I. Explain major types and features of Indian rural society in terms of caste and class.

**Ans:** There have been six types of societies
- Hunting and gathering societies.
- Pastoral societies.
- Horticultural societies.
- Agricultural societies.
- Industrial societies.
- Post-industrial societies.

Class and caste are two phenomena of social stratification which offer many features in common not only in their origin but also in their development and function. Both are agencies of social mobility and selection in as much as they decide largely the position that a man occupies in society.

The word ‘caste’ is used in everyday life and we use it to distinguish one person from another. We say that such and such belongs to a particular caste. In saying it we generally mean to convey that he is born of such parents or is a member of the family, said to belong to a particular caste. In this way caste is a hereditary group. In biology this word is used only for descent or heredity. But this definition is inadequate for the purposes of sociology since it requires a more comprehensive and clear definition. Caste may be defined as a hereditary endogamous group which decides the individual’s status in the social stratification and his profession etc. Modern thinkers consider it best to enumerate the features of caste in defining it. The following are the predominating characteristics of caste.

1. Determination by birth: The membership of caste is determined by birth. A person remains the member of the caste into which he is born and his membership does not undergo any change even if changes take place in his status, occupation, education, wealth etc.

2. Rules and regulations concerning food: Each individual caste has its own laws which govern the food habits of its members. Generally there are no restrictions against fruit, milk, butter etc. but kachcha food (bread etc.) can be accepted only from a member of one’s own or a higher caste.

3. Definite occupation: In the Hindu scriptures there is a mention of the occupation of all castes. According to Manu the functions, of the Brahmín, Kshatriya, Vaísha and Sudra were definite. The functions of the Brahmín were to study, teach, guide and perform religious rituals and to give and receive alms, that of the Kshatriya to study, perform religious rituals, give alms, punish the evil and to go to war; that of the Vaísha to study, perform religious rituals, give alms, work in agriculture, trade and animal husbandry; that of Sudra to do menial work for all the other castes. Having developed from Varna system the occupations in caste system are definite. In Hindu society even today in most cases the son of a cobbler pursues the occupation of his father; the son of a carpenter becomes a carpenter.

4. Endogamous group: The majority of persons marry only within their own caste, Brahmín, Kshatriya, Vaísha and Sudra all marry within their respective castes; Hindu community does not approve inter-caste marriage even now.

5. Rules concerning status and touchability: The various castes in the Hindu social organisation are divided into a hierarchy of ascent and descent one above the other. In this hierarchy the Brahmínas have the highest and the untouchables the lowest position. The sense of superiority among the Brahmínas is much exaggerated and manifests in the South. The stringent observation of the system of untouchability has resulted in some low castes of the Hindu society being called untouchables who were consequently forbidden to make use of places of worship, cremation grounds, educational institutions, public roads and hotels etc. and were disallowed to living in the cities.

6. Authority: The last feature of caste worth considering is the existence within it of an organ wielding a varying degree of authority which compels obedience from caste members. In the high castes it is public opinion which exercises this control over its members, though in modern times this may be eluded. In most cases the authority invested in a body called the panchayat which is supposed to be composed of five members, but in fact there are many more social groups who meet whenever its decisions are needed.

2. Discuss major objectives and various facets of development.

**Ans:** The concept of rural development has changed significantly during the last three decades. Until the 1970s, rural development was synonymous with agricultural development and hence focused on increasing agricultural production. This focus seems to have been driven primarily by the interest of industrialization to extract surpluses from the agriculture sector to reinforce industrialization.

The establishment of the Millennium Development Goals has significantly reinforced the concerns about non-income poverty. With the parading shifts in economic development from “growth” to broadly defined “development”, the concept of rural development has begun to be used in a broader sense.

In more recent years increased concerns on the environmental aspects of economic growth have also influenced the changes. Today’s concept of rural development is fundamentally different from that used about three or four decades ago.

The concept now encompasses “concerns that go well beyond improvements in growth, income and output. The concern include an assessment of changes in the quality of life, broadly defined to include improvement in health and nutrition, education, environmentally safe living conditions and reduction in gender and Income inequalities.

Today, there seems to be a universal consensus that the ultimate objective of rural development is to improve the quality of life of rural people. This makes it essential to go beyond the income-related factors such as prices, production, and productivity to a range of non-income factors that influence quality of life and hence inclusiveness of rural development.”