**Rural Sociology and Agricultural Extension**

**COURSE CODE: EBS 364**

*Course Notes*

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION, UCC

***Bachelor of Education Programme***

# INTRODUCTION

Working in rural communities is associated with a number of social issues that may promote or retard the progress of work. The agriculture teacher is found to be more affected because agriculture is the traditional employment in most rural communities, undertaken by mostly people who were not successful enough to get opportunity to travel out of the community to work. Moreover, infrastructure, transport, educational options, health facilities and other social opportunities are not easily available. The agriculture teacher therefore is less respected by both students and parents. The agriculture teacher therefore has to be well informed about the sociology of rural communities and his/her roles as leader (role model) and promoter of modern agriculture in order to cope with the environment and live a satisfied working life. To achieve this, this course notes are compiled to guide facilitators of the course and learners. The course is divided into seven units in line with the expected course learning outcomes.

**UNIT 1: DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL AND URBAN COMMUNITIES**

**The Rural and Urban Community**

Agriculture is basically practiced in rural communities and teachers of agriculture who may come from rural or urban areas need to understand the communities they will be teaching in, or preparing their students to work in, and the kind of adjustments they need to make to achieve the carrier and societal goals. It is very difficult to define rural and urban community in isolation because they are comparative terms. As such, there is no universal definition of rural and urban society that clearly distinguish them. The difference between the two terms is merely one of degrees, as a result of which it is very difficult is make a clear distinction between the two. However, rural communities are generally considered as villages with fewer people who are more spread out from one another, living in open spaces and natural areas. On the contrary, urban communities are generally called towns or cities with lots of people living close together in a small amount of space and artificial environment. Both rural and urban communities influence each other and at times it becomes difficult to decide whether a place is rural or urban. But there are few area that are considered in distinguishing between the rural and urban communities.

**Distinguishing features of rural and urban communities**

*Differences in social organization*

* *Family* - The families in the villages and towns exhibit the following differences:
1. In the villages the families are comparatively stronger than the families in the town, where greater importance is attached to the individual than to the family.
2. In the villages the system of joint family is to be found in greater member than in the town.
3. In the villages there is greater control, intimacy and organization than in the families in towns.
4. In the towns, as compared with the village, the functions of the family are more steadily decreasing.
* *Marriage*
1. In the towns there is a preponderance of love marriages in comparison with the villages.
2. In towns as compared to the villages, one finds a number of divorces.
3. In towns greater freedom is allowed in selection of a life partner.
* *Condition of women* - Generally, the women in the villages are not much, if at all, educated and their social status is also low.
* *Neighbourhood* - In the villages the neighbourhood has a greater importance than it has in the towns, where sometimes people do not even know their neighbours.
* *We feeling* - In the rural community the `we feeling' is found to be far stronger than in the urban community. The influence of the community on the individual in the village is greater than in the towns.
* *Inequality of classes -* The inequality of classes is much more demarcated in the towns than in the villages & there are correspondingly more conflicts in the towns.

*Differences in Social Restrictions*

There is higher social control of behaviour in the rural community based on traditions and customs. On the other hand, the society does not exercise much control over the individuals in the urban society. Usually because of the crowds and busy of life in towns no one has time to exert social pressure on another. To compensate, formal control systems such as the control of police, law, court, etc., is greater in the towns than in the village.

*Difference in Social Interactions*

The pattern and type of social interaction in rural areas contrasts significantly with those in urban areas both in qualitative and quantitative aspects. The following stand out as more important differences between rural and urban areas in respect of social interaction:

1. Rural population: smaller, less dense, possessing lower mobility than urban populations, and have fewer personal contacts per individual. The contacts through various media of communication are also lower in rural areas. An urban community (e.g., city) is surrounded by radio, television, magazines, posters, newspapers and many other sophisticated media as part of life.
2. As there is a quantitative difference in social contacts so also there is a qualitative difference. Urban contacts may be frequent, but they tend to be more cursory, formal and impersonal. Rural contacts, however, are more face-to-face, informal and personal. On the other hand, in rural communities the area of contact is spatially more limited and narrower than the area of contact of urban communities. Contacts in urban areas seem to converge from a wide geographical area.

*Differences in social viewpoint*

Rural cultural tends to be conservative than in the urban, especially in the following areas:

* Politics - In the towns, more than the villages, people take interest and active part in politics.
* Religion and Ritual - In the villages greater importance is attached to religion and ritual than in towns whereas the religion of the rural people is based upon faith, the religion in the city is relatively more based upon reason.
* Fatalism - The villagers are more fatalistic than the urban people because the lives of the villagers are affected to a very large extent by natural forces (physical and spiritual) while the urban people are equipped with scientific knowledge and techniques in handling natural calamities and catastrophes.
* Artificiality - There is more artificiality in the urban people than in the villagers. Rural people tend to be frank, open and genuine and depend on nature more than urban people.

*Differences in Social Mobility and Stability*

There is greater social disorganization in the towns than in the villages. Cities possess greater mobility than the villages (e.g., territorial-one place to the other, occupational-one job to the other). Normally the migration current carries more individuals from the rural community to the urban.

*Differences in Economics Life*

* Modes of living - In the villages the major occupation is agricultural while in the towns the major occupations are of an industrial nature. (Commerce’s, professions, governing etc).
* Standard of Living - Standard of living in the villages is lower than that of the towns because the means of earning money are limited in the villages.

*Differences in Cultural life*

* Static - Culture is more static in the villages than in the towns. This means the rate of change of culture in the urban areas is faster that in the rural area.
* Traditions - Traditions have a very important place in rural culture, while urban culture does not attach much importance to them.

*Physical Differences:*

* Relationship to nature exists. On the other hand, in cities greater isolation from nature is seen. There is a predominance of man-made environment over the natural.
* Size of community - the rural community is always smaller than the urban community. Agricultural occupations by their very nature call for higher land-to-man ratio than industry does, and consequently, rural areas have a low population per square kilometre. Farmland may vary in size depending on the type of farming practised, but enough land must be available to raise crops and livestock as a paying proposition. A rural community is hence a small community - much smaller than an urban community.
* Density of population - In the same country and at the same period the density is lower in the rural area than in the urban. Density of population and “rurality” are negatively correlated. Thus, as population density increases the community moves in the direction of being classified as urban; and the pattern of settlement changes somewhat from individual family dwelling houses to multi-family buildings with flats and apartments.
* Heterogeneity and Homogeneity of the population compared with the urban population; rural communities are more homogenous in social and psychological traits such as language, beliefs, mores, and patterns of behaviour. As a small community, members of a village share common interests and major occupations through frequent face-to-face contacts. The urban population is more heterogeneous, comprised of persons from a wide variety of sub-cultures -many interests, cultures, occupations, patterns of behaviour and even languages make up the widely heterogeneous city population.

**Challenges and opportunities of rural community to the Agriculture teacher**

Teachers often neglect rural communities in favour of urban areas. But teachers are in greater demand in these rural schools than in any other place. The rural schools and community may present some challenges to the teacher, but there are a number of strengths of rural schools and communities that people overlook.

*Challenges of rural community to the Agriculture teacher*

1. Geographical isolation

Rural areas are geographically situated far from main urban areas and cities and accessibility to these areas is not always easy due to rocky, sandy and bushy areas which make transportation difficult. The isolation associated with rural areas implies that teachers have limited interaction with other teachers with whom they can share teaching resources and practices. Rocky, sandy and bushy areas implies that teachers’ mobility is negatively affected and they cannot easily access resources and services when needed.

1. Lack of social interaction

Entertainment, recreational services and sporting facilities are limited in rural communities, resulting in restrictions on social interaction and on opportunities to realize potential in different spheres of human existence such as sport achievements. As rural environments are often severely impoverished and are associated with an aging population, unemployment and low quality of life, many teachers particularly those from urban backgrounds are faced with challenges regarding recreation and socializing, which adds to their job dissatisfaction. The lack of opportunities to meet new friends and to socialize hampers teachers’ quality of life in rural areas.

1. Harsh living conditions

In the absence of high-level of education, life in rural areas is therefore related to experiencing harsh living conditions manifested by poverty, as a lack of resources with which to acquire a set of basic goods and services are limited. The provision of education is hampered by a lack of resources, which affects factors such as student attendance and teacher motivation.

1. Limited academic support from parents

Most parents in rural areas have achieved very low levels of literacy and this affect their understanding of education and the roles they must play in their children's education. Because of the low illiteracy, they have less ability to provide educational support for their children, as they are uncomfortable to discuss school work with children and assist them academically due to their lack of knowledge and understanding of what students do in the school.

*Opportunities of rural community to the Agriculture teacher*

1. Strong sense of community

Rural areas have a deep sense of belonging that can support teachers. Parents collaborate with teachers on a wide range of educational activities and are involved in far more facets of their children's education than their metropolitan counterparts. Parents take part in school activities and services. It allows them to feel as though they are a part of something greater than themselves. Their community revolves around the school. The building itself is considered a “community centre” often with multiple uses. This rural community's sense of belonging can be used as a powerful tool to help students succeed in school

1. Strong sense of caring for one another.

There is a strong sense of kinship and caring for one another that holds rural communities together and can make teaching in a rural area appealing. If teachers integrate well with the society, they will benefit from the goodwill of the community to support their activities as teachers and members of the community. The usually support in times of need such as when you are sick, bereaved or getting married. There is a belief, that you have to take care of your family, yourself, and your community.

1. Good environment for practical agriculture.

One of the benefits of a rural community is that it provides the best environment and natural resources to for the practice of agriculture. There is always availability of land and the natural environment for agriculture. There is an atmosphere in which parents, guardians, and other student experiences in farming can be harness to promote teaching and learning of Agriculture in the rural community.

*Note: Tutors will provide materials based on practical experience*

**UNIT 2: THE CONCEPTS OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY**

Teachers of agriculture take up jobs in various locations of the country and automatically become part of the community and society where they work and reside. To be an effective member of the place they need to understand the community and society and how they can effectively function as members to achieve their career and societal objectives. The unit will provide the meaning of the concept of community and society, the relations between the concepts, and their distinguishing features. Additionally, the unit will highlight key measures teachers can take to make them effective members of a community for a satisfied working life.

**What is a Community?**

The word community came from the Latin word *communitas*, which means shared in common and public spirit. Hence, community is a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic or a likeness in common. Thus, there is no distinct diversity among them; they share common characteristics such as religion, language, caste, age, sex, family and kinship, profession, and, residence. Therefore, homogeneity acts as a core element in a community. Hence, a social group known as a community is created based on these common characteristics among these members or people with similar interests. As a result, there can be communities based on the likeness they share in common with one another.

One distinct characteristic of a community is that the members reside in the same geographic place apart from having similar interests and characteristics. Therefore, there can be different communities within one social unit. Thus, within a wide area there can be different communities based on the profession: fishing community, farming community, the business community. As such, community members tend to define these common characteristics they share among each other as rendering a certain identity to them, and maintaining them becomes important. Therefore, every effort in a community is to avoid differences and conflicts among its members.

**What is a Society?**

The word society came from the Latin word*sociatas*, which in turn was derived from the noun *socius*. *Socius* means, comrade, friend, or ally; this describes a bond or interaction between parties that are friendly, or at least civil. Hence, in sociology society is defined as a group of people with a common territory, interaction, and [culture](https://pediaa.com/difference-between-culture-and-civilization/). These groups consist of two or more varied people who interact and identify themselves with one another. These groups can be known as communities as well. Hence, persistent social interactions with these varied communities are a fundamental aspect of society.

Similarly, if there are no such healthy interactions among these groups or communities within a country, those groups cannot be considered a part of the same society. As such, barriers such as geographic distance and language differences can separate communities within society and similarly, societies within a country.

**Relationship Between Society and Community**

* Different communities of same culture and territory collectively make a society.
* The individual is the basic component of both community and society.

**Difference Between Society and Community**

*People*

The members of a society are diverse since it consists of many different communities while the members in a community necessarily share common characteristics among each other.

*Interactions*

Interactions among members is a core element in society since it determines the connection between vast networks of people whereas interactions among members in a community happen involuntarily since these people share many things in common.

*Diversity*

There is a high diversity among the society members; hence, it is heterogeneous. Conversely, there is minimum diversity among those in a community; hence, it is rather homogenous. This is another difference between society and community.

*Size*

Size is a major difference between society and community. Comparatively, a community is smaller than society, and society is larger than a community. Thus a size of a community may be small or big like a village community or a nation community but the size of a society is always large.

*Locality*

In a society, locality is not defined, and it is not an essential element to shape a society. For a community, definite locality becomes an essential factor, and it provides a definite shape to the community. Society has no definite locality or boundary because it refers to a system of social relationships. Hence it is universal or pervasive. On the other hand, a community is always associated with a definite locality.

**Measures to make the teacher an effective member of a community**

Community and school partnerships:Reach out to all stakeholders to connect and create an authentic bond. Visit local businesses and organisations talk with them on what they hope and wish for their school and encourage them for mentoring and support.

* Parental collaboration: get parents involved in the training.
* Curriculum should be connected to real-life experiences: we need to find ways to connect core curriculum beyond the classroom to lets students see their application in real-life.
* Student voice: involve students in the planning and execution of activities.
* Cross generation learning: get experienced local people to share their skills and knowledge of what works in the community
* Designing solutions to local problems: the lessons should be applicable to solving local problems and using local resources.

*Note: Tutors will provide materials based on practical experience*

**UNIT 3: SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION**

Social structure is the basic concept for the proper understanding of society. The Agriculture teacher needs to under the concept of social structure, its meaning, elements and basic institutions within a society. Also, the social stratifications with the society and what the teacher can do to improve his/her status in the society to achieve his/her career and societal goals.

**Meaning of Social Structure:**

Social structure is a term applied to the particular arrangement of the interrelated institutions, agencies and social patterns as well as the statuses and roles which each person assumes in the group. It is the external aspect of society which is relatively stable as compared to the functional or internal aspect of society. It can be created, maintained for a time and changed.

**Elements of Social Structure:**

In a social structure the human beings including teachers in the community organize themselves into associations for the pursuit of some goals. The aim can be fulfilled only if the social structure is regulated by certain elements.

*Norms:*

The norms present the society with the beliefs (knowledge, ideals) and values. The people attach emotional importance to these norms. The institutions and associations are inter-related according to these norms. The individuals perform their roles in accordance with the accepted norms of society.

*Positions:*

Positions refers to the statuses and roles of the individuals. The desires, aspirations and expectations of the individuals are varied, multiple and unlimited. So, these can be fulfilled only if the members of society are assigned different roles according to their capacities and capabilities. Actually, the proper functioning of social structure depends upon proper assignment of roles and statuses.

*Anticipated Response:*

The anticipated response system calls upon the individuals to participate in the social system. ‘His preparation sets the social structure in motion. The successful working of social structure depends upon the realization of his duties by the individual and his efforts to fulfill these duties.

*Action:*

It is the object or goal to be arrived at by the social structure. The whole structure revolves around the objectives the society intends to achieve. The Action is the root cause which weaves the web of social relationships and sets the social structure in motion. It may be emphasized that social structure is an abstract entity. It cannot be seen. Its parts are dynamic and constantly changing. They are spatially widespread and, therefore, difficult to see as wholes. Any scientific understanding of social structure would require structural-functional approach.

*Sanctions:*

For the proper enforcement of norms, every society has a sanction system. The integration and coordination of the different parts of social structure depend upon conformity to social norms. The non-conformists are punished by the society according to the nature of non-conformity. It however, does not mean that there are no non-conformists in a well-organized society. Non-conformity is also an essential feature of society, otherwise there would be no progress. But the number of non-conformists is smaller than the number of conformists. The stability of a social structure depends upon the effectiveness of its sanction system.

**Major institutions within a social structure**

We may also devote some attention to the concept of social institutions because social institutions are essential to maintain the ordered arrangement of social structure. The institutions are collective modes of behavior. They prescribe a way of doing things. They bind the members of the group together. There are five kinds of institutions. These are the family, economics, religion, education, and state.

*The family*

It is the most multifunctional of all institutions in society, and is a system of organised relationships involving workable and dependable ways of meeting basic social needs. Family commonly fulfils the following tasks in society:

1. Sex regulation
2. Reproduction and perpetuation of the family and human race.
3. Socialisation
4. Provision of economic maintenance and livelihood in many cultures.
5. Provision of love, affection and security to individuals and
6. Provision of class status to the individual of the family into he has been born.

Within the basic institution of the family are secondary institutions such as engagement, marriage, courtship and relationships with the family into which marriage has taken place.

*Economics*

Such institutions provide basic physical subsistence for society and meet basic needs for

food, shelter, clothing and other necessities. Included are the economic institutions of production – agriculture, industry, and the distribution, exchange and consumption of commodities, goods and services necessary for human survival. Secondary institutions included within the major economic institutions are credit and banking systems, advertising, cooperatives etc

*Religion*

Religion provides a foundation for mores in society. The function of religion is to provide means where man can face the crisis with strength and fortitude. Most religions of the world have the following elements:

1. A set of beliefs regarding the ultimate power in the universe.
2. A set of beliefs regarding the ideal and proper pattern of behaviour
3. A set of ceremonial ways of expressing these beliefs

*Education*

Educational institutions are those institutions which seek to socialise individuals in society or introduce them in formal ways into their social and cultural world. Every new generation must be prepared and trained to play a role in society. This process referred as the process of socialisation. It commences informally at home and then formally in the institution of education.

*State*

It is also referred as the political institution or government. It administers the regulatory functions of law and order and maintains security in society. Within this major institution are secondary institutions such as military systems, political forces, legal systems, and diplomatic relations with other countries.

Inter-relations of Institutions

A social structure owes its stability to a proper adjustment of relationships among the different institutions. No institution works in a vacuum. Religion, education, family, government and business all interact on each other. Thus, education creates attitudes which influence the acceptance or rejection of certain religious beliefs.

Religion may exalt education because it enables one to know the truths of God or denounce it because it threatens the faith. Business conditions may influence the family life. Unemployment may determine the number of people who feel able to many. An unemployed person may postpone his marriage till he gets employed in a suitable job. Postponement of marriage may affect the birth rates. The state influences the functions of institutions. It may take over some of the functions and determine their institutional norms.

**What is Social Stratification?**

Social stratification is the division of a population into two or more layers, each of which is relatively homogenous and between which there are differences in privileges, restrictions, rewards and obligations”. Stratification involves rank differentiation and constitutes an order of ranking on the basis of relative position within the rating system operating in society. Each stratum of society is only relatively homogenous and distinct from other strata. Further privileges and rewards enjoyed or restrictions imposed may or may not be related to needs of society.

There are three main features of the definition of social stratification that should be noted for greater understanding:

1. Social stratification is a socially accepted cultural pattern that assigns members of society a general position in the structure of society;
2. Social stratification is superimposed by members of society by tradition and, without either the will or conscious knowledge of the majority; and
3. Social stratification involves a system of differential privilege, unequal distribution of privileges, goods, power services, etc among members belonging to different social strata.

The social classes in the rural area are different from those in the urban area in the following ways:

1. Social classes are fewer in the rural than in the urban area. This is because the opportunities available for rural dwellers to modify their social positions are limited.
2. The lowest and highest social classes in the rural area are closer than in the urban area.
3. Rural social class tends to be lower class.

Social stratification emerges from interaction of members in society. When people in society interact with one another over a prolonged period of time they tend to compare and rank individuals and groups who differ from one another. Their relative worth is judged in terms of specific criteria. Roles are evolved, ascribed and evaluated differentially. Some roles are regarded more important, with greater esteem and social value than others, and individuals filling these roles thereby receive preferential treatment and greater reward than others. Groups thus ranked with some degree of permanence are said to be stratified. When society divides its population into a large number of such groups, a highly stratified society is the result

**Functions of Social Stratification**

The following functions of stratification are identified:

1. *Means of accomplishing essential jobs in society*.

Stratification in society constitutes a means of society’s getting some of its essential jobs done by distributing different amounts of prestige and privilege to various strata. An army is an example of stratification with clearly defined strata, each marked with visible symbol denoting rank, specific roles and role expectations, norms and prescribed standards of behaviour and inter-relationship-all clearly organised to do a job.

1. *Regulation and control of individual and group relationships and participation*. Stratification regulates and controls human relationships in society. Prescribed roles and role expectation, norms and standards of behaviour are involved in relationships within each stratum and in interstate relationships. Stratification tends to regulate participation of groups and individuals in the total life of society, giving them access to certain areas and restricting them to others.
2. *Contribution to social integration and structure*.

Stratification in society has a strong integrative function, serving to co-ordinate and harmonise units within the social structure. Stratification further serves to influence the functions of various units of social strata. Each may develop its own voluntary organizations to serve recreational (and some other) needs, the nature of such organizations varying from stratum to stratum. Thus, members of a particular stratum will have clubs, teams and perhaps a recreational centre distinct from those of other strata in society.

1. *Simplification*.

Stratification of society categorises people into different strata, thus simplifying man’s world in respect to his relations with other people. While within primary groups it is no problem to know how one should behave toward other individuals because of intimate knowledge of each other, to know how to react in various situations involving several people outside of primary groups is extremely difficult without such classification.

**Improving teacher’s role and position in the social structure of a community**

1. Create a good image of yourself: to feel that you are valued and the work you produce can be worthy of praise.
2. Develop your social skills: feeling comfortable in class is important. Getting along with your peers and having a good relationship with your students and the community can influences your social role and position.
3. Professional development: develop yourself academically and gain the professional skills and experience for professional development. This can influence your roles and status in the workplace and community.
4. Uphold high professional standard in the community.

*Note: Tutors will provide materials based on practical experience*

**UNIT 4: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN SHAPING THE ASSIGNMENT OF ROLES AND REWARDS IN SOCIETY**

**Social Role and Status of Social Stratification**

The element of social role and status are important features of social stratification. This is because, role conflict and inequality of status can affect smooth functioning of a society of the teacher.

*Social Role:*

The social structure functions better if the individuals do the jobs assigned to them properly. An individual cannot perform all the jobs nor can all the individuals be given the same job. The social system is based on a division of labour in which every person is assigned a specific task to perform. Some are teachers, others are physicians, some are labourers, others are scientists, traders and soldiers

The task performed by an individual makes up the role he is expected to play in a society. Thus, **a social role is defined as a pattern of behaviour expected of an individual in a certain group or situation.** It specifies the part a person is supposed to play in the activities of his group or community. So, for instance, what is society expecting from the Agriculture teacher in the community or what obligations does the teacher has towards his society or community where he works?

#### Role conflict and causes:

It is expected that when roles are assigned by society each member accepts and fulfills it according to expectations. But sometimes this is not the case. Sometimes there is doubt or disagreement as to what behaviour is expected in a given role and sometimes an individual resents the role assigned to him and fails to live up to the expectations. This situation is referred to as role conflict and can caused by:

1. Culture heterogeneity and complexity of the social system;
2. Different roles of an individual in different groups;
3. The possibility of confusion over the appropriateness of a case;
4. When two or more persons are authorized to perform same functions;
5. When the functions are below the status of the individual
6. Differences in the expected behaviors from the person assigned a role, and
7. Differences in the perception of one’s duties and responsibilities.

To the extent the different roles are clearly allocated and to the extent the rights and duties inherent in each role clearly understood and to the extent everyone behaves in his role as expected, the social system will run smoothly and with a minimum of strain on the individual personality.

*Social Status:*

Social status is the comparative amounts of prestige, difference, or respect accorded to persons who have been assigned different roles in a group or community. It can be high if the role, a person is playing is considered important by the group. On the other hand if the role is regarded less high, its performer may be accorded lower status. Thus, the status of a person is based on social evaluations. Also, it is possible for person to occupy many different roles. He can be a father, a teacher and a president of a Home Gardening club in the community.

It is important to also note that status and role are closely related. A status is a position. A role is the manner in which that position is supposed to be filled. Each position has both a status that is socially given and a role or pattern of behaviour linked to the status that is socially expected. The execution of role expectations is role performance.

### Determinants of Status:

There are two processes by which the status of a person in society is formed. These are the process of ascription and the process of achievement. Every society is confronted with the necessity of making a choice between the two. An *ascribe status* is assigned either at birth or later in life without reference to their innate differences or abilities and is not changeable. An achieved status is gained voluntarily through an individual's actions, merit, and ability.

There may be a society in which status is ascribed while in another society the status may be achieved. However, no society makes exclusive use of either of these two principles. Every society makes use of both. The only question is to what extent the status in particular case has been determined by ascription and achievement.

#### By ascription, the determinants of status include:

1. Sex:All societies prescribe different attitudes and roles to men and women.
2. Age:Age is an important factor used by all the societies for role assignments. Generally, a society recognizes at least five age periods: infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age.
3. Kinship: Generally, the society ascribes status to a child on the basis of his relations to his parents and siblings. His status is identified with that of his parents.
4. Social factors: Social factors are also used as a basis for ascription. All societies classify their members into a number of groups or categories (e.g. based on technical skill or other abilities) and ascribe to such categories differing degrees of status. In some societies some groups of professionals are ascribed higher status than others.

By achievement, social status is determined through individual’s manifestation of talent and effort. It is based on education, occupation, and other accomplishments by an individual. Determination of social status by ascription allows society to make use of individuals with exceptional capacities for common social ends. It also encourages people to put initiative and do their best, and to prevent incompetent individuals from occupying high positions only on the basis of ascribed status.

**Assigning roles/positions and rewards based on social standards**

As society becomes more technologically advanced with greater complexity, its system of assigning or distributing roles and status (privileges, prestige and rewards and punishment) becomes increasingly all-encompassing and based on modern social standards. The rewards society gives serve as incentives to get the various essential jobs accomplished; hence, rewards must be commensurate with the job to be done or at least adequate to attract individuals to do the job. These rewards may be economic, aesthetic or symbolic and give material and/or psychological satisfactions.

*Note: Tutors will provide materials based on practical experience*

**UNIT 5: ADJUSTING TEACHING METHODS IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION TO SUIT THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT**

**Facilities for teaching agriculture in rural communities**

*Note: Tutors will provide materials based on practical experience*

**Varied abilities, attitudes and needs of students in rural communities**

*Note: Tutors will provide materials based on practical experience*

**Facilitation techniques suitable for agricultural education in rural communities**

For the teacher to play an effective role as change agent of Agriculture in a rural community he/she need good facilitation skill and attitude. Facilitation is the employment of approaches for realizing community involvement. It is a process where the facilitator or an agent of change assists engagement in meaningful dialogue, activities and projects. Today’s demand is for teachers to change from manipulating to facilitating teaching of agriculture. What is the difference?

* *Manipulating* is trainer centred, you are in charge and everyone knows it, you know it all.
* *Facilitation* is learner centred, you are helping others to learn, you are learning too.

Facilitation encourages creativity and reflection by participant, leading to shifts in attitudes and awareness. But manipulation should not be seen as entirely wrong. You may combine the two but you ought to be careful of when and how to do that. At the beginning of a subject the trainer is the dominant figure, directing the training. But as the lesson progresses the trainees need to be facilitated to grow more comfortable with one another and overall process, group cohesion will increase and they will begin to assert their own authority over the training. This will enhance active participation.

*Facilitation Techniques*

The following techniques are important in playing the role of a facilitator:

## Beginning the facilitation process

1. Clearly define your role at the start of the meeting. Be brief but be sure and do this. Check if there are any questions.
2. If there is skepticism about the role, ask if they are willing to try if for an hour or so. Indicate that you will check to see what they think after they experience it. Remember to use a negative vote, e.g., “Any objections or concerns you have about the role?
3. Periodically ask for feedback (at halfway point or after a break) e.g. “How are you doing? Is there anything you want me to do more of less of?
4. Get as many “small” agreements as early as you can, e.g., agreement on a time for closure, agreement on the outcomes, agreements on the first step of the meeting etc.
5. Use the group memory to remind them of what they have accomplished, what they are trying to accomplish at the moment, and what they are trying to accomplish for the entire meeting.
6. Use the group memory to help them make process decision, Remember, in making process decision, you are helping them move through the same phases of problem solving, only about process instead of content.
7. Boomerang questions back to the group. “I don’t know. What do you think is the next step here?
8. Make suggestions “lightly”, e.g., “You may want to defer on evaluating until you have got all of your ideas out,” or, “Let’s try listing the advantages and disadvantages of these options before deciding. Any objection to taking a few minutes to do that?

## *Controlling the facilitation process*

The facilitator needs to be mindful of certain participants’ characteristics and behaviours that may be detrimental to the learning or discussion process e.g.

* Discouraging others
* Being talkative
* Reluctant to mix with others due to age differences
* Noisy
* Being Sabotage
* Reluctant to mix with others due to different political affiliations in a multi-party.
* Bringing in a political climate.
* Ambitious demands
* Having participants with different levels of understanding of issues at hand due to different levels of education (Literacy)

What would you do if one or more people have above characteristics and behaviours in the group you are facilitating?

## *Results of good facilitation*

* Sustainability
* Raised community ability to making decisions (well informed)
* Community benefits realized
* Development will take place
* Community ownership promoted
* Good name for the facilitator
* Community made ready for other interventions and assistance
* Good leadership
* Strong community groups
* Reduced dependence syndrome
* Promoted confidence
* Experienced teacher
* Raised community capacity
* Self-reliant

What makes a good Facilitator?

Becoming a good Facilitator requires time, experience and learning by doing. Most effective facilitators have the following range of key characteristics:

1. A **warm personality**, with the ability to show approval and acceptance of trainees
2. **Social skills**, with an ability to bring the group together and control withoutdisorganizing or destabilizing it
3. A **manner of teaching** which generates and uses the ideas and skills of participants
4. **Organizing ability**, so that resources are booked and logisticalarrangements smoothly handled
5. **Problem analysis skills** in noticing and resolving participants problems
6. **Enthusiasm** for the subject and capacity to put it across in an interesting way
7. **Flexibilit**y in responding to participants’ changing needs Knowledge of the subject

***Note:*** Some of the above can be attributed to one’s personality BUT some can be learnt or improved through experience and practice.

Facilitative attitudes

The following attitudes are important for good facilitators:

*Neutrality:* Suspending or deferring your own thoughts, opinions and feelings about the task before the group is the basis for your credibility and effectiveness. It is your overview of where they are and where they want to go, separate from your opinion about either of them, that will enable you to assist in accomplishing their tasks. This should be interpreted to mean that the facilitator should not make contributions of content or provide direction for the group. In areas of your expertise, it important that you act as an expert – while at the same time being attentive to the knowledge that group members can contribute.

*Win/Win Attitude*: If you do not believe and do not demonstrate a belief that agreements are possible or desirable, they probably won’t be. Your responsibility is to advocate for decisions that everyone is willing to support.

*Flexibility:* It is important for you to plan the meeting based on your knowledge and experience enriched by the data you have about the participants’ needs and identify strategies and tools beforehand. It is equally important that you be able to let go of the pre-planned roadmap and move with the group.

*Being Non-Defensive:* The mediating influence of a trainer depends on neutrality and a non-defensive attitude. When a trainer becomes defensive, he or she can easily become the focus for the session. At times you will be called upon to put the group’s needs before your own and not allow your feelings to add another dynamic to a complex situation.

**Facilitation skills for promoting effective agricultural education in rural communities**

* Reinforce interest and awareness of opportunities existing in agriculture.
* Demonstrate that farming is a dignified and profitable occupation.
* Develop self-reliance, resourcefulness, problem solving abilities and occupational outlook in agriculture.
* Teach in a practical manner basic principles and skills in agriculture.
* Relate in broad terms the value of agriculture to the family and community in general and to show how improved agriculture will contribute to freedom from hunger.
* Ensure that the school take an active part in rural development by involving communities in the curriculum activities.

*Note: Tutors will provide materials based on practical experience*