



Indira Gandhi National Open University
School of Continuing Education

MRD-101
Rural Development:
Indian Context



UNIT 1 SOCIAL CHANGE: MOBILITY AND MOBILISATION

Structure

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- define the concept of change and its various aspects;
- describe the role of mobility in bringing about change in people's lives;
- critically examine the role of Mobilisation for empowerment of people; and
- explain the concept of Self Help Groups as an organising principle.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This is the first unit of the block on **Dynamics of Change in Rural India**. In this unit we are introducing the *concept of change* and its various sources and characteristics. That done, we present an analysis of *mobility* in the Indian context, especially within the framework of caste system. To explain the phenomenon of mobility within the caste structure, we felt it necessary to briefly touch upon the concept of *sanskritisation* and *westernisation* to evaluate the possibilities and limitations of mobility as it obtains in India. Mobility is also examined in the overall contexts of how change itself was viewed by the state and policy makers and how it influenced the various programmes adopted for the uplift of marginalised groups. Mobilisation of marginal groups has largely been top down process with very little actual participation of people in it. In the next section of the unit, we examine the role of Mobilisation and the need for Mobilisation to bring about transformation of people. Finally we will talk about Self-Help Groups as an example of the successful practice of Mobilisation of rural women folk.

1.2 WHAT IS SOCIAL CHANGE?

In your own life time you must have seen so many changes. When you were younger, you probably did not see anybody using computers. Now, however, you

see them being used all around. You must have noticed also that the computer technologies have initiated widespread changes, which touch many aspects of our daily life, some far reaching and some momentary. Changes, which are fleeting are known as fads, like the cut of the dress, a hair style, some type of furnishing, etc. But computer technology is not a fad. It is a change, which affects the very pattern and structure of society.

Change can be described as “transformation in the organisation of society and in patterns of thought and behaviour over time” (Macdonis, 1987: 614). To understand fully what change means to a society, let us look at some of the characteristics of changes.

1.2.1 Characteristics of Social Change

a) Social Change is Universal

Everything in nature is subject to laws of change. Even the seemingly unchanging things exhibit minute changes. Something as permanent and immobile as the Himalayas experience geological processes such as erosion, earth quakes and so on, which change their contours. Human society is even more susceptible to changes, since social institutions, patterns and the very making of society are made by humans.

All societies experience change, but each society experiences change at different rates and in different ways. Some societies do not experience many changes, because of conscious effort and/or compulsion of circumstances. For instance the hunting/gathering society of the Kalahari Bushmen have changed very little over the last few centuries. It is only recently, through contact with outside world, that their society is experiencing changes.

The rate of change is believed to be much more rapid in societies which are technologically advanced. Each new major invention, as you might have noticed, brings in major changes.

Not all cultural elements change at the same rate. The concept of “cultural lag” developed by William Ogburn (1964) refers to the fact that material culture usually changes faster than nonmaterial culture. In our own Indian context, you must have noticed that modern technology, institutions, be it transport, means of communication or bureaucracy, did not necessarily bring changes in our culture and values.

b) Social Changes are both Unplanned and Planned

Changes can be unplanned. The colonisation of un-exposed world is an example of unplanned change, as the coming of the Europeans has completely changed those societies. The British rule in India has changed the social fabric of Indian society. The introduction of railways in far off villages in India altered the lives of people considerably, and it is a change that villagers did not plan. All these are instances of unplanned changes.

Some changes are deliberately sought. For instance, a government might want to change sex ratio in favour of women. For this, the state may adopt different approaches and policies. Better health facilities, literacy, legislation, etc. may be adopted to bring about social changes. Engineer a new world by planned change is a feature of modern society.

c) Social Change and its Consequences

Whether change is sought or unplanned, all social change involves consequences which may be positive or negative. This gives rise to controversies, especially when the change is an initiated/planned one.

The recent controversy that surrounds Narmada Dam Project is one such planned development initiative, which has raised a lot of controversies. While some section of the populace support it, some groups are vehemently opposed to it, as they believe that it would cause more damage than good. In fact, the benefits to the people, of any proposed change, are an important criteria for social planners.

These are some of the chief characteristics of change, across time and space. You must be wondering as to what causes things to change, some as we realised are planned but some are uninitiated and unplanned and these have several sources. In our next section, we will have a brief discussion on various sources of change.

1.2.2 Sources of Social Change

i) Cultural Processes

Societies are constantly introducing new things, abandoning old ones, reinterpreting the existing ones and so on. Basically, social processes are dynamic. The several *processes of change* can be briefly summarized as the following:

- a) **Invention:** When the wheel was invented or the automobile by human ingenuity, it radically altered the conception of space. People became mobile, in turn producing consequences that touched every aspect of human life. The invention of wheel is one example. There are several devises, mechanisms, including ideas, which are invented by people, which have brought about significant changes. And inventions are being made every day, which bring further changes in the human society.
- b) **Discovery:** When people notice something for the first time, though it has always been there, and bring it into prominence as they understand it or use it in new ways, we are dealing with with the process of discovery. Discovering that there are microscopic germs, which cause diseases, has completely revolutionised medicine and the very way we look at life and death. There are countless such discoveries which have brought about major changes in the world.
- c) **Diffusion:** When things and ideas spread from one region to the other, the process is called diffusion. The decimal system in mathematics spread from India to the Arab world and from there to the Western World. The decimal system is now an integral part of mathematics and there is hardly any computation that does not use this system. Diffusion is an essential part of change. We come in contact with new ideas and inventions and some times new ideas are imported so that a positive change may be introduced.

ii) Social Structure

The seeds of change sometimes lie within the very social structure—the changes arising out of tensions and conflicts. The most influential theory linking change to social structure was by Karl Marx, who claimed that social class was the basis of conflict between unequally positioned sections of the population—the rich and the poor. The rising tension between the haves and have not, he held, would lead to class struggle, in which the capitalist system, which is advantageous to the haves would be replaced by a socialist system. While Marx's predication has not necessarily come true, despite erstwhile Soviet Union's tryst with socialism, his argument of social tensions arising out of inequalities can be applied to various movements which have emerged out of inequalities of race, gender, wealth, etc.

iii) Value and Ideas

Certain ideas and values that society holds and works towards bring in changes. The idea of "equality, liberty and fraternity", which ended aristocracy in France has

caught peoples' imagination all over the world. It is an idea which people aim for. Similarly, the idea of *democracy*, which is largely held to be a superior political system, finds resonance in many parts of the world. For the sociologist Max Weber ideas and beliefs also encourage social change. In his book "*Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*", he develops a thesis indicating connection between Protestantism and its ethic of discipline, ascetism, frugality, etc. and the rise of capitalism. His basic proposition is that ideas and beliefs have a strong influence on the Action of People. The recent discourse on rights is said to have a powerful influence on many social movements – the feminist, dalit and tribal movements, to name a few.

iv) **Environment**

In recent times it is increasingly being realised that imbalances in the overall environment, especially caused as a result of human action, have serious consequences for the inhabitants of the planet including human beings. Natural disasters such as earthquakes, storms, cyclones and floods do cause unintended changes to the society. The realisation that the growth model of development, which exploits nature, is damaging has spawned new ways of looking at man's relationship with nature. In the development debates there is an increasing stress on sustainable development, which is less damaging to environment.

In the foregoing we have outlined what we mean by social change – its characteristics and the various sources. We have so far discussed *change* in a generic sense. Change, as we mentioned earlier, affects everyone, but certain changes which are general and not intentional as well as some of the intended changes, whether initiated by the state or an individual, seem to affect a community or a social pattern much more than others. For instance, the reservation policy, initiated by the state and which is laid down in the constitution has changed the lives of some tribes and some scheduled castes. They have been able to move to slightly better positions. This change in social position/status is known as social mobility. In our next section we will talk about various aspects of mobility.

Check Your Progress I

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

ii) Check your answer with the possible answer provided at the end of the unit.

1) What do you understand by change? Explain with a suitable example.

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2) What are some of the main sources of change?

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- 3) Write about any one invention of recent times, which has altered the lives of people in a significant way.

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1.3 SOCIAL MOBILITY

Simply put, mobility means movement from one place to another. Social mobility can be defined as changes in the social position of individuals within a system of social stratification. In the following sub section, let us look at social mobility in the context of our own peculiar and highly rigid social stratification system of caste.

1.3.1 Social Mobility and Caste

The caste system in India is a stratification system, which is almost entirely ascriptive: that is, a person can only be born to a certain caste and she/he cannot choose or work towards becoming a member of another caste group, which she/he is not born in to. The caste very much defines the privileges one enjoys. As you know, the higher castes enjoy certain privileges that lower castes are not allowed to. For instance the Dalit and untouchable communities, at one time and even now in some places, are not allowed to use public wells enter a temple, go to school etc. The categories of what can be accessible and what is forbidden has definitely changed in the last 50 years or so but the disadvantages and the marginalised position of the lower caste continue to this day.

Some changes have brought about a relative change in the rigid caste structure, which has brought about a relative social mobility from one generation to another generation, even if these changes have not brought any deep structural changes in the caste system, such that one could move from lower caste to upper caste.

Talking of mobility in the caste structure, M. N. Srinivas talks of two process which have been the major impetus to mobility in the Indian context of caste system. Let us briefly reflect on these two terms.

1.3.2 Mobility: Induced Changes from above — Sanskritisation and Westernisation

The introduction of these two terms, sanskritisation and westernisation, here is limited in its scope. Here we want to indicate how the two concepts are used to explain change in India, especially in the case of mobility within the caste system.

In his concept of sanskritisation, Srinivas has made an important contribution to the understanding of caste structure in a historical context, which does away with notion that caste structure is a rigid system.

By sanskritisation Srinivas means a “process by which a ‘low’ Hindu Caste to Tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology and way of life in the direction of high, and, frequently twice born caste” (Srinivas 1966: 6)

Several instances from history have been cited to show that sanskritisation was one of the few avenues open for mobility. But the mobility through sanskritisation itself did not produce any structural changes but only positional changes. It did not alter the structures of power and dominance. Sanskritisation in any caste explains only particular process of cultural changes, hinting at one possible avenue for mobility among host of possible avenue of change in Indian society. The other concept used by Srinivas tries to look at the impact of colonialisation.

By Westernisation Srinivas means “the changes brought about in Indian society and culture as a result of over 150 years of British rule, the term subsumes changes occurring at different levels.... technology, institutions, ideology and values”.

The British rule brought several changes not only at the level of cultural structure such as education, law, science and technology, new forms of politicisation, urbanisation, industrialization, transport, communication, but also introduced cultural traits such as dress, food, and changes in lifestyles.

In matters of cognition, it is believed that British rule brought the rational-legal discourse, which did add to the value orientation of many people who were influenced by it. It encouraged the values of equality, equity and universalism and not those of status and hierarchy, *communalistic* or *familialistic*.

While gradual changes did take place due to the British rule in India, challenging the traditional setup, it also reinforced the traditional tendencies. For instance, it is argued that the traditional ethnic, caste, communal cleavages are both reinforced and reflected in modern national institutions such as democracy, where elections are fought on the basis of religion, caste or some such identity. These tendencies went against the cherished long held feeling that traditional institutions and values would be replaced by modern institutions, which were considered the bulwarks of a developed India.

This notion that modern institutions and values would replace traditional values etc. was responsible for the way change was envisaged for India, specially for rural India, where traditionalism was in command. It is with this perspective and orientation that various modernisation and uplifting measures were taken by the state to address the specific problems faced by rural India. What was generally believed to be the natural consequences of the introduction of modernisation leading to a change in society did not bring in the expected change.

In our next section we will discuss how mobility or rather change was conceived in a way that was largely state induced and from the top and with a particular notion regarding how development could be achieved.

In recent times, however, especially with initiatives from the civil society and development organisations, we do find a change in the perspective and discourse of development. The shift has been from top down to bottom up approach. The development initiatives are now being sought from the grassroots, where the people concerned become part of the action. It is in this context that the concept of Mobilisation takes an added dimension.

In our next sub-section, we will take a look at the concept of Mobilisation in the context of changing perspectives on development and what it means for the marginalised groups in the Indian social structure.

Check Your Progress II

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

ii) Check your answer with the possible answer provided at the end of the unit.

1) What do you understand by the term ascriptive?

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2) How does the concept of “sanskritisation” explain change in the caste system?

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3) Do you think “westernisation” as a process of social change has been able to remove the traditional hierarchies?

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1.4 MOBILISATION AND CHANGE

The literal meaning of Mobilisation is to organise people for a particular action. When we talk about Mobilisation in the context of disadvantaged groups, we are referring to such a way of organising of people, as would have positive impact on the lives of people, for whom the action is initiated. In that sense it is social engineering whether the organising is done by the state and its various agencies or by the civil society, bodies like NGO’s or people’s movements or a combination of them.

In the context of rural development in India, the Mobilisation of rural folk, especially the disadvantaged, was taken up essentially by the state bodies in the early years of independent India, but the rural development arena is interspersed with several facets of Mobilisation. Some Mobilisations, like the anti-arrack movement or the Chipko movement, rose spontaneously, though they had inspiring figures or leaders behind them. There are many development initiatives which have been organised with the help of institutions, leaders and participation from the people. There are numerous examples where Mobilisation of people found support from different quarters, be it the issue of literacy, bonded labour, dowry, right to information or education.

While movements or collective organisations can be of different kinds, increasingly it is being felt in several quarters that Mobilisation of groups is a very important factor for bringing about change, specially the Mobilisation of those people for whom change is of dire necessity.

The role of civil society organisations is no longer restricted to influencing the government policies, it encompasses handling cultural struggles, confronting traditional power structures, religion and caste politics and gender. Among rural development practitioners, be it government institutions or civil society organisations, it is felt that organising disadvantaged groups is an important aspect of rural development. In our subsequent section, we will talk about Self Help Groups, as an example of an organisation where women have been mobilised to bring about a change, leading to a sense of empowerment and dignity in their lives. But before we start to talk about SHGs (Self Help Groups), let us briefly look at why it is important to mobilise people. To understand the need for Mobilisation let us look at the situation of women as a particular example.

The Need for Mobilisation

In this section we will try to understand why it is important to mobilise people. As we mentioned earlier, we would examine Mobilisation in the particular context of women.

In a patriarchal society women face all kinds of inherent disadvantages. The system, in fact, is geared towards keeping women in a subordinate position. There is not only the socialisation process, which equips women with a mental make up to take on the subordinated role, but also a host of institutions — education, religion, law, politics— which keep them in that position. In such a situation, for a woman to take up issues that affect her singularly is too difficult a task. Besides, if one wants social changes of long standing nature it becomes imperative that women are organised as a *collective* force. When groups of women mobilize themselves they reinforce each other and move in a concerted way. As a *collective*, they can identify their own priorities and the strategies they want to use to struggle for change, whether it is for resources or for change in gender relations.

Any kind of empowerment is a process that has to address various sources and structures of power; the process has to work both at the individual and the collective levels. This involves equal participation in the decision making process, control over resources and mechanisms for sustaining these gains.

DAWN—Development Alternatives with Women for New Era, a feminist organisation has recommended a strategy of empowerment through collective organisation that seeks for major structural changes at the policy level and also raise basic survival needs as the priority development issues. As we mentioned, it is difficult for one woman to bring major changes in society but “if whole groups of people demand change it is difficult to reject them altogether”. (Batliwala, 1993:10).

The *Shramshakti Report* (Report of the National Commission on Self Employed Women) on the working women points to the fact that women get exploited because they are not organised and therefore lack the bargaining power.

It is this need for Mobilisation, which has spurred various efforts on the part of organisations and individuals to come up with ways of forming women’s collectives. In our next section we will look at Self Help Groups as one such organisational effort in bringing women together.

1.5 THE SELF HELP GROUPS: A CASE IN MOBILISATION

In our earlier discussion on mobilisation, we mentioned that mobilisation is towards attaining a goal. A collectivity is one such group, which is formed with the purpose of achieving a goal. It is not a random group of people who happen to be in the same space like a group of people watching a cricket match in a stadium. A group is a collectivity only if it works for a specific purpose. The group has a conscious and voluntary member ship, the members abide by the rules and regulations of the organisation, the organisation is guided by collective articulation regarding what it wants to achieve, which may be spelt out in its constitution. The Self Help Group has been one such group.

The SHGs are small informal groups formed with the objective of enabling members to reap economic benefits and share group responsibility. The benefits include small loans out of group savings and also access to formal credit facilities, as well as pursuit of group activities. The SHGs in India have been inspired by the success of Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, which started for the poor in 1975. In India organising

women into small SHGs has been very popular with many NGOs in rural India. As the name indicates *self help* is the basic goal that the group tries to achieve. Some of the chief **characteristics of Self Help Groups** are as follows:

- Small size
- Identical interest/social heritage/common occupation
- Intimate knowledge of members' intrinsic strengths, needs and problems
- Flexible and responsive
- Simple documentation
- Collective leadership and mutual discussions
- Group solidarity, collective action, self help.

Owing to their nature of smallness, homogeneity and sense of collective affinity, SHGs have yielded a lot of tangible results not only in terms of economic benefits, but also have had their ripple effects on the society of the community they belong to. Some of the tangible **benefits of SHGs** are given below:

- Promotion of thrift and savings: most SHG programmes insist on regular savings—a fixed small amount. Such compulsory savings lead to accumulation of big funds.
- Improved loan recoveries: The peer pressure based on joint liability brings about a remarkable improvement in loan recoveries, leading to improved loan recycling and continued access to borrowings.
- Cost efficiency, better access to institutional credit: SHG can help rural women gaining better access to formal institutions of credit.

Besides these credit related benefits there are other benefits, which help the larger society. They can be summarised in brief as follows:

- SHGs, being people centered organisations, can take up various development activities in the area of education, water supply, environment, sanitation, road access, electric power and so on.
- As most SHGs are women centered, they can help ensure gender equality. The women's empowerment through SHGs would lead to benefits not only for the women but also for the family and the larger community.
- SHGs can help implement income generation programmes by collectively addressing entrepreneurial problems such as providing inputs, improving production and marketing facilities, and in obtaining better terms through their collective bargaining strength etc. (Women's Empowerment and Development, IGNOU, 2004)

Here is a case from *Ichikottai* which will help you understand the very simple functioning of SHG as well as its impact on the larger society.

Ichikottai Self Help Group

In Ichikottai, an SHG was initiated over an informal meeting between development workers and the villagers. To start with 20 women joined the SHG and pooled together Rs. 200 each. In 6 months time, three such groups were organised in the same village. On seeing these SHGs, the men organized a fourth one. Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA) an organisation organised 20 other groups and introduced them to Indian Bank, Thenipatti-Pudipatti. The members now deposit their savings with the bank regularly. This has created a linkage between the bank and the women's groups.

In April 1997 the village mobilised nearly Rs. 50, 000 and the SHGs contributed to the development of the village by undertaking development activities like road construction, tank deepening, village sanitation, mosquito eradication, availing of government services and linking with nationalised banks among other things.

It is felt that being local and grass root based, the SHGs can address a host of issues that deal with every day problems of development, such as the issue of water facility, opening a new school, forest management or addressing gender issues, besides generating credit among themselves and being credit worthy in the eyes of banking institutions.

Now, in India Self Help Groups have become an effective way of mobilising people to bring about transformation in rural structures and uplift the lot of disadvantaged groups. We are sure in your subsequent reading in rural development literature you will come across many efforts and organizations, which have been responsible for development of rural India.

1.6 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit we tried to explain the various factors and process involved in change as our starting point. We also tried to understand the avenues of change in the traditional Indian set up. Towards this end, we examined the concepts of sanskritisation and Westernisation as means of mobility in the Indian caste system. Then we looked at Mobilisation in the context of rural India and how our policies towards rural development have been top down and how they could bring about the desired amount of change. We tried to look at the latest efforts to mobilise groups. We attempted this by examining Self Help Groups as one process of collective Mobilisation.

1.7 KEY WORDS

Mobilisation	: An act of organising collectivities of people towards achieving set goals.
Social mobility	: A term used to explain change in one's social position or hierarchy of an individual or group.
Social Structure	: Refers to a patterned networks or relationships among people and institutions, which are enduring and available over time.

1.8 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

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1.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) Whenever we talk about social change we are talking of changes which have far reaching consequences. In that sense social change is much more than a mere change which is fleeting. Change can be described as “transformation in organisation of society and in patterns of thought and behaviour over time” (Maeionis 1987: 614).

Industrial revolution is a good example of social change. Industrial revolution brought in far reaching changes in the very structure of society, not only in England where it appeared first, but also in the entire world.

- 2) The following are some of main sources of social change:

Cultural process: Societies are constantly discovering and inventing things and ideas, some of which are diffused across cultures. These ideas take root and the culture or society gets transformed.

- 3) Electricity was a part of nature best exhibited during a thunder storm with lightning flashing across the sky, but it took an ingenious mind to tap it, find ways of providing it, storing it and distributing it for practically all modern day needs.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) *Ascriptive* means to possess a quality or a feature right from one's birth. Ascription has nothing to do with one's own effort, it is something one inherits or one is born into, like for instance the caste.
- 2) The term *sanskritisation* was coined by M.N. Srinivas to explain social mobility in the caste system. According to M.N. Srinivas, lower caste emulated the ways – rituals, dress, habits, food, etc.— of upper castes, which led to their eventual claim to the castes they imitated.
- 3) *Westernisation* means, the ways and aspects of Western Culture (British) which have had their impact in India. To a great extent, Westernisation disturbed the traditional caste structure by opening the social possibilities for lower castes. For instance, lower classes could abandon their tradition, lowly caste occupation and pick up other occupations in cities, etc. They could also access education and become socially mobile.

However, Westernisation has not been able to eliminate caste hierarchies completely.

UNIT 2 EMPOWERMENT

Structure

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- 2.2 Essential Ingredients of Empowerment
 - 2.2.1 Social Empowerment
 - 2.2.2 Economic Empowerment
 - 2.2.3 Political Empowerment
 - 2.2.4 Cultural Empowerment
- 2.3 Empowerment: Concept and Definition
- 2.4 Economic Empowerment of the Rural Poor
- 2.5 Political Empowerment
 - 2.5.1 Salient Features of Participatory Development
 - 2.5.2 Empowerment through Self-Governance
- 2.6 Social Empowerment
- 2.7 Cultural Empowerment
- 2.8 Self Help Groups (SHGs) as a Strategy for Empowerment of Weaker Sections
- 2.9 Voluntary Organisations as Change Agents
- 2.10 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.11 Key Words
- 2.12 References and Suggested Readings
- 2.13 Check Your Progress – Possible Answers

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- describe anti-poverty/developmental programmes that focus on empowering the SCs/STs and the weaker sections of the community.
- explain the role of the panchayat as a change agent – political empowerment.
- describe the role of the Self Help Group as a means for empowerment.
- outline the concepts of empowerment without being dogmatic in areas of social empowerment, political empowerment and economic empowerment.
- explain the processes of socio-political and economic empowerment.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of empowerment refers to process of bringing about a transformation in all walks of the life of every individual citizen of the country. The aim is to provide to them a sense of participation and to give them the secure feeling that their voice will be heard irrespective of their economic and social status. But to achieve such lofty ideals how would you go about in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-class society? Can we identify areas that should be addressed? Can we really overcome the inequalities caused by 'nature' and the man-made inequalities that have existed for centuries? If so, how to go about achieving such objectives without upsetting the social balance and/or creating social upheavals?

These are some of the questions that we will examine and will try to find answers for. You must recognize that there are no easy solutions. After all, the Indian society has, till recently, been an agrarian society governed by the “Jajmani” system based on caste, heredity and occupation. So far, social transformation, in our society governed by rights and duties, has been slow.

In the previous unit on Dynamics of Change in Rural India, you were exposed to the concept of change and the various sources and characteristics of change. In this unit we will discuss the concept, definition, essential ingredients and the various forms of empowerment. We will, therefore, be following the methods to identify the path for reaching the goal of empowerment. In doing so we will be traversing the route that guarantees equality at personal, familial, social, political and institutional levels.

2.2 ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS OF EMPOWERMENT

You must be aware of the term “equality”. If so, you must check it out with what we would list as areas wherein “equality” needs to be achieved. In working for equality, the aim is not to achieve parity in size and shape of human beings or leave them with equal portions of wealth. Instead we will address those areas where equal treatment can be given to all, i.e. before law, equal and inalienable rights, equal freedom or moral equality, full political equality (as equal universal suffrage), social equality (as equal status and consideration regardless of class or wealth) and equal opportunity (as equal access and equal start). These are enshrined in different Articles in the Indian Constitution which guarantees them.

But if you are a perceptive student of democracy, you would know that words enshrined in Constitution do not always translate into reality. To achieve that goal of “equality”, it is necessary that you understand the strong relationship between equality and democracy. Now, list the ingredients that you would consider essential to help a person to achieve his individual self. Having listed them, you may now compare the essential ingredients listed by you with what we consider the four essential areas that need to be addressed to achieve “equality”.

2.2.1 Social Empowerment

Social empowerment means removal of all the existing socially induced inequalities, disparities and other persisting problems besides providing easy access to basic minimum services.

Social change is a dynamic process and when a section of society, particularly the weaker sections like the SCs/STs and women, is to be conferred the right to property, literacy and equality in the political process, it results in radical transformation in social practices in a society where money has retained a “ceremonial character that is obligatory and effective”, as described by Mauss. In rural India, it would also mean breaking up of “Jajmani” system. Empowering women would challenge the ‘patriarchal’ structure of the society where conferment of property rights, particularly land title, and literacy were considered to be the domain of male members of the society.

2.2.2 Economic Empowerment

It implies the provision of training and employment-cum-income generation activities with both “forward” and “backward” linkages with the ultimate objective of making community economically independent and self reliant. It would also mean conferring, through policies, onto the economically deprived sections the strength that would alleviate their poverty, improve their living standards and help in generating assets.

2.2.3 Political Empowerment

Political empowerment means conferring the rights to decide the priorities of development best suited to the individuals, groups of people or to the society and to the people themselves. Power in such an event would flow “bottom-to-top” with weaker sections having equal say in decision making.

2.2.4 Cultural Empowerment

This is a complex area that revolves around the beliefs, values, language, art and customs which characterises the society. The cultural mores take more time to change and the “cultural lag” tends to slow down the empowerment process.

We now will examine at greater depth what is understood by the term empowerment and whether we can define it.

2.3 EMPOWERMENT: CONCEPT AND DEFINITION

Are you in a position to define the term “empower”?

The Oxford Dictionary defines ‘empower’ as ‘authorize, license (person to do), give power to, make able (person to do).’ It is only when you understand the basic meaning of this term that you will be able to appreciate the thoughts on “empowerment”.

This would mean that the term refers to the power that can be bestowed by one person or the society or the Government on another person or a group of persons (may be Class Group, Caste Group, Religious Group or Gender based Group) as the case may be. The assumption is that a group (men, elite, rich or the propertied class) has ‘power’ over another group (the landless, labour class, ethnic minority or women) and the former are able to exercise control in some way on the actions or options of the latter. Such a control can be overt through coercion, physical control of economic assets and use of force or it could be hidden and subtle through psychological processes influencing the groups in such a way as to restrict the range of options perceived by them or to enable them to perceive the offered options as their own desire. Thus, this group of people is denied power and influence in the dominant society. This, over a period of time, internalizes the message that the dominant group gives out, as their own option for their survival. When control becomes internalised, over a period of time, overt exercise of power does not remain a necessity any longer.

This mechanism has been related to the Bentham’s Panopticon Prison Model: “there is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself. A superb formula: power exercised continuously and what turns out to be minimal cost.” (Gordon, 1980). Does this example ring a bell to you? Does it sound familiar? This is the common form of control exercised in the feudal setup in many parts of the country even now.

Most writers in the area of power would like to see the making over of power (empowerment) as not just act of relinquishing the power by a section of people. This is because if a section could bestow power on others, it would mean that it could just easily withdraw the same. In this situation, the transfer of “The Power Over” becomes illusory and would just remain an instrumentalist notion or rhetorical devise and not an active tool to achieve change with justice. The deprived groups will only become a means to an end to achieved growth and development. For example, when we talk

of women's empowerment the emphasis is not just on empowering women per se, but mainstreaming them to participate in the economic activities and contribute to development. Here, the empowerment aims are narrow and the transfer would appear illusory. Therefore, a section of thinkers in the area of empowerment would like to focus beyond *power over* on the 'process' of empowerment by including "power to" "power with" and "power from within". In what Hardsock calls the *energy definition* of power, in contrast with *obedience definition* of power, it is generative in nature through leadership, which wishes to see a group achieve what it is capable of with no conflict of interest and the group setting its own agenda. This is "the power some people have of stimulating activity in others and raising their morale" (Hardsock, 1985). An aspect of this power "is to generate a leadership from within the group to achieve what it is capable of, setting its own agenda".

A seminal work in the area of empowerment was by Foucault (1982) for whom the power was not a finite entry that can be located; power was relational not a substance and was constituted in a network of social relationship among people who would be free to act to at least a minimal extent. He sees power as a "mode of action upon action". There was an element of resistance as a form of power and hence where there was power there was resistance. This was particularly true for him in micro-policies and the local exercise of power that rooted in the systems of social network. This takes us to the analysts who identify power with "in addition to 'power over' and 'power to' – which involves a sense of the whole being, greater than the sum of the individuals; for example, groups taking problems together (William et al, 1995). Groups of people working together have greater chance of provoking a change than an individual working alone. Finally, there is also power from within, the spiritual strength that emanates in human beings, based on self-acceptance and self-respect that leads to accepting others as equals and lead to empowerment once such an awakening occurs "Empowerment, then, is not restricted to the achievement of the 'power over' from of power but can also involve the development of power to, with and from within" (Rowlands, 1998).

This interplay of power would lead to physical, social and economic empowerment. Thus, the term empowerment is not just a rhetorical device but also an active tool to achieve change with justice. Empowerment is thus not only about opening up access to decision making but must also include processes that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to occupy the decision making space (Rowland, 1995). Though some envisage empowerment of an individual as conferring the individual with rights in decision making and achieving self-reliance, it also connotes collective empowerment of marginalised groups.

The various interpretations of the term *power* embedded in the concept of empowerment in different approaches to empowerment are given in the Table 2.1 (Oxal and Boden, 1997).

Table 2.1: Definitions of Power and Empowerment in Practice

Interpretation of Power	Implications in Practice
Power over	Conflict and direct confrontation between powerful and powerless interest groups through movements and legislation.
Power to	Capacity building, supporting individual decision making, leadership, etc.
Power with	Social Mobilisation, building alliances and coalitions.
Power within	Increasing self-esteem, awareness or consciousness raising, confidence building, bringing out power already embedded with marginalised groups.

To sum up, empowerment is essentially a bottom-up process. With coherent policies and programmes, devised carefully without confronting the power-over target groups, the objective is to enable people to empower themselves, assess their own situation and create and shape a transformation in society.

Now that you have gained reasonable understanding of the concept of empowerment, let us examine in depth the socio-political and economic empowerment of the rural poor.

Check Your Progress I

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

ii) Check your answer with the possible answer provided at the end of the unit.

- 1) In your view, what may be the four essential ingredients of empowerment?
- 2) Can you give an example of how control over masses is achieved without the use of force?
- 3) Indicate which of the following statements is true or false:

	True	False
a) Empowerment means taking away the power enjoyed by one group to give it to another.	☐	☐
b) Weaker sections have no desire to power, hence have remained weak.	☐	☐
c) The 'Jajmani' system meant that only a few moneyed people and landlords had control over decision making in society.	☐	☐
d) Economic empowerment alone cannot provide the impetus for the development of weaker sections.		

- 4) Can you recapitulate as to what you have understood by "power over", "power to" and "power within".
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)

2.4 ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF THE RURAL POOR

What have you heard about Land Reforms since Independence? You may like to jot down what you already know about these reforms. Land reforms have been on the National Agenda of Rural Reconstruction since independence, as giving greater access to the landless rural poor was considered an important component of efforts aimed at poverty alleviation and economic empowerment. It was so, because in a predominantly agrarian economy, the entire village economy revolved around land and its ownership. Much of the past angst of rural communities could be attributed to unjust distribution of land and the tautological approach to the process of rural development, which resulted in poor performance of rural programmes. Agrarian reform thus becomes the core issue for bringing about rural development.

Are you aware that some of the changes made and the proposals under consideration within the government include:

- Conferment of ownership rights to tenant cultivators. Till the year 2001, 124.22 lakh tenants have been given protection. About 53.7 acres of land declared surplus under the Land Acquisition Act, has been distributed to 55.84 beneficiaries including Scheduled Castes (36%) and Scheduled Tribes (15%). Similarly, Bhoodan lands and wastelands have also been distributed to the landless.
- The National Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC) set up in 1989 finances state agencies working for the development of SCs/STs. It has started financing Land Purchase Scheme to secure land for SC/ST tillers through NGOs and gives land rights solely to women or jointly with their husbands. This experiment in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, done with the participation of local Governments' financial agency, has had far reaching social impact as it targets weaker sections of the society.
- Rural housing under "Housing for All" programme, now adopted as National Housing and Habitat Policy 1998, aims to provide shelter to an estimated 3.1 million households without shelter (Census of India, 1991) by the end of the 12th Plan period. Schemes under this include Indira Awaas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana, Samagra Awaas Yojana, etc.
- It has to be recognised that the available land for distribution continues to shrink with rapid urbanisation and industrialisation. A recent Government study shows that most families own less than one hector of land making further sub-division and fragmentation non viable. Hence, to provide economic sustenance to the landless poor, various employment schemes are in place, like Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (earlier known as JRY), Employment Insurance Scheme (EIS) for drought prone areas and Food for Work Programme (FWP). The Sampurna Gram Rojgar Yojana (SGRY) introduced in 2001 merges JGSY, EIS and FWP under one umbrella.
- Programmes for self-employment have been, from time to time, implemented through government initiatives. At present Swarn Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) is a major programme for self-employment, which has brought under its umbrella all the earlier schemes such as TRYSEM, DWACRA, SITRA and GKY. The programme aims to establish a large number of micro-enterprises in rural areas. Also, it aims at providing subsidy, channeling credit through banks, playing an effective role in development plans for the rural poor and preparing projects and helping in marketing the produce. It targets not only SHGs, but also individual 'Swarozgaris' including SC/ST women. Till 2002 over 4,80,000 Swarozgaris have been covered. Besides, 14,000 SHGs have been assisted and beneficiaries include 2,14,302 SC/ST and 2,18,302 women Swarozgaris.

Box 1 Public Cooperation and Social Engineering

The Public Cooperation Scheme of Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART) focuses on income and employment generation for the weaker section, specially for the disadvantaged strata like SCs/STs, OBCs and women, through Public Cooperation (PC) and covers a wide variety of projects in areas such as agriculture, animal husbandry, minor irrigation, post harvest processes, fisheries, horticulture, etc. The PC schemes are meant to promote social engineering and mobilise skills of the voluntary sector and unleash the collective energies of rural community. Its activities are linked to one another and their completion should result in holistic development

of a village community. For example, the Health and Sanitation Project for a given area (Village/Cluster of Villages) could involve provision for safe drinking water, management of environment, sanitation in the area, health care management in all its aspects (preventive, curative and promotive) and work for asset creation to ensure sustainability. The weaker sections of the community are involved in the entire planning and implementation of the Project which not only empowered them but also benefited the society at large.

- The SGSY aims to replace various attempts at cooperative movements for self-employment, which were experimented successfully in some parts of the country from 1930s to 1960s, but had gradually lost their sheen. Nevertheless, cooperatives continue to play an important role in financing the agriculture sector through State Cooperative Banks, Central Cooperative Banks and Land Development Banks. The contribution of these cooperatives is highly significant in rural development. Particularly so with the advent of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), which besides providing financial assistance to different sectors of the rural economy, also undertakes promotional activities to improve marketing of products. Cooperative institutions have to a great extent relieved the farmers from the clutches of moneylenders, and the weavers from the clutches of master weavers.
- In order to deliver the finances to the deprived groups the Government has, besides NSFDC mentioned earlier, set up four other agencies namely, National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation, National Safai Karamchari Finance and Development Corporation, National Minorities Finance and Development Corporation and National Backward Classes Finance Corporation to assist the beneficiaries in undertaking self-employment ventures. These corporations also fund micro-finances for Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for micro-enterprises.

Are you aware that women constitute about 48.2% of the population and that 80% of women live in rural India? Yes, it is true. It is also true that their literacy is low, they are mostly employed in the unorganised sector or unpaid employments. Any assessment of the need to empower weaker sections cannot ignore the weakest and yet the largest component of the group—women. The Female Economic Activity Rate (FEAR) as accounted in the System of National Accounts (SNA) is 45%. According to the Human Development Report (1995), female/male ratio of work participation in India is 50%. Yet their participation in economic decision-making in the society has been abysmally low. The reservation of 33% seats in Panchayat at the level of members and Pradhans gives them necessary interface in deciding development issues including economic issues of rural communities.

The National Policy for Empowerment of Women, 2001, includes many steps to confer economic empowerment on them. The two most important measures being a) gender budgeting which envisages a Women Component Plan of not less than 30% of funds/benefits to be earmarked specifically for women in any programme of development that involves women, and b) the expansion of the scope of the concept of holistic development through SHGs at the national level through Swayamsidha (a women's empowerment programme) covering all states. The two measures are now part of the plan process and find place in the Tenth Plan.

The Nodal Departments dealing with women and children have launched several programmes to empower women through employment and income generation—welfare and support services, awareness generation, gender sensitisation and other development enabling measures. Swayamsidha women empowerment programme launched in 2001 aims to generate awareness among and help women achieve economic strength through micro-level income generation activities. The main focus of the programme

is to converge various sectoral services such as literacy, health, non-formal education, rural development, water supply, entrepreneurship, etc. Another empowerment intervention is Swashakti Project which aims holistically empower women through a blend of empowerment and development activities in order to have a broader impact on the lives of poor women. This project has already brought in a change in the lives of the poor and weaker sections of women by enhancing their awareness levels, literacy, disseminating information on health, nutrition, legal rights, on-farm and off-farm enterprise activities besides facilitating women's access to credit.

The programme of hostels for working women aims to promote mobility among women in the employment market by providing safe and cheap accommodation to working women belonging to the lower income strata.

Box 2 Maa Bamleshwari Samooh (MBS) — A Success Story

A group of illiterate and impoverished women in the remote backward district of Rajnandgoan in Chhattisgarh State brought themselves together to start a micro-enterprise group called Maa Bamleshwari Samooh (MBS). Encouraged by the district administration, they undertook stone quarry contract where they themselves had laboured earlier for pittance as wages. Winning the contract in the face of a stiff competition from the same exploitative contractors was perhaps a defining moment of empowerment, a moment that came through micro-credit and bank linkage. The group has prospered to small savings of Rs. 1.75 crores and won contracts to make milestones and floor tiles. The group has taken land on lease to cultivate pulses and have also got into fisheries, goat breeding and setting up a cycle shop. The last of the activities owes its birth to the need for mobility – because now the members of the group cycle their way to the banks and Samooh meetings!

To sum-up the economic empowerment of the rural poor and those living below poverty line is an uphill task, but achievable.

2.5 POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT

One lesson that the long years of freedom struggle taught was that to achieve a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual society like India, it is necessary that people from all sections have a sense of participation in decision making. It is for this reason that even while adopting the Westminster Model of Parliament (parliamentary system of democracy as it functions in Britain), India opted to be a Republic with a Constitution that conferred fundamental rights, that were inalienable, on her citizens. She gave herself a strong judiciary as a vanguard of her citizen's rights, universal franchise irrespective of caste, creed, race, gender or level of literacy and the principle of one-man one vote.

In the first two decades of independent India, the Government adopted a 'top down' approach to development by putting in place a centrally planned economy where all developmental decisions up to grassroots were taken in the Planning Commission. In the initial years of planning, it worked out well and many infrastructural industries like steel plants, dams and rural development programme were put in place. But with development the aspiration of local communities, diverse that they are, also went up. There was a general awakening both at the decision making level and at the grassroots that it was essential to involve people in decision making if plans were to succeed.

Economic empowerment by itself cannot ensure sustained development and growth of the weaker sections and the deprived people. Development today is recognised as a people centered participatory process geared to bring about qualitative change

in all aspects of human life. Development in the modern context has to be a participatory process of social change which brings about both social and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom and other valued qualities) to majority of its people by conferring on them greater control of their environment.

2.5.1 Salient Features of Participatory Development

Can you list some of the salient features that you consider important for participatory development? Check your answers with the following points:

The process of participatory development would include:

- Active participation of people at grassroots in designing development projects to suit their needs.
- Use labour efficient and cost effective technology appropriate to the needs of the rural community (bio-gas, energy, hand-pumps, solar-cooker, Sulab Souchalay).
- Create viable institutional structures at grassroots to plan and implement development programmes.
- Monitor and evaluate programme objectives and implementation independently or with the help of bureaucracy or NGOs.
- Harness (by the members of the community themselves) the collective energy of rural community to achieve social engineering and create social assets with concomitant capacity building in the community.

2.5.2 Empowerment Through Self-Governance

Historically, in India there always existed in some form a Panchayat or a local self-government in villages. Charles Metcalf admiringly called them 'Little Republics'. As early as 1909, in the 24th session of the Congress Party at Lahore, a resolution was adopted to take steps to put in place elected local bodies for villages.

The Montague Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 provided for a scheme of diarchy with local representatives to look after village affairs and development. But as most Panchayat representatives wrested power on the basis of their financial or land holding strength, the exercise was not truly democratic.

Mahatma Gandhi's vision of 'Gram Swaraj' with full powers underwent vicissitudes before it gained currency and took the shape of Panchayat Raj. Various recommendations of Ashok Mehta Committee (1977), G.V.K. Rao Committee (1985) and L.M. Singhvi Committee (1996) along with Sarkaria Commission Report of 1978 were all considered by the Consultative Committee under the chairmanship of Shri P.K. Thungam (1988) and by V.N. Gadgil Committee (1989).

The outcome of this exercise, undertaken between 1985 to 1995, were the decisions to (a) accord Constitutional recognition to a Panchayat, (b) have a three tier system of Zilla Parishad, Gram Sabha and Panchayat, (c) give Panchayat a fixed term of five years, and (d) provide reservation for Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes and not less than 33% reservation for women.

The shape of Panchayat Raj was given through the Constitution (Seventy-Third Amendment) Act, 1992. This Act was brought in to force by a notification with effect from April 24, 1993.

Democracy at the grassroots has thus become a part of the right conferred by the Constitution of India to her citizens.

The Constitutional Amendment of 1992, in Article 243-I, provides for setting up a State Finance Commission each in every State. These commissions are to review the issue of devolution of funds on Panchayats and make recommendations to the Governors.

Panchayats would now plan and execute economic development programmes and social justice and implement schemes listed in the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution. Planning, monitoring and evaluation of programmes would now rest with the Panchayats.

There are now 2.5 lakh (approx.) Panchayats, 5906 intermediate Panchayats and 500 district Panchayats spread through out the country and are manned by 29.2 lakh elected representatives at all levels.

Article 243-G of the Constitution enables states to endow such power and authority as may be needed for Panchayats to prepare plans for economic development and social justice. Article 243-H enables states to give grants-in-aid and such funds as are necessary and also allow Panchayats to levy appropriate taxes, duties, tolls and fees.

In 1996, the Provisions of Panchayats (extension to the scheduled areas) Act came into force to cover tribal areas in states like Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Rajasthan. The Act enables tribals' societies to assume control over their own destiny and to preserve and conserve their traditional rights over natural resources.

The grant of adult franchise to every citizen of the country above the age of 18 years without discrimination of caste, creed, economic status or gender discrimination also contributes to the political empowerment.

Box 3 Resistances to Empowerment — A case of a Panchayat

Empowerment does not necessarily follow the legislation. Weaker sections do not find easy acceptance in communities that are still mired in caste and gender inequality. In Haleru Gram Panchayat near Malgudi, the Panchayat with eight members (four women, 2 SCs and 1 ST) had the ST women as Gram Pradhan (reserved post). Other members could not accept her as she was a woman, only 4th class pass and ST. Despite support from Zila Parishad and a favourable decision from Court, she had to carry on with the support of 2 SC members. Even Gram Panchayat Secretary quit at frequent intervals. The Panchayati Raj implementation is replete with such stories of active and passive resistance to empowering weaker sections. This example shows that it would be sometime before communities learn to take reservation for weaker sections in its stride. Legislation is only the first step.

Check Your Progress II

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

ii) Check your answer with the possible answer provided at the end of the unit.

1) Recall any two of the important steps that have been taken to empower the rural poor through agrarian reforms.

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2) List the salient features of participatory development.

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3) Panchayati Raj confers the following power on weaker sections. (True or False, tick mark).

	True	False
i) Now it will be the weaker sections and the women who will decide all development issues.	☐	☐
ii) It gives 50% representation to women.	☐	☐
iii) Any resident of the village community qualifies to contest for membership.	☐	☐
iv) The SC/ST reservation provided is the same as in legislatures and parliament.	☐	☐
v) States have been empowered to set up Finance Commissions under the Constitution to decide on devolution of funds.	☐	☐
vi) Panchayats have power to levy and collect taxes, fees, toll, etc.	☐	☐
vii) Panchayats are totally autonomous with no checks on them.	☐	☐

2.6 SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT

Unlike political and economic empowerment, which can be introduced using a 'top down' approach, the social empowerment of the weaker sections and women cannot be thrust down but will have to evolve and emerge from within. Constitution of India guarantees the following:

- Article 14 : Equality before Law
- Article 15(4) : Enjoins States to make special provisions for advancement of socially and educationally backward classes or for SCs.
- Article 16(4) : Appointment of backward classes.
- Article 46 : Enjoins the State to protect them from all forms of exploitation.
- Article 330 : Reservation of seats in democratic institutions.
- Article 335 : Reservation of seats in services.

There have been further amendments to the Constitution to strengthen the above provisions, including universalisation of primary education to make it a fundamental right applicable to all children.

The provisions of Constitution are supported by sizable legislation introduced over five decades. Several social legislation(s) have been enacted to protect and support the interests of weaker sections, women and children.

Box 4 Important Social Legislation(s)

- Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956.
- Dowry Prevention Act (1961).
- Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act (1981).
- The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act (1987).
- Eradication of female feticide and female infanticide through Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act (1994).
- Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children Act (2000)).
- The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act (1986).
- Prevention of Atrocities Act (1989).

There are also high powered commissions, such as National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, National Commission for Minorities and National Commission for Women, which go into issues of injustices and review laws to make them more effective.

Despite all these measures, the Tenth Plan document (2002-03) recognizes the fact that in reality the Government and Law have not succeeded in eradicating social prejudices completely. As wet latrines could not be provided everywhere and alternative employment has not been available easily, manual scavenging continues even today resulting in continued practice of social segregation and *untouchability*. Scheduled Castes dwelling in rural areas continue to remain outside the main settlement, with attendant infrastructure problems. Migration of SC workforce to urban areas from rural areas and their settling down in SCs slums have created room for social tensions and the associated problems. Though OBCs do not suffer the social disability of SCs, their social and economic backwardness is of nearly the same nature. These not only incapacitate them to enhance their production and productive capabilities in qualitative and quantitative terms, but also restrict their economic betterment. (Tenth plan document).

2.7 CULTURAL EMPOWERMENT

To a large extent, cultural practices owe their origin to social setup and time. With changes in the economic and social framework, the cultural milieu is also likely to undergo changes. But to avoid a cultural shock that destabilizes the people who are used to certain practices over centuries, the change has to be brought about gradually. This slows down the dynamic process of the reforms. This is called the ‘cultural lag’ that acts as a drag. But this has to be accepted if we are to avoid social tension and resistance from the people sought to be helped. The tribals are a good example of the people who need to be protected from exploitation and be allowed to assimilate themselves in the mainstream of economic and political activities even while retaining their cultural practices, their art and craft. This is because it is recognised that many of the tribal societies practice little gender or caste related discrimination; their women have equal say in household and decision-making and they have better control over

ecology, particularly in forest areas, and that nurturing the positive gains of tribal culture can benefit the society as a whole.

2.8 SELF HELP GROUPS (SHGS) AS A STRATEGY FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF WEAKER SECTIONS

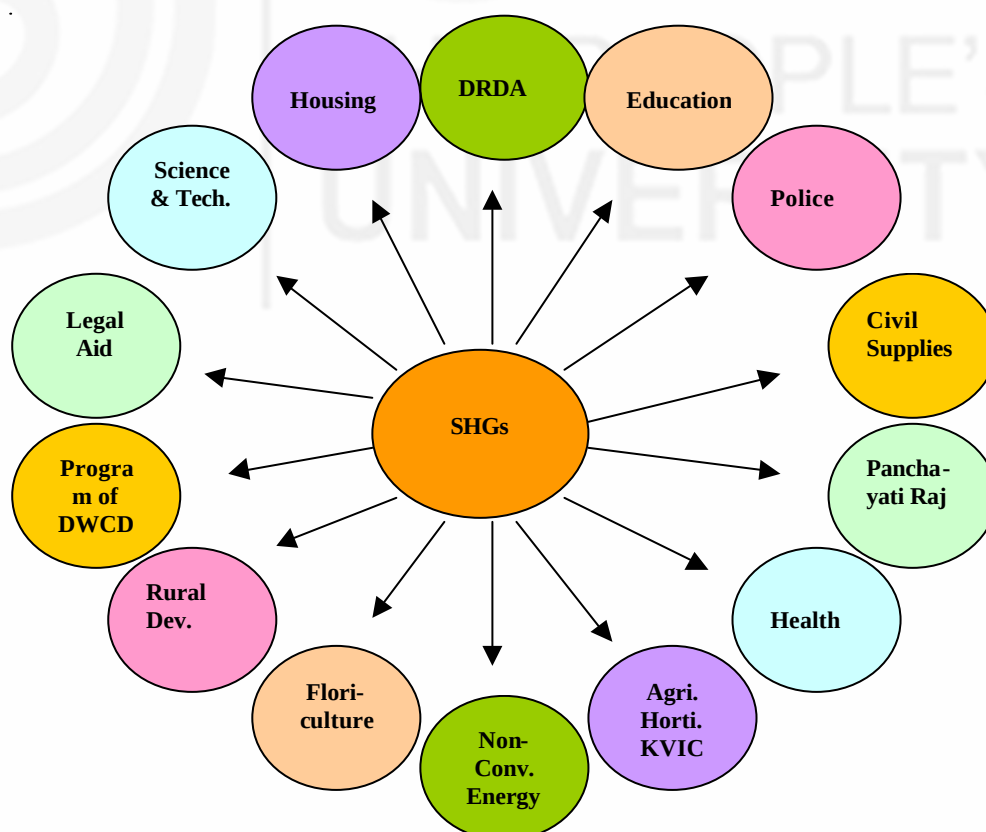
The empowerment through SHGs is a new area of study that requires serious attention of the students of empowerment. The reasons are three fold:

- They involve people of all weaker sections - economic, social and political.
- They break social and gender barriers by allowing the formation of mixed groups based on economic consideration.
- Since the members of the group chart their own course with benign help from Government and NGOs, they gain self-confidence to determine their own future.

The concept of Self Help Groups (SHGs), which evolved in Latin America and South Asia in the 1970s and the 1980s, took concrete shape in India in early 1990s through TRYSEM, DWACRA, STEP, etc. There were parallel NGO movements like SEWA in Gujarat, MYRADA in Karnataka, KALANJAM in Tamil Nadu, etc.

SHGs, as effective tools to combat poverty and effect social Mobilisation, have now been accorded recognition by the planners who have formulated Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY) and Swayamsidha (for women). While the former has been conceived as a holistic programme for self-employment, the latter has a wider canvass of bringing about all round development of women. Both the programmes seek active involvement of NGOs in the formation of SHGs, capacity building, training and assistance to deal with on-line departments, banks and project monitoring.

Convergence with Schemes of Line Departments



DRDA – District Rural Development Agencies

Since SGSY is mainly to promote self-employment, it assists individual “Swarozgaris” and Swarozgari groups including SCs/STs and women. Swayamsidha and Mahila Samakhya, empowerment programmes for women on the other hand assist only women’s groups and provide them with continuous capacity building opportunities through legal literacy, education, skill development training, participation in decision making, counseling, help in income generation activities and convergence.

SHGs have become a focal point of convergence for various sectoral programmes of Government Departments.

Box 5 Social Engineering by SHGs

In a small hamlet in Omalur in the Salem district of Tamil Nadu, a group of SHG members, calling themselves Kurinji Magalir Iyakkam, have a very focused objective – prevent female foeticide and female infanticide. Their vigil includes monitoring health and nutritional status of pregnant women in the area, speak to and counsel the families on the rights of child and arrange for adoption if the family is adamant about not having the girl child. Any resistance beyond the soft approach invites threat of police action. This social activism of SHGs in a sensitive area like curbing female foeticide is making a difference to the girls whose lives have been saved.

(**Source:** The Hindu December 7, 2003)

Box 6 Fruits of Collective Effort

In Madhya Pradesh, members of SHGs promoted by Swashakti have replicated the mythology of Bhagirath harnessing the river – they have brought water to every house in Ranipur Village in Betul district and to 60 farms in Dodramohan Village in Shahpur Block. Women themselves did the digging and networking of pipes and fitted the taps. Within weeks, every lane and by-lanes had pipes running. The Self Help Groups got into the act when they found that resource crunch was stalling the tap water project

2.9 VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS AS CHANGE AGENTS

Voluntary organisations have been playing a pivotal role for the welfare and development of the socially disadvantaged groups. They bring forth the desired social change by virtue of their direct contact and linkages with the target groups living in the remotest areas. They have established their credentials by moulding public perception/opinion about themselves. Their committed work in reducing the social evils like *untouchability*, and curbing crimes/atrocities against and social/economic exploitation of women and weaker sections are well known. NGOs have gone in a big way to promote SHGs and empower the weaker sections. Their contributions in implementing government programmes and policies for socially disadvantaged groups for improving their living standards needs to be understood in the correct perspective.

Check Your Progress III

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

ii) Check your answer with the possible answer provided at the end of the unit.

1) Can you recall at least four important Articles of the Constitution that empower weaker sections and SCs/STs?

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2) What is the role of social legislation in empowering weaker sections, particularly women?

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3) Distinguish between what you understand to be the roles of the two schemes, SGSY and Swayamsidha.

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4) Write a brief note on the importance of the role of NGOs in empowerment.

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2.10 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have gained insights into *empowerment*, the process of which is still evolving. The question whether the empowerment of a section of people necessarily involves deprivation of the existing power of another section/class of people was examined. It was seen that the thinkers in the area of empowerment recognise that such a narrow approach was fraught with the danger of generating social discontent and resistance to change. Hence, a broader and more acceptable approach of allowing 'power to' percolate or 'power with' people to emanate on its own and the 'power from within' to regenerate the weaker and deprived section of people is being advocated.

In this unit, *Empowerment* in India has been presented in this background, viz. as a concept evolving through political, economic and social engineering even while preserving cultural entities. In order to allow the 'power from within' to evolve, recognizing the need to respect self-esteem of people, the emerging scenario of empowerment through self help has been captured. In understanding the changing phases of empowerment, we have seen the importance of Constitutional guarantees,

the role of domestic institutions such as Panchayat Raj and the social legislations that protect and promote welfare of the weaker sections of the society. Ultimately, all these efforts can succeed only if people's aspirations to satisfy their basic needs of food, housing and education are met. Hence, the importance of economic empowerment in achieving the overall objective of giving power to weaker sections and need to extend help to them to help themselves and at the same time retain their self-esteem by forming self help groups (SHGs) and giving the groups access to economic resources.

2.11 KEY WORDS

Angst	: Anxiety, feeling of guilt or remorse.
Tautological	: Saying the same thing twice over in different words, statement necessarily true but repetitive.
Interior(ising)	: From interior, inner situation, within, existing in mind or soul.
Coercion	: Controlling others' voluntary action by force.
Rhetorical	: Expressed with a view to be persuasive or impressive, ,,,,,,,,,,or extravagant in language.
Embedded	: Fixed firmly in a surrounding mass.
Conferment	: Grant or bestow.
Abysmal	: Bottomless, extremely bad (e.g. abysmal ignorance).
Concomitant	: Going together, arranging things.
Vicissitude	: Change of circumstances especially of fortune, regular change, alternation.

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2.13 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) For achieving equality, it would be essential to ensure that an individual is given the economic strength, social status, right to decide what is good for him/her and the community and is allowed to retain his/her cultural entity, if he/she chooses to, without his/her right of choice affecting his/her empowerment. Thus, the four ingredients necessary are the social, the political, the economic and the cultural empowerment.
- 2) The status of a prisoner in a prison is an example of control over an individual through no overt exercise of power. The prisoner knows that he is being watched and if he does not conform to discipline that is dictated by the system, the punishment would be swift. This knowledge keeps the prisoner in check with little cost to the system.
- 3)
 - a) False.
 - b) False.
 - c) True.
 - d) True.
- 4)
 - a) “Power over” means a group of powerful people exercising power over the powerless interest groups using force, if necessary.
 - b) “Power to” means conferring power through capacity building, legislation and supporting individual decision.
 - c) “Power with” would require social Mobilisation and building alliances.
 - d) “Power within” would mean promoting self-esteem and self-confidence among weaker sections of people and allowing their leadership to emerge through moral boosting acts.

Check Your Progress II

- 1)
 - a) Land reforms to correct the unjust distribution of land by prescribing land holding ceilings and distributing the surplus land to cultivators and confer them with ownership rights.

- b) Financing the Land Purchase scheme to secure land for SCs/STs through NGOs and giving land rights solely to women or jointly with their husbands.
- 2) The participatory development involves social change, which would bring about social and material advancement, including equality, freedom and greater control over one's environment. It would thus include participation of people at grass roots in designing development projects, use cost effective technology appropriate to their needs, create institutions and monitor their development.
- 3) i) False.
 ii) False.
 iii) True.
 iv) True.
 v) True.
 vi) True.
 vii) False.

Check Your Progress III

- 1) Four important Articles of the Constitution:
 - Article 14 : Equality before Law
 - Article 15(4) : Special provisions for advancement of SCs/STs.
 - Article 330 : Reservation of seats in democratic institutions.
 - Article 335 : Reservation of seats for SCs/STs in services.
- 2) Important social legislations empowering weaker sections would besides various amendments to Indian Penal Code, include the following:
 - i) Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956.
 - ii) Dowry Prevention Act 1961.
 - iii) The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986.
 - iv) Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989.
- 3) The three important distinctions that separate SGSY and Swayamsidha are:
 - a) The SGSY scheme is open to all individuals and groups for starting self-employment projects, whereas Swayamsidha is exclusively meant for women's empowerment.
 - b) The SGSY aims at providing self-employment (swarozgari), whereas Swayamsidha aims at the holistic development of women including the provision of social and literacy components.
 - c) The SGSY promotes individual swarozgaris also, whereas Swayamsidha targets only women who have formed groups.
- 4) Voluntary agencies, also called the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) play a pivotal role in promoting development. They act as bridges that link the government departments, linked agencies such as banks and the socially disadvantaged group.

UNIT 3 INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION (IEC)

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Communications and Rural Development
- 3.3 Process of Communication
 - 3.3.1 Definitions
 - 3.3.2 Concept of Process
 - 3.3.3 Characteristics of the Communication Process
- 3.4 Types of Communication
- 3.5 Barriers to Communication
 - 3.5.1. Physical Barriers to Communication
 - 3.5.2. Social and Cultural Barriers to Communication
 - 3.5.3. Psychological Barriers to Communication
- 3.6 Functions of Communication
- 3.7 Objectives of Communication
- 3.8 Process of Behavior-change
- 3.9 Communications and Change
- 3.10 Preparing IEC Strategy
 - 3.10.1 Inventory of Communication Resources
- 3.11 Selection of Media
 - 3.11.1 Folk Media
 - 3.11.2 Visual Aids
 - 3.11.3 Demonstrations
 - 3.11.4 Radio
 - 3.11.5 Television
 - 3.11.6 Video and Film Shows
 - 3.11.7 Print and Publicity Material
 - 3.11.8 Outdoor Publicity, Hoardings and Wall-writings
- 3.12 Message Design
- 3.13 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.14 Key Words
- 3.15 References and Suggested Readings
- 3.16 Check Your Progress – Possible Answers

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- describe the process of information sharing, communication and development in the rural context;
- describe the various channels of and barriers to communication;
- explain the importance and the role of information, education and communication (IEC) in behavior-change and rural development; and
- explain the process of preparing appropriate IEC strategies and IEC materials.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

We all communicate all the time; there is not a single moment when we are not communicating. Communication plays a vital role in our day-to-day life. Communication has been central to all the progress that human beings have made. As a matter of fact no organised social life and progress would have been possible in the absence of communication.

An important purpose of communicating with people is to enable the members of the community to understand their problems and take appropriate action to solve them collectively. This process of informing, educating and communicating with the people empowers them to take decisions and actions leading to their progress and development. The thrust of this unit is on the proper understanding of and the proactive use of information, education and communication resources so as to facilitate the process of rural development and cost-effective implementation of various development programmes and schemes that are being carried out by the various government and non-governmental organisations. This unit is an attempt to describe clearly the role of IEC in rural development and also discuss how to use communication resources in support of rural development cost-effectively. After a brief discussion on the close relationship between communication and rural development, we will explain in detail the concept and the process of communication, types of communication, barriers to communication and functions of communication. This will be followed by a discussion on the process of behavior-change and the role of communication therein. After that, we discuss and explain the need for an appropriate IEC strategy for rural development and the process of preparing IEC media materials.

3.2 COMMUNICATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

There is a close association between communication and development. Communication creates awareness about new things and a desire for change leading to development. In India, the significance of communication in equipping people with new information and skills and mobilising them for their willing participation in various development programmes has been well recognised and emphasised in all the Five Year Plans, the blueprint of the country's development strategies. In the First Five Year Plan itself, the need for understanding and appreciating the various development programmes and schemes by the people, especially in the rural areas, was clearly underlined. In the subsequent Plans, the concern about reaching out to the people even in remote villages has been voiced with increasingly greater emphasis and force. Consequently, all available methods of communication have been developed and strengthened many fold over the years.

Right from the start after independence, the Government provided for special broadcasts on radio to facilitate rural development. Radio played an important role in creating awareness about many new methods and techniques of agricultural practices, thereby contributing to Green Revolution in many parts of the country. So much so, in many areas the new High Yielding Variety of seeds came to be known as *radio seeds* and fertilizers as the *radio khad*.

When the television was first introduced in India in 1959, the stated objective was to facilitate the process of education and development in rural areas. Again when colour television was introduced in 1970s, the justification was that our farmers would be able to see better the demonstrations of agricultural practices if shown in colour. The SITE experiment was also primarily for rural development.

In order to effectively use the power of mass media, the government provided for community radio and television in the initial stages. With the coming of transistor

sets, the costs came down substantially making them affordable. In recent years the costs of black & white TV sets have also come down and you can notice the rapid penetration of television in rural areas. In many areas the TV has become a common dowry item in marriages, thereby further giving a push to the reach of television in villages.

Noticing the limited reach of mass media in rural areas, the Government planned and provided for extensive network of extension services by various development departments and agencies to harness the power of interpersonal communication. The mass media and the extension services are intended to complement and supplement each other in promoting development in rural India. The extension services use a variety of audio-visual aids in their efforts to communicate various development messages to the rural people.

With the coming of satellite cable television, IGNOU has launched a couple of special channels (Krishi and Vigyan) to meet the information and development needs of the vast multitude of people through out the country including the remote tribal and rural villages.

Notwithstanding the phenomenal expansion of mass media facilities in the country as a whole, the actual reach of various mass media in rural areas still continue to be rather limited. This is mainly due to four mutually reinforcing factors. These are:

- Low literacy, about 64 per cent, comparatively lower still in rural and remote areas. Effective literacy is even less.
- Low purchasing power, about 27 per cent people live below poverty line. They cannot afford having a radio/ TV set or access to newspapers.
- Poor means of transportation that hamper timely delivery of newspapers or repairs and maintenance of radio/television sets in rural areas. Irregular supply of electricity makes television operations problematic.
- Lack of relevant information, if purposive and development communication are the aims of the mass media.

As such, it is often argued that the mass media are essentially the class media and serve more the commercial interests rather than as development agents.

Therefore, in order to optimize the power of communication as a facilitator of development processes, it is necessary to plan and strategise the use of communication resources. It is in this context that the concept of *Information, Education and Communication (IEC)* has been used in development literature. It is a strategy of careful planning for and using communication resources in support of specific development programmes and activities. Of late, the concept of (BCC) Behaviour Communication Change is also being used to emphasise the importance of changing the behaviour of the target audience for bringing about development and change in any society or group.

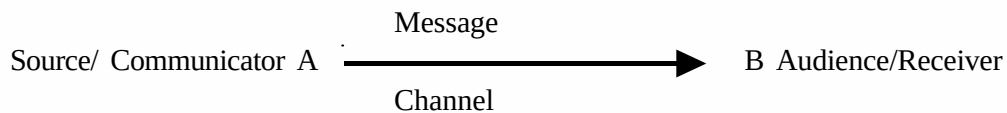
3.3 PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

Let us first understand the communication process. How does it work? What does it do/ achieve? Proper understanding of the communication process would help in a better appreciation of the role of Information, Education and Communication in rural development.

Communication is a dynamic process of the exchange of information and ideas. Communication comes from the Latin word “communis” which means common. Whenever two or more people come together, they communicate through words,

signs, symbols, gestures and body language. Communication and human interaction go together. Even silence is communication. When we communicate, we are trying to establish commonness among ourselves. When we communicate, we are trying to share information, ideas, feelings and attitudes with other people.

The various elements involved in the communication process become apparent when one asks questions like who says what, how or through what channel(s), to whom and with what effects. In the communication process the person(s) who is saying something is the *communicator* or *source*; what he is saying is the *message* and how or through which means is the *channel*; to whom he is saying constitute the *audience* and to what affect or impact means the *result*. One can simply show the communication process as follows:



3.3.1 Definitions

Here are some representative definitions:

Communication – the imparting, conveying or exchange of ideas, knowledge, etc. (whether by speech, writing or signs). *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Communication – the transfer of thoughts and messages, as contrasted with transportation, the transfer of goods and persons. The basic forms of communication are by signs (sight) and by sounds (hearing). *Columbia Encyclopedia*.

Communication is the *process* of exchanging information, ideas, attitude and values between two or more human beings through *shared* signs and symbols. *J. S. Yadav*

In the most general sense, we have communication whenever one system, a source, influences another the destination, by manipulation of alternative signals, which can be transmitted over the channel connecting them.

The word communication can be used in a very broad sense to include all the procedures by which one mind may influence another. This, of course, involves not only written and oral speech, but also music, the pictorial arts, the theatre, the ballot, and in fact all human behaviour.

In some connections, it may be desirable to use a still broader definition of communication, namely one that would include the procedures by means of which one mechanism (say automatic equipment to track an airplane and to compute its probable future positions) affects another mechanism (say a guided missile chasing this airplane). *Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, The Mathematical Theory of Communication*.

The mechanism through which human relations exist and develop – all the symbols of the mind together with the means of conveying them through space and preserving them in time. *Charles Cooley*.

Harold Lasswell's (1948) classic description of communication is: who says what in which channel to whom and with what effect. This brings out clearly the different elements involved in the communication process. Subsequent studies of communication were greatly influenced by this postulation of communication. The scientific study of the process of communication tends to concentrate upon one or another of these questions. The results of various studies emanating from this perspective have helped in reviewing our understanding and conceptualisation of the communication process.

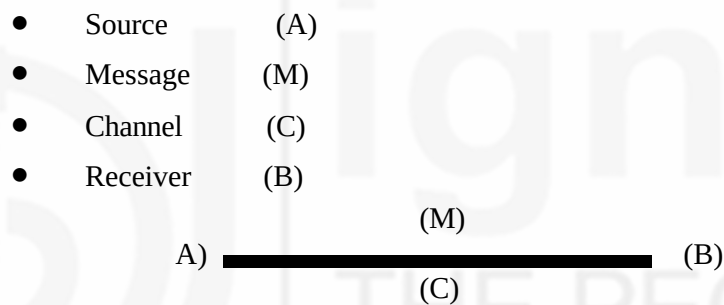
Each of these definitions has its own strength and its own usefulness. The first two are based on the idea of transfer of information; they distinguish between the transfer of ideas, knowledge, thoughts or messages and the transfer of more material things. The third and the fourth definitions rest on the idea of influence or effect, rather than a transfer of anything. Notice that they do not limit the nature of the message to anything, but ‘signals’. The fifth definition is noteworthy for its emphasis on human relationship.

For our purpose, it will be more appropriate to conceptualise communication as a process of sharing information, ideas and values through shared signs and symbols. It is the sharing of an orientation towards a set of informational signs.

3.3.2 Concept of Process

Let us briefly discuss the *concept of process* to understand the process of communication more clearly.

Process: is on going activity to achieve certain specific objectives/results. For carrying out any process we have to have a system. Actually process and system are two sides of the same reality. In one (system), we emphasise or focus attention on structural aspects ,while in the other case (process) the attention is on functional dimension of the same organised activity. Any system will have a set of elements, which are mutually interacting, influencing and producing results. The four basic elements of communication are:



The source may also be called the communicator, speaker or sender, who tries to communicate messages to some one who is referred to as the receiver or the audience. It is the source that decides what message to send, how to formulate it, what channel or medium to use and which audience to reach.

The message is the information package or the communiqué. It may relate to improved farm practices and skills, health, safe drinking water or environmental sanitation. It should be so formulated by the source that it is easy for the receiver to comprehend and is relevant to his/her needs.

Used in this sense, *information* must be defined quite broadly. Obviously, it is not limited to news or ‘facts’ or what is taught in the classroom or contained in reference books. It is any content that reduces uncertainty or the number of alternative possibilities in a situation. It may include emotions. It may include facts, opinions, guidance or persuasion. It does not have to be in words, or even explicitly stated; the latent meanings, “the silent language,” are important information.

The channel is the medium of communication. It could be your own voice and gestures as is the case in interpersonal communication. It could also be mass media like radio, television, newspapers, internet, etc. The message cannot get through to the intended audience without the use of a proper channel. For bringing about change and development, it has been found that simultaneous use of a combination of channels often works better.

The receiver or the audience may be a single person or a group of persons or a large number of people spread over a vast area, i.e. the masses. A proper understanding of the intended target audience is very important, as otherwise the message may fall flat on them. It must be remembered that it is the target audience, which actively decides as to how to respond to a message from the source; whether or not to accept the message or be influenced by it.

In the context of rural development programmes, the development agent like the extension worker is the source, the new information, skills and practices which he/she shares with the farmers is the message, the farmers constitute the targeted audience or the receiver and the medium of sharing the message (extension worker's own voice, printed material, posters, audio-visual aids, radio & TV, etc.) is the medium.

The important thing to remember is that as elements of the communication process, none of these has independent existence so to say. The efficiency of each element affects (positively or negatively) the efficiency of the other elements as functional units of the same process, i.e. communication.

3.3.3 Characteristics of the Communication Process

For further clarity in our understanding of the communication process, let us discuss the main characteristics of the communication process.

Communication is a two-way process:

Unlike other processes, the communication process is essentially a two-way process. While the communicator may be the main source, the receiver also acts as a source in the communication process. As a matter of fact the source and the receiver are interchangeable in actual communication. The receiver not only communicates back to the source as feedback, but also actively acts on the message exchanged as much as the message acts on the receiver.

(A)_____ (M)_____ (B)

Communication is a selective process and selection takes place at three levels:

- Selective exposure
- Selective interpretation
- Selective use

What we read, see or hear, we do that selectively. We select a newspaper to read, and in the newspaper we select certain news and leave out most others. Having exposed ourselves to the newspaper, no two of us interpret the messages/news in the same way. Also, not all of us put the received information to the same use necessarily. Selection in communication is influenced or affected by three factors, viz.

- Experience (past)
- Needs (future)
- Mood (present)

Take the example of a simple word “DOG”. You read it, but the image it invokes in your mind may vary from person to person depending on your/their experience with dogs. You see many advertisements in a newspaper but your response ‘to’ and ‘use’ of the advertisement will depend upon your need for the product or service advertised. Similarly, mood influences the communication process, a good communicator will try his/her best to create a proper environment/mood for effective communication. It requires professional approach in terms of message formulation, layout, design and packaging to make communication effective so as to ensure not only exposure, but also its correct interpretation and use as well. A number of points should be kept in mind for this, the most important ones being:

- Relevance of the message
- Credibility of the source
- Proper presentation in terms of language, design, packing, etc.
- Feedback and corrective measures and reinforcement.

Communication is a complex process

The communication process is essentially a function of brain, but we know little about the functioning of brain. Furthermore, a human being is complex entity, he/she is not the same at all times, rather he/she keeps changing depending on a variety of factors and influences. In group situations and mass audiences, communication is manifold more complex.

Check Your Progress I

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

ii) Check your answer with the possible answer provided at the end of the unit.

1) Define the communication process and list its unique features.

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2) Describe any communication act you were engaged in today. Examine as to how selectivity influenced it?

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3.4 TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Communication can take different forms, but may be broadly considered under four major categories, namely, Interpersonal communication, Group communication, Mass communication and Folk/Traditional form of communication. Let us discuss each one of them briefly.

- Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is face-to-face communication between two persons or a very small number of persons. It is the most effective method of communication as you are virtually face-to-face with the person with whom you are communicating. You almost instantly get the feedback and based upon the reaction or the feedback you can further explain the point not clearly understood earlier.

- Group Communication

When the number of people involved in the communication process is small, you know each other well and are in direct contact.

- Mass Communication

When with the mediation of technologies you are able to communicate, disseminate information or sets of messages simultaneously to a large number of people spread over a large area, you are involved in mass communication. The source, instead of being a person as in case of interpersonal communication, is a complex institutional setup for information gathering, processing, producing and disseminating contents or messages. The contents/messages are also a complex assortment of a large variety of messages or contents intended to meet the diverse needs of the diverse audiences. Through the medium of technologies, the contents are disseminated simultaneously to a large number of people, mass audiences spread over different places or even countries. With satellite facilities, mass communication has become global in nature.

You are all well familiar with the major mass media like radio, television, newspapers, magazines and even Internet. Telephone is both a medium of interpersonal and mass communication. Posters, hoardings, billboards, kiosks, etc. are other important media of out door publicity and mass communication. In mass communication the feedback mechanism is weak. In the case of newspapers, radio and television, letters to the editor are the feedback. Drop in circulation or listener-ship or viewer-ship surveys constitute an indirect way of the audiences to give their reactions

- Folk/Traditional form of Communication

Folk/Traditional Forms of Communication are an important vehicle of community level entertainment and mass communication through various performing arts popular in the different parts of Indian society, especially in rural and tribal areas. It has been seen that some of these traditional forms, such as puppet shows, have been effectively used for communicating modern ideas and disseminating development messages among the rural and tribal population.

3.5 BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

As we communicate, it is not unusual to be faced with difficulties in our communications. As a communicator, you should be aware of these difficulties or the barriers to communication, which could interfere with the reception and the response to your message. If you can recognize the difficulties in getting your message across to your intended audience, you can take the remedial action accordingly. The barriers to communication could be physical, social or psychological in nature.

3.5.1 Physical Barriers to Communication

Language: The communicator should use the language and idioms with which the audience is well familiar. The communicator's job is to communicate and not to impress his/her audience by using difficult or unfamiliar words. Use the language the audience can easily comprehend.

Voice: Voice should be clear. If your voice is too low, unclear, too loud, high pitched and irritating to the receiver, it is likely to create problems in interaction and the reception of your message.

Eye Contact: Communication is more effective if you are able to look into the eyes of the audience while delivering your message. It helps you to keep the attention of listeners and also provide some opportunity to get their feedback to your communication as you are proceeding with the delivery of your message.

Physical Discomfort: If your audience is uncomfortable for reasons such as the seating arrangements, poor lighting, weather, or ill health, they are not likely to be very attentive to your message.

3.5.2 Social and Cultural Barriers to Communication

You all know pretty well as to how the factors like caste and religion at times influence social interaction and communication in our village communities; so do socio-economic background, education, income, etc. Members of higher castes may not like to participate in a programme or meeting just because the members of the lower castes and socio-economic strata are also participating in that programme. In a highly hierarchical society, marked asymmetrical social relations become barriers to the flow of communication.

3.5.3 Psychological Barriers to Communication

Verbalism: If the speaker talks monotonously and continuously without making attempts to involve the audience by inviting questions or clarifications, they are likely to be bored and distracted sooner than later.

Referent Confusion: As you know each one of us have different life experiences and accordingly we develop our frame of references in our minds. We have already discussed *selectivity in communication*; it is often based upon our past experience. Not unusually, the speaker and the audience have different frames of reference and hence may respond differently to any given message. We interpret and make use of any message depending upon our past experience and future needs. So, due to *referent confusion* different persons may derive different meanings from the same message.

Daydreaming: Some members of the audience may be thinking about something else, maybe about their families or some other issues, while the speaker is talking about a new variety of seeds. In such a situation, these members are not paying the required attention to the message the communicator is trying to give to the audience.

Lack of Motivation: Motivation of the target audience is the key to the success of the programmes for bringing about behavioural changes. Lack of motivation among the audience makes communication of your messages a difficult task. So, first try to motivate your audience in favour of the programme you are communicating about or advocating and then take up the theme proper.

Emotional Disturbance: Emotionally disturbed members of the audience find it difficult to concentrate on what the speaker is saying and hence fail to receive the messages being conveyed to them, whatever the theme.

3.6 FUNCTIONS OF COMMUNICATION

If communication is considered in its *broadcast* sense, not only as the exchange of news and messages, but also as an individual and collective activity embracing all transmission and sharing of ideas, facts and data, then its main functions in any social system may be related to **information**—the collection, storage, processing and dissemination of news, data, pictures and facts and also the expression of knowledgeable reactions to personal, environmental, national and international conditions/issues as well as suggestions and decisions regarding these issues.

Broadly, we can consider the functions of communication under the following categories:

Socialisation: the provision of the common fund of knowledge which enables people to operate as effective members of the society in which they live and which fosters social awareness thereby permitting active involvement in public life.

Motivation: the promotion of the immediate and ultimate aims of each society, and the stimulation of personal choices, aspirations and the fostering of individual or community activities geared to the pursuit of agreed aims.

Debate and discussion: the provision for and exchange of facts needed to facilitate agreement, clarification on differing viewpoints on public issues and the supply of relevant evidence needed to foster greater popular interest and involvement in all local, national and international matters of common concern.

Education: the transmission of knowledge so as to foster intellectual development, the formation of character and the acquisition of skills and capacities at all the stages of life.

Cultural promotion: the dissemination of cultural and artistic products for the purpose of preserving the heritage, the development of culture by widening the individual's horizons, awakening his/her imagination and stimulating his/her aesthetic needs and creativity.

Entertainment: the diffusion, through signs, symbols, sounds and images in the form of drama, dance, art, literature, music, comedy, sports, games, etc. for personal and collective recreation and enjoyment.

Integration: the provision of access to the variety of messages, required by individuals, groups and nations, in order to know and understand each other and to appreciate others' living conditions, viewpoints and aspirations.

Besides these functions, which are seen essentially from an individual's stand point, emphasis should also be laid on new phenomena, or at least the one, the importance of which is rapidly increasing: communication has become a vital need for collective entities and communities. Societies of the world cannot survive today if they are not properly informed about political affairs, international and local events, or weather conditions, etc. Governments need varied information (from all the corners of their respective countries as well as from every quarter of the earth) about the trends in population growth, harvest results, water supplies, etc. if they are to be able to plan dynamically for the future.

3.7 OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNICATION

Broadly speaking, the functions/objectives of communication are to inform, educate, entertain, relate and influence. Interaction and communication go hand in hand. Communication helps in maintaining the 'status-quo' as well as in bringing about 'change' and hence development. It is through communication and the socialisation process that we learn many things and practices from our parents and peer groups and keep doing things as they have been to maintain traditions so to say. Equally true is that we come to many a new idea and practice through communication and adopt some of them, thereby bringing about change and development.

In the context of rural development, we (as effective communicators) use communication to 'influence' and persuade others to do things as we wish/want or consider 'proper'. We select only those pieces of information or communication, which support our own ideas and attitude. We tend to 'keep out' all that goes against our views or ways of doing things and behaviour patterns. However, people generally do not want to be influenced by others. In other words every body resists change.

Therefore, we have to be very careful in organising our messages for mass communication. Only then can we influence the masses and bring about changes.

3.8 PROCESS OF BEHAVIOR-CHANGE

The process OF behavior-change involves the following:

i) *Awareness*

Initially a person may not be know whethr a particular behaviour is not good or is not in his own best interest or may be harmful or even dangerous. Take the case of the usual practice of not washing hands properly before meals. Though people in rural areas wash their hands ritually and not properly before their meals, often they are not clear about the links between eating meals with unhygienic hands and many a disease caused by contamination of food by their own dirty hands. Take another example of AIDS. Many people may not be aware of the links between unsafe sex and AIDS or the dangers of sharing syringes. The first step in a behaviour-change programme is to make people aware of the issue at hand through various channels, both mass media and interpersonal communication. Generally the mass media play an important role in creating awareness about various issues and problems among the masses.

ii) *Concern*

To bring about behaviour-change the information must be given in a way that the audience feels it applies to them, i.e. the audience becomes concerned and they are motivated to evaluate their own behaviour. Mass media aimed at the general population are less likely to be effective in creating a concern of this type. Targeted approach and interpersonal communication are likely to be more effective and useful in creating it and thus motivating the people for positive action.

iii) *Knowledge and Skills*

Once aware and concerned, individuals may seek more information and knowledge by talking to friends and peers, social workers, extension workers or other experts for advise and about the specific steps they may take to address their concern or problem. In the process they may also acquire new skills that are necessary to handle their concerns. At this stage some skills training sessions may be very useful.

iv) *Motivation and Ready to Change*

Individuals might now seriously begin to think about the need to change their behaviour and try out the new suggested practices. At this stage they may be ready for a change. They may visit some demonstration farms to see for themselves if the suggested methods and practices have yielded better results. This will reinforce their motivation for change.

v) *Trial Change*

Now they may be ready for the actual trial of new methods and practices. At this stage enabling environment should be available for them to try out new methods and practices. For instance, if some new variety of seeds is recommended, it should be available easily and at an affordable price. The result of any trial will be evaluated. If the experience is satisfactory they may firmly continue with the changed behaviour leading to behaviour- change and development in the society.

3.9 COMMUNICATION AND CHANGE

So change is difficult and it is here that professionalism of a good communicator is at test as to how communication could facilitate change or development. The suggested changes/developments should be so presented that the receiver of communication perceives these changes in her/his own interest. In this lies the success of communication.

The effectiveness of communication is influenced by many factors like the communicator's experience and knowledge, need of the audience and the urgency of the situation. So to be effective as a communicator it is important to understand as to how the communication process works/functions, where and what can lead to failure, that is what are the barriers to communication, and what can be done to improve the effectiveness of the communication process. In the whole process audience is of supreme importance. So to be effective as a communicator, 'know your audience'.

For making the best use of communication for development, it is necessary to first clearly define the development objectives and then accordingly also define clearly the communication objectives and specific communication tasks and inputs to achieve the development objectives in the most cost effective manner.

In order to achieve the desired impact of communication, clear understanding and segmenting of the audience is necessary for you to appropriately target your message.

In rural development, information, education and communication efforts generally aim towards:

- making people aware of their conditions and problems;
- informing people of the different programmes and schemes;
- motivating them to take advantage and derive benefits from the relevant schemes;
- facilitating the process of acquiring the necessary skills and building organisations to find solutions to their problems; and
- enabling them to be self-reliant and to make development sustainable.

Communication is essentially the facilitator of rural development. It is a means and not an end in itself.

Check Your Progress II

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

ii) Check your answer with the possible answer provided at the end of the unit.

1) Briefly discuss the purpose of communication in rural development.

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2) Discuss in brief the steps involved in the process of behavior-change.

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3.10 PREPARING IEC STRATEGY

By now you understand fairly well that communication helps in creating awareness about new ideas, products, practices and skills. It empowers and enables people to take action leading to behavioural change and rural development. It is the facilitator of development and change in a society. You also know that it is not easy to bring about a change, as people generally resist it and find more comfort in sticking to age-old established norms and practices. As such, to bring about behavioural changes and rural development, you need to plan a strategy to use your communication resources properly, so as to achieve your development objectives in a cost effective manner.

Like in any other field, preparing the IEC strategy involves your making an action plan (keeping in view the communication resources at your command) to achieve your development objectives. For this you should be absolutely clear about:

- a) The specific development objectives that are to be achieved.
- b) The target audience to be covered under the development programme.
- c) The specific communication objectives and the behavioural changes that are to be brought about for development.
- d) The various communication resources you can mobilize, their access and relevance to the target audience for communicating the development messages.

The first step in planning a communication strategy is to know the intended audience and the responses sought. A communication method, technique or material that may be effective with one set of people/audience may not be effective with other audience. Two people may attend to the same talk by say a village level worker, hear the same radio broadcast or see the same poster or hoarding and yet interpret these communications quite differently. As explained earlier, people selectively expose themselves to various communication stimuli that may be available to them at any given time. Not only do they see or hear selectively, they also selectively interpret and use the information or message they receive depending upon their own experience, needs and even mood at that particular time. This makes communication, apparently a simple task, quite a difficult and challenging one. The source of communication, here the development agent, must be skillful enough in encoding messages that take into account how his target audience usually decodes the messages

For a message to be effective it is important that the coding process of the source/sender greatly matches that of the receiver/decoder. It should be as far as possible simple and straightforward in the language and the idiom that the receiver is familiar with. Further, the message and its contents should be relevant to the needs of the receiver/audience. More over, it is important that the source is perceived to be credible. People are exposed to communications from different sources and are

more likely to believe a communication from a person or organisation they respect and trust. As such, every effort should be made by the individuals, agencies and organisations engaged in development work to build and maintain rapport with and credibility among the target audience.

3.10.1 Inventory of Communication Resources

To prepare any meaningful IEC strategy, the IEC planner/manager must have a clear understanding of the communication resources at his/her command and their relevance to the intended audience for bringing about the desired change. For this it is necessary to have a clear idea about the nature of access that the target audience has to various channels and sources of information. The basic data about the availability of different media of communication need to be collected and collated. These may include: newspapers and magazines, their readership pattern among the target audience; reach and access to radio and television programmes and listening and viewing pattern; prevalence of different folk forms of entertainment and communication in the region and other sources of information especially about the issues having a bearing upon the development objectives. The data about the audience information needs also should be gathered through secondary sources or if need be through a sample survey. Such an understanding helps in better focusing on the information needs and tackling of information gaps for bringing about awareness and change in the target audience.

Based upon the audience profile, the development tasks and the objectives of communication, an effective communication strategy would usually use a combination of mass media and channels of interpersonal communication. Working out a judicious combination of mass media and interpersonal channels is the key to the success of IEC strategy.

3.11 SELECTION OF MEDIA

As you would have understood by now, the basic purpose of communicating with people is to inform, educate, and motivate them to act towards some specified goal. Under rural development programmes this goal could be improved yield in crops by adopting new agricultural practices, improved health of the members of the family by taking nutritious food, or protection from disease by undergoing immunization at the right time.

Interpersonal communication, though most effective, is time consuming and often not enough for communicating ideas and skills for adopting change and effect development. Experience shows that other media also become necessary as they help in making the spoken words clearer. Messages are put across through more than one channel/media so as to appeal to more than one sense. The use of more than one media helps in holding attention, creating interest and retention of new learning, thereby facilitating the whole process of communication, especially in the context of rural people. You also know that each medium of communication has its strengths and weaknesses. It is important that the communicator recognizes this and assesses the usefulness of each medium in relation to his/her target audience. Based upon such an understanding, the selection/choice of media should be made for communicating development messages.

In any development programme, actually a combination of media comprising mass media, folk media and interpersonal channels are used.

3.11.1 Folk Media

Take the case of Folk/traditional Media. India has a rich heritage of folk forms of communication and entertainment. Some of the prominent forms are: puppetry, folk

dramas, folk songs, and folk dances with regional variations. These have been in existence for time immemorial and continue to be popular in rural and tribal areas even today. You will notice a number of folk media in any region you may visit. As these folk forms use local language and dialects, costumes and situations, these are easy to comprehend for the local people. These may be recreational, devotional or maybe about folklore or folk heroes. As these continue to be popular forms of entertainment in rural and tribal India, these have a great potential for being used as powerful vehicles of development communication. It is for the development communicator to identify which of the prevalent folk forms is suitable for communicating the development messages.

Once such a folk form is identified for use, the performers/presenters of these folk media should be thoroughly briefed about the development programme and more specifically the development messages that are to be communicated to the target audience so that the artists can creatively incorporate the development messages in their presentations.

3.11.2 Visual Aids

To make interpersonal communication in small groups more effective, it is usually advisable to use some simple audio-visual aids such as flash cards, flip charts, and flannel graphs. These are particularly helpful in explaining the new ideas and concepts with the help of visuals.

3.11.3 Demonstrations

Seeing is believing. As such, a live demonstration often proves a very effective mode of communication. A demonstration is a good way to show how to do something. It provides stimuli to all the senses of the learners— seeing, hearing, touching, and maybe tasting and even smelling. People learn best when all their sense are used in the process. Demonstration may also include role-play to make it even more real. Some member of the group may volunteer to act out a real life situation or a problem on the basis of a given description. It enables the group to understand better the cause of a problem or the result/consequences of an action.

3.11.4 Radio

Radio is truly a mass medium. A large segment of population can be reached through radio. It has the advantage of being affordable, portable and convenient. In rural areas where frequent power failure is normal, radio has the tremendous advantage, as it is generally battery operated. There are a number of radio programmes which have a bearing upon issues of rural development. You can monitor the radio broadcasts in your area to have a more clear idea about the various rural development programmes that are currently being aired and are popular with the local audience.

Radio can be very effective not only in creating mass awareness and interest in new innovations or practices but also in motivating and initiating action. Research findings have shown that systematic and serialised radio programmes covering a given theme or topic and organised group listening are far more effective in bringing about changes and development than the normal general radio broadcasts. This way you combine the strength of the mass media and interpersonal communication as well as of organized learning.

3.11.5 Television

The television is a very powerful and effective medium as it uses both audio and visual signals. It is increasingly becoming more popular even in rural areas. But, frequent power failures inhibit its uses in most parts of India. Further, this medium

has come to be associated with news and entertainment primarily. More over it is an expensive medium. As such its use for development purposes should made be with great care. But certainly for creating mass awareness TV can play an important role for its being a very visible and popular medium of mass communication.

3.11.6 Video and Film Shows

Film and video shows are very effective in rural communication as these have visual appeal and the audience can see exactly what you are talking about, e.g. farming techniques, sanitation and health, low cost housing using locally available material, immunization, etc. Video can be used to produce development programmes for TV at a much smaller cost than that of films and as such is quite often favoured as the medium for development purposes. Making video programmes is comparatively simple and easy. You can produce video programmes to incorporate local details, costumes, language and the dialects to make it a more effective tool of communication with any given target audience.

3.11.7 Print and Publicity Material

The language newspapers and magazines are now reaching rural communities as well. Village people reading newspapers at a village teashop or other convenient points is a common sight these days. Like other mass media newspapers/magazines also serve the purpose of creating awareness among the masses about various issues. But literacy being still low in rural areas the utility of print media in communicating development messages is limited. However, the print and publicity material produced to include specific development messages for the rural audiences and distributed among the target audience can serve the purpose of development.

3.11.8 Outdoor Publicity, Hoarding and Wall-writings

The wall writings and hoardings giving briefs of development messages on various development programmes are a common sight now in most villages. These may be on immunization, family planning, water and sanitation or AIDS. These are usually very effective as these use written words as well as some visuals. The messages are put in short and simple phrases in the form of slogans that are easy to comprehend and remember. And these stay for long periods serving as reminders and repeated exposures for the local people.

Thus, there is a wide range of possible choices of media. It should not be difficult to select an effective combination of media for communication that suits your needs and the target audience.

3.12 MESSAGE DESIGN

Keeping in view the available choices of mass media, interpersonal channels of communication and the extent of their possible uses for meeting the communication and development objectives, it is necessary to design appropriate messages to make full use of the strength of each of these media and channels. Both the channel and the purpose of communicating development information influence message design. Messages may be designed to convey facts, alter attitudes, change behaviour or encourage participation in decision making. Often these purposes overlap and are sequential and progressive. For bringing about behaviour-change and development, people must receive information, understand it, believe it, agree with it and then act upon it. Messages must be designed and developed with the desired change and development in view. Some of the factors that need to be kept in mind in designing proper and appropriate messages are:

i) **Audience interest**

For a message to be accepted by the intended audience it should address their information need. The message should be based on what they perceive as important, what they want to know and not what is most interesting or important for you as the sender of the message.

ii) **Draw and retain attention**

Messages should be so designed as to draw and retain attention of the target audience. In this age of information glut there are numerous messages competing for attention at the same time. Hence, messages should be so creatively designed, packaged and placed as to assure attention of the audience, failing which messages will be lost altogether.

iii) **Clarity**

A message must be simple and short. It should be in a language and idiom, which the intended audience can easily comprehend. It must clearly convey the required information. It should assure a understanding of the information being sent across and reduce the chances of misunderstanding to the minimum. It should not lead to any inappropriate action. It should avoid difficult scientific/technical terms as far as possible. It should not carry information that is not needed by the audience for making decisions.

iv) **Consistency**

You should maintain consistency in the messages you design for different media and channels of communication. This would help in avoiding confusion, facilitating understanding, reinforcing learning and retaining the theme of your messages among your audience.

v) **Main points**

The main points of your messages (put across through different media and channels of communication) should be stressed, repeated and never be hidden within less strategically important information.

vi) **Tone and appeal**

A message should be straightforward and reassuring. It should be truthful, honest and as complete as possible.

vii) **Pretest message design**

It is always a good strategy to pretest your message design (in the context of the audience you intend to address) to know as to how far it is effective in communicating the essence of the theme and contents of your intended message. Time and resources spent on protesting are worth the effort, as they help in improving the efficacy of the message.

Check Your Progress III

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

ii) Check your answer with the possible answer provided at the end of the unit.

1) Define in brief the IEC strategy and list the main considerations to be kept in mind while preparing it for any rural development programme.

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- 2) Write the main points that are to be kept in mind while preparing IEC media material for rural audiences.

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3.13 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have learnt that communication is an essential component of both continuity and change in our society. There is a close association between communication and development. Through communication people become aware of new developments in various fields and also of the resultant new opportunities.

You have also learnt that communication stimulates a desire for change and facilitates the process of change and development. Change is not easy to bring about, as people resist it. It is only through professional communication that the objectives of behavioural change and rural development can be achieved.

We have also described and discussed the process of communication, its functions and objectives in brief so as to help you understand the role of communication in rural development more clearly.

To achieve the objectives of rural development a well thought out Information, Education and Communication (IEC) strategy is required. Keeping in view the objectives of the development programme, the specific communication objectives need to be clearly spelt out. Then, depending upon the media reach and the exposure pattern among the different sections of the target audience, a suitable media mix should be selected to send the message across. Cost effective utilisation of the available communication resources should be the guiding principle throughout the process.

We have also discussed in brief the process of media design and the preparation of appropriate media materials.

3.14 KEY WORDS

Communication	:	Communication is a process of interaction or exchange of information and ideas.
BCC	:	<i>Behavior change communication</i> is now in currency in the context of developmental communication, as the emphasis is on behavior-change leading to development.
IEC	:	Information, education and communication inputs for facilitating development and change.
IEC Strategy	:	IEC strategy is the approach or a well thought out design to make the most cost effective use of communication resources in support of development.

3.15 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

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Mass Media: An Introduction to Modern Communication, 1988: by Ray Eldon Hiebert, Donald F. Ungurait and Thomas W. Bohn, Longman, New York.

3.16 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) Communication is a process of interaction or exchange of information, ideas and values between two or more human beings through shared signs and symbols. Its unique features: It is; 1) a two way process, 2) a selective process, and 3) a complex process.
- 2) Reading a newspaper. You select a newspaper that you read. You select the news items you read. You selectively interpret and use the news items or other matter like the advertisements that you have read.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) Broadly speaking, the functions/objectives of communication are to inform, educate, entertain, relate and influence. Interaction and communication go hand in hand. Communication helps in maintaining the 'status- quo' and also in bringing about 'change' and hence development. It is through the communication and the socialisation processes that we learn many things and practices from our parents and peer groups and keep doing things as they have been to maintain the traditions so to say. Equally true is that we come to many a new idea and practices through communication and adopt some of them, thereby bringing change and development.
- 2) Behavior-change is difficult as people generally resist any change, as it causes some discomfort. Even so, the basic function of communication in the process of rural development is to bring about behavior-change. Through IEC efforts are made to bring about behavior-change by creating awareness, providing necessary knowledge and skills and motivating the target audience so that they are ready for the trial and the final adoption of the suggested changes leading to development and progress.

Check Your Progress III

- 1) Preparing the IEC strategy involves making your action plan to achieve your development objectives. While making the plan, you have to keep the communication resources at your command in view. For this you should be absolutely clear about:

- The specific development objectives that are to be achieved.
 - The target audience to be covered under the development programme.
 - The specific communication objectives and the behavioral changes that are to be brought about for development.
 - The various communication resources you can mobilize, their access and relevance to the target audience for communicating the development messages.
- 2) The main points to be kept in mind while designing messages for rural audiences are: Audience interest, Drawing and Retention of Attention, Clarity, Consistency, Main Points, Tone and Appeal and Pretesting of the Message Design



UNIT 4 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Convergence of Technologies
- 4.3 Information Age
- 4.4 Digital Divide
- 4.5 Access versus Ownership
- 4.6 IT & Rural Development
- 4.7 Innovative Use of IT and Rural Development: Some Examples
- 4.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.9 Key Words
- 4.10 References and Suggested Readings
- 4.11 Check Your Progress – Possible Answers

4.0 OBJECTIVES

In the previous unit, we described the role of IEC in rural development. Now we turn to Information Technology. After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- describe the recent developments in communication technologies and their relevance to rural development;
- explain the importance of the basic data about Information Technologies (ITs); and
- outline in brief some examples of innovative uses of ITs and their applications for rural development.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

These days Information Technology (IT) is the buzz word making rounds everywhere. We use it in varying contexts. It means different things to different people. We talk about IT revolution. As a matter of fact with the advent of microprocessors and Personal Computers (PCs) the human ability to collect, store, transfer and retrieve data/information have increased phenomenally. As a consequence, now it is possible to communicate with greater ease and speed and ITs have become a powerful means of managing information and communication. Computers, telephones, satellite and television are the major manifestations of Information Technologies and these are rapidly transforming the way we live, work and spend our leisure time.

As a matter of fact, what is new about the present day IT revolution is the convergence and integration of the hitherto known communication and information technologies into one system together with the emergence of Internet and Information super-highways. It has extended the spread of knowledge immensely and made its sharing easy, promising almost near universal empowerment of the people, provided we make innovative uses of these 'new' technologies.

As a result, winds of change now sweeping across much of the world are paving way for an open world. Today, the advances that man has made in the area of

communication technologies are so fundamentally transforming the organised human life that many social scientists speak of the dawn of a new era – *the Information Age*.

Today, events taking place in any corner of the planet become known the world over almost in no time. More and more economic decisions and operations have global ramifications. The increasingly greater integration and centrality of information and communication into the functioning of economy and society is taking place so rapidly and on such a vast scale that globalisation and emergence of information societies is becoming a reality.

However, all nations and groups and individuals within a nation cannot uniformly or equitably share the benefits of information technologies. Hence, the fierce debates about the hopes of a utopia and the despair caused by the widening digital divide and the promises of a prosperous peaceful world and fears of cultural clashes.

What implications do these developments have for rural societies and the economy and life in rural India? We will examine the issue in the light of experiences with innovative uses of communication and information technologies in the context of rural communities. Experimental applications of ITs in many parts of India have shown good results promising that ITs would serve as facilitators of rural development and empowerment of the weaker sections of the rural society.

In this unit, we will describe in brief the phenomenon of the convergence of technologies and the emergence of information society. This will be followed by an examination of the data from certain select countries which are indicative of the increasing “digital divide” between the developed and the developing countries. This will outline the ground situation about the spread of ITs. At the end of the unit, we will describe certain innovative approaches towards ITs and their use for rural development in the Indian context, which points clearly to the fact that it is the access and not so much the ownership per se that is critical for the development and empowerment of our rural society.

4.2 CONVERGENCE OF TECHNOLOGIES

Let us briefly examine the characteristics of the new communication technologies that have been fast changing the information environment in the new millennium. As a matter of fact, most of the so-called new communication technologies have been with us for the last couple of decades. What is relatively new is the convergence and integration of these technologies. Another feature of the present day situation in communications is the scale of operations, which the microprocessors and the ‘chips’ have not only made possible in physical terms, but in economic terms also. The results of these two processes, convergence and scale, are revolutionary in so far as they have made information technologies user friendly and affordable for common people.

The convergence of emerging telecommunication technologies and computers is transforming business operations, broadcasting, telephone systems and human interactions in general. We are on the threshold of having a high-resolution two-way video and personal computers tied to networks, so that sitting at home or office, one can receive and send information from and to anywhere in the world, and engage in a two-way video conversation across the world.

4.3 INFORMATION AGE

Today, IT and media have assumed significance, which they never had before. Starting as an institutionalised approach to generate awareness and inform the masses,

media has become a mechanism to govern our lives. Rather than a form of cultural expression, it has a culture of its own. It was supposed to report on the way of the life of people. Instead, it has now become a way of life itself. Moreover it is one of the most important industries of all times.

Many of the societies are already changing from being advanced industrial societies to 'information societies' in which computer technologies, their networks and other enhanced forms of interpersonal and institutional communication are a major force. Some of the Western countries have already entered into the information age. In the United States, the information activities engage more than 46 per cent of the work force, which earns over 55 per cent of the labour income.

Multinational IT companies are in the process of building a vast web of electronic networks, 'information super highways', of fiber optics and computers. This network will deliver an abundance of goods and services at your office or homes— video images, phone calls, enormous amount of data on various required fields by a user or customer. They promise to change the way people think, work, live and use their leisure time.

The vision of the communication boom has been possible because of the sharp decline in costs. According to an estimate the cost of microprocessors is falling 22 per cent, computer memories by 40 per cent and communication equipment by 11 per cent per annum. By the year 2010, may be even earlier, the cost of a computerised home system should be about the same as that of an automobile today, thus coming within the reach of common people in the developed countries. The protagonists of the new communication technologies have been promising a revolution of abundance and diversity of information for all.

As the world shifts to a service-oriented economy, vast amounts of money, goods and services are being circulated as well. In the last few years break-through in satellite and high-speed computing have given leading users an over-whelming economic advantage over those who have not kept pace. Thus, the stakes in new communication technologies are high and are of global dimensions. Although for foreseeable future, the responsibility, if not power, to plan and decide about communication will continue to rest with the nation states, already many of the operations are beyond them. The result is the enormous expansion and significance of multi-national corporations.

Through multi-nationals and other trade channels, the advanced Western countries are *pushing* hard the new communication technologies into the developing countries to maintain their economic and political interest. The 'pull' for the 'latest' and the 'best' on the part of the ruling elites in these countries sustains the 'push'.

Thus, in brief, there have been revolutionary changes in information and communication technologies, which provide both challenges and opportunities. The new fervor for modernisation and progress through the adoption of the latest information technologies enhances the capabilities of communication at various levels, both within and outside the organisation. Technologies increase the efficiency in terms of speed, spread and also in terms of looks and appearances. With the latest communication technologies you are able to multiply your messages fast enough and also reach the intended audiences quickly or even instantly. You may also produce attractive information/communication packages.

Amazing times are ahead. You can get any thing, goods and services, from anywhere any time. Time and space have acquired new meanings. What used to be distant is no more that far away. What used to be local has become global. Information technologies abound with excitement. Telephone, television and computers are getting inter-twined with each other holding out promises of a world in which innovation and human dynamism would be the main driving force. In the seamless world of tomorrow,

mind would matter. Some say, it will be a *knowledge society*. Innovations would lead to intelligent technologies and bits and bytes would dictate communication. In the world of convergence, a telephone would not be an end in itself, but a means to greater linkages with the PC, and through it, to the Internet. Similarly, a TV is not just an entertainment medium but also a link to the worldwide Internet through cable TV. The emergence of the wireless web further facilitates connectivity.

The quality of images and the speed of downloads will improve significantly with the introduction of the next or the third generation techniques and technologies. The mobile phone will have computation and storage capabilities that will match the fixed devices. Multi-media mobile messages will be the next rival of e-mail. But enhancement of capabilities is not necessarily an assurance for effective communication equity and social justice.

Check Your Progress I

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

ii) Check your answer with the possible answer provided at the end of the unit.

1) Discuss in brief the concept of Information Technology.

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2) List the main features of the convergence of technologies.

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4.4 DIGITAL DIVIDE

The gap between the industrialised countries and the developing world is striking. About 80 per cent of the world's population lives in developing countries. Their share of income and consumption of world resources is less than 20 per cent. The digital divide is even more striking. The developing countries' share of Internet access is merely 10 per cent. In United States, 56 percent of adults are online, while in most developing countries merely 2-3 per cent, or even less, have access to the Internet. The whole of Africa has just 14 million phone lines, that is less than what they have in New York or Tokyo. A third of the world's people have never made a phone call in their lifetime. One fifth of the world population lives on just a dollar a day.

Table 4.1: Ownership of Information and Communication Technologies*(Per 1000 People)*

	India	World	USA
Radio	121	418	2090
T V	69	247	864
Telephone	34	146	666
Mobile Phone	1	55	500
Internet	4.5	70.6	540

Source: *Business World*, May 21, 2001

In these circumstances, naturally some argue strongly in favour basic needs such as safe drinking water, adequate food, shelter, health facilities and education first and telephone and computers later. But as rightly emphasised by Vinod Thomas, Vice President of World Bank, it is not a question of choice between Penicillin or Pentiums. The power of information revolution is precisely that it can help in delivering basic services in more efficient and innovative ways. Rather, not putting those technologies to work for the poorest people carries a huge and growing cost. It means missed economic opportunities and growing inequalities within the less developing countries themselves as rural areas become more isolated and fall further behind.

As stated earlier with the 'push' from developed countries and 'pull' from within the developing countries, information technologies are spreading fast. While Internet users increase in number in Asia, Africa and other developing countries, most data flows out of USA, rather than flowing into that country. In 2000, some 60 per cent of the world's Internet hosts were based in USA and of the 100 most visited web sites all were in USA. The U.S. hegemony in this field is nearly complete.

As compared to the developed countries, especially the U.S. A., the PC penetration and spending on IT in developing countries is low and is likely to continue to be so in coming years. The following table brings out this fact clearly.

Table 4.2: Spending on it and Penetration

Country	IT Spending as % of GDP	Per Capita IT Spending (\$)	P C Penetration Per 1000 People	Per Capital GDP (\$)
China	1.1	7.9	13.2	793
India	0.8	3.6	6.2	461
Indonesia	1.0	6.8	11.2	681
Malaysia	1.3	42.7	69.4	3286
Philippines	0.6	5.9	19.1	981
Thailand	0.5	10.0	22.0	2008
U S A	4.3	1,372.3	500.00	31915

Source: *Business World*, May 21, 2001

The figures given in the above two tables may have changed over the years. Today, there is greater access to mass media and Internet in India and other developing countries. However, the tables are reflective of the overall trends. The learners should check the latest figures for their assignments.

4.5 ACCESS VERSUS OWNERSHIP

However, notwithstanding, the present limitations of IT and PC penetration patterns in developing countries like India, access to and benefits of IT are possible to a much wider population through innovative use of limited facilities. India has developed a niche for itself in the area of computer software development and as a services provider. In the free-trading globalised world, the gains would accrue to those who can use IT to generate new ideas, products and services besides improving efficiency generally. While IT induced improvement reduces demand for expertise/labour in traditional skills, it opens new possibilities as well. The Indian computer programmers are in great demand the world over. Customer support services and medical transcriptions services have opened new opportunities for English educated young men and women in India. Thus, a secretary in Chennai works for a doctor in USA or Canada. It is true of customer support services as well. A customer in USA, Canada or UK or for that matter anywhere in the world dials a toll free 1-800 number and the call is attended at the customer support service centre based in Bangalore. But the gains of IT revolution should not remain confined to the western developed countries or the urban educated elites of the developing countries. These should reach the poor as well. Some innovative strategies to enhance access to and use of IT have to be thought of and put in place urgently. The hope of benefits trickling down to the poor in villages will take decades and it may even never happen. Like the other technologies, IT may remain the monopoly of a few urban elites, until it is actively developed to serve the needs of the wider population. Then, the economies of scale set in. Remember, not long ago radio, telephone, and television were status symbols even in urban India. However, things changed rapidly with availability of transistor sets, public call offices (PCOs) and cable television in the respective cases. Taking a cue from CNN's showing of the Gulf War live on television in five star hotels in Delhi, entrepreneurs jumped at the technological possibility of satellite cable television in India. They wired their neighborhood and started showing video films and some satellite TV channels through dish antennae to 2-300 households setting in motion the entry of foreign and Indian private television in the country.

It provided spurt to private television production and a host of other related media activities. Today, about 30 thousand cable operators, each with 200 to 500 household clientele, reach to nearly 30 million people, though mostly in big cities and small towns.

No doubt information technology is a very powerful force, but much will depend upon the way we put to use these technologies to address our issues and concerns.

Check Your Progress II

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

ii) Check your answer with the possible answer provided at the end of the unit.

1) Discuss the concept of *digital divide* in the national and international contexts.

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- 2) Discuss in brief how *access* to IT is more relevant than *ownership* in developing countries like India.

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4.6 IT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

As discussed above the Information/Communication Technologies revolution, together with the attendant economic, social, cultural and political responses, has far reaching implications for the way we work, live and spend our leisure time. How are these developments in the IT sector going to influence the rural India?

Information/Communication Technologies, such as wireless telephony, computers, satellite, cable television and Internet, are bringing about noticeable changes in the rural society in India as in many other countries. Although, the actual reach and penetration of various information technologies in the rural areas are still very limited, many interesting and promising experiments are going on in different parts of India. The strength of new communication technologies in bringing about social change and rural development lies in their ability to combine some of the characteristics of both interpersonal communication and mass media. As you know, interpersonal communication is face-to-face interaction and the exchange of information and ideas between two or more—only a small number of persons. This provides for free flow of messages between the participants. Feedback is immediate and in plenty. The messages exchanged in interpersonal communication are generally high on socio-emotional content and not just a matter of fact statements as in the case of mass media. The convergence and integration of communication technologies have resulted in the emergence of what many call “new media”, which often link two or a small number of individuals and facilitate interactive communication between these people. The participants involved in such communication (using the new media and/or ITs) have far greater control over the process of information exchange, can reverse roles in their discourse and enjoy the confidence of familiarity and personal bonds. It is now possible to make the transmission and exchange of messages more focused and target specific—the key ingredients for effective communication for rural development.

4.7 INNOVATIVE USE OF IT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT: SOME EXAMPLES

PCOs

Access to telephone has increased substantially with the introduction of Public Call Office (PCOs). With a view to provide greater accessibility to telephone service, ordinary telephones have been provided with small meters. Many small entrepreneurs availed themselves of the opportunity as they set up PCOs at market places and even at their own homes and are earning a decent livelihood for their families. By 2000, about 6,50,000 PCOs were estimated to be functioning across the country making

telephone services available to a much wider public. Now many of these are upgrading their services by adding a PC and connecting to Internet as well.

Rural telephony also is making big strides in India now. More than half of the 6,00,000 villages in India have been provided telephone connections. Not only that, India's 'handset toting' culture is reaching rural areas as well. In some small towns in Kerala, Maharashtra and Haryana, mobile phone users are thicker on the ground than the bustling metropolitan cities like Delhi and Mumbai. The rural folk are becoming *netizens*. Many experiments are being tried successfully in different parts of the country to facilitate IT access in rural and remote areas of the country.

AMCS

The milk cooperative, Anand, in Gujarat, which ushered in the 'white revolution' in India, is in the process of increasing its efficiency by adopting IT to streamline its procedures and operations. At the village level, milk cooperative society has adopted the Automatic Milk Collection System (AMCS) with its own resources. The computerised system allows the reading of milk quantity and quality for fat content and maintains daily records of milk societies and the payments made every day. This has brought about not only efficiency but also transparency in the day to day dealings. The women, who are generally not educated, behind this unique dairy movement in Gujarat bring milk to the collection centre in the village every day, thus promoting the IT revolution all around. As an AMUL (the Anand Milk Union Limited) advertisement claims, about 21 million rural women bring milk to collection centres daily. Soon, all of them will be deriving benefits of computer technologies with the adoption of automatic milk collection system by their village dairy cooperatives.

GYANDOOT

In another interesting project, *Gyandoot*, (ambassador of knowledge) in Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh, 26 major information centres are connected through Internet. Each such centre has a computer connected by a telephone line, which functions as a cybercafe and services about 25-30 villages. The centre is manned by a high school educated boy/girl who after initial computer literacy training manages it on his/her own. The villagers come to the centre, get information (on nominal rates) regarding the prices of their produce in different markets in order to negotiate better deals. The manager of the information centre is not given any salary; rather, he/she pays 10 per cent of his/her earning as commission to the *panchayat*. Yet he/she is able to make his/her living illustrating the soundness of the concept of making IT access possible without owning it as such. The benefits of Gyandoot reach over half a million people in more than 600 villages.

VKS

The Village Knowledge Centre (VKS) set up by M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai, is another example of information empowerment of the rural and tribal women who are barely literate. The VKC enables farming families not only to produce more without causing any ecological harm, but also helps every one in the village to create a hunger free area. The action plan for the elimination of hunger and malnutrition consists of seven steps, which the village women themselves using the latest information technology, i.e. computer, are supposed to take for their own good. The process helps the women in creating a relevant database and sharing with others leading to awareness, behaviour-change and action to improve their economic well-being and life itself. For a holistic and sustainable development, this approach could be extended to cover the health issues as well. There are plans afoot in many states in India to computerise the land records. Once it is done the villagers can have access to the details of their land holdings from IT kiosks bypassing the age-old institution of *patwari-revenue clerk*, who is a living symbol of harassment, delays and corruption. There is already substantial progress in this direction in states

like Karnatka, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Pilot projects have also been tested successfully in some other states.

SEWA

The SEWA, Self Employed Women's Association, in Gujarat is using satellite communication to train women in both urban and rural areas, in health care, child development, marketing, functioning of *Panchayat Raj*, water management and house management. A host of other topics of their concern can be handled using modern communication technologies to empower women generally. This will help women to be economically sound and lead healthier and happier lives.

The BPL Mobile reported that out of its every 100 customers in Kerala, five are illiterate fishermen, most of whom have never used a hand phone before. Based on the information received on their mobile while returning from their fishing expeditions, they can decide where to land their catch to get the best price of the day.

Numerous other such experiments are being tried to meet different information and communication needs in different parts of the country. Imagine, all the villages in India have telephone connections. The village post office and/or one or more enterprising educated youth from the village are enhancing this facility by setting up information centers. They can provide access to telephone, computer, Internet and even e-mail and voice-mail and deliver messages to the villagers in their homes meeting the communication/information needs of the village population on a price they can afford. It opens enormous possibilities of connectivity ushering in the IT revolution at the grass roots level. A villager can get access to the records of his landholding, information about the market price of his produce, the latest methods and techniques to increase his productivity, talk to his/her son/daughter in other villages or town or country on voice mail and so on. People take to IT only when they are convinced that it serves some purpose in their lives. The biggest bottleneck in the spread of Internet in rural areas is not so much the technology, but the availability of relevant information services to satisfy the needs of the rural people. It is a challenge to the ingenuity of computer programmers and software producers to identify their needs and come up with appropriate solutions. Once that is done, government help is not necessary to move things. Just as PCOs have mushroomed in urban India to meet the needs of common people, integrated information centres (telephone, computer, internet) will become a reality everywhere through individual entrepreneurs both in rural and urban India.

Although the direction of IT revolution is clear, yet we have a long way to go. Notwithstanding a lot of talk about e-governance, the bureaucratic hurdles, the old mind set and turf wars are some of the hurdles to be negotiated.

Check Your Progress III

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

ii) Check your answer with the possible answer provided at the end of the unit.

- 1) Critically examine the use of IT for rural development and the poverty alleviation programme in your area—you may write about a slum or a village community. Also list some of the innovative uses of IT for rural development.

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4.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have discussed the phenomena of fast emerging communication technologies, the hopes and aspirations built around ITs. We have also described some of the innovative uses of communication technologies, which have benefited the weaker sections of the society in rural and tribal areas. With the availability of PCOs in remote tribal and rural areas, the benefits of telephone are within the reach of ordinary people. Mobile phone is facilitating the ordinary fishermen to direct their catch to the market where they get the best price. Computerisation of land records in certain districts makes the life of farmers there a lot easy. Various innovative uses of communication technologies for rural development clearly show that in making ITs more widely available in support of rural development and the empowerment of rural masses, access is the key, not the ownership of technology per se.

Developments in information and communication technologies open vast opportunities to empower those who were bypassed by industrial revolution. While facing the challenges of globalisation brought about through liberalisation and privatisation in the free market place, the developing countries should not lose sight of their poor population in urban and rural areas. It is possible to reach the un-reached and empower them with information and skills through innovative uses of information by cable operators, public call office (PCO's) and now information centres. Innovative use of IT would help in meeting their basic needs of health, education, food and shelter; facilitate their economic and social well being and in the process enhance their productivity; and thus contribute immensely to the goal of rural development and progress. This will also expand markets for all kinds of goods and services in the rural areas, thereby giving a boost to globalisation, free market and the emergence of information society in India. This approach alone will lead to a win-win situation.

4.9 KEY WORDS

- Information Technology (IT) :** Information technologies means a whole range of technologies like computers, telephones, TV, internet, etc. that facilitates human communication in terms of quality, quantity and speed.
- Convergence & Integration :** With the development of microprocessors the erstwhile technologies have come together and got integrated into one system, thereby expediting and facilitating communication in ways never imagined before.
- Digital Divide :** The *existing marked differences* in the access and ownership of various communication/information technologies between urban and rural areas on the one hand, and between the developed and the developing countries on the other, are commonly referred to as the *digital divide*.

4.10 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

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4.11 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) With the advent of microprocessors and Personal Computers (PCs), our ability to collect, store, transfer and retrieve data/information have increased phenomenally. As a consequence, now it is possible to communicate with greater ease and speed and ITs have become a powerful means of bringing about social change. Computers, telephones, satellite, Internet and television are the major components of Information Technologies and these are rapidly transforming the way we live, work and spend our leisure time.
- 2) With the development of microprocessors it has been made possible to integrate the various information/communication technologies into one complete system. The result is reduction in costs, increase in speed, user friendliness of ITs and immense ease in generating, storing and retrieving data at great speed.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) There are marked differences in the ownership of and access to various information and communication technologies like telephone, TV, radio, internet between rural and urban areas on the one hand and between developed countries like United States of America and developing country like India on the other.
- 2) Access to ITs is more important than its ownership. Take the case of telephone. Through Public Call Offices (PCOs), telephone facilities have become available in far flung areas of rural and tribal India. To a lesser extent, the same is true of internet at least in urban areas. You can avail yourself of internet facilities at cybercafes without owning your own PC.

Check Your Progress III

- 1) The significance of information revolution lies in the fact that it can help in delivering basic services in more efficient and innovative ways. Not putting

those technologies to use for the poorest people carries a huge and growing cost. It means missed economic opportunities and growing inequalities within developing countries themselves as rural areas become more isolated and fall further behind.

Information/Communication Technologies such as wireless telephony, computers, satellite, cable television and Internet are bringing about noticeable changes in the rural society in India as in many other countries. Although, the actual reach and penetration of various information technologies in rural areas are still very limited, many interesting and promising experiments on their applications are going on in different parts of India.

Innovative use of ITs: Examples: PCOs, Milk Cooperative of Anand, SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association in Gujarat) and *Gyandoot*, (ambassador of knowledge) in Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh.





FEED BACK

Dear Learner,

With the completion of this Block, we have come to the end of **SEM -101, I Development: The Indian Context**, which consists of 5 Blocks. While studying various Blocks of this course, you may have found certain portions of the text difficult to comprehend. We wish to know your difficulties and suggestions in order to improve the course in future. Therefore, we request you to fill out and send us the following questionnaire, which pertains to all the 5 Blocks of this course. If you find the pages provided insufficient for your response, kindly use additional sheets to complete it. Your response is very important for us to address various difficulties encountered by you while going through this course and also to make improvements where we wish this course.

Questionnaire

Enrolment No.

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1) Which of the blocks interested you the most and why?

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2) Please give your reaction to the following items based on our reading of the various blocks of the course

Items	Excellent Good	Very Good	Good	Poor	Give Specific reasons (if any)
Presentation Quality					
Block 1- I Society and Economy	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Block 2- I Development Concepts, Strategies and Experiences	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Block 3- I Development - Agrarian Issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Block 4- I Development Administration	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Block 5- Dynamics of change in I India	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Language and Style					
Block 1- I Society and Economy	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Block 2- I Development Concepts, Strategies and Experiences	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Block 3- I Development - Agrarian Issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Block 4- I Development Administration	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Block 5- Dynamics of Change in I India	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Illustrations Used (diagrams, tables, etc.)					
Block 1- I Society and Economy	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Block 2- I Development Concepts, Strategies and Experiences	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Block 3- I Development - Agrarian Issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Block 4- I Development Administration	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Block 5- Dynamics of Change in I India	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Block 1– Rural Society and Economy	☐	☐	☐	☐	.....
Block 2– Rural Development Concepts, Strategies and Experiences	☐	☐	☐	☐	.....
Block 3– Rural Development – Agrarian Issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	.....
Block 4– Rural Development Administration	☐	☐	☐	☐	.....
Block 5– Dynamics of Change in Rural India	☐	☐	☐	☐	.....
Check Your Progress Questions					
Block 1– Rural Society and Economy	☐	☐	☐	☐	.....
Block 2– Rural Development Concepts, Strategies and Experiences	☐	☐	☐	☐	.....
Block 3– Rural Development – Agrarian Issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	.....
Block 4– Rural Development Administration	☐	☐	☐	☐	.....
Block 5– Dynamics of Change in Rural India	☐	☐	☐	☐	.....
Possible Answers to CYP Questions					
Block 1– Rural Society and Economy	☐	☐	☐	☐	.....
Block 2– Rural Development Concepts, Strategies and Experiences	☐	☐	☐	☐	.....
Block 3– Rural Development – Agrarian Issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	.....
Block 4– Rural Development Administration	☐	☐	☐	☐	.....
Block 5– Dynamics of Change in Rural India	☐	☐	☐	☐	.....

3) Any other comments or suggestions:

Mail to :
Course Coordinator (MRD – 101)
SOCE, IGNOU, Maidan Garhi
New Delhi – 110 068.

N.B.: Please use these very pages to prepare your response. Cut the pages along the perforated