

## 2. Segments of Indian Society

### 2.1 Tribal Community

### 2.2 Rural Community

### 2.3 Urban Community

#### INTRODUCTION

In this lesson, you will learn about important aspects of three segments of Indian society i.e. Tribal, Rural and Urban. Indian society has been broadly divided into tribal, rural and urban communities on the basis of their geographical differences and socio-cultural features. Tribal people marked by a distinct culture, language, economy and religion, live in relative isolation. They are considered socio-economically backward when compared to rural and urban communities. On the other hand, the rural and urban communities differ on the basis of physical environment, way of life, norms, values and a large number of other factors such as density of population, economic activities, poverty, caste, class, family and religion. Urban community comprises of non-agricultural sectors like industries and services. However, there has been a continuous interaction between all these three segments.

#### 2.1

#### TRIBAL COMMUNITY

The term 'tribe' has had multiple meanings. Despite the lack of precise meaning for tribe, this did not cause much confusion as long as it was possible to locate them and differentiate them from other groups. This was the case in Australia, Melanesia and North America, when tribal people were first studied by anthropologists. In India as well as Africa however, the situation has been quite different. This is because groups which

correspond to the anthropologist's definition of tribe have lived in long association with communities of an entirely different type (e.g. rural, urban). Thus, it is very difficult to come across communities which retain all their pristine characteristics. Sociologist Andre Béteille holds the view that categories in social sciences are so diversified that it seems pointless to arrive at clear-cut definitions of such categories. In India, Western definitions do not help in locating a tribe. Emphasis needs to be given to the historical perspective i.e. the process by which tribes have been transformed. Only by going into the antecedents of a group can we say with any confidence whether or not it should be considered as a tribe.

According to Bhoumik Deshmukh, the term 'adivasi' is an umbrella term for a heterogeneous set of ethnic and tribal groups believed to be the aboriginal population of India. These comprise a substantial minority of the population of India. Scholars like David Hardiman also prefer to use the term adivasi because it relates to a particular historical development during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Adivasis, according to Hardiman, are groups who have 'evolved a collective identity having shared a 'common fate' under colonial rule.' Today, adivasi groups are a politically assertive category which, along with Dalits, make up a large section of the marginalised communities in India.

Thus, the term 'tribe', which has been used all along, has come in for questioning. In its precise meaning it refers to a community of people claiming descent from a common ancestor. But in its application, it is used to cover a variety of social and economic forms and biological and racial entities.

Region	Location	Names of Tribes
Himalayan Region	It has three sub-regions: (a) North-Eastern Himalayan region (b) Central Himalayan region (c) North-Western Himalayan region	Garo, Khasi, Jainta, Naga, Mizo, Khasa, Lepcha, Gaddi
Middle Indian Region	Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Over 55 percent of the tribal people of India live in this zone.	Gond, Santhal, Munda, Ho, Oraon, Birhor
Western-Indian Region	Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Dadra and Nagar Haveli. It has about one crore tribal population.	Bhil, Katkari, Warli, Baina
South India Region	Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala. About one-sixth of tribal population of India is found in the Southern zone.	Toda, Kota, Irula, Badaga, Chenchu, Kurumba
The Island Region	The Islands of Andaman and Nicobar in the Bay of Bengal and Lakshadweep in the Arabian Sea.	Andamanese, Nicobarese, Onge, Jarawa, Sentinelese

### Definitions of Tribe :

👉 **Andre Béteille** : “A tribe is a society having a clear linguistic boundary and generally a well-defined political boundary. It is within the latter that “regular determinate ways of acting” are imposed on its members. The tribe also has a cultural boundary, much less well-defined and this is the general frame for the mores, folkways, the formal and informal interactions of these members.”

👉 **L.M. Lewis** : “Tribal societies are small in scale and are restricted in the spatial and temporal range of their social, legal and political relations and possess a morality, a religion and world view of corresponding dimensions.”

👉 **Ralph Linton** : “Tribe is a group of bands, occupying a contiguous territory or territories and having a feeling of unity deriving from numerous similarities in a culture, frequent contacts and a certain community of interests.”

### You should know!

Article 366 (25) of the Constitution of India refers to ‘Scheduled Tribes’ as those communities which are protected under a schedule, according to Article 342 of the Constitution.

As per this, Scheduled Tribes are groups or communities that have been declared by the President of India, as possessing the following characteristics:

- Primitive traits
- Geographic isolation
- Distinct culture
- Shy of contact with the larger community
- Economic backwardness

However, when specific definitions of tribes are applied in the Indian situation, it is found that many groups do not exactly fit

in. 'Scheduled Tribes' can also be ascertained by the fact that they live apart in hills and even where they live on the plains, they lead a separate and excluded existence and are not fully assimilated into the main body of people. They may belong to any religion. In brief, a tribe to be specified as Scheduled Tribe should fulfill the following criteria:

- It should have its distinct language, religious beliefs and culture which should qualify to be considered as primitive.

- It should have an isolated existence. In case it lives in close proximity to other castes or communities, it should not have assimilated with them.

- It should be extremely backward both educationally and economically.

The terms 'tribe' and 'Scheduled Tribe' are complementary and not contradictory.

**Geographical Distribution of Indian Tribes :** L. P. Vidyarthi (1977) has given a five-fold geographical classification of tribes in India on the basis of ecological, social, economic, administrative, ethnic and racial. (See the table given on page 24).

### Activity 1

Form groups of five students. Refer to the geographical classification of tribes in India. Choose a tribe and prepare a PPT/or Chart Presentation of 8-10 slides of its cultural traits.



Gond Tribe

**Characteristics of Tribes :** Following are the basic characteristics of tribal communities in India:

(1) **Geographical isolation :** They have usually a well-demarcated geographical territory. They live in clusters (called 'padas'), which are generally located in remote forests and hilly areas. Today however, many tribal people have migrated to rural villages and cities and in the course of time, they have mixed with non-tribal populations.

(2) **Economic life :** They are engaged in varied occupations such as hunting, fishing and food gathering of forest produce, basket making, weaving, iron-smith etc. Besides, they also practice simple agriculture and shifting cultivation. Their economic activities are based on rudimentary technology, usually resulting in low produce. They have a low level of literacy and poor health. In addition their economic and infrastructural and marketing facilities are poor. Some tribes still depend on barter system. These are among the few causes that leave them economically backward, at bare subsistence level, still leading a hand to mouth existence.

(3) **Sense of identity :** Tribal folk nurture a sense of exclusive identity, which strongly binds them together as a community. This sense of identity is characterised by an awareness of territorial boundaries. The very existence of a tribe depends upon their sense of identity. Each tribe has a common name (e.g. Warli, Irula, Gond, Naga, Khasi) which adds to their sense of cohesion and solidarity.

(4) **Endogamous group :** Tribal people generally do not marry outside their tribe. Marriage within the tribe is the usual norm. Marriage among tribals is based on the rule of tribal endogamy. It is viewed as a contract and usually there are no taboos on divorce and remarriage. Recently, the increased mobility among the tribals has changed this condition and now, inter-tribal marriages are not uncommon.

**(5) Distinctive culture and language :**

They have independent traditions with respect to social customs, folklore, ecology and a belief system. Each tribe has its own dialect. However, they may also use the regional language for communication with people outside the tribe.

**(6) Simple society :**

Tribal communities are considered as simple societies because their social relationships are primarily based on family and kinship ties. Besides, they do not have any rigid social stratification. They have their own faith systems based on natural phenomenon and beliefs in evil forces. Based on it they have a traditional pantheon of various gods and goddesses. Traditionally, they have had a marginal degree of contact with other cultures and people.



**Tribal economic life**

**(7) Simple religion :**

Their forms of religion are known as ‘animism’ (i.e. worshipping the soul or ancestors), ‘animatism’ (i.e. worshipping any non-living body like stone or wood), ‘totemism’ (i.e. worshipping a tree or any animal as the founding ancestor), and ‘naturism’ (i.e. worshipping elements of nature like river, stream, Sun, Moon, forest, etc) and ‘manaism’ (i.e. worshipping force which is believed to move swiftly across the world and enter into objects and people, giving them powers which they previously lacked). Sacred groves are an integral part of tribal society. They also have belief in black and white magic, ancestor worship, benevolent and malevolent spirits.

Tribal Religion	Term introduced by
1) Animism	Edward Tylor
2) Animatism	Robert Marett
3) Totemism	James Frazer
4) Manaism	Robert Marett
5) Naturism	Max Mueller

**(8) Community administration :**

Each tribe has its own distinct ways of community administration, meant for solving various individual and community issues. They manage the internal community issues through



**“Suryadev Mandir” (Temple of the Sun God) at Kasatvadi Village, Jawahar Taluka, Dist. Palghar**



**“Shedoba cha van” (Forest of Shedoba) Sacred grove in Murbad Taluka, Dist. Thane**



“Waghoba Mandir” (Temple of the Tiger God)  
at Kasatvadi Village, Jawhar Taluka, Dist. Palghar

‘tribal panchayat’, family and kinship ties. The authority of the Tribal Chief and Council of Elders was the governing body of each tribe. Today however, this autonomy of the traditional authority vested in tribal chiefs has weakened.

**(9) Clan organisation :** Clans are an integral part of tribal community. They refer to a number of families who are related in blood and who trace their descent from a real or imagined person, object or being.

Most tribes in India are divided into exogamous clans and lineages. Clans are a basis for strong kinship bonds.

**(10) Egalitarian values :** The tribal social organisation is based on egalitarian principles. There is no hierarchy defining social relationships. Thus, there are no institutionalised inequalities like the caste system or gender based inequalities. However, in some tribes the chief may enjoy a higher social status, having more authority.

### Tribal Community and Sacred Groves

#### Sacred Groves

Sacred Groves are tracts of forest land dedicated to local deities who are manifestations of the energy of the universe. Since hunter-gatherer times, the tribal and rural people of India have been revering the ‘Earth-Energy’ and the ‘Cosmic-Forces’ manifested in the forests and the groves. These deities are believed by the tribal people to be fiercely protective about the grove and the village.

Sacred Groves are like a separate institution through which a myriad of

relationships emanate, giving rise to a culture pattern. This pattern connects the local people with their fields, forests and with one another. Worship in the sacred groves is related to fields, forests and to the survival of the tribal and rural people living in and around the grove. Due to this, large tracts of forestland are preserved, which in turn have helped to conserve biodiversity. Sadly, many of these are facing threats of depletion as there is no law to protect sacred groves.

**Sun Worship :** Tribal people look upon the Sun as the primordial source of all energy (which is a scientific view). They are aware that it due to this energy that plants grow and their cattle can feed. If their cattle are healthy, their fields will also bear good crop and the people will also be healthy. Thus, nature gods, viz. sun, rain, earth are all energy sources and are a must in tribal worship.

### **You should know!**

**Tiger God Worship :** The Tiger God is a prominent deity in the pantheon of gods in sacred groves in Maharashtra. The tiger is revered as the protector of the forests. There are several stories in Indian mythology about tigers having tremendous powers. They are shown fighting dragons, creating rain, keeping children safe and having healing powers.

Several tribal people in Maharashtra (e.g. Warlis and Malhar Kolis) believe that the tiger is the greatest of gods. Every harvest season, they donate part of their harvest to the tiger god as a symbol of life and regeneration.

**The Legend of the Warli Rain Dance (Kambad Dance) :** Most of tribal song and dance revolves around nature worship. Among the Warli Tribe found in parts of Maharashtra like Thane, Raigad and Palghar, the Kambad Dance is dedicated to the goddess of food grains (Kansari Devi). As the legend goes, the goddess was angry with the people for wasting food grains, so, she disappeared and no one could find her. The people appealed to the Rain God (Naaran Dev), who then performed the rain dance and wooed the goddess out of her hiding place in the cleft of a rock. She then came on to the earth where she could germinate and the people would then get food. As per legend, the tribal people are very particular about not wasting food grains for fear of incurring the wrath of Kansari Devi.

This dance is only performed by Warli men at the start of the rainy season.

### **Check your progress**

1. Name one tribe in South India, Western India and North-East region.
2. Identify any three tribal occupations.
3. Give examples of tribal belief systems.

### **Reasons for tribal exploitation :**

Following are some reasons due to which tribal problems may have emerged.

- (i) The British wanted to exploit tribal resources, which were rich in minerals and natural resources.
- (ii) Contact with missionaries desirous of converting the tribals, which in some cases, resulted in identity crisis.
- (iii) Entry of specialists like medical professionals, agents and vendors into the tribal areas, causing alienation of tribals from their traditional medicine.
- (iv) Development of transport and communication in the tribal areas, which facilitated the entry of outsiders in the region.
- (v) Displacement of tribal populations from their traditional habitat due to industrial establishments, construction of big dams, highways etc.

### **Problems faced by the tribal community :**

**(1) Alienation from forest land :** Forest land and its resources provide the best means of livelihood for tribal people. Many tribes engage in primary agriculture, food-gathering and hunting. They are heavily dependent on the produce of the forest. Therefore when outsiders exploit the tribal land and its resources, the natural eco-cycle and the tribal life dependent on it is greatly disturbed. The history of land alienation among the tribes began during British period. In addition, tribal lands were also occupied by moneylenders,

*zamindars* and traders. Industrialisation and construction of water reservoirs resulted into further acquisition of land by the State. Various State governments have passed several acts to abolish transfer of sale of tribal land to non-tribals but the issue of tribal alienation has not abated till date.

### Cases of Land Alienation

The 2007-2008 Annual Report states, "Reports received from various States, indicate that 5.06 lakh cases of tribal land alienation have been registered, covering 9.02 lakh acres of land, of which 2.25 lakh cases have been disposed off in favour of tribals covering a total area of 5.00 lakh acres. 1.99 lakh cases covering an area of 4.11 lakh acres have been rejected by the Courts on various grounds".

**(2) Poverty and Indebtedness :** A majority of tribal people live below the poverty line. The tribes practice simple occupations based on primitive technology. Most of the occupations fall into the primary categories such as hunting, gathering and agriculture. There is no profit nor surplus making in such economy. Hence their per capita income is very low, far less compared to the national average. Most of them live in abject poverty and are steeped in debt. Local moneylenders and *zamindars*, take advantage of this situation and exploit the tribals. In order to repay the debts they often have to mortgage or sell their land.

**(3) Health and Nutrition :** In many parts of India the tribal population suffers from chronic waterborne infections and diseases, which often prove to be life threatening. They also suffer from malnutrition since childhood and various deficiencies caused by it. Infant mortality is quite high among the tribals. Lack of proper medical and sanitary facilities and poverty among the tribals also lead to various difficulties in maintaining proper health and nutrition.

Tribal malnutrition is a serious problem today.

**(4) Illiteracy :** Illiteracy among tribals is a major hindrance towards their development. School hours often clash with agricultural and wage-earning activities of children. Children are looked upon as economic assets and are thus expected to supplement their parents' income. Hence, many parents are unwilling to send their children to school, or they come and call the children from school to help in the fields. Also, schools are often not located in the vicinity of tribal settlements. The formal courses in school are not taught in tribal languages, so children lose interest in learning, leading to a high drop out rate.

**(5) Bonded labour :** Bonded labour is banned by Indian Law. However, it still prevails in some tribal areas. Bonded labour is considered to be a serious problem, which started due to rampant poverty and lack of stable income among the tribals. In fact, land alienation, indebtedness, bonded labour and poverty are problems which exist hand-in-hand. However, due to the efforts of the government and voluntary organisations many tribals are being freed from this problem.

**(6) Shifting cultivation :** Shifting cultivation among tribals is a problem since it involves large-scale deforestation and soil erosion. Shifting cultivation is known by various names such as Jhum (among the North-eastern tribes), Khallu (among Maler of Bihar), and Podu (among Khonds of Central India region).

### Activity 2

Visit a tribal settlement in your region and document different aspects of their life (e.g. clothing, shifting cultivation, sacred groves). If a physical visit is not possible then take information from the internet. Make a short presentation to your class and follow it up with a discussion.

**‘Panchsheel’ Philosophy of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru :** Since Indian Independence, particularly with the inception of Five-Year Plans, the concern for tribal development has always been high on the government’s agenda. The first Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, not only took a great deal of interest in tribal development, but also created long term guidelines in this regard. He strongly believed that no development activity in the tribal areas should take place at the cost of tribal heritage. This is evident from his views, on tribal development termed as ‘Panchsheel’.

### Summary of ‘Panchsheel’

(i) People should develop along lines of their own genius and we should avoid imposing anything on them.

(ii) Tribal rights to land and forests should be protected.

(iii) We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development.

(iv) We should not over administer these areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes. We should rather work together and not in rivalry with our own social and cultural institutions.

(v) We should judge the results not by statistics or the amount of money spent on them, but by the quality of human life that is evolved.

No doubt, in keeping with these broad guidelines and the provisions of the Constitution, a number of special schemes and programmes have evolved.

**Tribal Development Efforts after Independence :** After Independence, the Government of India has taken various efforts for Tribal Development. The government made available, funding of Tribal Development Programmes i.e. State Plan, Special Central Assistance, Sectorial Programmes of Central Ministries/Department

and Institutional Finance.

### Programmes for Tribal Development by Government

Construction of hostels for Tribal students, educational complex in low literacy pockets for women in Tribal areas. This scheme provides complete financial assistance to NGOs/Organisations established by government as autonomous bodies/educational and other institutions like co-operative societies, to establish educational complexes in identified districts.

Grants-in-Aid to state Tribal Development Cooperative Corporation and others, Village Grain Banks, Grants-in-Aid to Voluntary Organisations, Research and Training to Tribal Development, Post-Matric Scholarships, Overseas Scholarships and Book Banks, Upgradation of Merit and Coaching, Tribal Advisory Council (TAC), Point 11(b) of 20-point Programme, The new paradigm shift for Tribal Development Strategy etc. By these different programmes the government aims at overall development of tribal people. However, not all programmes were successful. So, at present we continue to see tribal problems and their backwardness.

### Activity 3

Find out about any tribal scheme started by the government or an NGO. Share your findings with your class.

### Check your progress

1. Why are tribal people slow to change? Give two reasons.
2. Identify three forms of tribal religion.
3. State two problems caused by cultural contact with non-tribal people.

## CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS FOR TRIBAL COMMUNITY

The constitution has given more than 20 articles for the redressal and upliftment of the underprivileged, with policies on positive discrimination and affirmative action with reference to Scheduled Tribes. They have helped in the educational development of the tribes.

Article No.	Provision
14	Confers equal rights and opportunities to all.
15	Prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of sex, religion, race, caste etc;
15(4)	States to make special provisions for advancement of any socially, educationally backward classes.
16(4)	Empowers the State to make provisions for reservation in appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens, which in the opinion of State, is not adequately represented.
22(2)	73rd and 74th amendments, to ensure effective participation of tribals in the process of planning and decision making.
46	State to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker section, especially the ST and protect the social injustice and all forms of exploitation.
244(1)	Tribal Welfare Committees to be setup for the welfare of the tribes. Extension to Scheduled Areas Act 1996. Amendments to the Constitution are extended to the Scheduled Areas through Panchayats.
275	Grant-in-aid for promoting the welfare of STs and raising the level of administration in Scheduled Areas.
330	Seats shall be reserved in the House of the People.
332	Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assemblies of the States.
335	Stipulates the claims that the members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State.

## 2.2 RURAL COMMUNITY

Rural community is one that is agrarian in nature and is dependent on natural resources. Rural economy rests predominantly on agriculture, pastoralism and allied activities. The density of population in rural areas is low. The rural way of life revolves around a traditional value system. India is basically a land of villages.

The autonomy, independence and self-sufficiency which Indian villages enjoyed for centuries gradually declined during the British Period. This was the period when the rural people began to get exposed to different ways of life. Sociologists started some systematic studies of social organisations in Indian villages during colonial and post-independence period. These studies are significant for

understanding Indian rural community and its dynamics, albeit with its limitations. They throw light on village solidarity, village settlement patterns, rural class structure, impact of land reforms, agrarian unrest and so on.

### Definitions of Rural Community

👉 **A.W. Green** : “A village community or rural community is a cluster of people living within a narrow territorial radius who share a common way of life.”

👉 **Encyclopaedia Britannica** : “Rural society is one in which there is a low ratio of inhabitants to open land and in which the most important economic activities are the production of food stuffs, fibers and raw materials.”

In simple words, the Indian rural community may be defined as a group of

about 5000 people (Census of India, 2011) depending on agriculture and allied occupations, permanently residing in a geographic area and participating in common socio-economic and cultural activities.

The rural community has a long history of its own. Rural life has preceded urban life. In spite of the growth of cities, the population of the world is largely rural. According to the 2011 Census, 68.84% of Indian population lives in the rural areas. There are around 6.4 lakh villages in India having varied population strengths.

Rural social formations such as caste, class and family have received popular attention of sociologists. The majority of our sociological literature in India belongs to the study of rural society.

**Panchayati Raj :** The recommendations of the Balwantrai Mehta Committee in the 1950s, led to the institutionalisation of Panchayati Raj as a three-tier system of democratic functioning in villages, from the grassroots level upward. The three tiers of the Village Panchayat today include:

Zilla Parishad  
Panchayat Samiti  
Gram Panchayat

In the old days, the village panchayat was made up of about five elders of the village, whose role was to administer justice. The purpose of the modern panchayat is administrative - to promote rural reconstruction and development.

### Characteristics of Rural Community

The rural community has the following characteristics:

**(1) Community living in villages :** The village largely satisfies needs of its residents. They have a sense of togetherness. The development of villages is influenced considerably by the local needs.

**(2) Small size :** It means that villages are comparatively smaller in size and

population density. In the Indian context a community with a population of about 5000 is designated as a “village”.

**(3) Dominance of agriculture :** Agriculture is the major occupation in villages. However, it is not to be viewed as the only source of income but also as a way of life needs to be ascertained. Almost 40% of our national income is obtained through agriculture and more than 60 % of the people still depend on agriculture. It was associated with various crafts like pottery, carpentry, smithy, basket-weaving etc.

**(4) Primary relations :** The impact of primary relations is still significant in Indian villages. The relationship is informal, personal and inclusive. Community spirit prevails over individual interests. The ‘we-feeling’ helps to build social cohesiveness.

**(5) Social homogeneity :** Homogeneity is an underlying thread due to similarities in the ways of thinking, behaving, dressing, acting and living. There is a tendency to conform to traditions and customs. Group feeling and mutual cooperation is evident among village dwellers. They cooperate with each other in times of exigencies. Due to political interference this cohesiveness has been adversely affected in recent times.

**(6) Significance of family :** The rural community is built around the institution of family. The joint family was once upon a time a significant pillar of village organisation. This has diminished significantly and yet decision making has the impact of collective thinking.

According to **Sorokin** and **Zimmerman** such an agrarian society shows traits of “**Familism**” i.e. the family is the unit of social responsibility, it is the basis of social norms and relationships.

**(7) Status of women :** Women in villages continue to live under patriarchal

control. The “ideal” of “Pativrata” (conjugal fidelity of women) is strongly instilled in the minds of women and men alike. This was glorified in the Indian tradition to the extent that women accepted it as their inherent duty. Women are expected to fulfill their traditional roles. There is an unstated approval for the subservient role of women.

**(8) Religiosity :** Faith in religious practices and rituals is a dominant feature of village community. They have deep faith in religion, God and in religious traditions. Each village has its own deity called ‘Gramdevata’. People of all castes normally worship it and at least once in a year they celebrate fairs or ‘utsav’ (festival). Additionally, people would worship their own family deities.

**(9) Dominance of caste system :** Indian village life is inextricably linked with the caste system which is hierarchical (according to notions of “purity and pollution”, their religious customs and practices, and the nature of their occupation). This interdependence among caste groups is seen in the practice of the “balutedari system”, where traditionally upper castes received services from the lower castes.

It is important to note that the above characteristics of Indian villages have undergone vast changes, especially after Independence. Hence, they are to be understood in their dynamic perspective and in a relative sense.

#### **Problems of Indian rural community :**

It is true that Indian villages are undergoing rapid changes now. These changes have not always brought positive results in all spheres of village life. There are a large number of villages which suffer from major problems such as poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, indebtedness, superstition and the like. Problems faced by the rural community are as follows:

**(1) Poverty :** Poverty is a socio-economic phenomenon in which a section of

rural society is not able to fulfill even its basic necessities of life. A vast majority of rural population works in villages under the grim shadow of poverty, unemployment as well as pitiable economic conditions. Large portions of the rural poor are small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and rural artisans.

**(2) Illiteracy :** When compared to urban population, illiteracy continues to be rampant in rural areas. Primary education is the fundamental right of every child and accordingly, the government has made special provisions (e.g. *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*) for the same. High illiteracy rates among children as well as adults continue even to this day because of inadequate budgetary provisions for rural education. The quality of education in rural areas is a matter of grave concern despite various programmes and provisions.



**Rural development**

**(3) Traditionalism, Conservatism and Superstitions :** Rural India till date can be called a conservative society because it still holds on to traditional mindsets and beliefs. Conformity to traditional customs, religion and ways of life still hold sway. There is usually a reluctance to change their way of life and outlook. Rural folk are slow to change and very often resist changes. Change is unwelcome due to habit; fear of the unknown also encourages a fatalistic attitude.

**(4) Caste influence :** The traditional rights, authorities and sanctions based on caste hierarchy may not be apparent today.

However, it is so deeply entrenched in people's minds that it permeates social interactions. Nevertheless, in the ordinary transactions of daily life, village people tend to cooperate with each other. Members of each caste have their assigned roles at common festivals and those are carried out with willingness.

**(5) Farmers' suicides :** The phenomenon of suicide by farmers is especially worrisome for India because the majority of the workforce is dependent on agriculture for its livelihood. A large percentage of farmers who took their own lives were financially indebted. Undoubtedly, there has been a little positive impact of economic reforms in the agricultural sector in India and in some cases it has been showing negative trends.

**(6) Lower status of women :** As a result of the control of family, religion, customs and traditions, a subordinate status is given to women on the whole. Patriarchal values and practices pervade all aspects of social life. This in turn feeds discriminatory practices and gender stereotyping.

**(7) Family disputes :** This is a common problem in rural areas – conflict over land holdings. Due to this, many joint families have broken and land has become divided to such an extent that it is hardly cultivable. For example, even if land as small as one acre gets divided into four shares, it becomes uneconomical to cultivate the same. Rural farmers suffer due such property disputes and their children are then not motivated to continue farming on land that is in a state of dispute.

**Efforts for Rural Development :** Rural social change has been among the most important subjects of study in the 'developing' countries since 1950's, partly because major national efforts in these countries have been directed towards economic development and such efforts have been located in predominantly agrarian social settings. What is the direction of social change in rural community? Indian sociologist, A. R. Desai

had tried to identify some patterns of rural transformation as a result of developmental programmes. He had identified four major trends of rural social change:

- i. Rapid transformation of agrarian society from subsistence economy to market economy;
- ii. Rapid transformation followed by the introduction of modern technology;
- iii. Abolition of intermediaries such as zamindari system; and
- iv. Emergence of various associations and institutions having linkages with urban and national organisations.

In the light of views of A. R. Desai we see changes in rural community due to efforts of the Government. After Independence, the Community Development Programme (CDP) was started in 1952. It was an initiative meant for all-round development of villages. The aim of CDP was to facilitate involvement and participation of the village community for its own welfare. Later on in 1957, Panchayati Raj (Local Self Government) was started. The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) replaced the CDP in 1979.

#### **You should know!**

Some important recent schemes for Rural Development launched by Government of India are – Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana, Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)/ National Rural Livelihood Mission, Prime Minister Rural Development Fellows Scheme, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY), National Social Assistance Programme, Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (Gramin)/ Indira Awas Yojana, Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY).

The Indian rural community has undergone considerable changes, particularly since Independence, as a result of a series of land reform legislations that have accelerated the pace of this change.

Rural and urban communities have continuous interaction among them due to interdependence. For example, dependence of city people on the farming community for agricultural produce. Likewise, the rural community is dependent on urban areas for new technology, to enhance agricultural production. Gradually, some sense of heterogeneity becomes imminent in rural characteristics. Thus, the term, *rural-urban continuum* (i.e. continuous interaction). Construction of roads and transportation have brought about lot of social and economic changes e.g. weakening of the caste system. Now, there is more mobility and it is changing into a cash market from the previous barter system etc.

#### Check your progress

1. State three characteristics of rural community.
2. Enumerate three changes in rural community.
3. Identify any three programmes started by the Government for rural development.

#### Activity 4

##### Class Debate/Discussion:

‘The impact of caste on Indian society has reduced today.’

### 2.3

### URBAN COMMUNITY

Urban community includes towns, cities and metros with their different way of life. Due to industrial development there is urbanisation as a result of which urban communities have emerged. Every country

has its own urban community. Different criteria are used to identify a community as urban. Some of them are, for example, density of population, types of occupation, social organisation, having a distinct ecology and culture different from that of the dominant culture. The city, in the words of Louis Wirth refers to a relatively large, dense and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals. Early sociologists in Europe and the United States of America i.e. Ferdinand Tonnies, Emile Durkheim, George Simmel, Robert Park and Louis Wirth extensively studied the rise and growth of cities. They presented their views on urbanism as a way of life.

An urban area or urban agglomeration is a human settlement with a high population density and infrastructure of built environment. Urban areas are categorised as cities, towns or suburbs.



Urban Community has a dense population

#### Definitions of Urban Community

👉 **Max Weber** : “Five attributes define an urban community: it must possess (1) a fortification, (2) a market, (3) a law code and court system of its own, (4) an association of urban citizenry creating a sense of municipal corporateness, and (5) sufficient political autonomy for urban citizens to choose the city’s governors.”

👉 **Henri Pirenne** : “Two characteristics were fundamental to the development of an urban culture: a bourgeoisie, or middle class, that depends on trade for both-wealth and political autonomy from non-urban feudal power holders; and a communal organisation

of the urban citizenry that creates the municipal integration necessary to free the city from control by local feudal lords or religious authorities.”

👉 **Merriam-Webster Dictionary** : “A society that is typical of modern industrial civilisation and heterogeneous in cultural tradition, that emphasises secular values, and that is individualised rather than integrated contrasted with folk society.”

As per the above definitions, an urban area is characterised by higher population density and vast human features in comparison to the area surrounding it. The growth of large cities that contain the bulk of society’s population is a very recent development. Urban areas are created and further developed by the process of urbanisation. Urbanisation is a part of the development process.

### **Characteristics of Urban Community :**

Urban communities have the following characteristics:

**(1) Heterogeneity :** In urban areas you will find people belonging to diverse groups such as class, occupation, caste, language and religion etc. – all living in the same territory. There is continuous migration from tribal and rural areas as people come in search of employment, education, healthcare - and with the hope of raising their standard of living. Heterogeneity can be an advantage because it creates a cosmopolitan and tolerant approach, but it can also create tensions.

### **Activity 5**

Debate the positive and negative effects of heterogeneity in an urban setting.

**(2) High density of population :** As urban society is diverse and complex, the degree of urbanity is greater here. In urban communities, there is a confluence of many cultures. Cities and towns have a higher

density of population due to large population in a smaller area and also because there is a steady influx of people pouring into urban centres. Major cities are like ‘urban octopuses’ drawing people into their area of influence.

**(3) Different occupations :** Occupations are more specialised. There is wide spread division of labour and specialisations are numerous. The occupation in urban areas is mainly non-agricultural, i.e. based on manufacturing, trade and commerce, professional and governance, services etc.

**(4) Large-scale social mobility :** As urban people adapt to the class structure, social mobility increases, thus breaking down caste barriers. Achieved status (based on education and occupation) is given greater value when compared to ascribed status (based on birth). An individual can rise on the basis of qualification and merit.

### **You should know!**

Mumbai city has one-sixth of an acre of open space per thousand population though four acres is the suggested standard according to the Master Plan of Greater Mumbai. Metropolitan cities of India are overcrowded both in ‘absolute’ and ‘relative’ terms. Absolute, in the sense that these cities have a real high density of population; relative in the sense that even if the densities are not very high, the problem of providing services and other facilities to the city dwellers makes it so. This leads to tremendous pressure on infrastructural facilities like housing, electricity, water, transport, employment etc. The experiment of developing villages in the hinterland land of Delhi, to reduce the density in the city, has been successful.

**(5) Secondary relations :** In urban areas, interaction among people is largely based on anonymity and secondary contact. It is not personal nor face-to-face; rather, cities are characterised by formal interactions, and impersonal relationships which tend to

become time-bound and based on vested interests. Cultural diversity, formal communication, friends' circle are hallmarks of cities. For instance, people spend their leisure time at multiplexes, gardens, hotels, social clubs and markets.

**(6) Market-based economy :** The economic organisation of cities is based on its markets and financial system. Marketisation is an essential feature of urban centres today e.g. E-marketing, E-biz etc. It is a market that is profit-driven. This creates an individualistic attitude wherein the profit motive guides most activities.

**(7) Advanced infrastructure :** Urban facilities like gas, telephone, drinking water, internet connection, road networks, airports, Metrorail, shopping malls and commercial centres etc. are typically seen in cities. City Development Plans are revised frequently to include diverse civic amenities such as roads, electricity, water, garbage treatment plants etc.

**(8) Nuclear Family :** Joint families are comparatively less in number; nuclear families are on the rise. Individualism has led to the significant increase in nuclear families. Family is less stable today. More than the family as a unit, it is the individual who is given more importance.

**(9) Class consciousness :** People are more class-conscious and progressive. They are exposed to modern developments in the fields of science and technology. There is greater awareness about one's rights as well as participation in movements to protect them.

**(10) Formal social control :** Formal means of social control such as formal education, law and legislation, police and court are needed, in addition to informal means for regulating the behaviour of people. Traditional authority vested in figures such as family elders, religious leaders and teachers have decreased greatly.

**(11) Complex division of labour :** A very clear and specialised division of labour is found in every walk of life. People are trained for their job and skills according to institutional and professional requirements. An interdependence of professions is observed in almost all fields of life. For example, in the medical profession there are gynaecologists, radiologists, paediatricians, anaesthetists and physicians.

#### Check your progress

1. State three characteristics of urban life.
2. Why are nuclear families more common in urban than rural communities?
3. Why are secondary relationships a significant characteristic of urban areas?

**Major Urban Problems :** The rapid growth of urban population, both natural and through migration, has put heavy pressure on public utilities like housing, sanitation, transport, water, electricity, health, education and so on. Although India is one of the less urbanised countries of the world, with only 31% (2011 Census) of population living in urban agglomerations/towns, this country is facing a serious crisis of urban growth at present. Poverty, unemployment and under-employment among rural immigrants, beggary, theft, burglary and other social evils are on the rise. By 2030, more than 50 per cent of India's population is expected to live in urban areas.

The following urban problems are highlighted:

**(1) Urban Sprawl :** Urban sprawl or real expansion of the cities, both in population and geographical area, of rapidly growing cities is the root cause of urban problems. In most cities the economic base is incapable of dealing with the problems created by their excessive size. Massive immigration from rural areas as well as from small towns into big cities has taken place almost consistently;

thereby adding to the size of cities. The urban sprawl is taking place at the cost of valuable agricultural land.

**(2) Overcrowding :** Overcrowding is a situation in which too many people live in too little space. Overcrowding is a logical consequence of over-population in urban areas. It is naturally expected that cities having a large size of population squeezed in a small space will suffer from overcrowding. This is well exhibited by almost all the big cities of India.

**(3) Housing and Slums :** Overcrowding leads to a chronic problem of shortage of houses in urban areas. This problem is specifically more acute in those urban areas where there is a large influx of unemployed or underemployed immigrants who have no place to live, when they enter cities/towns from the surrounding areas.

Slums are a serious problem in urban areas. In Mumbai city, almost 50% of the population is found in slums. In spite of the efforts of the Municipal Corporation to rehabilitate these people the problem remains unsolved. Even a planned city like Chandigarh could not escape slums.

### Do you know?

Slums are known by different terms in various cities of India.

City	Term used for Slums
Mumbai	Jhopadpattis
Delhi	Jhuggi – Jhompdi
Kolkata	Bustees
Chennai	Cheris
Bengaluru	Keris
Kanpur	Ahatas
Jaipur	Kachchi Basti
Bhopal, Indore (M.P.)	Gandi Basti
In tea estates	Barack
In mining areas	Ghobara

**(4) Unemployment :** The unemployment rate in urban India is approximately 15 to 25% of the total workforce. The rate of unemployment is higher among the urban educated. It is observed that of the total urban educated population, majority of them reside in four megacities (Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai).

**(5) Beggary :** For a majority of the urban poor, beggary has become a way of life, due to sheer lack of education and skill to find employability. Many people are pushed into beggary, due to reasons that range from - abject poverty to beggary as a profession. There are organised gangs of beggars which are known to operate in big cities. Also, there are instances of children who are sold into beggary by their parents or are kidnapped and then coerced into begging by maiming them. In Mumbai, beggary has been criminalised under the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959.

**(6) Transport :** With traffic bottlenecks and congestion, almost all cities and towns of India are suffering from acute transportation problems. They get worse and more complex as towns grow in size. As towns become larger, even people living within the built-up area have to travel by car or public transport to cross the town. Wherever trade is important, commercial vehicles such as vans and trucks make the problem of traffic more complicated.



Urban crowded transport

**(7) Water shortage :** Supply of water falls short of demand as cities grow in size and number. Today, we have reached a stage

where practically no city in India gets sufficient water to meet the needs of city-dwellers. In many cities, people get water from municipal sources for less than half an hour on every alternate day. In the dry summer season, taps remain dry for days together and people do not get water supply at a time when they need it the most. Many small towns have no main water supply at all. They depend on such sources as individual tube wells, household open wells, private tankers or even rivers. In big cities like Mumbai, water is resourced from the rivers and lakes in Thane and Palghar, thereby causing hardship in the lives of those people also.

**(8) Sewerage problems :** Urban areas in India are almost invariably plagued with insufficient and inefficient sewage facilities. Not a single city in India is fully sewered. Resource crunch faced by municipalities and the unauthorised growth of cities are two major causes of this pathetic state of affairs. Most cities do not have proper arrangements for treating the sewerage waste and it is drained into nearby rivers (as in Delhi) or into the sea (as in Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai), thereby polluting the water bodies.

**(9) Trash disposal :** As Indian cities grow in number and size the problem of trash disposal is assuming alarming proportions. Huge quantities of garbage generated by our cities pose serious health hazards. Most cities do not have proper arrangements for garbage disposal and the existing landfills are full to the brim, which become hotbeds of disease and innumerable poisons into the environment. Wastes putrefy in the open, inviting disease-carrying flies, mosquitoes and rats. Also, a poisonous liquid called leachate is emitted, which contaminates ground water. People who live near the rotting garbage and raw sewage fall easy victims to several diseases like dysentery, malaria, plague, jaundice, diarrhea, typhoid, dengue and leptospyrosis.



**Trash disposal is a problem in cities**

**(10) Urban crime :** Like other problems, the problem of crime increases with the growth in urbanisation. The problem of urban crime is becoming more complicated in the present day world because criminals often get protection from politicians, bureaucrats and other urban elite. Some criminals reach high political positions by using their money and muscle power. In fact, the increasing trend in urban crimes leads to much tensions and insecurity which makes city life unsafe. Not only the poor, deprived and slum dwellers take to crime; people from well-to-do families also resort to crime in order to make a fast buck and to meet cravings for a lavish life. Occasional failures in life also may drag youngsters to crime. Violent urban crimes like abuse, rape, murder, kidnapping, cyber-crime, economic offences, and various forms of white-collar crime are rampant in many large cities.

### **Activity 6**

In schools located in urban areas conduct a survey using questionnaire or interview technique, to understand about problems in slum area. Students from rural and tribal areas should do the same exercise on farmers' problems. Write and present your report to the class.

### Efforts towards Urban Development :

We cannot think of a strong India economically, socially and culturally, when our cities remain full of squalour, when the quality of urban life declines and the urban environment is damaged beyond repair. Cities are the backbone of economic expansion. Urbanisation can be positively viewed as an engine of economic growth and an agent of socio-political transformation.

The share of urban areas in the total National income has been estimated at 60 per cent and the per capita income was about three times higher than rural per capita income. But, this is not sufficient, partly, due to high cost of living and partly, because of growing economic disparity in urban areas. The rich are becoming richer and poor are becoming poorer. Several steps have been initiated to meet the challenges posed by the urban crisis but with little or no success.

National Commission on Urbanisation (NCU) has, in its policy proposal of 1988, stressed the need for : (a) the evolution of a spatial pattern of economic development and hierarchies of human settlements, (b) an optimum distribution of population between rural and urban settlements and among towns and cities of various sizes (c) distribution of economic activities in small and medium-sized growth centres, (d) dispersal of economic activities through the establishment of counter-magnets in the region, and (e) provision of optimum levels of services in urban and rural areas.

The other major development programmes include: (i) Urban Basic Services for the Poor (UBSP) (ii) Environmental Improvement of Urban Slums (EIUS) programme (iii) Integrated Development of Small and Medium Towns (IDSMT), (iv) various housing and infrastructure financing schemes e.g. Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) (v) Mega Cities Project, and (vi) Integrated Urban Poverty

Eradication Programme (IUPEP).

### Recent urban development programmes in India

- (1) Smart Cities Mission
- (2) Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) Project
- (3) Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) or Housing for All by 2022 Mission.
- (4) Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY)
- (5) Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission
- (6) Urban transportation
- (7) Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)

Almost all the major programmes of urban development suffer from the chronic disease of resource crunch. Right from the beginning of the planning period, urban development has been low on the development agenda with only 3-4 per cent of the total plan outlay being allocated to the urban sector.

### Activity 7

Gather information on various tribal, rural and urban development programmes in your area. Present your findings to your class and follow it up with a discussion.

In this Unit we have examined how Indian society has a mix of all kinds of people and cultures that are classified into tribal, rural and urban communities. We have examined the differences between one segment and another. You will have noticed greater similarities between tribal and rural communities when compared to urban communities. The influence of one segment on another continues till date and is the

cause for development as well as social change. This interaction also creates certain future challenges. It is important to bear in mind that the characteristics of tribal and rural segments of Indian society are the

typical features that are associated with traditional societies. Much has changed in the present but the speed of change is not uniform.

## SUMMARY

- The tribal segment constitutes 8.6% of the total Indian population. Tribes have different identity and are referred to by various names. The Constitution of India calls them Scheduled Tribes. Each tribe has its distinct identity (e.g. Warli, Mizo, Toda, Gond, Bhil, Jarawa).
- Tribes are found in various parts of India. They have their unique characteristics and their culture has set them apart from others.
- However, due to contact with rural and urban people, tribal people have undergone many changes and this has impacted their way of life. There is cultural disintegration taking place in tribal areas.
- Most of India lives in its villages. Villages constitute the rural segment. Their predominant economic activity is agriculture.
- Institutions such as joint family, caste and panchayat are considered the pillars of rural society.
- Rural people are also faced with numerous problems and especially the problems of poverty, indebtedness, exploitation, resistance to change, farmer suicide etc.
- Several programmes have been started for rural development and reconstruction.
- Urban areas are distinct when compared to tribal and rural segments of Indian society. This is due to tertiary occupations like business, trade, commerce, professions etc.
- Urban areas are more heterogeneous, impersonal and individualistic.
- Urban areas have their own set of problems from inadequate infrastructure to meeting growing demands, crime, poverty, class extremes, alienation, environmental pollution, diseases etc.
- The government has taken up various programmes for urban development.

## EXERCISES

**Q.1 (A) Complete the following statements by choosing the correct alternative given in the bracket and rewrite it.**

- (1) Secondary type relations are significant in \_\_\_ community.  
(rural, tribal, urban)
- (2) Over 55% of the tribal population in India is found in the \_\_\_ region of the country. (Western, Central, Southern)

**(B) Correct the incorrect pair and rewrite it.**

- (1) (i) Landlord - Zamindar  
(ii) Initiative for rural development programme - Community Development Programme  
(iii) Three-tier system of governance - Integrated Rural Development Programme.  
(iv) Primary occupations – traditional societies

**(C) Identify the appropriate term from the given option in the box and rewrite it against the given statement.**

Urban community, Devrai, Gramdevata

- (1) Sacred groves in the tribal community.
- (2) Instances of white collar crime.

**(D) Correct the underlined words and complete the statement.**

- (1) Individual status in urban society is mostly ascribed.
- (2) The custom of worshipping non-living bodies is called animism.

**Q.2 Write short notes.**

- (1) Problems of tribal community.
- (2) Characteristics of urban community.

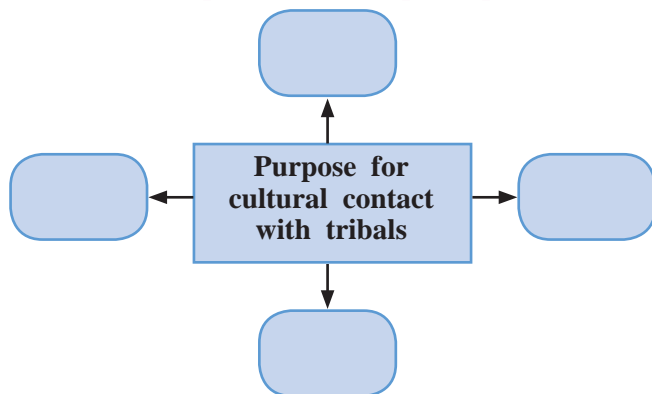
**Q.3 Write differences.**

- (1) Rural economy and Urban economy
- (2) Tribal community and Urban community

**Q.4 Explain the following concepts with examples.**

- (1) Urban crime
- (2) Sacred groves

**Q.5 (A) Complete the concept map.**



**Q.5 (B) State whether the following statements are True or False with reasons.**

- (1) Division of labour is complex in urban community.
- (2) The traditional influence of caste has changed today.

**Q.6 Give your personal response.**

- (1) Why is there lack of community feeling in cities?
- (2) Explain the need for rural development.

**Q.7 Answer the following question in detail. (About 150 words)**

‘Traditional communities tend to hold on to their customs, traditions and beliefs.’ Using examples of your own, explain the statement with special reference to either family or religion. Also, discuss any three ways by which change is introduced into traditional communities.

**Activity**

Visit a government primary or Ashram school in a tribal or rural or urban area. Find out from the School Head about enrolment numbers, classes taught, number of teachers, subjects they teach, problems they face, needs that they have. Write a report on your findings.

**Activity**

What do you mean by rural reconstruction? Find out about programmes started by (a) government and (b) voluntary associations for people in rural India. Prepare a poster exhibition in your school or library.

