



### **Palpate Village:**

Kalpattu is a village that's close to the sea coast in Tamil Nadu. People here do many kinds of work as in other villages, here too. There is non-farm work such as making baskets, utensils, pots, bricks, bullock-carts etc.

There are people who provide services such as blacksmiths, nurses, barbers, Washer men, weavers, teachers, cycle repair mechanics and there are also some shopkeepers and traders. In the main street, which looks like a bazaar, you will find a variety of small shops such as tea shops, grocery shops, barber shops, a cloth shop, a tailor and two fertilizer and seed shops. There are four teashops, which sell tiffin- such as idli, dosai and upama in the Moring and snacks like vadai, Bonda and Mysore pak are available in the evening. Near the teashops in a corner lives a blacksmith family whose home serves as their workshop. Next to their home is a cycle repair shop. Two families earn a living by washing clothes. There are some people who go to the nearby town to work as construction workers and lorry drivers.

The village is surrounded by low hills. Paddy is the main crop that is grown in irrigated lands. Most of the families earn a living through agriculture. There are some coconut groves around. Cotton, sugar cane and plantain are also grown, and there are mango orchards.

### **On being in debt:**

Farmers need to borrow money to purchase basic things like seeds, fertilizers and pesticides. Often they borrow this money from moneylenders. If the seeds are not of good quality or pests attack their crop there can be a major crop failure.

The crops can also be ruined if the monsoon does not bring enough rain. When this happens farmers sometimes are unable to pay back their loans. And, for the family to survive, they may even have to borrow more money. Soon the loan becomes so large that no matter what they earn. They are unable to repay. This is when we can say they are caught in debt. In recent years this has become a major cause of distress among farmers. In some areas this has also resulted in many farmers committing suicide.

### **Agricultural Laborers and Farmers In India:**

In Kalpattu village there are agricultural labourers and many small farmers. In India nearly two out of every five rural families are agricultural labourer families. All of them depend on the work they do on other people's fields to earn a living. Many of them are landless and others may own very small plots of lands. We have looked at farming in kalpattu. Apart from farming, many people in rural areas depend upon collection from the forest, animal husbandry, dairy produce, fishing etc. for example, in some villages in central India, both farming and collection from the forests are important sources of livelihood. Collecting mahua, tendu leaves, honey, to be sold to traders, is an important source of additional income. Similarly selling milk to the village cooperative society or taking milk to the nearby town may be the main source of livelihood for some families. In the coastal areas, we find fishing villages.

### **Rural livelihood**

People in rural areas earn their living in various ways. Some work on farms while other earns their living on non-farm activities. Working on farms involves

## 6<sup>th</sup> – Rural Livelihood

operations such as preparing the land, sowing, weeding and harvesting of crops. We depend on nature for the growth of these crops. Hence life revolves around certain seasons. People are busy during sowing and harvesting. Rural people in different regions of the country grow different crops. Most farmers grow crops both for their own requirements and also to sell to traders from whom they have borrowed money. For their survival, many families need to borrow money for their work or when no work is available. There are some families in rural areas which thrive on large acres of lands, business and other activities. However, most small farmers, agricultural laborers, fishing families, crafts persons in the villages do not find enough work to keep them employed throughout the year.

