

DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT OF DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

L.No	Title of Lesson	SKILLS	Activity
25	Development and Empowerment of Disadvantaged Groups	Self Awareness, Inter-Personal Skill Problem Solving, Creative Thinking	Understanding Socio-Economic Conditions of Disadvantaged Groups

Meaning

India got freedom from foreign rule in 1947, with this began our new struggle to get rid of poverty, illiteracy hunger and social discrimination. To achieve objective of socio-economic development, the government undertakes various activities. Empowerment of weaker or disadvantaged sections like Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and Women have been integral part of our development strategy.

Meaning of Socio-Economic Development

- **Social Development :** Social development leads to transformation of social institutions, improvement in health and educational facilities building capacity of the society to fulfil aspirations of all sections of the society, checking social discrimination and encouraging progressive attitudes and behaviour of the society.
- **Economic Development :** Increase in Gross Domestic Product, National Income and Per Capita Income is essential for economic development. But the concept of economic development implies much more like ensuring economic wellbeing, equal distribution of benefits of development, particularly, it should reach to the disadvantaged groups of the society.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a broad concept that is defined as, "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" Sustainable Development is environment friendly development. Its primary goal is to achieve reasonable and equitably distributed level of economic and social well-being that can be perpetuated continuously for many generations of mankind.

Socio-economic Development in India

Various policies and programmes have been implemented for the development of the country right from the day it became independent. After adoption of Liberalisation and Globalisation policies in 1991, India became one of the fastest growing economies in the world. It resulted in significant reduction in poverty, although around 27.5 percent Indians still live below the Poverty Line (2000-05 estimates).

Socio-economic Disparities in India

After independence, planned economic development strategy in India aimed at reducing regional disparities by promoting development of all regions. But sharp regional disparities still exist. Also there are some man made differences like differences of the per capita income, lopsided agricultural and industrial growth, expansion of transport and communication, literacy rate etc which are still more dangerous and difficult to meet as challenges.

Causes of Regional Disparities in India

- Historical perspective
- Geographical factors
- Uneven distribution of natural resources
- Distance from national markets and major commercial centres.
- Lack of basic infrastructure
- Poor governance, law and order problems, inability to make optimum utilisation of national resources, lack of vision etc discourage development and give rise to disparities.

Disadvantaged Groups of the Society

In a diverse country like ours, it is a big challenge to ensure equal access to the outcomes of the development. India has been making notable progress but still there are various social groups who are socially and economically disadvantaged and backward. Some such groups are Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward classes (OBCs), Minorities and Women

Empowerment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Population

Social and economic empowerment alongwith social justice is the three pronged strategy of Government of India to uplift Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other disadvantaged groups.

A. Social empowerment

Free and compulsory elementary education, scholarship to pursue school and higher education, free coaching for various competitive exam. and free hostel facility

B. Economic empowerment:

Various income generating programmes have been launched, NSFDC, NSKFDC, NSTCDC, SCDC, TRIFED etc. are some organisations which provide financial support to SCs and STs.

C. Social justice:

Affirmative action in the form of reservation has been initiated. Seats have been reserved for SCs and STs in all the governmental offices and institutions.

Empowerment of Women

Constitution of India prohibits gender discrimination and ensures gender equality and justice. It also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women. But there exists a wide gap between accepted goals and ground reality regarding condition of women in India. Following major steps are being undertaken by the government for the empowerment of women:

A. Economic empowerment

- Training programmes to enable them to participate in various industrial sectors like electronics, IT, food processing etc.
- Support services like child care, creches at work place are being provided.

B. Social empowerment

- Equal access to education, providing special benefits to the girls.
- Fulfilling nutritional needs of the women at all stages of life cycle.
- Legal steps to check violence against women at domestic and social level.

C. Political empowerment

73rd and 74th constitutional amendments (1993) provided 33.3 percent seats for women in rural and urban local bodies. It is a land mark step in the direction of enhancing participation of women in public life.

Major Policies and Programmes on Socio-Economic Development

Education for All

Some special measures adopted are as follows:

- National literacy mission, 1988, aimed at providing functional literacy to adults of age group 15-35
- Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA), 2001 aimed at enrolling all children of age group 6-14 and achieve universal retention by year 2010.
- Nutritional support or mid-day meal scheme.
- 86th Constitutional Amendment Act 2002 made free and compulsory education a fundamental right for all children in age group of 6 to 14 years.
- Parliament passed Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 and it came into effect in year 2010.

Health for All

Health for all by the year 2000 was first enunciated at the WHO/UNICEF meet at Alma Atta in 1978. To achieve this goal, Government of India launched various programmes like National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) and related programmes like Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY), Balika Samridhi Yojana (BSY) etc.

Evaluate Yourself

- Q. What is meant by socio-economic development? What are various causes of disparities in India?
- Q. Why is it necessary to take steps to uplift the weaker/disadvantaged groups?
- Q. Describe the measures taken by the government for the empowerment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.