

Impact of Social Problems for the Development of Nation – An Analysis

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Abstract

Social problems are the problems which affect the larger sections of the society. They have been discussed since ancient times. In fact, these very social problems have been instrumental in bringing upon a change in our society from time to time. India is a country of different cultures, religions, languages and beliefs. Therefore, within the same country there lie different social problems which differ from region to region, state to state. Social problems in India are not something new. They have been there since ancient times.

For instance, the caste system in India is a social issue which has been there since the earlier times and exists even today. Similarly, untouchability is another social issue which has been existent in India since older times. Such problems have affected the development of the people as well as society. They are often the cause of hatred among people and lead to conflicts and sometimes even riots.

As in any other society, there are some social problems which are prevalent at a given period of time. India is a no different country. It has its own share of social problems. India is a developing country. Therefore, poverty is a major social issue here. At the time of independence, a large population of India was struggling with basic needs such as food shelter and clothing.

Even today, such facilities are lacking in the rural areas of the country. People have to travel long distances in search of potable water. Despite many initiatives by the Government as well as private organisations, still, a large section of the population lives below the poverty line. This hampers the overall development of the country. Illiteracy is among the major social problems which have affected the growth of the country. However, there are many causes of this social issue. On one hand, it is the lack of education facilities especially in the rural belt which has led to the people being illiterate. On the other hand, it is the reluctance of people to send their children to school has also resulted in a high illiteracy rate in the country. Due to illiteracy and ignorance, the people are not able to avail the facilities provided by the government.

Keywords— social problems, Illiteracy, India, society, WHO, ignorance, women, dowry, corruption.

Introduction

The caste system is another of such social problems which has deep roots in the society. In India, people are divided among four castes, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. Among all these, the Shudras are considered as the lowest and are looked upon as untouchables in the society. The upper castes do not allow the lower ones to avail even the basic facilities such as drawing water from the same well. Often this has been a cause of hatred and fights among the people. However, with different schemes introduced by the government from time to time, things have started changing. Now, the Shudras are provided jobs, education and other facilities at par with other citizens of the country. Not all social problems are permanent in society. There are many such social problems which existed earlier, but with changing mind-sets of the people and

awareness among the citizens, many of them have been abolished. For instance, Sati system was one such social issue which was actually cruelty against women. In case the husband of a woman dies, she was required to burn herself alive in the pyre of her husband. Women had no right to live in a society without their husbands. But with the initiatives of leaders such a Raja Ram Mohan Roy such evil practices were abolished.

Similarly, polygamy was a social issue in India since ancient times. A man was allowed to marry many women. Kings of earlier times had many queens. Women were treated as objects and married off as presents to men. However, with changing times and introduction of different laws such practice has been abolished.

Similar to this is the social issue of child marriage. Earlier, girls and boys were married as soon as they attained puberty. In fact, it was a general mind-set to marry off a girl within two years of her attaining puberty. Due to such practices, the girls were not able to have equal opportunities in education as men.

In fact, they were not treated as equal to men in any matter. However, with laws in place, this practice was termed illegal. As per the laws enacted by the Indian Government, a minimum age of 18 for girls and 21 for boys has been fixed for marriage. However, in remote parts of the country, such practices still exist and there are initiatives by the government from time to time in educating people about the evil aspects of this practice.

Objective:

This paper intends to explore some of the important social problem that need to be addressed today in India and their impact on development

Current Social problems, causes and remedy

India has made a place for itself as one of the fastest growing economies in the world, yet it loses behind in a lot behind in the name of growth. As the rich are getting richer and the poor get poorer, the divide has been expanding more than before. What can after all be attributed to the various problems that pose a threat before every government that comes to power at the centre? From the increasing poverty, to the corruption at an all-time high, the increasing violence against women across the nation, the incidents of terrorism that rock some or the other city, and the rising prices of basic amenities, are some of the most scary facts of this fast-growing economy, India.

While these are not the only problems on the list, let's go through some of the major social problems that mar the reputation of the country off and on:

Poverty

Poverty is one of the biggest evils faced by India in the present scenario. With an increasing population of people in the Below the Poverty Line (BPL) across the nation, it seems like a never-ending issue. Rising inflation has added further to the existing problem. India has an unbelievable number of people suffering due to this evil. According to the Indian Planning Commission's 2013 estimate, around 269 million people (approximately 22% of the total population) live under the poverty line. And, when we start looking around for what has actually been done about it, we wouldn't really find much.

The government needs to take a strong action against the biggest social evil of all. Ministers need to work towards creating employment, and providing enough for the large population which does not even receive the basic amenities. New policies are the need of the hour, not only for employment creation but also to create a young educated population. Education must be promoted at all levels of the society to create awareness especially among the poor.

Corruption

Corruption is ruining the spine of the nation, and has adversely affected the economy of India. India has been marred by a list of scams and scandals, which have crippled the nation from inside out. From the Coalgate scam, to the 2G scam, to the CWG scandal and the Bofors scam, all brought forward the weaknesses of a government and a nation as a whole. As the government at the centre changes every time, the blame game changes and political parties start blaming the other, but corruption is not really being fought at the ground level. From babus to ministers at the top, all have been found involved in some of the world's biggest scandals.

What has created a hole in the pockets of the Indian economy, it has become essential for the government to tackle it at different levels. From strict rules at all levels of government undertakings, to an awareness among the people against the spread of corruption, needs to be maintained by the government. Anna Hazare's fight against corruption should actually be taken up by the leaders of the nation and must imply the Anti-Corruption bill in the government completely. While pointing a finger on others is the easiest way out, people need to realise the need to get rid of the 'under-the-table' bribing habit and strengthen our system by neither giving bribe, nor taking bribe. The government needs to take strong action against a bribe-giver and a bribe-taker equally.

Terrorism

Terrorism has affected India since the day India was partitioned. The dispute over Kashmir between India and Pakistan has been a long-standing unresolved issue. Using this, the neighbouring country has often used terror against India in the worst manners possible. Uncountable incidents of terror attacks in Kashmir, and its nearby regions such as Srinagar, along with the major cities of the country, have been a source of disturbance very often. One such incident which shook the nation was the

26X11 Mumbai terror attack, among the uncountable similar attacks. India has been disturbed by external terrorism as well as internal terrorism through Maoist attacks in the western parts of the country.

Terrorism mainly causes loss of lives, but also affects the country economically. Tourism in Jammu & Kashmir has suffered for years on end due to the threat to tourists due to sudden terror attacks. Alongside, the clean-up after every such attack involve long governmental processes. How is the government tackling the issue, only remains a question.

The government needs to take a strong stand against the neighbouring countries terror activities and needs to take action and not only hold peace talks. It's the need of the hour that the citizens of the country are provided with security as well as an assurity of safety as well. A sensitive approach towards terrorists may be attempted to make them surrender.

Communalism

Being a mix of various cultures and religions, India has ever-since its formation suffered due to communal differences. Communal clashes have led to a lot of violence in various incidents across the country. The hindu-muslim clash during the partition of India, and the Operation Blue Star which led to the assassination of the then PM Indira Gandhi are the worst examples of communalism in India. Not to forget the bloodbath that took place during the Babri Masjid demolition case. India has been affected both economically and politically, after such incidents took place.

The government needs to handle such problems with extreme sensitivity, along with making sure that communalism is not used for political gains by its ministers. Besides political understanding, change needs to be brought from the grass roots level itself. The caste divide must be decreased by educating the younger generation and sensitizing them about such problems.

Illiteracy

On one hand, India has a state like Kerala that boasts of 93.91% literacy in its state alone, while on the other hand there is a backward state like Bihar with 68.8% literacy rate. Education is not necessary for employment and learning, it is required to create a sensitive and growth-seeking younger generation. A youth needs to be empowered with education, to further know their rights as the citizens of the country. Illiteracy needs to be tackled as one of the biggest social evils of the nation, as this is the biggest reasons why the youth is misguided and involved in criminal as well as terror activities. The government needs to enforce free education and strict rules to follow it in every family in India, poor or not poor. An educated population will eventually lead to the country having a stronger workforce as against the world. Education is sure to change the poverty and unemployment scenario in the country. At the core level, the people need to be made aware of the need of education to have enriched lives.

Inflation

The past years have seen inflation as one of the major problems faced by the common man. The rising prices of basic amenities have created furore among the people. Rising rates of food items and fuel have affected the pockets of the middle

class so much, bringing them out on the roads in protest. The government has not been able to fulfill any of the promises made before coming in power, which were all forgotten later, leaving the people to suffer the brunt of inflation.

There is an essential need to bring inflation under control, and bring basic amenities at affordable prices for all. When will this economic divide be erased, is a question no government has been able to answer as yet.

Violence against Women

Women in India live under a constant fear all the time. A fear of going out alone, disturbs every female mind living in India. The rising cases of sexual abuse and rape across the country, have left a black mark on the reputation of India. Foreign tourists have been known to have been given special warnings while travelling to India, in fact some countries even labelled our nation as an unsafe country for women, after the deadly Delhi Rape case. Is this the reputation we wish to maintain across the world? Definitely not! But, what are we really doing about it.

The recent rape cases in Badaun, UP moved the entire nation, though no concrete action was taken for a long time. Rapes continue to take place, and no action is taken against the culprits. In most cases, victims die, and if they survive they live a worse life than ever.

Before the government does anything about the security, the people themselves need to take a stand against crime against women. We as a society need to fight this social evil from within. The youth needs to be sensitized about the safety of women, and the respect to be given to women. Strong police action needs to be taken against the culprits, and cases need to be handled with more sensitivity and through a quick process. We need to see justice happen, and now.

The country as a whole needs to be ready to tackle such social evils, along with the government.

Overall Impact of social problems for the development of nation

The caste system in India has its roots in ancient India. Just as the ashrama dharma laid down rules and duties with reference to the individual's life in the world, varna or caste system prescribed duties with reference to the particular caste to which an individual belonged. Earlier they were all regarded equal in social status and could take up any profession they liked. There was no restriction in the matter of eating food or marriage with members of other profession. But with the beginning of specializing in hereditary professions and coming in contact with the indigenous people situations changed and the birth of the person decided their caste.

Hence the varna system that developed during that time was the outcome of the social and economic development. But as time passed, it led to the division of society into high-caste and low-caste people who could not mix with each other. Inter-caste dining or marriage was forbidden. People belonging to the so called lower castes were exploited and slowly down the ages, their condition became miserable.

They were poor and did not enjoy equality in society. They were not even allowed to draw water from the common wells of the villages, or even could go to the temples or to come close to the people of the so called higher castes. Thus caste system hampered the healthy growth of different professions as entry into a particular profession was based on birth and not on ability. Caste-based discrimination has at times even led to violence. The caste-system also makes the working of democracy in our country difficult. Society gets divided into artificial groups that tend to support the candidate who belongs to their caste. They do not pay much attention to the fact whether he/she is a deserving candidate or not. This is not good for the health of democracy in India. Our country cannot make real progress unless this system is uprooted completely. During the post-independence period, i.e. after 1947, the Government has taken cognizance of these problems and tried to tackle them through legislation (enacting laws to counter these problems) as well as by social action (by involving the civil society, NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) and social groups. These steps have helped in improving the situation but still a lot more needs to be done. In India females are discriminated in various fields like health, education and jobs. The girls carry the liability of dowry on their head, and they have to leave their parents home after marriage. Besides, in order to safeguard their old age parents prefer to have male offspring. Many female babies are aborted, abandoned, deliberately neglected and underfed simply as they are girls. This is worst in the state of Rajasthan.

But now there is a great change in this direction. In some states like Haryana where girl child ratio is very low, the government has taken out many schemes to promote education of girls. Reservation of jobs for women and even six months maternity leave is provided to them besides many others. The World Bank Document, "A New Agenda for Women's Health and Nutrition" (Washington 1995) estimates that in developing countries, 450 million adult women have their development problems due to lack of protein input during their childhood. In many communities, women and girls get less food or poor quality food compared to men and boys. When they are ill, they get less attention or receive some attention only when the disease becomes extremely serious. There is ample evidence at the global level of disparity in health status between men and women and their access to medical services. In a majority of the countries, literacy rate for women is significantly lower than that for men. In 66 countries, the gap between the male and female literacy rates is estimated to be larger than 10 percentage points and in 40 countries, it is larger than 20 percentage points in the age group of 6-11, which corresponds to primary level education.

According to 2011 census, there is a gap of 16.7 percent between the literacy rate of men and women i.e. men's literacy rate is 82.14 percent compared to women's literacy rate that stands at 65.46 percent. About 24.5 percent (85 million) of the girls in the world are estimated to be out of school compared to 16.4 percent (60 million) boys. In most Indian families, a girl child is least welcome although in India women were respected from the early ages. Even though there are growing instances of girls excelling in education, tradition, custom, and social practices place greater value on sons than on daughters, who are often viewed as an economic burden. This attitude of the society also stands in the way of the girl child being able to achieve her full potential. A recent report on the girl child makes the following observations: "Girls are the world's most squandered gift. They are precious human beings with enormous potential, but across the world, they are generally the last to have their basic needs met and first to have their basic rights denied." The need of girls for food clothing, shelter, healthcare, education, nurture, and time to play often goes unmet. Their rights to safety, freedom from harassment and exploitation, as also their rights to grow, develop and blossom, are denied. Prejudice against the girl child becomes clearer and sharper from the data in sex ratio in the age group 0-6 years. In the Census, 2011 this ratio has been recorded as 914, down from 927 in the Census, 2001. The child sex ratio has steadily declined from 976 in 1961 to 914 in 2011.

Conclusion

In spite of the fact that Governmental and NGOs are moving in the direction of enhancing the current condition in the social problems, the results are not exceptionally reassuring. Maybe the issue lies in the plain profound established convictions in the psyches of individuals of the nation which isn't letting the circumstance to change such social problems. For example, the issue of Female Feticides is one of the disgraceful practices. Despite the fact that there are different rules in place which term this practice an illegal, it is still rampant in many parts of the country.

The genuine purpose behind this is the Patriarchy arrangement of the society of our nation which thinks about male as the better specialist and ladies as subordinate than them. Along these lines, the exceptionally powerful urge of having a male youngster in contrast with female prompted the disgraceful routine with regards to female feticides. In this manner, it is conviction framework or the social moulding of the general population which isn't letting the general public to change at a quick pace.

Despite the fact that there have been a few positive changes in the general public, for example, presently young girls are going to school in greater part and their business proportion is likewise expanding, education facilities are available in rural areas, the backwards are provided equal opportunities, and still we have a long way to go.

We witness many social problems every day such as inequality against women in our own homes, sexual savagery against ladies which is being heard on a consistent schedule, female feticide, religious-mutual brutality which is on the ascent, untouchability which is yet a reality and child labour which still exists. Unless and until we change our mind-sets, nothing can change in our society. It is up to us whether we see these as social problems or accept them as a part of our society.

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