

ESSAY ON SOCIAL PROBLEMS

MODULE 3

INTRODUCTION

- **Essay # 1. Introduction to Social Problems:**
- India emerged as an independent nation-state on 15th August 1947, after a long struggle against the British colonial yoke. The country is a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic with a parliamentary system of government. Though India has shown tremendous growth in all spheres of national life in the years after independence, yet many problems plague the everyday social life; the problems, many a time, are interrelated.
- Poverty, Population, Pollution, Illiteracy, Corruption, Inequality, Gender discrimination, Terrorism, Communalism, Lack of Infrastructure, Unemployment, Regionalism, Casteism, Alcoholism, Drugs Abuse, Violence against Women are the major ones.
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CONCEPT

- **Essay # 2. Concept of Social Problems:**
- Contemporary Indian society is flecked with numerous issues that are labelled as social problems. Some of them are age-old, and some are of recent origin that have erupted owing to the change in global socio-political order.
- A social problem, in general, is the condition which is not ideal and disrupts the balance of a society. A dictionary of sociology defines social problems as, “any undesirable condition or situation that is judged by an influential number of persons within a community to be intolerable and to require group action toward constructive reform”.
- Another widely used definition specifies that “no condition, no matter how dramatic or shocking to someone else, is a social problem unless and until the values of a considerable number of people define it as a problem”.
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DEFINITIONS

- **Some of the other definitions of social problems given by sociologists are:**
- **1. Horton and Leslie:**
- It is often defined as the condition which many people consider undesirable and wish to correct.
- **2. Lindbergh:**
- It is any deviant behaviour in a disapproved direction of such a degree that it exceeds the tolerance limit of the community.
- **3. L.K. Frank:**
- It is defined as any difficulty of misbehaviour of a fairly large number of persons which we wish to remove or correct.
- **4. Fuller and Mayer:**
- A social problem starts with the awakening of people in a given locality, with the realisation of certain cherished values that are threatened by the conditions which have become acute.
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TYPES

- **Essay # 3. Types of Social Problems:**
- Social problems are of diverse nature.
- **However, these diverse social problems can be broadly grouped under four categories:**
- **1. Economic Factors:**
- These problems arise due to imbalance in economic distribution such as poverty, unemployment, etc.
- **2. Cultural Factors:**
- Problems that arise from established beliefs, values, traditions, laws, and languages of a nation or society fall under this category such as dowry, child marriage, juvenile delinquency, etc.
- **3. Biological Factors:**
- The problems that arise due to natural calamities, infectious diseases, famine, etc.
- **4. Psychological factors:**
- Problems that arise from ill mental and neurological health fall under this category.
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CHARACTERISTICS

- **Essay # 4. Characteristics of Social Problems:**
- Social problems are serious to the extent that they undesirably alter the existing order of the society.
- **On the basis of the aforesaid discussion, we can identify the following characteristics of social problems:**
- 1. All social problems are situations which have injurious consequences for society.
- 2. All social problems are deviations from the “ideal” situation.
- 3. All social problems have some common basis of origin.
- 4. All social problems are social and political in origin.
- 5. All social problems are caused by pathological social conditions.
- 6. All social problems are interconnected.
- 7. All social problems are social in their results—they affect all sections of society.
- 8. The responsibility for social problems is social—they require a collective approach for their solution.
- 9. Social problems occur in all societies.
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CAUSES

- **Essay # 5. Causes of Social Problems:**
- **The causes of social problems may be three-fold but cannot be treated in isolation:**
 - (i) Individual
 - (ii) Cultural
 - (iii) Structural.
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OTHER CAUSES

- Prominent among them are- juvenile delinquency; child abuse; escalating crime waves such as armed robbery; arson; fraud; drug peddling; currency trafficking; bribery and corruption; embezzlement of public funds; student and youth unrest; cultural violence; religious intolerance; boundary disputes; stark dishonesty; election rigging; coups and counter coups; lack of commitment to duty; examination malpractices; filthy and gross indiscipline; result racketeering; disrespect for other species; gross economic inequality; poverty; disease and hunger; widespread illiteracy; lack of gainful employment opportunities; open injustice; ostentatious spending; abuse of authority; hoarding of essential commodities; cheating and exploitation of the masses; discrimination and ethnic jingoism; inordinate ambition; cultism; lack of realisation of human potential; narrow education resulting in ill-informed citizens; civil wars; famine; drought and unchecked desertification; and human trafficking and child labour.

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FACTORS

- **Essay # 6. Factors that Result in Social Problems:**
- **James H. Reinhardt (1952) has recounted three factors in the development of social problems:**
- **(1) Differentiation and Multiplication of Interests and Functions:**
- The principle that the greater the number of parts in a machine or an organism, the greater the probability of maladjustment among the parts holds good for human societies too, where there is increased opportunity for the collision of interests of various individuals, groups, institutions, and systems. Untouchability, communal riots, and political crimes are the social problems which is the result of the clash of interests of different castes and classes.
- **(2) Accelerating Frequency of Social Change or Growth of Civilisation:**
- This has been made possible due to the multiplication of scientific and mechanical innovations. For example, the invention of machines has destroyed many old forms of employment resulting in the migration of millions of people, and has given rise to class conflicts. It is thus the structural and functional maladjustments arising from revolutionary inventions which create many social problems.
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