

## 1. Details of Module and its structure

| Module Detail     |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Subject Name      | Geography   |
| Course Name       | Geography 04 (Class XII, Semester - 2)  |
| Module Name/Title | Introduction to Human Settlements-Rural Settlements – Part 1  |
| Module Id         | legy_20401  |
| Pre-requisites    | Basic concepts about Human Settlements and Rural Settlements  |
| Objectives        | After going through this lesson, the learners will be able to understand the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concept of human settlements</li><li>• Types of human settlements</li><li>• Main characteristics and features of rural settlements</li><li>• Patterns and types of rural settlements</li><li>• Factors affecting rural settlements in India</li><li>• Types of rural settlements in India</li></ul> |
| Keywords          | Settlements, Rural and Urban Settlements, Clustered, Semi-clustered, Hamleted, Dispersed  |

## 2. Development Team

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## **Introduction of Human Settlements**

Human Settlement means a cluster of dwellings of any type or size where human beings live. For this purpose, people may erect houses and other structures and command some area or territory as their economic support-base. Thus, the process of settlement creation inherently involves grouping of people and territory as their resource base.

The study of human settlements is basic to human geography because the form of settlement in any particular region reflects human relationship with the environment. A human settlement is defined as a place inhabited more or less permanently. The houses may be designed or redesigned, buildings may be altered, functions may change but a settlement continues in time and space. There may be some settlements which are temporary and are occupied for short periods, may be a season.

The term settlement is accepted but when it comes to its existence, that can be differentiated in terms of rural and urban, but there is no consensus on what exactly defines a village or a town. Although population size is an important criterion, it is not a universal criterion since many villages in densely populated countries of India and China have population exceeding that of some towns of Western Europe and United States. At one time, people living in villages pursued agriculture or other primary activities, but presently in developed countries, large sections of urban populations prefer to live in villages even though they work in the city. The basic difference between towns and villages is that in towns the main occupation of the people is related to secondary and tertiary sectors, while in the villages most of the people are engaged in primary activities such as agriculture, fishing, lumbering, mining, animal husbandry, etc. Differentiations between rural and urban on the basis of functions are more meaningful even

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though there is no uniformity in the hierarchy of the functions provided by rural and urban settlements. Petrol pumps are considered as a lower order function in the United States while it is an urban function in India. Even within a country, rating of functions may vary according to the regional economy. Facilities available in the villages of developed countries may be considered rare in villages of developing and less developed countries.



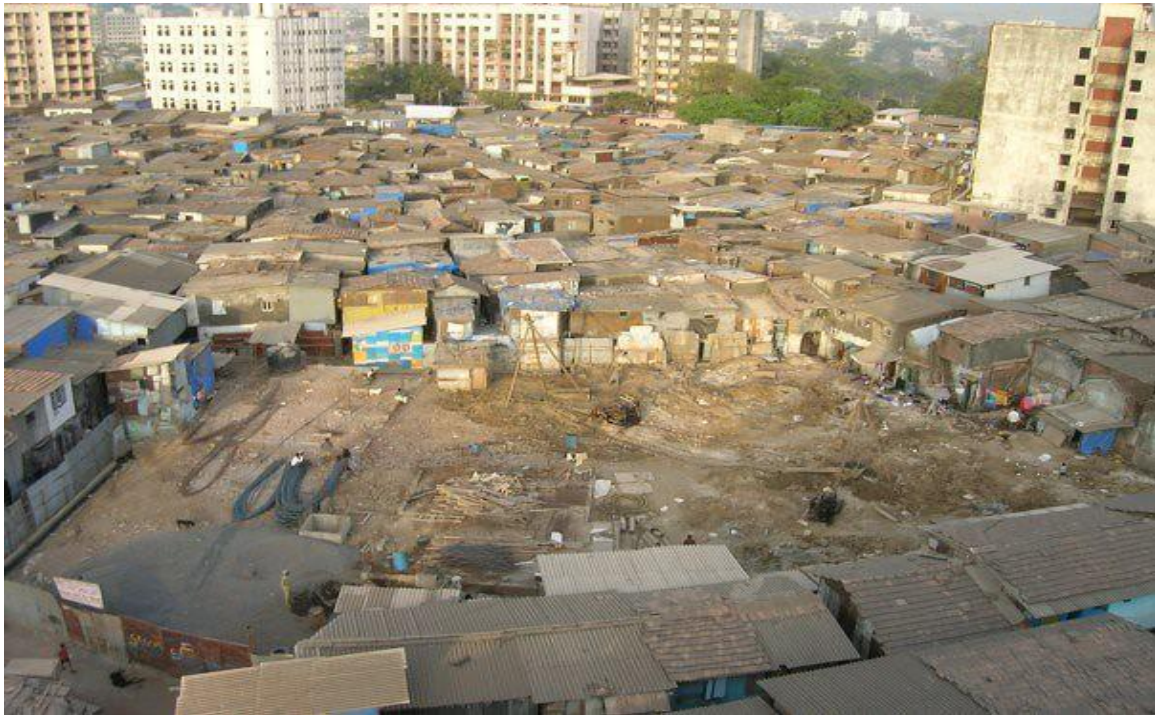
Human Settlements

Source: <https://p1.pxfuel.com/preview/753/543/692/village-asia-house-india.jpg>

### **Types and Patterns of Settlements**

Settlements are classified on the basis of their shape, patterns types which are discussed below:

**Compact or Nucleated settlements:** In these settlements a large number of houses are built very close to each other. Such settlements develop along river valleys and in fertile plains. Communities are closely knit and share common occupations.



Compact Settlement

Source: [https://live.staticflickr.com/7074/7256173116\\_fa3506a974\\_z.jpg](https://live.staticflickr.com/7074/7256173116_fa3506a974_z.jpg)

• **Dispersed Settlements:** In these settlements, houses are spaced far apart and often interspersed with fields. A cultural feature such as a place of worship or a market, binds the settlement together.



Dispersed Settlements

Source: <https://c8.alamy.com/comp/DGACMH/top-view-of-a-village-in-summer-nilkanteshwar-maharashtra-india-DGACMH.jpg>

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Settlements vary in size and type. They range from a hamlet to metropolitan cities. With size, the economic character and social structure of settlements changes and so do its ecology and technology. Settlements could be small and sparsely spaced; they may also be large and closely spaced. The sparsely located small settlements are called villages, specializing in agriculture or other primary activities. On the

Other hand, there are fewer but larger settlements which are termed as urban settlements specializing in secondary and tertiary activities. The basic differences between rural and urban settlements are as follows:

- The rural settlements derive their life support or basic economic needs from land based primary economic activities, whereas, urban settlements, depend on processing of raw materials and manufacturing of finished goods on the one hand and a variety of services on the other.
- Cities act as nodes of economic growth; provide goods and services not only to urban dwellers but also to the people of the rural settlements in their hinterlands in return for food and raw materials. This functional relationship between the urban and rural settlements takes place through transport and communication network.
- Rural and urban settlements differ in terms of social relationship, attitude and outlook. Rural people are less mobile and therefore, social relations among them are intimate. In urban areas, on the other hand, way of life is complex and fast, and social relations are formal.

### **Rural Settlement Patterns**

Patterns of rural settlements contemplate the way the houses are sited in relation to each other. The site of the village, the surrounding topography and terrain influence the shape and size of a village.

Rural settlements may be classified on the basis of a number of criteria:

(i) **On the basis of setting:** The main types are plain villages, plateau villages, coastal villages, forest villages and desert villages.

(ii) **On the basis of functions:** There may be farming villages, fishermen's villages, lumberjack villages, pastoral villages etc.

(iii) **On the basis of forms or shapes of the settlements:** These may be a number of geometrical forms and shapes such as Linear, rectangular, circular star like, T-shaped village, double village, cross-shaped village etc.

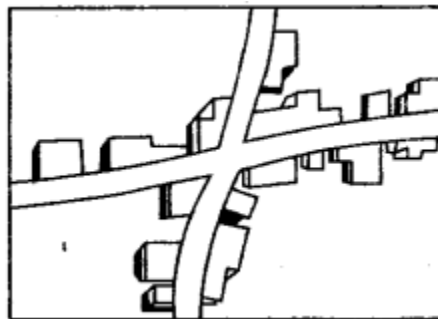
• **Linear pattern:** In such settlements houses are located along a road, railway line, and river, canal edge of a valley or along a levee.



Linear pattern

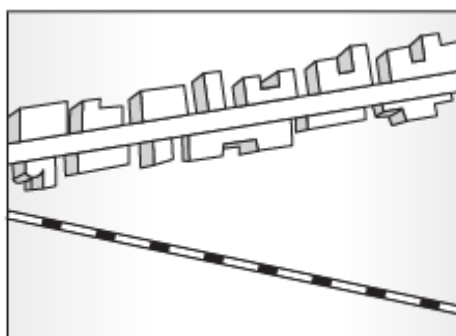
Source: [https://lh3.googleusercontent.com/proxy/FbC57r4yewZ7f9YER49DwK5m9j4OmejxDx8vJnOGkLyhgYU9E95qHhHXoD2Hws4CfAAJPFHsbzK30b7i25MT1VzbgBVY-Y7yKg2H5V\\_aa\\_WtiflAPNZCeU\\_Fk8WJjXoHCIS7x4](https://lh3.googleusercontent.com/proxy/FbC57r4yewZ7f9YER49DwK5m9j4OmejxDx8vJnOGkLyhgYU9E95qHhHXoD2Hws4CfAAJPFHsbzK30b7i25MT1VzbgBVY-Y7yKg2H5V_aa_WtiflAPNZCeU_Fk8WJjXoHCIS7x4)

- **Rectangular pattern:** Such patterns of rural settlements are found in plain areas or wide intermontane valleys. The roads are rectangular and cut each other at right angles.

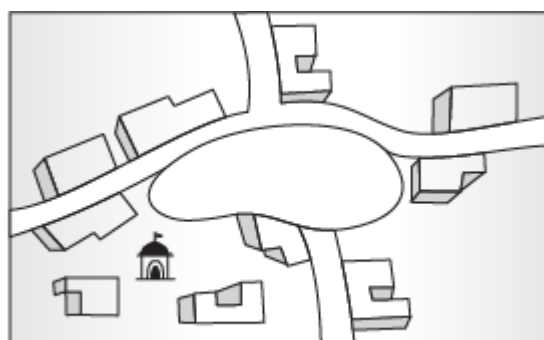


Rectangular pattern

- **Circular pattern:** Circular villages develop around lakes, tanks and sometimes the village is planned in such a way that the central part remains open and is used for keeping the animals to protect them from wild animals.



(A)

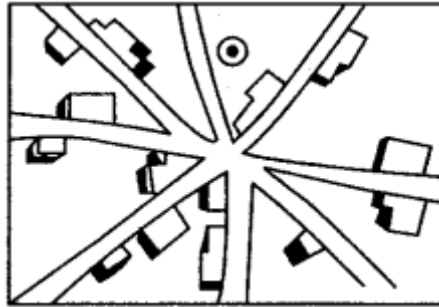


(B)

(B)Circular pattern settlement

Source: [https://cdn3.edurev.in/ApplicationImages/Temp/508219\\_b59fc263-2542-4c1a-a062-c1b77b894678\\_lg.png](https://cdn3.edurev.in/ApplicationImages/Temp/508219_b59fc263-2542-4c1a-a062-c1b77b894678_lg.png)

• **Star like pattern:** Where several roads converge, star shaped settlements develop by the houses built along the roads.



Star shaped settlement

• **T-shaped, Y-shaped, Cross-shaped or cruciform settlements:** T-shaped settlements develop at tri-junctions of the roads while –Y shaped settlements emerge as the places where two roads converge on the third one and houses are built along these roads. Cruciform settlements develop on the cross-roads and houses extend in all the four direction.



Y Shaped Village

Source: <http://www.geograph.org.uk>

• **Double village:** These settlements extend on both sides of a river where there is a bridge or a ferry.

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**Sites favorable for rural settlements include the following:**

**i. Water Supply**

Water is considered the elixir of life. Humans are largely dependent on water for life, thus, the supply of water has been a strong factor that determines the location of settlements. People are willing to face other adverse conditions in order to fulfill their need for water, for example, on islands and low-lying swampy areas.

Water is required not only for drinking, cooking and washing, but also for economically important activities such as irrigation, transport, etc. Water also forms a kind of natural defence to these settlements. Such sites are mainly along riverbanks. However, in water scarce areas, water resources deserts, springs and wells serve as the main sources of water.

**ii. Land**

Land, that is suitable for agriculture, is an important factor. Since rural settlements are predominantly agricultural in nature, level plains and fertile lands needed for traditional crops are highly preferred.

**iii. The area of High Land**

Land, not threatened by floods, is usually chosen as a site for settlements. Thus, high lying areas that provided water while being relatively dry and free from floods are chosen. Such areas include outer bends of meanders, river terraces or levees, and foothills. In some parts of the world like Malaysia and Indonesia, houses are built on stilts to get a protection from floods and also from animals and insects. In equatorial countries, such houses are also found to be much cooler.



Stilt House

Source:<https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn%3AANd9GcSv8tbSUB5M4EnZu8N8WIdvd0Amf5rIYflicw&usqp=CAU>



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#### **iv. Housing Materials**

Availability of materials to build houses is another factor that influences the development of a settlement. For example, easy availability of materials such as wood from forests, stone from surrounding rocks, mud bricks and ice blocks, etc., serve the purpose of housing.

The type of construction of the houses reflect the climatic conditions of the area. In northern hemisphere, the south-facing slopes of mountainous areas facing sunlight are chosen; whereas in southern hemisphere, it is the north-facing slopes. Dwellings are also built in a fashion to prevent heavy winds, unhealthy mists, frosts, waves and tides.

#### **v. Security**

In the past, strategic positions like hills, islands, etc., were chosen to establish settlements in order to cope with the high political instability and hostility among ethnic clans, or tribes. The examples of this can be the sites on hilly and forested area of India.

#### **vi. Planned Settlements**

Planned settlements need food, water and shelter as pre-conditions. Settlements are reorganized or restructured according to plans of governments or landlords, in order to facilitate agricultural production. Mostly, it is the spreading of settlement into new areas that needed planning. Such planned settlements are seen in the US and Canada, which followed a gridiron pattern.

### **Types of Rural Settlement**

Before we proceed to discuss settlement types, it is worth making a distinction between settlement types and settlement patterns. In the geographical literature, these terms convey various meanings, sometimes synonymous, at others interchangeable and in yet others as one being part of the other.

The rural settlements are concerned with the degree of dispersion of the dwellings and the life is supported by land based primary economic activities. Rural people are less mobile and therefore, social relations among them are intimate. In India, the rural settlement varies with the diversity of climatic condition in India that is compact or clustered village of a few hundred houses is a rather universal feature, particularly in the northern plains. However, there are several areas, which have other forms of rural settlements. Types of the settlement are determined by the extent of the built-up area and inter-house distance. In India compact or clustered village of a few hundred houses is a rather universal feature, particularly in the northern plains. However, there are several areas, which have other forms of rural settlements.

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There are various factors and conditions responsible for having different types of rural settlements in India. These include:

- (i) Physical features – nature of terrain, altitude, climate and availability of water
- (ii) Cultural and ethnic factors – social structure, caste and religion
- (iii) Security factors – defence against thefts and robberies.

But, in reality, such simplistic explanation does not explain the process. In simple language, types of rural settlements imply the degree of dispersion or nucleation of the dwellings whereas the patterns refer to geometrical shapes formed by the arrangement of dwellings.

Various authors have suggested different schemes of discussing settlement types. Finch and Trewartha et al. refer to two primary types of settlements, (i) the isolated or dispersed and (ii) the nucleated. These are two extreme types of groupings, wherein isolated settlements refer to a single family residence and the nucleated settlements refer to a group of dwellings clustered almost in the center of the village lands.

D.C. Money has given three broad categories of settlements viz. (i) The single large nucleated village, (ii) Hamlets scattered throughout the countryside and (iii) Single homesteads. Enayat Ahmed gives four types of rural settlements: (i) Compact, (ii) Cluster and Hamlet type, (iii) Fragmented or Hamleted and (iv) Dispersed settlement. R.L. Singh discussed four main types: (i) Compact settlements, (ii) Semi-compact or Hamleted cluster, (iii) Semi-sprinkled or Fragmented or Hamleted settlements and (iv) Sprinkled or Dispersed type. On the basis of number of villages, hamlets and number of residential units, R.B. Singh identified four settlements. They are (i) Compact, (ii) Semi-compact, (iii) Hamleted and (iv) Dispersed or Scattered type.

According to Santibhushan Nandi and D. S. Tyagi, the village settlement patterns can be classified into the following four categories:

- i. 'Shapeless cluster' or agglomerate with streets not forming an integral part of design. These may be again divided into massive and dispersed types.
- ii. 'Linear cluster' or assemblage with a regular open space or straight street provided between parallel rows of houses.
- iii. 'Square or rectangular cluster' or agglomerate with straight streets running parallel or at right angles to one another.
- iv. Villages formed of 'isolated homesteads', a number of which are treated together as a mauza for convenience of collection of rent or taxes.

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On the basis of above discussion and views of different Geographers about the types of rural settlements in India, Rural settlements in India can broadly be put into four types:

- Clustered, agglomerated or nucleated,
- Semi-clustered or fragmented,
- Hamleted and
- Dispersed or isolated.

### **Clustered Settlements**

The clustered rural settlement is a compact or closely built up area of houses. In this type of village the general living area is distinct and separated from the surrounding farms, barns and pastures. The closely built-up area and its intervening streets present some recognizable pattern or geometric shape, such as rectangular, radial, linear, etc. Such settlements are generally found in fertile alluvial plains and in the northeastern states. Sometimes, people live in compact village for security or defence reasons, such as in the Bundelkhand region of central India and in Nagaland. In Rajasthan, scarcity of water has necessitated compact settlement for maximum utilisation of available water resources.



Compact settlement

Source: [https://storage.needpix.com/rsynced\\_images/village-733244\\_1280.jpg](https://storage.needpix.com/rsynced_images/village-733244_1280.jpg)

Such settlements are found throughout the plateau region of Malwa, in the Narmada Valley, Nimar upland, large parts of Rajasthan, paddy lands in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Vindhyan Plateau and several other cultivated parts of India.

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In such villages all the dwellings are concentrated in one central site. The inhabitants of the village live together and enjoy the benefits of community life. Such settlements range from a cluster of about thirty to hundreds of dwellings of different forms, sizes and functions. Their size varies from 500 to 2,500 persons in sparsely populated parts like Rajasthan to more than 10,000 in the Ganga plain.

### **Semi-Clustered Settlements**

Semi-clustered or fragmented settlements may result from tendency of clustering in a restricted area of dispersed settlement. More often such a pattern may also result from segregation or fragmentation of a large compact village. In this case, one or more sections of the village society choose or is forced to live a little away from the main cluster or village. In such cases, generally, the land-owning and dominant community occupies the central part of the main village, whereas people of lower strata of society and menial workers settle on the outer flanks of the village. Such settlements are widespread in the Gujarat plain and some parts of Rajasthan.



Semi-clustered or fragmented settlements

Source: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/50/Poomparai\\_village.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/50/Poomparai_village.jpg)

### **Hamleted Settlements**

Sometimes settlement is fragmented into several units physically separated from each other bearing a common name. These units are locally called *panna*, *para*, *palli*, *nagla*, *dhani*, etc.

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in various parts of the country. This segmentation of a large village is often motivated by social and ethnic factors. Such villages are more frequently found in the middle and lower Ganga plain, Chhattisgarh and lower valleys of the Himalayas.



Hamleted Settlements

Source: <https://p1.pxfuel.com/preview/592/848/931/nature-recording-nature-styria-landscape.jpg>

### **Dispersed Settlements**

Dispersed or isolated settlement pattern in India appears in the form of isolated huts or hamlets of few huts in remote jungles, or on small hills with farms or pasture on the slopes. Extreme dispersion of settlement is often caused by extremely fragmented nature of the terrain and land resource base of habitable areas. Many areas of Meghalaya, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Kerala have this type of settlement. Dispersed settlements are found in tribal areas covering central part of India, eastern and southern Rajasthan, Himalayan slopes and land with dissected and uneven topography. Homesteads or farmsteads of wheat producing areas in Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh also belong to this category.



Dispersed or isolated settlement

Source: [https://storage.needpix.com/rsynced\\_images/village-2105619\\_1280.jpg](https://storage.needpix.com/rsynced_images/village-2105619_1280.jpg)

The village has been both the cultural and physical entity since ancient times. If the physical factor of site has provided a mould for pattern formation, cultural factors have given the substance and vitality. The concept of Dih is a symbolic of traditional attachment to the site of the settlement of the growing village community while the decayed Dih has ever remained unwanted, and thus preserved amidst till the life around. The settlement has also preserved the various layers of the social fabrics with provisions for group segregation within the village territorial limit and is in consonance with the need of the time.

The villages are seldom an isolate; it is an essential part of a large territorial unit developed in the process of land occupancy. Such territorial units have continued to this day in more or less similar form maintaining uniform rural polity through the general political order at the national as well as regional levels has been registering frequent changes.

## **Problems of Rural Settlements in India**

### **Lack of infrastructure**

Rural settlements in the developing countries are large in number and poorly equipped with infrastructure. They represent a great challenge and opportunity for planners. Supply of water to rural settlements in developing countries is not adequate. People in villages, particularly in mountainous and arid areas have to walk long distances to fetch drinking water. Water borne diseases such as cholera and jaundice tend to be a common problem. The countries of South Asia face conditions of drought and flood very often. Crop cultivation sequences, in the absence of irrigation, also suffer. The general absence of toilet and garbage disposal facilities

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cause health problems. The design and use of building materials of houses vary from one ecological region to another. The houses made up of mud, wood and thatch, remain susceptible to damage during heavy rains and floods, and require proper maintenance every year. Most house designs are typically deficient in proper ventilation. Besides, the design of a house includes the animal shed along with its fodder store within it. This is done to keep the domestic animals and their food properly protected from wild animals. Un-metalled roads and lack of modern communication network creates a unique problem. During rainy season, the settlements remain cut off and pose serious difficulties in providing emergency services. It is also difficult to provide adequate health and educational infrastructure for their large rural population. The problem is particularly serious where proper clustering of the village has occurred and houses are scattered over a large area.

### **Insufficient access to market**

Due to poor infrastructure, productivity or lack of education, the accessibility to market is very poor. Employment opportunities in agriculture are also very limited. Rural workers are largely concentrated in jobs like those of owners-cultivators, tenant farmers, share croppers, informal care workers, agriculture day worker and livestock herders. With access to other places rural workers continue to work in villages in agriculture for very low wages. This leads to poverty. Besides this the rural poor often lack access to capital markets and financial institutions. They hardly think to establish savings and obtain credit cards and other subsidy and benefits provided by the government.

### **Education and social services inadequacies**

The lack of facilities of education and limited opportunities to increase and improve one's skills are the main problems of rural societies. Most of the poor villagers remain confined to subsistence farming. They remain untouched with latest technology in agriculture and other fields of progress. Inadequate education regarding health and nutritional needs often result in under nutrition or malnutrition among the rural poor, resulting in worse health and higher rates of infant mortality. A lot of disparities in both of Asia and Africa between rural and urban areas in terms of the allocation of public education and health services.

### **Disparities in agricultural productivity**

A remarkable disparity in agricultural yields has been observed in developed and developing countries. After green revolution, India has witnessed a remarkable progress in agricultural production. It occupies the first or second position in the world in several crops in terms of area

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and production. Even then the productivity of some crops is not only low but also remained stagnant over the years. In rain fed areas the productivity is very low.

### **Steps Taken by Government to improve Rural Areas in India**

The various steps taken by the government in improving the conditions of the rural population in the country

- Providing financial help to the rural class through cooperatives banks for providing loan facilities to the farmers.
- They have introducing traditional methods of conserving water through rain water harvesting.
- Providing effective road network and electricity to the people in the rural areas.
- The government has initiated programs for promoting organic farming, animal husbandry, and increase agricultural production through effective measures.
- The government has improved the public distribution systems for the supply of food grains to the poor households.
- The farmers are given various forms of subsidies along with introducing the best methods for improving the agricultural systems.
- They have put in efforts for improving the infrastructure and improving the quality of life of the people living in the rural areas

### **Conclusion**

In this module we have dealt with the Human settlements and types of settlements. We discussed the bases of division of human settlements. We also discussed the characteristics of rural settlements specific to India. We explained the factors affecting the rural settlements in India. We have also described the types of rural settlements in India and their characteristics and distribution. In last we have discussed the problems of rural settlements in India and the steps taken by the government to improve the rural areas in the country.