

Programme: Master in Sociology

SEMESTER- III

Postgraduate Department of Sociology

Patna University, Patna

Compulsory Paper: C.C. 11 (SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN INDIA)

UNIT I: Social Disorganization and Social Problems Concepts and Theories

Elements of a Social Problems:

1. A condition or situation resented as objectionable by a significant number of people.
2. It is considered as undesirable because of its injurious consequences.
3. All social problems want correction through collective action. They warrant change in conditions via some means of social engineering.
4. All aberrant behaviours or deviations from accepted norms are termed as social problems such as crime, juvenile delinquency, prostitution, rape, drug addiction, domestic violence, ethnic or communal tension.
5. Social problems are not static but change with the change in time and space. Changes in law and mores change the concept of social problem.

Recognizing an undesirable condition and defining it as a social problem are two different things. There can be disagreement if

some people believe some condition or situation as undesirable but also think it unavoidable because it is a part of the human condition or the price we pay for 'progress' as we see in the case of environment imbalance caused by cutting of trees for constructing roads, dislodging people for constructing dams and canals, air and noise pollution due to increasing motor vehicles, rising rate of accidental deaths involving automobiles, etc.

The steadily rising rate of accidental deaths involving automobiles is long considered to be unavoidable but after effective criticism by many people, automobile safety became a social problem. In the initial stages of industrialization, development of slums and ghettos was also regarded as unavoidable and not a social problem.

People may not define a condition as a problem because it is desirable and natural, and not a threat to their values.

Casteist/gender discrimination was not a problem for those who believe the castes/sexes to be naturally unequal. They would deny that differential treatment is 'discrimination' (for them, integration is a threat to their values, and thus a social problem).

In reality, it requires a belief in equality in order to define discrimination as a problem. There are people who still do not believe that poverty is a social problem. They regard it as unavoidable fate of the masses. Poor people are to blame for their own condition of poverty. Such people define poverty as the personal failure of those who are poor, not a consequence of the arrangement of social structure.

But such old notions have changed in the modern societies and people started believing that something could be done about such condition and society (government) should take step to do something.