

Revision Notes

Class-6 Social Science (Civics)

Chapter 08 – Rural Livelihoods

In CBSE Class 6 Social Science (Civics) Chapter 8, we will try to understand whether people in rural India have equal opportunities to earn a living like their urban counterparts and what are the similarities in their life situations and problems faced.

Kalpattu village

1. Kalpattu is a **small village close to the sea coast in Tamil Nadu**.
2. To earn living, people here are engaged in many economic activities given as follows—
 - a) Some people here are involved in **non-agricultural activities** such as making utensils, pots, bricks, baskets, etc.
 - b) To earn a living, some people also serve as **blacksmiths, nurses, washermen, weavers, barbers, cycle mechanics**, and many more.
 - c) **Traders and shopkeepers own small shops** selling tea, grocery, clothes, seeds, fertilisers, etc. There are shops selling food and snack items like idli, dosa, upama, bonda, mysorepak and vadai.
 - d) Some households **earn a living by washing clothes, doing construction work, driving lorries, repairing cycles**, and so on.
 - e) Kalpattu is surrounded by low hills and is also **favorable for agricultural practices**. The main source of income for the people is agriculture. **Paddy is the main crop**. There are also some coconut groves, cotton, sugarcane, plantain fields, and mango orchards.

Example 1: Thulasi

1. Thulasi **works in paddy fields** owned by Ramalingam **from 8:30 in the morning till 4.30 in the evening.**
2. **June to November** is the time when Thulasi finds regular work in a year. Ramalingam calls her and other workers for transplanting the paddy, then again for weeding and then finally for harvesting.
3. For the tremendous work they do all day long, Ramalingam pays her only rupees 40 per day. This is less than what labourers get in her home village.
4. Her **husband Raman is also a labourer**, who sprays pesticides during this time of the year.
5. Additional tasks Thulasi does are as follows—
 - a) Thulasi **takes care of all the tasks at home.** She cooks for the family, cleans the house, and washes clothes.
 - b) She also **collects firewood from the nearby forest and fetches water from the village borewell.** Her husband helps by getting groceries for the house.
6. Their school-going daughters are the joy of their lives. They borrowed money from Ramalingam for her treatment when she fell sick.
7. Thulasi's story shows that **poor families in rural areas spend a lot of time getting water and firewood.** They have to do these tasks as the **money they make is not enough.**
8. Nearly **two-fifths of our rural population work as agricultural labourers.** They either have small plots of land or do not own any land at all, like Thulasi. To earn money, they travel long distances looking for work. Such migration of labourers is more common during particular seasons.

Example 2 : Sekar

1. Another villager is **Sekar whose family after harvesting their field has to carry paddy to their home.**
2. They **own 2 acres of land** and manage to do all the work themselves. **During the harvest time, they often take the help of small farmers** who help them harvest their field.
3. **Sekar takes seeds and fertilizers as a loan from a trader** and pays it back by selling his paddy to the trader at a cost lower than the market price.
4. The remaining paddy is used in the house for consumption.
5. Additional income sources of Sekar are as follows—
 - a) Whatever he has lasts for the next 8 months. So, **as a back up he has to engage in work at Ramalingam's rice mill.** His job there is to help him in the collection of paddy from other farmers in the nearby villages.
 - b) **Sekar is also the owner of a hybrid cow.** It gives milk which he sells in the local milk cooperative and earns a little additional money.

Being in Debt

1. **Farmers like Sekar often need to take loans** to buy agricultural raw materials such as seeds and pesticides. However, **a crop failure can occur** and adversely affect agricultural production if the **seeds turn out to be of bad quality, the crops face a pest attack or there is a lack of rainfall.**
2. In such a scenario, farmers cannot pay back the borrowed money. In fact, they might even need to borrow some more to survive. This way, **the loan amount keeps increasing** and they are unable to pay it back.

3. **Thus debts accumulate.** Accumulated debts become a major reason for distress among farmers and have resulted in **farmers committing suicide** in many parts of the country.

Example 3 : Ramalingam and Karuthamma

1. **Ramalingam's financial condition is better** than the agricultural labourers.
2. His sources of income are as follows:
3. His family is the **owner of land, a rice mill, and a shop of seeds and pesticides** for farmers.
4. To run the rice mill, they use a part of their own money and also take some loan from the government bank.
5. They buy paddy from the farmers in the village and also from the nearby villages.
6. With the paddy, **Ramalingam's rice mill produces rice and sells those to the traders** in surrounding towns. This acts as a source of substantial income.

Agricultural Labourers and Farmers in India

1. **Most of the agricultural labourer families in rural India earn a living by working on other people's land** as most of them do not own any land.
2. A few of them, like Sekar, **have small plots of land**, which is not enough for the survival of a complete family. 80% of the farmers in India belong to this group.
3. The rest 20% are bigger farmers like Ramalingam, **who cultivate most of their land and sell a part of their produce in the market.** They also own shops and small factories in villages and lend money to smaller farmers.

4. The smaller and poor farmers cannot depend only on agriculture as it is not a sustainable source of income. Additional sources of income for them are as follows—
- a) In central India, many villagers depend on **collection from the forest for livelihood**. They collect leaves of trees like mahua and tendua, honey and sell them to traders to earn an extra income.
 - b) **Dairy produce, animal husbandry, and fishing** are also important sources of livelihood.
 - c) **Selling milk** to nearby towns or selling it to the cooperative society is also a source of income for some families.
 - d) In some villages like Pudupet, a village near Kalpattu, **people make a living by fishing** and live close to the sea. Their activities make the beach bustling in the morning, around 7 a.m when catamarans return with their catch and women get together on the beach to buy and sell fish.

Example 4: Aruna and Paarivelan

- 1. Aruna, a resident of Pudupet village, has a family that survives on fishing.
- 2. Their everyday routine is somewhat like this:
 - a) **Every morning**, Aruna's husband Paarivelan, her brother, and her brother-in-law **go to the sea together for fishing**.
 - b) After that, **Aruna's task is to sell the catch**.
 - c) Then **whatever money is earned, they divide it into 4 parts**, one for each person who went fishing and the fourth one for buying fishing equipment. **The owners of the equipment are Aruna and her husband**. They had taken a loan to buy those and get the fourth share as well.
 - d) In the evening, **her husband and relatives untangle and repair the nets**.

- e) The next morning, **they set to the sea as early as 2 a.m.** and repeat the same routine.
- 3. **There are about four months during the monsoon season when fishermen cannot go to the sea** as this is the time when the fish are breeding.
- 4. This is the time **fishermen borrow money from the trader** and are later forced to sell the fish to the same trader to repay the loan.

Rural Livelihoods

- 1. People in rural areas **engage in a variety of activities to earn money.** They work on the farms, prepping the land sowing, weeding, and harvesting.
- 2. Their life revolves around certain seasons as **they depend on the crops** which are, in turn, dependent on nature for their growth.
- 3. People in rural areas **grow different crops** but there are a lot of **similarities in their life and the problems faced by them.** An account of it is given as follows:
 - a) Some people survive by **cultivating their land** while others **work as labourers** on farms.
 - b) Small **farmers grow crops for their own families** as well as to **sell in the market.**
 - c) Their main issue is regarding **taking loans.** In case they have borrowed money from a trader they also need to sell their crop to them at prices lower than the market price.
 - d) Many of them have to look for **alternate sources of income** to earn more money,
 - e) Also, the agricultural labourers, fishing families, and craft workers often struggle to find enough employment throughout the year.

4. On the other hand, **bigger farmers thrive quite lavishly** on the produce of the land and many other businesses and activities.

Important Questions and Answers:

1. People in Kalpattu are involved in an array of non--farm work. List five of these.

Ans: Some of the main activities that the people of Kalpattu are involved in are as follows—

- I. Making pots, utensils, bullock-carts, baskets, etc.
- II. Repairing cycles
- III. Running small shops
- IV. Weaving
- V. Teaching

2. What are the different types of people you read about in Kalpattu who depend on farming? Also, who is the poorest among them?

Ans: Thulasi, Sekar, and Ramalingam are the people in Kalpattu who depend on farming. They are of three different types as their way of earning from agriculture is different. So, from this, we can conclude the following types of people in Kalpattu—

- I. The first type (Thulasi) does not own any land.
- II. The second type of people (Sekar) owns a few acres of land and the family manages to cultivate it on its own.
- III. The third type (Ramalingam) owns large acres of land and takes the help of local farmers for cultivation.

Thulasi is the poorest of the three. By working in Ramalingam's field, she earns only Rs. 40 a day. She owns no land and also does a lot of household work.

3. If you belonged to a fishing family and were asked if you should take a bank loan for an engine, what would you say?

Ans: To buy an engine for the catamaran, I would suggest taking a bank loan instead of going to a moneylender. The high rates of interest that moneylenders charge often put fishermen in a difficult situation.

4. Poor rural labourers like Thulasi often have no access to decent medical facilities, schools, etc. They are in no way equals to Ramalingam. Is this a fair situation?

Ans: The rich are enjoying all the opportunities while the poor are lagging - this is definitely not a fair situation because of the following reasons—

- I. Basic amenities and facilities like good hospitals and schools should be accessible to everyone. This will ensure equal opportunity for all.
- II. A piece of land should give everyone equal earnings to make a good living.
- III. Also, such a situation gives the rich moneylenders of villages the chances to exploit the small farmers or labourers. Hence, the poor should be educated about their rights and opportunities so that local moneylenders cannot charge them high rates of interest on loans.
- IV. Last but not the least, our constitution emphasizes equality and justice for all. Going by those ideals, this is not a fair situation.

5. How can the government help farmers like Sekar in case of accumulated debt?

Ans: In case of accumulated debts, the government can help small farmers like Sekar in the following way—

- I. The government should extend support to small farmers so that they can avail loans at no or low interest.

- II. It should also provide seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides at subsidised rates.