

Problems of Other Deprived Sections

Lesson No.	Title	Activity
31	Problems of other Deprived Sections	Make a database of education, health and employment status of Women and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) based on census data of 2001 and 2011

Summary

The government of India implemented many innovative changes in policies and programmes to improve upon the social and economic status and life style of other deprived sections of our society, viz the OBC (Other Backward Classes), women and children. However, these groups still face acute social and economic problems, exploitation and health issues. Even these groups are unaware of government schemes and programmes and legislations.

Problem of Children

- ✚ The wellbeing of the child is the prime responsibility of family, society and nation. The Constitution of India has laid down certain specific safeguards to ensure their survival, protection and development. However, a large percentage of children are deprived from the basic facilities such as quality education, clothing and healthy nutrition. This has led to problem of child labour; street children and girl children face more acute problems.
- ✚ Given the widespread poverty in our country, a large number of such children come to towns and cities in search of work. They get engaged in boot-polishing, rag-picking, begging, etc. These children also have to face the problem of accommodation. Specially during the night, they use public places like railway stations, bus stands and public parks for their stay. So, they are also known as street children. In families which are below poverty line, many children go to work to earn some extra money to support their family.
- ✚ Child labour is a curse in any human society. Poverty, illiteracy, absence of earning member in family, exploitation and oppression by land owners, inhuman treatment by parents, temptation to earn more money and buy consumer goods, low payment to parents, no regular work to parents, landlessness etc. are main reasons behind the persistence of child labour. The child labourer also faces number of problems such as health issues, sexual abuses and situations of accident and death
- ✚ A girl child has to suffer discriminatory behaviour in our society. Being girl, she is deprived of educational opportunities. Some girls do not go to school and are engaged in household work and some of the poor families are encourage girl child to earn wages as maid servant and child labors. The practices of Child marriage are more prevalent among girls and this results into mother hood at an early age. It created several health problems including early motherhood and material mortality.

Problem of Women

Women constitute nearly half of the total population. In our country, male-female ratio as per 1991 census is 929. It means that sex ratio is not balanced. It is unfortunate that women are denied equality with men and are deprived of their rights and freedom. Women are the custodian of our traditions and culture. In our literature and mythology, it is stated that wherever women are worshipped, the gods and goddesses reside. But in practice, we find that women are subjected to torture and violence. Gender discrimination, domestic violence, dowry, exploitation and neglect in day-to-day life are some of the major problems that women face today.

Gender Discrimination

- Many families have a preference for a male child and disfavoured towards the daughter. Girls in the family are still denied learning opportunities and are not provided required health support. Widows face a number of social and cultural problems. Property rights of Indian women too are unequal and unfair compared to men.

Domestic violence

- Domestic violence takes place in the form of torture, beating, poisoning, burning, drowning and rape. It is not that domestic violence is prevalent only in rural areas, but it is also prevalent in urban areas. In recent years there has been a tremendous increase in domestic violence due to the temptation towards consumer goods.

Dowry

- Dowry refers to the gifts given in cash or kind to the bridegroom and his family by the parents of a girl during her marriage. Dowry is often a demand placed by a man or his family as a pre-condition to the marriage. Modern education has played a significant role in increasing the rate of dowry. Similarly, lack of awareness of laws and improper implementation of laws are also responsible for dowry.

Exploitation

- Women are subjected to exploitation due to socio-cultural practices and poverty. They are exploited in inheritance, possession of property, disposal of property, ornaments and mode of payment. They cannot sell the property of their husband.

Lack of Awareness of Legislation for Women

- Many laws and acts such as Special Marriage Act, 1954, Hindu Marriage Act 1955, Hindu Succession Act 1956, Termination of Pregnancy Act 1971 and Anti Dowry Act 1976 have been passed to improve the condition of Indian women. However, the majority of women in our country do not have knowledge about these Acts. This results in the exploitation of women and further, women are also not able to take benefit out of it.

Problem of Other Backward Classes

- Other Backward Classes (OBCs) comprise the 'non-untouchable', lower and intermediary castes who were traditionally engaged in agriculture, animal husbandry and handicrafts services. The OBCs are above the so-called untouchable groups and below the twice born castes.
- The OBCs do not constitute a homogenous category. There are many divisions within the overall category. The OBCs constitute nearly 51% of the total population of the country. A 27% reservation for OBCs in Central Government job was introduced on the recommendations of the Mandal Commission. Thereafter, OBCs emerged as powerful political force in our country particularly in the states like UP and Bihar.
- No doubt, there are various constitutional provisions made for the safeguards of their interests. OBCs still face numerous problems associated with their interaction with upper-castes, share-cropping, indebtedness, education, health and nutrition which are described in detail as:
 - A. Lack of Interaction:** In villages, OBCs live in separate hamlet. The children of upper castes do not have interaction with the children of O.B.Cs. There is also no interaction between women of higher castes and O.B.Cs. This leads to a conflict between forward castes and backward castes.
 - B. Dependency of Higher Castes:** The economically educationally advanced castes are not dependent on higher castes for their livelihood. But a good number of extremely backward economically and educationally backward castes are fully dependent upon higher castes for their livelihood especially in rural areas. They work as casual labour. They also render services under jajmani system.
 - C. Problem of Share-cropping:** In rural areas, a majority of OBCs are marginal and small farmers and they do not have sufficient land for cultivation. They take land from higher castes for share-cropping.
 - D. Indebtedness:** Majority of the OBCs are poor. Since they are not in a position to meet their various needs such as marriage of daughter, death ritual and community feast from their income, they have to take loan from the land owners, or money lenders.
 - E. Health and Nutrition:** Majority of OBCs live in unhygienic condition. Such unhygienic environment affects their health adversely. As they are not well off economically, they are not able to provide nutrition to their body properly.

Evaluate Yourself

1. Explain different reasons of child labour in your own words.
2. Describe why child labour face numerous health problems?
3. Describe how lack of proper health and nutrition caused problem for Other Backward Classes in India?
4. List out different acts and legislations made for improving the condition of women.