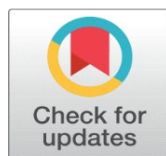


MODERN SOCIETY: A GREAT CHALLENGE IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

In India suffers from a host of social issues ranging from poverty to gendered violence. This article covers the concept of social issues and highlights the different experiences of rural and urban sectors. Further, it studies six important social issues namely poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, the caste system, gendered violence and communalism by analyzing their causes and the specific measures adopted to combat them. Poverty is one of the leading social problems in India. Poverty basically means the unavailability of adequate means of money to fulfill the basic requisites of human life such as food, shelter, clothes, health and education. Poverty is not only socio-economic but even emotional, cultural and political in nature. As India is one of the most overpopulated nations, it is one of the major factors leading to poverty. Rural areas are mostly affected by it. Poverty basically indicates three things- economic dependence, economic insufficiency, and economic inequality. The social issues like poverty, unemployment, migration, crime, delinquency, drug abuse, child abuse, crime against women, crime against children, discrimination on the basis of Caste, class & religion, corruption, family and health problems, education, political, economic, cultural and environment issues and human rights violation all need to be seen in the socio economic repercussions. Steadily rising crimes against women and minorities, intolerance towards other religious communities, lack of employment opportunities for the steadily rising population and insufficient schemes to eradicate poverty can be termed as the major social issues facing India. We people are talking more about the social issues in society but only marginal people are willing to do work on it in practical manner this is harsh reality of our society. If we want to change then we have to work collectively to eliminate these problems. Hope we all understand the social responsibilities

Keywords: Poverty, Unemployment, Corruption, and Economic Inequality.

1. INTRODUCTION

"Poverty is a social phenomenon". Mahatma Gandhi thought that poverty was the worst crime to be committed by any civil society. An individual problem is one that affects only a particular individual or group. On the other hand, public issues are those faced by society as a whole. A social issue is when a situation is deemed less than the social ideal. It must result in unfavorable circumstances that can only be handled collectively. India has undergone many changes in the last decades. Social change brings with it a new set of circumstances wherein an otherwise overlooked issue might be given importance. For example, the population explosion in India was not viewed as a serious issue until the 1950s. It is also important to note that any problem only becomes a social issue when enough number of people find it undesirable. Sati was not deemed a social issue until Raja Ram Mohan Roy criticized the practice and a considerable number of people started supporting him.

2. POVERTY

Poverty is one of the leading social problems in India. Poverty basically means the unavailability of adequate means of money to fulfil the basic requisites of human life such as food, shelter and clothes. Poverty is not only socio-economic but even emotional, cultural and political in nature.

As India is one of the most overpopulated nations, it is one of the major factors leading to poverty. Rural areas are mostly affected by it. Poverty basically indicates three things- economic dependence, economic insufficiency, and economic inequality.

The sociologist David Elesh determined three causes of poverty namely individual, culture of poverty and social structure. The first ideology is propagated by those who believe that if an individual ends up in poverty, it is their own fault and due to a lack of hard work and initiative. This thought is rooted in the functionalist approach of sociology. It maintains that poverty is a good thing for society since it propagates the survival of the fittest. The culture of poverty concept was introduced in 1959 by Oscar Lewis.

He believed that the lifestyle of the lower socio-economic classes" fostered behaviours and attitudes associated with poverty. Hence, no amount of economic rehabilitation could help alleviate the poor. Finally, the social structure approach was propagated by sociologist Herbert Gans. He associated poverty with unjust social conditions and pointed out that the middle and higher classes had a vested interest in the poor. For example, the existence of the poor helped alleviate their social status. Thus, they had no interest in changing the social structure.

CAUSES OF POVERTY IN INDIA

- **UNEMPLOYMENT:** The unemployment rate in India is quite very high, which results in the people coming under the poverty line.
- **RISE IN THE PRICE:** It is said that the rich are getting richer, and the poorer are getting poorer. This is just because of the increasing price of goods that the poor cannot afford.

Less productivity in farming is one of the foremost means of livelihood for the people of India, and due to the seasonal changes, the production in agriculture are quite uncertain. This is also a contributing factor to poverty.

3. HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

It is true that the world"s most populous democratic country cannot provide proper healthcare facilities to its entire population. India is becoming a hub for medical tourism but all these facilities are not available to local residents, who happen to be poor. Healthcare is a neglected issue in India, as major attention drawers are agriculture, infrastructure and IT. Lack of resources in rural India is a major concern of the day, leading to most of the problems. 50% of all villagers have no access to healthcare providers; Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is 34 per 1000 live births; lack of nutrition caused stunning growth in 50% of all the babies, and 36% people in India have no access to toilets

Despite the country's medical tourism bringing in \$2.8 billion in 2020 and being the fourth largest medical devices market, the healthcare system for the Indian citizen has been a disappointment. According to a report by NITI Aayog, the country has 1.3 hospitals bed per 1000 population with almost 50% of it concentrated in states like Karnataka, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra.

It is common knowledge that the private sector is the dominant player in the healthcare arena in India. Almost 75% of healthcare expenditure comes from the pockets of households, and catastrophic healthcare cost is an important cause of impoverishment. Added to the problem is the lack of regulation in the private sector and the consequent variation in quality and costs of services.

CAUSES OF POOR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IN INDIA

- **LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE:** India has been struggling with deficient infrastructure in the form of lack of well-equipped medical institutes for quite a while now. To add to it, the rate of building such medical teaching or training facilities remains less as compared to the need of the hour .
- **SHORTAGE OF EFFICIENT AND TRAINED MANPOWER:** One of the most pressing problems in India remains a severe shortage of trained manpower in the medical stream; this includes doctors, nurses, paramedics and primary healthcare workers. The situation remains worrisome in rural areas, where almost 66 per cent of India"s population resides.

- **UNMANAGEABLE PATIENT-LOAD:** Even prior to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, healthcare facilities had been feeling the strain due to unmanageable patient-load. Moreover, serving a population of 1.4 billion remains a Herculean task in itself when it comes to suitably managing healthcare facilities.
- **PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY AND PROACTIVE HEALTHCARE:** The latest National Health Policy (NHP) 2017 highlights the „Health for All“ approach to provide assured healthcare for all at an affordable cost. However, there is scope to do much more under the NHP 2017. Ideally, the public health policy needs to be focused towards proactive healthcare, not reactive healthcare.
- **HIGH OUT-OF-POCKET EXPENDITURE REMAINS A STRESS FACTOR:** While public hospitals offer free health services, these facilities are understaffed, poorly equipped, and located mainly in urban areas. It is a known fact that accessible and affordable healthcare in the public sector can considerably reduce the rise in dependence on private institutions. However, governmental facilities leave no alternatives but to access private institutions and incurring high out-of-pocket expenses in healthcare. Most health services are, therefore, provided by private facilities, and 65 per cent of medical expenses in India are paid out of pocket by patients.

4. CORRUPTION

There are many definitions of corruption. The classic definition, which was particularly in vogue in the 1990s, is “the misuse of public power for private gain.” Jeremy Pope, the former head of Transparency International, has defined corruption as “the misuse of entrusted power for private benefit” (Pope 2000:2).

Changes in the Indian society such as the westernization, industrialization, urbanization, secularization has brought various modifications in the values and the attitudes that are to be associated with the lifestyle, marriage, education, economy etc. Undergoing such changes, India is facing several issues. A case study on social issues in India demonstrates corruption as a vital social issue that prevails throughout the nation. In common parlance, corruption means unlawful dishonesty involving bribery. India has been considered one of the ten most corrupt countries in the world. The main reason for the corruption is greed. People want to become rich by using the shortcut, which results in corruption.

The businessman class people practice different methods of corruption to increase their profits. The officers or bureaucrats commit corrupt methods to earn money to lead a happy and luxurious life, maintain a high standard and social status, and equalize them to the higher strata people. To get elected, politicians bribe the poor people.

CAUSES OF CORRUPTION IN INDIA

- **MONEY- MAKING NATURE OF PEOPLE:** Nowadays, people have greed, so they want more than their needs. Hence they use to practice corruption as a step for money-making.
- **ECONOMIC NEED:** Insufficient amount of salary or pay scales and the rising cost of the prices of every good is one of the most important causes of the rising corruption. Unemployment and poverty force a person to use such illegal way to earn bread and butter.
- **PRESENCE OF BLACK MONEY:** Black money is evil for society, and this corruption generates black money by its very nature. Black money refers to the amount of money held illegally and illegitimately by an individual or by any organization, such as the smuggling of drugs, illegal weapons, bribery, or terrorism.
- **LACK OR INADEQUATE PUNISHMENT FOR CORRUPTION:** In India, though there are many anti-corruption laws, they are considered very weak or inadequate. Thus, the common people face many problems, and mainly the weaker sections of people are the victim of corruption.

5. UNEMPLOYMENT

The defective education system fails to give importance to primary education and vocational training. The benefits of education are mostly availed only by middle- and high-income youth with access to private schools and universities. The conditions in most government schools are unsuitable for studying and are often a result for many girls to drop out (Ahuja 2014). Unemployment is a global phenomenon where a person who is willing to work fails to get a job to earn to fulfill his basic needs. It is a growing social issue in India. In a nutshell, society fails to provide a means of earning for the non-disabled man. With a high rate of the population, India is facing unemployment issues, which is responsible for the rise in the poverty level, social tension, diseases, corruption, crimes, and low productivity.

CAUSES OF UNEMPLOYMENT

- The literacy rate in India is quite meager. Due to the inappropriate or insufficient education system does not make the people fit for working in various fields.
- As agriculture is the backbone of our country, 90% of Indians depends on agriculture for their livelihood. And agriculture is a gamble in the hand of the monsoon; hence, due to this seasonal nature of agriculture, the agricultural labourers work less.
- A case study on social issues in India demonstrates that the higher growth of the population is also a factor for the increasing unemployment and poverty.

6. OVERPOPULATION

Population is rising at an alarming rate in India making overpopulation an urgent and important issue. Indians are ignoring the soon to burst-overpopulation bomb. According to UN reports (2015) one-fifth of Indians are living below the poverty line and almost one fourth of the Indians are illiterate even after 73 years of independence. The problem of over population is prevalent mainly in poor and developing countries. The illiteracy and poverty are interrelated. Where there is illiteracy, there is poverty and vice versa. The Government is increasing investment in many infrastructure projects (Dr BKS Sanjay 2020)

Overpopulation is a major social issue in India. It is increasing very rapidly. Such a rise in population is a somber aspect of the economic development of India. The population growth has led to several problems such as scarcity of food; clothes, employment and shelter, and the demands of the resources have peaked.

CAUSES OF OVERPOPULATION

- **Illiteracy**– As the literacy rate in India is meager; the people are unaware of the population explosion. People do not have any idea about family planning which gives rise in population.
- **Need of a male child**– as in our India, a son is given much priority compared to a girl. It is believed that son will perform all the religious rites. So for getting a male child, the people give birth to daughters, ultimately increasing the population.

7. BASIC SANITATION

The term sanitation generally stands for the supplying of services and facilities for the safe management and disposal of human excreta and sewage, and, more generally, solid and animal waste (Singh, 2014).

REASONS FOR POOR SANITATION IN INDIA ARE AS FOLLOWS:- Sanitation is one of the methods to provide primary health care to the actual need of the community possibly through minimizing the level of pollutants in the environment. India, having 14% of world's total population suffers by 50% of world's total diseases due to poor sanitation.

- Low priority accorded to sanitation
- Lack of felt need
- Lack of coordination between different implementing agencies—
- Inadequate sartorial planning
- Illiteracy and ignorance
- Lack of infrastructure
- Weak and inefficient institutional mechanism.
- Inadequate trained human resources
- Inadequate financial resources.
- Lack of community participation and inadequate health education facilities.—
- Lack of private sector participation

The problem of rural sanitation is further complicated due to social and attitudinal problems. A large percentage of our population is poor, illiterate and socially disorganized so, these do not realize, the importance of sanitation. The sanitation programme will be successful only through people's involvement and by designing a system which is suitable to the sociocultural attitudes and customs of the people.

8. CHILD LABOUR

“A Child is a father of the Man” -William Wordsworth Child Labour is a 'harsh reality' and one can only mitigate some of the harshness of the exploitative aspects of Child Labour. The 'harsh reality' of Child Labour arises out of the fact that in the present state of development in the country many parents, on account of poverty, have to send their children to work in order to supplement their income and the income derived from the Child Labour, however to do work is essential to sustain the family. This is the 'poverty argument of Child Labour (Justice P.S. Narayana 2007)

Child labour is basically said to the work done by children below the age of fourteen, which deprive them of their childhood and studies. Children are now forced to work in the mill, factories, small scale industries, shops or household works. Child labour has a very negative effect on the growth and development of a child in various aspects, including the physical, mental, psychological and social.

CAUSES OF CHILD LABOUR

- Poverty The biggest cause of child labour is poverty. People below the poverty line do not have sufficient money to afford education for their children. As a result, the children are forced to help their parents in earning money.
- Unemployment by the elders another factor towards child labour is the unemployment by the elders, which compel a child to leave his dreams and childhood and earn money for the two squares meal for his/her family.
- Migration of the families the migration of families from rural to urban areas is also a major factor for child labour. They migrate to get better earning opportunities in the cities; however, their children become child labour when such thing is not met.
- Overpopulation causes the limitation on the resources and more mouth to feed. So the children are bound to be child labour.

Both men and women enjoy equal opportunities, but as far as freedom and safety of women are concerned, India lags behind. Issues like domestic violence, rape, the portrayal of women in media, etc., must be tackled immediately.

CAUSES OF WOMEN SAFETY CONCERN

- Apart from feeling unsafe on roads when it gets dark, women go through a lot of different Women's rights violations.
- Women trafficking, dowry deaths, domestic violence, child marriage, women forced to give birth to only sons, female feticides, forced evictions and exclusions, sexual harassment at the workplace, rapes are prevalent across the world.
- Something as basic as education which might be normal for a boy is still a dream for many girls in India.

These are some of the ill-happenings which are used by the male to display male superiority. This is one of the prime reason violence is increasing in India, and women's safety is a concern in India.

9. DRUG ADDICTION

Millions of Indians are dependent on alcohol, cannabis, and opiates, and drug misuse is a pervasive phenomenon in Indian society, says a new report, published jointly by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and India's Ministry of Social Justice Sanjay Kumar (2004) Drug addiction refers to the repeated use of drugs for a purpose other than medication. It has spread its branches to India, starting from the young to the old generation. Drug addiction means the consumption of alcohol, sedatives, stimulants, narcotics, hallucinogens, and nicotine.

CONSEQUENCES OF DRUGS ADDICTION

- Creates health disorders Drug addiction leads to the deterioration of health. It causes severe health issues such as liver problem, kidney damage, lungs diseases, heart diseases, and vomiting, respiratory problems.
- Enhance the crime rate A person addicted to drugs generally has a very lower moral sense or judgment. Hence there are more chances for several crimes like murder, theft, adultery and other crimes.
- Harms the social life Drug addicts generally get detached from the bond and responsibilities of their family, which in turn harm their married life and family.

10. CONCLUSION

There are a lot of social issues we are facing right now, some more prominent than the others. First of all, poverty is a worldwide issue. It gives birth to a lot of other social issues which we must try to get away with at the earliest. Social Issues is an undesirable state which opposes society or a certain part of society. It refers to an unwanted situation that frequently results in problems and continues to harm society. Social issues can cause a lot of problems that can be beyond the control of just one person.

Moreover, child labour is another major social issue that damages the lives of young children. Similarly, illiteracy also ruins the lives of many by destroying their chances of a bright future. In India mostly, poverty, corruption, unemployment, drug addiction, lack of proper sanitation and proper health infrastructure etc., still exists and is responsible for the lack of development. We must all come together to fight against them and put them to an end for the development of the society.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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