

SOCIAL ISSUES: A STUDY OF SOCIAL ISSUES THE IMPACT OF RURAL SOCIETIES IN EAST GODAVARI DISTRICT OF AP IN INDIA

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Abstract: A Social issue is a problem that influences a considerable number of individuals within a society. It is often the consequence of factors extending beyond an individual's control, and it is the source of a conflicting opinion on the grounds of what is perceived as a morally just personal life or societal order. Social issues are distinguished from economic issues; however, some issues 'such as immigration' have both social and economic aspects. There are also issues that do not fall into either category, such as warfare.

Introduction: A distinct but related meaning of the term "social issue" refers to topics of national political interest, over which the public assembly is divided and which are the subject of intense public advocacy, debate and voting. Social issues refer 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 labor, literacy, gender inequality, superstitions, religious conflicts and many more. It is high time that the society gets relief from these undesirable social evils. A mistake in reading and writing that is seen to be characteristic of an illiterate person is also referred to as illiteracy.

Causes of Illiteracy: Around the world, the impact of illiteracy on personal income varies but it is clear earning potential is limited in illiterates. These people earn 30% - 42% less than their literate counterparts and do not have the literacy skills required to undertake further vocational education or training to improve their earning capacity.

Poverty: The menace of illiteracy affects many countries today and it is further complicated by strong links between illiteracy and poverty. For example, there is a significant negative correlation between measures of poverty and adult literacy rate. It is more prevalent in developing countries like India, where poverty rates are higher and as such literacy rates tend to be lower. Millions of people cannot attend classes because they are poor and they are obliged to work to fulfill the needs of their daily life. Poverty and illiteracy form a cycle that is difficult to break.

Gender Disparities: Gender disparities are either non-existent or minimal in countries with adult literacy rates at 95% and above. In almost all other countries, men have better reading and writing skills than women. On average, the literacy gaps between adult men and women are largest in South and West Asia (70% vs 46%), the Arab states (73% vs. 51%) and sub-Saharan Africa (68% vs. 52%). The gap between the male and female literacy rates is considerably

greater in countries where the overall adult literacy rate is lower.

Age: In all countries, literacy rates vary across age groups. Typically, individuals aged 15-34 have higher literacy levels than those aged 45 and older, reflecting in large part the expansion of mass schooling throughout the world. In some countries, there are small decreases in literacy rates among younger age groups and then a sharp decline in literacy rates across age groups is fairly linear. Unsurprisingly, age disparities are smaller in high literacy countries and larger in low literacy countries. In countries with comparatively low literacy levels, the literacy rate among 25 to 34 years old is twice that of those aged 65 and older.

Geographical Disparities: Rural residents have lower literacy levels than urban residents, as seen from census data or household data. The disparities between urban and rural populations tend to be greater in those poorer countries in which overall literacy rates are comparatively low. The influence of urbanization on literacy acquisition reflects differences in access to formal schooling, higher-quality education and non-formal education programs.

Poverty: In the simplest term, poverty may be defined as a social condition where individuals do not have financial means to meet the most basic standards of life that is acceptable by society. Individuals experiencing poverty do not have the means to pay for basic needs of daily life: food, clothes and shelter. The direct consequences stemming from poverty are hunger, malnutrition and susceptibility to diseases, which have been identified as major problems across the world. India's official poverty measure has long been based solely upon the ability to purchase a minimum recommended daily diet of 2,400 kilocalories in rural areas where about 70 percent of the population live and 2,100 kilocalories in urban areas. Rural areas usually have higher kilocalorie requirements because of greater physical activity among rural residents.

Causes of Poverty in India: Poverty is a multi-dimensional social problem in India its causes are varied. They are as follows.

- a. **Climatic Factors:** Climatic conditions constitute an important cause of poverty. Frequent flood, famine, earth quakes and cyclone cause heavy damage to agriculture. Moreover absence of timely rain, excessive or deficient rain affect severely country's agricultural production.
- b. **Demographic Factors:** The following demographic factors are accountable for poverty in India.
- c. **Rapid growth of population:** Rapid growth of population aggravates poverty of the people. The growth of population exceeds the rate of growth of national income- population growth not only creates difficulty in the removal of poverty but also lowers per capita income, which tends to increase poverty.
- d. **Size of family:** size of family has a significant bearing on rural poverty. The larger the size of family, the lower is the per capita income and the lower is the standard of living.

• **Personal causes:**

Lack of Motivation: lack of motivation is an important cause of rural poverty. Some rural people do not have a motive to work hard or even to earn something this account for poverty of rural people.

a. **Economic causes:**

b. **Low Agricultural Productivity:-** In India the farmers follow the traditional methods of cultivation even to day, despite advancements in agricultural related technology.

Hence there is low agricultural productivity resulting in poverty.

• **Unequal distribution of land and other assets:-** Land and other forms of assets constitute sources of income for the rural people. But, there has been unequal distribution of land and other assets in the country. Most of the farmers in India are small and marginal farmers, whose land holdings are less than 5 acres. For such small and marginal lack of better support prices. As a result most farmers are forced to live under the rails of poverty.

• **Decline in village industries:** As a result of industrialization, new factories and industries are set up even in rural areas. Consequently, the village industries had a major they failed to compete with the factory-made good in terms of price and quality. In such circumstances many village industries had been forced to closed down. The workers are thrown out of employment and are forced to live a life below to their very existence under poverty.

Poverty Measurements:

Absolute Poverty: When income of a person is not sufficient to provide the basic necessities of life, he/she is said to be absolute poverty

Relative Poverty: Relative poverty occurs when a comparison of the standard of living or income distribution of various income groups is undertaken in a country. The income inequalities between different groups are a reflection of a relative poverty. In India people living below the poverty line are quite high as compared to other Asian countries like Malaysia, Thailand and China. According to the projections of the planning commission poverty is expected to decline to 18 percent in 2002 and further to 4 percent in 2012.

Measurement of Poverty: The planning commission of India set up a study group in 1962 to examine the question of poverty in the country. The study group suggested a private consumption expenditure of Rs.20 (at 1960 -61 Prices) per capita per month as a basic minimum requirement of life, below which are regarded as poor. In 1979 following the recommendation of the task force on projection of minimum needs and effective consumptions demand. The poverty line is defined as "the per capita monthly expenditure needed to obtain the consumption of 2,400 calories per capita per day in rural areas and 2,100 in urban areas in the base year 1975-74. The poverty line so defined was Rs.49.10 for rural areas and Rs.56.60 for urban per capita per month. The same poverty line was updated for subsequent years using stable indicators of changes in cost living.

Poverty Alleviation Programs in India: The poverty alleviation programmes in India can be categorized based on whether it is targeted for rural areas or urban areas. Most of the programmes are designed to target rural poverty as prevalence of poverty is high in rural areas. Also targeting poverty challenging in rural areas due to various geographic and infrastructure limitations. The programmes can be mainly grouped into

- Wage employment programme
- Self employment programme
- Food security programme
- Social security programmes
- Urban poverty alleviation programmes

Integrated Rural Development Programme

(IRDP): IRDP is the most ambitious programme to alleviate rural poverty by providing income-generated assets to the poorest of the poor. This programme was first introduced in 1978-79 in some selected areas, but covered all the areas by November 1980. The main objective of IRDP is to raise families of identified target group below poverty line by creation

of sustainable opportunities for self-employment in the rural sector. Assistance is given in the form of subsidy by the government and term credit advanced by financial institutions like commercial/co-operative Regional Rural Banks. The target group under IRDP consists of small and marginal farmers, agricultural laborers and rural artisans having low annual income as defined by poverty line.

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA): The NREGA Bill notified in 2005 and came into force in 2006 and further modified as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) on 2 October 2009. This scheme guarantees 150 days of paid work to people in rural areas. The scheme has proved to be a major boost in India's rural population's income. The Ministry of Rural Development (MRD) is the nodal Ministry for the implementation of MNREGA. It is responsible for ensuring timely and adequate resource support to the states and to the Central Council. It has to undertake regular review, monitoring and evaluation processes and outcomes.

Unemployment in India: Unemployment occurs when a person who is actively searching for employment is The most frequently cited measure of unemployment is the unemployment rate.

Causes of Unemployment in India: The major cause of unemployment in India is the slow pace of development, AS GDP growth rate is still slow even after sixty five year of independence. The major causes which have been responsible for the wide spread unemployment can be spelt out as below:

Rapid Population Growth: it is the leading cause of unemployment in rural India. In India, particularly in rural areas, the population is increasing rapidly. It has adversely affected the unemployment situation largely in two ways. In the first place the growth of population directly encouraged unemployment by making large addition to labour force. it is because the rate of job expansion could never have been as high as population growth would have required. Secondly the rapid population growth indirectly affected the unemployment situation by reducing the resources of capital formation.

Limited Land: Land is the gift of nature. It is always constant and cannot expand like population growth. Since India's population is increasing rapidly, the land is not sufficient for the growing population. As a result, there is heavy pressure on the land. In rural areas most of the people depend directly on land for their livelihood. It created the unemployment situation for a large number of persons who depend on agriculture in rural areas.

Child Labour: There is no agreement on the definition of a 'child'. According to Article I of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child 1989

(UNCRC), "A child means every human being below the age 18 years unless under, the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. The definition of the child as given by the UNCRC has definite bearing not only on child development programs but also a production of statistics as applicable to different cross sections of children in terms of reference ages.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) refers to children as those who are under 15 years of age. ILO states that child labor may be defined in a number of different ways and a different definition yields a different estimate of child labor in India as well as other countries. According to ILO, children and adolescents, who participate in work that does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with their schooling is not called child labour, rather it may be generally regarded as being something positive.

Causes of Child Labour: Various factors have contributed to the problem of Child Labour among which the following are important

a. Economic causes

b. Extreme Poverty: child labour is commonly found in all the developing countries where poverty is usually found. Many families with extreme poverty are compelled to send their children for work who contribute something for the family income.

c. Possibility of extracting more work for less wage: Employers of many enterprises search for child labourers because they can extract more work from them by giving less wages. Child laborers neither have trade union of their own nor the bargaining power to demand more wages

d. Secure more profits: some industrialists believe that their units are able to maximize profits because of engaging child laborers, who are very cheap and easily available.

e. Family Factors

f. Family disorganization often leads to child labour. Extreme poverty and economic conditions of the family are the factors favoring to child labour. Divorce, desertion, rigid family, relations, and cruelty at home. Parent child conflicts, criminal tendencies of parents often compel children to run away from the unpleasant family environment. In order to while away their time and need of money for their livelihood /survival such children finally get into some jobs.

g. Other factors

h. Justification of employers of child labourers: Some employers justify their act of employing children for work. They argue that work keeps poor children away from starvation. They even say that they are rendering service to the society by

providing some jobs to the wandering children, who would otherwise become criminals or joined the anti social elements.

- i. **Lack of public awareness:-** Children constitute the treasury of future wealth of any nation. But unfortunately in India, public awareness is not there regarding social evils such as child abuse and child labour. As such even after 70 years of its independence the country is still facing it as a major challenge to address it effectively.
- j. **Kidnapping and Blackmailing of children:-** There are also some anti social forces which often kidnap children and take them to different places to sell them as a cheap human labour.
- k. **Failure of Government Machinery and Legislative system:-** Though the government has a constitutional obligation and responsibility to promote the welfare of children, the efforts of the government have not been proved to be fully successful. Half hearted legislations under taken in this regard are a big failure.

Child Labour: Preventive Measures

Legal Measures against Child Labour: In the constitution of India provisions are made to protect the interest of children, Art 24 of the constitution states that children below 14 years of age shall not be employed in any industry or in any hazardous unit. The first act to regulate the employment of children was the factory act of 1881, which forbids appointment of children below 7 years. Second was the Indian merchant shipping Act, 1923 which prevents appointing children below 14 in ships. A commission

was constituted in 1929 to fix the minimum age of child employment, on whose recommendations the Child Labour Act, 1933 was passed prohibiting employment of children below 14 years of age and no children can be pledged for the purpose of getting loan nor for repaying loan.

Conclusion: A social issue is a problem that influences a considerable number of individuals with in society. Social issues refer to any undesirable condition that is opposed either by the society as whole or a section of the society. Illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, child labour are some of the social issues confronted by Indian society. Illiteracy is a condition where an individual cannot read and write the menace of illiteracy affects many third world countries and it has close connection with poverty when income of a person is not sufficient to have basic necessities of life, then he/she is said to be poverty. In India people living below the poverty are quite high and it is due to inequitable distribution of resources among the people Unemployment is the indicator to slow the health of economy of a country. It is the major causes of poverty Under Unemployment conditions; a person does not get work for his livelihood in a specified season or throughout the year. Child labour is a concerted manifestation of violations of right of children recognized as a serious social problem in India A man keeping another man in perpetual bondage for his selfish and personal gains is known as "bonded labour".

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