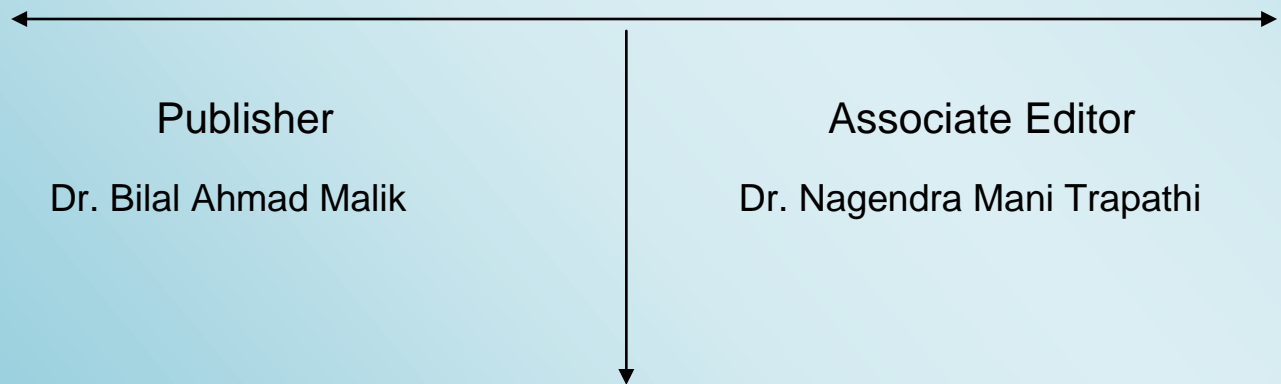


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SOCIAL ISSUES IN INDIA A BIG CHALLENGE

Dr. Ashak Hussain Malik

INTRODUCTION

Since India's Independence in 1947, India has faced multiple social and economic issues. **Such as** social problem, social evil and social conflict refers to any undesirable condition that is opposed either by the whole society or by a section of the society. It is an unwanted social condition, often objectionable, the continuance of which is harmful for the society. India is facing a large number of social issues such as caste system, child labour, Poverty, Overpopulation, Corruption, Unemployment, illiteracy, gender inequality, superstitions, religious conflicts, and many more.

FORMS OF SOCIAL ISSUES IN INDIA:

Overpopulation

The population of India is an estimated 1.27 billion. Though India ranks second in population; it ranks 33 in population density. Indra Gandhi, then Prime Minister of India, had implemented a forced sterilization programme in the early 1970s but the programme failed. Officially, men with two children or more were required to be sterilised, but many unmarried young men, political opponents and ignorant, poor men were also believed to have been affected by this programme. This programme is still remembered and regretted in India, and is blamed for creating a public aversion to family planning, which hampered Government programmes for decades. One of the reasons the population has increased is that a dip in the rate of infant mortality has not been accompanied by a corresponding fall in the birth rate

Poverty

Poverty is a condition in which a household is not able to fulfill its basic needs for survival i.e. food, clothing and shelter. Poverty is a widespread condition in India. Since Independence, poverty is a prevalent concern. It is the twenty-first century and poverty still is a persistent menace in the country. India happens to be country wherein the disparities between the haves and the have-nots are extremely wide. It needs to be taken into account that although the economy has shown some visible signs of progress in the last two decades, this progress been uneven across various sectors or areas. The growth rates are higher in Gujarat and Delhi as compared to Bihar and

Uttar Pradesh. Nearly half of the population doesn't have proper shelter, access to a decent sanitation system, villages do not have a nearby water source, and villages also do not have a secondary school and lack of proper roads. Some sections of the society like the Dalits are not even included in the poverty list maintained by the concerned authorities assigned by the government. They're groups that are marginalized in the society.

Corruption

Corruption is widespread in India. India is ranked 76 out of a 179 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, but its score has improved consistently from 2.7 in 2002 to 3.1 in 2011

In India, corruption takes the form of bribes, tax evasion, exchange controls, embezzlement, etc. A 2005 study done by Transparency International (TI) India found that more than 50% had firsthand experience of paying bribe or peddling influence to get a job done in a public office. The chief economic consequences of corruption are the loss to the exchequer, an unhealthy climate for investment and an increase in the cost of government-subsidized services.

The TI India study estimates the monetary value of petty corruption in 11 basic services provided by the government, like education, healthcare, judiciary, police, etc., to be around Rs.21,068 crores India still ranks in the bottom quartile of developing nations in terms of the ease of doing business, and compared to China and other lower developed Asian nations, the average time taken to secure the clearances for a startup or to invoke bankruptcy is much greater. Recently a revelation of tax evasion (**Panama Papers' Leak**) case involving some high-profile celebrities and businessmen has added spark to the fumes of corruption charges against the elite of the country.

Debt bondage

Debt bondage in India was legally abolished in 1976 but it remains prevalent, with weak enforcement of the law by governments. Bonded labour involves the exploitive interlinking of credit and labour agreements that devolve into slave-like exploitation due to severe power imbalances between the lender and the borrower.

The rise of Dalit activism, government legislation starting as early as 1949, as well as ongoing work by NGOs and government offices to enforce labour laws and rehabilitate those in debt, appears to have contributed to the reduction of bonded labour in India. However, according to research papers presented by the International Labour Organization, there are still many obstacles to the eradication of bonded labour in India.

Debt bondage in India is most prevalent in agricultural areas. Farmers taking small loans can find themselves paying interest on the loans that exceeds 100% of the loan per year.

Opportunity for youth

India one of the famous country in the world , where youth accounted for 40% of the total population in 2013 according to the registrar general of india , however youth unemployed remains very high in india

Superstition

Superstition is considered a widespread social problem in India. Superstition refers to any belief or practice which is explained by supernatural causality, and is in contradiction to modern science. Some beliefs and practices, which are considered superstitious by some, may not be considered so by others. The gap, between what is superstitious and what is not, widens even more when considering the opinions of the general public and scientists. Prevalent superstition in India had earned it the title of "The Land of Snake Charmers and Black Magic". Till only 25-30 years back, if not more, there were many people in the world who thought that India was a country of snake charmers, it was a country which practiced in black magic

Religious violence

Constitutionally India is a secular state, but large-scale violence have periodically occurred in India since independence. In recent decades, communal tensions and religion-based politics have become more prominent.

Terrorism

The regions with long term terrorist activities today are Jammu and Kashmir, Central India (Naxalism) and Seven Sister States (independence and autonomy movements). In the past, the Punjab insurgency led to militant activities in the Indian state of Punjab as well as the national capital Delhi (Delhi serial blasts, anti-Sikh riots). As of 2006, at least 232 of the country's 608 districts were afflicted, at differing intensities, by various insurgent and terrorist movements.

Caste related violence

Over the years, various incidents of violence against Dalits, such as Kherlanji Massacre have been reported from many parts of India. At the same time, many violent protests by Dalits, such as the 2006 Dalit protests in Maharashtra, have been reported as well.

The Mandal Commission was established in 1979 to "identify the socially or educationally backward, and to consider the question of seat reservations and quotas for people to redress [caste](#) discrimination. In 1980, the commission's report affirmed the affirmative action practice under Indian law whereby members of lower castes

were given exclusive access to a certain portion of government jobs and slots in public universities. When V. P. Singh Government tried to implement the recommendations of Mandal Commission in 1989, massive protests were held in the country. Many alleged that the politicians were trying to cash in on caste-based reservations for purely pragmatic electoral purposes.

Illiteracy

Illiteracy is a condition which becomes a blot on the development of nation. India possesses the largest illiterate population. Illiteracy in India is a problem which has complex dimensions attached to it. Illiteracy in India is more or less concerned with different forms of disparities that exist in the country. There are gender imbalances, income imbalances, state imbalances, caste imbalances, technological barriers which shape the literacy rates that exist in the country. The Indian government though has launched several schemes to combat the menace of illiteracy but due to the poor conditions of sanitation and expensive private education and defective mid-day meal schemes, illiteracy still prevails. Not only the government, but every literate person needs to accept the eradication of illiteracy as a personal goal. Each and every contribution by a literate person can make a contribution to eradicate the menace.

Child Marriage

According to the United Nations report, India has the second highest number of child marriages. Marriage is considered to be a sacred union between two mature and consenting individuals who are ready to accept each other and share responsibilities for a lifetime. With respect to this context, child marriages happen to be an unsound institution. Child marriage mars the innocence of childhood. The Indian Constitution provides for prohibitions against child marriage through various laws and enactments. The first law that was designed was the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 which extended to the whole of India except Jammu and Kashmir. This act defines the ages of an adult male and female. Also, sex with minors is a criminal offence under Section 376 of the Indian Penal Code. Proper media sensitization is required for a major change to take place. While on one hand, it is stated that child marriage will still take nearly fifty years to be eradicated, genuine efforts, strict enforcements of the legal provisions and change the scenarios to a great extent.

Starvation

Starvation is a condition characterized by the deficiency in calorie energy intake and is a serious form of malnutrition which ultimately leads to death if not taken care about. Historically, starvation has been constant across various human cultures apart from India. Starvation can take place in a country due to many reasons like war, famine, the disparities between the rich and the poor and so on. Malnutrition conditions like kwashiorkor and marasmus can also develop into serious causes of starvation. Generally, the conditions of kwashiorkor and

marasmus arise when people are taking diets which are not rich in nutrients (proteins, vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, fats and fiber). In the context of India, it becomes needless to say that the food distribution system is flawed. The Supreme Court has issued orders over the past decades directing the government to take measures like mid-day meal schemes and the provision of health care schemes for pregnant and lactating women. The National Food Security Bill which has become a landmark act does seem to show promises with respect to its measures of the identification of the poor and the needy, redressal mechanisms for grievances and children's entitlements. But, this bill also is not without its cons. Clear mechanisms with respect to the identification of beneficiaries have not been defined. The indicators of the poor need to be made specific. They are vague in description.

Child Labour

Child labour typically means the employment of children in any work with or without payment. Child labour is not only limited to India, it happens to be a global phenomenon. As far as India is concerned, the issue is a vicious one as children in India have historically been helping parents at their farms and other primitive activities. Over population, illiteracy, poverty, debt trap are some of the common causes which are instrumental in this issue. Overburdened, debt-trapped parents fail to understand the importance of a normal childhood under the pressures of their own troubles and thus it leads to the poor emotional and mental balance of a child's brain which is not prepared to undertake rigorous field or domestic tasks. Multinational companies also recruit children in garment industries for more work and less pay which is absolutely unethical. Child labour as a global concern has been raised on international platforms as well. Abolition of child trafficking, elimination of poverty, free and compulsory education, and basic standards of living can reduce the problem to a great extent. The World Bank, International Monetary Fund can help in eradicating poverty by providing loan to the developing countries. Strict implementation of labour laws is also essential in order to prevent exploitation by parties or multinational companies.

Homosexuality

Homosexuality is still considered a 'taboo' in India. India today is one of the fastest developing nations with impressive economic growth rates. But is the growth rate enough to imply that India is a developing nation. A nation is also characterized by the way it treats its people. With respect to this prerogative, the way India looks at homosexuality is certainly not the way to look at it. Homosexuality is considered as a disease by most sections of the society and there are only a few sections of the society who welcome homosexuality. Homosexuality thus is also regarded as a criminal offence in India. Homosexuality is a 'criminal offence' under Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code dating back to 1861 with punishments up to ten years which makes it all the more hard to

believe that India is a progressive nation and that we are the 21st century inhabitants of the country. Although, this subject did see the light of the day when the Delhi High Court legalized gay sex among consenting adults holding that making it a criminal offence violates fundamental human rights way back in the year 2009 as a result of persuasive struggles carried out by Gay Rights activists and foundations.

In December 2013, the Supreme Court passed a controversial order making gay sex illegal quashing the Delhi High Court's decision on the matter. In January 2014, the Supreme Court also refused to review the petition against its order on gay sex being criminalized. Needless to remark, the refusal drew flak internationally for violating fundamental rights. To sum up, homosexuality needs tolerance both by the country and its citizens. It is certainly not a disease hence it doesn't require any treatment. According to my viewpoint, the organizations which have been instrumental with the emancipation of the LGBT community (Example- Naz Foundation) should continue with their protests because slowly but surely people are changing their perceptions towards this subject. Other varied forms of social problems related to issues such as Casteism, Untouchability, Bonded Labour, Gender Inequality, Dowry, Domestic Violence against Women, Sexual Violence against Women, Child Sexual Abuse, Communalism, Religious Violence, Issues related to SC/STs, Marital Rape, Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace etc.

The list may go on and it is not a comprehensive list. There are several other social issues and problems ailing the country but above mentioned ones are really pressing issues which need immediate attention.

It is not so that social ills have not been fought with; in fact from the ancient times in our country there have been various social-cultural reformers such as Budha, Mahavira, Kabir, Gurunanak, Raja Ram Mohun Roy, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar, Vinoba Bhave etc who have tried to fight those evils throughout their lives; they have succeeded also to a certain extent. But still the country is facing these socio-cultural problems in various degrees which is an unfortunate reality of 21st century India.

CONCLUSION

In this study it has found that still social issues are found in India, Government has formed various rules, Laws and passed various Act to overcome from the big issue like social Issues. But the aspirations of people were not fully fulfilled. People are wishing for reforms in this system.

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