

CURRENT SCENARIOS OF CHALLENGES FACED BY SOCIETY

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Introduction:

Today India is a developing nation and represents itself at International level, but we cannot ignore the fact that our country faces major challenges and social issues at a large scale which has proved to be an obstruction for the development of our nation. We will discuss some of the major challenges faced by our nation and for convenience I would do my best to rephrase all the issues as simply as possible for a quick access.

Need for Sexual and Reproductive health awareness in Adolescents: Saathiya Resource Kit:

In recent years lack of awareness among teenagers has resulted in unsafe sexual practices, violence, substance abuse and mental disorders. Including depression and anxiety. According to UNICEF India's latest data, one in three adolescent girls have experienced physical, sexual and emotional violence and 13% have experienced sexual violence by their partner. Around 2.6 million girls have experienced forced sexual intercourse or another form of forced sexual act in the country. Also 77% of the girls were sexually abused by either husband or partner while 3% reported Sexual violence by a stranger. One in six girls began child bearing in adolescence. The study also revealed that 45% girls and 48% boys justify wife beating which was also reflected in it. 33% women are beaten by their husband or partner. A Lancet study released last year showed that suicides contributed to the highest number of deaths among teenagers between 15-19 years in India. WHO says 4.5% of the total population suffers from depressive disorders that stand at more than 50 million people. The Government of India is making an attempt at educating adolescents on the sex education. The new approach is to involve peer educators from within their own community so that they feel comfortable to discuss their problems.¹

Action against Sex Determination and girl infanticide in Haryana

Over the years, Haryana had notorious reputation for the state with the lowest sex ratio and rampant girl infanticide. The male child preference has harmed the cause of girls and led people to search for various means to abort the girl child medically or through illegal means. Though the PNDT Act was enacted in 1994, Haryana ranked lowest among states in 2011 despite an increase in sex ratio to 834 with previous 819. The sex ratio at birth according to sample registration system statistical report 2012 also ranked Haryana at the bottom amongst all states with an SRB of 857.²

Tuberculosis in India: The Curse of the Increasing Inequality:

Tuberculosis, an airborne disease is contagious, it creates major public health problem in India. It has the highest number of TB cases in the world and accounts for one fifth of the global TB burden in the world. Each year, more than 2 million people in India get TB. It also has the greatest number of new cases of MDR-TB, with an estimated 99,000 cases in 2014. Despite the fact that the total number of deaths by TB has fallen by 22% over last 5 years, over 300,000 people die from it annually (two in every three minutes). Case fatality ratio is 20% in India compared to 5% in developed country. The variation in the percentages suggests that there are critical socioeconomic determinants of TB that aggravate the situation and make population in developing more vulnerable to TB. This essay aims to illustrate how social determinants of Tuberculosis such as low income, food insecurity, weak infrastructure and religion and culture make certain populations more vulnerable to Tuberculosis.³

Child Marriage in India - Latest Data:

Since time immemorial, child marriage has been one of the greatest evils plaguing India. Marriage is a sacred relationship between two individuals who are ready to accept each other. Child marriage is an abuse of such union and is not permitted by law in India. History has always proven child marriage detrimental for our society.

The recent statistics released by the Government of India on married Indian women show 31.3% Hindu women and 30.6% Muslim women marry before the age of 17.6% of all Hindu women married before turning 10. The corresponding figure for Muslim women was 5%. Only 6% of men were married before 18.⁴ The legal age for marriage is 18 for women and 21 for men. Any marriage below the legal age is considered child marriage. One in three married women from Hindu and Muslim communities got married before their 18th birthday making them vulnerable to not just higher maternal mortality rates but also domestic violence.

Studies show girls who give birth before turning 15 and the infants of child mothers are at greater risk. Underage marriages interrupt education and most child brides are unable to negotiate with their family members making them liable to domestic violence.

The Socio- Economic Caste Census 2011:

The socio economic caste census 20 11 is the first comprehensive exercise to estimate India's rural poverty level. Nearly one of the three people in India's villages or about 31 % of the rural population is poor with an income hardly enough to buy even the bare essentials. Three out of 4 households in rural India earns less than Rs 5000 per month. In more than half the cases 51.8% of the total number of rural families the main income earners barely manage to make both ends meet by working as manual or casual laborers. 56% of the rural Indian households have no land or property. About 30% of the households were directly engaged in farming but another 51 % were employed as farm or manual laborers. According to the reports the analysis of the findings shows that 31.2% of India's rural households can be called poor. About 275 million people in rural areas live in deprivation a state of being where people struggle to make subsistence living. In 2002 a similar census had estimated India's rural poverty at 36% of the population, about 267 million In 10 years only and 8 million people moved out of poverty.⁵

Violence against Women:

Women have been the victims of violence all through the ages in all societies, cultures, regions and religious communities of the world. In India which claim to have apostle of people and non violence women bear the brunt of violence domestic as well as public, physical and as well as emotional. Violence against women is linked to her status as subservient to patriarchal norms dominant in the society. From post Vedic period violence against women began to be practiced .The doors of educational, economic, social, political and cultural opportunities were gradually closed for them. The birth of the son came to be the occasion to rejoice and that of a girl of grief. Their personal freedom in respect of movement, dress, diet, marriage are dominated by men. Women also began to be enslaved. They were equated to cattle or commodities that could be sold or purchased. Various obligations, restrictions and regulations were imposed on them and different penalties were imposed if a woman violated them. Thus violence against women came to have a societal sanction.⁶

Need for Women Empowerment:

For time immemorial women in general been forced to occupy a secondary place in relation to men. Women have been relegated to the margins in spite of the fact that they are numerically half of the world's population. This has resulted in women being unable to take a place of human dignity as free and independent entities associated with men on an intellectual and professional equal wavelength. In the ancient period women were known to engage in many productive activities but over the time reproduction and challenges of pregnancy and child birth gradually made her dependent on men protection and food. But the time mankind reached more settled existence patriarchy was fully established. The men were to write the codes of society and governance where women were given subordinate role. The Men projected the dominant view point as universal truth. Yet even in the ages of strict dominance by males society has thrown up women of caliber who could match even surpass the skills of men. The visible achievements of women as teachers, doctors, pilots, politicians and explorers etc. have demolished the patriarchal notions of confining women's role to home and earth. But these achievements have been made mostly at individual levels at times when women faced discrimination and criticism at all levels.⁷

Trends in Divorce in India:

The young couple are fast becoming upwardly mobile and rich in Indian cities. But economic prosperity is taking its toll on the marital status and marriages are falling apart. Over the years the number of divorce cases filed in the family courts have doubled. The main reasons are ego, stress to professional competition. Family counselors and lawyers say the trend may play havoc with the institution of marriage. In cities like Gurugram (Haryana) over 25 matrimonial dispute cases are registered every month at the mediation and conciliation center, more than 10 are divorce petition. At least 2 cases settle for divorce every month. It is seen that most of the couples filing a divorce petition in the family courts are working professionals in the age group of 25-35 years. According to experts divorces are increasing due to frequent ego clashes and work stress. Corporate culture demands long working hours and increases stress levels in young people. Also there is professional competition among the spouse.⁸

Gender Discrimination and child abuse:

The recent deaths of babies facing cruelty at the hands of relatives have shocked the country. But it is true that gender discrimination is not confined to one particular economic class or section or a community. It is widespread and even the states that top the literacy chart like Kerala has a skewed child sex ratio. The 2001

and 2011 Indian census reports show a significant decrease in the number of girls compared to boys in the 0-6 categories. State health society report reveals that child sex ratio has fallen in 9 out of 14 districts in past 10 years. This we are talking about where the population is highly educated and fairly well off compared to other states.⁹ According to sociologists the problem is acute because mothers are unable to speak tip for their children. They have limited rights within the family and practically no decision making power. There is an urgent need to change mindset of the communities while strengthening the laws within the country. There is no dearth of laws but the implementation needs to be tightened. The Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques and rules is in place for years and is fairly a stringent law but then female feticide is rampant across the cities and villages. The need of the hour is to implement the laws more strictly with heavy punishments as deterrents. Another measure could be to introduce fast track courts to look at the cases that involve the rights of minors. A 2007 report of the ministry for women and child development revealed that more than 53% of children in India sexually abused and many have never shared the fact of this abuse with anyone.¹⁰ They need speedy justice to move on and leave the past behind. The institutions involved in child protection should be given more teeth so that can take some effective measures against child abuse.

Conclusion:

From the research conducted and all the data combined, we have come to the conclusion that we face social problems in the contemporary world today but these problems would be eradicated soon as the officials and responsible citizens are taking required steps to control the issues and problems which occur in the way of nations development.

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