

### Objective & Scope of the Thesis

The objective of this thesis is to study the problem of rural development with special reference to agriculture. The term "rural" essentially means an area which is characterized by non-urban style of life, occupational structure, social organisation and settlement pattern. Rural is essentially agricultural, its settlement system consists of villages or homesteads; socially it connotes greater inter-dependence among people, more deeply rooted community life and a slow moving rhythm of life built around nature and natural phenomena; and occupationally, it is highly dependent on crop farming, animal enterprises and related activities.

Rural areas by the very nature of their peculiarities in relation to urban areas are in theory identifiable. In practice there lies a vast transition zone between what is essentially rural and urban. It is true that urban areas are marked by presence of manufacturing industries, commerce and other social and economic facilities. The urban areas constitute, by and large, a large concentration of human beings. The rural-urban continuum in activity patterns is found since the very dawn of civilisation. In matters of settlement, one gets a continuum starting from a small hamlets of a few households to metropolitan cities of several million people. In between there are villages, market centres, town and cities of various sizes.

In Sikkim, the rural areas are somewhat different from the plains. For this reason, in the Census reports rural areas are classified not as villages but as "revenue blocks".

Among the four districts the East district (Gangtok) has the highest population with 138,762 persons confined to 128 revenue blocks (two uninhabited) and 3 towns. It is followed by South district which has a population of 75,975 residing in 145 blocks (1 uninhabited) and 2 towns and the West district (Gyalshing) has population of 75102 persons residing in 120 blocks (one uninhabited) and 2 towns. North district is the least populated and accounts for 26,455 persons residing in 54 revenue blocks (3 uninhabited) and 1 town.

Table 1.4.

Number of villages or Revenue Blocks in Sikkim in 1981 Census.

<u>District</u>	<u>No. of Revenue Blocks</u>	<u>Uninhabited</u>
1. East (Gangtok)	128	2
2. South (Namchi)	145	1
3. West (Gyalshing)	120	1
4. North (Gangan)	54	3

The purpose of this study is to study the problems of rural development in Sikkim.