# UNIT 7 : SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN INDIA

## UNIT STRUCTURE


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## 7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- identify the concept of social problems
- discuss the various forms of social problems in India
- identify the meaning of unemployment and poverty
- analyse the problem of crime and violence against women
- describe the issues of migration and displacement
- elucidate the causes behind the problems of child abuse and child labour

## 7.2 INTRODUCTION

The previous unit discussed the concepts of social change and social movement. This unit is concerned with familiarizing the learners with the concept and various forms of social problems in India. Social problems are those which affect the society at large and are not just individual or group problems. A social problem has been defined as 'a situation confronting a

group or a section of society which inflicts injurious consequences that can be handled only collectively'. Thus, no one individual or a few persons are responsible for the cause of a social problem. Also, the control over such a socially problematic situation is beyond the ability of one or a few persons. This responsibility is placed upon society at large.

Social problems change with the passage of time. What was not regarded as a problem a few decades ago, might take the form of a serious social problem later. Social change creates new conditions in which an issue comes to be identified as a social problem. For example, a few decades ago, gender discrimination, dowry, practice of Sati was accepted societal practices and not considered social problems as they are considered at present times. Thus the social problems evolve and change with the changing times.

## 7.3 SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN INDIA

India, as we all know is a land of diversity with numerous ethnic, linguistic and religious groups residing in this political terrain.

It is not easy task to give a comprehensive definition of crime. The all societies has some certain norms, values, beliefs, customs of society. These are very acceptable to the society and important to maintain social order, harmony of the society. Breaking of these norms and values regarded as the anti-social activities. Thus many writers have defined crimes as anti-social, immoral or sinful behavior.

In the legal system, crime is generally defined as 'any act or ommission prohibited by law are for the protection of public, and made punishable by the state in a judicial proceeding in its own name'. It means crime is an act of commission or omission which is punishable by the law of the state. However, the social scientists define crime in different way from that of the law makers. Redcliff Brown, an Anthropologist, defines crime as 'a violation of usage which gives rise to the exercise of the penal sanction'. Emile Durkheim defines crime as 'an act that offends certain very strong collective sentiments of the group'. Thus the social scientists define crime emphasizing more on the violation of group norms.



**ACTIVITY**

Collect some data on various crimes committed in Assam that published in your daily paper for 15 days.

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### 7.3.1 POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment is an economic condition where people do not have any work or are jobless despite actively searching for employment opportunities. It is defined as a situation where anyone of working age, regardless of his desire to be in full time employment, is not able to acquire the same. The level of unemployment varies with economic conditions and other circumstances.

Unemployment has basically three elements -

- An individual should be capable of working
- An individual should be willing to work
- An individual must make an effort to find work.

**Types of Unemployment**

We can classify or categorize unemployment into various types on the basis of their causes. Depending on the causes, the type of unemployment are different and also varies from one society to another. Certain types of unemployment are more common or are prevelant mostly in urban areas where as some others are by and large found in the rural areas. Let us now understand the different types of unemployment -

- **Cyclical Unemployment :** Cyclical unemployment is the kind of unemployment that occurs due to economic fluctuations or economic breakdown. For example, during recessions when the demand for the products of the business falls off, the employer is bound to curtail the number or size of his employees and restrict himself from appointing new employees.

- **Structural Unemployment :** Structural unemployment is one of the most important types of unemployment within an economic system. It arises in an economy when a mismatch occurs between the kinds of jobs being offered by employers and the skills, experience, education, and geographical location of potential employees. If the skills or the expertise of the people do not match with the kinds of jobs that are available, then they face difficulty in getting a job or are rendered jobless.
- **Industrial Unemployment :** Industrial unemployment is primarily the outcome or fallout of the losses incurred by industries, slow growth of industries, competition with foreign industries, unplanned industrializtion, defective industrial policies, labour strikes, etc.
- **Voluntary Unemployment :** Voluntary unemployment is defined as a situation when workers intentionally decide not to work. For some reasons like low wage rate, unfavourable or harsh working conditions, etc, the workers may choose to remain jobless or decide not to participate in the labour market. They make this decision on their own without being prompted or asked by anyone else.
- **Seasonal Unemployment :** Seasonal unemployment occurs because certain sectors of the economy only produce or distribute their products at certain times of the year. When production or distribution activity is concentrated only to a specific period of the year, the workers are out of job for the remaining period. Thus, they are employed only for a particular season or a definite time period. Seasonal unemployment is common include farming, tourism, and construction sectors.
- **Disguised Unemployment :** Disguised unemployment refers to a situation where we find too many people working when so many are not required. The best example here is agriculture where we usually find the entire family being engaged in cultivation when the same work could have been done by 3-4 persons. This may be because the excess people are not able to find employment elsewhere, so rather than remaining jobless; they prefer to join the other family

members in cultivation. This is known as disguised unemployment where more than the required numbers of people are employed in a particular work and which even do not increase the total production.

**Magnitude of Unemployment in India**

By magnitude we here mean the degree or the level unemployment in a particular society. From the above given sub section we have already learnt that based on the variety of causes that are prevelant in our society, we have different types of unemployment. But, not only the types, even the degree or extent of this problem also varies from one society to another. In some societies due to lack of employment avenues or excessive population etc., the problem of unemployment is more rampant than other societies where there are plenty of employment opportunities or where population is limited etc. Thus the magnitude or the enormity of the problem of unemployment differs in different socities. Let us now try to understand the extent of this problem or the unemployment scenerio in India.

As per the reports of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, the unemployment rate in India decreased to 3.70 per cent in 2011 from 9.40 per cent in 2010. Unemployment rate in India averaged 7.57 per cent from 1973 until 2011, reaching an all time high of 9.40 per cent in 2009 and a record low of 3.70 per cent in 2011.

Again, according to the Annual Employment and Unemployment Survey Report for 2012-13 released by Labour Bureau under Union Ministry of Labour and Employment, Sikkim had the maximum unemployed people in the country. The unemployment rate per 1,000 people, aged more than 15 years, was highest in Sikkim at 136, followed by Arunachal Pradesh at 130, Tripura at 126, Goa at 107 and Kerala at 104. Chhattisgarh had lowest unemployment rate of 14 in the country, followed by Karnataka at 20, Madhya Pradesh at 22, Andhra Pradesh at 25 and Gujarat at 27.

**Causes of Unemployment in India**

There are many factors which results in unemployment. Let us understand the most important causes which have been responsible for the rampant unemployment problem are as follows:

- **Population Explosion :** One of the foremost causes of unemployment in India is the massive population growth particularly in the rural areas. It has adversely affected the unemployment situation by constantly generating additional labour force which is not proportionate to the rate of expansion of jobs. Moreover, to cater to the needs of such a large population requires huge expenditure. As a consequence, more resources get used up in private consumption such as food, clothing, shelter and in public consumption like drinking water, electricity, medical and educational facilities etc. This reduces the opportunities of diverting a larger proportion of income to saving and investment. Here we may cite the example of northeast and particularly Assam where the increasing number of migrants have resulted in the rapid rise of population. Due to unabated migration, employment opportunities have become scarce and hence many people here suffer from lack of livelihood opportunities.



Population Explosion results in huge expenditure of resources in public and private consumption

- **Limited Availability of Land :** Land being an endowment of the nature is inelastic or constant. It cannot expand like population growth. Since, there is rapid increase of population in India; the land that is available becomes insufficient to fulfill the needs of such a vast population. As a result unemployment mounts up especially in the rural areas where there is heavy pressure on the land, as majority of the people are dependent on land for their livelihood.
- **Seasonal Agriculture :** Rural Society is mostly agrarian in nature. Most of the rural people are engaged directly or indirectly in agricultural activities. But in India agriculture is fundamentally a seasonal affair and therefore it provides employment opportunities only for a particular season of the year. For example, during the sowing and harvesting period, people are fully employed and the period between the post harvest and before the next sowing they remain unemployed and suffer from poor economic conditions.
- **Decline of Cottage Industries :** In rural India, village or cottage industries are the only means of employment particularly of the

landless people. They depend directly on various cottage industries for their livelihood. But, now-a-days, these are adversely affected by the industrialisation process. The small scale and cottage industries with their limited resources are unable to compete with modern industries and factories. Hence they are suffering from a serious loss and are gradually closing down. People are no longer motivated to set up their own small scale or cottage industries. This has resulted in the decline of employment avenues and opportunities.

- **Limitations of the Education System :** The present educational system is mostly confined within the classroom. It is mostly degree oriented and not practical and job oriented. Vocational skills are not given due importance. Thus, modern education is not very effective in terms of rendering employment. It has not been able to impart skills necessary for self employment or entrepreneurship.
- **Lack of Transport and Communication :** In India particularly in rural areas, there are no adequate facilities of transport and communication. Owing to this, the village people who are not engaged in agricultural work remaine unemployed. Further, they are also unable to start any business for their livelihood as they are bound to remain confined only within the limited boundary of the village. It is to be noted that the modern means of transport and communication are the most effective way to trade and commerce. Since there is lack of transport and communication in rural areas, therefore, it leads to unemployment problem among the villagers.
- **Inadequate Employment Planning :** The employment planning of the government is not adequate in comparison to population growth. In India near about two lakh people are added yearly to our existing population. But the employment opportunities do not increase proportionately to the population growth. As a consequence, a great difference is visible between the job opportunities and population growth. On the other hand it is a very difficult task on the part of the Government to provide adequate job facilities to all the people. Besides this, the government also does not take adequate step in

this direction. The faulty employment planning of the Government expedites this problem to a great extent. As a result the problem of unemployment is increasing day by day.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** What are the causes of unemployment in India?

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## POVERTY

The concept of poverty received public concern only in the twentieth century. Poverty is a socio-economic condition in which a segment of the society is incapable of accomplishing their basic or indispensable requirements of life such as food, clothing, housing, education and other essential minimum human needs. It is closely linked to inequality. When one section of the society is not socio-economically at par with rest of the population and is deprived of the fundamental necessities of life, they are considered as poor. Furthermore, poverty involves not only the lack of basic necessities for material well-being, but also denial of opportunities for living a decent life. It is a condition or a state of being that gives rise to a feeling of discrepancy between what one has and what one should have.

Berstein Henry (1992) has identified the following dimensions of poverty-

- Lack of livelihood strategies,
- Inaccessibility to resources (money, land, credit),
- Feeling of insecurity and frustrations,
- Inability to maintain and develop social relations with others as a consequence of lack of resources.

### Estimation of Poverty in India

Poverty is one of the main social problems that India is facing today. The most important indicators of poverty in India are malnutrition, low

consumption expenditure, chronic illness, unemployment, poor sanitation and housing conditions. Here poverty is estimated on the basis of 'Head Count Ratio' or on the basis of minimum consumption expenditure. There were about 32.1 crore persons living below poverty line in 1973-774. It remained almost stagnant during a decade of 1973-1973 but it come down to 26 crore in 1999-2000 and 22 crore in 2004-05. Poverty is higher in the rural sector as compared to urban India. Further, the number of people living below poverty line varies across different states. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttrakhand, Madhya Pradesh etc. have relatively more number of poor persons as compared to other states. Orissa has the highest percentage of persons living below poverty line i.e., 43 per cent and Punjab has the lowest i.e., 6 per cent. In Assam according to the Poverty Headcount Ratio 37.9 per cent of people live below poverty line in 2009-2010 i.e. 11.64 Million people living in Assam fall under the category of poor.

### 7.3.2 DRUG ADDICTION AND ALCOHOLISM

Alcoholism and **drug addiction may** be conceptualized as crime without victim, i.e., addict himself is the victim who becomes a prey of misuse. This devastating melody is eroding the roots of social, economic, and cultural fiber of Indian society. It gives rise to criminality and criminal behaviour which eventually leads to social disorganization. Though, these are victimless crime, they do carry with them secondary victims such as family, dependents, friends, etc. The person who intake it find pleasure and relaxation or relieving from his/her physical or mental tension.



Drug Addiction refers to the habit forming drug consumption that affects the brain or the nervous system.

**Meaning of Drug Addiction and Alcoholism**

Generally drug means a chemical substance associated with different physical or psychological effect. It alters person's normal bodily processes or functions. In medical sense drug is a substance prescribed by physician or manufactured specially for treating and preventing diseases and ailment by its chemical nature and its effect on the structure and function of a living organism. In the psychological and sociological context, drug is a term for habit forming substance which directly affects the brain or nervous system. According to Jullian, 'drug refers to any chemical substance which affects

bodily function, mood, perception or consciousness which has potential for misuse, and which may be harmful to the individual or the society'. In terms of his definition the frequent use of drug is considered so dangerous and sometimes even immoral and anti-social. It arouses a variety of indignant and hostile sentiments on the part of general public.

Jhonson said '**alcoholism** is a condition in which an individual loses control over his alcohol intake in that he is constantly unable to refrain from drinking once he begins'. According to Keller and Efron, 'alcoholism is characterized by the repeated drinking of alcoholic beverages to an extend that exceeds customary use or compliance with the social customs of the community and that adversely affects the drinker's health or interferes with his social or economic functioning'.

An alcoholic is different from an 'occasional drinker'. Any person who takes alcohol is a 'drinker', while a compulsive drinker who cannot live without taking alcohol is called an 'alcoholic'.

**Causes of Drug Addiction and Alcoholism**

Ram Ahuja has discussed causes of drug addiction under four headings:

- Psychological causes includes reliving tension, easing depression, satisfying curiosity, removing boredom, feeling high and confident, etc.
- Social causes, like facilitating social experiences, being accepted by friends, and challenging social values.
- Physiological causes, like staying awake, heightening sexual experiences, removing pain and getting sleep.
- Miscellaneous causes, like improving study, sharpening religious insight, deepening self-understanding, and solving personal problem.

The sociological reasons for taking alcohol are essentially the same as for taking drugs. It is more easily available than drugs. The main sociological causes of taking alcohol are environmental pressure, peer pressure and a dominant sub-culture. However, psychologists maintain that only those people take a frequent drinking who are emotionally immature and lack self-confidence.

**The reasons of drug addiction and alcoholism can be grouped in following way -**

a. **Impact of Social Processes :** Some social processes like modernization, industrialization, westernization, urbanization have the tremendous influence over the life of present human society. On one hand, all these processes help people to communicate or unite world wise. But on the opposite it makes easier to drug trafficking from one corner to the other. All these bring changes in the life style or ways of living in the society as well as new values among the present generation. As a result, people break up lots of traditional values and adapt western and modern values where taking drugs is the normal situation for few people.

b. **Lack of Parental Control and Broken Family :** Lack of family care and control over the young generation partly due to working situation of both the parents has contributory factor to encourage for taking alcohol and drugs. Disintegration of joint family system and broken family or family clashes may badly influence over the relationship among its members. Sometimes due to this many people take drugs and alcohol to getting relief from family tension especially by the youth or male person.

c. **Development of Medical Science :** The recent developments of pharmaceutical and medical sciences have provided scope for production of a variety of toxic synthetic substances. This has contributed substantially to drug abuse and addiction.

d. **Physiological Causes :** Sometimes people take drug or alcohol for relief from painful illness and ultimately get addicted to it. Besides, there are some person whose neurological heritage is that they find difficult to survive without taking drug or alcohol. This ultimately makes them habitual alcoholics or drug addicts.

e. **Hippie-Culture :** Due to the influence of hippie-culture many youngsters take drug and alcohol as fun or enjoyment. At the initial stage they consume these for their enjoyment but gradually increases

due to narcotic effect and finally a good number of them turn out to be drug addicts and habitual.

f. **Generation Gap :** The communication gap between the elder and younger generation or between parents and child also influence over the individual of developing such kind of habits. The lack of knowledge of child psychology is also one contributory factor.

g. **Others :** Besides the above factors some other socio cultural factors also influence over developing drug addiction and alcoholism in the society. Poverty, unemployment are also problems of society which brings mental hazards among the individuals. Due to these some people take drug and alcohol to get relief which ultimately makes them habitual. Social disorganisaion, neighborhoods influence, etc. may divert a person to alcohol or drug addiction.

### 7.3.3 CRIME AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

In the Indian society, women have been the victims of exploitation since time immemorial. In spite of the spread of education and consequently women's gradual economic independence and various legislative measures adopted in favour of women, most of the women still continue to be victims of violence. Patriarchy plays a major role of dominance on women.

Violence against women is a term which is used to refer as acts that are committed against women. Kempe (1972) has defined violence as 'physically striking an individual and causing injury'. In practical sense, it may be defined as the 'force used to wrest from an individual (a woman) something that she does not want to give of her own free will and which causes her either physical injury or emotional trauma or both'. Thus, rape, wife-battering, sexual abuse, eve teasing, forced prostitution, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, kidnapping, murder are all examples of violence against women.

In 1993, United Nations declaration defined violence against women as 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to a woman, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether

occuring in public or private life'.

The Fourth Conference of Women, 1995 has defined violence against women as a physical act of aggression of one individual or group against another or others. Violence against women is any act of gender-based violence which results in, physical, sexual or arbitrary deprivation of liberty in public or private life and violation of human rights of women in situations of armed conflicts (Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995).

In northeast India women enjoy a greater mobility and visibility than the women in other places. This often portrays a picture of equality between men and women and therefore, violence against women is not a major concern in the area. However, unfortunately, in recent times cases of violence against women are seen to have been increasing constantly every year in the area.

## LET US KNOW



- According to UN estimates, upto 200 million women and girls are demographically missing.
- According to UNICEF 100 to 130 million women around the world have been genitally mutilated.
- Assam (40%) is among those Indian states where the prevalence of spousal violence is well above the national average (37%). There are various types of Violence against women which may be categorized as -
- **Domestic Violence :** Domestic violence is tthe physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in a family. It includes battering, dowry related violence, sexual abuse of female children, marital rape, female genital mutilation, etc. Domestic violence occurs in all socio-economic groups. In many societies, women are socialised to accept and remain silent about such experiences. Domestic violence was recognised as a criminal offence in India in 1973. However, there was no separate civil law for domestic violence. In 2006, a comprehensive domestic

violence law, known as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, was amended. The law includes the prohibition of marital rape and the provision of protection and maintenance orders against husbands and partners who are emotionally, physically or emotionally abusive.

- **Social Violence :** It is the physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassement and intimidation at work place, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking, forced prostitution, eve teasing, etc.
- **Criminal Violence :** Criminal violence is that violence where a woman is tortured against the radical law of the state and referred to as crime. It is also the violence prepetrated or condoned by the state including murder, abduction, etc.

There has been increasing concern about violence against women in general, and domestic violence in particular, since 1990s.

**DOWRY**

Dowry is both a practice and problem associated with Hindu marriage. Generally it means giving money, ornaments, or any other kind of goods with the daughter at the time of her marriage. It is an age old custom of the Indian tradition. According to the old Hindu law only the son can inherit the parental property. So the parents try to give as possible as amount of things with their daughter at the time of marriage. But, sometimes the greedy of the in-laws of demanding more goods with the bride or tortured her by the husband or in-laws for non-fulfillment of demand. Many times tortured leads to unnatural death of the married women or compelled by circumstances to commit suicide.

Dowry has been defined as the payment in cash or kind by the bride's family to the bridegroom's family. Ram Ahuja has defined 'dowry as gift and valuables received in marriage by the bride, the bridegroom and his relatives'.

Max Radin in Encyclopedia of Social Sciences has referred 'dowry as



**Dowry** is a social evil that results in physical and psychological abuse of a married women. It may lead to unnatural death or suicide of the women

the property which a man receives from his wife or her family at the time of his marriage'.

According to Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, dowry has been defined as any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given either directly or indirectly: (a) by one party to the other party through the marriage; or (b) by the parents or by any other person; at or before or after the marriage as consideration for the marriage of the aforesaid parties; but does not include dowry or mehr in the case of persons to whom the Muslim personal law (shariat) applies.

In the earlier days dowry practiced as a custom. But with the changes of society people become more materialistic and it is the easiest means of earning money and acquiring high socio-economic status in the society. As a result, an increasingly difficult and frustration situation has arisen for the present generation and their parents, particularly for the middle class and salaried persons. Dowry which was practiced voluntarily as a token of love and affection, has now become financial obstacle to marriage. Now it has been increasing day by day and becomes a rigid custom that is strongly adhered to.

This evil practice has gone so far as to become a chronic evil in modern societies. Both the educated male and female with high profile structure and high profile ladies have contributed in boosting this problem. It is in practice in all sections of society in different forms. But instead of eradication, it has now spread even to the communities where they were once unknown. No-a-days, dowry as a phenomenon has gone beyond the ritual of marriage. Pregnancy, childbirth and all kinds of religious or family functions are occassions when such demands are made. **The consequences of dowry system are as follows -**

**Female Foeticide and Infanticide :** Foeticide means killing of the female foetus in the mother's womb and infanticide implies killing of the female infant. Dowry is a major cause behind killing of the baby girl and female foetus.

- It causes economic burden to the bride's family:
- Dowry harassment and murders: Sometimes women are ill-treated, tortured mentally or physically by their husbands and in-laws in the name of dowry. If the bride's family cannot fulfill the expectation of her in-laws demand then they start to torture her.
- Dowry leading to immorality: Practice of dowry is not only regarded as unlawful but even as immoral. Practice of dowry leads to some immoral practices like some unmarried young girls take up some petty jobs to earn money in order to reduce the financial burden of their parents.
- Psychological Crises and Emotional Disturbances in the Family: Practice of dowry leads to unhealthy and unwanted competition among the parents. These ultimately hamper on the family peace and happiness. Domestic violence is a major outcome of this.



**LET US KNOW**

- The Indian National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) reported that there were about 6,777 cases of dowry deaths registered in India in 2005.
- In Assam, 143 cases of dowry harrasement and 3,707 cases of domestic violence have been registered between April 2009 and January 2010.
- The pracice of female infanticide existed among the Toda tribe of Tamil Nadu.

## 7.3.4 CHILD LABOUR AND CHILD ABUSE

### PROBLEM OF CHILD LABOUR

Child labour has emerged as an increasingly important issue. India has the largest number of children employed than any other country in the world. According to a statistics around 90 million out of 179 million children

in the 6 - 14 years age group do not go to school and are engaged in some occupations or other. Unofficially, this figure exceeds 100 million but the fact is that a large number of children work without wages, unreported by census, makes it very difficult to estimate accurately.

**Meaning and Definition of Child Labour**

'Child labour' is a derogatory term which translates into child exploitation and inhumanity according to sociologists, development workers and educationists. Not all work done by children can be called child labour. It depends on the child's age, the type, and hours of work performed, the conditions under which the work is performed. Work that does not affect children's health or development or does not interfere with their education is generally regarded as being positive. So, when a child is engaged in part time work to learn practical skills that contribute to the welfare of the family and society it is not child labour. It becomes child labour when the child is fully involved in employment, earn money to support family without education. There is no universally accepted definition of child labour.

The term 'child labour' is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that -

- is physically, mentally, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and
- interferes with their schooling by: depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

This problem persists in various employments on account of socio-economic compulsions. Complete ban of employment of children in all occupations have remained far behind. The Governments bans employment of children below the age of 14 years in factories, mines and other hazardous employments according to the Constitution. It also regulates the working-conditions of children in non-hazardous employments. The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1976 passed in December 1976 sought to

achieve this objective. The Government of India had set up a Child Labour Technical Advisory Committee to identify and list down various occupations where restrictions need to be imposed for prohibiting employment of children. The Committee first submitted its report in August 1977.

International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions 137 (1973) and 172 (1999) define child labourers as all children younger than 12 years are working in any economic activities, children 12-14 years old are engaged in more than light work, and all children are engaged in the worst form of child labour - in which they are enslaved, forcibly recruited, prostituted, trafficked, forced into illegal activities or exposed to hazards.

**Child workers are** engaged primarily in agriculture and allied activities in rural areas and in a variety of industries and informal sector activities in the urban areas. According to International Labour Organisation's Bureau of Statistics (1997), there are 250 million child labours in the age group of 5 - 14 in the developing countries. In 2000 the ILO reveals that 246 million child workers in the age group of 5-17 are involved in child labour of which 171 million are in hazardous occupations. While 7.4 million are engaged in the worst forms of child labour and million are in non hazardous occupations. The actual magnitude of child labour in India is hard to determine. According to Indian Census of 2001, child labourers in India are 11.29 millions under the age of 14, which constitutes 1.34 per cent of the total population of the country. A significant number of this labour is in the rural areas working in agricultural activities like farming, livestock rearing, etc. Among the North Eastern states of India, Assam has perhaps the highest percentage of child labour. It has 3, 51,416 child labour according to 2001 census. These child labourers are seen in a wide range of sectors like various factories, tea gardens, hotels, constructional sites, motor mechanic sheds, grocery shops, bonded labour in the households of rich landlords, agriculture, factories, etc.



Child workers are made to work in hazardous and non-hazardous occupations.

## PROBLEM OF CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse is a global phenomena. It is a state of emotional, physical, economic and sexual maltreatment meted out to a person below the age of

eighteen years. However, the extent and magnitude of the incidence of child abuse cannot be estimated. Data on offences against children reported by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) is the only authentic source to estimate the number of children in abusive situations. It is important to note here that the NCRB data is only indicative in nature as it is based on the reported cases. It is also an accepted fact that the majority of cases of child abuse go un-reported. The growing complexities of life has played a major role in increasing the vulnerability of children to various forms of abuse.

**Meaning and Definition of Child Abuse**

The term 'Child Abuse' may have different meanings in different socio-economic situations. In general, child abuse is a state of emotional, physical, economic and sexual maltreatment of a child under the age of eighteen by a parent, caretaker or employer. According to World Health Organization, 'Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power'. Child abuse is a violation of the basic human rights of a child and has serious physical and psycho-social consequences which affect the overall well-being of a child.

**Types of Child Abuse**

Child abuse may be divided into four types -

- **Physical abuse :** The World Health Organization (WHO) defines physical abuse of a child as an incident resulting in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. This may include burning, hitting, kicking, slapping, punishing through corporal punishment, beating by family members, caretakers, employer.
- **Sexual abuse :** According to World Health Organization, child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she

does not fully comprehend or that violates the laws or social taboos of society. It includes fondling or touching of child's genitals, intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy, exhibitionism and sexual exploitation.

- **Emotional abuse :** Emotional abuse of children is very difficult to define. As defined by the World Health Organization, 'Emotional abuse includes the failure to provide a developmentally appropriate, supportive environment, including the availability of a primary attachment figure, so that the child can develop a stable and full range of emotional and social competencies commensurate with her or his potential and in the context of the society in which the child dwells. Acts of emotional abuse include parents/caretakers using extreme forms of punishment, such as confinement in a closet or dark room or tying the child to a chair for long periods of time or threatening a child. Less severe acts are belittling or rejecting treatment, discriminating, using derogatory terms to describe the child, habitual tendency to blame the child'.
- **Neglect :** It is the failure to provide for the all round development of the child. Neglect can be physical, educational, emotional or psychological. Physical neglect includes denial of food, clothing, appropriate medical care or supervision and proper protection of weather. Educational neglect includes failure to provide appropriate schooling or special educational needs. Psychological neglect includes lack of any emotional support and love. This also includes aspects of gender discrimination.

### 7.3.5 MIGRATION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human migration implies physical movement by humans from one area to another, sometimes over long distances or in large groups. Historically this movement was nomadic, often causing significant conflict with the indigenous population and their displacement or cultural assimilation. Only a few nomadic people have retained this form of lifestyle in modern times.

Migration has continued under the form of both voluntary migration within one's region, country, or beyond and involuntary migration (which includes the slave trade, occupational shift, trafficking in human beings and ethnic cleansing). People who migrate into a territory are called 'immigrants', while at the departure point they are called 'emigrants'. In trying to analyze the migration of people into a particular region, it is necessary to understand the adjustments that the migrant group and the host community makes as an after-effect of migration (Nath 1977). Labor migration, refugee migrations and urbanization takes place as millions of agricultural workers left the countryside and moved to the cities causing unprecedented levels of urbanization. This phenomenon began in Britain in the late 17th century and spread around the world and continues to this day in many areas. Population explosion is a threatening problem in India; especially in the urban areas.

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

According to Oxford English Dictionary, traffic is an illegal trade in a commodity, in this case, the commodity is women and children. Human trafficking is one of the biggest crime in the world. Women and girls are trafficking for the different purposes such as commercial sexual exploitation, forced marriage especially in those areas where imbalanced sex ratio is found. Children are also trafficking for forced labour as factory workers, domestic servants, baggers and agricultural workers. Some of them also influenced by terrorist and insurgent groups.

**There are different definitions of the term trafficking.** According to the UN Commission on Human Rights (2000) definition, 'Trafficking in persons means the recruitment, transportation, purchase, sale transfer, harboring or receipt of a person - (i) by threat or use of violence, abduction, force, fraud deception or coercion (including abuse of authority) or debt bondage for the purpose of and - (ii) placing or holding such a person, whether for pay or not, in forced labour or slavery of like practices, in a community other than the one in which such person lived at the time of the original act described in (i)'.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has

also established a definition which is: 'Moving, selling or buying of women and children for prostitution within or outside a country for monetary or other considerations with or without the consent of the person subjected to trafficking'.

There are almost no reliable estimates of the number of women who are trafficked and to where they are trafficked.

**Reasons or Causes of Trafficking**

The main reason and causes of human trafficking are as follows-

- Economic deprivation or poor economic condition is one of the important cause of trafficking. Because of this, many parents sell their children to the gang in returns of few rupees. Their poverty forced them to done this type of activities.
- Due to the lack of employment opportunities many girls are misguided by some fake placement agencies .
- Lack of awareness and illiteracy.
- Demand of girls for marriage in some places like Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan.
- Demand of domestic helps from the metros.
- Social evils like dowry, degrading attitude towards girl, child marriage, prostitution, etc.
- Poor implementation of police and law enforcement agencies.
  The Indian Penal Code criminalizes the activities like selling and buying of minors for the purpose of prostitution, kidnapping, abduction, inducing, procuring, importing for the purpose of illicit intercourse or slavery. Another Act that protects the children from being forced into labour and exploitation is the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2006.

**Special institutions.**

There are several institutional which are functional to provide support to trafficking victims. The enactment of Juvenile Justice Act also provided a few institution such as children home, after care home, observation home,

special home for protection of the victims. Under the Juvenile Justice Act institute like Child Welfare Committee was established to provide all support to the Child-in-Need-of Care and Protection( CNCP).

In order to investigate trafficking cases effectively and to prosecute the traffickers, special Anti-Human Trafficking Cell of Police departments have been established in several part of the country. There are different advisory body, nodal agencies created in different places in India for overseeing the progress with regard to anti-trafficking measures.

Besides these, the Ministry of Women and Child Development, National Human Rights Commission, Ministry of Home Affairs, National Commission for Women, and many NGOs in different places take initiatives. In India, many NGOs are playing active role in combating human trafficking. Prerana, a Mumbai based NGO, in Delhi STOP, CORE, Prayas, in Calcutta Sanlap, GOLD in Assam et. al. are working different ways regarding trafficking. They are involved in rescue operations as well as in the prosecution of traffickers and other exploiters. Many of them provide counseling and rehabilitation training to the victims.

Beside the legal measures there are some other socio-cultural measures which can help in prevention or controlling of this crime. Such as:

- By promoting employment opportunities to the people that people would never be engaged in this type of criminal activities.
- Government should do better job for reducing poverty, illiteracy from India.
- They also try to remove the existence of fake agencies which misguided the people by offering employment opportunities. Media can play a very effective role in creating awareness among the public.
- Social evils like gender discrimination, practice of dowry and child marriages should totally remove by the society.
- The police, law enforcement agencies and other government or non government agencies must awake to control this crime in the society and developed awareness programme among the peoples especially in rural areas.

- The most important thing is that moral education should be developed in the society. People should understand the rights and values of the others.

**Human Trafficking in North-East India**

Human trafficking is one of the major problems in the states of North-Easter region. The largest markets for trafficked NE women are metros like Delhi and Mumbai, and states like West Bengal, Goa, Kerala and even in border areas. Satyarthi, the founder of the Bachpan Bachao Andolan pointing out that children from Assam & other N.E.States were increasingly being trafficked to Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Mumbai and other parts. Most of the traffickers from Lakhimpur, Kokrajhar, Tea gardeners of Udalguri, Sonitpu, Bongaigaon, and other background areas of lower Assam through a well organized criminal racket. The agents are paid Rs. 15,000- 20,000 per girl by placement agency, and 25,000-30,000 from the family that employs girls as maid. Thus, many girls and women, also children has been trafficking to different places from Assam.

The main reasons of trafficking in this region are- closure to several tea gardeners and loss of livelihood, acute poverty and natural disaster, existence of fake placement agencies both in source and destination, lake of awareness and illiteracy, demand of domestic helps from metros, poor implementation of police, demand for girls for marriage from different areas, social evils like dowry, etc.

In Assam, there are 14 Anti Human Trafficking Units (AHTU) cell. These play very active role in this regard. Many a times they have rescued girls from Haryana or other parts. To deal with this acute violations of human rights in the region, the Assam Human Rights Commission was constituted on 19th March, 1996 under the protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. GOLD (Global Organisation for Life Development), an NGO, plays initiative role in the rescue and rehabilitation operation of the victims. After all these efforts, many girls and women are trafficked to the other places. Therefore, there is the necessity of having very strong effort both from government and non-government organization to prevent this crime.



## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: Name the only legislature specifically addressing trafficking.

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Q 3: What are the three types of violence against women?

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## 7.4 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have discussed the social problems with specific reference to India and focussing on north east India. From the social science perspective, issues of child and female abuse, Unemployment and poverty, drug addiction and alcoholism are barriers to development of a nation. Thus, these social problems need to be identified and policies should be the key tools to deal with them.



## 7.5 FURTHER READING


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2. Ahuja, Ram (2006) Social Problems in India. New Delhi: Rawat Publications
3. Dutta, Nalini Kanta (2009). The Law of Crime and Correction. Guwahati: Purbachal Prakash.
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Yadav, K.P. (2006). Trafficking: An Emerging Social Problem. New Delhi: Adhyayan Publishers.



## 7.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No1:** The causes of unemployment in India are population explosion, limited land availability seasonal agriculture, decline in cottage industry,limitation of education system, etc.

**Ans to Q No2:** The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956

**Ans to Q No3:**Domestic, social and Criminal Violence



## 7.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

**A) Short Questions** (Answer each question in about 150 words)

**Q 1:** What do you mean by drug addiction and alcoholism?

**Q 2:** What do you mean by human trafficking?

**Q 3:** Give a definition of dowry.

**Q 4:** What is child labour?

**B) Long Questions** (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

**Q 1:** Discuss the forms of crime against women

**Q 2:** Explain the main causes of human trafficking in India.

**Q 3:** Discuss the problem of unemployment in India.