

SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE ECONOMY

STUDY-NOTES

- **Indian society** is primarily a rural society though urbanisation is growing. The majority of India's people live in rural areas (67 per cent, according to the 2001 Census).
- They make their living from **agriculture or related occupations**. This means that agricultural land is the most important productive resource for a great many Indians.
- **Land** is also the most important form of property. But land is not just a 'means of production' nor just a 'form of property'.
- Nor is agriculture just a form of livelihood. It is also a way of life. Many of our cultural practices and patterns can be traced to our agrarian backgrounds.
- For example, most of the New Year festivals in different regions of India – such as Pongal in Tamil Nadu, Bihu in Assam, Baisakhi in Punjab and Ugadi in Karnataka – actually celebrate the main harvest season and herald the beginning of a new agricultural season.
- Agriculture is the single most important source of livelihood for the majority of the rural population. But the rural is not just agriculture.
- Many activities that support agriculture and village life are also sources of livelihood for people in rural India. For example, a large number of artisans such as potters, carpenters, weavers, ironsmiths are found in rural areas. They were once part and parcel of the village economy.
- **Rural life** also supported many other specialists and crafts persons as storytellers, astrologers, priests, water-distributors, and oil-pressers.
- The **diversity of occupations** in rural India was reflected in the caste system, which in most regions included specialist and 'service' castes such as Washermen, Potters, and Goldsmiths.
- Some of these **traditional occupations** have declined. But increasing interconnection of the rural and urban economies have led to many diverse occupations. Many people living in rural areas are employed in, or have livelihoods based in, rural non-farm activities.
- For instance, there are rural residents employed in government services such as the Postal and Education Departments, factory workers, or in the army, who earn their living through non- agricultural activities.
- Agricultural land is the single most important resource and form of property in rural society. But it is not equally distributed among people living in a particular village or region. Nor does everyone have access to land.
- In most regions of India, women are usually excluded from ownership of land, because of the prevailing patrilineal kinship system and mode of inheritance.
- The term **agrarian structure** is often used to refer to the structure or distribution of landholding. Because agricultural land is the most important productive resource in rural areas, access to land shapes the rural class structure.
- **Access to land** largely determines what role one plays in the process of agricultural production. Medium and large landowners are usually able to earn sufficient or even large incomes from cultivation.
- Agricultural labourers are more often than not paid below the statutory minimum wage and earn very little. Their incomes are low. Their employment is insecure. Most agricultural labourers are daily-wage workers. And do not have work for many days of the year.
- Tenants (cultivators who lease their land from landowners) have lower incomes than owner-cultivators. Because they have to pay a substantial rent to the landowner – often as much as 50 to 75 per cent of the income from the crop.

- In rural areas, there is a complex relationship between caste and class. This relationship is not always straightforward.
- In most regions of India, the major landowning groups belong to the upper castes. In each region, there are usually just one or two major landowning castes, who are also numerically very important. Such groups were termed by the sociologist M.N. Srinivas as dominant castes.
- In each region, the **dominant caste** is the most powerful group, economically and politically, and dominates local society. Examples of dominant landowning groups are the Jats and Rajputs of U.P., the Vokkaligas and Lingayats in Karnataka, Kammas and Reddis in Andhra Pradesh, and Jat Sikhs in Punjab.
- While dominant landowning groups are usually middle or high ranked castes, most of the marginal farmers and landless belong to lower caste groups. In official classification they belong to the Scheduled Castes or Tribes (SC/STs) or Other Backward Classes (OBCs).
- In many regions of India, the former '**Untouchable**' or **dalit castes** were not allowed to own land and they provided most of the agricultural labour for the dominant landowning groups.
- The rough correspondence between caste and class means that typically the upper and middle castes also had the best access to land and resources, and hence to power and privilege.
- In most regions of the country, a '**proprietary caste**' group owns most of the resources and can command labour to work for them.
- Until recently, practices such as **begar or free labour** were prevalent in many parts of northern India. Members of low ranked caste groups had to provide labour for a fixed number of days per year to the village zamindar or landlord.
- Similarly, lack of resources, and dependence on the landed class for economic, social, and political support, meant that many of the working poor were tied to landowners in 'hereditary' labour relationships (bonded labour), such as the halpati system in Gujarat and the jeeta system in Karnataka.
- Although such practices have been abolished legally, they continue to exist in many areas. In a village of northern Bihar, the majority of the landowners are Bhumihars, who are also the dominant caste.
- There are historical reasons why each region of India came to be dominated by just one or two major groups.
- When the British colonised India, in many areas they ruled through these local zamindars. They also granted property rights to the zamindars.
- Under the British, the zamindars were given more control over land than they had before. Since the colonisers also imposed heavy land revenue (taxes) on agriculture, the zamindars extracted as much produce or money as they could out of the cultivators.
- One result of this **zamindari system** was that agricultural production stagnated or declined during much of the period of British rule. For peasants fled from oppressive landlords and frequent famines and wars decimated the population.
- Many districts of colonial India were administered through the zamindari system.
- In other areas that were under direct British rule had what was called the **raiyyatwari system of land settlement** (raiyyat means cultivator in Telugu).
- In this system, the 'actual cultivators' (who were themselves often landlords and not cultivators) rather than the zamindars were responsible for paying the tax.
- Because the colonial government dealt directly with the farmers or landlords, rather than through the overlords, the burden of taxation was less and cultivators had more incentive to invest in agriculture. As a result, these areas became relatively more productive and prosperous.
- After India became independent, Nehru and his policy advisors embarked on a programme of planned development that focused on agrarian reform as well as industrialisation.
- The policy makers were responding to the **dismal agricultural situation** in India at that time. This was marked by low productivity, dependence on imported food grains, and the intense poverty of a large section of the rural population.

- From the 1950s to the 1970s, a **series of land reform laws** were passed – at the national level as well as in the states – that were intended to bring about these changes.
- The first important legislation was the **abolition of the zamindari system**, which removed the layer of intermediaries who stood between the cultivators and the state.
- Of all the land reform laws that were passed, this was probably the most effective, for in most areas it succeeded in taking away the superior rights of the zamindars over the land and weakening their economic and political power.
- However, zamindari abolition did not wipe out landlordism or the tenancy or sharecropping systems, which continued in many areas. It only removed the top layer of landlords in the multi-layered agrarian structure.
- Among the other major land reform laws that were introduced were the **tenancy abolition and regulation acts**. They attempted either to outlaw tenancy altogether or to regulate rents to give some security to the tenants.
- In most of the states, these laws were never implemented very effectively. In West Bengal and Kerala, there was a radical restructuring of the agrarian structure that gave land rights to the tenants.
- The third major category of **land reform** laws were the **Land Ceiling Acts**. These laws imposed an upper limit on the amount of land that can be owned by a particular family.
- The ceiling varies from region to region, depending on the kind of land, its productivity, and other such factors.
- But in most of the states these acts proved to be toothless. There were many loopholes and other strategies through which most landowners were able to escape from having their surplus land taken over by the state.
- While some very large estates were broken up, in most cases landowners managed to divide the land among relatives and others, including servants, in so-called '**benami transfers**' – which allowed them to keep control over the land (in fact if not in name).
- In some places, some rich farmers actually divorced their wives (but continued to live with them) in order to avoid the provisions of the **Land Ceiling Act**, which allowed a separate share for unmarried women but not for wives.
- The **agrarian structure** varies greatly across India, and the progress of land reforms has also been uneven across the states.
- On the whole, however, it can be said that the agrarian structure, although it has changed substantially from colonial times to the present, remains highly unequal. This structure puts constraints on agricultural productivity.
- **Land reforms** are necessary not only to boost agricultural growth but also to eradicate poverty in rural areas and bring about social justice.
- In contrast the **Green Revolution** of the 1960s and 1970s brought about significant changes in the areas where it took place.
- The Green Revolution was a government programme of agricultural modernisation. It was largely funded by international agencies that was based on providing high-yielding variety (HYV) or hybrid seeds along with pesticides, fertilisers, and other inputs, to farmers.
- Green Revolution programmes were introduced only in areas that had assured irrigation, because sufficient water was necessary for the new seeds and methods of cultivation. It was also targeted mainly at the wheat and rice-growing areas.
- **Agricultural productivity** increased sharply because of the new technology. India was able to become self-sufficient in foodgrain production for the first time in decades.
- The Green Revolution has been considered a major achievement of the government and of the scientists who contributed to the effort.
- However, there were certain negative social effects that were pointed out by sociologists who studied the Green Revolution areas, as well as adverse environmental impacts.
- In most of the Green Revolution areas, it was primarily the medium and large farmers who were able to benefit from the new technology.
- In the first phase of the Green Revolution, in the 1960s and 1970s, the introduction of new technology seemed to be increasing inequalities in rural society. In many cases it led to the displacement of tenant-cultivators.

- This made the rich farmers better off, and worsened the condition of the landless and marginal holders.
- In addition, the introduction of machinery such as tillers, tractors, threshers, and harvesters (in areas such as Punjab and parts of Madhya Pradesh) led to the displacement of the service caste groups who used to carry out these agriculture-related activities. This process of displacement also increased the pace of rural-urban migration.
- The ultimate outcome of the Green Revolution was a process of 'differentiation', in which the rich grew richer and many of the poor stagnated or grew poorer.
- Employment and wages for agricultural workers did increase in many areas, because the demand for labour increased.
- Rising prices and a shift in the mode of payment of agricultural workers from payment in kind (grain) to cash, actually worsened the economic condition of most rural workers.
- Following the first phase of the Green Revolution, the second phase is currently being introduced in the dry and semi-arid regions of India.
- In **market-oriented cultivation**, especially where a single crop is grown, a fall in prices or a bad crop can spell financial ruin for farmers.
- Another negative outcome of the Green Revolution strategy was the worsening of regional inequalities.
- The Green Revolution was promoted more in the western and southern parts of the country, and in Punjab, Haryana, and western U.P., than in the eastern parts of the country.
- Agriculture in states such as Bihar and in eastern U.P., and in dry regions such as Telengana, is relatively undeveloped.
- These are also the regions that continue to have an entrenched 'feudal' agrarian structure, in which the landed castes and landlords maintain power over the lower castes, landless workers and small cultivators.
- The sharp **caste and class inequalities**, together with exploitative labour relations, in these regions has given rise to various kinds of violence (including inter-caste violence) in recent years.
- Often it is thought that imparting knowledge of '**scientific**' farming methods will improve the conditions of Indian farmers.
- We should remember that Indian farmers have been cultivating the land for centuries, much before the advent of the Green Revolution. They have very deep and extensive traditional knowledge about the land they till and the crops they sow.
- Much of this knowledge, like the many **traditional varieties of seeds** that were developed over the centuries by farmers, is being lost as hybrid, highyielding, and genetically modified varieties of seeds are being promoted as more productive and 'scientific'.
- Several profound transformations in the nature of social relations in rural areas took place in the post-Independence period, especially in those regions that underwent the Green Revolution.
- These included an increase in the use of agricultural labour as cultivation became more intensive, a shift from payment in kind (grain) to payment in cash, a loosening of traditional bonds or hereditary relationships between farmers or landowners and agricultural workers (known as **bonded labour**) and the rise of a class of 'free' wage labourers'.
- The change in the nature of the relationship between landlords (who usually belonged to the dominant castes) and agricultural workers (usually low caste), was described by the **sociologist Jan Breman as a shift from 'patronage to exploitation'**.
- The transformation in labour relations is regarded by some scholars as indicative of a transition to capitalist agriculture.
- For regular agricultural growth, uninterrupted power supply to rural India is one of the necessities. The recently launched **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana** is an effort of the Indian government in this direction.
- One way in which rural social structure was altered by agricultural development in the 1960s and 1970s was through the enrichment of the medium and large farmers who adopted the new technologies.
- In several agriculturally rich regions, such as coastal Andhra Pradesh, western Uttar Pradesh, and central Gujarat, well-to-do farmers belonging to the dominant castes began to invest their profits from agriculture in other types of business ventures.

- This process of **diversification** gave rise to new entrepreneurial groups that moved out of rural areas and into the growing towns of these developing regions, giving rise to new regional elites that became economically as well as politically dominant.
- Along with this change in the class structure, the spread of higher education, especially private professional colleges, in rural and semi-urban areas, allowed the new rural elites to educate their children – many of whom then joined professional or white collar occupations or started businesses, feeding into the expansion of the urban middle classes.
- But in other regions such as eastern U.P. and Bihar, the lack of effective land reforms, political mobilisation, and redistributive measures has meant that there have been relatively few changes in the agrarian structure and hence in the life conditions of most people.
- States such as Kerala have undergone a **different process of development**, in which political mobilisation, redistributive measures, and linkages to an external economy (primarily the Gulf countries) have brought about a substantial transformation of the rural countryside.
- Another significant change in rural society that is linked to the **commercialisation of agriculture** has been the growth of migrant agricultural labour.
- A pattern of **seasonal migration** emerged in which thousands of workers circulate between their home villages and more prosperous areas where there is more demand for labour and higher wages.
- As a livelihood strategy, men migrate out periodically in search of work and better wages, while women and children are often left behind in their villages with elderly grandparents.
- Migrant workers come mainly from drought-prone and less productive regions, and they go to work for part of the year on farms in the Punjab and Haryana, or on brick kilns in U.P., or construction sites in cities such as New Delhi or Bengaluru.
- These migrant workers have been termed '**footloose labour**' by **Jan Breman**, but this does not imply freedom. Breman's study shows that landless workers do not have many rights, for instance, they are usually not paid the minimum wage.
- Wealthy farmers often prefer to employ migrant workers for harvesting and other such intensive operations, rather than the local working class, because migrants are more easily exploited and can be paid lower wages.
- This preference has produced a peculiar pattern in some areas where the local landless labourers move out of the home villages in search of work during the peak agricultural seasons, while migrant workers are brought in from other areas to work on the local farms.
- This pattern is found especially in sugarcane growing areas. Migration and lack of job security have created very poor working and living conditions for these workers.
- In poor areas where male family members spend much of the year working outside of their villages, cultivation has become primarily a female task. Women are also emerging as the main source of agricultural labour, leading to the '**feminisation of agricultural labour force.**'
- The insecurity of women is greater because they earn lower wages than men for similar work. Until recently, women were hardly visible in official statistics as earners and workers.
- While women toil on the land as landless labourers and as cultivators, the prevailing **patrilineal kinship system**, and other cultural practices that privilege male rights, largely exclude women from land ownership.
- The **policy of liberalisation** that India has been following since the late 1980s have had a very significant impact on agriculture and rural society.
- The policy entails participation in the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which aims to bring about a more free international trading system and requires the opening up of Indian markets to imports.
- After decades of state support and protected markets, Indian farmers have been exposed to competition from the global market.
- These are indicators of the process of globalisation of agriculture, or the incorporation of agriculture into the larger global market – a process that has had direct effects on farmers and rural society.

- For instance, in some regions such as Punjab and Karnataka, farmers enter into contracts with multinational companies (such as PepsiCo) to grow certain crops (such as tomatoes and potatoes), which the companies then buy from them for processing or export.
- **Contract farming** is very common now in the production of specialised items such as cut flowers, fruits such as grapes, figs and pomegranates, cotton, and oilseeds.
- While contract farming appears to provide financial security to farmers, it can also lead to greater insecurity as farmers become dependent on these companies for their livelihoods.
- Contract farming of export-oriented products such as flowers and **gherkins** also means that agricultural land is diverted away from food grain production.
- Contract farming has sociological significance in that it disengages many people from the production process and makes their own indigenous knowledge of agriculture irrelevant.
- Contract farming caters primarily to the production of elite items, and because it usually requires high doses of fertilisers and pesticides, it is often not ecologically sustainable.
- Another, and more widespread aspect of the globalisation of agriculture is the entry of multinationals into this sector as sellers of agricultural inputs such as seeds, pesticides, and fertilisers.
- This has led to the increased dependence of farmers on expensive fertilisers and pesticides, which has reduced their profits, put many farmers into debt, and also created an ecological crisis in rural areas.
- While farmers in India for centuries have periodically faced distress due to drought, crop failures, or debt, the phenomenon of **farmers' suicides** appears to be new.
- Sociologists have attempted to explain this phenomenon by looking at the structural and social changes that have been occurring in agriculture and agrarian society. Such suicides have become '**matrix events**', that is, a range of factors coalesce to form an event.
- Many farmers, who have committed suicide were **marginal farmers**, who were attempting to increase their productivity, primarily by practising Green Revolution methods.
- However, undertaking such production meant facing several risks: the cost of production has increased tremendously due to a decrease in agricultural subsidies, the markets are not stable, and many farmers borrow heavily in order to invest in expensive inputs and improve their production.
- The loss of either the crop (due to spread of disease or pests, excessive rainfall, or drought), and in some cases, lack of an adequate support or market price means that farmers are unable to bear the debt burden or sustain their families.
- Such distress is compounded by the changing culture in rural areas, in which increased incomes are required for marriages, dowries and to sustain new activities and expenses, such as education and medical care.
- Suicides of farmers is basically associated with debt, as well as, natural disasters, resulting in the failure of agricultural produce.
- **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Gram Uday se Bharat Uday Abhiyan and National Rurban Mission** are some of the schemes of the Government of India, which may provide unified help to farmers all over the country. These schemes are also helpful in providing quality life to rural India.
- Many of the great works of sociology were written at a time when **industrialisation** was new and machinery was assuming great importance.
- Thinkers like Karl Marx, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim associated a number of social features with industry, such as urbanisation, the loss of face-to-face relationships that were found in rural areas where people worked on their own farms or for a landlord they knew, and their substitution by anonymous professional relationships in modern factories and workplaces.
- Marx called this **situation alienation**, when people do not enjoy work, and see it as something they have to do only in order to survive, and even that survival depends on whether the technology has room for any human labour.
- **Industrialisation** leads to greater equality, at least in some spheres. For example, caste distinctions do not matter any more on trains, buses or in cyber cafes. On the other hand, older forms of discrimination may persist even in new factory or workplace settings.

- While the early sociologists saw industrialisation as both positive and negative, by the mid 20th century, under the influence of modernisation theory, industrialisation came to be seen as inevitable and positive.
- **Modernisation theory** argues that societies are at different stages on the road to modernisation, but they are all heading in the same direction. Modern society, for these theorists, is represented by the West.
- Comparative analysis of different countries suggests that there is no standard model of industrial capitalism. In developed countries, the majority of people are in the services sector, followed by industry and less than 10% are in agriculture.
- In India, in 1999-2000, nearly 60% were employed in the primary sector (agriculture and mining), 17% in the secondary sector (manufacturing, construction and utilities), and 23% in the tertiary sector (trade, transport, financial services etc.)
- Another major difference between developing and developed countries is the number of people in regular salaried employment. In developed countries, the majority are formally employed.
- In India, over 50% of the population is self-employed, only about 14% are in regular salaried employment, while approximately 30% are in casual labour.
- Economists and others often make a distinction between the organised or formal and unorganised or informal sector.
- According to one definition, the **organised sector** consists of all units employing ten or more people throughout the year. These have to be registered with the government to ensure that their employees get proper salaries or wages, pension and other benefits.
- In India, over 90% of the work, whether it is in agriculture, industry or services is in the unorganised or informal sector.
- First, it means that very few people have the experience of employment in large firms where they get to meet people from other regions and backgrounds. Here personal relationships determine many aspects of work.
- Second, very few Indians have access to secure jobs with benefits. Of those who do, two-thirds work for the government. Of those who do, two-thirds work for the government.
- In the early years of India's independence, the first modern industries in India were cotton, jute, coal mines and railways.
- After independence, the government took over the 'commanding heights of the economy.' This involved defence, transport and communication, power, mining and other projects which only government had the power to do, and which was also necessary for private industry to flourish.
- In India's **mixed economy policy**, some sectors were reserved for government, while others were open to the private sector. But within that, the government tried to ensure, through its licensing policy, that industries were spread over different regions.
- Before independence, industries were located mainly in the port cities like Madras, Bombay, Calcutta (now, Chennai, Mumbai and Kolkata, respectively).
- Since then, places like Baroda, Coimbatore, Bengaluru, Pune, Faridabad and Rajkot have become important industrial centres.
- The government also tried to encourage the small-scale sector through special incentives and assistance. Many items like paper and wood products, stationery, glass and ceramics were reserved for the small-scale sector.
- Since the 1990s, however, the government has followed a **policy of liberalisation**. Private companies, especially foreign firms, are encouraged to invest in sectors earlier reserved for the government, including telecom, civil aviation, power etc.
- **Licenses** are no longer required to open industries. Foreign products are now easily available in Indian shops. As a result of liberalisation, many Indian companies have been bought over by multinationals.
- At the same time some Indian companies are becoming multinational companies.
- The government is trying to sell its share in several public sector companies, a process which is known as disinvestment. Many government workers are scared that after **disinvestment**, they will lose their jobs.

- More and more companies are reducing the number of permanent employees and **outsourcing their work** to smaller companies or even to homes. For multinational companies, this outsourcing is done across the globe, with developing countries like India providing cheap labour.
- As small companies have to compete for orders from the big companies, they keep wages low, and working conditions are often poor. It is more difficult for trade unions to organise in smaller firms.
- Almost all companies, even government ones, now practice some form of outsourcing and **contracting**. But the trend is especially visible in the private sector.
- At the same time as secure employment in large industry is declining, the government is embarking on a policy of land acquisition for industry. These industries do not necessarily provide employment to the people of the surrounding areas, but they cause major pollution.
- Many farmers, especially adivasis, who constitute approximately 40% of those displaced, are protesting at the low rates of compensation and the fact that they will be forced to become casual labour living and working on the footpaths of India's big cities.
- Only a small percentage of people get jobs through advertisements or through the employment exchange.
- People who are self-employed, like plumbers, electricians and carpenters at one end and teachers who give private tuitions, architects and freelance photographers at the other end, all rely on personal contacts.
- Job recruitment as a factory worker takes a different pattern. In the past, many workers got their jobs through contractors or jobbers.
- In the Kanpur textile mills, these **jobbers** were known as **mistris**, and were themselves workers. They came from the same regions and communities as the workers, but because they had the owner's backing they bossed over the workers.
- On the other hand, the mistri also put community-related pressures on the worker.
- Nowadays, the importance of the jobber has come down, and both management and unions play a role in recruiting their own people.
- Many workers also expect that they can pass on their jobs to their children. Many factories employ **badli workers** who substitute for regular permanent workers who are on leave.
- Many of these badli workers have actually worked for many years for the same company but are not given the same status and security. This is what is called contract work in the organised sector.
- The **schemes of the Government of India**, like 'Stand Up India Scheme' and 'Make in India' are programmes by which employment and self-employment will become possible.
- These schemes are helpful to people of the **marginalised sections of the society**, like SC, ST and other backward classes.
- The **contractor system** is most visible in the hiring of casual labour for work at construction sites, brickyards, and so on.
- The contractor goes to villages and asks if people want work. He will loan them some money. This loan includes the cost of transport to the work site. The loaned money is treated as an advance wage and the worker works without wages until the loan is repaid.
- In the past, agricultural labourers were tied to their landlord by debt. Now, however, by moving to casual industrial work, while they are still in debt, they are not bound by other social obligations to the contractor.
- In that sense, they are more free in an industrial society. They can break the contract and find another employer. Sometimes, whole families migrate and the children help their parents. For example, situation in the brickyards of South Gujarat.
- The **basic task of a manager is** to control workers and get more work out of them. There are two main ways of making workers produce more. One is to extend the working hours.
- The other is to increase the amount that is produced within a given time period. Machinery helps to increase production, but it also creates the danger that eventually machines will replace workers. Both Marx and Mahatma Gandhi saw mechanisation as a danger to employment.

- Another way of increasing output is by organising work. An American called Frederick Winslow Taylor invented a new system in the 1890s, which he called '**Scientific Management**'. It is also known as **Taylorism** or industrial engineering.
- Under his system, all work was broken down into its smallest repetitive elements, and divided between workers. Workers were timed with the help of stopwatches, and had to fulfil a certain target every day. Production was further speeded up by the introduction of the assembly line.
- Each worker sat along a conveyor belt and assembled only one part of the final product. The speed of work could be set by adjusting the speed of the conveyor belt.
- In the 1980s, there was an attempt to shift from this system of direct control to indirect control, where workers are supposed to motivate and monitor themselves. But often we find that the old Taylorist processes survive.
- The more mechanised an industry gets, the fewer people are employed, but they too have to work at the pace of the machine. For example, the Maruti Udyog **factory**.
- Workers get only 45 minutes rest in the entire day - two tea breaks of 7.5 minutes each and one lunch break of half an hour. Most of them are exhausted by the age of 40 and take voluntary retirement.
- While production has gone up, the number of permanent jobs in the factory has gone down. The firm has outsourced all services like cleaning, and security, as well as the manufacture of parts.
- The parts suppliers are located around the factory and send the parts every two hours or just-in-time. **Outsourcing** and **just-in-time** keeps costs low for the company, but the workers are very tense, because if the supplies fail to arrive, their production targets get delayed, and when they do arrive they have to run to keep up. No wonder they get exhausted.
- In the case of the services sector, it is no different. **Software professionals** are middle class and well educated. Their work is supposed to be self-motivated and creative. But their work is also subject to Taylorist labour processes.
- An average work day has 10-12 hours and it is not uncommon for employees to stay overnight in the office (known as a 'night out'), when faced with a project deadline. Long working hours are central to the industry's 'work culture'.
- Extended working hours are legitimised by the common management practice of 'flexi-time', which in theory gives an employee freedom to choose his or her working hours (within limits) but, which in practice, means that they have to work as long as necessary to finish the task at hand.
- As a result of these working hours, in places like Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Gurugram, where many IT firms or call centres are located, shops and restaurants have also changed their opening hours, and are open late.
- If both husband and wife work, then children have to be put in crèches. The joint family, which was supposed to have disappeared with industrialisation, seems to have re-emerged, as grandparents are roped in to help with children.
- One important debate in sociology is whether industrialisation and the shift to services and knowledge-based work, like IT, leads to greater skills in society.
- The famous sociologist, **Harry Braverman**, argues that the **use of machinery actually deskills workers**. For example, whereas earlier architects and engineers had to be skilled draughtsmen, now the computer does a lot of the work for them.
- Taking the example of the mining sector to look at the working conditions there.
- The **Mines Act 1952** specifies the maximum number of hours a person can be made to work in a week, the need to pay overtime for any extra hours worked and safety rules. These rules may be followed in big companies, but not in smaller mines and quarries.
- Moreover, **sub-contracting** is widespread. Many contractors do not maintain proper registers of workers, thus avoiding any responsibility for accidents and benefits. After mining has finished in an area, the company is supposed to cover up the open holes and restore the area to its earlier condition. But they don't do this.
- Workers in underground mines face very dangerous conditions, due to flooding, fire, the collapse of roofs and sides, the emission of gases and ventilation failures. Many workers develop breathing problems and diseases like tuberculosis and silicosis.

- Those working in overground mines have to work in both hot sun and rain, and face injuries due to mine blasting falling objects etc. The rate of mining accidents in India is very high compared to other countries.
- In many industries, the workers are migrants. The fish processing plants along the coastline employ mostly single young women from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala.
- Ten-twelve of them are housed in small rooms, and sometimes one shift has to make way for another. Young women are seen as submissive workers. Many men also migrate singly, either unmarried or leaving their families in the village.
- These migrants have little time to socialise and whatever little time and money they can spend is with other migrant workers.
- From a nation of interfering joint families, the nature of work in a globalised economy is taking people in the direction of loneliness and vulnerability. Yet for many young women, it also represents some independence and economic autonomy.
- **Home-based work** is an important part of the economy. This includes the manufacture of lace, zari or brocade, carpets, bidis, agarbattis and many such products.
- This work is mainly done by women and children. An agent provides raw materials and also picks up the finished product. Home workers are paid on a piece-rate basis, depending on the number of pieces they make.
- For example, in the bidi industry, the process of making bidis starts in forested villages where villagers pluck tendu leaves and sell it to the forest department or a private contractor who in turn sells it to the forest department.
- The government then auctions the leaves to *bidi* factory owners who give it to the contractors. The contractor in turn supplies tobacco and leaves to home-based workers.
- These workers, mostly women, roll the *bidis* – first dampening the leaves, then cutting them, filling in tobacco evenly and then tying them with thread.
- The contractor picks up these *bidis* and sells them to the manufacturer who roasts them, and puts on his own brand label.
- The manufacturer then sells them to a distributor who distributes the packed *bidis* to wholesalers who in turn sell to the neighbourhood pan shops. Maximum benefit goes to the manufacturer.
- Many workers are part of **trade unions**. Trade unions in India have to overcome a number of problems, such as regionalism and casteism.
- In response to harsh working conditions, sometimes workers went on **strike**. In a strike, workers do not go to work. In a **lockout** the management shuts the gate and prevents workers from coming.
- To call a strike is a difficult decision as managers may try to use substitute labour. Workers also find it hard to sustain themselves without wages.
- For example, a famous strike was the Bombay Textile strike of 1982, which was led by the trade union leader, Dr. Datta Samant, and affected nearly a quarter of a million workers and their families.

QUESTION BANK

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Many of our cultural practices and patterns can be traced to our agrarian backgrounds. Which of these festivals are a part of it?
 (a) Pongal (b) Bihu (c) Ugadi (d) All of these
2. A system of tax collection in colonial India in which the government settled the revenue directly with the cultivator was called?
 (a) Zamindari system (b) Rayatwari system (c) Halpati system (d) Jeeta system
3. As part of land reform initiative, an act that gave land rights and security to the tenants was _____.
 (a) Commercialisation of agriculture (b) Subsistence agriculture
 (c) Capitalist agriculture (d) None of these

4. A pattern of seasonal migration that emerged due to the Green revolution where workers circulate between their home village and more prosperous areas is called _____.
- (a) Circulation of labour (b) Subsistence agriculture
(c) Begar (d) Matrix events
5. Identify the sociologist who described the change in the nature of relationship between landlords and agricultural workers as a shift from patronage to exploitation.
- (a) Karl Marx (b) Jan Breman (c) Hubert Risley (d) Max Weber
6. Farmer suicide is a matrix event. Which of the following options is not responsible for farmer suicide?
- (a) Educational expenses (b) Agricultural loans (c) Diversification (d) Marriage and dowry
7. Contract farming is when:
- (a) Large landowners lease out their land to smaller farmers to grow crops
(b) When MNCs have a contract with certain farmers to grow specific crops which the company then buys from them for processing or export
(c) Started during the Green Revolution when the government entered into contract with large farmers to support them
(d) Part of the land reform measures undertaken after India's independence
8. The term 'agrarian structure' refers to
- (a) The structure or distribution of landholding (b) The commercialisation of agriculture
(c) The land revenue system (d) The land reform measure
9. There have been schemes launched by the Government of India to provide unified help to farmers all over India. Which of them given below is the incorrect one?
- (a) Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (b) Gram Uday se Bharat Uday Abhiyan
(c) National Rurban Mission (d) Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana
10. The term 'dominant caste' was coined by
- (a) Yogendra Singh (b) M.N. Srinivas (c) Jan Breman (d) P. Sainath
11. **Assertion (A):** One way in which rural social structure was altered by agricultural development in the 1960s and 1970s was through the enrichment of the medium and large farmers who adopted the new technologies.
- Reason (R):** In regions such as eastern U.P. and Bihar, the lack of effective land reforms, political mobilisation, and redistributive measures has meant that there have been relatively few changes in the agrarian structure and hence in the life conditions of most people.
- (a) Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A.
(b) Both A and R are true but R is not the correct explanation of A.
(c) A is true but R is false.
(d) A is false but R is true.
12. There were many negative social effects that were pointed out by sociologists. Which of them is true?
- (a) It led to the worsening of regional inequalities.
(b) In many cases it led to the displacement of tenant-cultivators.
(c) The introduction of machinery led to the displacement of the service caste groups.
(d) All of the above.
13. The policy of liberalisation that India has been following since the late 1980s have had a very significant impact on agriculture and rural society. The policy entails participation in the _____ (WTO), which aims to bring about a more free international trading system and requires the opening up of Indian markets to imports. What is the full form of WTO?
- (a) World wide Trade Organisation (b) World Tariff Organisation
(c) World Trade Org (d) World Trade Organisation
14. Migrant workers go for a part of the year to work in
- (a) Farms in Punjab and Haryana (b) Brick kilns in UP
(c) Construction sites in New Delhi and Bangalore (d) All of these

15. Of all the land reform laws that were passed, _____ was probably the most effective.
 (a) Land Ceiling Acts (b) Abolition of the Zamindari system
 (c) Tenancy abolition and Regulation Acts (d) Cooperative joint farming
16. When agriculturists produce primarily for themselves and are unable to produce for the market, it is known as 'subsistence agriculture' and they are usually termed _____.
 (a) Farmers (b) Peasants (c) Footloose labour (d) Contract labour
17. _____ lower the cost of farming because the government pays part of the price charged for inputs.
 (a) Support price (b) Planning (c) Subsidies (d) Taxes
18. After India became independent, _____ and his policy advisors embarked on a programme of planned development that focused on agrarian reform as well as industrialisation.
 (a) Gandhi (b) Ambedkar (c) Tilak (d) Nehru
19. Which of the following is not true about agriculture in India?
 (a) It is a form of livelihood.
 (b) It is a way of life.
 (c) Its nature and practice varies greatly in different regions.
 (d) It contributes significantly to our national income.
20. For regular agricultural growth, uninterrupted power supply to rural India is one of the necessities. The recently launched _____ is an effort of the Indian government in this direction.
 (a) Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (b) National Rurban Mission
 (c) Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (d) Gram Uday se Bharat Uday Abhiyan
21. While women toil on the land as landless labourers and as cultivators, the prevailing _____ kinship system, and other cultural practices that privilege male rights, largely exclude women from land ownership.
 (a) Matrilineal (b) Matriarchal (c) Patrilineal (d) Joint family
22. Which of these is not an example of a dominant caste?
 (a) Lingayats (b) Jatav (c) Kammas (d) Rajputs
23. The Land Ceiling Act proved to be toothless as some rich farmers actually divorced their wives but continued to live with them under _____.
 (a) Zamindari system (b) Halpati system (c) Green Revolution (d) Benami Transfer
24. Which of these regions did not receive the first wave of the Green Revolution package?
 (a) Western UP (b) Coastal Andhra Pradesh (c) Eastern UP (d) Parts of Tamil Nadu
25. What does Raiyat mean in Telugu?
 (a) Cultivator (b) Agriculture (c) Landlord (d) None of these
26. In developing countries like India, nearly 17% were employed in the _____ sector in 1999-2000.
 (a) Primary (b) Secondary (c) Tertiary (d) None of these
27. According to Marx, when people do not enjoy work and see it as something they have to do only to survive is known as
 (a) Class struggle (b) Surplus value (c) Capitalism (d) Alienation
28. An organized sector is the one which
 (a) Consists of units employing ten or more people throughout the year
 (b) Is registered with the government
 (c) Provides secure jobs with benefits
 (d) All of the above
29. A process through which the government is trying to sell its share in several public sector companies is called
 (a) Alienation (b) Knowledge economy (c) Disinvestment (d) Time slavery
30. Name the famous sociologist who argued that the use of machinery actually deskills workers.
 (a) Harry Braverman (b) Marx (c) Weber (d) Louis Dumont

31. What are the ways that help people find jobs?
 (a) Jobs are advertised (b) Through the employment exchange
 (c) Personal contacts (d) All of these
32. Who saw mechanisation as a danger to employment?
 (a) Harry Braverman (b) Marx (c) Mahatma Gandhi (d) Both (b) and (c)
33. The convergence thesis was put forward by which modernisation theorist?
 (a) Emile Durkheim (b) Clark Kerr (c) Max Weber (d) Frederick Taylor
34. The _____ system is most visible in the hiring of casual labour for work at construction sites, brickyards, and so on.
 (a) Contractor (b) Caste hiring (c) Direct hiring (d) Informal
35. One sociologist has argued that the reason why there have never been communal riots in a place like Bhilai is because
 (a) People are more peace loving there.
 (b) The public sector Bhilai Steel Plant employs people from all over India who work together.
 (c) The government has taken steps to ensure harmony.
 (d) None of these
36. Since the 1990s, however, the government has followed a policy of liberalisation. What does this policy not entail?
 (a) Private companies, especially foreign firms, are encouraged to invest in sectors earlier reserved for the government, including telecom, civil aviation, power etc.
 (b) Foreign products are now easily available in Indian shops.
 (c) Licenses are required to open industries.
 (d) Many Indian companies have been bought over by multinationals. Ans. c. Licenses are required to open industries.
37. **Assertion (A):** So far, employment by the government was a major avenue for increasing the well-being of the population, but now even that is coming down.
Reason (R): At the same time as secure employment in large industry is declining, the government is embarking on a policy of land acquisition for industry. These industries do not necessarily provide employment to the people of the surrounding areas, but they cause major pollution.
 (a) Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A.
 (b) Both A and R are true but R is not the correct explanation of A.
 (c) A is true but R is false.
 (d) A is false but R is true.
38. Many factories employ _____ workers who substitute for regular permanent workers who are on leave.
 (a) Badli (b) Well-trained (c) Qualified (d) Jobber
39. Gandhi on Machinery, in Hind Swaraj 1924: "What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery. Men go on 'saving labour' till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all. I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of the few, but in the hands of all."
 What did Gandhiji propose as an alternative to prevent exploitation of the poor workers?
 (a) Ban on machinery (b) Ban on labour saving machinery
 (c) Adopting the spinning wheel (d) Boycott foreign goods
40. An American called Frederick Winslow Taylor invented a new system in the 1890s, which he called scientific management. It is also known as Taylorism or Industrial engineering. Under his system, all work was broken down into its smallest repetitive elements, and divided between workers. Workers were timed with the help of stopwatches and had to fulfil a certain target every day. Production was further speeded up by the introduction of the assembly line. Each worker sat along a conveyor belt and assembled only one part of the final product. The speed of work could be set by adjusting the speed of the conveyor belt.
 What was this system called?
 (a) Scientific management (b) Taylorism (c) Industrial engineering (d) All of these

41. In companies like Maruti Udyog, what keeps costs low for the company?
 (a) Outsourcing (b) Just-in-time (c) Both (a) and (b) (d) Neither (a) nor (b)
42. In many industries, the workers are migrants. The fish processing plants along the coastline employ mostly single young women from _____
 (a) Rajasthan, Bihar, Maharashtra (b) Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala
 (c) Delhi, Punjab, Haryana (d) Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh
43. Manufacture of lace, zari, carpets, bidis, agarbattis are examples of _____ work.
 (a) Home-based (b) Child-based (c) Exploitative (d) Lonely
44. The process of making bidis starts in forested villages where villagers pluck tendu leaves and sell it to the forest department or a private contractor who in turn sells it to the forest department.
 (a) Asokam (b) Thanni (c) Venga (d) Tendu
45. Trade unions in India have to overcome a number of problems. These are :
 (a) Regionalism (b) Casteism (c) Both (a) and (b) (d) Neither (a) nor (b)
46. When the management shuts the gate and prevents workers from coming, it is called a _____
 (a) Strike (b) Lockout (c) Bandh (d) Curfew
47. The Bombay Textile strike of 1982 was led by which trade union leader?
 (a) Dr. Datta Samant (b) Jayprakash Bhilare (c) Lakshmi Bhatkar (d) Kisan Salunke
48. The Congress-led _____ was the only approved union and it helped to break the strike by bringing in other workers.
 (a) Maharashtra Girmi Kamgar Union (b) Mill Chawls Tenant Association
 (c) Rashtriya Mill Mazdoor Sangh (d) Sarva Shramik Sangh
49. Looking at the distribution value of the finished bidi, who gets the maximum share?
 (a) Contractor (b) Manufacturer (c) Distributor (d) Bidi worker
50. The Government has passed number of laws to regulate working conditions in the mines in India. Which is one of these Acts?
 (a) The Mines Act 1952 (b) The Mines Act 1982 (c) The Mines Act 1962 (d) The Mines Act 1972
51. Many of the working poor were tied to landowners in 'hereditary' labour relationships (bonded labour), such as the halpati system in _____
 (a) Tamil Nadu (b) Gujarat (c) Haryana (d) Odisha
52. What did the abolition of the zamindari system succeed in doing?
 (a) More land passed to the tenants.
 (b) It wiped out landlordism completely.
 (c) It removed the top layer of landlords in the multi-layered agrarian structure.
 (d) None of these.
53. When agriculturists produce primarily for themselves and are unable to produce for the market, it is known as
 (a) Subsistence agriculture (b) Contract farming
 (c) Capitalist agriculture (d) Commercialisation of agriculture
54. What is the full form of BIRA?
 (a) Bombay Intra Regulating Authority (b) Bombay Industrial Relations Act
 (c) Bombay Inter Regulation Act (d) Bombay Industry Regulating Authority
55. What are the difficulties that miners face in their work?
 (a) Workers face very dangerous conditions, due to flooding, fire, the collapse of roofs and sides, the emission of gases and ventilation failures.
 (b) Many workers develop breathing problems and diseases like tuberculosis and silicosis.
 (c) Those working in overground mines have to work in both hot sun and rain, and face injuries due to mine blasting, falling objects etc.
 (d) All of the above

56. Which are the schemes recently floated by the Government of India by which hired wage works and self-employment will become possible?
 (a) MUDRA (b) Aatmanirbhar Bharat (c) Make in India (d) All of these
57. In Modern Foods, which was set up by the government to make healthy bread available at cheap prices, and which was the first company to be privatised, _____ of the workers were forced to retire in the first five years.
 (a) 50% (b) 40% (c) 60% (d) 30%
58. Which item among these is not reserved for the small-scale sector?
 (a) Paper and wood products (b) Stationery (c) Iron and steel (d) Glass and ceramics
59. After independence, the government took over the 'commanding heights of the economy.' This involved
 (a) Defence (b) Transport and communication
 (c) Power and mining (d) All of these

Input-Text Based MCQs

Study the passage and answer the questions that follow (60 to 62):

Indian society is primarily a rural society though urbanisation is growing. The majority of India's people live in rural areas (69 per cent, according to the 2011 Census). They make their living from agriculture or related occupations. This means that agricultural land is the most important productive resource for a great many Indians. Land is also the most important form of property. But land is not just a 'means of production' nor just a 'form of property'. Nor is agriculture just a form of livelihood. It is also a way of life. Many of our cultural practices and patterns can be traced to our agrarian backgrounds.

60. Which of these is not a correct statement about Indian rural society?
 (a) Agriculture is the single most important source of livelihood for the majority of the rural population.
 (b) Many activities that support agriculture and village life are also the main sources of livelihood for people living in rural India.
 (c) The diversity of occupations in rural India was reflected in the class system.
 (d) Many people living in rural areas are employed in, or have livelihoods based on rural non-farm activities
61. _____ is the single most important resource and form of property in rural society.
 (a) Agricultural land (b) Caste system (c) Class system (d) Agrarian structure
62. Kammas and Reddis are dominant castes in which state?
 (a) UP (b) Punjab (c) Karnataka (d) Andhra Pradesh

ANSWERS

Multiple Choice Questions

1. (d) 2. (b) 3. (d) 4. (a) 5. (b) 6. (c) 7. (b) 8. (a) 9. (d) 10. (b)
 11. (b) 12. (d) 13. (d) 14. (d) 15. (b) 16. (b) 17. (c) 18. (d) 19. (d) 20. (a)
 21. (c) 22. (b) 23. (d) 24. (c) 25. (a) 26. (b) 27. (d) 28. (d) 29. (c) 30. (a)
 31. (d) 32. (d) 33. (b) 34. (a) 35. (b) 36. (c) 37. (b) 38. (a) 39. (c) 40. (b)
 41. (c) 42. (b) 43. (a) 44. (d) 45. (c) 46. (b) 47. (a) 48. (c) 49. (b) 50. (a)
 51. (b) 52. (c) 53. (a) 54. (b) 55. (d) 56. (d) 57. (c) 58. (c) 59. (d)

Input-Text Based MCQs

60. (c) 61. (a) 62. (d)