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MAJOR SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF INDIA

Every society continues to change with time. The process of shredding the old and accepting the new dispensation creates problems of adjustment. Our country is also confronted with some major social problems.

You might have heard the term illiteracy, which Mahatma Gandhi held to be a severe blot on our culture. But unfortunately, 35 percent people of our country are illiterates even after 57 years of our independence. Literacy enables an individual to differentiate between right and wrong.

Our population has trebled after independence. This explosion has affected our development adversely.

In recent times, corruption in different walks of life has grown tremendously. This has seriously undermined our progress and social life.

You must also have seen a large number of people living in huts, in a semi-clad state and suffering from hunger and want. Thus poverty is also one of the major problems before our country.

In this lesson we are going to learn about literacy situation, population explosion, corruption and poverty as prevalent in our society.



OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, you will be able to:

- comprehend literacy situation in India;
- understand population explosion and its problems;
- explain corruption as an evil; and
- describe poverty and its causes.

29.1 LITERACY SITUATION IN INDIA

You might have seen people putting thumb impression in banks, post offices and at the time of casting votes. You would have also seen people approaching someone to get letters read, or written. Have you ever thought as to why they do so? The simple reason is that they are illiterate. They are neither handicapped nor sick, but they are not able to read and write. Thus, illiteracy is a curse for modern society. It leads to ignorance, superstition, deprivation and even wrong thought and action.

Literacy, on the other hand, makes one to read and write and even a blind can read and under stand. It leads to proper thoughts and action

Literacy is ability to read, write and understand any language and illiteracy is inability to do so.

Literacy takes everyone on the road of education and development, acquire superior skill for a better life. The pre-literate or non-literate people suffer from lack of awareness of rights and duties, ignorance of healthy practices and benefits of sanitation and they cling to superstition. Such a person is unable to grasp better skills for development or act as model and guide to younger generation. There are many avenues which literacy and education open in one's life. One can learn more about scientific skills and perform his job in a better way. He can also opt for new jobs and enhance the quality of life of his family.

Now let us have a look at literacy situation in our country. As per 2001 census report, 65 percent persons of our country are literate. It means that 35 percent citizens are still illiterate. The male literacy is 76 percent against 54 percent female literacy. The present literacy situation in our country as under:

Year	Persons	Male	Female
1951	16.67	24.90	7.90
2001	65.38	75.85	54.16

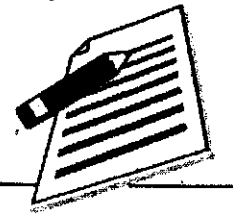
As per 1991 census report among States and Union Territories, Kerala occupies top position with more than 90% literates, while the State of Bihar occupies lowest position in literacy with only 38% literates. Literacy among STs is 29% (41% males and 18% females).

Nearly one-third of world's illiterates reside in our country. Altogether, there are 19 crores of children in the age group 6-14 years in which 4 crore (25%) have not seen the face of school. Nearly 50% children leave school after enrolment. Children

of STs and SCs are worst victims in this regard. Only 29% children of SCs and STs are enrolled in school.

Poverty, high population growth, lack of awareness and improper implementation of educational development programme are responsible for illiteracy. First education policy in our country was formulated in 1960 and second in 1986, and the third in 1991. In 1992, a new National Education Policy was formulated and introduced for all children upto 14 years of age. Besides, non-formal education programme was also initiated in 1979-80. In 1994, District Primary Education programme was implemented. In 1995, Midday Meal programme was introduced to check incidence of dropouts. In 2001, Education has been brought under fundamental right of children as per 93rd constitution amendment. The central government has launched Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan with the help of parents, social workers, administrators and parents. The role of NIOS (National Institute Of Open Schooling) in spreading education and reaching the unreached, have received massive support from the deprived sections of the population.

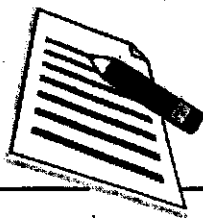
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INTEXT QUESTIONS 29.1

Choose correct one from following:

- i. As per 2001 preliminary census report, literacy rate in our country is –
 - a) 62%
 - b) 64%
 - c) 66%
 - d) 65%
- ii. Female literacy rate in our country as per 2001 census report, is
 - a) 50%
 - b) 52%
 - c) 56%
 - d) 54%
- iii. Which state of our country has highest literacy ?
 - a) Tamil Nadu
 - b) Karnataka
 - c) Andhra Pradesh
 - d) Kerala
- iv. Which state of our country has lowest literacy?
 - a) Uttar Pradesh
 - b) Madhaya Pradesh
 - c) Rajasthan
 - d) Bihar



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- v. The number of illiterate children in the age group of 6-14 years in our country is
- a) 3 crores
 - b) 4 crores
 - c) 5 crores
 - d) 6 crores

29.2 POPULATION EXPLOSION

Populating explosion is a rapid growth of population. It reveals increase in population at an alarming rate. The growth rate of population is basically difference between birth rate and death rate. Population problem is an inevitable result of reproductive behaviour of people in a society. But this view has been rejected by the population experts. They hold that population explosion is transitory phenomena. It occurs due to rapid fall in death rate without a corresponding fall in birth rate.

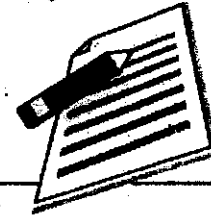
Future rate of economic progress would, *inter alia*, depend on our power to control population

According to them, every country passes through three stages of population transition. In first stage, both birth rate and death rate are high. So, population remains more or less stable. In villages, prevalence of traditional norms and lack of education result in high birth rate. Lack of medical facilities result in high death rate.

The second stage begins with industrialisation, which brings educational development and medical aid. As a result, there is check on death rate. Since society remains primarily, agrarian and education remains limited to few sections of the society only, attitude towards size of family does not change. So, birth rate remains high. This gives rise to population explosion. Our country is in this state of transition.

In the third stage, birth rate decline significantly due to education and adoption of birth control measures. This puts a check on population explosion.

Population explosion is one of the major issues which our country is facing. At the rate of 31 new babies every minute, we are adding 45,000 persons daily to our population. In this way, every year we have nearly 16 millions more people to feed, educate, provide shelter and find jobs for them. The growth rate of population is 2.0 percent per annum.



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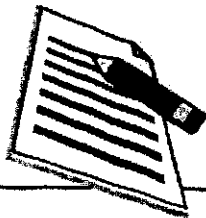
After China, India is the most populous country of the world. As per 2001 census preliminary report, total population of our country is 102.72 crores. 16.8% of total world's population lives in our country, but land area is only 2.4% of the world. India's population has increased rapidly in 20th century.

29.2.1 Socio-Economic Problems of Population Explosion

Population explosion gives birth to a number of socio-economic problems such as lack of shelter, landlessness, poverty, illiteracy, low standard of living, unemployment, malnutrition, undernourishment, ill health, insufficient infrastructure, overgrowing migration and crimes.



Some problems of over population



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Large families have created problems of housing and home-stead land. It creates the situation of landlessness due to division of land in each generation among brothers. Landlessness results in poverty. Poverty increases illiteracy because poor families send their children to work instead of sending them to schools. It comes in the way of proper nutrition and nourishment of family members. In fact, quality of life is adversely affected by population explosion. It also brings health problems. Frequent births affect the health of mother and children. It also affects feeding and nourishment processes. Rapid increase in population creates situation of unemployment and low wages. It also leads to crimes.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 29.2

Tick True or False for following statements :

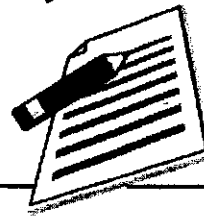
- i. Population explosion is increase in population at alarming rate (True/false).
- ii. In population explosion, there is rapid fall of birth rate and death rate (True/false).
- iii. Population explosion is transitory phenomenon (True/false).
- iv. The growth rate of population of our country is 2.0 percent. (True/false).
- v. India is the second most populous country of the world (True/false).

29.3 CORRUPTION

Let us examine what corruption means. Simple meaning of corruption is an act of characterless-ness, moral degradation and unlawful practices. In other words, it means earning money and positions by hook or crook, without caring for duties and responsibilities towards people, society and nation.

Corruption is an act by someone who is ready to do dishonest and illegal things in return of money or for something else they want, or behave in a way what is considered morally wrong.

Corruption, in our country is all pervasive and omnipresent. India is largest democracy of the world. It is the second populous country of the world. India had cherished honesty, morality and also high values from time immemorial. With passage of time and fast socio-economic changes in the country, corruption has effected all walks of life.



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You must have observed that a number of public servants, politician's government servants, bureaucrats, industrialists, traders, etc. have been sent to jail on corruption charges. But these punitive steps have not been able to put a check to this social evil. People still compromise with principles. It has taken away our social virtues and has made us selfish and inhuman. It has, almost, become a way of life.

Manifestation of Corruption:

In our country corruption is existing in every sphere of life. The practice of nepotism, favouritism, dowry, dishonesty, immorality and foeticide are examples of social corruption.

Payment of illegal gratification for getting work done in offices is the most common form of corruption. Making money from misuse of office and power to contest election, utilising criminals to win election, looting polling booths, giving tickets to criminals, giving bribe to legislators to get required number for making and unmaking a government, etc. are political forms of corruption.

Taking bribe and commission for getting the fund sanctioned, looting public money with the trader, etc. are examples of bureaucratic and administrative forms of corruption.

Admission on donation, free degree, diploma and certificate, mass copying, leak of question papers, bribing examiners, supply of answer materials from outside and all kinds of cheating are examples of educational corruption.

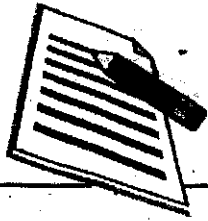
Corruption prevalent in development programme is example of developmental corruption.

Smuggling, black marketing, hoarding, profiteering, food adulteration, production of duplicate items and spurious medicines are examples of commercial corruption. Corruption found in judiciary, medical institutions and service commission reveals professional form of corruption.

Raising funds in the name of building religious centres, religious discourses, performing yagya and worship, but spending otherwise, reveals form of corruption.

29.3.1 Causes of Corruption

A number of causes are associated with the prevalence of corruption in our society. Some of them are -- to make illegal things legal on the basis of bribe or commission, to acquire more and more wealth and consumer goods, high aspirations from jobs, to enhance status in the society, to pay dowry, to meet expenditure on technical and higher education of children, to erect modern and beautiful house, to get



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required number for constituting and running the government, to collect money for fighting election, etc.

INTENT QUESTIONS 29.3

Fill in the blanks with suitable words from the brackets:

- (i) Corruption is making wealth through Acts (legal/illegal)
- (ii) Corruption is prevalent in corners of our country (few/every)
- (iii) In our country corruption prevalent at high places (is/is not)
- (iv) In our country educational institutions are from corruption (free/not free)

29.4 POVERTY

Poverty is an universal problem. It is a condition of an individual in which his income is so low that he is unable to feed or provide shelter for himself and his family members. Those who do not have such income are called poor.

Poverty is also an inability to earn sufficient income to arrange two square meals a day for himself as well as family members. A sizable section of the population of our country fails to earn such income. So, they are considered to live below poverty line.

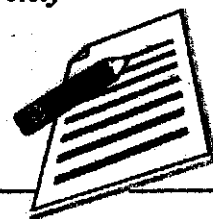
You might know that the urban poverty is the result of migration of rural people to urban areas for work and wages. They live in slum areas in unhygienic condition. Rampant unemployment is also responsible for urban poverty.

On the basis of human factor, poverty can not be measured only on economic terms. It should also be measured terms of deprivation. So, human poverty can be measured on the basis of three elements of human life – longevity, knowledge and decent standard of living. In this sense, human poverty is denial of tolerable life.

29.4.1 Causes of Poverty

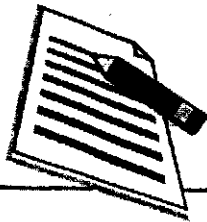
Main causes of poverty are as follows:

1. **Social causes:** In our society, scheduled castes occupied lowest position. They did not possess any property. So, they remained poor for centuries,



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- generation after generation. Heavy expenditure on performance of social customs, traditions, rituals also make many person poor. People sell their land and property to pay dowry and perform shradha (death rituals) etc.
2. **Economic causes:** Unequal distribution of land, unemployment, low wages, and indebtedness are responsible for poverty. In our society, a number of families are landless or near landless. They are dependent on others for work and wages. They do not get work round the year. They do not bargain for their wages. They have to work at low wages. They have to take loan at high rate of interest. If they are not able to repay loan and interest, they have to work as bonded labour on nominal wages.
 3. **Political causes:** Improper policies in the past are also responsible for poverty in our country. We have now opened our market for foreign countries. The production system in our country has now to match its production with them. Heavy industries have adverse influence on rural and cottage industries. Lack of proper marketing system for agricultural produce and forest produce has also resulted in poverty among agriculturists and forest dwellers. The jobs are also very few even for educated youths. Migration of rural youth to urban area for work is increasing year by year. It has created slum areas in towns and cities. Slum dwellers do not have proper house and sanitation. They live in an unhygienic condition. This affects their health which ultimately causes poverty.
 4. **Religious causes:** Religious beliefs and practices also adds to poverty in our country. People spend good amount on performing religious rites and rituals. They even take loans at high rate of interest from the money-lenders. When loan and interest is not paid, they have to mortgage or sell land, ornaments and other kind of property. Those who do not have landed property have to work as bonded labour on nominal wages. All these happen because one has to follow socio-religious norms of the society.
 5. **Natural causes:** Natural calamities like flood, cyclone, drought, earthquake, and epidemic, etc, cause poverty in our country. Each year some parts of our country have to face the situation of flood, or drought or cyclone. As a result of such natural causes, income of the people of the area is reduced to such an extent that they become unable to feed and cloth themselves.
 6. **Physical causes:** Physical causes like disease, illness, physically handicapped, accident, suicide, death of earning member, mental illness, alcoholism and drug abduction cause poverty in our society. These are personal causes of poverty but they ultimately affect family and society from the view point of poverty.
 7. **Illiteracy:** Illiteracy is also responsible for poverty in our country. Due to illiteracy, people are ignorant and show extravagancy on the occasion of ceremonies, rituals, worship, witch doctor, etc. this leads ultimately to poverty.



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8. **Population Explosion:** It leads to division of paternal property and ultimately causes, landlessness, unemployment and poverty.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 29.4

Match the column 'A' with 'B'

A	B
(i) From the view point of income, poverty is	(a) poverty has political causes, too.
(ii) From human point of view poverty is	(b) is 43.5 percent.
(iii) Percentage of people below poverty line is in our country	(c) in sufficient income to meet both ends meals of a day.
(iv) Adult illiteracy rate in our country	(d) denial of longevity, knowledge and decent standard of living.
(v) Besides social, economic religious, natural and physical causes	(e) is 43.0.

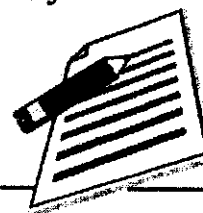


WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Literacy situation in India reveals that 34.62 percent people are still illiterate in our country. 4 crores of children in the age group of 6-14 years have not seen the face of school. In male, literacy rate is 75.85% against 54.16% in females. Kerala is most literate state in our country and Bihar and Rajasthan are most backward from the point of view of literacy.
- Population explosion is on the increase at an alarming rate. It occurs due to rapid fall in death rate without a corresponding fall in birth rate. It gives birth to landlessness, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, malnutrition, under nourishment, ill health and low standard of living.
- Corruption is making wealth and raising position through illegal and immoral acts. It is individual behaviour related to gain in cash and kind. Corruption is prevalent in every part of our country. It exists in social, economic, political, religious, administrative, commercial, and professional fields. Desire to become rich soon, high expectation from job, dowry, costly technical education

possession of commercial goods, political system, etc. are causes behind the prevalence of corruption.

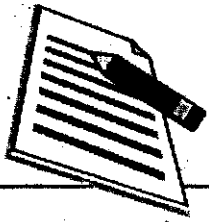
- From the economic point of view, poverty is inability to have such income from which expenditure on both meals of a day is not met. But from the human point of view, poverty is denial of longevity, knowledge and decent standard of living; Poverty has social, economic, political, religious, natural, physical and educational causes.



Notes

GLOSSARY

Birth Rate	–	Number of births per thousand population of a community.
Corruption	–	giving up morality and character for gaining wealth.
Death Rate	–	Number of death per thousand population of a community.
Demographic	–	Related to population.
Transition	–	Change.
Demographic Transition	–	Population change.
Denial	–	Refusal.
Family size	–	Average number of family members in a community.
Human Poverty	–	Denial of longevity, knowledge and decent standard of living.
Illiteracy	–	Inability to read and write.
Illiterates	–	Those who do not know to read and write.
Literacy	–	Ability to red and write.
Literates	–	Those who are able to read and write.
Literacy rate	–	Number of literates per hundred population of a community.
Population	–	Number of persons in a community.
Population Explosion	–	Rapid increase in population.
Poverty	–	Situation of not meeting expenditure on both ends meals due to very low income.



Notes

- | | | |
|---------------|---|--|
| Ramification | — | Spread. |
| Rural poverty | — | Poverty situation prevalent in rural areas due to unequal distribution of land and low wages. |
| Urban poverty | — | Poverty situation prevalent in urban areas due to migration of rural youth for work and wages and unemployment in urban youth. |



TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. What is literacy? Literacy rate of which state is the highest
2. What is meant by population explosion?
3. Name five socio-economic problems related to population explosion.
4. What do you mean by corruption? Name its five types
5. What is poverty? How it is different from human poverty?



ANSWER TO INTENT QUESTIONS

29.1

- | | | |
|--------|--------|---------|
| (i) d | (ii) d | (iii) d |
| (iv) c | (v) b | |

29.2

- | | | |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| (i) True | (ii) False | (iii) True |
| (iv) True | (v) True | |

29.3

- | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| (i) Illegal | (ii) every | (iii) 7 th |
| (iv) is | (v) not free | |

29.4

- (i) a-c, b-d, c-e, d-b, e-a