

CHAPTER – 8

RURAL LIVELIHOODS

Q. 1 You have probably noticed that people in Kalpattu are engaged in a variety of non-farm work. List five of these.

Answer:

The people of Kalpattu village are engaged in several non-farm activities. Some of them are Baskets, utensils, pots, bricks and bullock-cart makers. There are people who go to nearby villages to work as construction workers. The village also has lorry drivers, washer men, weavers, blacksmiths, teachers, nurses. There are also cycle repair mechanics in the village.

Q. 2 List the different types of people you read about in Kalpattu who depend on farming. Who is the poorest among them and why?

Answer:

There are big farmers like Ramalingam and Karuthamma who own lands along with some small farmers like Sekar and several landless labourers like Thulasi. While Ramalingam and Karuthamma provide employment to landless labourers and small farmers like Thulasi and Sekar, at the same time they exploit the poor people by paying them less and taking extra work from them.

Landless labourers like Thulasi are the poorest among all because they do not have land and are forced to work on lesser pay which is insufficient for their survival. At times, these people have to sell whatever they have to when they get into problems. Also, these people do not have a fixed income, therefore, their survival is always difficult. In India, nearly two

out of every five families are agricultural labourer families. All of them depend upon the work they do on other people's fields to earn a living.

Q. 3 Imagine you are a member of a fishing family and you are discussing whether to take a loan from the bank for an engine. What would you say?

Answer:

If I were a member of a fishing family, then I would have said that taking loan from a bank for engine is a very good idea. An engine can be fixed to a catamaran and the catamaran can travel long distance in the sea where we can get a better catch. Moreover, taking a loan from the bank is safer than any local trader, because the bank rates are fixed and there is no chance of fraud or exploitation.

Q. 4 Poor rural laborers like Thulasi often do not have access to good medical facilities, good schools, and other resources. You have read about inequality in the first unit of this text. The difference between her and Ramalingam is one of inequality. Do you think this is a fair situation? What do you think can be done? Discuss in class.

Answer:

1. The situation presented in the chapter is not at all fair. On one hand, we have Ramalingam who owns huge land and also owns a rice mill. His living conditions are very good, he can afford to send his children to good schools and can fulfil every requirement of his family members.
2. While, Thulasi on the other hand is forced to work on Ramalingam's land to provide basic services to her family. When she was young she could easily work on the paddy fields, but with age she finds it hard to bend down for longer hours during the day.

3. The government can offer schemes for the betterment of the landless farmers. Even distribution of land is also a good idea in which, those who do not have land should be given some land to cultivate.
4. The government can also, provide easy loans and seeds, fertilizers at subsidized rates to the small farmers until they become financially sound.

Q. 5 What do you think the government can do to help farmers like Sekar when they get into debt? Discuss.

Answer:

Yes, the government can help farmers like Sekar when they get into debt, by safeguarding their interests. The government should provide easy loans to small farmers at lesser rates with certain flexible terms. Insuring the crops is also a good option to compensate for the loss of the small farmers. Small funds can be given to the farmers so that they can buy seeds, pesticides and fertilizers etc. The government can also educate small farmers by opening farming schools free of cost.

Q. 6 Compare the situation of Sekar and Ramalingam by filling out the following table:

	SEKAR	RAMALINGAM
Land cultivated		
Labour required		
Loans required		
Selling of harvest		
Other work done by them		

Answer:

	SEKAR	RAMALINGAM
Land cultivated	About 2 acres	About 20 acres
Labour required	Not required. Sekar gets help from other farmers during the time of harvesting and in return he also help them during their harvest.	Labour is required in large number as the land is huge.
Loans required	Yes, for seeds, fertilizers, pesticides	No loan is required, as the land owner already has sufficient funds
Selling of harvest	Forced to sell the harvest to the moneylender at lesser prices from whom he has taken money	Free to sell the harvest to any trade at higher rates
Other work done by them	Work at Ramalingam's rice mill where he collects paddy from other farmers in the neighbouring villages	No other work is required to be done by Ramalingam as he is financially well of. Owns a good amount of land and several rice mills and shops.