders, castes and classes and special provisions for weaker sections in the society; striving together to make a nation self-reliant and national unity to strive together to maintain the dignity and self-respect, among others. It assumes even greater significance in rural context where social life is rather ascriptive, traditional and conservative that influences deeply the economic and political structures and processes. Such a situation demands that development- economic or political- must be accompanied by social development, i.e., well-being of all people with justice. However, there are factors located in social life as a whole (economic, social, cultural and political structures/institutions) and attitudes of individuals that determine the nature of social development. So it becomes imperative for the society to know what these factors are and how they influence social development. Besides, one must know about what exactly indicates social development or well-being. This unit therefore introduces you to factors and indicators of social development. Let us begin our discussion with factors of social development.

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## **2.2 FACTORS OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

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In a given context all phenomena are found interrelated, constituting a complex reality that comprises different dimensions - natural, physical, psychological, demographic, social, cultural, economic and political. Each phenomenon is thus a unit of the multidimensional reality and it relates directly or indirectly with other phenomena in the reality. As such, a phenomenon is determined, shaped and altered in its (multidimensional) relationship with other phenomena. Totality of the reality thus constitutes an environment for a single phenomenon or a group of phenomena, giving rise to/influencing a particular phenomenon or set of phenomena. Those phenomena of the environment which act as forces to give rise to or influence a particular phenomenon are known as causes, determinants, forces or factors. We can thus say that the phenomena that indicate the process of social development are also a product of some other phenomena that act as causal/determining/influencing factors. So their knowledge helps us understand the nature of social development. Since these factors relate to

various dimensions of people's life, there are found several sets of the factors. These are discussed here.

### 2.2.1 Socio-cultural Factors

Amidst various factors of social development, socio-cultural factors have special importance because there is a vital role of culture, values, beliefs and habits, social institutions and attitudes of individuals in developing human personality. While growing a new-born baby increasingly passes through interactions with many people and social institutions and undergoes socialisation, i.e., life-long process of imbibing cultural norms and values. Socialisation which is thus responsible for building **self** of a human being is based on societal structure, beliefs and culture. Every society has its own culture and pattern of socialisation.

Before the 1960s, when the western model of development dominated, believing that economic development was equivalent to social development and economic growth included well-being, as well, but in the 1960s scholars began to realise a need to take a holistic view of development wherein economic development is accompanied by well-being, i.e., development in social, cultural, religious, political, psychological and ecological aspects of people from all sections in the society. Besides, they also realised that in terms of social structure and culture the non-western societies were distinct from the western/ modern/ developed societies wherein economic development/ growth could work well to promote people's well-being. Therefore, in the context of the developing societies until and unless these non-economic factors are included economic development leads to sheer material progress, not to well-being and social justice, which lacks a human sense of development.

The importance of social, cultural and religious factors in social development increases further, especially, in the context of rural India where the rural structure directly connects with the society, culture and religion which have immense impact on people's life. Without taking into account these (non-economic) factors, one can't imagine a rural environment or society. A question arises: Is social structure consisted of various institutions an essential condition for social development? Social institutions have an ability to adapt to the changing environment and thereby to facilitate social development. The state of harmony between culture, social institutions and religion is conducive for social development. Maintaining a balance between material culture and non-material culture reduces a possibility of cultural lag. The cultural traits have the ability to change rapidly and so the cultural complex can move step by step with the change. A religious tendency towards progressiveness, rather than conservatism, can play its positive role in social development. So, social structure can play a positive role in providing conditions with such habits and tendencies as they help people adjust with new social situations arising out of day-to-day changes.

### **2.2.2 Economic Factors**

Economic factors play crucial role in social development. Karl Marx believed that to make history or society the first condition for a human being is to survive oneself, for which s/he needs food, clothes and shelter which things are obtained only by economic efforts. Any social development can't be imagined without fulfillment of basic needs of food, clothes and shelter. Only after fulfillment of the basic needs we can focus on other economic or non-economic needs/ factors.

Economic factors constitute an essential condition of availability of natural and human resources which have major role to play in social development. Natural resources such as land, water, forests, animals, plants and minerals determine and ensure livelihood of people, but in the absence of human resources like education, training, skills, technology and health among people it is impossible to use natural resources.

The modern developed mode of production, the distinct and equal system of distribution, the consumption patterns, efficiency and specialisation and division of labour are very important factors for achieving social development. Besides, flexible and non-discriminatory economic policies encourage, support and benefit the workers. Taking care of the needs of business persons and investors also plays a positive role in social development. Intervention by the State establishes a healthy economic competition and reduces problems like conflicts, tensions, strikes and lockouts, which helps in economic development as well as social development.

### **2.2.3 Political Factors**

Political factors also have an important link with social development. Political stability allows new steps for development whereas a politically unstable society can never develop. Frequent and premature fall or change of governments is extremely dangerous for development because conducting elections in large democratic countries like India is a very expensive and difficult task. Corruption-free public administration and transparent government policies are an important aspect of social development. Completion of works within a prescribed time in government offices and adequate check over bribery, nepotism, red-tapeism, bribery and scams helps in social development.

Proper implementation of nation's Constitution and its respect by all citizens and delivery of transparent, equal justice by its judiciary and striking a balance between rights and duties are all such elements as to help in social development. A healthy and corruption-free democratic system, devotion of public representatives to their duty and fair voting behaviour, all, constitute the basis of a strong democracy, which is directly related to social development. Freedom of expression of the media and press, which are called the Fourth Pillar of democracy, is the hallmark of a developed democratic society. Significant growth in social development can be achieved by taking proper control of paid news, propaganda and hateful reporting. Thus, in the

course of social development political factors play a role by presenting an ideal political model.

### 2.2.4 Psychological Factors

In the entire universe, human being is the only creature with a tendency to curiosity. Motivated by this psychic quality, human beings make new experiments and inventions. Psychological factors refer to the effects that occur as a result of actions and interactions in human mind and brain and the positive and negative effects on society and social environment. A social environment free from worry, fear and frustration encourages human beings to create progressive ideas.

In a modern urbanised society, stress is the biggest obstacle in the way of human activity and creative power. Human beings with stress and stressful environment always suffer with unstable brain which promotes social disorganisation. As a result, there is a tendency of deviance in the form of anomie and normlessness in different sections of the society and its surroundings, resulting in break-up of the social system. Sometimes, people even commit suicide in such a situation which is the biggest hindrance for social development. For reducing deviance it is extremely important to promote social conformity, for which strengthening of social organisation is the first condition. Building of a strong social organisation is possible only with healthy family, stress-free mind and happy life, which makes social development sustainable in the society.

### 2.2.5 Ideological Factors

Progressive thoughts and ideology of great persons play an unexpected role in the field of social development. Where Karl Marx stresses upon economic factors for social development, at the same time Max Weber gives more importance to religion or ideas. Influenced by such ideological differences the whole world today broadly divides into two camps: one consists of supporters of capitalism and the other is of its opponents.

Role of religious institutions in social development cannot be denied. In his work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904) Weber says that Protestant ethic is responsible for the rise of capitalism, today found all over the world. Historians and philosophers have considered the role of great persons very important in social development. Carlyle and Nietzsche have appreciated the contribution of great persons to the society.

In India, Swami Vivekananda and Ramakrishna Paramhans unfurled the flag of Indian religion all over the world. Great deeds for India's social revival were done by Raja Rammohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Lala Lajpat Rai, Madan Mohan Malaviya and Chandra Shekhar Azad. To liberate India from the British clutches, an unprecedented contribution was made by Indian women like Rani Lakshmi Bai, Bhagini Nivedita and Sarojini Naidu. Deendayal Upadhyay, Dr. Hedgewar and Shyamji Krishna Varma have made great contributions to build modern India.

## 2.2.6 Technological Factors

Today's era is the era of technology. Technology encompasses methods- sets of a variety of tools and human knowledge systems- that help us achieve physical goals. Advanced technology has always played an important role in social development. In the modern development journey, technology is responsible for the capitalist system, industrialisation and urbanisation. In the present, ICT, social media, mass communication and Internet have played a vital role in social development. Today, in every field- education, employment, medical, household necessities, entertainment and transport or communication, technology is being used extensively. Today, not only the youth but every age group is using technology to ensure their participation in the development and the society.

Social media have done successful job of spreading public awareness by reducing the physical distance between people and making easier the information exchange between them. All government and private services are being made easily accessible to the public through Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Internet has become a strong source of knowledge in today's times. Mass communication has strengthened mutual relations of people. Thus, there is a direct relationship between technology and social development.

## 2.2.7 Geographical Factors

Geographical factors include geographical and natural environmental components such as weather conditions, excess rainfall, droughts, famine, rainfalls, mountains, earthquakes, rivers, seas, floods, etc. The natural environment always influences human behaviour. Positive environmental conditions contribute to social development whereas adverse environmental conditions impede it. The areas where floods, famines, earthquakes, volcanoes, overflows and droughts often occur lag behind on the path of social development. On the contrary, the circumstances free from calamities prove to be helpful in social development. Natural and geographical factors are closely related to human relationships. Where nature is calm the people do the work of creation which helps in social development. Contrarily, where natural calamities persist, life is always in distracted conditions which are fatal to social development.

## 2.2.8 Demographic Factors

Demographic factors also play an important role in social development. They refer to size, density, formation, composition and mobility of the population in a society. These are various aspects and processes of the population. For social development study of quantitative aspects of population such as birth rate, death rate, sex ratio, etc are as important as the knowledge of its qualitative aspects. Maintaining a balance between birth rate and death rate is important; a situation of over-population arising out of high birth rate and high death rate may cause problems due to lack of working people. Under-population also renders a country underdeveloped due to underutilised natural resource. Unequal sex ratio also leads to many social problems, creating

adverse conditions for social development. Age-group is another important factor in social development. A society of young population progresses socially. Equilibrium between immigration and emigration also increases social development.

Malthus (1798) says that if the growing population of any country is not controlled, then, it grows faster than the food supply, making balance between them difficult. So, natural calamities like epidemics (corona, cholera, smallpox, etc) or severe disasters (earthquake, flood, famine etc) balance the population and create favourable conditions for social development.

### **2.2.9 Biological Factors**

Biological factors are directly related to the properties, derived from heredity, that are transferred from generation to generation. People's biologically inherited properties - height, physical formation, average age, etc- constitute biological factors. Darwin's (1859) principle of natural evolution also links biological factors to human development. The theory of natural evolution has the analogy of social evolution, a process caused by human factors that affect the birth rate and death rate or either of them. Clearly, better adjustment of birth and death rates leads to social development. Through adaptation to biological factors only the best human species survive in the process of struggle for survival on this earth, creating the best conditions for social development.

Thus, factors constitute a set of phenomena in an environment, acting as forces to give rise to or influence a particular phenomenon in the given environment. Such factors emerge from and influence various dimensions of people's life. These factors perceived in various life-dimensions are socio-cultural, economic, political, psychological, ideological, technological, geographical, demographic and biological.

Before we proceed to discuss indicators of social development let me check your progress.

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## **2.3 INDICATORS OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

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Can we measure development? Yes, we can. There are different indicators to measure development in its specific states. For example, different sets of indicators point out development in education and health of people. Indicators measure the ideal state of a particular development, the changes, seen to have taken place in important aspects of a phenomenon over a time-period. Indicators judge the state of the development in terms of numbers. Efforts of a government can be measured with the help of indicators which precisely state the particular state of its progress. Indicators help in understanding where the society stood in a particular situation and with efforts how far it has come within a given time frame to achieve its goal of ideal situation. Indicators play an important role in policy-making decisions, on the basis of which governments decide their actions to maintain and improve the well-being of the citizens.

As well-being generally can't be measured directly, so the indicators are used as surrogates for direct measurement which translate abstract and non-measurable concepts into operational terms. For measurement these surrogates are concerned with quantifiable information. "Social indicators can be defined as statistics that usefully reflect important social conditions and that facilitate the process of assessing those conditions and their evolution. Social indicators are used to identify the social problems that require action, to develop priorities and goals for action and spending, and to assess the effectiveness of programmes and policies" (United Nations, 1994). "Social indicators are measures of social well-being which provide a contemporary view of social conditions, and monitor trends in a range of areas of social concern over time" (McEwin, 1995).

According to Richard Estes (2005), social indicators are two things: (1) they are direct measures of phenomena they purport to measure (e.g., infant mortality rate, educational attainment level, divorce rate, the number of deaths or injuries associated with civil protest actions) and (2) they are indirect measures of other phenomena, always more complex, that cannot be measured directly or, at least, cannot easily be measured directly (e.g., infant mortality rate is often used as a proxy for the quality of local or national health system; divorce rate is often used as proxy for family stability and the number of deaths and injuries incurred in civil protest actions are often used as a proxy for societal stability or cohesion). Hence, social indicators serve as powerful measures of changes in development levels over a time and provide direct measures of phenomena of interest to community practitioners.

Richard Estes (2005) mentions three basic categories of social indicators: (1) leading indicators showing the direction of future economic or social activity, e.g., increases in social cohesion in response to serious external threat; (2) coincident indicators tracking social and economic cycles with comparatively little time lag, e.g., increases in crime rates during periods of growing unemployment or poverty and (3) lagging indicators measuring how the economy or society was rather than how it is or will be, e.g., declines in social spending during periods of economic expansion. These categories of social indicators are applicable to the advancement of community practice, especially in situations for which valid, reliable and timely data are needed (e.g., needs assessment and planning) or in the situations for which the identification of pre-intervention baseline performance measures are desired (e.g., goal-setting, pre- and post-intervention assessments, cost estimation, etc). Social indicators also help in assessing the changes, occurred over the time, in the performance of even larger systems including countries, states or provinces, nations and the world as a whole.

Certain scientific criteria are to be met in using social indicators for knowledge-based practice. Different organisations use a number of indicators to measure social development.

There are some important indicators that directly influence social development. Let us discuss them hereunder.



### 2.3.1 Health

Health is the first priority of any developing society. A physically competent and healthy society always leads to progress. So, good health becomes an essential condition for social development. Health condition is examined by using such parameters as life expectancy, health care facilities, nutrition, birth & death rates, mortality & fertility rates, suicide rate, etc.

Life-expectancy refers to the number of years a person can expect to live. According to WHO, life expectancy is the average number of years that a newborn could expect to live, if he/she were to pass through life exposed to the sex- and age-specific death rates prevailing at the time of his/her birth, for a specific year, in a given country, territory, or geographic area. In India life expectancy at birth in 2021 is 69.4 years which is less than that of the world (72.81 years).

Health care facilities include the number of hospitals, doctors and nurses and the number of beds and modern equipment in hospitals. Apart from them, most important is easy access of common people to primary health care facilities at minimum cost and in appropriate ratio to the population. Availability of advance health care facilities is a positive indicator of social development. Food is a basic need of human beings but nutritious food is compulsory condition for healthy and developed society. Nutrition is very important for growing children and pregnant women. Aanganwadi Centre, ASHA, NM, Health Centre and health workers play major role in fulfilling nutritional requirements in India's rural areas. Advance immunisation against infectious childhood diseases and pandemics like Corona is an important part of health care.

Birth rate, death rate, infant mortality rate and mortality rate of under-five years' children also influence social development. Birth rate refers to the number of live births per thousand persons in a given year while death rate is the number of deaths per '000 persons in a given year. These rates have to be balanced in order to make them positive indicators of social development. Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is the number of deaths per '000 live births of infants under the age of one year in a given year. A continuous decrease in IMR indicates social development. Gross Fertility Rate, also called General Fertility Rate, is the number of live births per '000 women, aged 15-44 or 15-49 years, in a given year. To achieve social development it also needs to be controlled by the government.

Suicide mortality rate is the number of suicide deaths per '00000 persons in a population. According to the World Bank report, suicide rate of India was 12.7 per lakh population in 2019, an increase of 0.79% over that of 2018.

### 2.3.2 Education

Among the indicators of social development education occupies an important place. Lack of education or low literacy rate is a great hurdle in development of the society. So, as an essential condition for social development, honest educational efforts should be made mainly to increase the enrolment percentage of children in primary education, to reduce the rate of dropouts

and to increase the percentage of re-admission. They are the key indicators of social development.

Promoting adult education for men and women increases literacy rate. Efforts for adult literacy also occupy an important place among the indicators of social development. According to UNESCO (2018), "Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential and to participate fully in their community and wider society" (GAML, Fifth Meeting, Hamberg, Oct 17-18). According to the Census 2011, India's literacy rate increased by 9 percent, from 65 percent in 2001 to 74 percent in 2011. As per the data of the National Statistical Organisation (NSO) for the year 2017-18, India's average literacy rate is 77.7%.

### **2.3.3 Employment**

Livelihood directly relates to source of employment and income. Regular source of income is necessary for development of family and society. Regular employment is a basic condition for regular income, thus, indicating its direct relationship with social development. High employability, proper employment-population ratio, equitable share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector and high labour productivity are employment-related key indicators for social development.

According to the World Bank's collection of development indicators, vulnerable employment in India was reported at 73.98% in 2020. Vulnerable employment refers to the sum of contributing family workers and the employment status groups of own-account workers, who are less likely to have formal work arrangements and so more likely to lack decent working conditions. Employment to population ratio is the proportion of a country's population that is employed. Employed people are working age persons who, during a short reference period, were engaged in any activity to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit, whether at work during the reference period (i.e., who worked in a job for at least one hour) or not at work due to temporary absence from a job, or due to working-time arrangements.

People aged 15-24 years are generally considered the youth population. According to the World Bank's collection of development indicators, employment to population ratio for this age group in India is reported at 20.69 % in 2020.

### **2.3.4 Quality of Life**

Helbich (1996) states, "Quality of life is the degree of satisfaction obtained by the individual as a result of the consumption of goods and services, spending free time as well as the use of other material and social conditions of the environment, in which this individual is located" (cited in Jankowska, 2014). The quality of life has very profound effect on human life. Social environment affects human beings the most as they live in some kind of

social environment throughout their life. Measuring quality of life is a mental exercise that involves various degrees of intensity. While measuring the quality of life one comes across a wide range of social indicators which include assessment of different aspects of life, attitude towards life, life activity and ability to adapt to social and economic changes. A satisfied person has a high level of feeling of accomplishment. Thus, quality can be measured by the degree of satisfaction.

Quality has the subjective nature. So it can be measured on an ordinal scale (e.g., high quality, average quality, low quality). Economic approach is the one of many approaches to measuring the quality of life. The following are the most commonly used social indicators for measurement of quality of life:

- **Gross Domestic Product and National Income**

These two indicators are used for identifying socio-economic development directly and changes in the quality and level of people's life indirectly. But with the changing time these indicators, being one-dimensional and constituting average values, have become inadequate to describe changes in social sphere. Also, they fail to reflect the disparities between social groups/regions/ countries in terms of the amount of income, the supply of products and services, and participation in social and cultural life. They lack information needed for a locative policy of the state and so they are not wholly correct measures of well-being.

- **Measure of Economic Welfare (MEW)**

MEW is adjusted account of the national income. This indicator introduces to the category of national income new items/ elements that increase or decrease its value. The elements that enhance the value of this measure are estimated values expressing the equivalent of one's own work in the household (natural consumption), leisure time treated as an alternative to the time spent at work, public infrastructure (roads, parks) and private durable goods (furniture, jewelry). The elements that reduce the value of the index include the estimated value associated with environmental pollution (i.e. ecology), expenditure on national defense and expenditure on commuting to work. Measure of Economic Welfare is calculated as the sum of positive components (contributing to increase of welfare) and negative components (contributing to decrease of welfare) of the whole aggregate.

This measure determines the direction and intensity of changes in levels of people's welfare. However, it does not describe the degree of need satisfaction as well as the differences between the degrees of satisfaction of various needs. The method for construction of this indicator is complex, and regular measurement of the phenomena undertaken as well as their valuation is difficult and expensive.

- **Human Development Index**

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been conducting comparative studies of social progress in the world for several years, based on the data obtained from almost all countries of the world. Human

Development Index (HDI), constructed and used for evaluation of social and economic progress of the countries, is the synthetic measure based on the average of indicators covering three main areas of life: (1) health (assessed by the indicator of the average life expectancy), (2) education (assessed on the basis of educational attainments) and (3) income (assessed on the basis of GDP).

In sum, indicators measure the ideal state of a particular development or the changes occurred in important aspects of people's life, over the time. They quantify the changes and help the government achieve the goals of maintaining and improving the citizens' well-being. Indicators used as surrogates for direct measurement translate abstract and non-measurable concepts into operational terms. Different organisations use a number of indicators to measure social development. Health, education, employment and quality of life are some important indicators that directly influence social development and governments frequently use them in policy formulation for their citizens' welfare.

### **2.3.5 People's Participation and Accountability**

People's participation and accountability are both essential for social development of any society. Rural development can be achieved in better way through people's participation and involvement in development programmes and projects. Participation includes people of different genders, age groups, religions, castes, regions, etc in the development process. Long back, participation has been recognized as an intrinsic part of the development process rather than a facilitator. Therefore, success of various rural development programmes depends not only on effective functioning of various administrative agencies but also on rural people's active participation.

Rural development is a process of welfare and development actions by the rural people. Rural development programmes constitute a wide spectrum consisting of agriculture, animal husbandry, cooperation, rural industries, rural engineering (comprising minor irrigation, roads, buildings), health and sanitation (including family welfare, family planning, women's welfare, child care and nutrition), education (including adult education/social education and adult literacy), youth welfare and community organisation. Community involvement/participation in development projects indicates growth of democratic ideas; it builds capacities of the community to effectively deal with their own problems and through it people direct the change in their area.

People's participation, besides being an essential component of rural development, is an indicator of rural social development. It realises in proper coordination of individual and social efforts, in utilizing fully the local institutions' potential, the higher level statutory bodies, the village cooperatives, the village school and other associate organisations such as farmers' forums, youth clubs and women's clubs, and in proper harmonisation of individual needs with group-needs and group-needs with national needs.

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## 2.4 LET US SUM UP

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The phenomena in an environment that give rise to or influence a particular phenomenon therein are called factors. The environmental phenomena that determine social development/ positive changes constitute various dimensions of social life. So factors of social development are known by the dimension they emerge from. Socio-cultural factors assume special importance as culture, values, beliefs and habits play a vital role in developing human personality. Economic factors are very important as they fulfill the basic needs like food, clothes and shelter and so availability of natural and human resources is an essential condition of human survival. Political factors broadly comprising political stability, corruption-free public administration and transparent government policies are no less important for social development. Psychological factors comprise effects of actions and interactions on human mind and their positive and negative impacts on individuals and the society. Enhancing human capability advance technology has always done great service to humankind. Geographical factors are natural environmental components such as weather conditions, excess rainfall, drought, famine, rainfall, mountains, earthquakes, river, sea, flood, etc. Positive environmental conditions contribute to social development whereas adverse environmental conditions impede social development. For social development, it is very important to have a demographic balance between birth rate and death rate, low infant mortality rate, equitable sex ratio and favourable portion of youth age group. Biological factors directly relate to the properties, derived through heredity, transfer of which has been from generation to generation. Darwin's principle of natural selection links biological factors to social development.

Indicators measure the ideal state of particular development/ changes seen in important aspects of people's life, over the time. They quantify the changes and help governments achieve the goals of maintaining and improving well-being of the citizens. They used as surrogates for direct measurement and to translate abstract and non-measurable concepts into operational terms. Different organisations use several indicators to measure social development, out of which some important ones relate to health, education, employment and quality of life which directly influence social development and governments frequently use them for people's welfare and policy-making. Their use requires certain scientific criteria for a knowledge-based practice of social development.

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## 2.5 KEY WORDS

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**Factors/forces:** Particular phenomena in a given environment that act as forces to give rise to or influence some other phenomena therein.

**Indicators:** Measures of the ideal state of a particular development/changes occurred in important aspects of people's life.

**Socialisation:** A life-long process of individuals' learning of social roles and personality development in a society.

**Culture:** A learned behaviour, shared by and transmitted among people through generations in a society.

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## 2.6 SUGGESTED READINGS

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## UNIT 3 RURAL SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: SOCIAL POLICIES AND SOCIAL SECURITIES

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- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
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- 3.8 Key Words
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### 3.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this unit, you will be able to

- define ‘social policy’ and ‘social security’;
- comprehend various constitutional provisions related to social policy and social security;
- understand the nature and evolution of social policy and social security measures;
- appreciate the significance of social policy and social security initiatives in the development of society; and
- know about major initiatives/schemes/programmes for rural social development.

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

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Social policy may appear unfamiliar to some people but it affects almost all people, knowingly or unknowingly. Generally people come to know about social policy through internet, television, radio or print media. As of academic interest, it is a phenomenon of relatively recent origin, though it has existed in the society from the time immemorial. In the time of distress people have always got support and care from their family members, caste fellows, clans, neighbours and religious organisations, but the government plays an important role in people's welfare and meeting their social needs. Social policy forms the basis of people's welfare and fulfilling their needs of education, health, housing and social security. The human action of providing help to distressed people is the foundation of social security. Along with social policy, another instrument of social development is social security that has dynamically evolved in the contemporary world. With technological advancement the risk of life has increased manifold, the nature and scope of both social policy and social security measures are changing. Social policy should be looked, beyond being merely welfare considerations, as an instrument of social development and, thus, be located into a wider context of development strategy.

Social policy and social security are both mandated by the Constitution of India. So India, relatively a young developing economy and the largest democracy, strives to provide its citizens social and economic justice as pronounced in the Preamble of the Constitution. Also, being a welfare state it takes the responsibility of providing social security against risks. In the Constitution the Directive Principles of the State Policy also stipulate to secure a social order to promote people's welfare. The Article 38 reads, (1) "The State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of the national life" and (2) "The State shall, in particular, strive to minimise the inequalities in income, and endeavour to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities, not only amongst individuals but also amongst groups of people residing in different areas or engaged in different vocations". Further, the Article 41 describes the right to work, to educate and to public assistance in certain cases: "The State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other cases of undeserved want". The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 25) proclaims that every member of the society has the right to social security that should be realised with national efforts and international cooperation. The International Labour Organisation played a key role in evolving and establishing universally accepted principles of social security. Today, the much needed moving equilibrium of technological, environmental, economic and social development requires more holistic, comprehensive and coordinated policy responses. This unit will discuss the concept, evolution, and significance social policy and social security and major initiatives, thereof, taken in India. Let us first understand these as concepts.



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## 3.2 CONCEPTS OF 'SOCIAL POLICY' AND 'SOCIAL SECURITY'

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It is difficult to encapsulate meaning of social policy. So Titmuss (1974: 28) says that defining social policy is a 'tiresome business'. Macbeath (1957) informs that "Social policies are concerned with the right ordering of the network of relationships between men and women who live together in societies, or with the principles which should govern the activities of individuals and groups so far as they affect the lives and interests of other people". Alcock (2008) refers social policy to "actions taken within society to develop and deliver services for people to meet their needs for welfare and well-being". Hagenbuch (1958) opines that in general terms "the mainspring of social policy may be said to be the desire to ensure every member of the community certain minimum standards and certain opportunities" (all cited in Raj, 2016:3). Some scholars' wider focus finds that the study of social policy "is concerned with those aspects of public policies, market operations, personal consumption and interpersonal relationships which contribute to, or detract from, the well-being or welfare of individuals or groups".

So the defining features of social policy can be summarized as (1) social policies are directed towards people's welfare; (2) they include both economic and non-economic aspects of life; (3) they aim at some measures of progressive redistribution of resources from rich to poor. As such, social policy, in general terms, refers to the guidelines, principles and interventions aimed at meeting the needs of human health, education, housing and social security and to improve human welfare. Academically, social policy is understood by the social services such as employment, prison, legal services, etc. and by the welfare state that takes care of people's social security, housing, health, social work and educational needs.

Social security, as a broad concept, encompasses both social insurance and social assurance. Social insurance, protective in nature, is aimed to protect people from want and hunger whereas social assurance, curative in nature, aims at removing diseases, discrimination, exploitation and ignorance of the people. In more general terms, social insurance is available to all injured persons, irrespective of their economic condition and social status, whereas social assurance is strictly based on needs and requirements.

A comprehensive understanding of social security requires that we examine some of its definitions. Sir William Beveridge (1912) defines social security as "The security of income to take the place of earnings when they are interrupted by unemployment, sickness & accident, to provide for retirement through or to provide against loss of support by the death of another person and to meet exceptional expenditures those connected with birth, death and marriage. Primarily social security means income should be associated with treatment design to bring the interruption of earnings to an end as soon as possible" (cited in Naik, 2016). According to ILO, social security is "The security that society furnishes appropriate organisation against certain risks to which its members are exposed. These risks are essentially contingencies, against which the individual of small means cannot effectively provide by his

ability or foresight alone or even in private combination with fellows" (cited in Gramlich, 1996; Naik, 2016).

Social security thus acts as an incentive for development. By substituting the danger of risks and inadequacy, it increases the efficiency of working people.

Having clarified the concepts of social policy and social security we can proceed to trace their evolution in India. Before proceeding further let me check your progress.

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### **3.3 EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL POLICY AND SOCIAL SECURITY**

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In India, development of social welfare is thought to have begun with the provisions of specific care and support being provided voluntarily to people with special needs and disadvantaged groups by their family members, caste groups and religious organisations whereas the Government made limited interventions. This system continued during the pre-colonial period but during the colonial period, with the advent of urbanisation and industrialisation, a system of organised social welfare started, more in the urban areas, for a few groups of people. On the one hand, the colonialism broke the rigidity of determining occupations by caste by offering industrial and military jobs which provided upward social mobility to some of the oppressed people in the society while the traditional *jajmani* system of exchange got disturbed due to the presence of industrially manufactured goods in the market, on the other.

The permanent system of settlement introduced in 1793 by the British colonial administration changed the hereditary economic regime in India. The administration perceived rural India's poverty as inherent in its backwardness, untouchability and, ultimately, in the very nature of 'Indianness'. The British introduced the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1923 as a system of social security for a small group of workers who were working for them, which can be considered as the beginning of institutionalisation of welfare mechanism by the Government in India.

After Independence, social welfare of people received greater attention and direction. This broadened the scope and changed the nature of social welfare policy with the Government's active participation. The Constitution introduced on 26th January 1950 laid down the goal of making India a socialist, secular and democratic polity. It enshrines the objectives of social development and institutionalises social welfare mechanisms in the country. India has established itself not only as a liberal democracy but also as a federal polity, wherein some subjects such as education, health, land reforms and rural development either solely fall under 'State List' or under the 'Concurrent List' that permits both the State and Central Governments to legislate upon the subjects covered in it. The article 58 of the Directive Principles of the State Policy gives the State the responsibility 'to secure and promote a social order which stands for the welfare of the people'.

After Independence considering the need for proper planning to work for people's welfare, the National Planning Commission was set up in March 1950 which gave the way to Five-Year Plans based on the soviet model of economic growth. The Planning Commission came out with four long-term objectives to address the fundamental issues of development, drawn from the socialist pattern of governance. The objectives were mainly oriented to increasing the production limit to achieve a higher level of national and per capita income, generating employment opportunities, reducing income disparities and bringing equality and justice to all by removing exploitation. They were attempted by using the tool of Five-Year Plans that restricted the role of private enterprises and gave the government a lead role. Restrictions on import were imposed and licensing of industries was made compulsory.

Based on the Planning Commission's recommendations the Government of India established the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) in 1953, which aimed at developing, assisting and promoting voluntary sector to deliver welfare services. Up to the Seventh Five-Year Plan, the policies mainly focused on equitable redistribution of resources, heavier tax liabilities on the rich, provision of highly subsidized goods and services to the poorest and downtrodden sections of the society, welfare of the oppressed and exploited groups of people, restrictions on foreign direct investment and promoting the public sector to participate in industrial development. The emergent circumstances of India and the globe called the Government for announcing New Economic Policy (NEP) or Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1991, which opened the doors for globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation. This continued through the Eighth and Ninth Five-Year plans. With the Government formed by the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) in 2004, social welfare policies took a turn towards rights-based approach that manifested in the Right to Information Act and the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) of 2005, the Right to Education Act of 2009, Right to Food Act 2013, etc.

As urbanisation and industrialisation initiated in the British period led to a shift from the informal system of philanthropy to a more organised system of state-funded social security, the British Government started to take social security measures with the establishment of the factory system in the 1850s. The post-World War I was the period that provided both impetus and direction to the Government towards labour welfare. The hostilities ended with the world oriented towards peace and reconstruction, giving birth to a new institution- the International Labour Organisation (ILO) - Which since its inception played a significant role in evolving and concretizing universal principles and standards of social security. the most important and fundamental instruments of ILO Among the ILO's most important and fundamental instruments the Social Security (Minimum Standard) Convention 1952 is the one, providing a minimum basic standard of benefits covering almost all aspects of contingencies such as injuries, sickness, unemployment, old age, etc. Of the ILO's 28 conventions passed on social security, only five conventions have been ratified by India. Nonetheless, Independent India has also enacted various laws such as Industrial Dispute Act 1947, Employees State Insurance Act 1948, Employees Provident Fund

Act 1952, Maternity Benefit Act 1961, Payment of Gratuity Act 1972, etc.

Having traced the evolution of social policy and social security in India let us proceed to understand what these two instruments of social development signify for people and the society.

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### **3.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF SOCIAL POLICY AND SOCIAL SECURITY**

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Social policy plays a significant role in meeting social and economic needs of people. It is important in achieving social equity and a minimum standard of living. Social policy is a complex web of policies, schemes and institutions which forms part of a social contract between the state and its citizens. Citizens elect their representatives to form a government and lend it their support through payment of taxes and efforts for the good of the nation. In return, the government protects the rights of its citizens and implement policies for the welfare of all people . Through this process, the government gets legitimised, as well.

Though the social policy has multiple roles to play, at the most basic level it enhances the State's capacity to manage economic and social shocks such as income inequality and social imbalances due to modernisation. Secondly, it legitimises not only the regime but also the developmental projects, thereby, ensuring the social stability and maintaining the continuity of the process itself. Social policy also functions to increase the overall social productivity of labour rather than just enhancing labour productivity in a particular field. It even plays a significant role in cutting the overall costs of labour to an employer because basic needs are already taken care of by the state, therefore, providing more flexibility to the employer.

Thus, social policy is an important step towards nation-building as it extends the benefits of economic development to all. Inadequate and inefficient social policies can limit the medium and long term economic and social growth. Social policies are designed to meet the economic and social needs for future growth and political stability by ensuring the support of the citizens to the government.

As mentioned earlier, in this modern age social security has occupies a significant role in the society and so 'social security' becomes one of the most dynamic concepts. It has become as much effective in maintaining peace as nuclear missile in case of a war. It influences both economic and social policies. It provides security against risks when an individual cannot stand up with other fellows during a crisis period, due to sickness, disability, unemployment or old age. It has become indispensable part of national programmes in almost all advanced countries to eradicate poverty, unemployment and disease. In India, with the transition from tradition to modernity the traditional values attached with the joint family system and simple communities, which used to have an in-built system of social security embedded in these social institutions, have gradually lost much of their hold and significance. India faces many problems such as population explosion, low per capita income, underemployment, low employment opportunities,

lack of educated and skilled manpower, lower literacy and numeracy, largely rural people, engaged in agriculture, who are under the pressure of migration to urban areas, etc. These problems are found beyond an individual's capacity and effort to get over. Thus, it becomes important for the state to take necessary actions.

Here, before we proceed towards policy and security initiatives taken in India let me give a pause and check your progress.

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### **3.5 IMPORTANT SOCIAL POLICY INITIATIVES**

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In the Indian context, social policies have been mostly directed towards land reforms, food procurement and distribution, educational reforms, creation of employment opportunities, affirmative action in the form of reservation-quotas in public services and educational institutions, poverty eradication through the provision of microcredits and asset creation and structural change in governance through decentralisation and devolution of power. Let us have a view of these social policies.

#### **3.5.1 Land Reforms**

In the Constitution the subject of land reforms falls under the 'State List' for law-making. Therefore, a lot of variations are observed in the extent of implementation, progress and effectiveness of land reforms across the states. Quite evidently, implementation of land reforms across India through the Government intervention has not been satisfactory and impressive so far as agrarian relations and redistribution of land are concerned. Though, over the time, some changes in the agrarian landscape are visible, they are inadequate and largely restricted to a few States such as Kerala and West Bengal. In Kerala the reforms' main focus was on transformation of landholding pattern and welfare of the agricultural labourers whereas West Bengal was mainly concerned to improve tenants' condition by registering them, formalizing their contracts and fixing the amount of rent/ share to stop their arbitrary eviction and other forms of injustices or harassment.

Zamindari Abolition Act, 1952, ended the absentee landlordism yet ownership and monopoly over the land largely remained intact across rural India. Lack of radical change in the land ownership kept the aggregate agricultural production restricted to only a few landlord-turned capitalists and rich peasants, thus, the domestic market for the local produces and services largely remaining contracted socially.

In recent decades, Indian polity has rarely witnessed a discussion or debate on the land redistribution and other structural changes for land reforms. The Plan documents which earlier, at least, talked about the land reforms have now the main concerns of corporatisation of agriculture, promotion of plantation crops and so on. As small and marginal landholdings make agriculture difficult and also less viable for investment in irrigational and other facilities, initiatives for land reforms should, instead of being abandoned, rather be implemented more widely, covering other regions

across the country to bring necessary structural change in the agriculture.

### 3.5.2 Food Procurement and Distribution System

India's food management system has a threefold objective: (1) maintaining some degree of price stability in the market, (2) facilitating cultivators with incentives by ensuring the market-prices of the products above their input costs and (3) providing certain degree of food security to consumers. It is based on a twin pillar: (1) procurement of major food crops such as wheat and rice and other agricultural products at a pre-determined Minimum Support Price (MSP) from cultivators and (2) their distribution at subsidized rates to people through a State-run network of Fair Price Shops.

Indian food and agricultural prices remained more or less stable as compared to the world market prices in the decades of 1970s and 1980s, in the late 1990s, with the debate of explicit targeting of poor households gaining ground the Government decided to limit PDS to certain poor sections only. Under the new 'targeted PDS' (TPDS), the households were categorized as 'below poverty line' (BPL) and 'above poverty line' (APL). Another category of the *Antyodaya* (the poorest of the poor) was also created in 2000. This BPL-APL categorisation of households became problematic, owing to the unreliable process of beneficiary households' identification which was based on arbitrary calculations from the statistical data having little to do with the food security.

National Food Security Act, 2013 consolidated the efforts of some States to ensure the food security with their available resources and the PDS is one among its components. The Act covers 75% and 50% of the rural and urban populations respectively to provide food items at low price (Rs. 3/- per kg for rice and Rs. 2/- per kg for wheat) at the rate of 5kg per person per month. It provides three entitlements of benefits: maternity benefits through cash transfers, nutritious food for children provided under the Mid-Day Meal scheme and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and PDS.

### 3.5.3 Education

Directive Principles of the State Policy under the Constitution's Article 45 state that "The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until the age of fourteen years". Still, India is one among the world's most illiterate countries, with the overall literacy rate of 72.98 per cent, male literacy rate of 80.9 per cent and female literacy rate of 64.6 per cent (Census 2011). This clearly shows that over one fourth of the people are illiterate. The situation of the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes and other minority groups appears even more dismal. The public spending on education is only 4.6 per cent of the country's GDP, which is less than the global standard of 6 per cent. All this reflects that education has not been in the forefront of the Government policies. Denial of people's educational needs is a failure from both the viewpoints of human rights and developmental vision.

To promote education the Government has time to time come out with National Policy on Education (NPE): the first policy on education in 1968, the second one in 1986 and, recently, the third one in 2020. The first policy, based on recommendations of the Kothari Commission (1964-1966), focused on radical restructuring of the education system. It promoted equal educational opportunities for the country's overall development. It called for compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14 years as specified in the Constitution. It gave a 'three language formula' for implementation in the secondary education, consisting of English, Hindi and the official language of the State concerned. Besides, it encouraged the ancient language, Sanskrit, to promote India's cultural heritage.

The second policy implemented in 1986 aimed at removing disparities in educational opportunities, especially in case of SCs, STs and women and it expanded the provisions of scholarship, adult education, incentives to poor school-going children, more teachers from SCs and STs, etc. Under this, 'Operation Blackboard' scheme was launched to improve the conditions of primary education across the country and focused on a 'child-centric approach' to enhance the primary school children's learning capabilities. In 1985, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was established and a call was given for establishing rural universities based on Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy to bring social and economic development at the grassroots level.

National Education Policy (NPE) 2020 implemented from the year 2021-22 onwards mainly aims to reduce children's curriculum burden and enhance their learning capabilities by developing in them critical thought, practical knowledge, debate and discussion-based learning. It mandates to restructure the pedagogical structure from 10+2 to 5+3+3+4, encouraging essential learning among children and their cognitive development. The policy is expected of transforming India's educational system by 2040.

Besides, some on-going programmes of education are National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL), *Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)* for secondary education, *Saakshar Bharat* or Adult Education, *Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)* for higher education, *Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)* for equitable school education, Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) and District Primary Education Programme (DPEP).

### 3.5.4 Health Care

"Primary health care is an essential health care based on practical, scientifically sound and socially acceptable methods and technology, made universally accessible to individual and families in the community, through their full participation and at a cost that the community and the country can afford" (Alma Ata Conference of WHO, 1978). Every government has therefore a responsibility to formulate policies, plans and devise strategies to cater to their citizens' health care needs.

So the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, launched National Health Policy (NHP) with the main objectives of (1) establishing a network of primary healthcare services, (2) encouraging health volunteers who have required knowledge, skills and technologies, (3) establishing a decentralised system of healthcare to avoid the unnecessary burden at the higher levels of healthcare systems, (4) promoting private investments in the speciality and superspeciality healthcare services for those who can afford so that the Government services can be provided to the neediest people or unprivileged sections of the society.

A revised NHP was launched in 2002 to achieve better healthcare and previously unmet goals with the main objectives of enhancing primary healthcare services, decentralizing public healthcare system, converging multiple healthcare programmes and strategies under a single umbrella, expanding public healthcare services across the country, promoting private investments and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) in the healthcare delivery system and expanding the public expenditure on health care.

Furthering the cause of health and development, another National Health Policy (NHP) launched in 2017 identified priority areas that require coordinated action to improve the environment for health. The priority areas include *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*, balanced and healthy diet and regular exercises, reducing the use of tobacco and alcohol, *Yatri Suraksha Yojana* to prevent deaths due to road and rail accidents, *Nirbhaya Nari Yojana* to act against gender violence, to ensure safe, secure and stress-free workplace, reducing air pollution, etc. Besides, the Government runs many national health and nutrition programmes to meet reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health needs; viz., *Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)*, *Mission Indradhanush*, Mid-Day Meal Programme, ICDS, National Programme for Family Planning, etc.

### 3.5.5 Affirmative Action

The most basic public policy for affirmative action is the Reservation Policy for socio-educationally and socio-economically backward sections of the society. At the earliest, independent India provided reservations quotas in government jobs and public institutions to the SCs and STs only. The policy was, later, extended to Other Backward Classes in the 1990s. Recently, in 2019 it has been extended to Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) of the unreserved category of the people.

However, its greater socio-economic impact is still awaited in view of the lack of its effective implementation and freezing of new employment opportunities in the government sectors. Nevertheless, keeping in mind a long gestation period of effects of such a social policy, it should be carried forward, based on the social dynamics, to achieve the desired goal of social justice and equality.



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## 3.6 IMPORTANT SOCIAL SECURITY INITIATIVES

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India has five major programmes forming altogether the foundation of its social security system; namely, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), school meals, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, Public Distribution System (PDS) and the social security pensions. Let us introduce these programmes.

### 3.6.1 Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

Launched in 1975, ICDS programme provides services of nutrition, health and pre-school education to children under six years' age through dedicated child care centres or Anganwadis, across the country, through trained women staff known as Anganwadi workers. The frontline health workers at the centres, local Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) and Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA), provide health services such as monitoring of children's growth and immunisation and regular antenatal care. Nearly 1.4 million Anganwadi centres serving more than 90 million children across the country provide regular health check-ups, nutritious food, games, etc to the children in the age group of 3- 6 years. Also, there exists a provision for 'take-home rations' (THR) and children's immunisation at the centres. Besides, pregnant women, lactating mothers and adolescent girls are also provided nutrition and health services at the centres.

The Supreme Court's 2001 verdict on Mid-Day meals stated that children up to the age of six years should be provided with nutritious food under the ICDS. The Court's another order passed in 2006 included all pregnant women, lactating mothers and adolescent girls, other than the children under six years of age, in the entitlement of the ICDS services as a matter of their right. These Court orders have consolidated and expanded the ICDS reach to the country's all corners.

### 3.6.2 School Meals

School meals scheme is one of the most successful social security initiatives in India. Already having existed for a long time in some States like Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, the Government brought it under the National Programme of Nutritional Support for Primary Education (NPNSPE) in 1995 to extend its benefits to other States' children in other States, as well. Initially, the school children were provided only wheat or rice but the Supreme Court's intervention in 2001 made in response to a petition on right to food, all the State governments were directed to provide the cooked mid-day meals to children in primary schools.

It further received impetus with the UPA Government formed in 2004 which was strongly committed to providing the school children with a well-cooked nutritious mid-day meal and financial allocation for it in the Union Budget was increased. The Central financial assistance promoted the States to improve the quality of the meals provided to the children and, also, helped them extend the scheme to the children of the upper primary stage (class 6 to 8).

Initially, a lot of resistance emerged from teachers and upper caste parents who did not want their children to intermingle and inter-dine with lower castes' children. However, the scheme has been successfully established across the nation. Presently, the mid-day meal scheme covers over 100 million children across the country with the cost of nearly 0.1% of the GDP.

It benefits the society in many ways. First, it provides nutritious food to children and reduces classroom hunger. Second, it increases the children's school participation and enhances their learning capacities. Third, it makes children's intermingling and inter-dining that counters caste prejudices and contributes to social equity in the society. Finally, it creates employment opportunities for women and liberates them from the burden of feeding their children during day-time.

### **3.6.3 Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)**

Influenced from Maharashtra's employment guarantee scheme the Central Government enforced the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in 2006, enacted in 2005 and renamed as MGNREGA in 2007 after Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation. Initially implemented in India's first 200 poorest districts and, in 2008, extended across the nation, the Act mandates that an adult with a job card, who wants to work, has to be employed within 15 days of his/ her application or registration for work, failing which he/she is entitled to employment allowance. It also provides for minimum wages, basic facilities at the workplace and payment of wages within 15 days. However, the Central Government has replaced in 2009 the minimum wage criteria with the right to fix wage in different States based on the State-specific price index while keeping the real wages constant.

Local administration is responsible and accountable for its proper implementation. Both, the Central and State governments being reluctant to take the onus of accountability for maintaining, supervising and properly implementing its provisions since the inception it has seriously suffered from a lack of administrative accountability. Besides it faces some other challenges such as corruption in the fund utilisation and delayed wage payment to the workers', compulsorily made through their accounts in banks or post offices. However, this mode of wage payments has significantly contained the corruption that exists in the MGNREGA fund utilisation.

Its benefits go much beyond the economic aspects. Politically it helps revive the grassroots democratic institutions in rural areas such as Gram Panchayats and Gram Sabhas. As these local bodies are mainly involved in its implementation, they play a significant role in the planning of works and social audits. It also plays an important role in empowering women through their work participation and promoting gender equality in the rural society. Contrary to a low rate of women's participation in India's overall workforce, women workers in MGNREGA constitute about half of the total workers. Of these women workers, over a half belongs to the SCs and STs.

### 3.6.4 Social Security Pensions

As told earlier, the Article 41 of the Constitution directs the State to make provision for public assistance to its citizens in contingencies such as 'unemployment, sickness, old age and disablement within the limits of its economic capacity and development'. Social security pension in India for widows, the elderly and disabled persons is provided through National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) initiated by the Central Government in 1995. Three sister schemes; namely, Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS), Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) and Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS) are constituents of this scheme.

IGNWPS, started in 2009 under the Ministry of Rural Development, had, earlier, provision of a monthly pension of Rs. 200/- for all widows in the age group of 40-59 years which was in 2012 revised to the age group of 40-79 years with a monthly pension of Rs. 300/- per beneficiary.

IGNOAPS is a non-contributory old-age pension scheme. Under this, citizens of India who are 60 years and above and live below the poverty line (BPL) are eligible to apply for a monthly pension. People in the age group of 60-79 years are provided a monthly pension of Rs. 300/- while the people in the age group of 80 years and above receive a monthly pension of Rs. 500/-.

Under IGNDPS, BPL people in the age group of 18 years and above (up to 79 years), with more than 80% disability, receive a monthly pension of Rs. 300/- per beneficiary whereas those in the age group of 80 years and above receive a monthly pension of Rs. 500/- per beneficiary.

Indian pension schemes are facing serious problem of implementation. First, the process of beneficiary identification is slow and cumbersome, making people to wait for years in the hope if they can apply at all. Second, the monthly payment is irregular and unpredictable. In some cases, payment is made only once or twice a year, instead of monthly basis. Third, collection of monthly pension becomes a difficult task, due to the limited reach of India's banking system, while corruption in post offices defeats the very purpose of these schemes.

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## 3.7 LET US SUM UP

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Social policy refers to the guidelines directed towards people's welfare in economic and non-economic aspects through measures of progressive redistribution of resources to meet the needs of livelihood, health, education, housing and social security. Social security is both protective and curative action, encompassing social insurance and social assurance respectively. With the advent of urbanisation and industrialisation during the colonial period organised social welfare started, more in urban areas, for only limited groups. After Independence, guided by welfare provisions made in the Constitution the Government of India has initiated some important policy measures related to land reforms, food procurement and distribution system, education, health, and affirmative action. Besides, special programmes have

been initiated to take care of the vulnerable people and victims of time and situation through some targeted social security initiatives such as ICDS, Mid-Day Meal, MGNREGA and National Social Assistance Programme.

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### 3.8 KEY WORDS

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**Social Policy:** A set of principles for people's socio-economic welfare to be taken through measures of progressive resource redistribution for meeting the needs of livelihood, health, education, housing and social security.

**Social Security:** Protective and curative measures provided by the society/State to protect people from or bring them out from contingencies.

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## UNIT 4 RURAL SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: NATURE AND SCOPE

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- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Rural Society: The Structure and Culture
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### 4.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- explain ‘rural society’ as a context of social development;
- understand the nature of rural social development;
- know its scope; and
- tell about major initiatives taken for it.

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

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In the previous three units, you have learnt how to conceptualise social development; how to explain it; what determines and shapes it; what indicates it and what instruments the nations use to realise it. However, this phenomenon is understood best when seen in a context, through its ground-level experiences, as with the variation of its societal/community context it too varies in terms of its essential qualities (nature) and the extent of the social issues and activities it covered (scope). Based on rural-urban contexts, one can find rural and urban variants of social development. In fact, rural society, rather than urban society, is comparatively much more in need of social development. In this unit we shall discuss the nature and scope of rural social development. Let first explain ‘rural society’ as a context of social development.

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## 4.2 RURAL SOCIETY: THE STRUCTURE AND CULTURE

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The word 'Rural' derives from the Latin word *Ruralis* which means 'of the countryside'/ a 'village'. NSSO defines 'rural' as an area with a population density of up to 400 persons per square kilometer; villages with clearly surveyed boundaries but no municipal board and minimum of 75% of male working population involved in agriculture and allied activities (cited in Compton, 2019: 28). Thus, 'rural' has three criteria; viz., area with specified density of population, villages with clear-cut boundary and specified portion of male working population engaged with agriculture.

Though an emerging economic power, in reality India remains largely rooted in villages. Majority of its rural population lives on agriculture and allied activities. Its rural population has low educational levels, high poverty and high mortality and fertility rates. The rural residents have relatively fewer modern amenities as compared to their urban counterparts. The villagers are commonly tended to migrate to urban areas for employment and education. Even after the passage of decades of Independence got in 1947, its rural literacy rate is still 68.91% (Census 2011). Disparity of education, employment, land ownership and assets is more pronounced in rural areas with considerable variation across social groups.

Knowledge of social institutions is very important to understand the rural development pathway and to compare the changes the rural society has undergone. Rural society prefers living and sticking together as it gives them security and strength. In India, joint family typically consists of three or more generations and their spouses living together as a single household with a common kitchen. It has been present in rural households from the very beginning but it is now changing into nuclear or elementary family, due to migration of rural people for better opportunities in cities or due to their educational and occupational mobility. The share of nuclear family, consisting of a pair of parents and their unmarried children, has risen from 50.7% to 52.1% and that of joint family has fallen from 21.1% to 16.8% across India; however, the dip is sharper in rural India, i.e., from 21.1% in 2001 to 16.8% in 2011(Census 2011).

Even in the midst of India's diversity of region, religion, language and ethnicity in India, it is caste that holds all discussions and debates. It mainly comes from Hinduism, the religion followed by majority population, but stratifies other religious communities, as well. *Manusmriti*, widely regarded as the most authoritative Hindu law book, acknowledges and justifies caste system as the basis of social order and regularity. Caste system divides people into thousands of groups, classifiable broadly under four main occupational categories or *varnas*; namely, Brahmins (who read scriptures and performed rituals), Kshatriyas (warriors and protectors of the society), Vaishyas (who engaged in trade, agriculture and rearing of cattle) and Shudras (who did service to the preceding three *Savarna*/ upper castes).

Having dictated almost every aspect of Hindus' religious and social life for centuries, caste arranges groups and sub-groups in a complex hierarchy. The

Brahmins occupied the highest position while the Shudras stood at the lowest rung of the ladder. Historians do inform that in the ancient India the formal distinctions of caste were of limited importance and social identities were much more flexible wherein people could move easily from one caste to another.

Rural communities, for long, arranged on the basis of caste, have almost always lived in segregated colonies; water wells were not shared; *Savarna* castes (Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas) would not accept food or water from the Shudras and one could marry within one's own caste. Today, a significant reduction in caste discrimination is seen, yet it still exists, especially, in the rural areas. In the last few decades the lower castes, especially SCs and STs, have registered more cases against the discrimination they faced, mainly in the rural areas, and in most of the registered cases the victim is women. This discrimination thus reflects caste bias as well as gender bias. The report prepared on completion of 20 years of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 noted that the number of registered cases of rape against SC and ST women have outnumbered other offences such as murder, kidnapping, arson, robbery and dacoity.

Based on unequal distribution of land they divide into classes, as well. Before Independence, landowners (zamindars), tenants and agricultural labourers constituted three classes in the rural society. The landowners, who were tax gatherers and non-cultivating owners of land, belonged to the upper caste groups. The agricultural labourers who were placed in the position of bondsmen and hereditarily attached labourers belonged to the lower caste groups. A great part of land belonged to the Zamindars, which they had acquired by unethical means. This made the agricultural labourers poorer and poorer as they couldn't stand with the unfair rise in the prices and fell in debt trap. This class division was abolished through legislation on land reforms after India's Independence. However, this is still in practice in rural areas and reflects in people's behavior, leading to discrimination and exploitation in many forms. Evidences of exploitation of the bonded labourers are still found in some places.

Clearly, the rural society has typical demographic and structural elements (qualities of population, family, caste, class and gender) as well as cultural elements (low levels of education, health and nutrition, values, beliefs and practices), which pose various challenges to development initiatives taken for its uplift. These are the issues and activities of 'social' nature and addressing them only can help it develop. Their role in the process of rural development makes us realise the need of social development in the rural society. Also, they determine the nature and scope of rural social development. Let us, first, understand the nature of rural social development. Before proceeding further, let me check your progress.

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## 4.3 NATURE OF RURAL SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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Rural social development refers to a positive change in rural people's social conditions and their modes of life. The change consists of many interrelated aspects of people's life, each of which needs to be dealt in its own unique way. As the term 'social' has the key role to conceptualise 'social development', one needs to define it. It is defined in two ways. *Holistic approach* defines 'social' as **anything relating to people/ society** while *residual approach* defines 'social' as **anything which is 'not economic'**. The latter approach lacks any acceptable definition of the word 'economic'; it refers to multiple activities like 'financial', 'directly productive' issues, etc. and it excludes economic aspect from the ambit of 'social' which is very important for constituting the latter. Contrarily, the holistic approach to 'social' covers all aspects of life- social, cultural, political and economic- of all sections of the people. Thus, the holistic approach assigns to 'social' a meaning in its totality that determines the very nature of rural social development. While attempting to understand the 'nature' of rural social development we find its three elements: (i) essential qualities, (ii) levels of these qualities and (iii) their historical evolution. Let us first know about essential qualities.

### 4.3.1 Essential Qualities of Social Issues

Essence of rural social development can be understood by identifying essential qualities of social issues in the following four societal features:

#### i) *General Social Characteristics*

Rural social development, basically a process of qualitative change, affects the structure, demography, culture and psychic orientation of the society. So, its essential qualities can be discerned in general characteristics of the society, mainly comprising the following four social domains:

- i) Demographic structure, comprising size and density of population, age and sex structures, household structure and composition
- ii) Social structure, comprising leadership structure, class, caste or other social divisions
- iii) Religious and cultural beliefs and practices, making general culture of the society
- iv) General attitudes, making a psyche/mindset of the society.

#### ii) *General Quality of Life*

It consists of a number of different factors like economic status, income, poverty, etc which have wider implications for other aspects of life. For example, income affects health, nutrition, access to various goods and services, leisure activities and the ability to choose between alternative lifestyles, all of which are important components of the quality of life.



### iii) *Social Services*

Social services are initiatives taken by the Government or Non-Government Organisations to improve the people's status. They are free or subsidized services in the field of health, education, water and sanitation, and welfare benefits.

### iv) *Social Justice*

Social justice considers that all human beings are equal and so everyone in society deserves equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities, regardless of their legal, political, economic or other circumstances. It covers issues of equity, females' social position, caste-based discrimination, migration issues and human rights issues.

With the help of indicators derived from the essential qualities social development is subjected to measures, stating its level (high, medium or low) and comparing the changes in the qualities observed across the rural areas, over the time.

## 4.3.2 Levels of Social Development

The degree/level of social development allows comparisons between areas/societies in terms of changes that have taken place over a time-period. By selecting appropriate social indicators/items one can measure social development in terms of degree/level of the qualities/ changes. To select appropriate social indicators one requires the following three things:

### i) *Social Indicators*

Social indicators selected should cover all relevant aspects/qualities of social development that are being measured, i.e., social characteristics, quality of life, social services and social justice. They should reflect positive and negative changes to indicate a development. A positive change indicates progress of the society while a negative change reflects its retrogression.

Some of these indicators are relatively easy to be used for measurement. For example, there are fairly obvious and generally accepted indicators of quality of life such as per capita income, life expectancy, infant mortality, food consumption, quality of housing, etc. Similarly, measurable indicators of access to social services include distance to the nearest school, health and sanitation facility, clean drinking water, school attendance, number of doctors per '000 population, etc.

However, in case of many indicators the measurement parameter is very disputable, especially when one gets down to the details of exactly what to measure. Should one simply measure the quality of life by household or try to distinguish between different household members such as men, women and children? Should one measure the food consumption in terms of the total number of calories consumed or distinguish between foods with different nutrient values? Is availability of social services within radius of reach an adequate measure of access or other factors such as availability of transport, charges for services, etc also affect access? And when it comes to some other

aspects of social development especially those related to social justice, it is much more difficult to find appropriate indicators. For example, how does one measure consideration of human rights or the degree of participation in decision-making?

ii) *Availability and Collection of Data*

Collection of data is neither an easy task nor is it very cost effective. It needs necessary resources, planning, implementation, and accuracy and comprehension in their compilation. Though it must be possible to obtain the data needed to actually measure the variables selected as indicators, either by cost-effective data collection exercises or from secondary sources (i.e., data already collected and available for use), yet this is often a major problem because much of the information required is not available in the required form. The problems are particularly great at district and rural levels, especially if one requires information for a particular project or programme.

iii) *Data to Enable Comparisons*

The data must be available in scalable form to make comparisons of growth between different areas or societies over a period of time, and also they should be easily distinguishable, which is not always the case. Sometimes, data, especially social data, are found in a very subjective and elaborated form, i.e., qualitative form that makes it difficult to deduce and make comparisons. In such cases one can either use some sort of qualitative scale (e.g., high, medium, low or very good, good, fair, poor, very poor) or briefly describe them to indicate their main similarities and/or differences.

The quantitative or numerical data make comparisons easy. Also, the data must be collected at regular intervals so that comparisons can be made over the time.

iv) *Choices of a Few 'Key' Indicators*

Due to problems of obtaining accurate and inclusive data one has to often rely on a few 'key' indicators of social development, for which information is readily available and which can be correlated with other factors that are not possible to measure directly. For example, in case of 'World Happiness Index 2021', a number of key indicators or variables have been pooled together to form a 'composite' index. The ranking is based on Gallup World Poll data on six variables: (i) GDP, per capita income, (ii) social support, (iii) healthy life expectancy, (iv) freedom, (v) generosity and (vi) perception of corruption. These data were compared and analyzed to prepare the ranking of countries.

The levels of social development within the same as well as across the rural areas have been changing over the time as its 'social' context has also evolved all through the ages and years.

### **4.3.3 Evolution of Social Development**

Rural society has been relatively a more integrated system of closely interrelated components of life such as agricultural and non-agricultural,

economic, social and political, and religious and secular. It has evolved in a phased manner. With the invention of computer presently high speed internet and blooming of Information Technology industry, known as a new phase of revolution in rural India, is being witnessed. During the time of Corona epidemic when everything is going digital, the nature of rural society is going to be altered more. One is to witness structural changes, causing simultaneous evolution of social development. Let us discuss various stages of rural social development.

i) ***The Pre- agricultural (Hunting and Gathering) Stage***

In the earliest time human beings, like other species, depended on hunting and gathering of food for survival; lived in caves and covered their bodies with animal skin or leaves to protect themselves from harsh environmental conditions. But development of skills enabled them to grow food and enter into agricultural stage.

ii) ***The Agricultural Stage***

Human beings learned to grow food and consequently started to own land. Earlier, food crops were grown to feed the family and society. As gradually things took commercial turn and industry started. The area under cultivation increased to give profit out of the land produce. Cash crops cultivation also increased. This changed not only peoples' outlook on agriculture but also their life style and social behaviour. Notably, industrial development led to urbanisation and social divisions. A commercial or trading center, little away from rural areas, became active hub of trade and commercial activities. Later, it developed into a hotspot area, leading to formation of urban area or town and, later, cities. Some people shifted to urban area and some stayed back in villages. With this, there started migration, perturbing the rural demography and structure.

iii) ***The Industrial Stage***

By the time industries developed, urban and rural social domains had already emerged. Industries became the turning point in shaping societies. People from villages migrated to cities for better opportunities and settled down there. Rural demography and sex ratio changed and many other changes accompanied them.

iv) ***The Stage of Information and Communication Technologies***

During the last few decades, a new industrial revolution, driven by the development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the Internet has significantly predisposed the patterns of working, living, socialising, producing, marketing, cooperating, interacting, etc. It has spread its roots from local to the global level. Everything is just a tap away; the world can be experienced on one's fingertip. People are getting to know other people from various cities and country, besides their neighbours. Their knowledge about other cultures, societies, ways of living, etc h is impacting their social circle and lifestyle. They are imbibing some new practices, becoming liberal in their thinking and incorporating different types of cultures.

With the teaching going online during the Corona pandemic and the government providing support to rural pupil with laptops, mobiles and high speed internet, a shift in learning pattern is seen in rural India. Earlier, pupils were restricted to interacting within a confined group for knowledge but now with the mobile and Internet in their hands the whole world is in their classroom. Besides, they can also learn from their most celebrated teacher and clear their doubts while sitting in a room's corner. Other sectors are also deeply impacted by technology. Farmers are getting benefited from weather related and other significant information about farming and agriculture and updates on the Internet. Women are exploring their area of interest and learning new skills to excel and support their family.

This historical evolution of the societal structure has been accompanied by evolution of the essential qualities of social development as well, enhancing the extent or scope of social development. Before we discuss scope of rural social development, let me check your progress.

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## 4.4 SCOPE OF RURAL SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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Rural social development, as a collective action for promoting the well-being of all sections in rural society, is carried out by multiple local, national and international organisations by means of various programmes. Thus, its coverage/extent/scope broadly embraces three components: social issues and activities, the agency and the instruments. Let us discuss them.

### 4.4.1 Social Issues and Activities

Rural social development involves a range of social issues and activities for promoting various rural sections' well-being. These activities are discussed under the following categories:

i) *Demographic Structure*

India's rural population proportion has gradually declined from 89.2% in 1901 to to 68.84% in 2011The urbanisation trends project the urban population taking over the rural population by 2050. Besides, 72.4% of the workforce resides in rural areas and the rural economy contributes 46% to the national income.

Other demographic factors like population density, sex ratio and ethnic composition have also undergone changes that vary across the States, due to social, cultural and regional diversity and heterogeneity of population. The rural population comprises several castes and tribes (*Adivasis*), including SCs and STs. Though the SC population has grown from 16.2% in 2001 to 16.6% in 2011 and the ST population has grown from 8.2% in 2001 to 8.6% 2011, their social position has not improved significantly. Cases of discrimination against them have increased in the past few years and the upper castes residing in the same village enjoy advantages of the centuries' old caste beliefs.

## ii) *Social Structure*

Change in household type indicates a significant social change in social structure, familial relationships, bond of kinship, etc. Drastic change in the family structure is seen during India's transformation from a closed agrarian economy to globalisation and open market.

A female headed household is rarely seen in rural society which is basically patriarchal and patrilineal. Even when female is main bread earner in the household decision-making authority generally remains with male members. In 2011, female headed households constituted 10.9% of India's total households, auguring good as compared with 10.3% such households in 2001.

## iii) *Gender Inequality*

Gender inequality prevails in terms of women's low status India's rural society. The centuries' old tradition of patriarchal families restricts their access to quality health services, contributing to their high morbidity and mortality rates. Their low status is the product of the old belief that sons are winners of the family and women are only for household chores- not considered a job. This bias exists in division of labour, as well. After marriage, leaving their parental house they move into husband's house while men stay back. This discrimination, along with superiority assigned to men in work, has led to strong preference for sons and changed the demography, resulting in alarmingly skewed sex ratio, better nutrition and health care for males and a higher female death rate. The child sex ratio has widened from 927 in 2001 to 918 girls per '000 boys in 2011. In rural India, even today girl's birth is undesired and the woman is held responsible for this, leading to intensified domestic or spousal violence. The overall percentage of spousal violence among ever-married women, as per a survey, is 31.2% in rural area.

## iv) *Health and Sanitation*

Rural India had the bad habit of defecating in open that caused unhygienic and unsanitary environment, inviting various diseases like diarrhea and health hazards. With the launch of *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan-Gramin* on 2nd October 2014 by the Government with help of the UNICEF , over 603,175 villages having been declared open defecation-free in January 2020. This has benefited utmost to women, the worst sufferers, from the viewpoint of their health, security, education and mobility.

## i) *Education*

Literacy rate is an indicator of socio-economic development. In India 9% females and 27% males were literate in 1951 while in 2011 82.14% males and 65.46% females are literate. In spite of the wide gender disparity it is a positive development. The low female literacy rate has a dramatically negative impact on family planning and population stabilisation efforts in India. Female literacy is found as a strong predictor of contraceptives' use among married Indian couples, even when women otherwise have no economic independence. Unavailability of schools in vicinity and severe

caste and gender disparities mainly contributed to this relatively low literacy rate of women while discrimination against lower castes has resulted in their high dropout rate and low enrolment rate.

ii) ***Migration***

Internal migration takes place because of better opportunities in an area other than that of one's primary residence. Rural people's translocation to urban area for better future opportunities creates a gap in rural demography. In India internal migration has increased from 30% in 2001 to 37% in 2011.

iii) ***Human Development***

Human development is about expanding richness of human life, rather than simply that of economy. It is a people-centric approach, enhancing human choices. Human Development Index (HDI) is used by United Nations Development Programme to measure development of the nations in the world. Among 189 countries on the UNDP's Human Development Index 2020, India ranks 131st, showing a slip from 129<sup>th</sup> rank in 2019. This progress owes to three decades' rapid development, dramatic reduction in absolute poverty and gains in life expectancy, education and access to health care.

iv) ***Health and Nutrition***

In the last decade India has seen development in the rural health care and nutritional status Health care facilities in rural India improved in the wake of National Rural Health Mission launched by the Government of India in April 2005 and introduction of the community health worker called ASHA, the most important measure of community programmes, as she is selected by the community and resides in the village to provide services at the door steps in rural India.

Women in reproductive age and pregnancy period and children in developing stage need special care for their health and nutritional access. Over 50% women in reproductive stage in rural India are anemic and nearly a half of all under-5 mortalities in India are attributable to undernutrition. Around 46.6 million children in India are stunted, about half of whom reside in rural area and about 21% have low weight for height (wasting). Any nation aspiring for development cannot afford malnutrition of its future- children. In spite of recently witnessed improvement, India has yet to achieve an acceptable health level. India's infant mortality rate, 28.3 deaths per '000 live births, signifies a decrease from previous year's 32 deaths per '000 live births. Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) has declined to 113 in 2016-18 from 122 in 2015-17 and 130 in 2014-2016 (SRS on Maternal Mortality in India 2016-18). This decrease indicates an improved medical care and hygiene and a decrease in female infanticide.

#### **4.4.2 Agencies of Rural Social Development**

The agencies involving in rural social development are largely government organisations. However, a huge number of non-government or voluntary

organisations of international, national, regional and local levels have come up in the past few decades. Let us discuss them.

### i) *Role of Government in Rural Social Development*

Development of a society involves individual and collective efforts and intervention by many government organisations and institutions. It makes the field of social development diverse, wide, comprehensive and interconnected. For instance, without economic development, there is no possibility of any rural social development. Rural social development primarily aims to improve quality of the rural masses, particularly poorer and weaker sections. It is a multi-sectoral activity that includes agricultural development, rural industries, establishment or improvement of infrastructure such as schools, roads, water supply, clinics, communication, markets, welfare sources, improved nutrition, literacy, adult education, fair wages, village planning, public health, etc.

In India the steps taken by the Central and State governments for rural social development are as follows:

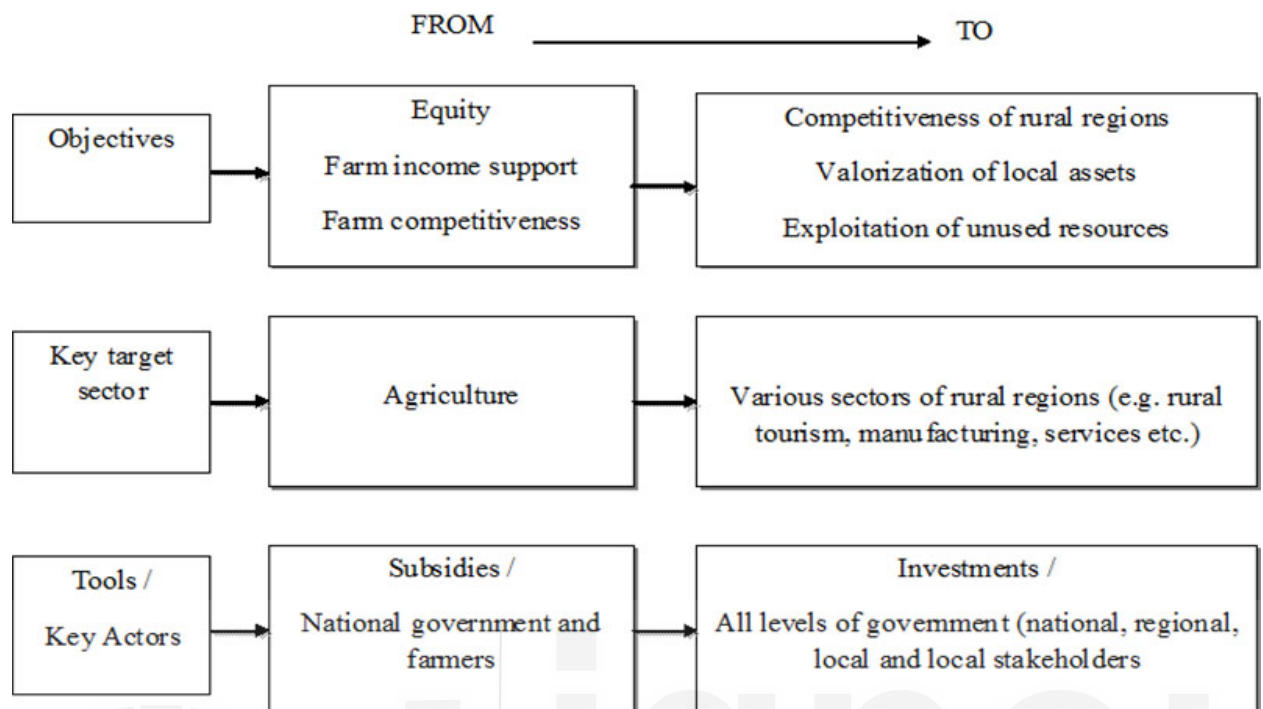
- 1) Providing basic healthcare facilities at an affordable price
- 2) Providing free education to and meeting nutritional needs of poor children
- 3) Providing financial assistance such as loans, especially, to women so as to enable them to set up or maintain small scale businesses and become self-dependent
- 4) Reforming the most occupied sector, ie, agriculture
- 5) Developing roads and other infrastructure to ensure better connectivity and facilities
- 6) Rolling out more schemes like Roshni (skills development scheme) to provide work to needy people
- 7) Promoting Self-Help Groups

The flow chart, given below, shows how government can help reform agricultural sector.

### ii) *Local Self-Government*

The rural social progress entirely depends on an active organisation in villages/ grassroots level which bring all the people, including the weaker sections, into common programmes and carry out it with the assistance of administration. In India, a three-tier structure of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) exists at the village, block and district levels as the government elected by the people living in a local area. The **elected representatives** look into the problems and basic needs of the local people. The **73<sup>rd</sup> (Constitution Amendment) Act, 1992**, mandated the **reservation** of 33.3% seats in PRIs for women across the country. However, the reservation has been increased to 50% in several states; namely, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand and West Bengal.

Chart 1



Source: OECD, 2006.

As the local self-governing bodies, the PRIs ensure people's participation and involvement in formulation and implementation of rural development programmes, promoting rural development.. The Central Government's People's Plan Campaign or *Sabki Yojana Sabka Vikas* is an intensive and structured exercise for planning at the lowest/ Gram Sabha level through **convergence of the PRIs and the concerned departments of the State concerned**, making Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GDPs) in the country and **placing them on a website** where anyone can see the status of the government's flagship schemes.

### iii) International Organisations

Many international organisations are fighting poverty and other problems in poor countries. Some of them are like Oxfam, UNDP, UNICEF, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, USAID, ODI, etc.

### iv) Non-Government Organisations

Numerous NGOs, non-profit seeking entities, are providing social services to the needy and poor in the society Some renowned ones are Help Age India, CRY (Child Rights and You), Lepira Society, Smile Foundation, Rural Health Care Foundation, Goonj, Deepalaya, etc. NGOs are non-profit organisations,.

## 4.4.3 Means of Rural Social Development

The Government has launched various schemes and programmes to provide services to people, especially the poor and deprived sections, and promote their well-being. They are tools for achieving goals of rural social development. Let us introduce them.



i) **Deen Dayal Upadhyay Grameen Kaushal Yojna**

This is a placement-linked skill development scheme for rural poor youth, targeting youth in the age group of 15–35 years.

ii) **Roshni - Skills Development Scheme for Tribals**

It is a skill development scheme offering employment to tribal youth in 24 Naxal-affected districts to provide training and employment to an anticipated youth in the age of 10-35 years for three years. Its 50% beneficiaries are women.

iii) **Swachh Bharat Mission**

Launched on October 2, 2014, Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary, *Swachh Bharat Mission* envisions paving access for every person to sanitation facilities including toilets, solid and liquid waste disposal systems, village cleanliness and safe and adequate drinking water supply. As a result of the mission, 603,175 villages were declared open defecation-free in January 2020. This rapid progress in ending open defecation across the country has a huge impact on improving water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

iv) **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)**

Launched under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 which was implemented on 2nd February 2006 and renamed in 2007 as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the scheme is an Indian labour law and social security measure. It aims to provide 'right to work' to the people falling Below the Poverty Line. It guarantees 100 days' employment in a year to villagers and 50% of the workers should be women.

v) **National Rural Livelihood Mission (Aajeevika)**

This scheme, restructured from the *Swarn Jayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojna* in 2011, aims to empower women's self-help group model across the country. Under this scheme the Government provides loan up to Rs 3 lakhs at the interest rate of 7% which could be lowered to 4% in case of its timely repayment.

vi) **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna**

It mainly aims to provide all-weather road connectivity to rural areas with population of more than 500 persons and for hilly areas it is 250 persons.

vii) **Antyodaya Anna Yojna (AAY)**

The scheme provides food grains to around 2 crore BPL families at a very subsidized rate. Total 35 kgs of food grains are provided to a family. Rice is provided at the rate of Rs. 3/- per kg and wheat at the rate of Rs.2/- per kg.

viii) **Village Grain Bank Scheme**

Implemented by the Department of Food and Public Distribution, Government of India, it mainly aims to provide safeguards against starvation during the natural calamity period or lean season when marginalised food insecure households have no sufficient resources to purchase rations. Under this, needy people are able to borrow food grains from the village grain bank and return it when they have abundant food.

v) **National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)**

National Rural Health Mission, now under National Health Mission, initiated on 12th April 2005, mainly provides accessible, affordable and accountable quality health services even to the poorest households in the remotest rural regions. ASHA scheme also operates under this scheme.

x) **Aam Aadmi Bima Yojna**

It is a social security scheme for rural households. It provides a group insurance cover to individuals from specified groups against natural and accidental deaths and disablements, covering only one member of the family. The premium of Rs. 200/- per person per annum is shared by the State and Central governments. The insured person needs to pay no premium if his/her age is between 18 and 59 years.

xi) **Kutir Jyoti Programme**

Mainly, to improve the standard of living of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes the government assistance of Rs. 400/- is provided to their BPL families for single point electricity connections in their houses.

xii) **Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA)**

SSA, started as a flagship programme to impart elementary education in a time-bound manner, has operated since 2000-2001 with the main aim of providing free and compulsory education to children in the age 6-14 years, which is a fundamental right, now.

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## 4.5 LET US SUM UP

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Rural social development, a broad and complex concept, lacks any specific definition. Being evolutionary and progressive it always moves in forward direction. Its nature has been explained in terms of essential qualities, their level and their evolution whereas its scope is discussed in terms of social activities, agencies and instruments.

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## 4.6 KEY WORDS

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**Rural Society:** A society, with small area and population density of up to 400 per square kilometer, consisting of villages with clear surveyed boundaries but no municipal board and agriculture as their main occupation.

**Rural Development:** A process of growth and progress in physical, economic, environmental, social and demographic components of rural society.

**Rural social Development:** A positive change in rural people's social conditions and modes of life.

**Rural Social  
Development: Nature  
and Scope**

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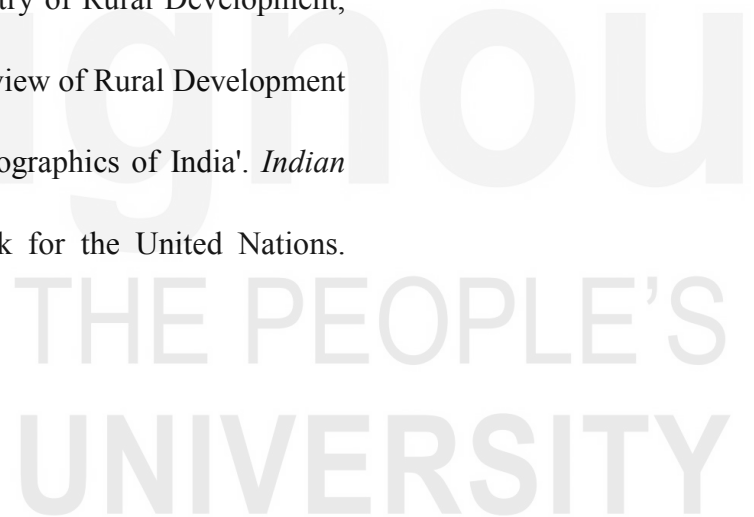
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