
UNIT 9 FOOD SECURITY

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9.1 INTRODUCTION

Food security refers to the ensuring of food for all. It is the most important step to eradicate absolute mass poverty and lay a foundation for growth and development of a society. The goal of food security becomes difficult to achieve in a country like India where poverty is vast and population is still growing. But there is no alternative to ensure food security for the entire population. Food security demands adequate food production and distribution. This needs political will that will prioritize human development and create a favourable environment that will enhance sustainable development. The unpalatable fact here is that while on the one hand, such environment aids mass production of food, on the other hand, ruthless exploitation of land wherein topsoil gets eroded, water gets exhausted and soil loses its fertility, such an environment, subsequently, loses its productive capacity.

The environment is further damaged, degraded, and destroyed by unplanned vast industrialisation and massive use of industrial products like automobiles and industrial machinery, both calling for a very high intensity of energy and other resource use. All these point out to the need for a balance among population, food needs and environment. Food security must be consistent with and conducive to such a balance.

India is yet to achieve this as its mass population and poverty keep large sections so poor as to be unable to buy food at the prevailing market rates. If India is to achieve its goal of development with equity, social inclusion, and social justice, food security must be ensured for its population at all costs.

Aims and Objectives

This Unit would enable you to:

- explain the concept and meaning of food security

- analyse the relationship between food security and malnutrition
- identify the important ways to deal with food security and
- discuss India's future perspectives in this area.

9.2 FOOD SECURITY AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

“God who is unnamable and unfathomable by human understanding, and it means God of the poor, God appearing in the hearts of the poor....For the poor the economic is the spiritual. You cannot make any other appeal to those starving millions. It will fall flat on them. But you take food to them and they will regard you as their God. They are incapable of any other thought....According to me the economic constitution of India and, for the matter of that, the world should be such that no one under it should suffer from want of food and clothing. In other words, everybody should be able to get sufficient work to enable him to make two ends meet.”

Mahatma Gandhi

Food security refers to access for people, especially poor who are below poverty line, to adequate food necessary for a normal life. Food security is a social concept dealing with community needs. Adequate food means sufficient quantity of nourishment that a person in normal circumstances is required to consume according to food science experts. According to the Planning Commission, a person needs a minimum of a daily calorie intake of 2400 in rural areas and 2100 in urban areas. According to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), a person needs a minimum of 2000 calories per day.

In terms of quality the food must be reasonably nutritious that enables a person sustain and develop his physical and mental faculties and personality. Therefore the food must include pulses, edible oils, milk products, egg, meat, and some fruits and vegetables. These together will give the required nutrients like carbohydrates, proteins, fats, mineral and vitamins necessary for healthy growth. If people do not get the required diet they are deprived of nourishment which may adversely affect their capabilities affecting their growth and development.

Food security also means that people, especially poor, have the ability to pay in terms of purchasing power needed for purchasing the required quantity and quality of food in terms of nutrients. This ensures that the human resource in the society get what is needed for a normal life and can be expected to contribute towards promoting economic growth and development of the society. Food security ensures that in the society every one gets the minimum required food and nutrients for a productive life and therefore can contribute to the progress of the society.

The absence of food security can have disastrous consequences for the deprived people and the society. It becomes a stigma if a significant section of the population is unable to participate in the development process of the society. When adequate nutrients are not available in one's food, it impairs one's ability to work. Stunted growth, weak eyes etc deprive them of the ability to pursue a good employment career. Such malnutrition also reduces the immunity or resistance to diseases, often affecting adversely the whole lifetime. Inadequate food and nutrition add to hunger and keep people weak, underdeveloped and inefficient. Infants and women are especially vulnerable in terms of food insecurity.

At a collective level, people deprived of food remain unemployed or face a very poor quality of employment with low wages which leads to waste of human resources. Further, such dependent population constitutes a burden on the economy and society as they have to be provided with food and again they may have to be offered public assistance when they become sick or invalid. On the whole a society with a significant section deprived of food security, make development meaningless as it results in an unbalanced development where the rich get richer and poor degenerate into more acute poverty. The absence of food security retards a society's development while adequate security releases productive human resources for nation-building.

9.3 FOOD SECURITY, POVERTY AND HUNGER

Food security in India in terms of poverty and hunger presents a very unsatisfactory picture. The higher the level of poverty, the lower would be the purchasing power of the poor people. One recent survey of the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) (61st Round, 2004-05) brings out that poverty has declined. According to the Planning Commission, the percentages of rural, urban and total population below poverty line were 37.3%, 32.4% and 36% in 1993-94 and these percentages fell to 28.3%, 25.7% and 27.5% respectively in 2004-05 (61st Round of NSSO). But still the absolute number of poor remains highly significant.

According to the same NSSO survey (61st Round), in rural areas 28.3% population was below poverty line amounting to about 221 million. In urban areas 25.7% of the urban population amounting to 81 million was below poverty line. Both rural and urban areas together had 27.5% of the total population amounting to 302 million (Poverty line assumed as per capita monthly expenditure Rs.356/- in rural and Rs.538.6 in urban areas (Survey on Uniform Recall Period (URP) basis). It shows that over 300 million in the Indian population would suffer from hunger and deprivation but for the assistance received from the various employment, poverty eradication and other programmes of the governments at central and state levels. The actual population suffering from food insecurity may be much higher as even people marginally above poverty line get affected by food insecurity.

9.3.1 Impact of Globalisation Policies

The NSSO's 61st Round has highlighted the fact that the population below poverty line is still high and the absolute number of over 300 million is also a large number. The policies of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG) were intended to unleash the potential of India and its entrepreneurs who were demanding a framework of economic freedom and entrepreneurial opportunities which would raise all round growth in the country and the trickle down effects of these policies will help in reducing poverty levels significantly and substantially in the country.

A study undertaken by Dev and Ravi (2007) analysing in depth of the NSSO data of the above 61st Round and earlier data has brought out the fact that globalisation policies failed to make a significant impact on poverty. The following table (Table 1) gives the details:

Table 1: Absolute no of poor & very poor in India & % change in poverty (on URP basis)

	1983(Mn)	1993-94(Mn)	2004-05(Mn)	Change in-> 1983-94	Poverty % 1993-2005
Rural					
Poor	252.0	247.2	231.2	-0.81	-0.73
VeryPoor	140.6	102.0	76.7	-0.97	-0.52
Urban					
Poor	72.3	77.4	83.3	-0.92	-0.59
Very Poor	38.4	38.0	38.4	-0.61	-0.36
All India					
Poor	324.3	324.6	315.5	-0.85	-0.70
Very Poor	179.0	140.0	115.1	-0.88	-0.48

Source: Dev & Ravi (2007), Quoted in Ruddar Datt (2007). Compiled from Tables 3&4

(Poor refers to those below poverty line. Very poor refers to those below 75% of the poverty line).

It is obvious from the above table that the percentage fall is in all categories, both in rural and urban areas, but the fall is less during the post-reform (globalization) period 1994-05. Also absolute poverty among poor has increased in urban areas while it has remained static among very poor. It may be concluded that food security problem is still a gigantic task.

9.3.3 Hunger

Governments, both at the centre and states, have been taking serious and strong measures to promote food security, by making food available at cheaper rates, by promoting employment, and through poverty eradication programmes. There have been some improvements in eliminating starvation and reducing calorie deficiency. But the problem of ‘mass hunger’ in the country has not disappeared.

This year Global Hunger Index (GHI) for India highlights this fact. Among the ranking of 84 countries – developing and transitional - India has been ranked 65th, a very poor ranking indeed. India’s rank indicates ‘alarming’ poverty situation. India ranks poorer than its neighbouring countries like China (rank 5); Sri Lanka (35); Nepal (55); and Pakistan (58). It is also behind; South Africa (14); Thailand (22); and Indonesia (35). India’s position is worse than that of several poorer African and Central Asian countries like Turkmenistan (11), Gabon (13), Botswana (31); Burkina Faso (57); and Sudan (53) (a country with no stable government for about 50 years!) It is clear that India has to go a long way to conquer the ‘Hunger’ and ‘Starvation’ and ensure food security to its population.

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), in its study ‘Millions Fed’, has given credit to India for some good innovations like zero-tillage farming and developing milk network. But it says that still India has the world’s largest number of hungry people – more than 200 million food insecure people. In this regard its rank is 66 in a list of 88 countries.

9.4 FOOD SECURITY AND MALNUTRITION

Food security is not only a matter of quantity of food but also of quality in terms of nutrients. In India the availability of nutrients in a poor man's food is very scanty. According to Prof. Hanumantha Rao, in India, 'food security' unfortunately has become synonymous with 'food grain security'.

The following table (Table 2) gives the per capita per day net availability of cereals and pulses:

Table 2: Per capita net availability per day (gms)

Year	Cereals	Pulses	Total
1951	334.2	60.7	394.9
1961	399.7	69.0	468.7
1971	417.6	51.2	468.8
1981	417.3	37.5	454.8
1991	468.5	41.6	510.1
2001	386.2	30.0	416.2
2005	390.9	31.5	422.4

Source: Economic Survey February, 2008 Table 1.17 p-A-22

The table above reveals that even in case of cereals, the availability has been stagnant hovering around 400 grams per day (except in 1991 when it was 468.5 grams). In case of pulses which is the source of protein, the consumption has been falling over a period of time from 60.7 gms in 1951 to 31.5 gms in 2005.

Not only are the nutrients inadequate in poor persons' food in India but also the general standard of living of the poor masses is also poor in comparison to other countries. For example in 1995, the annual per capita grains used in India was 200 kgs while the same was 300 kgs in China (50% more) and in the USA it was 800 kgs. Similarly in case of milk, the per capita annual milk consumption in India was 34 kgs compared to 288 kgs in the USA. In case of several nutrients like poultry, there is hardly any consumption by India's poor. Thus nutrients in India are poor both in quantity and quality.

9.4.1 Global Hunger Index

The Global Hunger Index 2009 highlights the fact of India's poor nutritional performance. 21% of the Indian population was undernourished (Between 2003 and 2005); 43.5% of Indian children under the age of five were underweight (between 2002 and 2007) and under five years age infant mortality rate in 2007 was 7.2% for India.

Surveys of the National Nutritional Monitoring Bureau and the National Family Health Survey unambiguously suggest that incidence of malnutrition is extremely serious. In 2000-01 about half the children and one third of adults were undernourished. What is more worrisome is the fact that except for two states, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, there has not been any improvement in this regard. In some states such as Madhya Pradesh and Orissa the situation has worsened (Vyas, 2005). In other words we have to make special efforts to raise nutritional security and improve nutrition especially for pregnant and lactating mothers and small children.

9.5 FOOD SECURITY AND GLOBAL CONCERNS

Brown Lester R, author of 'Tough Choices' (1996) has argued that just as ideological conflict was the defining issue in the previous era that has just ended, the defining issue in the emerging era will be food scarcity. This will be the challenge that the world will have to face.

9.5.1 Rising Demand and Instability in Supply and Prices

Globally the demand for food is rising fast, especially in China and India, which pushes up global demand significantly. These countries are also experiencing rapid and steady economic growth which raises the income and purchasing power resulting in a higher demand for better quality commodities. At the same time population has also been growing in countries like India creating additional demand for food. On the other side, supply is often affected by failure of monsoon, frequent droughts, floods etc., which create instability in supply. With rising demand and fluctuation in supply, prices too rise and fluctuate creating uncertainties. India has been experiencing inflation intermittently.

Lester Brown has explained the debate in this area of demand, supply and prices. He points out that both the World Bank and the FAO were projecting a bright future of food surplus and declining prices in 1970s and 1980s. According to Brown, such projections lead to serious underinvestment in agriculture and family planning. It is true that in China, in mid-1970s and under their modernisation programmes, which commenced around 1978, there was a large increase in food production and China felt it would never have to import food grains other than the seeds. But in 1994 prices rose sharply forcing China to import massively and overnight China became world's second largest importer of food grains after Japan. And thus China with 1.2 billion population, with rising incomes and moving up the food chain can create a massive demand for massive imports, pushing up the world food prices. Brown feels that only now we are realising that the world is facing food shortage and rising food prices.

On grounds of equity at a global level, there is a welfare need to raise the consumption both in quantity and quality of food in developing countries where at present consumption levels are poor and grossly inadequate. The following table (Table 3) gives annual per capita food consumption:

Tabel 3: Annual per capita grain use and consumption of livestock in select

Country	Grains	Beef	Pork	Poultry	Milk	Egg
USA	800	45	31	46	288	174
Italy	400	26	33	19	197	158
China	300	4	30	6	5	196
India	200	1	0.4	1	34	Less than 30

Source: Lester R Brown (1996), p.49

The above table reveals the gap in consumption and quality of food items between developed countries like the USA and Italy on the one hand and developing countries like China and India on the other. Economically apart from rising demand due to rising incomes in developing countries, there will also be rise in demand due to the process of

the developing countries trying to catch up with the living standards of developed countries.

There is also a need for expanding world food production and for equitable consumption for which global efforts are needed. For example, while the need for raising the purchasing power of the poor is recognised, it is also necessary to recognise the need to help poor countries financially. Fortunately international measures are emerging. For example, the World Bank created a \$1.2 billion Rapid Financing Facility and supports the Global Food Response Programme to speed up assistance to the neediest countries. This is a part of the bank's 'New Deal' on Global Food Policy for short/medium/long term responses including for programmes like safety nets like school feeding and Food for Work Programmes. Similarly, the World Trade Organization (WTO) also provides flexibilities to developing countries in addressing food security including domestic policy initiatives.

9.5.2 Food Security and Environment

Food security and environment are closely related and impact each other. Food production is already affected by climatic changes. At the same time reckless and repeated use of land in countries with large population and rising demand like in India and China can erode the soil fertility making the land barren. Further water consumption may create shortage and water crisis. This can have a chain reaction affecting forests, flora and fauna. On the other side, environment may be abused by unplanned industrialisation. There may be excessive deforestation. There may be excessive addition of Carbon-dioxide (CO₂) in the environment and release of chloro-floro-carbon (CFCs). Temperatures may rise and the ozone layer may begin to deplete. And these can result in climatic changes that affect production of food grains and other food products. There can also be monsoon failures at some places creating droughts and excessive monsoon creating floods at some places. Such climatic changes may also have seasonal changes affecting living. A balanced development with an environmentally sustainable economy satisfies the food requirements.

9.6 MEASURES AND THEIR IMPACT

Measures for food security in India have been extensive though their impact has been mixed. Some measures are long term measures and these measures have multi-purpose aims which include facilitating availability of food for the poor and promoting their welfare. Managing population growth has been one such measure. Large population creates large responsibility and large problems. Many of India's core problems like poverty, unemployment and food security are accentuated by the population pressure. Simultaneously, strong measures taken, such as those during the emergency period of 1975-77 to control population growth had met with stiff resistance and disapproval among masses. So governments in India now pursue the goal through education, persuasion and provision of incentives for achieving the goals of population control and also paying attention to raise the quality of population through the policy of 'family welfare planning'. The impact can be termed as modest in this field. However this is a long term approach and the impact will be realised only over a long period.

Similarly, measures are needed to eradicate poverty, reduce unemployment and improve education and skills. Various employment and poverty eradication schemes like the IRDP, Swarna Jayanthi Gram Swarojgar Yojana and Swarna Jayanthi Shahari Rojgar Yojana aim at raising income and purchasing power of people and help in improving food security.

An important measure to deal with the problem has been the attempt to increase food production through better agricultural methods and use of higher level of technology which was ushered in the Green Revolution. Significant increase in the production of wheat and rice were achieved but not much progress could be made in other areas. Improvements made in the food grain production helped the country to become self-sufficient in food doing away with imports. But the problem of ensuring food to poor remains and is being tackled by special measures which are discussed below. Ecological preservation and environmental promotion is also a long-term measure emphasised by the experts. Optimum use of flora and fauna in land and fisheries in sea can help in preserving ecology and environment and retain sustainability and food security.

9.6.2 Three Important Measures

Three important measures are needed to protect vulnerable sections of the poor below and above the poverty line, women and children and deal with their food security and widen their physical wellbeing. We examine these measures below:

9.6.2.1 The Public Distribution System

A well organized public distribution system- (PDS) is perhaps the most important direct measure to help poor in getting food. It ensures equitable distribution of food articles and protects poor from high prices and provides the required minimum of food. In India PDS has been expanded over time to provide not only food grains but also other essential commodities like sugar and kerosene. Food grains are procured and made available by the Food Corporation of India, set up in 1965. About 150 million families are covered under the PDS which provides goods worth Rs.30000/- crores annually and is termed as perhaps the largest distribution network in the world. This system takes care of meeting the demand; the instability in supply; the availability; and price stability aspects.

But the operation of the PDS suffered from a number of flaws. Leakages due to corruption have led to diversion of food grains to the open market and not all the poor benefited. The distribution of the commodities over the country was also uneven, with the Southern states getting higher quantities compared to their share of population below poverty line and reverse was the position in the Northern states, especially in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The system has also been imposing on the government an enormous burden of food subsidies. The food subsidy which in 1980-81 was a modest Rs. 662/- crores, rose to Rs.2850/0 crores in 1991-92 and then to a whopping Rs.23828/- crores in 2006-07. This rising food subsidy contrasted with a reduced off-take in relation to allocation making the system less effective and productive. The system is urban-biased which makes it inequitable for the rural areas and has also become inefficient due to high cost of procurement, storage and distribution; it resulted in higher prices when large quantities are procured leaving less for the open market.

Attempts have been made in India to revamp the system and raise its efficiency. The system has been making efforts to reach the targeted poor under the 'Targeted Public Distribution System' introduced in mid-1997 under which the below poverty line families can buy at lower prices than the above poverty line families. But this has made the latter families to resort to open market and so the prices had to be later reduced. Though the PDS has been a direct, well meaning, and equitable system for all poor, ensuring food security for all poor has been a difficult task. Many development economists argue for a universalized PDS.

9.6.2.2 Integrated Child Development Services

This is a scheme sponsored by the central government but contributed and coordinated by both the central and state governments. At the central level, the scheme is under the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD). State governments provide funds for supplementary nutrition. The scheme was launched in 1975 and is considered to be one of the largest and comprehensive intervention programmes in the world offering several services to pregnant women, lactating mothers and children up to the age of six years. It provides the targeted sections, supplementary feeding providing nutrition; immunisation; public health check-up; referral services (for attention of experts); education, health and nutrition to adult women; and non-formal pre-school education to children between the ages of three to six years. The scheme provides food security including nutritional security and health security and has been expanding its coverage of women and children. During December 2007, the coverage had extended to 62.9 million children and 13.2 million pregnant mothers. However the scheme does not cover all poor or all children. Jean Dreze has recommended the universalisation of the scheme covering all children, on four grounds:

- a) Legal- The Supreme Court Order of 28th November 2001 says that extension of ICDS to all children, pregnant women and lactating mothers is mandatory.
- b) Political- The Government of India in its 'National Common Minimum Programme' has included this demand.
- c) Economic- Expenditure on the development of children is an investment benefiting all, over a period of time, and,
- d) Equity- Provision ICDS to all children would promote social equity over a period of time.

9.6.2.3 Mid-day Meals Scheme

In 1982, the Tamil Nadu government introduced a scheme of Free Noon Meals Scheme which became very popular and effective. Nutrition to children improved and there was also a fall in the infant mortality rate. Inspired by its success, the central government introduced the MDMS in 1995 with the purpose of

- a) improving children's attendance in the school,
- b) reducing dropouts from the schools, and,
- c) Providing nutritious food to children of primary section of aided schools.

It is considered to be the largest school nutritional programme in the world. The Scheme has been further improved with proposals for the construction of kitchen-cum-stores. It has been well received except in some states like Uttar Pradesh where the implementation has been poor.

9.6.2.4 NREGA 2006

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act/Scheme became effective in February 2006. It has now become the government's flagship scheme and is being renamed after Mahatma Gandhi (MG-NREGS). It was initially introduced in most backward states of India but now covers all rural areas in the country. It provides a guarantee of some

income to have some food security. The Sampoorna Grameen Rojgar Yojana and the National Food for Works Programme (NFFWP) have been merged into this scheme.

The scheme was inspired by the success of the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme introduced in Maharashtra in 1972-73 providing employment guarantees to rural poor. Though there were criticisms of leakages, corruption and lack of productive assets creation, yet it was hailed internationally as an effective welfare and income guarantee programme. Thus it attracted the attention of the central government and the result is the NREGA/S. It seeks to provide 100 days of guaranteed unskilled wage employment to each rural household that seeks employment under the scheme. It has been expanding its eligible activities. Earlier only manual work was available but now covers the artisans like masons, potters etc. There has to be a 'verifiable permanent asset' which rules out corruption in the forged muster rolls by culprits to pocket money in the name of rural jobs. In future, road and house construction for the below poverty line poor are likely to become eligible. This scheme is bound to go a long way in creating food security in rural areas. The system of social auditing which is a continuous, open and transparent process can help this and other such measures from corruption.

9.7 FOOD SECURITY AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

The above analysis highlights the need to attend to several aspects of demand and supply of food and food prices. The aim is to ensure that there is no starvation and all poor people get the minimum required food with required nutrients. This calls for special efforts to meet the needs of people below the poverty line and even those poor who are only marginally higher than those below poverty line.

Toward this end the government has passed a legislation ensuring food security titled 'National Food Security Act' (NFSA). This is a direct, comprehensive and universal legislation applicable to the poor who are below the poverty line, to all schedule castes and tribes and women headed household in the whole country. The changes that are needed towards this direction are discussed as following:

9.7.1 Managing Demand, Supply and Prices

Managing the future food security system poses a number of challenges. These are considered and suggestions are attempted.

- 1) It is necessary to ensure effective demand that reflects the nutrition requirements and efficiency needs of poor people. The norms fixed by the Planning Commission of a minimum of daily calories intake of 2400 per person in rural areas and 2100 in urban areas must be considered while framing policies for poor people.
- 2) It is necessary to meet the shifts in demand for different articles especially wheat and rice. More grains supply is needed in festival seasons.
- 3) The most difficult challenge is to help poor earn adequate purchasing power to buy food so that they can make choices in the purchase of goods. There are a number of community development projects, poverty eradication programmes, and employment generation schemes which bestow purchasing power on poor who take part in any of these schemes. There are also 'Food for Work' programmes where they get food grains instead of cash payments. The MGNREGS now covers the whole of rural India. Though there is no such scheme in urban areas, there are other special

schemes for the poor. In addition to wage employment programmes, self-employment ventures, and micro entrepreneurship programmes are available for artisans and other craftsmen.

- 4) Promoting a safety net for the poor is necessary in the form of Subsidy. Resultantly, the poor may get food grains at a cheaper rate or government may give farmers inputs like fertilizers at cheaper rates thus subsidising the sale of grains. In India, there is a strong criticism that large subsidy allocation is fiscally unsustainable in the long run. This subsidy would still go up if the National Food Security Act is implemented. Such high subsidies are also against the Agreement on Agriculture of the World Trade Organisation. It is also pointed out that in fertilizer subsidies the better-off farmers benefit. All these facts bring out the significance of managing the subsidies very effectively and keeping it as low as possible.
- 5) It is necessary to strengthen organisations of poor small farmers, consumers and other stakeholders by appropriate capacity-building to deal with issues that arise in a market-oriented environment. Cooperatives of farmers and consumer associations can bargain for better prices. Such transactions eliminate middlemen or reduce their roles thus benefitting both producers and consumers and optimising the supply and demand. The government organisations or NGOs can help in capacity-building among the poor.
- 6) Adequate investment in agriculture and rural development is necessary. So far, attention was focused more on industry, business, trade and services, and the investment in agriculture was neglected. Africa and South Asia failed to invest in rural economy and accounted for 75% of the world hunger. Investment in rural development should cover agricultural production as well as non-farm employment and micro-entrepreneurship that will generate income in rural areas for the poor and enable them to participate in the development process.
- 7) Developed countries continue to protect and support their agriculture and made it an important agenda in the WTO negotiations. With the use of high technology, and other inputs they produce more than the demand in their domestic markets. But instead responding to the needs of developing countries for food security for their poor, it is pointed out that they use their surplus to feed animals. Such 'feeding half the world's food grains to animals, indicates a sad state of affairs'. International cooperation and agreement is needed to persuade developed countries to help poor and hungry in developing countries thus making global efforts to ensure food security.
- 8) Diversion from food production must be avoided where there is still mass hunger in several developing countries. There are cases of conversion of maize crop to bio-fuel production. 'Oxfam predicts that bio-fuel targets could create a 600 million additional hungry people by 2025. In 2008, the U.S. was scheduled to divert 1/3 rd maize crops to bio-fuel production'. This is considered to be a breach of rights to food under UN Declaration of Human Rights. Attention may be paid to productivity and diversification that can lead to lower prices, larger supply, and a wider basket of agricultural goods satisfying not only the demands of poor but also the needs of international trade and business.
- 9) Attempts are on to promote genetically modified crops but such a solution can be highly controversial as they may adversely affect production of food supply for the poor.

- 10) Food security issue need not be bogged down in ideological controversies. Under globalisation 'a market-oriented approach' is advocated whereas food security or food sovereignty approach demands due consideration to the needs of poor. In the market-led approach, attention shifts to mass production of standard varieties leading to a loss of bio-diversity and often leads to a deterioration of the conditions of rural poor. There needs to be balance between market-oriented approach and the solution of food security of poor.
- 11) In case of India, there has been a shift from 'ship to mouth' to 'food surplus and exports'. Though it is a remarkable achievement, it appears to be at the cost of the food security demands of a vast section of the poor. The need is to satisfy the food security demands of poor and then go for export markets; the goal should be 'food and livelihood security first' and 'market and trade' later.
- 12) Adequate attention to research is necessary, to locate region where food security is needed to be intensified, so that it can be targeted accurately. The Institute of Human Development (IHD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) have brought out a series of food security atlases for eight states- Jharkhand, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh – which analyse the dimensions of food security at the sub-state or district level. Each of the atlases calculate six different indices pertaining to, food security outcome; food availability; access to food; food absorption; food security and public intervention. The purpose is to identify regions and districts within the state that require priority attention in ensuring food security. These atlases are useful for analysis, action and advocacy for reducing the incidence of hunger in the entire rural India.
- 13) The PDS/TPDS, the ICDS and the MDMS must be broad-based and universal to the extent possible and needed. The central government stated that 'strengthening the PDS would mean adequate supplies, reasonable subsidies, and efficient delivery of subsidized food'. For this purpose 'Haryana and Chandigarh will introduce on a pilot basis a smart card based delivery system to deliver food grains. This measure will also help in raising the off-take. Such innovative approach should be sought and discovered to make the PDS a 'least-cost-most-efficient' system. Similarly, the budget 2009-10 of the central government has stated that the ICDS will be universalised by March 2012 and all services under the ICDS will be extended to cover every child under the age of six years. The MDMS must be extended to all schools accommodating very poor and disadvantaged children.
- 14) Due attention must be paid to food, ecology and environment. While growing food, its ecological and environmental consequences must be analysed and provided for, so that ecology remains balanced and environment remains enriched. Great care must be taken in case of renewable resources. For example 'fishing' carried out excessively can exhaust the fish population and replenishment may not take place. Similarly rigorous environmental control and restoration of flora and fauna can help in preserving natural climate conducive to food production.
- 15) Water resource needs high attention. India needs to conserve harvest rain water. Water productivity should be maximised. Whenever monsoon has been deficient (as it is in 2009) food production has been adversely affected resulting in inflation. Prices of not only food grains but also of vegetables and other agricultural commodities become significantly costly.

- 16) Land reforms in India have not been satisfactory. If judiciously planned and surplus land is distributed to landless they can motivate first generation farmers to work hard to raise land productivity resulting in greater agricultural production.
- 17) The need is to control population growth and concentrate on raising the quality of population in terms of education, training, skills and capacity-building that can help in increasing food production and relieving pressure on demand for food. But this needs sustained efforts.

9.7.2 National Food Security Act

There has been a persistent demand in the country that food security, especially for poor, must become a right and entitlement. The government of India has enacted a Food Security Act to ensure food security for the poor. A national public debate and consultation process for this was taken. This Act proposes that every family below poverty line will be entitled by law to 25 kgs of rice or wheat per month at Rs. 3 per kg. The scheme is expected to cover 65.2 million families below the poverty line. The Act is considered complementary to the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act which assures employment in rural areas, giving the rural poor the purchasing power to buy food sold under the food security Act. But some of the concerns need to be addressed, discussed as below.

- 1) It is unclear as to how many beneficiaries will be there. It is said that the Act will cover about six crore families below the poverty line. It is estimated that if below poverty line families and beneficiaries of similar schemes are added, 25 million tonnes of wheat or rice may be needed. But if above the poverty line who are poor are also added then 50 million tonnes of these grains may be needed, which will be a tall order.
- 2) The delivery mechanism, it appears will be the PDS (TPDS) mechanism. But the system is corrupt and poorly administered. Is it advisable to rely on such a mechanism?
- 3) The financial implications are quite high. If only below the poverty line families are covered, the subsidy bill will be Rs.30000/- crores. If both below and above poverty line families are to be covered, the bill may rise to Rs.60000/- crores. This may rise further if the minimum support price is raised further. Is such high bill sustainable?
- 4) Food security is not just a provision of rice or wheat but an extension of minimum nutrition requirements. Will it be feasible?

To overcome the above problems and face the challenges, some suggestions are given below:

- 1) Initially the Act included both rural and poor urban areas. In the long-term measure, various poverty eradication and employment schemes must be made available to the poor so that they will have the purchasing power to buy the food grains from the PDS. Poor must also be trained, skilled and made capable.
- 2) The procurement and distribution may be left to state governments. This arrangement would keep the subsidy bill at a comparatively lower level for the central government.
- 3) Before the Act is implemented, the PDS must be made efficient and corruption must be tackled.

- 4) The management, procurement prices, investment etc. must be considered in advance for the effective implementation of the Act.
- 5) The state governments need to consult and coordinate with the central government to procure and distribute food grains.
- 6) Gram panchayats should be involved to remove bogus cards.
- 7) As regards nutritious food, the PDS sells/distributes several essential commodities; subsequently, the required nutritious items may be added.

9.8 SUMMARY

Food security refers to the provision of basic food requirements for all. It refers to ensuring minimum food requirements to the poor and disadvantaged sections of the society at subsidised or concessional rates. Food security ensures the welfare of the poor and is therefore highly valuable from the point of view of equity and social justice. It is necessary for helping in raising the standard of living, efficiency and productivity levels in the country. In India food security is needed because large sections of the society live below the poverty line. Apart from non-availability of minimum required food, the quality of food in terms of nutrients is also poor. The Government of India has been taking several measures to ensure food security like providing minimum purchasing power in the hands of poor, special schemes to make food available at subsidised rates for the poor, MNREGS, PDS, ICDS, and MDMS. Measures are also on to protect environment and improve the distribution of food. The Government of India has embarked on the process of passing the National Food Security Act that could confer social benefits on India's poor, enabling them to participate and contribute to the development of the Indian society, thus fulfilling the Gandhian hopes of a contended society.

9.9 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. What is food security? Bring out its significance for India.
2. Examining poverty, argue the case for food security for India.
3. Discuss the future scenario in the area of Food Security in the light of the proposed National Food Security Act.

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UNIT 10 UNORGANISED LABOUR (RURAL AND URBAN)

Structure

- 10.1 Introduction
 - Aims and objectives
- 10.2 Profile of Rural Labour
- 10.3 Problems of Rural Labour
- 10.4 Measures for Rural Labour
- 10.5 Profile of Urban Unorganised Labour
- 10.6 Problems of Urban Labour
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10.1 INTRODUCTION

“The labourer has to realize that labour is also capital. As soon as labourers are properly educated and organised and they realize their strength, no amount of capital can subdue them. Organised and enlightened labour can dictate its own terms. It is no use vowing vengeance against a party because we are weak. We have to get strong. Strong hearts, enlightened minds and willing hands can brave all odds and remove all obstacles.”

Mahatma Gandhi

In India, unorganised labour refers to that vast segment of the labour force that has remained unprotected even after six decades of planned development. It includes agricultural labourers; low paid labour in small manufacturing and services in rural and urban areas; casual labour; handloom and power-loom workers; bidi and cigar workers; sweepers and scavengers; and others like rag-pickers, self-employed and small professionals like electricians, plumbers etc. If agricultural labour is taken out, the rest of the categories of unorganised labour could be classified together as ‘informal sector labour’, much of it is found in urban and semi-urban areas.

The nature of labour force in a developed country differs in several respects from that of a developing country like India. In developed countries, it is more organised and such labour enjoys all social security benefits ‘from cradle to grave’. The labour force is also highly educated and productive. But in developing countries like India the labour force is highly unorganised, unskilled and unprotected. As a result, the earnings, the terms and conditions of employment and other social benefits are not available to the vast majority of the labour force that is rightly termed as unorganised.

India's total labour force has been increasing continuously along with the population. Labour force includes the unemployed. The following table (Table 1) gives the growth of labour force over a period of time:

Table 1: Labour Force in Million person Years (CDS basis)

Year	1983	1993-94	1999-00	2004-05
Population	718.10	893.68	1005.05	1092.83
Labor Force	263.82	334.20	364.88	419.65
Employed	239.49	313.93	338.19	384.91
Unemployed	24.33	20.27	26.69	34.74

Sources: Economic Survey February, 08 : 2007-08. Table 10.9. CDS=Current Daily Status)

It should be noted that the figures for unemployed have shown a sharp increase in 2004-05 compared to those for earlier years.

In the Indian labour market, the unorganised labour constitutes an overwhelming majority of the labour force. For example, in the year 1999-2000 the total employment constituted 397 million persons. Out of this, only 28.11 million persons were employed in the organised sector which constitutes approximately only 7% of the total employment. Thus 93% of the employed are in the unorganised sector. Even within this organised sector, over two-third employment is in the public sector. Under the post-1991 globalisation policies, organised employment in the public sector has been falling as a result of government's gradual withdrawal from the business sector. During the period 1994-2005, the rate of growth of employment in public sector was negative (-0.70% per annum) which brought the total organised sector employment growth rate to a smaller negative rate of -0.31%, in spite of a positive growth rate of 0.58% in the private sector. In other words, a vast 93% of the workforce is the unorganised sector and therefore, there is an imperative need to concentrate all public attention on this unorganised sector.

The unorganised labour, whether urban or rural, has always remained at the bottom in getting the benefits of development. It is not a beneficiary from the high growth rate experienced by the economy since 1990s. As the empirical evidence shows, we have been having a 'jobless growth' both in terms of quantity and quality of employment. The unorganised labour constitutes child workers, poor women workers, bonded labour, contract labour etc., who have been facing exploitation in the labour market. The position of women in the unorganised sector has been very poor and vulnerable. The 'Shram Shakti' Report (Ila Bhatt Commission, 1988) has brought out comprehensively the nature of self-employment of women and their poor working and living conditions.

The fluctuating nature of employment in several sectors of unorganised labour is a major problem. In rural areas many occupations including agriculture are seasonal and highly dependent on the monsoon. The failure of the monsoon creates enormous problems for agricultural labour and small farmers who are all unorganized because of seasonal unemployment. Even in urban areas, when business and industry face a 'downturn' or recession, employment is adversely affected. The variations throw a section of organised labour into unorganised sector and during 'boom' times there are shifts of labour from unorganised to organised sector of the economy.

Aims and Objectives

This Unit would enable you to:

- describe the nature and magnitude of the unorganised labour in the country.
- profile rural and urban unorganised sectors and the measures taken to benefit them.
- identify the tasks involved in developing the unorganised labour.

10.2 PROFILE OF RURAL LABOUR

India has often been referred to as a country of villages. At the time of independence in 1947, agriculture was the main occupation with over 70% of population depending on agriculture and more than half of India's GDP came from the primary sector. Majority of the workforce depends on this primary sector and the sector has not changed much as the following discussion would show.

10.2.1 Nature and Magnitude of Rural Labour

Rural labour includes agricultural labour; rural artisans, craftsmen, educated science graduates and technically qualified persons to deal with agricultural implants and technology; various agricultural and manual labour and 'own account establishments' with family labour. Agricultural labourers include small and marginal farmers constituting an overwhelming section of rural labour. As the economy has been developing over a period of time and more rapidly since 1991, the share of agricultural labour in the total employment has been falling but continues to be the majority of the total labour force.

Table 2: Sectoral Employment shares (by CDS) (percentage)

Industry	1983	1993-94	1999-00	2004-05
Agriculture	65.43	61.02	56.64	52.08
Mining+Quarrying..	0.66	0.78	0.67	0.63
Manufacturing	11.27	11.10	12.13	12.90
Electricity,water,gas	0.34	0.41	0.34	0.35
Construction	2.56	3.63	4.44	5.57
Trade/hotel/Restaurent.	6.98	8.26	11.20	12.62
Transport/Storage/communication.	2.88	3.22	4.06	4.61
Other services	9.88	11.58	10.52	11.24
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Economic Survey February, 08 : 2007-08 Table 10.10

As seen from the above table, the agricultural labourers were 65.43% of the workforce in 1983 and have been reduced to 52.08% in 2004-05. The share of the agricultural labour keeps falling as the economy moves to a higher growth path. However in advanced economies this percentage is less than 5% which shows that India has a long way to go in reducing the dependence of labour on agriculture.

10.2.2 Socio-economic conditions

The socio-economic conditions of rural labour are still highly deplorable. Access to drinking water was not available to 10% of the households in 2001 for India as a whole and in case of rural areas it was much worse with about 27% of households, constituting

poor labour had no access to drinking water. Many of them do not have adequately built houses.

10.2.3 Type of Employment

In India the rural employment falls into three categories: self-employment, regular/salaried employment and casual employment. Obviously, regular and salaried employed enjoy relatively better life with access to social security like regular wages, provident fund, medical benefits etc.

Table 3. Distribution of workers (Usual status) by category of employment in rural areas (Percentage)

Year	Self-employment	Regular/salaried	Casual
1977-78	62.6	7.7	29.7
1983	61.0	7.5	31.5
1987-88	59.4	7.7	32.9
1993-94	58.0	6.4	35.6
1999-2000	56.0	6.7	37.3

Source: Various NSSO Rounds

Only a small section of 6-8% of the rural workforce gets regular salaried employment. Majority are self-employed as they opt for it as a last resort to livelihood. A large section is casual labour that has a little better job and income security.

10.2.4 Literacy

The level of literacy and skills are low among rural labour. The general literacy rate according to 2001 census was 65.4% and still lower in rural areas. It is reported that in 1999-2000, only 2% of rural workforce was ‘professional & technical and related workers’ and 1.4% constituted of ‘administrative, executive and marginal workers.’ The corresponding figures for urban areas are much higher.

10.2.5 Vulnerable Sections

The rural labour also includes bonded labour whose poverty and indebtedness has kept them under the clutches of rich farmers and landlords. It has been legally abolished, but the position of labour freed from bondage continues to be adverse compared to other labourers. Child labour exists inspite of several local, national and international measures taken to abolish it. The chief impediment is the poverty of the parents which is also attended to, but a solution appears to be a long-term one. There are also artisans, craftsmen and others who work in forestry, poultry, dairy and fishing. The rural labour constitutes a wide variety of workers but predominant are agricultural workers. The proportion of rural/agricultural workers in the total workforce has been coming down but still they constitute the largest and majority section of the workforce and therefore need full attention from the governmental authorities.

10.3 PROBLEMS OF RURAL LABOUR

The rural labour in India faces varied problems including social, economic and political problems that are chronic and complex.

10.3.1 Social Problems

Socially the unorganised rural labour suffers from a poor status as large sections belong to scheduled castes and tribes and other backward classes and also minorities. The poor status affects their mobility in other fields also. In spite of reservation and affirmative policies, there is no improvement owing to social stratification that affects them adversely. They work at traditional and hereditary jobs like scavenging, barbers and craftwork. Many other problems like lack of access to community facilities and lack of economic resources are, to some extent, due to the poor status suffered by the rural labour.

10.3.2 Economic Problems

Economically rural labour has not been able to improve its position due to lower wages despite the Minimum Wages Act of 1948 because of its poor implementation. There is also large amount of reserve and surplus labour which keeps wages low. This one single measure, if implemented effectively, could be of great help to the unorganised labour. There is also employers' resistance in raising wages which is also facilitated by large supply of labour compared to its demand. According to the government surveys, the rural labour suffer from indebtedness often leading to bonded labour. A recent survey showed that 50% of Indian peasantry is indebted. Their earnings are further affected by the seasonal nature of agriculture. While during busy harvesting season they get better wages and more employment opportunities, during slack seasons their earning capacity and opportunity fall so low that many of them, especially males, are forced to migrate to nearby urban areas or better-off states like Punjab and Haryana. Hard working conditions, inadequate pucca houses, lack of infrastructural facilities and difficult financial access make their conditions worse. Conditions of rural artisans and craftsmen have deteriorated on account of decline of their traditional crafts due to competition from machine-made goods and substitutes like advanced technological services and plastic goods. Labour replacing devices also displace labour. There is an urgent need to address this from alternative ways of development.

10.3.3 Position of the Unemployed

A major economic problem is the presence of open unemployment, under-employment and disguised unemployment. Lack of education and skills deter the employability of a person as high levels of illiteracy and limited skills become limiting factors. Open unemployment has been fluctuating as per the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) surveys undertaken periodically. Though absolute poverty has been coming down, yet it is still insignificant. The rural poor workers are unable to invest in education and skills thus perpetuating a vicious circle of poverty and low standard of living.

10.3.4 Gender Discrimination and Child and Migrant Labour

Gender discrimination affects adversely women workers who are paid much less than their male counterparts even though this is unconstitutional. This practice is prominent in unorganised sector. Along with this is the prevalence of child labour. A large numbers of rural workers in backward areas with no irrigation facilities are migrant workers who are always exploited by their employers who pay them less for their work.

The above facts portray the complex problems faced by rural labour in India. These problems are also multidimensional and chronic and require sustained and multifaceted efforts to deal effectively.

10.4 MEASURES FOR RURAL UNORGANISED LABOUR

The central and state governments have been following a multifaceted approach to help this labour. These measures collectively attempt to deal with the major problems faced by the poor rural labour. An important general measure has been the passing of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 giving a constitutional status for the rural self-governments. This Act aims at 'planning from below and with people's participation'. The Act has given many powers, authority and duties to local bodies so that they can function independently, planning action suited to their local needs. But in the subjects given to these bodies, organising unorganised labour is not there. Though there is some welfare responsibility for weaker sections, it is difficult to plan measures for the benefit of all unorganised labour in rural areas. There is scope to improve the lot of rural unorganised labour under this Act.

10.4.1 Poverty Related Measures

One set of measures deal with the acute and colossal poverty of the rural labour. Earlier it was presumed that as economy and society develop, such development percolates downwards to benefit the rural poor at the bottom level. But this has not happened, though there has been a reduction in poverty after the economic reforms were introduced in 1991. Percentage of people below poverty line in 1987-88 was 39.1% which in 2004-05 (NSSO 61st Round) came down to 21.8%. Though there are differences in the way poverty is estimated, yet it cannot be denied that during the period 1991-2005 poverty has come down significantly. But still the prevailing poverty rate is quite high.

Since the beginning of the planning period the government has attempted to reduce poverty through special measures to improve the agricultural labourers and marginal farmers, small farmers and rural poor affected by droughts. In 1978-79 a comprehensive programme called Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was started to help the poor by creating new assets for themselves so that their poverty can be eradicated over a period of time. Later it was restructured making it more employment-oriented and was termed as Swarnajayanthi Gram Swarojgar Yojana and some other programme contents were also added to it.

10.4.2 Minimum Wages

The passing of the Minimum Wages Act 1948 is another important measure that ensures some sustained support to rural poor. Most state governments have fixed wages as per minimum wage legislation but the implementation of the minimum wage legislation has been very poor. This is due to several factors like excess labour supply; low productivity and poor skills of workers; lack of effective organisations of workers in rural areas; employers' inability to pay even minimum wages; and reluctance of the rich farmers to pay the prescribed minimum wages. This measure needs to be strengthened and effectively implemented.

10.4.3 Land Reforms

Soon after independence the government attempted a series of reforms in agriculture in rural areas. The 'land reforms' consisted of schemes like providing surplus land to landless labour, regulation of rent for small cultivators, security of tenure for small and marginal farmers, consolidation of landholdings and cooperative farming. These aimed at

ensuring social justice to small and marginal farmers, and those who cultivated others' lands. These steps have been uneven and poorly implemented. The results have been uneven and did not improve the conditions of rural poor.

10.4.4 Abolition of Bonded Labour

In India's rural areas there is the practice of forcing the workers to work in lieu of their debts, often incurred by their forefathers. This unjust, cruel and exploitative practice was abolished in October 1975 when the country was under an internal emergency with an ordinance and was followed by the passing of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976. The workers were legally made free but the practice seems to be continuing in some rural areas. However such forced labour is found internationally in many countries, especially the developing ones. The International Labour Organization (ILO) in its recent report (Economic Times, 13-5-09) points out the growing number of unethical, fraudulent and criminal practices that can lead people into situations of 'forced' labour. The Director General of ILO states rightly that 'forced labour is the antithesis of decent work and causes untold human suffering. Such forced labour can be dealt with only through international efforts.' In his words "modern forced labour can be eradicated provided there is a sustained commitment by the international community, working together with governments, employers and the civil society". India must set a good example of successful eradication of such forced labour by effective implementation of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976.

10.4.5 Employment Schemes

Another set of measures were attempted to provide employment opportunities that will uplift the rural poor gradually but effectively. The measures were broadly started during the Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74). These included the Rural Works Programme (RWP), Crash Scheme for Rural Employment (CSRE), Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) in Maharashtra and the Food for Work Programme (FWP). However these were not on a large-scale covering all rural areas of the country. Among these the EGS in Maharashtra deserves a special mention. Though there were criticisms of poor implementation, the programme has come in for high praise from international organisations. It encouraged the Union government to attempt a similar scheme all over the country as explained below.

A major change was visible from the Sixth Five Year Plan onwards. During this plan, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP) was launched. A special programme for rural landless poor labour called 'the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP)' was also launched fully funded by the central government. Later these programmes were merged into the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY). The JRY was also restructured and renamed as JGSY (Jawahar Gram Smriddhi Yojana). This programme gave employment to rural poor and also created durable assets necessary for development. To benefit rural poor residing in desert, drought prone, tribal, and hilly areas there is an Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS). A more comprehensive benefit programme was launched in 2001 called Sampoorna Gram Rojgar Yojana (SGRY) which not only gave wages to workers but also food security, at the same time creating durable assets for the community. In 2004 a National Food for Work Programme was launched. All these programmes are meant to provide employment, income and purchasing power to the rural poor and these definitely have improved the living conditions of rural poor.

A historical step was taken in 2006 when the Government of India introduced the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP) in select districts which became the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA). This ambitious programme now covers all the districts in rural areas. The scheme provides 100 days of guaranteed unskilled wage employment to each rural household that seeks employment under the scheme. The scheme is on the pattern of EGC of Maharashtra introduced in 1972. The programme is to benefit the rural poor and has become the government of India's flagship programme. It has been expanding rapidly since its introduction in 2006. Till recently only manual work was available to those seeking employment. Recently some changes have been announced by the Ministry of Rural Development. It will now cover rural artisans like masons and carpenters. Emphasis is also laid on the creation of 'verifiable permanent assets', 'to root out corruption in the forged muster rolls by culprits to pocket money in the name of rural jobs.' Officials have been asked to prepare 'a scheme under which a register of assets created under NREGA will be maintained at the district headquarters.' The programme may be further extended to construct roads as also houses for the BPL (below the poverty line) families under the Indira Awas Yojana that is being expanded to build 20 crore dwelling units. This single programme (NREGP) has prospects of making a world of difference for the rural poor in India and therefore carefully needs to be planned and effectively implemented to benefit poor in all major aspects of life, like poverty reduction, employment promotion and rise in the standard of living.

10.4.6 Measures for Rural Labour

Rural labour in India is entirely unorganised with poor living conditions. Further, a major measure announced is the 'Unorganised Sector workers' Social Security Bill'. However India still has a long way to go in improving the lot of rural labour and it is hoped that with the passage of rapid economic development large sections of rural labour will be able to enjoy the fruits of development. For this purpose the economic growth and development must be inclusive.

10.5 PROFILE OF URBAN UNORGANISED LABOUR

The unorganised labour in urban areas constitutes a highly heterogeneous labour. It includes self-employed, wage employed, casual labour in various sectors. It covers hawkers selling various goods like garments, plastic items, fruits, vegetables, and numerous food items. Another section consists of construction workers; home-based domestic workers; casual workers working in factories and micro establishments. The urban labor also works in household industries like food processing, bidis, cigar etc. There are also ragpickers, rikshaw pullers, electricians, and many self-employed. All these workers face a large number of problems. The government has taken a number of measures, but these do not seem to have much difference to the lot of these urban unorganised workers.

As stated in the beginning, if agricultural labour is taken out, the rest of the categories of unorganised labour found in urban and semi-urban areas include a) those employed on wages, b) those who are self-employed like hawkers, and rikshaw and taxi drivers, and c) micro-entrepreneurs manufacturing small and simple products and components/spare parts, for sale to larger industries as well as to direct customers. All these activities and workers constitute the informal sector, mainly the urban informal sector.

The ILO sources define such informal sector to mean an unorganised and decentralised

sector in which economic activities take place outside the framework corporate public and private sector establishments. Such activities include small scale of operations; ease of entry; reliance on family labour and local resources; labour-intensive technology; low capital endowments; a high degree of competition; unregulated market; unskilled workforce; and acquisition of skills outside the formal education system.

The informal sector is more visible in India and in almost all sectors of the economy i.e. in agriculture, industry, household sector and the services sector. It has been in existence for a long time but it is only since the 1970s that it has drawn the attention of the policy makers and researchers, notably from the point of view of opportunities for participation and reaping the benefits of development. In India, the formal sector which received large resources has failed to provide employment for the growing labour force resulting in the problem of labour force explosion. Under the circumstances, the surplus labour force has been forced to generate its own means of income and employment. This working class is engaged in a variety of economic activities in the informal sector.

10.5.1 Nature and Magnitude of Urban Unorganised

The urban unorganised labour is highly heterogeneous and is involved in a wide variety of occupations and establishments manufacturing a vast variety of goods and offering a number of services. A significant section of unskilled manual workers work in both organised (mostly as contract workers) and unorganised sectors in urban areas with unwarranted wage differentials between them. According to the 2001 census there were 402.5 million workers in the country. Of these 91.8 million were in urban areas. An overwhelming proportion of urban workers are unorganised. The work participation rate in urban areas was 32.2%. It was 50.85% for males and for females it was 11.5%. Women's work is thus increasingly informalized, flexible and thus prone to exploitation. Thus urban labour market is a phenomenon of clear male domination.

10.5.2 Type of Workforce

The urban workers too can be divided into self-employed, regular salaried and casual labour. According to NSSO surveys, in 1999-2000, 42.1% of the employment was self employment; 40.1% regular/salaried; and 17.8% were casual labour. This proportion has not changed much over a period of time. A much larger section of urban workers are salaried compared to rural areas where only 7% are in this category. In the urban labour market, about 60% of workers were unorganised having poor conditions of employment.

10.5.3 Literacy

India's literacy rate has wide variations. In urban areas literacy levels are higher but employability depends on acquisitions of skills and training. Here 90% of the workforce is unskilled or less skilled. Thus while urban labour may be more educated than the rural ones, such education is not associated with higher skills.

10.5.4 Vulnerable Sections

Like the unorganised in rural areas, in urban areas there is urban informal sector which is nothing but urban unorganised labour consisting of workers working in small establishments or self-employed. Those working are doing so in unhygienic working conditions including longer working hours. Lack of education, skills and training has made urban unorganised very vulnerable. With a large supply of unskilled labour, competition among urban poor for livelihood opportunities has driven the wage rates of the unskilled to very low levels.

Minimum wages exist in law, but the excess supply of labour keeps the wages at a low level. There is also a significant section of child labour in urban areas that is highly vulnerable to all sorts of abuses. Poor urban women workers, who mostly live in slums, face discrimination, exploitation and abuse. Unhygienic living conditions in the slums and prevalence of social vices make them victims of AIDS/HIV. Majority of urban unorganised do not enjoy the benefits of social security system though such laws are supposed to apply to them. The cumulative result of all these factors is poor health of workers, malnutrition, low skills and high levels of vulnerability.

10.6 PROBLEMS OF URBAN UNORGANISED LABOUR

The urban unorganised labour is highly heterogeneous working in different occupations and industries and services. Most of organised sector workers are found in big industrial cities and towns. So a significant part of urban unorganised labour are in residual employment wherein workers do not get employment in organised sector; they are pushed to the unorganised sector, mostly consisting of very small establishments, or self-employed offering a variety of services.

10.6.1 Nature of Work

An important feature of the urban unorganised labour market is that a significant section of the work force consists of migrants from nearby areas. Growth rate of urban workers has been much faster than that of rural workers. For example, the growth rate of urban workers during 1991-2001 was 3.64 % compared to that of rural workers of 2.54%. India has the largest urban population next only to that of China. Metropolitan cities like Mumbai and Delhi attract unskilled workers from all over the country. Several urbanisation experts like Joshi & Joshi (1971); L.K.Deshpande (1979); Bose (1978), Papola (1971); and Mazumdar (1971) have studied unorganised workers in the urban informal sector in cities and towns. These studies have found the unorganised workers including a large section of self-employed varied from 50% to 75% of the total employment in the cities. All these workers were working in small scattered units which have made the mobilisation and organisation of these workers an extremely challenging task.

10.6.2 Conditions of Employment

The urban workers work in varying conditions of work. For example construction workers work at building sites while small technicians work in small repair shops. Most of the workers are employed in low technology, low productivity and low earning occupations. Therefore, standardisation of their work is a difficult task. There is also absence of clear employer-employee relationship in case of certain categories of workers like domestic servants working in several houses. In such cases, workers are left to themselves resulting in adverse and sometimes hazardous working conditions.

Besides, large sections of workers have little education and poor skills making the problem of raising their skills, efficiency, and productivity an extremely challenging task. They also have little access to educational and training institutions. Further different categories of workers have different problems. Many workers, especially women and child workers are exploited in several ways. These problems are similar in both rural and urban areas. Many urban workers are forced to live in slums where the living conditions are extremely unhealthy.

Self-employed workers find it difficult to get access to credit from institutional sources

because of their inability to produce adequate security. They are also not well versed in the procedural formalities. They find it difficult to procure better quality of productive assets and resultantly, many of such workers depend on their kinship, caste and religious ties for livelihood and survival. Since the workers are not organised they lack adequate political and social power to influence government policies and programmes. And since they do not fit into any clear occupational classification development of a uniform legislation has become a major problem. Most of the workers do not enjoy social security.

Another problem faced by the urban unorganised workers is that of unemployment which is open, involuntary and chronic. According to the NSSO survey in 61st Round, unemployment rate under current daily status basis was 7.5% for males and 11.6% for females in 2004-05. Many of them are less educated and unskilled and are migrants from rural areas. A large section of the educated unemployed suffers on account of lack of employability because of inadequate education and training.

The above problems highlight the need for organising and regulating this sector. Though the economy and industries develop, the benefits have not percolated down to these workers because of being an organised force. Many of them are affected by the prevailing globalisation policies and need social help to enable them to face hardships. They should therefore be entitled to basic social security facilities like provident fund, medical care, pension benefits etc. The goals of poverty eradication demand that these workers are given some benefits of social intervention.

10.7 MEASURES FOR URBAN UNORGANISED LABOUR

The measures to improve the unorganised sector should aim at removing impediments like illiteracy and low productivity; and lack of access to credit and other facilities. This can help in providing the labour good livelihood opportunities.

10.7.1 Government's Coordinated Measures

It should be noted that measures are needed not only in the area of employment and livelihood opportunities but also in areas like infrastructural services including housing, water supply, sanitation, education and training, health and medical care. As pointed out by the central government, though cities are engines of growth and contribute nearly 55% to India's GDP, policies of economic growth have not led to improvement in the lives of urban poor.

It is necessary to evolve a plan of action for integrated development of urban areas in a sustainable, equitable, humane and inclusive manner. Right policies, programmes and projects can effectively meet the challenges of deprivation. "In urban context, however, the dimensions of poverty undergo transformation and priorities seem to change with the size of urban settlements. Security of tenure for shelter as well as for employment that is primarily informal, access to basic infrastructure and social services at affordable costs, availability of subsidized credit and social and political space emerge and factors which hugely impact poverty and quality of life of the urban poor (Kumari Selja, Minister of State, Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation, Govt. of India, 10-2-06). The government has claimed that measures are thus more coordinated and balanced to ensure not only work but also welfare of the urban poor.

The government measures that help the urban unorganised are connected with the removal of urban poverty and unemployment. Earlier programmes included the Nehru Rojgar Yojana (NRY) of 1989; Planning Commission's Integrated Urban Poverty Eradication Programme (IUPEP); and Urban Basic Services Programme. These were replaced by Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rojgar Yojana (SJSRY) which includes two schemes that were added in 1997 viz. the Urban Self Employment Programme (USEP) and the Urban Wage Employment Programme (UWEP). The USEP programme aims at helping urban poor for setting up gainful self-employment ventures; helping urban poor women in setting up of similar ventures; and programmes for upgradation and acquisition of vocational and entrepreneurial skills by the beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries. The UWEP aims at helping urban poor living below poverty line within the jurisdiction of urban local bodies by utilising their labour for construction of socially and economically useful public assets. Officially notified minimum wages are to be paid to the beneficiaries of this programme.

The SJSRY schemes 'seek to provide gainful employment to the urban unemployed or underemployed poor by encouraging self-employment ventures and provision of wage employment wherever possible.' The creation of suitable community structures and delivery of inputs will be through the medium of urban local bodies and community structures. For example, to ensure professional training to those who are dealing with SJSRY schemes in the area of skill upgradation and entrepreneurship development, special programmes in association with Entrepreneurship Institute of India (Ahmedabad) and National Institute of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (New Delhi) are arranged.

The government also attends to specific categories of unorganised labour in urban areas. For example, special programmes are arranged to help street vendors wherein all stakeholders and experts are brought together to ensure benefits to the vendors as indicated in the National Policy of Urban Street Vendors. Similarly there is the scheme of Urban Low Cost Sanitation for the Liberation of Scavengers.

10.7.2 Constitutional Measures

Measures to promote better governance of urban areas and more effective empowerment of urban local bodies is reiterated via the passing of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act which came into force from June 1993. The act devolves a Constitutional status on the urban local self-governments who will no longer be found as merely as arms of the State. Under the Act, Article 243 confers wide powers, authority and responsibilities on urban local bodies and the Twelfth Schedule gives the subjects that come under Article 243W. Unfortunately they do not include measures to help urban unorganised. Item 9 under the Twelfth Schedule deals with 'Safeguarding the interests of weaker sections of society, including the handicapped and mentally retarded' gives some scope to plan and implement measures for a section of unorganised labour but is inadequate to cover the whole lot of unorganised labour. Still, there is scope to take advantage of this provision to bring benefits to unorganised labour, which must be fully explored. There are also programmes in the area of housing for urban poor like the Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana (VAMBAY) providing shelter or upgrading it, and Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan dealing with community sanitation project

10.7.3 Other Measures

There are also several schemes involving partnership with NGOs providing micro finance facilities or helping the unorganised to get loans on concessional institutional finance from

the banks for the urban poor. It may be concluded that schemes for the urban unorganised poor labour are large in number helping a variety of categories of labour and offering a wide range of services. If these programmes are expanded and implemented effectively, the urban unorganised may benefit tremendously.

10.8 SUMMARY

Unorganised labour constitutes well over 90% of the Indian labour force. This vast section of over about 400 million presently, is distributed in rural and urban areas; among men and women (and children also); and among different categories of work and workers, - wage employed and self-employed, in occupations and in micro enterprises. Analysis under major heads of 'rural' and 'urban' shows that when it comes to mobilisation, training and giving them income generation opportunities, there is immediate urgency and need for doing so. Governments, at central and state levels are no doubt grappling with the problems and welfare of unorganised workers. Government measures of employment guarantee schemes, family pension schemes, social security measures and welfare payments for the aged and handicapped, many of these for the benefit of unorganised labour are commendable, though these can be made more effective and broad based. But success can be achieved only with all round participation of all sections of unorganised labour. A major initiative taken by the Government of India was the setting up of the Second National Commission on Labour in January 1999 to examine, among other things, the labour legislation and suggest umbrella legislation for the benefit of unorganised labour. The Commission submitted its report in June 2002. The Report brought out the poor conditions of work and security for labour in the unorganised sector in the country and suggested job access, job security and protection against exploitation and provision of welfare measures. The unorganised labour must be mobilised and sensitised so that they can be empowered to raise their wages, standard of living, efficiency and productivity benefiting not only themselves but also the economy and society. Cooperatives may be involved to train small producers like artisans and small garment makers, associations for training self-employed like the bakers and hawkers. This is the Gandhian approach of promoting unity and harmony among all the unorganised labour and empowering them.

10.9 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Explain the various features of the rural unorganised labour, commenting on its magnitude.
2. Attempt a profile of unorganised labour in urban areas, giving illustrations of some prominent categories.
3. Comments on the measures taken for the benefit of rural unorganised labour.
4. Discuss the measures available for the urban unorganised labour. Suggest some measures that can improve the lot of this labour.

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UNIT 11 EMPOWERMENT OF THE MARGINALISED (WOMEN, CHILDREN)

Structure

- 11.1 Introduction
 - Aims and Objectives
- 11.2 Concepts of 'Marginalised' and 'Empowered'
- 11.3 Empowering of Marginalised women
- 11.4 Empowerment of Child Labour
- 11.5 Empowerment of SCs, STs and OBCs
- 11.6 Empowerment of Bonded Labour
- 11.7 Empowerment of other Marginalised Sections
- 11.8 Summary
- 11.9 Terminal Questions
 - Suggested Readings

11.1 INTRODUCTION

India is a large country, a liberal democracy and a heterogeneous society seeking the welfare of its people, who are mostly poor. India is a complex network of people belonging to different races and ethnicity, languages, religions, and castes. Since large sections are poor, disadvantaged, and marginalised, the role of state has become very important. India, until 1991, was a planned economy seeking to achieve a balanced and equitable development. Though since then planning has become more indicative, still social sectors like employment, health and education are still very much the focus of the Five Year Plans and the Planning Commission.

During the past six decades of development India has achieved rapid and impressive progress. It is now one of the fastest growing economies of the world. It is the fourth largest economy in terms of Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). It is a nuclear and space power. In several important areas like biotechnology, pharma, automobiles, Information Technology(IT) and IT Enabled Services(ITES) it is an emerging global power. But paradoxically, its per capita income is low at \$720 (2005), 25% of its population is below poverty line, 70% of its population is rural, 60% of its work force is in agriculture, and it has 45% female illiteracy and 25% male illiteracy (Mark Dutz, World Bank, 2007).

Ninety percent of India's workers work in the informal sector, where there is underemployment, low productivity and low skill activities. Most of them are unskilled or have little skills. Regrettably, vast majority of India's workers are poor and marginalised. If India has to achieve its goal of becoming an economic super power in the future, these marginalised sections will have to be enriched with sound education, training and skills. The empowerment of the marginalised sections is the only solution that can optimise India's potential.

Aims and Objectives

After going through this Unit, you would be able to

- Define the concepts of ‘empowerment’ and ‘marginalisation’;
- Explain the position of the marginalised sections of India’s population;
- Identify the measures for their empowerment.

11.2 THE CONCEPTS OF ‘MARGINALISED’ AND ‘EMPOWERED’

11.2.1 Marginalisation

The dictionary meaning of the concept clarifies broadly and correctly. It explains stating that ‘marginalised’ means ‘to make (a person or group) feel less important or powerful’. For example, the tribals in India are generally considered to be marginalised because they are not fully in the mainstream in the country and are also not highly educated which makes them feel they are less important and helpless. Similarly women, especially poor rural women, feel exploited, subjugated and helpless, in the absence of assets and abilities to face the mainstream world. It is not necessary that such marginalised know that they are made less important or weak. For example, when children are sent to work, they are deprived of their basic rights for schooling and developing themselves. They get marginalised even without their awareness.

It is also not necessary that marginalisation is carried out deliberately; in fact doing so may be illegal and punishable by law. When governments at central and state levels come out with welfare and development schemes for the poor, the poor get marginalised when these schemes are poorly implemented and the benefits do not reach the targeted poor or the disadvantaged. In other words, the word ‘marginalised’ refers to ‘the overt or covert trends within societies whereby those perceived as lacking in desirable traits or deviating from the group norms tend to be excluded by the wider society and ostracized as undesirables’.

Marginalisation can arise out of chronic exploitation of a section of people. In case of bonded labour, they are marginalised by the burden of the loans taken by their ancestors. They feel ‘duty bound’ to work till it is liquidated. They do not know how the debt was contracted, on what rate of interest and on what terms. Being illiterate and poor already, they exist like slaves, exploited by the landlord or moneylender as the case may be. People may also be marginalised by age old customs, tradition and convention evolved in society which push down some castes and tribes to a very low economic and social status and they feel powerless to oppose or overcome it. The emergence and perpetuation of inequalities in society wherein the rich get richer and poor poorer also creates marginalised sections over a period of time. The entire section of population below the poverty line may be said to have arisen in such process though there may be other factors also.

There are multiple causes of marginalisation resulting in much higher intensity, for example, poor women in rural areas and women headed households tend to fall in this category. They are marginalised by the social attitudes, developmental process, and apathy of the state and of political elite, and so on. The denial of legislation for creating

reservation of seats in the Indian Parliament is an example of marginalisation of women in the governance of the country.

In India a majority section of the population is marginalised by politicians, bureaucrats and vested interests denying them reasonably good schooling, effective rural primary health care and access to credit, subsidies and other facilities. The result is the marginalised poor remain poor forever..

Lack of access for facilities and opportunities can also lead to marginalisation. For example even though the commercial and other banks have several schemes to help the poor and self-employed and the micro business owners, they are not fully effective due to lack of access created by cumbersome procedures, excessive obsession with security, difficult legal requirements and lack of sensitivity to the problems faced by the small borrowers.

The above discussion makes it clear that marginalisation of a large section of the Indian society exists. Broadly one can say that over 90% of the labour force which is unorganised in India is marginalised denying them not only a decent work life but also any opportunity to participate in India's governance with a view to make it more effective and just. The need of the hour is to eradicate such marginalisation. This is possible only through empowerment of these sections. Such groups are vast, covering a wide area of work and occupation from wage employment in small organisations to self-employment in areas like artisanship and craftsmanship, taxi and transport driving. They can be even micro entrepreneurs having own establishment with family labour or a few employed and include rural marginalised sections like poor women workers, child labour, bonded labour and S.C/S/Ts. The attention in the present Unit will be confined to a few but prominent marginalised sections. Before we take up such cases, it is necessary for us to understand in greater detail about the concept of empowerment as a tool to liberate the marginalised.

11.2.2 Concept of 'Empowerment'

Empowerment broadly refers to the process of strengthening the marginalised sections. It is a multifaceted concept. The dictionary meaning of the word 'empower' is 'to give authority or power, 'to give strength and confidence'. It 'includes providing opportunities to the marginalised to learn and to get confidence and capacity to come out of their marginalisation and become empowered to develop themselves freely'.

Wikipedia, elaborating the concept, explains that marginalised people fail to get opportunities for self development and are deprived of accomplishments that others achieve. 'Empowerment is the process of ensuring such basic opportunities for the marginalised people. It includes actively thwarting attempts to deny those opportunities'. 'Empowerment also includes encouraging, and developing skills for self sufficiency, with a focus on eliminating the future need for charity or welfare in the individuals of the group. This process can be difficult to start and to implement effectively, but there are many examples of empowerment projects which have succeeded'.

The marginalised group has to exercise great care in choosing their organisation that helps them. A good idea would be to form their own organization and develop themselves, because only they as marginalised people know what they suffer. Besides, there is always a chance of the organisation they select to help them, may, on the contrary make the marginalised dependent on them for getting opportunities to develop themselves. Same may be the fate of relying on charitable/philanthropist organizations who, by their charity,

may make the marginalised more needy and even less empowered than when they were not dependent on such organisation. However if the marginalised choose their organization judiciously, or form their organisation more carefully, then they may be able to help themselves much better. A competent and committed NGO, that is operating in the field of helping the marginalised to get access to the opportunities of empowerment, will be the greatest asset for such marginalised people.

Empowerment is a slow and steady multi-dimensional process. All stakeholders interested in empowerment must come together, arrive at a consensus and undertake harmonised and coordinated action. In solving problems like poverty and unemployment the affected marginalised sections themselves may not be able to achieve self-empowerment. They need support, encouragement and concrete help from others, from employers, from unions, from NGOs, and above all from the government.

Empowerment can also be looked upon as a four-stage process (Verma, 2005). These stages are:

- a) Relief, wherein marginalised survive, no further defeat or fall,
- b) Resistance, wherein they fight back to take control, may use political movement,
- c) Reconstruction, wherein marginalised build platforms of strength, and,
- d) Rectification, wherein they remove internal injustices and inequalities.

Empowerment is thus a multi-faceted approach. In empowering the unemployed poor, wide ranging activities on a long-term basis may be needed. The unemployed must be inspired and motivated to be interested in getting empowered and earning their livelihood. They must have access to job information and recruitment agencies like employment exchanges. They must also be provided training and imparted skills for which, facilitating NGOs or government agencies may be needed. Once the employability of the unemployed increases, it facilitates in getting jobs.

Employers must also be persuaded to consider marginalised sections like the SCs/STs, OBCs, women, and the physically challenged in their recruitment process. The unemployed can also be helped by banks to form themselves into self-help groups (SHGs). If all of them have similar skills, they may be encouraged to form cooperatives or any other suitable entrepreneurial organisation, so that they can programme their activities and generate jobs for absorbing some of the unemployed.

Social disabilities like lack of social acceptance may need social and political approach, of creating awareness among the socially deprived, and encouraging society to accept the marginal sections as their equal in the society. Issues like social boycott or strong legal action may be needed. Persons considered to belong to lower castes may be educated and their level of confidence must be raised.

However, there is an impediment wherein the pseudo-empowerment takes place with ultimate selfish intention. A suitable example lies in concepts like 'worker's participation in management' or worker's empowerment in terms of decision making etc where superficially it empowers a worker but the ultimate aim of the management may be to make worker to work harder so that the organisation gets more output and higher productivity.

Among all stakeholders, government and governmental agencies have greater responsibility. If they do not discharge their duties with commitment and without fear or favour, then the marginalised section may remain marginalised, never empowered. When atrocities are committed on minorities, or women or backward castes, the police must register the first information reports (FIRs) and raise the confidence levels of the marginalised. The government can also empower the marginalised collectively by passing suitable legislation in favour of the marginalised groups. At present the government is going through a massive legislation for social security benefits for the unorganised labour. Such activities of empowerment can only be taken by government, as they demand large organisational and financial efforts. With this background our attention can now be turned to certain selective and widely prevalent marginalised groups in the country.

11.3 EMPOWERING MARGINALISED WOMEN

11.3.1 Position of Women

Women, especially poor rural women, constitute the largest marginalised section in India and therefore deserve special attention. According to the 2001 census, India's total population was 1027 million, of which the female population was 496 million. Thus roughly half the population is women and their marginalisation should be a matter of deep concern for all. Ultimately, work and wages decide the standards of living of those who work and their families. The following table (Table 1) gives details of women workers in 2004-2005.

Table 1. Select Characteristics of Women Workers (2004-2005)

Indicators	Male	Female	Rural Female	Rural female S.Cs/S.Ts
Total workers (UPSS) (million)	309.4	148.0	124.0	44.9
Work Force Participation Rate(WPR)%	54.7	28.3	32.7	37.5
Percentage of Regular workers In Total Work Force(TWF)	18.2	8.9	3.7	3.1
Percentage of Self-employed In TWF	54.2	61.1	63.7	51.1
Percentage of Casual Labour In TWF	27.5	30.0	32.6	45.8
Percentage of Unorganized Workers in TWF	90.7	95.9	98.0	98.6

Source: Labour File: September-December 2007, p.71. Based on NSSO 61st Round (2004-2005)

The above table shows the adverse position of women. 95.9% of female workers, and 98% of female rural workers (Female rural S.Cs/S.Ts still larger – 98.6%) are in unorganised sector where the working conditions, wages, and terms of employment are of a poor order. They do not get any significant social security benefits.

According to the NSSO 61st Round, 11.1% of the households are headed by females. While 56% of rural males and 33% of rural females belong to the labour force, in urban areas 57% of urban males and 16% of the urban females are in the labour force. There is an increase in self-employment and more women are self-employed. The proportion of regular women workers is low (8.9%) compared to males (18.2%). The proportion of rural female work force is still lower (3.7%).

It appears a little paradoxical that while Gandhiji placed women on a very high pedestal, in reality the position of women workers in economic and social status appears not very encouraging.

Gandhiji on Women

To call woman the weaker section is a libel; it means injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then indeed woman is less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power then woman is immeasurably man's superior.

— (The Mind of Mahatma, P.291)

Women in Reality

Most women are permanently working, but not permanently employed in the workforce. It is this difference between work and employment which has become a major issue of equity today. That women constitute half of the population is a demographic fact. That they perform one third of the total work hours in the market is also recognized in official statistics. But calculations continue to show that women receive only about five percent of the world income. Their income is so low that most women have no margin for savings and hence ownership of any assets, Therefore they have no independent control of directing income generation activity. If quantified, it would not be surprising that women own perhaps not even one percent of reproducible assets. This is the global profile of women today.

———Krishna Ahooja-Patel, 1999, p.17

The Shramshakti Report (Ela Bhatt Commission, 1988) has brought out the poor conditions of women especially rural women, in employment, earnings, and living. Some of the general characteristics of these women are: fewer and poorer opportunities to work; greater impact of unemployment, underemployment and casual nature of unemployment; greater vulnerability because of lack of skills and education; lesser mobility, heavy responsibility; a systematic social practice of undervaluing women's work; and lack of access to better technologies, tools and productive assets. To large extent poor women keep moving between the status of self-employed and casual labour and unemployed. They are also divided on grounds like caste, class and employment activity but deprivation and discrimination is common. Women-headed households have a higher incidence of poverty and majority is landless. In spite of governmental support at central and state levels, not much impact is made because of the perpetuation of inequality.

11.3.2 Women's Problems of Marginalisation

Women's contribution to work and development is now better valued, especially in rural areas, but still stand marginalised due to many reasons.

1. Their working conditions are poor and being unorganised they are not able to fight for good working conditions. Even when there is legislation demanding good working conditions, they are not be implemented effectively.
2. Their wages are low because most of them are unskilled, and there is excess supply of labour compared to demand.
3. Many of the women have multiple roles, to manage house, work and children. This excessive burden makes their life one of oppression and hardship. Domestic work is unpaid and thus has lessor value than paid work.
4. An important factor that makes them economically marginalised is discrimination at work. More remuneration and relatively skilled jobs go to men while low paid, stereotyped, routine jobs are dumped on women workers. This happens in agriculture, construction, bidi making etc.
5. There are also multiple causes making their life miserable and marginalised. 'Job insecurity, back-bending work and inhuman conditions make women 'beasts of burden'. Legislation in most cases remains ineffective.
6. There are biases that women are less efficient and unreliable when they face events of uncertainty. So they are not preferred especially in private sector. In unorganised small establishments their services may be terminated.
7. When economy develops, they remain stagnant and are thus marginalised by development.
8. In times of bad economic situations like recession their jobs remain more vulnerable.
9. Women remain marginalised due to discrimination, deprivation, exploitation, sexual and other harassments and atrocities, and poor implementation of government measures including laws. They are subject to domestic violence.

11.3.3 Measures for Empowerment

The governments at central and state level have taken a number of measures. A large number of NGOs are working for women's causes. There are also international measures for their empowerment. The measures narrated below are not exhaustive but indicate the approach towards empowerment.

The governmental measures can be classified into three categories:

a) Legislation; b) Policy back-up; and c) programmes designed to eradicate poverty and unemployment.

In the sphere of legislation, apart from the Constitutional provisions, there are several legislative measures to ensure that women get what they are entitled to. Maternity Benefits Act 1961, Factories Act 1948, Equal Remuneration Act 1976, Contract Labour Act 1976, Workmen's Compensation Act 1923, and ESIC Act 1948 are some of the important such legal measures. However, unorganised rural women have not been able to benefit much from these laws.

In the sphere of policies, the government has been making vigorous attempts in recent times to incorporate women's empowerment in the policy formulations. Ministries like those of Education, Social Welfare, Health and Family Planning, Labour, and Rural Development have separate cells/Departments to look after women's interests. In Planning Commission, Social Planning Division deals with women's welfare and empowerment through employment and poverty-eradication schemes.

The governmental programmes help women in getting employment, self-employment or financial assistance. The Central Social Welfare Board assists women in setting up self-employment ventures by extending financing assistance to voluntary agencies for setting up women led units with employment potential.

Several state governments have set up separate corporations for women. For example, in Maharashtra, there is the Mahila Arthik Mahamandal (MAVIM) which helps poor women in getting training and employment assistance.

Apart from government there are several non-governmental organisations like the SEWA in Ahmedabad and Annapurana Mahila Mandal in Mumbai doing commendable jobs for helping women in almost all spheres of social needs especially in urban and semi-urban areas.

Every year 8th March is observed as International Women's Day when women's problems, policies, and programmes are discussed. The Department of Women and child Development set up in 1985 serves as the nodal agency for women's advancement. The National Commission for Women is a statutory body created in January 1992 to facilitate redressal of grievances and to accelerate the socio-economic development of women, to promote awareness about women's problems, and work for the empowerment of women. The Central Social Welfare Board promotes welfare activities for all marginalised sections including women. To ensure that women receive due benefits in government's public expenditure, the government has been promoting a 'gender based budgeting'. In spite of receiving high attention, the implementation of the laws, policies and programmes for the benefit of women has plenty of scope for improvement to make them more target-oriented and effective.

11.4 EMPOWERMENT OF CHILD LABOUR

"In recent years there has been a dramatic change in attitudes about child labour. Denial and indifference have given way to acknowledgement, outrage, and a readiness to tackle the problem effectively. Ridding the world of child labour will require a significant commitment of resources by the international community. Yet, globally, over two decades of the economic benefits of eliminating child labour would exceed the costs by nearly seven times. Eliminating child labour is unquestionably a sound financial investment".

Juan Somavia, Director General, ILO, 2005.

11.4.1 Position of Child Labour

A child is defined as the one who is below the age of 15 years. A working child can be defined as a child who is above the age of 4 and below the age of 15 who is doing labour, either paid or unpaid, and is working within or outside the family. It means, a child labour is one who is deprived of the right to education and childhood. This is the period during which the child is to be given opportunity of and access to the means of intellectual

and physical growth of the child, so that it transforms the child into an adult who can optimally contribute to the relevant activities for the all round and sustainable growth of the society in terms of its well-being. What makes this explanation important is that it makes it unambiguously clear that all out-of-school children are working children in one form or another. It does not make a distinction between children working in the so-called hazardous industries and children working as part of family labour.

Nevertheless, to understand the kind of pressures that children are subjected to in different sectors across the country, studies are being under taken in different occupations having significant incidence of the child labour. Much attention is being paid to the field of child labour and numerous occupations in India having significant incidence of child labour; sometimes it becomes necessary to undertake some base line surveys to understand the nature of the problem so as to prescribe the solutions and to assess the impact of the steps taken to solve or to ease the problem.

The term Child Labour, formerly applied to the practice of employing young children in factories, is now used to denote the employment of minors generally, especially in work that may interfere with their education or endanger their health. Throughout the ages and in all societies children joined with their parents to work in the fields, in the marketplace, in the family trades and around the home as soon as they were old enough to perform simple tasks. The use of child labour was not regarded a social problem until the expansion of the village economy and introduction of the factory system.

Even in the 21st century, with splendid developments in the processes of production of goods and services required for the basic needs of the human being, communication, transport and such infrastructure, the child labour remains a serious problem in many parts of the world especially in developing countries. The recent studies by national and international organisations show that more than 50 million children below the age of 15 are working in various jobs under quite hazardous conditions; and a larger number is engaged in activities not identified as having hazardous conditions. Juan Somavia says, “one out of six children in the world—an estimated 246 million children—are involved in child labour. Think of it. The number of child laborers is roughly equal to the entire population of the United States.”

Many of these children live in underdeveloped countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia under crude living conditions and with few chances for education. The meagre income they bring in, however, is necessary for the survival of their families. Frequently, these families lack the basic necessities of life like adequate food, decent clothing, shelter, and even water for drinking and bathing.

In some countries skewed industrialisation has created miserable working conditions for children; in India, for example, some 20,000 children work 16 hours a day in match factories with serious health hazards. Similar is the case in brick-kilns or the slate industry. A growing concern in recent years has been of an increase in sex labour among the youngsters in urban areas.

However the estimates on the magnitude of the child labour differ widely. The Census of the Government of India gives a lowest estimate of 12.7mn. as in the year 2001. The estimates of the NGOs/institutions differ and go beyond the figure of 40mn. By any standard, the lowest estimate itself is significantly high and the plight of this section of the labour is worst and detrimental to their well-being and the growth of the country.

11.4.2 Problems of Marginalisation of Child Labour

Child Labour is a highly complex and multidimensional issue in developing countries like India. It is marginalised through the marginalisation of Children's parents. Withdrawal of child labour many times impoverishes its family to such an extent that the 'liberated child' returns to child labour. The problem is the marginalisation of its parents in perpetual poverty. How to help the parents so that they may not be compelled to send their children to work is the biggest problem.

Childhood is considered to be the most enjoyable period of a person's life. It is also the most crucial stage in life determining the child's personality and its human capital quality, for acquiring good education and training that can help them throughout their life. To help these working children is a challenging problem.

Children are compelled to work for long hours for low wages, to work in hazardous industries in appalling conditions where they have little or no control over their working conditions, are made to carry heavy loads or sit in fixed postures for long hours. In hazardous industries they come into direct contact with poisonous gases, chemicals, fire, cotton fluff and dust which makes them highly susceptible to diseases like tuberculosis, asthma, bronchitis, silicosis and byssinosis.

Though they add to the income streams of the family, it is at a heavy social and economic cost. The gain is short-term and the level of wages or income that children get are a pittance compared to the need based wage or income. Further there are long-term losses to the child, its family and society. The child is deprived of good education and training and this prevents it from developing itself into a high quality human capital resource. The family in the long-term loses the high income that the child would have earned if it had received better education and skills. The social loss is maximum as, on the one hand society loses potential human capital and on the other, it has to provide more resources for providing social security for such population whose income is bound to remain low. The loss of human capital has grave implications for productivity and economic growth and development. Thus failure of marginalised poor parents and marginalised children who have no say for their own interests and development has grave implications to the children, parents and the society.

11.4.3 Measures for the Empowerment of the Marginalised Children

The most important efforts to eliminate child labour abuses throughout the world come from the International Labour Organization (ILO), a special agency of the United Nations. Right from the year of its inception, the ILO adopted several Conventions and Recommendations concerning child labour, including a minimum age of 16 years for admission to all work, a higher minimum age for specific types of employment, compulsory medical examinations, and regulation of night work. In the late 20th century the ILO added to this list the worst forms of child labour, including slavery, prostitution, debt bondage (the practice of requiring children to work off loans made to their parents), and forced military service. The ILO, however, does not have the power to enforce these conventions; it depends on voluntary compliance (ratification) by member nations.

There were special Commissions to study and assess the incidence of child labour in the country. Projects like International Project on Elimination of Child Labour of the ILO and the India-US project particularly on rehabilitation of the child labour, and Government of India's National Child Labour Project have made and continue to make significant

progress in dealing with the elimination of child labour. Government, employers and employees/unions - are being sensitised on the issues, and parents are convinced and helped. NGOs also have a significant presence in the area of education and development of child labour. Special attention is also paid to the rescue and rehabilitation of girl children.

The Government of India and state governments have taken a number of measures to tackle the problem of child labour. The Indian Constitution's Directive Principles prohibit the abuse of the tender age of children until 14 years of age. Several ILO conventions on child labour have been ratified by India. The Government of India has passed the comprehensive Child Labour Act of 1986. There are measures to rescue child labourers and prosecute those who abuse child labour. There is ample scope to implement the laws and programmes effectively and proceed to achieve child labour eradication. Free and compulsory education for all children till the age of 16 is essential to eliminate child labour. The GOI has passed the Right to Education Act, but it needs to be rigorously implemented.

As a result of sustained efforts at different levels and by several parties, the number of child workers has been coming down as can be seen from the following table (Table 2) below:

Table 2: Per 1000 Distribution of workers by age group (UPPS)

Age group (yrs)	Male Rural			Female rural		
	1993-94	99-00	2004-05	1993-94	99-00	2004-04
5-9	3	2	1	5	3	1
10-14	30	22	16	46	37	26
5-14	33	24	17	51	40	27
Total	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
	Male Urban			Female Urban		
	1993-94	99-00	2004-05	1993-94	99-00	2004-04
5-9	1	1	0	3	2	2
10-14	15	11	9	33	29	22
5-14	16	12	9	36	31	24
Total	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

Source: NSSO various rounds, from Table 3(part), Labour Statistics, Indian Journal of Labour Economics, Vol.50, No.1, January-March 2007, (p.160)

The above table reveals that over a period of time the proportion of child labour has been falling. It can be seen that child labour intensity is more in rural areas than in urban areas. Girl child labourers outnumber male child labour. Though the number of child labour is falling due to several sustained measures, we have a long way to go toward the eradication of child labour. Further attention is to be focused on children in rural areas and on girl children.

11.5 EMPOWERMENT OF SCs, STs AND OBCs

11.5.1 Position of the Disadvantaged Groups

The SCs, STs and the OBCs have been facing severe problems in the Indian society. Their position has not significantly altered in spite of several measures taken by the

governments since independence, though it cannot be denied that their position has been gradually improving. In spite of the government implementing a wide variety of programmes and schemes marginalization continues as one official report cites: 'on the subtle examination of the schemes from the point of view of implementation, it appears much is said than done. In other words, much remains to be done'.

The position of SCs and STs has been clearly secured in the Indian Constitution right from its inception in 1950. Legislation to remove untouchability and protect them from atrocities in society has been a very important measure towards empowering these sections of the society. In 1981, SCs constituted 15.8% and STs 7.8% of the total population. In 2001 their population had increased to 16.2% for the SCs and to 8.2% for the STs. Thus they constitute a significant proportion of the population which is increasing. However their distribution in the country is not even. In Mizoram the population STs is very high, over 90% whereas in Goa it is less than one percent. Same is the case with STs whose proportion is much higher in the North-Eastern states.

The position of the OBCs received significant attention after the Mandal Commission in the early 1990s. Adequate data are not available, but the OBCs constitute a larger number (over 40% of the population) than the SCs and STs combined. One recent compilation claims that central and state governments including union territories have enumerated 2176 and 2551 communities respectively as OBCs. These include the poor peasantry of the period of zamindars; communities that rendered traditional services like the barbers, and dhobis; artisans; and communities without resource or skill base. The OBCs also constitute a very heterogeneous group.

11.5.2 Problems of SCs/STs and OBCs

The above communities have been suffering for a long time in all major spheres of life – social, economic, political, legal and others; these communities suffer, though they vary in intensity and magnitude depending on particular caste, tribe or community.

Socially the level of literacy is low among these sections of the society, affecting their employability. They also suffer from poor status and social exclusion, lower income and lower standards of living. They also find it difficult to get easy access to finance and credit as a result they are not able to undertake income generating ventures. Lack of productive assets like land, livestock and capital also keep them poor and exploited by moneylenders in the society. They are unaware of the legal provisions meant to protect them and enable them to get justice and priority treatment. Besides affirmative action, a network of schools must ensure that these classes of people get free access to education and other services.

11.5.3 Empowering the Marginalised Sections

The government's policies and programmes aim at helping these sections in two main areas. Firstly, efforts are on to help them to overcome the multiple deprivations which have been keeping them marginalised. Secondly, these programmes seek to provide them protection against social exclusion and socio-economic discrimination on the one side and on the other, encourage these groups' effective participation in the mainstream of the country. The government's approach has a two-fold strategy consisting of anti-discriminatory or protective measures, and development and empowering measures. For protecting SCs and STs there is the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989.

Among the various dimensions of empowerment are to ensure education and employment. Towards these ends, the government has introduced the policy of reservation in which there marginalised sections have seats and jobs reserved for them. This is applicable in all institutions of higher education including the prestigious IITs and IIMs. Similarly job reservations are in government and Public Sector Undertakings. But the targets in several areas are not fully achieved and their condition has not improved. The 55th Round of NSSO found that in 1999-2000, 50-9% of the STs, 42.9% of the SCs and 33.7% of the OBCs in rural areas were below poverty line.

11.6 EMPOWERING THE BONDED LABOUR

11.6.1 Position of Bonded Labour

Bonded labour refers to the age old system wherein a labourer is tied down to render his services to his creditor in lieu of consideration from him or his ancestors to the labourer or to his ancestors. Thus it indicates a cruel bondage on indebted labourers. This system prevails predominantly in rural areas and makes the life of such indebted labourers miserable. There is no precise estimate of bonded labour. Different estimates around mid 1990s show wide variance. While a survey done by the Gandhi Peace Foundation put their total figure at 26.7 lakhs, the survey carried out by the NSSO showed a figure of 3.45 lakhs and the survey carried out by the state governments put the number at 2.06 lakhs. While exact number is a matter of doubt, their significant presence is not disputed.

11.6.2 Problems of Bonded Labour

‘The system of bonded labour is an outcome of customary obligations, forced labour or indebtedness under which a debtor agrees to render service. Though the system is deeply embedded in feudal and semi feudal social structure, it is also prevalent in advanced agriculture with capitalist feature and in the non-agricultural sectors’. It is obviously a system of exploitation of poor labourers.

The problems of bonded labourers is a part of the wider socio-economic problems of excess supply of labour, unemployment, low wages and poor standard of living of labourers with little surplus, rural illiteracy and helplessness. Such labourers are in permanent debts. The system perpetuates itself and powerful intervention is needed to prevent their miserable conditions.

11.6.3 Empowerment of Bonded labour

The Government of India decided to abolish this evil practice stating that “bonded labour, wherever it exists will be declared illegal”. In 1975 the government promulgated the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Ordinance. This was replaced by the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976. It freed unilaterally all the bonded labourers from bondage with simultaneous liquidation of their debts. Even after two decades, there is still a significant presence of this labour and in spite of clear provisions of identifying bonded labour, declaring them free and having plans for their rehabilitation, the evil practice still prevails. A strong concerted effort on the part of all concerned is necessary to put an end to this practice and empower the freed labourers for a new productive life.

11.7 OTHER MARGINALISED SECTIONS

Over 90% of the labour force is unorganised and faces very poor working and living

conditions. If their families are taken into considerations, they would constitute a large marginalised section in the country. There are several categories of labourers like construction workers, hawkers, and domestic workers etc who are all marginalised. But many of these are covered significantly in the groups discussed here above. Here we pay attention to two sections that have been receiving attention at the hands of researchers.

11.7.1 Disabled Workers

The disabled section covers all those with visual, hearing, speech, locomotor and mental disabilities and other permanent disabilities that may have arisen from accident, sickness etc. According to 2001 census there were 21.9 million disabled in India. 75% of them live in rural areas. Only 49% were literate. Again only a small section of them, 34% were employed. Their disabilities become the cause for their marginalisation as it becomes difficult for them to get educated in their fields of choice. They may also be not fit and employable as normal persons. Since many of them are poor, their marginalisation has become inevitable.

However governments, both central and state, and a variety of NGOS have emerged as their empowering supporters. The governmental attention includes medical and social rehabilitation. Several important laws like the Persons with Disability (Equal opportunities, Protection of Rights, Full Participation) Act, 1995; National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disability Act 1992 and Rehabilitation Council of India Act 1992 have been passed to take care of the needs of disabled. There are also several empowering measures and programmes. A large number of institutions that deal with different disabilities and help in treatment, rehabilitation, training and employment have now come into existence. There is also reservation in employment in government, public sector, and aided institutions, for the disabled. The National Handicapped and Finance Development Corporation help in self-employment ventures of the disabled. Recently the government has come out with the National Policy for the Persons with Disabilities, 2006 which aims at comprehensive help and empowerment of the disabled. The policy gives the disabled the status of 'valuable human resources', and aims at creating an environment of opportunities, protection of rights and full participation. With the support of the civil society, disabled can look forward to a decent and productive life.

11.7.2 Old/Aged persons

Aged old persons are those who are over 60 years of age, though classification differs at different places and purposes. Called with dignity as 'Senior Citizens', this section of the population has fortunately begun to receive more attention. In 1951 their population was 20 millions which increased to 57 millions in 1991, to 70.57 millions in 2001 and is expected to reach 100 millions in 2013 and 112.96 millions in 2016.

Unfortunately the aged have now begun to face a number of problems. Decline of joint family system has marginalised them, making them an isolated and neglected lot. Children, when they grow up settle with their own family, often abroad. Marriages out of caste or community also lead to their being abandoned. In urban areas, there is the problem of housing in which aged may not be accommodated. They also do not have adequate social security support. Though the government has introduced the scheme of national old age pension, the benefits appear highly inadequate. Above all they suffer from typical problems and diseases of old age like dementia, senility, depression, anxiety, and diseases related to bones and nerves.

The government has come out with the National Policy on Older Persons, 1999. It has promised the old that they will not live unprotected, ignored and marginalised. State will support them in getting financial security, health care, shelter, welfare needs, protection against abuse and exploitation and opportunities for their development. A number of support measures now exist for the old like the provision of identity cards, special queues for public services like postal service and ticket reservation, travel concessions, etc. A number of NGOs like the Dignity Foundation in Mumbai are doing valuable services for the old. It can be hoped that such measures will expand contributing to the empowerment of the senior citizens in India.

11.8 SUMMARY

In India large sections of the society are marginalised. In a broad sense over 90% of the labour force which is unorganised is marginalised but this is too vast and heterogeneous. There are more specific large sections like women, especially poor rural women; the S.Cs; the S.Ts; the OBCs; children; the bonded labour; the disabled; and the old/aged. Marginalisation of such sections has led to development without social inclusion and social justice. Our analysis has pointed out that though the central and state governments and other civil agencies have contributed significantly to empower these marginalised sections, and there is no doubt some progress in this direction, a lot more needs to be done. To create a Gandhian society of peace and harmony; inclusion and empowerment; growth with equity; and of enrichment and sustainability, a more vigorous, purposive, integrated and concerted effort by the governments and civil societies is needed.

11.9 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Explain the concept of 'marginalisation' giving examples from the Indian society.
2. Explain the marginalisation of women in India. How are they being empowered?
3. Discuss the problem of child labour in India. Discuss the measures in operation for their empowerment.
4. Write notes on
 - a) Empowerment of the OBCs
 - b) Helping the disabled
 - c) Supporting the aged

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UNIT 12 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Structure

12.1 Introduction

Aims and Objectives

12.2 International Cooperation: Issues and Challenges

12.3 Power-based Approaches of Cooperation

12.4 Knowledge-based Theories of Cooperation

12.5 Frameworks of International Cooperation

12.6 Gandhian Precepts for International Cooperation

12.7 Summary

12.8 Terminal Questions

Suggested Readings

12.1 INTRODUCTION

“...Peace will not come out of a clash of arms but out of justice lived
and done by unarmed nations in the face of odds....”

Mahatma Gandhi

The relevance and importance of International Cooperation is increasingly vital in a world divided and torn by a thousand conflicts that range from between individuals, groups, communities, societies, regions and nations in the international system. The teachings of Christ Jesus of the “Sermon on the Mount” added to some of the foundational values upon which Mahatma Gandhi had built his philosophy of non-violence, peace, justice, equity and development. Mahatma Gandhi’s sustenance of his campaign for Peace and transformation of the violent domestic and international order is drawn from the noble values of the above sources.

This Unit intends to explore the salient issues of International Cooperation from two fundamental approaches. It would examine the various issues and challenges of cooperation by examining the thematic sources upon which international cooperation is shaped and it would examine how these issues and challenges shape the scope of international cooperation. Building on the sources of international cooperation, the Unit would proceed to examine the central tenets of Mahatma Gandhi’s philosophy of peace, justice and cooperation at various levels of human communities.

International Cooperation has emerged to be a fundamental system-transforming construction that is vital to influence and transform the nature of international relations, domestic social, cultural, civic, economic and political discourse affecting individual, group, community and social interactions with its derivations on inter-state and transnational relations in the global context.

Aims and Objectives

After going through this Unit, you would be able to:

- analyse the imperatives and outcomes of international cooperation and how they have shaped the debate;
- describe the thematic frameworks for International Cooperation;
- apply the practices of Gandhian thought to international cooperation;
- explain India views international cooperation and the scope of its policy in the Gandhian context.

12.2 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

International cooperation is based on three major foundations of thought viz: interest-based, power-based theories, and value-based constructions. International Cooperation based on Interest-based construction would focus on the ability of stakeholders in any conflict with rational objectives cooperating with the objective to overcome collective action dilemmas. An action dilemma is one where in conflict situations, the scope of cooperation avoids suboptimal outcomes for the cooperators. It is a fact that such interest-based cooperative outcomes that the agents are usually rational and base their calculations on utility-maximisation within the given preferences. Often the attention is on the role of regimes/institutions in shaping preferences and facilitating cooperation.

The salience of Interest-based cooperation is based on the spillover effects of cooperation (functionalism). The costs of creating and maintaining institutions, establishing cooperation in one issue-area has a multiplier effect that can result in solutions with applications in other issue-areas. The ensuing cooperation is thus a result of institutional bargaining (based on a form of contractualism) resulting in negotiated agreements and commitments. Interest-based cooperation is based on a structural definition of the situation-problem context. The scope of the interest-based international cooperation is based on the twin aspects of the *situation-structural*.

The situation-structural context of international cooperation emphasises on the “interpretation of different kinds of regimes as collective responses to the functional requirements of different kinds of collective action problems”. It explores various models from game theory - such as Prisoner’s Dilemma, Coordination Game, and Assurance Game, etc. In the context of such arrangements, international cooperation requires Collaboration requiring sanctions and compliance, whereas coordination merely requires agreement among the stakeholders.

The second aspect of interest-based international cooperation is the *problem-structural*: The problem-structural approach involves observing the nature of the issue-area of the problem. In this analysis, there are two modes of conflict with different likelihoods of cooperation in each.

The first type is known as *dissensual* conflict that is divided into two sub-categories:

- a) Conflict about means: wherein the goals are agreed upon but the methods are not. The possibility of cooperation is medium;

- b) Conflict about values: when parties desire different outcomes. The possibility of cooperation is low.

The second type is *consensual* conflict which has two outcomes:

- a) Relative gains: when the benefit is relative to the benefits of others. The possibility of cooperation is low;
- b) Absolute gains: when everyone benefits from a solution. The possibility of cooperation is high.

International Cooperation is aided by certain social-psychological factors. Such situations create a situation in which the agents operate under a “veil of uncertainty” regarding benefits and costs, there is an increased tendency to cooperate more readily. It is also due to the fact that there are no known distributive issues to argue over in such circumstances. Besides this issue, yet another factor that could be exogenous shocks and public crises/outcry for better cooperation. The consensus factor for cooperation thus arises from the extent to which an issue-area of a given problem is amenable to a contractual solution.

12.3 POWER-BASED APPROACHES OF COOPERATION

Power-based approaches focus on the importance of relative gains and security concerns to otherwise rational agents. The distribution of power and the presence of anarchy (the absence of an authority to enforce contractual obligations) are critical factors that aid in the cooperation process. The nature of power-based approaches is predominantly static and positivist. This is because the concerns never change and are external to the agents involved. There are three power-based theories of international cooperation a) Hegemonic Stability Theory; b) Power-based Research Programme; c) Realist Theory of Cooperation

Hegemonic Stability Theory

The Hegemonic stability theory shows the importance of a dominant power that would bear the burdens of maintaining international order and stability and provide for cooperation. A hegemon is a powerful agent who provides public goods because it has the self-interest and the capacity to supply them. This provision generates free riders. According to hegemonic theory the weak exploit the strong. Hegemony can be coercive (imperialist) or benevolent (leadership). This theory believes that hegemons are necessary to shoulder the costs of rule-making and enforcement (second-order cooperation dilemmas). In return, they generally set the rules and others adjust. On the other hand, there could be alternatives like small groups that provide public goods by cooperating and sharing costs, instead of relying on a single hegemon. In addition, hegemons can vary according to issue-area (the environment, nuclear weapons, etc.). The concept of imperialism and domination stems from this theory.

Power-based Research Programme

The argument of the Power-based Research Programmes is that cooperation does not result in mutual adjustment at all; instead it requires the less powerful to adjust to the more powerful. In addition, the variable power differences shape the following dimensions of cooperation: a) Who gets to play the game? b) What are the rules? c) What are the payoffs?

The Power-based analysis is based on Game theoretic and Prisoner's Dilemma Games. Power-based cooperation suggests that the Prisoner's Dilemma is not the ideal game to study cooperation when power is a factor. In the Prisoner's Dilemma, there is one "best" solution and the challenge for the various agents is to arrive at it. By contrast, in Battle of the Sexes, the optimal outcome is different for each player, thus there is fundamental disagreement over what constitutes the "best" solution (mathematically there is no one best solution).

As a result, cooperation and institutions merely serve the interests of the powerful. Powerful players extend their power through these means. Since differences in the distribution of costs and benefits always exist, even under conditions of absolute gains not everyone gains equally. The reliability of assuming that structural power could be turned into bargaining power regarding outcomes is often questionable. This theory is similar to the earlier theory since it justifies hegemonic powers but adds balance of power through the idea of a zero sum game.

Realist Theory of Cooperation

The Realist theory of cooperation attempts to explain cooperation given states' overwhelming concern with security, independence, and autonomy. The Realist theory of Cooperation does not concern with relative gains but has an emphasis for a systemic intolerance for relative losses. In power asymmetry conflict, all acts could result in the destruction of the agent, so power asymmetries trump all other concerns. In this scenario, absolute gains just do not exist. There is always the concern over "who will gain more?" The result is "defensive positionalism," or resulting in reluctant cooperation, wherein agents will cooperate only if they feel it is absolutely necessary. Rationality, in this case, is constrained by fear of destruction and the presence of anarchy.

For Realists, the role of institutions matter only because they facilitate the necessary stabilising exertion of power: payoffs to other agents, sanctions, and norms of reciprocity (that make accepting relative gains losses in the now or on a particular issue easier in expectation of compensation on other issues or in the future). With power, cooperation is rare at best, but without power, it is impossible.

12.4 VALUE OR KNOWLEDGE-BASED THEORIES OF COOPERATION

Knowledge-based theories (cognitivism) of International Cooperation focus on the way in which knowledge and inter-subjectively shared knowledge and beliefs shape the agents' behaviour and identities that are engaged in cooperation. Norms and values are of major interest to knowledge-based theories. There are two-cognitivist variants a) "Weak cognitivism" that is concerned with the origins of rational actors' behaviour; b) "Strong cognitivism" that is concerned with the origins of actors' understandings of Self and Other.

Weak Cognitivism

Weak cognitivism assumes that rational actors, instead of taking preferences as given, would problematise preferences and investigate into the origins of agents' interests, as well as the impact of norms on preference formation. Weak cognitivism sees itself as complementary to other approaches. The role of knowledge is central, including ideas and learning. Since knowledge is filtered by interpretation, preferences become fluid as knowledge changes. As knowledge is primary, knowledge-shapers are powerful influences.

Thus the idea landscape acts as a “road map” from which agents choose their routes. Learning is possible and subsequent course-correction as well. Furthermore, the institutionalisation of knowledge shapes agents’ preferences. Institutions contribute to consensus through knowledge and information sharing.

Strong Cognitivism

Strong cognitivism, on the other hand, dispenses with rational actors in favour of a sociological model of behaviour. Agent’s perceptions of their own and others’ identities and roles are central objects of study. Agents are role-players, not utility maximisers. Strong cognitivism positions itself as an alternative to other approaches. This “sociological turn” investigates how knowledge and beliefs constitute agents and make possible both power and cooperation. Agents’ very identities exist only by virtue of shared understandings. Groups and institutions define who we are and what behaviours are possible and meaningful. Strong cognitivism stands in opposition to atomistic and positivist attempts to understand cooperation.

There are four schools of thought regarding cooperation:

- The power of legitimacy emphasises the study of the society of states and its rules.
- The power of arguments is the study of communicative rationality.
- The power of identity is the study of role-specific understandings of self and other.
- The power of history is the study stabilising v. critiquing the ‘world order.’

The power of legitimacy envisages that states comply with rules seen as legitimate even when it seems not to be in their self-interest. The agents in a system are there for insuring the validity and stability of the system is the first priority. Reputation and trust among stakeholders maintain the system.

The power of arguments focuses on the viable understanding of the discourse as essential to the understanding of cooperation. In the realm of cooperation the scope of “Strategic action” attempts to control others, whereas “communicative action” attempts to convince them. Common understandings are necessary to agree on goals. Often common understandings provide starting points for discussion.

The power of identity is based on the social construction of ideas and identity. Constructivism is the study of socially constructed identities in political science. Understanding cooperation among egoists is insufficient to understanding cooperation in general. The understanding of cooperation and its operationalisation results in the evolution of community. It diffuses reciprocity creating cooperation and cost sharing without direct incentives. Cooperation is viewed as self-stabilising when agents who cooperate for selfish interests come to identify themselves as “cooperators.” Social structures or social identities do not exist without interaction and reproduction (practices).

The power of history believes that the current world order is a product of western history and ideology. Therefore, the construction of Identities and norms are by powerful elite and historical forces. These forces are responsible for the dissemination and control of ideas. There are certain societal actors who benefit from prevailing modes of production, accumulation, and dominance. The construct of ‘Hegemony’ is a set of ideas promulgated by a powerful hegemon in the interest of various elite. The scope of cooperation is really collusion designed to reinforce or stabilise the existing world order.

In order to maintain consensus and the stability of the world order, Elite must compromise to that effect. The quest for Stability requires the marginalisation of any radical conceptualisations or alternatives. Seeming alternatives take “the existing order as given, as something to be made to work more smoothly, not as something to be criticized and changed.” Knowledge is always an ideology that works in favour of some groups and not others.

Other theories analyze internationalism through critical approaches that argue that power should be oriented towards the good of people and based on laws that are normative- or based on norms of value for public good.

12.5 FRAMEWORKS OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Having identified and analysed the issues and challenges of International cooperation, it is essential to analyse the frameworks of international cooperation and the conceptual understanding, which would be the basis of understanding the Gandhian precepts and practices of international peace, development and cooperation. International cooperation is created and sustained through the mechanism of arriving at political solutions. It is built on political will, expressed decisions, and by the formation of functional solutions demanded by inherent necessities. International cooperation in the contemporary context is built by creating a welfare mechanism by market integration and management of international economic inter-dependencies. Peace emerges from cooperation and common security production. Functionalism aids in the creation and sustenance of various economic, societal, and political necessities created by the progress of the forces of production and it results changes in the social system. Patterns of social and economic cooperation have emerged with the growth of international organisations— because of the autonomy of industrial societies and characterised by the progress of the forces of production through the internationalisation of socio-economic problem complexes. Conflict resolutions are attempted through various means of inter-state or supra-state cooperation.

International agencies are agents that aid international cooperation. They render war irrational / impossible through collective transnational problem solving and mutual dependence. International organisations are more conducive to the maintenance of international peace and stability, transcending any anarchical structures in world politics. As the complexities of national and global problems increase due to various issues and pressures, the scope of individual state action narrows giving way for comprehensive solutions that encompass all actors viz: state and non-state actors.

Thus, a process of integrative action sets in arising out of purely functional necessities. The process of integration initiated is to solve problems within technical, functional, non-political and small sector-based issue areas (low politics) in a technocratic and non-ideological way. As the success of cooperative management and problem solving approaches prove to be successful, they gradually expand to other related functional task-areas. In a cumulative phase, they would *spill over* into genuinely political (high politics) issue areas. Thus, international cooperation sets the stage for international integration. It commences as a gradual process of integration (*logic of integration by sectors*: At the next stage, it sets in supranational communitisation of state functions in a succession of neighbouring policy areas produces quasi-automatic integration by means of spill-over effects). In initiating an integrative and cooperative process, political actors play a decisive role in the

process of combining the requirements of problem solutions and adequate institutional provisions; they transfer their loyalties and benefit expectations in an ever-intensifying manner to the supranational level, thereby legitimising and stimulating the integration process.

Federalism is yet another framework of inter-state and intra-state cooperation. It involves the integration of several national actors' consequence of their willful political decisions taken by politicians and nations and based on common political and socio-economic norms and objectives. At the beginning of the integration process, a common constitution for the newly integrated actor formulated. This actor usually takes the form of a federal state with horizontal and vertical separation of powers; the formerly autonomous units give up their claim to sovereignty and submit to a common will. The partial or complete transfer of sovereignty to the central authority secures the outcome of the integration process with conflicts regulated within the framework. Federalism leads to solutions of economic and social problems fill a previously established (institutional) framework resulting from a pooling of sovereignty of individual actors.

Functionalism envisages progressive cooperation within specific issue areas. Functionalism is on increasing socio-economic interdependence and cooperation on problems within these issue-areas with effective treatment in an international rather than national context. Functionalism is the basis of various functional necessities. It is a construction of an increasingly intensifying network of common technical (non-political) activities and administrative tasks. It results in tightening of interstate relations that gradually includes genuinely political problem/ issue areas. Cooperation in some specific issue areas induces learning processes that enhance cooperation within other/ related issue areas.

Interdependence Theory

Yet another construction in the framework of international cooperation is the Interdependence theory. International relations are characterised by a complex conglomerate system of inter- and transnational interrelationships between a wide range of governmental and nongovernmental national and international actors. The traditionally given hierarchy of security issues over welfare/ socio-economic issues are replaced by variable sets of themes and preferences depending on the specific policy area. As national actors are integrated into a complex network of mutual interdependencies, the importance of the resort to force/organised violence as an instrument of foreign/ state policy is likely to be diminished.

Neofunctionalism

Neofunctionalism emerges as yet another construction of international cooperation. Given the socioeconomic problems of highly industrialised societies and their borders transgressing, causes and consequences can no longer be resolved by individual state action but require comprehensive solutions that encompass all actors; the integration of several actors arises out of purely functional necessities. Neofunctionalism sets the stage for the integration process by which actors formally agree (contractual arrangements) to solve problems within technical, functional, non-political and small sector-based issue areas (low politics) in a technocratic and non-ideological way. Neofunctionalism proves that adoption of cooperative management and problem-solving approaches would be successful. It would then expand to other related functional task-areas and will finally *spill over* into genuinely political (high politics) issue areas, where they also initiate a gradual process of integration (*logic of integration by sectors*: supranational communitisation of state functions in a

succession of neighbouring policy areas produces quasi-automatic integration by means of spill over effects).

Neofunctionalism envisages that political actors play a decisive role in the process of combining the requirements of problem solutions and adequate institutional provisions; they transfer their loyalties and benefit expectations in an ever-intensifying manner to the supranational level, thereby legitimising and stimulating the integration process.

12.6 GANDHIAN PRECEPTS FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The focus of this Unit is to highlight the issues and frameworks of international cooperation from the theory and policy experiences and then correlate the Gandhian context of international cooperation. Gandhi's approach to non-violence places him as a farsighted, sensitive and perceptive man of peace. He believed in the indivisibility of peace and the possibilities that conflicts could be transformed when the bitterness of the disputes are resolved through spiritual means. For Mahatma Gandhi, Peace building and international cooperation emanate from a nationalist perspective. In many ways, he is an original contributor to the thinking of peace research. The concept of structural violence is a product of social relationships of exploitation. Viewed from this angle, the control exercised by an imperial power is a classic case of structural violence, the British domination over India being one of them. The fight that Gandhi carried on against it was a non-violent fight against violence. Interdependence is and ought to be as much the ideal of man as self-sufficiency. To Gandhi the elimination of exploitation in the social, economic and the political could result in fertile grounds for nations to cooperate. Adopting the paradigm of Christ, that 'the Kingdom of God is within you', Mahatma Gandhi was convinced that cooperation could be possible when the spiritual transformation of Divine image imparts on humans and communities.

Gandhi affirmed the social essence of humanity and the indispensable nature of social interdependence. Social interdependence constitutes the basis of cooperation that spans from the social to national to the international. Mahatma Gandhi reiterates the integrative and functional cooperation of all humanity. His quote, "Humanity is not divided into watertight compartments so that we cannot go from one to another. They may occupy one thousand rooms but they are all related to one another". The essence of social interdependence is the true basis of social, national and international cooperation.

Gandhi viewed that conflicts are temporary in nature and are subject to transformation by cooperation. He affirmed his faith in the precept and experience of Ahimsa as the basis by which peace is created. Influenced by Christ's Sermon on the Mount of blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God; Gandhi believed in the innate nature of the Divine in human mind and conscience by which values of peace and harmony could overcome the situation of conflicts, or in other words transform conflicts into cooperation. He wrote "As everything in the world is subject of constant change, and conflicts also are not the exception, the nature of conflict too changes from time-to-time, no matter if conflicts are inevitable and the basis or root cause of them seems to be the same in one way or the other". Gandhian non-violence accords solution to all problems; it is capable to transform conflicts into cooperation to make the way of life peaceful and developing, if it is applied according to demand of time and prevailing circumstances in space.

Gandhi is a well-known proponent of nonviolence and peace in the world. He has widely written on war, peace and security vis-à-vis individuals, states and vaster global perspectives. He was not a system builder in thought and action, but combined the ideals and reality. He is a perceiver of reality as a “practical idealist”. He interweaved the two cords of human knowledge and human dynamics of action. By this interweaving, a holism of Gandhian vision and action emerged that was scientific. Deriving his understanding of Christ’s Millennium reign, Gandhi perceived that international cooperation was premised on the inherent linkage between knowledge, virtue or wisdom on the one hand, and security of a civil society comprising understandably connected individual(s), groups, administrative units, polis of different magnitudes, provinces, sovereign states, international and global organisations, on the other hand. There is very clear line of thinking and continued relationship amongst these aspects of security from the level of an individual to an international establishment and global order. Security, defence, and strategic environs and peace have to begin with the individual first. Other levels of security will have to follow suit.

The Gandhian order of holistic logic for a securer and more peaceful world is on the following foundations:

- a) Global conventional and nuclear disarmament;
- b) Preservation of environment and ecology;
- c) Resolving the population, poverty and unemployment challenges;
- d) Peace thought substituting conflict and war thought;
- e) Globalisation with a human face;
- f) Evolving a global culture of empowering the weak as strong and able.

Gandhi viewed security not in terms of merely a strategy and technique of defeating an invading army but from the comprehensive understanding of the notion why should there be a threat in the absence of some solid political and economic gain. The Gandhian perspective considers security and cooperation as a natural corollary of development and peace: a) Political and economic independence without any type of colonialism or imperialism and exploitation; b) Voluntary effort with dedication and commitment; c) Goals and means not imposed from above but developed from within; d) Equality for all; e) Decentralization at political and economic spheres; f) General disarmament; g) Unilateral disarmament; h) International society as a voluntary organisation; i) Common good and common security based on equity and cooperation; j) Bigger states cooperating with smaller states; k) Amicable and peaceful settlement of all disputes; l) Small international police force until the world develops a belief in nonviolence; m) Free, open and alert Media; n) Full and gainful employment; o) Preponderance to mutual service; p) Meaningful education for all that would be value-oriented.

Gandhi believed in a normal fraternity, where development does not pose diverse types of threats to the individual and humanity. For evolving such a normal course of life, a Global Education Order needs to be established through value-related and need based education. The scope of this programme would be inclusive of material, moral, emotional and cultural to spiritual needs of the individual. The individuality, creativity, identity and voluntary efforts have to be the fundamental terms of reference in the launching of a global education order. This educational order provides the basis for international cooperation and development.

Gandhi emphasises the role of the individual in decision-making and in sharing the national and international responsibilities. There is no place for undemocratic or authoritarian regimes in Gandhi's agenda of security and peace. To steer clear of undemocratic or authoritarian tendencies, he suggested two more correctives of: (i) limited State power and (ii) socio-economic decentralisation with emphasis on the least role of government. International cooperation in the Gandhian vision would be the upward movement from the individual and a federation of village republics to an international federation of nations in a society marked by voluntary cooperation and decentralisation.

Gandhi linked human security with international cooperation. He viewed that the ultimate interest of humanity is a healthy security environment in the absence of threats and perils and the increase in the development of humanity. It lay in environmental protection, food security, a balanced population, and the elimination of all offensive weapons of war including conventional and nuclear weapons. The structure of national and the global economies would be decentralised with participative political power. He called for the establishment of non-violent brigades trained in Panch yama. Panch yama envisaged the employment of Nonviolence, Satyagraha, Sarvodaya, Education and Discipline.

Gandhi linked the operations of the non-violent security to the decentralised economy and the ideal political order of national and international community of states. This vision was perhaps the first elucidation of Comprehensive Security based on a) Non-violent social, economic and political order; b) Non-exploitative and cooperative social-economic exchanges; c) Regeneration of the individual with a wholesome education leading to progressive social-cultural and political reform; d) Gradual reform of communitarian, social, national and international sectors through democratisation and the empowerment of the individual.

12.7 SUMMARY

International cooperation has emerged to be a very significant theme of study and analysis and research. In an age of proliferating nuclear weapons, relentless pursuit of radical terrorism based on suicidal variants, a deteriorating environment with a fragmenting economy, the search for alternate patterns of economy, society, polity and ecology based on a spiritual regeneration is essential. The Gandhian Paradigm of Peace, Development and the federation of nations based on a decentralised pattern of economy offers a credible alternative.

The Unit, in the first part, reviewed the various issues and frameworks of international cooperation in terms of the conceptual and theoretical frames providing a varied context of international and domestic bases of cooperation examining the various liberal-idealist and realist theories of cooperation. It then proceeded to examine the practical aspects of cooperation and examined the issues and challenges inherent in the various patterns of international cooperation. Viewing the theories of cooperation in the domestic and international contexts, one could observe the trends of international cooperation that have been more oriented towards functional and structural aspects of integration. The contrasting feature lies in the Gandhian approach of international cooperation, geared more towards a moral-spiritual basis of rejuvenation leading to a decentralised pattern of governance and a voluntary federation of states involved in the process. While the structural theories of federalism and functionalism offer the systemic basis of cooperation, the focus has been more on economic and social necessities and the negative feature to avoid conflicts. The

Gandhian approach, on the other hand, offers the positive accents of peace-building and the comprehensive scope of human security. International cooperation is thus a summation of conflict resolution, peace-building, comprehensive human security in which the individual thrives in a collective that is based on the principles of Panch yama.

12.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. What are the various typologies of international integration and cooperation and how have they aided in the buildup of international cooperation?
2. What are the unique features of Gandhian approach to peace and international cooperation and how does it differ from the conventional approaches?
3. Write short notes on the following:
 - (a) Strong and Weak Cognitivism
 - (b) Neofunctionalism

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