

### Economic activities of man

The activity of man by which he earns his livelihood is termed as an economic activity. Economic activities are mainly classified into five categories : primary, secondary, tertiary, quaternary and quinary. Primary activities are directly dependent on environment, because it is carried out by the use of physical resources such as land, water, vegetation, building materials, minerals, etc. Hunting, food gathering, animal rearing, fishing, lumbering, agriculture, mining, etc are primary activities.

In ancient times, man used to live a nomadic life. The ancient man used to obtain food in the form of fruits, leaves, roots from forests, and by hunting and fishing. He did not have clothes to cover his body. With time he realized the importance of animals, and thus began the activity of animal rearing. Use of animals led to development of agriculture. Shifting agriculture soon gave way to sedentary agriculture. This led to origin of village life. Man's needs increased. Those engaged in farming became farmers. Those who didn't engage in farming, engaged in different skill and art based works for fulfilling the needs of farmer, thus the rural artisan class emerged. Exchange of goods started among farmers and artisans. Gradually the size and shape of villages changed. With that, the scope of activities of rural people widened.

The Industrial Revolution took place in Europe in the 18th century. The revolution had its impact on agriculture, education, health, transport, communication and trade. Influence of the European people was spread across the world over. Europeans got advantage of natural resources of other continents and thus Europe became highly developed. During this period, colonial exploitation took place on Asian and African countries and they remained in underdeveloped status.

After the two world wars, due to adverse impact on environment, man began to think about his development. Shortly the information system developed. In the 1980s, knowledge gaining and sharing became an important profession in countries of western Europe. This resulted in information revolution of the 20th century. Telecommunications technology has opened doors for development of entire mankind.

### Types of Economic Activities of Man

Economic activities of man are mainly classified into five categories :

- (1) **Primary activity** : Hunting, forest gathering, fishing, animal rearing, mining, agriculture and related activities.
- (2) **Secondary activity** : These activities add value to natural resources. Industry related activities are of this type. In it, man transforms raw materials into finished goods, e.g., steel from iron ore and cotton cloth from cotton.
- (3) **Tertiary activity** : These activities include services. E.g., trade, transport, health, communication, education, entertainment and other services. Activities of electricians, technicians, shop-keepers, transporters, teachers, doctors, advocates, etc. is included in tertiary activities.

**(4) Quaternary activity :** This includes special services offered by highly skilled persons. e.g., industry, research and developmental services based on special knowledge, high level political and administrative services, information generation and analysis, beautician, telecommunication and other services.

**(5) Quinary activity :** Services of experts in specialized fields, services of administrative decision makers, advisory services by experts in various fields, services of new policy makers, etc are quinary services.

All these five types of man's activities are linked to each other and their borders also overlap. Due to all these five types of economic activities, knowledge based industries have developed, and made the world just like a small village. Residents of various continents have become interdependent. Now let us study all these five activities one by one.

### **Primary Activities**

In the economically developed countries, less than 5% people are engaged in primary activities, while in developing countries, human labour is given more importance.

Hunting and fishing, forest gathering, animal rearing and agriculture are primary activities of man.

### **Hunting and Gathering**

In ancient times, all the people of the world subsisted as hunters and gatherers. In such economy, people led a nomadic life in search of food. They lived in small groups. They did not have own wealth. They hunted with stone tools. They wore leaves as clothes and made shelter out of local materials. People residing near coasts subsisted on fishes and other marine life. People of tropical regions did hunting and gathering of forest products. They lived in natural conditions. They led a self reliant life without making any change in environment. Presently, such people are seen in limited parts of Australia, Africa, North America and South America. Black Fellows of Australia, Pigmy and Bushman of Africa, Eskimo of Alaska, Lapps of Europe, Red Indians of America, Paliyans of south India and Semang of Malaysia are engaged in primary activities.

### **Animal rearing**

Animal rearing has been an important primary activity. Even today people of grasslands, rear cow, buffalo, ox, horse, etc.; people of Tundra rear reindeer; people of desert areas rear camels, sheep and goats; people of mountainous areas rear llama and yak, These animals are used as beast of burden, in agriculture and for animal products. People of tropical and temperate regions practiced nomadic herding, but now they have shifted to commercial animal rearing.

### **Nomadic Herding**

People practicing such kind of animal rearing cannot live sedentary life. Such nomadic herders

keep on moving with their animal wealth, with season. In the Himalayas, herders migrate from upper slopes to the foothills in winter, and from foothills to upper slopes in summer season. Animal rearers of the Tundra Region, migrate to the south during winters, and to the north during summers.

These nomadic herders, move with their cattle in specific areas. They are well aware of the seasons and weather. They have empirical knowledge of fodder and water sources. Their cattle are dependent on natural vegetation. Herders in areas of scanty rain domesticate sheep and goats. Nomadic herders domesticate sheep, cattle, camel, cow, ox, horse, mule, etc. This kind of animal rearing is done in the developing countries. These animal rearers obtain milk, meat, wool, hides and other animal products from their animals, and subsist on them. This kind of animal rearing is a typical case of ecological and cultural adjustment with the ecosystem. Here, the herders and their domesticated animals are interdependent and live as a single community.

There are seven regions of nomadic herding in the world : the Arctic region, the Eurasian Steppes region, South -West Asia, the Sahara Desert, the Arabian Desert, Savannah grasslands of Africa, Andes and highlands of Asia. The number of such herders is declining.

### **Commercial livestock rearing**

Compared to nomadic herding, commercial livestock rearing is more systematic, scientific and capital intensive. To generate more income from animal products is the main objective. This is a specialized activity in which only a particular type of animals are reared. Animals such as sheep, goat, cow, ox, hen, duck, horse, etc. are reared. In this kind of animal rearing, milk, meat, hides, wool, eggs, etc. are produced in mass, packed through scientific process in tins and exported in world markets. Particular attention is given for producing the best breeds of animals, domestication, provision of medicines for animal diseases, treatment of animals by veterinary doctors, poultry in a scientific way, best food for animals, best care of animals, etc. Commercial livestock rearing is practiced in New Zealand, Australia, Argentina, U.S.A., India, Denmark, Uruguay, etc.

### **Agriculture**

Agriculture is supposed to have begun some 12000 years ago in the world. In the beginning, man hunted animals to obtain food, then he shifted to animal rearing by having closeness with animals. Animals were used as beast of burden, then with their help in farm activities, agriculture also began. Due to agriculture, man must have begun a sedentary life. Initially he chopped off trees to have open land for cultivation and began farming. After reaping production for about 2 to 5 years from the same land, he left it fallow to clear another piece of land. This was the primitive type of shifting cultivation. After sometime, sedentary agriculture developed in areas of favourable climate, irrigation facilities and fertile soils. This led to formation of rural settlements.

Among all primary activities, agriculture is the most important. Almost half the world population is dependent on agriculture. In developing countries, agriculture is the mainstay of more than 65%



people. The industrial revolution began in the 18th century in Europe. The revolution influenced countries of Asia, America and Africa. Agriculture was also transformed. Machines began to be used in farming. Man cultivated specific crops, in which wheat, paddy, cotton, tea, coffee, rubber, sugarcane, maize, etc. were major crops. Efforts were made to increase productivity through soil improvements. Plantation agriculture developed. Agricultural produce began to be traded in the world market. Cultivation of maize spread from central America to many other countries of the world. Cultivation of potatoes spread from the Andes to the European countries. Portuguese brought tobacco plants to India. Benefits of scientific and technical knowledge led to the Green Revolution. Agriculture has an important impact on the world's physical, social and economic conditions. Climate, rain, soil and relief are important factors influencing agriculture.

### **Allied activities dependent on Agriculture**

- Obtaining milk and milk products from animal rearing
- Obtaining wool, leather and meat from animals
- Obtaining eggs and meat from poultry
- Making pickles, murabba and juice, etc. through food processing industries dependent on various plantation crops.
- Making perfumes and different medicines from flower cultivation.
- Obtaining honey from apiculture
- Cultivating mulberry trees for sericulture
- Pisciculture in farm ponds prepared in lower parts of fields or in rice fields
- Planting medicinal plants in field shades or in open space
- Making edible oil by crushing oilseeds

### **Mining**

Mining means obtaining minerals from the earth by removing clay or sand, digging, breaking stones with dynamites and drilling to obtain minerals from deep within the earth. Mining activity started since ancient times. In the past, copper, iron and other minerals were used for making tools and weapons. Minerals were used for making spears, things of domestic use, different equipment, utensils, etc. Significance of mining increased in the medieval times. Metals were produced for making weapons and coins in England and Germany. Other countries also increased the use of metals. The use and significance of minerals increased after the Industrial Revolution.

A mineral is a matter with a definite molecular structure, chemical composition and uniform characteristics, commonly occurring in solid but exceptionally in liquid or gaseous state. Minerals are mainly put under two main categories : (1) metallic minerals (2) non-metallic minerals. Iron ore, copper, lead, zinc, etc. are included in metallic minerals. Sulphur, mica, fluorspar, limestone, etc. are non-metallic minerals. Coal, mineral oil, natural gas, etc. are minerals used as power resources.

Mining is of two types : (1) surface mining and (2) underground mining. Surface mining is also known as open pit mining. Surface mining is easier, safe and less expensive. Minerals can be mined in huge quantities and quickly.

If minerals are situated deep inside the earth, underground mining is preferred. Mining from greater depth below the earth's surface is considered very difficult and unsafe. It is very expensive also. Lift, equipment to bring out minerals from depth, air circulation system are required. Such mining is highly risky because there is possibility of mines getting filled with poisonous gases, landslides in mines, mines catching fire or mines getting flooded, causing major hazards. Deaths of miners working in mines may also occur. Developed countries do such mining with the help of modern machines.

We will study about some important minerals of the world in chapter 9 on '**Natural Resources**'. Now let us understand the secondary activities of man :

#### **Do You Know ?**

- The fieldwork of people engaged in primary activities is in outdoors, so such people are called **red collar** workers.
- The part of chewing gum that remains after chewing is 'chicle'. Chewing gum is prepared from milky fluid of 'Zapota' tree. Such trees are reared in some countries.
- Reindeers are mainly reared by Eskimos.
- Tea gardens are developed on mountain slopes

#### **Secondary activities of man**

All economic activities are related to procurement and use of resources. All types of resources are very useful to mankind. Due to secondary activities, value of natural resources is greatly enhanced. As raw material gets transformed into finished good it becomes valuable. Value of thread is more than cotton from which it is made. Threads are used for making cloth. In brief, a production activity that transforms raw material into more valuable products is called '**manufacturing activity**'. Activity in which products of primary sector are used is called secondary activity. Geographers use the word 'industry' to describe that activity which is related to primary products obtained from agriculture, forest, fishing and mining. To distinguish from primary activity, industry is classed as secondary activity.

Due to the industrial revolution, through the use of power resources like flowing water, coal, oil, etc., several changes occurred in the field of primary activities. This helped the manufacturing activity. Here, the raw material obtained from primary activities was processed into finished goods. Hence such activities became known as secondary activities. Making plastic toys, machines from iron, building a space ship, etc., are known as industry. Manufacturing means transforming organic or inorganic materials into a new product, through mechanical or chemical process of change. Such activity may have been done by an automatic machine, by hand or in a factory. Characteristics of modern manufacturing include complex system, modern power resources, skilled labour, use of machines and mass production.

## **Classification of industries**

Industries may be classified as follows :

### **Household Industry (Cottage Industry)**

Cottage industry is the smallest form of manufacturing. A craftsman or a sculptor with the help of his family members and simple tools, makes certain things using locally available material. Here, the production cost is very low. The products are sold in the local market. Potter, blacksmith, cobbler, etc. produce items as per their traditional household industry. In countries of Asia and Africa, even today goods are produced by household industries. Some of these goods have more demand in the developed countries. Capital and transport do not have any significant influence on such industries. Clothes, carpets, utensils, furniture, small idols, items of stone and clay utensils, leather products, footwear, gold or copper ornaments, items of bamboo are prepared by household industries.

### **Small scale industry**

In this type of industries, help is taken of power driven modern machines and skilled labour. Raw material for this industry, if not available from local market may be brought from far. This industry is more extensive, compared to the household industry. Here, employment opportunities are more, so there is increase in income of local people. In India, China, Indonesia, Brazil and other countries, local governments try to boost development of such industries, so that more people get employment. In China and India, cloth, toys, furniture, edible oil, leather goods, etc. are produced by the small scale industries.

### **Large scale industry**

Such industries require vast markets, different kinds of raw materials, means of power, skilled labour, more capital, heavy machinery, metalled roads, railways, access to electricity, water, banking and insurance facilities, etc. Iron and steel industry, petrochemicals, automobiles, cement industry, etc. are examples of such type of industries. Here management is high value based and complex. Here more importance is given to the quality of product and specialization. In such industries, there is mass production, and the products are sent to far and wide markets for sale. Such industries have mainly developed after the Industrial Revolution. Such industries have been established in many countries of the world.

Thus, in case of man's primary activities, there is significance of geographical elements while in secondary activities, man made things are important. In the following chapters, we will study man's tertiary, quaternary and quinary activities.

### **Exercise**

#### **1. Answer the following questions in detail :**

- (1) Write a note on hunting and gathering as man's primary activities.
- (2) Name the types of man's economic activities and primary activities.



- (3) Describe agriculture and allied activities.
- (4) Explain the classification of industries.

**2. Give to the point answer for the following questions :**

- (1) Write short note on 'commercial animal rearing'.
- (2) Name the allied activities related to agriculture.
- (3) Give the difference between nomadic herding and commercial animal rearing.
- (4) Write a short note on large scale industries.

**3. Answer the following questions in brief :**

- (1) What is mining ? State its types.
- (2) Give the characteristics of secondary activities.
- (3) What is industry ?

**4. Answer the following questions in one-two sentences :**

- (1) In which century did the information revolution begin ?
- (2) Which products are obtained from commercial animal rearing ?
- (3) In which region is the reindeer considered to be a useful animal ?
- (4) What is secondary activity ? Give example.
- (5) What is tertiary activity ?
- (6) Which things are made by the household industries ?
- (7) Define mineral.
- (8) Give examples of metallic minerals.

**5. Select the correct option from the options given :**

- (1) People living in northern part of Canada are known as :  
(a) Pigmy                      (b) Bushman                      (c) Eskimo                      (d) Black Fellows
- (2) Which people of Malaysia are engaged in primary activities ?  
(a) Red Indians                      (b) Palyans                      (c) Semang                      (d) Lap
- (3) Which of the following is a non-metallic mineral ?  
(a) copper                      (b) lead                      (c) zinc                      (d) sulphur
- (4) In which continent did the industrial revolution begin ?  
(a) North America                      (b) Asia                      (c) Europe                      (d) Africa