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M.R.D.E.- 101

Rural Social Development

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By: Taruna Jain



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**Sample Preview
of the
Solved
Sample Question
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QUESTION PAPER

June – 2023

(Solved)

RURAL SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

M.R.D.E.-101

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Attempt all the five questions. All questions carry equal marks.

Q. 1. Discuss economic and political status of rural women.

Ans. It is important to have a in the current status of the women which is referred to as a position in a social system or a sub-system which is distinguishable from and, at the same time, related to other positions through its designed rights and obligation. The Committee on the Status of Women recognized status as:

- Place in ritual hierarchy.
- Financial position.
- Independent job.
- Educational background.
- Political participation.

The two types of status are quantitative which includes vital statistics of birth and mortality rates, sex ratio, degree of participation in economic and political life, literacy and education and qualitative which helps in the understanding of the limitations.

Also See Ref. Chapter-1, Page No. 4, 'Economic Status', 'Political Status'.

Or

Examine major persisting problems of Scheduled Tribes.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-11, Page No. 119, 'Unresolved Issues and Persisting Problems'.

Q. 2. Discuss important programmes of economic empowerment of rural women.

Ans. The economic empowerment decides the status of women in society. The esteem and the power of a woman increases if she contributes in the income of the household by earning which in turn increases the pressure on her, but has to face less discrimination compared to a non-earning woman. An earning woman has to face less discrimination compared to a housewife. The additional income from the women has been found to have far greater incremental effect on spending on nutrition, shelter and savings than the additional income of a male.

Employment and Income-Generation

There are special efforts that have been made to generate gainful employment through promotion/expansion of both wage and self-employment opportunities. Some of the training programmes are **SGSY, SJSRY, PMRY, STEP, NORAD**, etc. which will be further expanded to create more and more of employment-cum-income-generation opportunities and to cover as many women as possible living below the poverty line. There are three unique programmes implemented by the Department of Women and Child Development for the empowerment of women at the grassroots. One such programme is *Swayamsidha* which is a centrally sponsored programme implemented in 650 selected blocks throughout the country, modeled on the basis of the two erstwhile programmes of Indira *Mahila Yojana* and *Mahila Samridhi Yojana*, which it subsumes.

Women and Micro-Credit

A comprehensive Credit Policy is needed to increase women's access to credit either through the establishment of new micro-credit mechanisms or microfinancial institutions or strengthening the existing ones. The lessons are drawn from the success stories of the voluntary organizations and also there are efforts to equip all States/UTs with Women's Development Corporations to provide both 'forward' and 'backward' linkages of credit and marketing facilities to women entrepreneurs, besides being active catalysts for empowering women economically. The government will also try and expedite the earlier efforts of setting up of an exclusive Development Bank for Women Entrepreneurs in the Small Scale and Tiny Sectors. One integrated programmes for women's empowerment is *Swayamsidha* which is based on the formation of women into Self-help Groups (SHGs) and aims at the holistic empowerment of women through mobilization, awareness generation and convergence of various schemes. Some other objectives include:

- (1) Setting of self-reliant women's Self-help Groups (SHGs).
 - (2) To create confidence and awareness among members of SHGs regarding women's status, health, nutrition, education, sanitation and hygiene, legal rights, economic upliftment and other social, economic and political issues.
 - (3) To strengthen and institutionalize the saving habit in rural women and their control over economic resources.
 - (4) To improve the access of women to micro credit.
 - (5) To involve women in local level planning.
 - (6) To converge services of DWCD and other departments.
- (4) The women's access to resources should be enhanced for better quality of life.
 - (5) In order to address the needs of women, sensitizing and strengthening the institutional capacity of support agencies.

The funds for the programme are available from the IFAD and International Development Association (IDA) and through partnership with NGOs.

Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)

In 1987, the STEP programme was launched which seeks to provide updated skills and new knowledge to poor and assetless women in traditional occupations, such as, agriculture, animal husbandry, dairying, fisheries, etc. in order to enhance their productivity and income generation. Some services like training, extension, infrastructure, market linkages, etc. are provided besides linkages with credit for transfer of assets. The maximum support so far has been received by women in the dairying sector keeping in view the nature of demands and then in handlooms, handicrafts, sericulture and poultry.

Swawlamban

In the year 1982-83, the programme was launched with assistance from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). The objective was to provide training and skills to women to facilitate them to obtain employment or self-employment on a sustained basis with the target group as poor and needy women, women from weaker sections of society, such as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, etc. The programmes like computer programming, medical transcription, electronics, watch assembling, radio and television repairs, garment making, handloom weaving, secretarial practice, community health work, embroidery, etc. are some of the important trades in the programme. The programme was a success and the Ninth Plan (1997-2002) adopted it as a central sector plan scheme.

A State Empowerment Committee has been set up in each state except a few in order to have enhanced involvement of the states in the implementation of the programme which scrutinises the project proposals received from the NGOs/corporations/undertakings from the state concerned and submits it to the Department for consideration.

Women in Small-Scale/Cottage Industries

In the Tenth Plan, special efforts will be made to identify the traditional sectors that are shrinking due to advancement of technology, market shifts and changes in the economic policies. Another objective will be to formulate the appropriate policies and programmes that will be attempted to generate opportunities for wage/

The most important component of the programme is the formulation, implementation and monitoring of block-specific composite projects for four to five years, incorporating the following four elements:

- Group formation/mobilization activities.
- Community oriented innovative interventions.
- Other schemes of DWCD, namely Swawlamban, STEP, SEP and AGP and other schemes, too, if there is a felt need for the same.
- Schemes of other departments, whether converged under GOI directions or state government initiative.

In the year 1998, The Swa-Shakti Project or Rural Women's Development and Empowerment Project was sanctioned with the aim of enhancing women's access to resources for better quality of life through use of drudgery and time reduction devices, health, literacy and confidence enhancement and increasing their control over incomes through their involvement in skill development and income generating activities. The technical and managerial support is provided by a project support unit at the central level (CPSU). It is a rural women's development and empowerment project supported jointly by World Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

Following are the specific objectives of the project:

- (1) Establishment of 7,400-12,000 self-reliant women's SHGs with 15-20 members each.
- (2) Developing linkages between SHGs and lending institutions in order to ensure women's continued access to credit facilities for income generation activities.
- (3) In order to alleviate poverty, increasing the control of women over income and spending by involving them in income generation activities.

Sample Preview of The Chapter

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RURAL SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

BLOCK-1 : DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL WOMEN

Rural Women: Status and Development Strategies



INTRODUCTION

There has been major 'Women's Upsurge' in the 21st century which is the result of the cumulative and interactive effect of the sustained efforts of government, the women's movement and the civil society at various fronts over the last two decades. There are two positive indicators of this 'Upsurge' and a negative one, which is indicative of women's assertion – of their rights for justice, for equality of status and level of empowerment. Some of the areas where women need attention are:

- Women had no political participation.
- Lack in organisation in groups and had no access to credit or resources.
- Lack in education, vocational training, and other skills.
- Poor health and nutritional status.
- Non-availability of water, fodder and fuel within their homes.
- Not adequate medical attention.
- Inadequate social support measures for women in rural areas.

It is important to have a in the current status of the women which is referred to as a position in a social system or a sub-system which is distinguishable from and, at the same time, related to other positions through its designed rights and obligation. The Committee on the Status of Women recognized status as:

- Place in ritual hierarchy.
- Financial position.
- Independent job.
- Educational background.
- Political participation.

The two types of status are quantitative which includes vital statistics of birth and mortality rates, sex ratio, degree of participation in economic and political life, literacy and education and qualitative which helps in the understanding of the limitations.

CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC STATUS

The women's health is affected by the factors like high female mortality rate in certain age groups, marked preference for sons and the consequent neglect of

female infants, lower status of women and the general neglect of women at all ages. Some other factors are the adverse impact of frequent and excessive child bearing on the health of women, higher evidence of certain diseases in women and higher work burden and drudgery.

Society's Attitude towards Women

The *Purdah* system and the widow norms still exist in our society. There is an inequality between men and women in our society based on caste, community and class. The status of women in the society is unrealistic. Marriage and motherhood continue to be the most honourable and religiously valuable achievement for women. However, women still continue to stand at a disadvantage. The practices such as rape, dowry, bride burning and so on, continue to affect women at large. Other problems that still exist today are illiteracy, ignorance, discrimination and violence.

Vital Statistics

The women account for 495.74 million and represent 48.3 per cent of country's total population, as per the 2001 Census. The female population has been categorized into five distinct sub-groups (Population as projected for 2001). They include:

- Special attention to the girl children in the age-group of 0-14 years.
- The sensitive stage is of the adolescent girls in the age-group of 15-19 years.
- Special care and attention to women in the reproductive age-group of 15-44 years.
- Women in the economically active age-group of 15-59 years who need help in the income generating activities.
- The elderly women in the age-group of 60+ years who have limited needs.

The number of men in India is more than the number of women. There has been a slight increase in the total female population of the country but still the demographic imbalances between women and men continue to exist till date. The other problems include discrimination that the girl child faces and the consequential problems of poor health and nutritional status. Added to these are the problems of female foeticide and female infanticide, incidences of which are on an increase.

Table 1.1: Population by Sex and Decennial Growth Rate (1981-2001)

(Population in million)

Census	Female		Male		Total	
	Population	DGR*	Population	DGR	Population	DGR
1981	330.0	24.93	353.4	24.41	683.4	24.66
1991	407.1	23.37	439.2	24.30	846.3	23.86
2001	495.7	21.79	531.3	20.93	1027.0	21.34

Note: *Decennial Growth Rate

Source: Census of India, 1991 & Census of India, 2001: Provisional Population Totals, Registrar-General & Census Commissioner, GOI, New Delhi.

The table above shows that the expectation of life at birth in respect of females has been rising steadily.

Table 1.2: Sex Ratio (1981-2001)*

Census	Sex Ratio
1981	934
1991	927
2001	933

Note: *Sex Ratio : Females per 1,000 males.

Source: Census of India, 2001 : Provisional Population Totals, Registrar-General & Census Commissioner, GOI, New Delhi.

Table 1.5 : Birth Rate (1981-1999)

(Per thousand)

Year	Birth Rate
1981	33.9
1991	29.5
1999	26.1

Source: Sample Registration System Bulletins for respective years, Registrar-General and Census Commissioner, GOI, New Delhi.

Table 1.6 : Death Rate (1981-1999)

(Per thousand)

Year	Females	Males	Total
1981	12.7	12.4	12.5
1991	9.7	10.0	9.8
1999	8.3	9.0	8.7

Source : Sample Registration System Bulletins for respective years, Registrar-General and Census Commissioner, GOI, New Delhi.

There is a decline in the female death rate. Other diseases are poor child-rearing practices of these adolescent mothers. According to the survey, many women suffer from nutritional anaemia, which can easily be prevented by providing better nutrition during their adolescent period and, more specifically, during pregnancy and lactation. The causes of this high rate are given in the table 1.8 below:

Table 1.7 : Maternal Mortality Rate (1980-1998)

(Per one lakh livebirths)

Year	Maternal Mortality Rate
1980	468
1993	437
1998	407

Source: Sample Registration System Bulletins for respective years, Registrar-General and Census Commissioner, GOI, New Delhi.

Table 1.3 : Life Expectancy at Birth (1981-2001)

(In years)

Year	Females	Males
1981-85	55.7	55.4
1989-93*	59.7	59.0
1996-2001	65.3	62.3

Note: * Based on the Sample Registration System Estimates.

Source: Census of India, 1991; and Census of India, 2001: Provisional Population Totals, Registrar-General & Census Commissioner, GOI, New Delhi.

Health and Family Welfare

The health risk in men and women are different as women are exposed to a particular or specific and major health risk due to child bearing. Therefore, good health and family planning services are important for the general well-being of the women, children and the entire family. There is a decline in the birth rate and the effective mean age at marriage for females has also increased. The education and employment of women/girls have also played a very important role in raising the age of marriage.

Table 1.4 : Mean Age at Marriage (1981-1997)

(In years)

Year	Females	Males
1981	18.3	23.3
1991	19.5	23.9
1997	19.5	N.A.

Source: Sample Registration System Bulletins for respective years, Registrar-General and Census Commissioner, GOI, New Delhi.

Table 1.8 : Percentage Distribution of Cause-Specific Maternal Mortality Deaths, 1998

Cause	Percentage
Haemorrhage	29.7
Anaemia	19.0
Sepsis	16.1
Obstructed Labour	9.5
Abortion	8.9
Toxaemia	8.3
Others	8.5

Source : Survey of Causes of Death (Rural), India, Annual Report, 1998, Registrar-General and Census Commissioner, GOI, New Delhi.

Table 1.9 : Prevalence of Anaemia amongst Pregnant Women

Category	Percentage
Normal (> 11 g/dl)	13
Mild (8-11 g/dl)	40
Moderate (5-8 g/dl)	34
Severe (< 5 g/dl)	13

Source: National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau (NNMB), 1996.

There are gender disparities in nutrition which are evident from infancy to adulthood. Girls are breast-fed less frequently and for shorter durations in infancy; in childhood and adulthood, males are fed first and better. Nutritional deprivation has two major consequences for women: they never reach their full growth potential and are prone to anaemia. As a result this complicates childbearing and results in maternal and infant deaths, and low birth weight infants.

Maternal Mortality

In India, the maternal mortality rates in rural areas are among the highest in the world. This is because of the reluctance to seek medical care for pregnancy – it is viewed as a temporary condition that will disappear. Women are treated with home remedies only for three reasons: the decision that a pregnant woman seeks help rests with the mother-in-law and husband; financial considerations; and fear that the treatment may be more harmful than the malady. For every maternal death in India, an estimated 20 more women suffer from impaired health.

SOCIAL STATUS

Even in today's world, the violence against women and girls can be seen in the different parts of the world which is the most pervasive human rights violation. The lack of women's participation in the outside world is because of the fear of violence both at home and outside. The acts like physical and sexual abuse as punishment shape their attitude to life, and their expectations of themselves. There are cases of women kidnapping, rape and being burnt alive for dowry.

Women are Subordinate in Society

The status of women in northern India is poor as some rural areas are still dominated by men. When a bride goes to the groom's house after marriage, they are dominated by the older females in the house and because of emotional ties between spouses are considered a potential threat to the solidarity of the patrilineal group, the northern system tends to segregate the sexes and limit communication between spouses – a circumstance that has direct consequences for family planning and similar "Modern" behaviours that affect health.

In the Indian society, it is perceived that sons are the major source of economic security in old age.

Child Marriages

After the amendment of the Child Marriage Restraint Act, the minimum legal age for marriage was raised from 15 to 18 for young women and from 18 to 21 for young men. But in many rural communities, illegal child marriages are still common. There is a large percentage of girls getting married between the age group of 10 to 14 especially in rural areas. According to a survey, more than 5,000 women in Rajasthan had married before they were 15 and barely 18 per cent of them were literate and only three per cent used any form of birth control other than sterilization.

Dowry

Even after the implementation of the Dowry Prohibition Act, there are many cases of dowry and there are virtually no arrests under the Act. No one is willing to complain and it is only after a "Dowry death" that the complaints become public. The article goes on to state, "So, complete is the discrimination among women that the gender bias is extended even toward the guilty. In a bizarre trend, the onus of murder is often put on the women to protect the men. Sometimes, it is by consent."

Inheritance

According to the Hindu law, sons have an independent share in the ancestral property and the share of the daughters is based on the share received by their father. Even the weak laws protecting women have not been adequately enforced. The women continue to have little access to land and property, a major source of income and long-term economic security.

Literacy and Educational Achievements

There has been reduction in the difference in the male and female primary enrolment to a great extent but still, there is a huge gap in their male and female literacy levels. The drop-out rates in different levels of school education are significantly more for girls as compared to boys. The past gains in women's education as reflected in the female literacy rate shows an increase from 29.76 per cent in 1981 to 54.16 per cent in 2001. The gap between female and male illiterates and drop-outs has also narrowed down.

Table 1.10 : Literacy Rates by Sex (1981-2001)

(In per cent)

Census	Females	Males	Persons	Male-Female Gap in Literacy Rate
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1981	29.76	56.38	43.57	26.62
1991	39.29	64.13	52.21	24.84
2001	54.16	75.85	65.38	21.69

- Note:** (i) The literacy rates relate to the population aged seven years and above.
(ii) The 1981 Census Literacy rates exclude Assam. The 1991 Census Literacy Rates exclude Jammu & Kashmir.

Source: *Census of India, 2001 : Provisional Population Totals, Registrar-General & Census Commissioner, GOI, New Delhi.*

The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for girls both at primary and middle levels have also increased. The number of women in higher education, which includes colleges, universities, professional colleges of engineering, medicine, technology, etc. has also increased. There is a decline in the drop-out rates.

ECONOMIC STATUS

Women work roughly twice as many hours as men: The contribution of women to agriculture – whether it be subsistence farming or commercial agriculture – when measured in terms of the number of tasks performed and time spent, is greater than men. The employment of women in family farms or businesses is rarely recognized as economically productive, either by men or women and the income generated is generally controlled by the men. Such work is unlikely to increase women’s participation in allocating family finances. “Not only do women perform more tasks, their work is also more arduous than that undertaken by men. Overall women are invariably paid lower wages, despite the fact that they work harder and for longer hours than do men.

The Impact of Technology on Women

There is a negative impact on women because of the shift from subsistence to a market economy. The participation of women, their knowledge was marginalized and the role shifted from being “Primary producers to subsidiary workers.” Commercialization and the consequent focus on cash crops has led to a situation where food is lifted straight from the farm to the market. The men control the generated income. Earlier, most of the produce was brought home and stored, and the women exchanged it for other commodities. Such a system vested more control with the women.

Women have Unequal Access to Resources

The women continue to perform unskilled tasks as the extension services tend to reach only men. According to World Bank study in 1991, it was revealed that the assumption made by extension workers is that information within a family will be transmitted to the women by the men, which, in actual practice, seldom happens. There has already been a major shift from subsistence farming method of rice, millet, corn and

wheat to cash-crop production of fruit, mushrooms, flowers and vegetables. This shift has led to women being the first to lose jobs. The ability of women gets restricted due to unequal access to education and have low mobility and literacy levels and prejudiced attitudes toward women. Gender discrimination is also evident from the differences prevalent in the average daily wages of women and men as regular salaried employees as well as casual labourers. There is an inadequate access of women to education, health and productive resources particularly in the rural areas. Hence, they are largely marginalized, poor and socially excluded.

POLITICAL STATUS

The figure of women at the various decision making is still very low and requires not only affirmative action, but also special interventions to help raise the number of women. A definite impact on the participation of women was made in the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Act in 1993, in grassroot democratic institutions viz. Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Local Bodies. These amendments have helped women not only in their effective participation, but also in decision-making in the grassroot democracy. Also, nearly one-third of the Mayors of the Municipalities are women. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, which guarantee that all local elected bodies reserve one-third of their seats for women, have spearheaded an unprecedented social experiment.

Contrary to fears that the elected women would be rubber stamp leaders, the success stories that have arisen from PRI are impressive. It was found after a study that two-thirds of elected women leaders are actively engaged in learning the ropes and exercising power. Women leaders in the Panchayati Raj are transforming local governance by sensitizing the State to issues of poverty, inequality and gender injustice.

CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

Malnutrition: In India, children are malnourished because tradition in India requires that women eat last and least throughout their lives, even when pregnant and lactating. The children of malnourished women are also malnourished.