

6. Social Problems In India

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6.1

MEANING AND NATURE OF SOCIAL PROBLEM

In the previous unit you learnt about social movements in Indian society. You have realised that several social movements emerged to solve social problems which were commonly felt by a large number of people in society.

Before we try to understand the meaning of 'social problem', let us examine the meaning of 'individual problem'. We must however bear in mind that individuals don't live in isolation but are part of a larger group. Hence it is necessary to appreciate that problems are a two-way process. For example, an individual may have a personal problem of loneliness. This could be rooted in the fact that the people around her/him have isolated her/him due to some reason. On the other hand, this same individual may feel lonely because of one's own peculiar personality traits which the larger group disapproves of. For example, having excess pride due to one's self-image.

What characterises an individual problem?

(1) It is a problem experienced by an individual. This means, the problem is not felt by others.

(2) The cause of the problem may rest with the individual. For example, one's own habit, lethargy, inertia, personality characteristics etc. The cause of the problem

may be located in one's group or the larger society. For example, lack of job opportunities matching one's education or skills, conventional mindsets of a community, lack of political will etc.

(3) It is the individual who must make an effort to solve one's problem. So for example, if as a student you are scoring low marks, and if you realise that this is due to minimal or no effort on your part to study, then you can solve this personal problem by consciously deciding to tackle it. You need the self-motivation and will to overcome the problem.

(4) Solving or tackling an individual problem is easier said than done. While some individuals may have the motivation to resolve their problem, others may need help, encouragement and support from others like family members, friends, teachers, religious leaders, counsellors etc. Sometimes it is necessary to solve the problem with professional help.

What does the term 'social problem' mean? Let us examine few definitions.

👉 **Fuller and Myers** : A social problem is "a condition which is defined by a considerable number of persons as a deviation from some social norms which they cherish".

👉 **Broom and Selznick** : A social problem is "a problem in human relationships which seriously threatens society or impedes the important aspirations of many people".

👉 **Horton and Leslie** : A social problem "is a condition affecting a significant number of people in ways considered undesirable, about which it is felt that something can be done through collective social action".

All the above definitions point out to certain common characteristics of social problems:

- Types of behaviour seen as unacceptable by several persons and groups.
- Such behaviour is problematic as it goes against existing social norms or the aspirations of people.
- People feel the need for collective action to solve the problem.

This unit will focus on specific social problems which are widespread in 21st century India.

6.2 AGEING

All of us have family members and relatives who are very senior in age. We have probably seen or experienced the problems that arise from having to care for them. Their needs are different and demand our attention. You might have come across reports of children and younger adults who abandon or neglect their ageing parents. We have read about crimes being committed against them for sheer greed, especially with regard to matters dealing with family property. What is ageing? Ageing is a natural and inevitable process. Ageing, on a simpler note, implies changes in the body and mind of a person along with its gradual impact on social life and life style.

Definitions :

👉 **Hess** : “An inevitable and irreversible biological process of life.”

👉 **Birren and Renner** : “Ageing refers to the regular changes that occur in mature genetically representative organisms living under representative environmental conditions as they advance in chronological age.

Characteristics of Ageing

Strehler has given four characteristics of ageing, as follows :

- (1) Ageing is universal, it occurs in all members of the population, unlike disease.

- (2) Ageing is progressive; it is a continuous process.

- (3) Ageing is intrinsic to the organism.

- (4) Ageing is degenerative.

The commonest criterion for measuring the process of ageing in an individual is one's chronological age. Chronological age implies defining age on the basis of the number of years a person has lived since her/his birth. It is a specific and countable measure. In India, the age of 60 has been adopted by the Census of India for classifying and categorising this population.

In India the size of ageing population is continuously increasing. Higher longevity and lower mortality have resulted in the increase in the number of ageing population in India.

Activity 1

Hold a class discussion to share about the problems faced by the ageing population. Speak to your family members and share inputs. If you can, speak to the elderly/ageing people in your neighbourhood, informally, and share these insights too.

The Problems of Ageing :

The problems of the ageing population include the following:

(1) Health concerns : Health includes physical, mental and emotional wellness. As one ages, there is a tendency for various parts of the physical body to begin deteriorating. Problems can relate to any physiological/biological problem, such as dental, bones, stomach, heart, hearing, vision etc. In addition to physical problems, there are mental health issues revolving around feelings of alienation, conflict, dissatisfaction, disappointment, anxiety, loneliness. Health also includes the emotional well-being of people.

(2) Loneliness : This is a psychological problem but it could well be rooted in the

real life experiences of the elderly. Loneliness is particularly relevant when dealing with people who are single, without child, isolated, living in homes or remote areas. Loss of a spouse or loved one can cause much loneliness. Inability to do things which one was capable of previously can add to the sense of loneliness. There are instances of the aged being literally thrown out of one's own home or the homes of their children. There is a sense of being neglected by others in the family, or even in the neighbourhood.

(3) Abuse : One comes across reports of the elderly and aged who are forced to do all kinds of work and also of those who are subjected to cruelty, abuse, mockery, harassment – from within the family as well as from outside. There are instances of physical abuse and domestic violence. We observe the aged begging for alms, food, clothing or assistance.

(4) Economic insecurity : Many aged persons are fully or partially dependent for financial support on their families. In a patriarchal society, this financial dependence more often than not falls on the son/s. Not all elderly/aged persons have pension to take care of their daily and medical needs.

(5) Lack of empathy : In a world where one is living amidst tight schedules, mechanical life styles, materialistic comforts there is often the lack of willingness to pay heed to the needs of aged. Family members and relatives too tend to address the problems of the aged in their homes, from their own vested perspectives. The youth, younger adults and care givers may also fail to understand the problems of the aged. They may use coercive methods in dealing with the aged/elderly.

(6) Mental health issues : Anxiety and depression are significant among the aged. This may be accompanied by a sense of guilt; a tendency to feel that one is a burden to one's family, friends and relatives. The social stigma of consulting clinical psychologists, psychiatrists or counsellors is changing very

slowly.

(7) Absence of adequate health care :

The aged may not have access to health care of any kind – for physical or psychological ailments. Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), incontinence, invalidity, and mental health concerns like Schizophrenia, Bipolarity, Depression, boredom, loss of self-esteem – for all these treatments and more, there may not be facilities, nor access.

(8) Lack of Old Age Homes : Old Age Homes or Homes for the Elderly are woefully inadequate. Even if they exist, they may not be affordable to the masses. Many homes or shelters for the aged lack basic amenities or are impersonal in their care of the inhabitants. One cannot rule out the reality of commercial greed.

(9) Weaker Sections : This includes elderly/aged who particularly belong to the weaker sections of society, for example, women, LGBT persons, disabled persons. The identity of being a single woman, physically, mentally or emotionally disabled, becomes a huge barrier, especially when care givers are no longer available.

(10) Exploitation : Elderly/Aged persons may become victims of exploitation especially when become increasingly dependent on others for all kinds of services – for personal hygiene, signing bank and legal documentation etc.

Measures to tackle the problems of ageing :

(1) Role of Government : The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has the responsibility to formulate policies and implement programmes for the care of aged. They do this through collaborative efforts with State governments, NGOs, and civil society.

(2) Policy : The **National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP)** was announced in January 1999 to look into the matter of well-being of older persons. This policy envisages

support from the State government towards their care through the provisions of shelters, support, sensitisation programmes, healthcare facilities, protection for the vulnerable sections etc.

(3) Action Plan : The Inter-Ministerial Committee on Older Persons is a mechanism for effective implementation of NPOP through ministries and departments that work under the Ministry at the Centre.

(4) Role of organisations/NGOs : Non-Governmental Organisations have contributed significantly towards helping the problem of the aged in India. For example, HelpAge India, Harmony India, Dada Dadi, Dignity Foundation, Nightingales Medical Trust, Seenagers etc. Today there are online communities which can lend support.

(5) Role of Education : Through Community Service Projects, Outreach Programmes, Socially Useful Productive Work (SUPW) and NSS school can create awareness about the problems of the elderly, aged and senior citizens. Such programmes can inculcate values of caring for them and becoming sensitive to their changing needs – physical, emotional, economic, psychological, and medical.

(6) Role of Family : Parents and relatives have a major role to play in creating a suitable atmosphere within the home; one that is enriching; one that is enabling; one that instills respect and value of the elderly, regard for their wisdom, involving them in activities within the homes, neighbourhood and community at large.

Check your progress

1. State any three problems faced by the ageing population.
2. Suggest three measures for the problems faced by senior citizens.

Activity 2

Form groups of 10 students. Each group collect data from 10 persons in your neighbourhood. Prepare a tool for data collection and use a personal interview technique or questionnaire to find out about their families: size of family, educational level of each member, whether they are employed or not. Write a group report of about 10-15 pages. Present your findings in class.

6.3 UNEMPLOYMENT

Look at the statistics given below.

Department	Jobs available	No. of applicants
Animal Husbandry	729	3.3 lakhs
Finance	932	1.7 lakhs
Forest	951	4.02 lakhs
Revenue	1,802	5.64 lakhs
Total	4,414	14.66 lakhs

It does not require much effort to figure out from the above data that the number of applicants have far exceeded the number of vacancies. Can you imagine what could happen to the majority who will not get selected for a job? Some may get jobs that don't match their training, others may become entrepreneurs, but the majority will remain unemployed. This is the gravity of the problem of unemployment.

Meaning of unemployment

When one refers to people who are unemployed, it is almost always in the context of who is employed. Also, the convention is to focus on the age group between 15-59 years. The term unemployment is used to refer to "people who are jobless, actively seeking work and available to take a job". According to The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) of the **National Sample**

Survey Office (NSSO), unemployment in rural India was 5.3% and urban unemployment was 7.8%. On the whole, unemployment in the Financial Year 2018 stood at 6.1%. According to NSSO, an unemployed person is one who puts in less than 14 hours of paid work in a week. Disturbances in global economy, like periodic industrial recessions is one of the causes of unemployment. For example, tourism, shipping, information technology, education, construction, textile industry etc.

Factors responsible for unemployment

The causes of unemployment may be attributed to several factors. They are as follows:

(1) Inadequate skills : Sometimes skill sets of an individual do not match the requirements of the industrial and corporate world. Such people are likely to be unemployed or underemployed. Also, advances in technology has rendered numerous workers unemployed as their skill-sets have become redundant today. For example, the Government Typing Examination has now become an on-line examination in Maharashtra. Typing skills on the age-old manual typewriter has very limited use in present times.

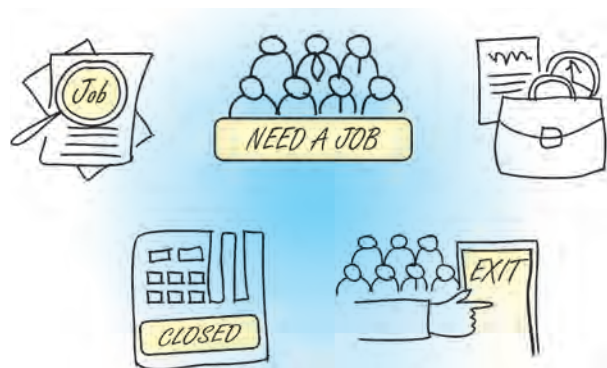
(2) Frequent shift in jobs : When individuals are temporarily unemployed or when they are switching jobs, there is period of no employment between one job and the next. For example, a farmer who is able to work during the monsoons, may remain unemployed after the harvest season and may have to search for other odd jobs in urban areas. This leads to an influx of people in urban areas.

(3) Changing economy : The world economy has its ups and downs. For example, the construction and real estate sector, is well known for periods of huge economic activity and lull periods. In the lull periods there are greater chances of workers losing their jobs; and when the economy seems to be doing

great, there is a boom in employment.

(4) Seasonal shift : In the same way as seasons come and go, seasonal periods of employment are common in certain sectors. This is seen for example in agriculture, banking sector, and shipping industry. Seasonal migration of people from rural to urban areas has an effect on urban unemployment too. In India, agricultural activity is dependent on the monsoons, and is thus seasonal in nature.

(5) Gap in demand and supply : The number of individuals who fit a job are far higher than the openings available. Many educated youth aspire for white collar jobs and are unwilling to accept work that does not fit their needs.



Unemployment crisis

Consequences of unemployment :

Ordinarily, individuals would like to be employed for the most obvious reason that the monetary benefits earned through a stable source of income will provide them a capacity to spend and perhaps even manage some savings for future. However, the fact is that many people in the “productive age group” are unemployed. As per the Census of India definition, the productive age category refers to people within the ages of 15-59 years. If you examine a typical Indian scenario, most of you who are studying in Std.XII, belong to the age group of 16-17, you are not employed and have no regular earnings. Also, you are dependent on your family for your basic needs and more. Your dependency is likely to continue for few more years until

you get employed. As far as girls are concerned, families are only slowly beginning to recognise the need for female education. Yet there are many homes where adult women are not expected to work, or are prevented from working outside the home for an income. So what are the effects of remaining unemployed? They are:

(1) Unutilised human resources : All individuals are valuable human resources, whether they are skilled or unskilled. To have an adult population which is unemployed is a sorry state, as these human resources are unable to add value to the economy but become dependent on others for satisfaction of their needs. They become a burden on the working population.

(2) Educational Stagnation : There are many individuals who receive formal training and who continue to remain unemployed. Perhaps their training has failed to equip them adequately for the world of work. It is true that many educational programmes are out of touch with the needs of the outside world. The government spends crores of rupees on education and yet the educated output is largely skill-deficient or unemployable.

(3) Underemployment : There are copious examples of persons who are trained in one field but who work in a totally unrelated area. Take the case of a person with a professional degree or PhD, who works as a clerk.

(4) Anti-social activities : Lack of opportunities may drive people to engage in anti-social activities. Several children who drop out from the school system could find themselves engaged in various anti-social or undesirable activities to make quick money.

(5) Impact on mental health : There are those who end up being disappointed with life, studies or who are trapped in boredom. They may become frustrated, develop a negative outlook on life; and even

feel lonely, depressed and suicidal.

(6) Adverse impact on national development : Have you wondered what are the long-term implications on national development if the scale of unemployment, especially that of the youth, is on the rise? Youth and young adults make up the future of our society. Unemployment among them can have a negative effect on national development.

You should know!

STARTUPS!

What are they? A startup is a young company founded by one or more entrepreneurs to develop a unique product or service and bring it to the market. It can get its funding from incubators (they help startups get started and running)!

The field of IT has given a significant boost to startups in India.

Startups that you may be familiar with are:

OLA, Flipkart, Make My Trip, ShopClues, Trazoo, Zomato.

Measures to tackle the problem of unemployment

(1) Educational change : Changes need to be made in the content of educational courses as well as the overall curricular experience. Academics need to develop mind sets that are open to change. The educational programmes on offer must become choice-based, need-based and learner-centred. If educational programmes are relevant to community needs, local needs, industrial needs, they will help to develop useful human resources for needs in a changing world.

(2) Skill Development : Much of what is learnt is knowledge-centric. While the role of knowledge is invaluable, there is a desperate need to also cultivate skills, especially those which are employment-

worthy or those which can promote self-employment, and develop entrepreneurial potential of the learners. For example, Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), the salient feature of which is to enable institutions of higher education for capacity building in different fields of employment.

(3) Vocational Training : The need for vocationalisation has been a long standing need. This will provide options for learners to branch into vocational programmes of study. The National Education Policy 2020 lays emphasis on integration of vocational training at all stages of education.

(4) Industry-Education symbiosis : The encouragement of industry-university endeavours has been talked about, discussed and implemented in several institutions- especially in areas of science, engineering, pharmacy, medicine, technology, media studies, fashion designing and management.

(5) Entrepreneurship and Self Employment : The government has been encouraging Start Ups in various fields. This is a boost to those who are willing to take up challenges and risks, based on their personal strengths and training. Self-employment is one measure to minimise the extent of unemployment.

Check your progress

1. In your opinion what do you think our educational system needs to do to solve the problem of unemployment among youth and young adults?
2. Give two reasons why unemployment is unhealthy for a democratic society.
3. Is there a connection between population growth and unemployment? Discuss in brief.

You should know!

Find out about the following schemes started by the Government of India:

- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) - 2009
- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) - 2015
- Startup India Initiative - 2016

Activity 3

Interview 5 working adults in the age group 22-30, in your local area. Find out about their educational background, work life and aspirations in life. Do you see any pattern in the responses that you receive? Discuss these in class.

6.4 FARMERS' SUICIDE

India is described as an agrarian society, where over 70% of the total Indian population works in primary and secondary sector occupations. Farmers are a significant percentage of the agrarian work force. The past decade has witnessed an increasing number of farmer suicides. Farmer suicide is a serious social problem. Let us examine the factors that have led to the problem of farmers' suicide.

Causes of farmers' suicide

(1) Impact of environmental deterioration : Over the past several years, there has emerged much concern for the safeguard of natural environment. Human beings have always endeavoured to maximise returns from nature. It has ended up in deterioration of natural environment because of deforestation, over exploitation of natural resources, destruction of natural spaces in the name of 'development'. Human intervention has led to increased pollution and the emission

of greenhouse gases that has caused depletion of the ozone layer, consequential melting of polar caps and unforeseen climate change. Thus in India we have in recent times seen instances of flooding and drought simultaneously in different parts of the country and also in Maharashtra. Under such situations, crops get completely destroyed and it creates adverse conditions wherein farmers find it extremely difficult to engage in gainful agricultural activity.

(2) Impact of globalisation : It is true that we live in a globalised world. Thus, the impact of globalisation has led to increase in marketisation and the resultant rise in consumerism. Dumping of agricultural produce in India due to free-trade policy has adversely affected pricing of local products.

(3) Indebtedness : Farmers who take loans from government agencies, private individuals or organisations, are often unable to repay loans and its interest, if the crops fail for one or more seasons. The impoverished farmers live a life steeped in debt. This weighs heavily on farmers, many of whom are men and sole earning members of their families. The psychological burden of being indebted passes on to the next generation. In situations of despair, many farmers are known to end their lives. By having to purchase expensive seeds every year from the market, the farmer is forced to seek additional loans. This pushes several farmers to bankruptcy.

You should know!

In the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra many farmers switched to using BT cotton seeds to gain higher yield. BT cotton seeds are more expensive.

However, BT cotton seeds require good irrigational facilities, which are not always available, especially with irregular monsoons. It leads to crop failure. Besides, the seeds obtained from BT crops cannot be used for the next sowing.

(4) Ignorance : Farmers may not be aware of new technologies and farming methods. This lack of awareness becomes an impediment to their progress.

(5) Disparity of land holdings : Farmers in India's villages belong to various categories such as large farmer, medium farmer, small farmer and landless labourers. The *zamindars* are farmers with large land holdings. However the majority of land holdings of most farmers are medium to small. Zamindars have greater economic security than farmers with small land-holdings. Landless agricultural labourers are the largest section of farmers who depend on others' land for survival.

(6) Dowry system : The custom of dowry has wrecked havoc with farmers in rural India. Often, they end up borrowing money from institutions or money lenders on the pretext of agricultural needs, but end up utilising the loans for personal purposes such as giving in to dowry demands. This social evil continues despite the law which treats its practice as a criminal offence. This has been seen in the case of suicides in the Vidarbha and Marathwada regions of Maharashtra.



Consequences of farmers' suicides

When farmers commit suicide there are several consequences. They are:

(1) Impact on farmers' families : If the farmer who commits suicide is the main earning member, it obviously proves to be a life-long economic and emotional trauma for the rest of the members of the family, especially for the wife and children. They

are left without any financial and emotional support.

(2) Impact on spouse : The wife may have to resume the responsibility of the sole bread winner. She may not have previous experience nor the necessary skills, thus leaving her with no option but to accept hard physical labour.

(3) Impact on children : The children may also have to assume new responsibilities prematurely. Many children are forced to abandon their education, thus adding to the statistics of school 'drop outs'. The psychological scars of losing a parent has several effects on the child.

(4) Impact on economy : A farmer committing suicide, even an isolated instance, is enough to create an atmosphere of despair in the entire village. The resultant negative effect can deter youth from taking up agriculture as their livelihood. Thus, many of them may then prefer to migrate to urban areas in search of employment. Can you imagine the long-term impact on the economy if farming becomes an unattractive career option?

(5) Impact on social environment : The psychological effect of death of farmers due to suicide, or even an attempt to end one's life, creates an atmosphere of helplessness, fear and doom in the minds of fellow villagers. It can dampen the spirit of the farming and/or village community. It can create a sense of guilt, shame or inferiority among fellow farmers of the village. This is especially true when the statistics of farmers' suicide are on the rise - in certain regions of a State or within the State as a whole.

Measures to tackle the problem of farmer suicides

(1) Support to farmers in distress : It is necessary for farmers to have support systems in place, to help them tide over various crises caused by failed monsoons, crop failure, indebtedness etc.

(2) Insurance : Life insurance for distressed farmers and their families as well as crop insurance against crop failure, failure of monsoons, destruction of agricultural produce by locusts or viruses etc. should be provided to farmers.

(3) Provision for direct sales from farmers to buyers : Farmers work in rural areas but their crop must reach various parts of India. This brings in many middlemen who operate between the farmer and markets located faraway. Middlemen and agents are known to grab a large share of the profits leaving a meagre sum for especially small and marginal farmers. Removal of the need for the systems of middlemen will be a step towards eliminating such forms of exploitation.

(4) Water harvesting : Since water is an essential requirement for farming, and there prevails a repeated pattern of floods and droughts in various parts of the country, effective measures for water harvesting and water management, are necessary. It will help to channelise and use water resources with great discretion. The responsibility of water harvesting cannot rest only with the government but with various organisations and the efforts of all people.

(5) Role of Banks : Banks and Cooperative Credit Societies need to set up their systems in farmer-friendly ways when it comes to the disbursement of loans to farmers and also to encourage a 'saving' habit among farmers. Farmers have to resort to private money lenders due to procedural difficulties in obtaining loans from banks, and other established financial organisations. Under such circumstances, debt-waiver schemes declared by the government have little or no value. They remain in a perpetual state of indebtedness and at the mercy of private money-lenders.

(6) Multi-cropping : This would be an alternative to monoculture. There needs to be a strong support system from the government

to provide training to farmers as well as supply good quality seeds, fertilisers and pesticides at subsidised and affordable rates.

You should know!

Multicropping is the practice of growing two or more crops on the same piece of land in the same growing season. It is a form of polyculture.

Check your progress

1. Discuss how multicropping will help farmers?
2. Why do you think there is a problem of irrigation? Give two reasons.
3. Discuss the role of counselling in tackling the problem of farmers' suicide.

6.5 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence refers to abuse within the family. Violence implies psychological, emotional, verbal and physical torture. There are at least two types of persons involved in cases of domestic violence the one who perpetrates violence and those who are at the receiving end, the victims. More often than not, violence within the family goes unreported as it is treated as a personal matter, and is perceived to be 'normal' in the patriarchal system. It is important to note that victims of domestic violence could be anyone within the family or extended family; domestic violence cuts across all age categories, sexes and genders.

Causes of domestic violence

(1) Patriarchy : Indian society is largely patriarchal. This means that there is a huge imbalance of power between men and others in our society. The status of women is gradually improving but the status of transgender persons and children is even lower. In a patriarchal context, there is the unwritten acceptance of male authority.

(2) Insecurity : Insecurity of one partner,

especially of men can lead to feelings of suspicion, threat to one's ego, one's authority, notions of infidelity etc. These are reasons enough to cause violence and abuse within the domestic sphere.

(3) Dysfunctional relationships : There are various factors responsible for strains in a spousal relationship or relationships between different members within the family. These could include personal insecurities, suspicion, age differences, cultural differences and incompatibility. These can trigger snide remarks, bickering, labelling, verbal spats and physical assault.

(4) Traditional and religious outlook : Conventional and traditional mind-sets, especially in institutions like marriage, family, religion, stipulate the supremacy of men over women in almost every sphere of life. Within such a scenario, gender socialisation trains the younger generation to conform to the social expectations based on sex, age, experience, authority etc. Such an outlook has the danger of 'normalising' violence within the home.

(5) Heteronormativity :

You should know!

Heteronormativity refers to social expectation (norm) that human behaviour must necessarily fit into a gender binary (that is, there are only two ways to identify and behave - female and male, feminine and masculine). Heteronormativity is a social construct that is often linked to heterosexism (i.e. the assumption that heterosexuality is the norm).

Non-conformity to heterosexist expectations and stereotypical gender roles is usually discouraged in patriarchal families. The control exerted by adults in the family on the young people during their puberty to adulthood years, becomes increasingly rigid. There are numerous instances of gender

discrimination not merely against women, but also transgender persons, and gender non-conforming family members.

(6) Vulnerability : Persons who are vulnerable are often the youth, women, disabled persons, the elderly and dependents. Their vulnerability caused by economic reasons or lack of power and control, can lead them to be trapped in the loop of constant exploitation. Instances of child abuse and the abuse of the elderly are not uncommon.

Consequences of domestic violence

(1) Psychological trauma : The psychological and emotional consequences of domestic violence continue long after the violence may have stopped. Victims of domestic violence may need intensive counselling or psychiatric treatment. This means that domestic violence has an adverse effect on mental health.

(2) Unfulfilled lives : The impact of domestic violence hinders the achievement of one's life goals and aspirations; there may be loss of hope; development of cynicism and negativity; distrust of others. This can lead to individuals leading highly unfulfilled lives.

(3) Effect on health : Psycho-somatic disorder is the term used to describe the physical and physiological consequences of psychological stress or trauma. For example, bed-wetting among children; depression among the elderly; irregular menstrual cycle in women and so on.

(4) Perpetration of abuse : It is possible that young children exposed to environments filled with violence may believe such behaviours to be the norm. For example, young boys who then believe that it is their right to physically abuse their girlfriend or wife, later in life; or girls who think it is necessary for them to be submissive to their husband.

(5) Decline in individual productivity :

Large number of people in their adulthood suffer from poor physical-mental health. Physical and emotional state of illness blocks individuals to realise their full potential and capabilities. This, in turn leads to low levels of productivity.

Measures to deal with domestic violence

There is no quick-fix solution to the problem of domestic violence, however, there are certain measures that may be undertaken, such as:

(1) Creating awareness : As long as domestic violence is perceived to be a problem that must remain within family circles, it will continue to be 'normalised'. It is therefore necessary to create awareness of the fact that domestic violence is not acceptable in a civilised 21st century society. There is a need to alter ways of thinking and to break cultural stereotypes that are detrimental to others, by promoting a rational outlook based on equality and social justice for all.

(2) Personal empowerment : It is necessary for all persons, and especially those who are the most vulnerable in society to empower themselves, through Self-Help Groups (SHGs), NGOs, age-mates, social workers and so on.

(3) Role of media : Various types of media can help create awareness and sensitise the public about the problem of domestic violence. Media can help to dispel ignorance about domestic violence too. It can present real life stories of hope, courage and success.

(4) Role of NGOs : Non-Governmental Organisations play a significant role in dealing with cases of domestic violence. There are NGOs that specifically work to support women, children, disabled persons, transgender persons, men, children and the elderly in distress. Often such NGOs are backed with services of legal professionals and the police department. Together they help to get justice

for the victims of domestic violence.

(5) Role of Law : Laws by themselves cannot transform society but legal and constitutional provisions make an important and necessary plank for empowering individuals. For example, 'reading down' Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code was a significant step in empowering LGBT persons. Gender non-conforming individuals in families are empowered by a law that does not criminalise them.

(6) Role of Police : It is very important that law enforcing staff becomes sensitive to matters pertaining to domestic violence. All too often, the police staff may not be sensitive to handling issues of domestic violence. It is treated as a personal matter that must be sorted within the confines of one's home. Such mindsets also need to change. Today there are women police staff specially assigned to handle issues regarding violence towards women.

Activity 4

Find out information about the 'Bel Bajao Andolan'. Then, enact a small skit in your class.

Check your progress

With reference to the 'Bell Bajao Andolan',

1. Show the usefulness of such a campaign.
2. What do you think is required for such a campaign to take off?
3. Do you think such a campaign will succeed in metropolitan cities? Justify your response.

6.6

ADDICTION

(Substance, Internet, Mobile)

Meaning of Addiction

The term 'addiction' is usually used to refer to a situation of psychological and/or

physical dependence on alcohol, drugs, internet or mobiles. Typically, addicts crave for access to such things; there builds up a physical and/or psychological dependence. An addict will try to access the substance or object at any cost to which he/she is addicted. Unavailability of the same can lead to a range of uncontrolled emotions ranging from anger, violence to depression. This psychological and/or physical dependence has a damaging effect on the individual and society at large.



Addiction

Types of Addiction

Addiction can be of various types. For this course the focus is on the following types of addiction:

(a) Substance Addiction : refers to a physical and biological dependence on chemical substances which leads to unpleasant symptoms (called withdrawal) when the person stops using the substance.

Abuse of substances such as alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, tobacco, gutka, etc. can cause health issues and serious problems with family, friends, the workplace and the law. Despite this, substance abuse continues. People with a tendency to become addicted

to one substance also have a tendency to be addicted to others.

Most common addictions involve the use of alcohol, tobacco, other legal and illegal drugs and other mood-altering substances. The use of these may be physically, biologically and psychologically harmful to the user and others. It can also lead to anti-social behaviour and depression.

Tobacco Addiction refers to habituated tobacco chewing or smoking. The addictive element in tobacco is nicotine which impacts the brain. Tobacco addiction is biopsychological and difficult to give up once it sets in. The deadly effects of tobacco addiction are mouth, throat and lung cancer. This type of addiction is found in all segments of society viz. tribal, rural and urban.

Tobacco is smoked in the form of beedis, cigarettes, or by using devices like hookah, chillum, hookli, chhutta or dhumti.

According to the National Sample Survey conducted by the Government of India, about 20 million children, in the age group 10-14 years are estimated to be addicted to tobacco. Also, the study says that 5500 new users are added everyday; making it two million users every year.

- **Alcohol** is a drink that contains ethanol, which is produced by fermentation of grains, fruits or other sources of sugar. It is a depressant drug which slows down various sections of the brain and central nervous system.
- **Whitener Addiction** is on the rise among teenagers in India. Whitener contains trichloroethane which is a colourless, sweet smelling volatile solvent. It is highly addictive.
- **Gutka** is a chewing tobacco preparation made of crushed areca nut. It is a known carcinogen and is

highly addictive.

- **Narcotics** are types of drugs that have the potential to be addictive. Medicinal drugs should be used only as per a doctor's prescription.

The epidemic of substance abuse in the younger generations has assumed alarming dimensions in India. Causes for this are changing values, increasing economic stress and dwindling supportive bonds. According to World Health Organisation (WHO), substance abuse or sporadic drug use is persistent and inconsistent with or unrelated to acceptable medical practice.

As per a United Nations report, one million heroin addicts are registered in India and unofficially there are as many as five million.

Cannabis, heroin and Indian-produced pharmaceutical drugs are the most frequently abused drugs in India. Cannabis products (charas, ganja, bhang) are abused throughout the country. Codeine-based cough syrups continue to be diverted from the domestic market for drug abuse.

Drug abuse thus is a complex phenomenon, which has various social, cultural, biological, geographical, historical and economic aspects.

You should know!

- According to the present anti-smoking law (2008), smoking in public places is banned.
- The minimum age for buying tobacco products is 18.
- Any person below 18 years cannot be employed in a tobacco related industry.

(b) Internet addiction : We live in an age of knowledge explosion. Access to data is far higher than it ever was. Many of you have access to internet information – either

at a computer in school, or at home, or on mobile phones. Access to data is good for many reasons – you can get all kinds of data in relation to any subject. Data can be textual, visual, graphic, mathematical etc. The internet also is a means to an entire virtual world and the world of social media. You might wonder how this becomes problematic.

Let us look at some pointers that make access to internet a matter of concern.

Ordinarily, accessing the internet is not a problem; it would not even qualify as an addiction. It becomes an addiction when there is a compelling need on the part of an individual to have to continuously access specific internet sites – not for work or professional purposes – but for very vested and personal needs or obsessions. For example, if one constantly needs to access sites for gaming, adult sites, pornography, social media, entertainment and stimulation.

Internet addiction is not limited to children. It cuts across several age categories. The motivation to access internet obsessively may or may not necessarily be different. A teenager or young adult may spend hours on gaming; an older adult could be obsessed with sex sites.

Why is internet addiction a problem?
It becomes a problem when it...

- increases stress or anxiety in the individual
- causes stress to other persons (e.g. friends, family, colleagues)
- affects one's physical health
- diminishes the value of interpersonal relationships.
- leads to personal neglect
- leads individuals to data that is inaccurate, prejudiced, titillating, unreliable and exploitative



Internet Addiction

(c) Mobile addiction : It is a fact that sale of mobile phones are ever-increasing. In fact, it is also true that the market is flooded with all kinds of newer and advanced mobile phones. Advertisements have played a huge role in encouraging us to purchase more sophisticated models, with larger memories, battery life, camera and what not. Here itself, one can speak of addiction to want to constantly upgrade one's mobile phone. It can become obsessive for various reasons – all of which are not necessarily professional. A mobile phone in itself has become a status symbol.

If one goes beyond the phone - as a gadget, to what the phone does for us, it opens a Pandora's Box of possibilities. Connectivity, social media networking, gaming, access to the web world, filming, editing, creative enterprises and numerous apps serving a variety of needs.

Mobile (phone) addiction is a problem when again, like in the case of internet addiction, it leads us to behave in ways such as the following:

- The need to almost constantly be on call
- The need to almost continuously take selfies or photos of any and everything
- The need to post all images of oneself immediately on social media

- The need to continuously be monitoring other persons
- The need to keep forwarding messages (and rumours) mindlessly to numerous people
- The need to constantly check one's likes and its effects on one's mood/behaviour
- Misuse of mobile phones for destructive, negative and vested purposes

The impact of mobile addiction is similar to the consequences stated as regards internet addiction. Haven't we all read of accounts of injuries and deaths due to careless behaviours like speaking on the phone while driving, dangerously posing for selfies, being overemotional in a public space; checking one's messages during sleep, anxiety caused by loss of one's phone and contacts. The consequences take a toll on mental and physical well-being.

Activity 5

Class Discussion:

The impact of Internet Addiction and Mobile Addiction on human life.

Causes of Addiction

Each type of addiction has a set of possible reasons. Here we shall examine some common causes that are applicable to some or all addictions.

(1) Personal factor : An individual will have several reasons why one becomes an addict. Generally individuals do not opt consciously to become an 'addict'. It is what they become over a period of time. For example, the occasional drinker may end up becoming a habitual drinker.

(2) Peer pressure : Friends in a group may knowingly or unknowingly pressurise others to adopt certain habits in order to 'fit

in'. This is especially common among students but it can also cut across other age categories. For example, the habit of smoking or "doing weed" (drugs) among friends.

(3) Social status : Certain addictions seem to make people feel that they have attained a certain degree of social respectability or position, which they might then flaunt. For example, consuming narcotic drugs or imported brands of alcohol may be considered as a fad in certain groups; non-conformity could lead to isolation or labelling.

(4) Validation of the 'Self' : This is especially true in the case of social media networks like Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter and so on. It makes people feel important. Today, "selfitis" (that is, the obsessive taking of selfies, called 'selfie syndrome') is regarded as a mental disorder.

(5) Psychological factor : Individuals can become addicts due to various psychological conditions in the individual such as inferiority/superiority complex, psychological insecurities, fear or anxiety, frustration or failure, loneliness and so on.

(6) Inadequate role models : In an environment where there are few or no role-models to emulate, one may be left with imitating disruptive traits of people in their neighbourhood or immediate social circle.

Consequences of Addiction

(1) Psychological effect on the individual : Any kind of addiction has a psychological impact on the addict. They develop a dependency on alcohol, narcotic drugs, medicinal drugs, the internet, social media and even mobile phone. There could emerge a need for validation for every single post or image that is uploaded, and the obsession with increasing numbers of 'like hits'.

(2) Impact on family : Addiction is not merely the problem of youth; it cuts across all age categories. Parents who have an

alcohol addiction problem pose a threat to stable family life. Sometimes this results in domestic violence. Addiction to mobiles can lead to situations where individuals feel insecure, lonely within family because of lack of communication. Non-communication within the family may leave people feeling unloved, unimportant and unacknowledged.

(3) Impact on health : The physical, mental and emotional well-being of individuals take a back seat when there is a problem of addiction. The levels of stress, anxiety, aggression or irritability can take its toll on addicts as well as others in the family or the group.

(4) Impact on work : Depending on the type of addiction, it can adversely affect levels of commitment, efficiency, an increase in instances of sexual harassment or sexual abuse, exploitation of vulnerable people, inability to focus on any activity, increased absenteeism and declining work performance.

(5) Economic Impact : Addictions of any kind are a drain on financial resources as one has to pay heavily for consumption of alcohol, substances, internet connectivity, and phone bills. Drug peddling is big business that transacts across borders of multiple nations and the underworld. Treatment of the same also is a drain on one's pocket.

(6) Isolation : Addicts often turn out to be loners or individuals who avoid social interaction. For example, excessive gaming, watching YouTube clips, forwarding WhatsApp humour etc, leads to detachment from people and experiences in the real social world.

Activity 6

Prepare a 7-10 minute street play on: The problem of internet addiction. End with a message of hope. Perform the street play on your campus and then in your neighbourhood (after taking necessary permissions).

Measures to tackle addiction problems

(1) Creating awareness : The very first measure is to create awareness about various kinds of addiction. This is necessary because many people do not even know what addiction means, or how to do self-assessment to examine one's own addiction. This is possible through educational programmes and camps.

(2) Counselling : There are limitations to what lay persons and untrained professionals can do. It becomes imperative to recommend people with addiction problems to professionals such as counsellors or psychologists, for professional intervention.

(3) De-addiction Clinics : There are professional clinics which work as centres to help addicts through de-addiction programmes. It is important for addicts to have support groups during the process of de-addiction.

(4) Laws : Legislative provisions are important and necessary, especially to tackle the problems posed by drug peddlers for example, or persons who upload messages or data, which are anti-social, dangerous, life-threatening and so forth. Implementation of law can potentially act as a deterrent, though it may not be able to eradicate the problem completely.

(5) Mass Media : Mass communication through mass media is an effective tool to raise societal awareness about addiction. The World Wide Web has numerous platforms such as FAQs answered, help-lines, help-groups, etc. through which awareness can be created.

(6) Voluntary organisations : Besides government, private organizations (NGOs) also work for social causes. For example, One India One People, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA) etc.

(7) Group activity : Getting involved in participative activities such as hobby classes, sports and games, can help in building positive experiences for individuals who otherwise would be isolated.

Check your progress

1. If you know a friend who has an addiction problem, what role can you play to help the person?
2. Suggest two co-curricular activities that can be conducted in your school to solve the problem of mobile addiction.
3. Identify three negative consequences of internet addiction.

Activity 7

Make a list of 10 students' activities that can be carried out in their leisure time. Find out from 10 of your peers about the activities they would take up, at least once every week. Tabulate your findings and share with your class.

For Your Information

Some De-addiction Centres in Maharashtra

- 1) Jeevan Jyot Vyasanmukti Kendra, Nagpur
- 2) Moksh De-addiction and Rehabilitation Centre, Nashik
- 3) Aasara Hospital: Psychiatric and De-addiction Centre, Ahmednagar
- 4) Navchaitanya De-addiction Centre, Kolhapur
- 5) Seva Dhan Foundation, Mumbai
- 6) Muktangam Rehabilitation Centre, Pune

SUMMARY

- A social problem is different than an individual problem.
- Ageing is a universal problem. It is inevitable and degenerative.
- Ageing problems are related to health, loneliness, abuse, economic insecurity, lack of empathy, exploitation etc.
- There has to be concerted efforts to provide for the ageing population, develop sensitivity towards them, understand their needs, access to health care and insurance, homes etc.
- Unemployment is a growing problem in Indian society. It is caused by inadequate skills, frequent shift in jobs, changing economy, gap in demand and supply and seasonal changes.
- It is necessary to revamp the educational system to include vocational programmes, industry-academic linkages, skill-oriented programmes etc.
- Farmers' suicide is a matter of concern. There are several causes: environmental deterioration, impact of globalisation, indebtedness, ignorance, disparity of land holdings etc.
- The problem of farmer suicide can be tackled through the elimination of middlemen, crop insurance, water harvesting and water management, counselling, agro-tourism etc.
- Domestic violence refers to violence within the home. Victims of violence can include females, males, transgender persons, the young as well as the elderly etc.
- The causes of domestic violence include patriarchy, heterosexism, inequalities, vulnerability, dysfunctional relationships, etc.
- Solutions to the problem of domestic violence include the creation of awareness about the problem,

empowering weaker sections of society, education and training, role of media etc.

- Addiction can be of several types such as alcohol, drugs, internet and mobile addiction.
- There are several causes for addiction. These include: personal factors, patriarchy, lack of satisfaction, non-conformity to social expectations, peer pressure etc.
- Measures to tackle the problem of

addiction include: creating awareness, role of education, media, law and NGOs.

- General Measures to tackle social problems include: creating awareness about the problem, implementation of the law, alertness of people, counselling, de-addiction clinics, professional help, support groups, NGOs, formal education, role of social workers etc.

EXERCISES

Q.1 (A) Complete the following statements by choosing the correct alternative given in the bracket and rewrite it.

- (1) The Domestic Violence Act was passed in the year _____.
(1995, 2005, 2011)
- (2) One of the causes of farmer suicide is _____.
(multi-cropping, indebtedness, climate change)

(B) Correct the incorrect pair and rewrite it.

- (1) (i) Marijuana - Drug addiction
(ii) Violent films - Internet addiction
(iii) Selfitis syndrome - Substance addiction
(iv) Country liquor - Alcohol addiction

(C) Identify the appropriate term from the given options in the box and rewrite it against the given statement.

Narcotic drugs, Patriarchy,
Gender discrimination

- (1) A problem faced by transgender persons.

- (2) It can lead to physical health problems.

(D) Correct the underlined words and complete the statement.

- (1) Alcoholic Anonymous helps drug addicts.
- (2) Ageing is an artificial process.

Q.2 Write short notes.

- (1) Effects of addiction
- (2) Measures to tackle the problem of ageing.

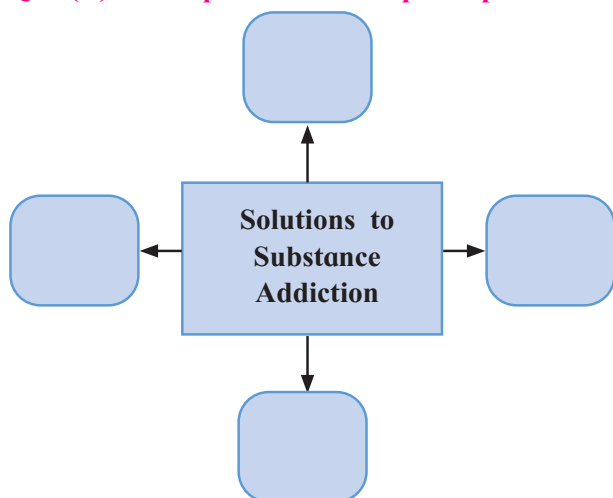
Q.3 Write differences.

- (1) Social problem and Individual problem
- (2) Mobile addiction and Drug addiction

Q.4 Explain the following concepts with examples.

- (1) Domestic violence
- (2) Skill development

Q.5 (A) Complete the concept map.



(B) State whether the following statements are True or False with reasons.

- (1) Technology is always useful for social progress.
- (2) There is a strong causal relationship between addiction and socialisation.

Q.6 Give your personal response.

- (1) Why do you think women are usually the victims in most reported cases of domestic violence?
- (2) Discuss how keeping aged parents in a 'Home for the Aged' can have positive and negative consequences.

Q.7 Answer the following question in detail. (About 150-200 words)

Discuss why farmers' suicide is a social problem today. Suggest suitable socio-economic measures to support the farmers.

Activity

View 10-15 Television advertisements and analyse the extent to which advertisements promote or reinforce: gender stereotypes. Also try to find out advertisements which do not present gender stereotypes.

Have a class discussion after viewing select advertisements.

Activity

An important legislation is taking shape in the Maharashtra legislature regarding the situation of women sugarcane cutters of Beed district. Many of them have undergone 'hysterectomy' or removal of uterus. Collect information and discuss in class.

Section - II



Passages

* **Note :** Questions will be asked in relation to any one of the following passages. Teachers may frame questions based on the passages given below. However, they should not encourage students to borrow word-for-word from the given passages. The questions will be of an **applied** or **analytical** nature. Students are expected to understand the context of the question and respond in their own words. Their response must be relevant, systematic, backed by logical explanation and have a sense of continuity. The text will only serve as a stimulus for further thinking. (Sample questions have been provided for the first passage.)

(1)

This is a real life story of Rukmini Devi who lives in a small hut in Gaigotha Village in Wada Taluka of Palghar District in Maharashtra State. She belongs to the Warli tribe. Her husband is a marginal farmer who cultivates on two acres of land. They have two children, one daughter aged 10 years and a son aged 6 years. Both the children walk to school and back daily (located about 3 miles away).

When the cultivation season is over, (or if the rice crop is damaged due to heavy rains or pests) they face many hardships. A section of the crop is kept for their personal use, for the year. Tur Dal (lentil) is also grown, in one small area, again for personal use. In a small backyard, they grow vegetables like chillies, cucumber and bitter gourd (karela).

During the off-season, both husband and wife go to the brick kilns (about 7 miles away) to do piece-rate work (That is, they get paid for each brick that they make.) While the men earn Rs. 300 per day, the women earn Rs. 150-200. Rukmini Devi stated that they prefer to walk the 7 miles both ways because the bus fare is Rs. 35/- per head one way. They cannot afford it.

(1) Identify any three problems that the family of Rukmini Devi has to face.

(2) Point out and discuss briefly, gender discrimination in this setting.

(2)

Education, since the coming of the British to India has been secular in content. By this we mean, the content of education did not include the study of sacred texts. Schools were open for all - to learn and climb the ladder of vertical mobility. The study of English language as well as the opportunity to study in the English medium was available.

It is true that several Indians from certain social and economic strata were the first to access an English education. Many of them later constituted the intelligentsia of our society. We refer to many of them as social reformers, such as, Raja Rammohan Roy, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Pandita Ramabai, Maharshi Dhondo Keshav Karve. They worked for religious, social and educational reform in Indian society.

Such visionaries of society continue even in the post-Independence era, to the present time.

Educational opportunities have grown by leaps and bounds in the last 73 years since Independence. One questions if the educated have merely acquired education or if the education has helped citizens become gainfully employed and more importantly, enlightened enough to transform society at the micro level.

It is necessary for the government to consider the interests of all sections of society. Each citizen can play a dynamic role in the development of all people in our society.

(3)

Indian society is a melting pot of cultures. The history of Indian society gives enough evidence of the process of accommodation. From early times migrants integrated into Indian society and influenced its culture. Our historical past is testimony to this fact of cultural diffusion.

Today, we describe our society as a composite whole that includes tribal, rural and urban communities. The way of life in these segments have their unique characteristics. However, is it also an observation that no one segment or community can be seen in its “pure” state. On the one hand there is interdependence between communities and on the other this would imply a certain extent of loss of cultural elements such as language, beliefs, customary practices etc. Have we not seen how, for example, Warli or Madhubani Art has made it to T-shirts and wall hangings in many urban households? Also, how technology has reached the remotest corners of our country?

A question that may cross your mind may be, ‘Is there anything such as ‘pure’ culture? What constitutes “Indian culture”? ‘Can cultural extremism be valuable in the present world? These questions are valid as they set us thinking. Perhaps there is no single “answer”?

(4)

The causes of disharmony and strife are several-fold. Resistance to social change is one among many. Problems of contemporary Indian society include domestic violence, sexual abuse, child rights, problems of senior citizens, migrants, ethnocentrism, religious fundamentalism, linguistic fanaticism, environmental degradation, substance abuse and addiction to devices, mob lynching and so on.

Given the varied types of social problems and their changing nature, there emerges a need to examine them in a scientific manner. The applicability of Sociology in its widest sense, includes the exploration of various themes that cut across fields such as Masculinity Studies, Minority Studies, Film and Media Studies, Sociology of Sports, Environmental Sociology, Forensic Sociology, Gerontology, Sociology of Music, Medical Sociology, Marketing Sociology and so on.

Various government departments and voluntary organisations include sociologists on their panels to help steer policies and programmes. As Sociology is a people-centered discipline, it tends to create awareness and dialogue regarding human relationships. This is a valuable asset in governance and conflict resolution.

(5)

Given below is a make-believe scenario.

Yogini and Yogita are twins of the Patkar family who live in a small room measuring 225 sq. ft. in a small town. Yogini is brilliant in studies and Kabbadi. Yogita is an outstanding cricketer who represents the Western India region; she also was a topper in the State-level Marathi language Competition.

Their parents come from a small village in Marathwada; they are farmers. For the sake of their daughters, they shifted to a small town to facilitate their children's further education and sports training.

Their relatives and others in their village have heard of the Patkar girls' success and are also encouraged to send their children to big cities with the hope that they too will become successful and famous one day.

Today, if one visits the village you will notice that in many homes, there are only the elderly folk. The youth seem to have migrated to better their prospects. Can you imagine the effect of such migration on the local village community?

(6)

Social movements arise generally from needs felt by one or more members of any given society. Through social interactions these needs and concerns are communicated to many more persons. A network of people who share these concerns become the driving force for change in that particular society. Movements are usually guided by some underlying philosophies and goals. Indeed, several movements are associated with a founder or a core group. It can take several years, or even decades for a social movement to become very wide and expansive, across vast geographical territories.

Social movements such as the Social Reform Movement, Trade Union Movement, Tribal Movement, Dalit Movement, Women's Movement, Chipko Movement, LGBT Movement, Civil Rights Movement, Rationalist Movement and so many more have emerged and grown.

As a social movement gains momentum, greater awareness is created in society. In fact, the study of several movements have found their way into the academic curriculum as well as research. For example, courses on Labour Studies, Gender Studies, Minority Studies and Environmental Studies.

Social movements can stimulate critical thinking about social issues in the wider society of which we are a part. Some of these concerns lead to the passing of legislations. Every era or generation has its share of concerns from which may emerge new social movements.

(7)

Can human societies be flawless? What is considered as acceptable, desirable, or valuable varies from time to time, place to place, and in different contexts.

There is sometimes a tendency to encourage excessive ethnocentric attitudes about one's culture or group to which one belongs. Ethnocentrism in its extreme form is an obstacle to social harmony. For the sake of social solidarity, respect of other cultures, self-criticism, critical appraisal, reflection and introspection is necessary. This may help to develop a pluralist way of appreciating the diversities within which we live. The life stories of people are a useful means to understand underlying feelings, beliefs, threats and so on.

Civil society can play a part in this process to eliminate or minimise factors that hinder progress, or those which divide us.

(8)

All of you have been studying Sociology for over a year. Sociology is the scientific study of human social behaviour. However it is not the only discipline that studies human behaviour. The study of human behaviour is of interest to historians, psychologists, sociologists, economists, political scientists etc. Surely, this question may have crossed your mind, or your family or friends might have asked you - 'What is the use of studying Sociology? What work will you do with a degree in Sociology? Perhaps you too have wondered about the same.

As a start you could surely consider a career in teaching. However you must be prepared to read extensively, be creative and develop a learner-centric personality. Indeed, you would have to be passionate about teaching and interacting with learners. For some, a career in research is another possibility, though that route is a long journey to attain the status of 'sociologist'. Many sociology students and others too, choose to offer Sociology as their subject of special study for Civil Service Examinations like UPSC (Central Services) and MPSC (in Maharashtra). To clear these highly competitive examinations, it is necessary to read widely and be well aware about the totality of Indian society - its past, present; goals and plans for the future.

Then of course, there are many allied occupations where a degree in Sociology can provide insights that are useful to take on other people-oriented professions such as Policy and Programme Development, Social Work with specialization in Family and Child Welfare, Community Development, Medical and Psychiatric Social Work, School Social Work etc.

The fact remains: it is not merely obtaining a degree in sociology that matters today, but the skill sets, sensitivity and personality that you develop; your ability to modify and adapt to new needs and challenging situations of every day life. Also, your ability to have a humanistic perspective whether dealing with research or creating empowerment programmes, or programmes for social change.

(9)

Read the make-believe speech made by a representative of the Governing Body to its Executive Committee meeting, in a well-known international firm located in Pune.

“Good morning. The Board of Directors has asked me to communicate with you all a policy decision that has been taken by the higher management. Two policies have been taken by our company. One, there shall be a confidential, two-way appraisal of all employees from the coming financial year. Every employee will be assessed by one’s immediate senior, one’s team members and by oneself through self-appraisal. Juniors will also assess the seniors to whom they report. There are specific criteria on which assessment will take place. A second policy decision is for the company to make every effort to ‘Go Green’ in keeping with the international commitment towards a cleaner and greener environment. You may please share this decision to members of your respective departments today, through our e-portal systems. Feedback from all employees are welcome but they must be made within a week from today, to the Human Resource Department, via the e-portal.”

(10)

Indian films have a history of their emergence, growth and development. There were the days of silent films where viewers interpreted visuals on screen and constructed their own understanding of what the films may have tried to communicate. Then came the days of audio-visual films, black and white films and later, colour films.

People who can afford to watch films at theatres and those who can do so on their television screens at home are entertained by the stories that films tell us. There are all kinds of ideas, ideologies, tragedies, themes and values that films communicate. Today one can watch films on the internet, on one’s mobile phones. Sometimes the explicit and implicit messages are received by viewers, but they can also be lost on them.

Besides actors’ abilities to ‘play varied roles or characters, there are a whole lot of persons involved with the production process as well as its marketing. This may include the film director, screenplay writers, designers, sound engineers, make-up artists and stylists, casting experts, musicians and so on.

Fields like Visual Sociology, Sociology of Mass Communication, and Marketing Sociology have a role to play in the study of these varied dimensions. Films as a source of knowledge play multiple roles even today. The story lines and types of films are ever increasing. Films are not limited to, nor bound by standard themes, love stories or gender stereotyping. Films can cause much upheaval on the one hand and generate much interest on the other. Regional films and international films have added to the list of viewing possibilities and multiple interests.

(11)

How does one tackle social problems? How do societies deal with the social problems that they have to confront? Why do social problems arise? These are some questions that learners of Sociology need to address.

Societies have culture; both of these are created by people, cumulatively, through the network of relationships over thousands of years. Every society has its normative system – customs, folkways, fashions, mores, taboos, fads, laws. Social norms are guidelines for human behaviour. They tell us what is expected of us and at the same time, what to expect from others.

Are these expectations permanent and unchanging? When can they change? Who changes them? Why must they change? Again, these are questions that one might ask. Social problems can arise when the expectations are not communicated effectively, or when individuals or groups choose to disagree with the expectation. This can lead to situations of conflict – not just ideological but also conflict that leads to hurting others' sentiments, abuse, violence, injustice, upheavals, normlessness, and even war.

(12)

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a Government of India programme that makes education for children between the ages 6-14 free and compulsory. This programme was pioneered by the former Indian Prime Minister, Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee in 1993-94. It became totally operational since 2000-2001. This programme made education a Fundamental Right.

Along with this, the Government of India also launched the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) on 15th August 1995. From here emerged the concept of free 'Midday Meal' for children going to schools which were managed by local bodies like Gram Panchayats and Municipal Corporations. The Midday Meal is mandatory. It is taken for granted that the children should be given good, nutritious food on a daily basis. A lot of organisation goes into the cooking and delivering of these meals to the schools on time.

Universal Education goes hand in hand with Nutrition. Children of the village and municipal schools look forward to this meal. For several of them it is perhaps the main meal of the day.

Notes

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