Prerna 2009

Inspiring Social Change

A magazine by SIESCOMS
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The strength of the institute lies in its experienced faculties from academics, corporate and social sector. The state of the art infrastructure available at SIESCOMS facilitates learning. SIESCOMS believes in being a socially responsible institution that aims to achieve leadership position in management education integrating social, economic and environmental aspects into its values.

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## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient Safety Management</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking Health Makes People Poor- Can Something Be Done?</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpooling - A Solution to Traffic Problems</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woods can still be dark and deep</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of Population Explosion on the Environment</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Marriage: A Social Stigma in the Land of Desert</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems and Issues relating to Single Parenting</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Next</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Women on Food and Health</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nuances of being a Post Graduate Homemaker</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Citizens: Yesterday-Today-Tomorrow</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development: Can do without me, right?</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India’s widening Economic and Social Disparities</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students In Free Enterprise……Catalysts for Change</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders of Tomorrow (Student’s experience with an NGO)</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foreword

We are pleased to bring out the next edition of Prerna magazine; the first was launched last year. The response that we have received in terms of contribution towards articles has been very good. Not only have people who are working in the field contributed articles, there are also others who are not directly/professionally connected with the social sector that have taken efforts to write on social issues that are close to their heart. It is encouraging to know that the magazine has been able to give an outlet to individuals to express their social concerns. This issue calls for an interesting read as there is a mix of articles from various fields – Development in General, Health, Environment, Children and Youth, Women and Senior citizens.

A quick update about the social initiatives at the institute:

Currently the 5th batch of the PGPSEM (Post Graduate Diploma in Social Enterprise Management) is running with 17 students from various backgrounds. Organizations that have representation in this batch include – Indian NGOs, Dr. Reddy’s Foundation, CCDT, Navnirman Samaj Vikas Kendra, Project Crayons and the like. There are also individuals who are not from the sector and belong to business community, RBI, pharmaceutical industry and advertising, keen to learn about social enterprises. We believe some of them would start their own social enterprises.

The NGO internship, a compulsory module for all MBA 1st year students to work with NGOs for two weeks was taken up by the students with a lot of enthusiasm and commitment. This was undertaken during the period Sep 21st to Oct 3rd 2009. The number of NGOs in which our students were placed has increased from 19 last year to 27 this year. Thanks to the efforts of Dr. Durga Surekha and the Sahayog team for undertaking this huge initiative. It was heart warming to hear the students’ experiences during the internship, as they came to terms with the ground realities of another section of the society i.e. the disadvantaged and deprived.

With support from NABARD, the Sahayog committee of the college organized Prerna 2008, the annual exhibition of NGO products and services with a lot of fanfare. 31 organizations participated in the event.

A peace exhibition was organized in the college in association with Soka Gakkai International from Mar17-19 2009 by the Sahayog committee. Another remarkable achievement of this committee was reaching the semi-final round of the Global Social Venture Competition held at ISB, where a group presented a project on health insurance scheme for slum dwellers.
As a business school we believe in standardizing, streamlining and scaling up whatever initiatives we undertake. While our existing social initiatives have got streamlined, we are now exploring new projects / areas that could be taken up to cater to the changing development sector.

We welcome our NGO / CSR partners to come forward with suggestions to explore new avenues to make best out of the student-power within the institute.

I specially want to acknowledge the efforts of Prof. R.S.S Mani in developing the social initiatives of the institute.

We look forward to your feedback, inputs and contributions to our magazine Prerna. Happy reading!

A K Sengupta
Director
SIES College of Management Studies
December, 2009
**Patient Safety Management**  
*Dr. (Prof) Manisha Saxena*

“**Primum Nil Nocere**” or “First do No Harm” is the first responsibility of any Health Care Organization.”

**Introduction**

The hospital is an unsafe environment not only for patients but also for staff. The risk of injury & death is comparable to the risks involved in events like bungee jumping & mountain climbing. Every medical procedure has a risk of complication. We are all aware of published reports of the extent of harm in developed countries. In developing countries like India, the problem is likely to be larger. The problem lies not in the negligent or willful acts but systemic faults, poor communication and widespread process variation.

**Definition of Patient Safety**

Patient safety may be defined in many ways, but the most widely shared element of these different definitions of patient safety is **freedom from adverse events in healthcare setting** (based on Kohn, L.T.2000). An adverse event is any event in a hospital, where a patient is harmed. Examples include any type of medical error, administrative error (operation of wrong patient).

**Patient Safety**

The science of patient safety is a new one, although the science of medicine is age old. In 2000 US National Academies Institute of Medicine undertook a massive effort to accumulate data on medical errors in US healthcare. Based on it they released a report “To err is human: building a safer healthcare system”.

The report highlighted that as many as 44,000 to 98,000 Americans die each year as a result of medical errors in hospitals. The United Kingdom Department of Health, in 2000 report, “An organization with a memory”, estimated that adverse events occur in around 10% of hospital admissions, or about 850,000 adverse events a year.

The Quality in Australian Health Care Study (QAHCS) released in 1995 found an adverse-even rate of 16.6% among hospital patients. Hospitals for Europe’s working party on Quality Care in Hospitals estimated in 2000 that every tenth patient in hospitals in Europe suffers from preventable harm and adverse effects related to care.

The situation in developing countries is much more depressing. The poor state of infrastructure and equipment, unreliable supply and quality of drugs, shortcomings in waste management and infection control, poor performance of personnel because of low motivation...
or insufficient technical skills and severe under financing of essential operating costs of health services make the probability of adverse events higher than in industrialized nations.

World Health Organization figures suggest that developing countries account for around 77% of all reported cases of counterfeit and substandard drugs. This would make these numbers higher than motor vehicle accidents (43,456), breast cancer (42,297), or AIDS (16,516).

21st Century India, at the threshold of globalization is expanding by leaps and bounds. It continues being an enigma of diversity. This is also true of the various health care facilities that it offers. The spectrum of health care delivery ranges from large and medium corporatized private hospitals to small and medium bed number nursing homes to primary health centers in the rural areas. The issue of patient safety and medical errors is one that is universally shared by all.

Medical Error

“Medical error” can be defined as “the failure to complete a planned action as intended or the use of a wrong plan to achieve an aim.”

Medical errors include (but not limited to):
- Diagnostic error
- Equipment error
- Infections: Nosocomial and post-surgical
- Blood transfusion
- Misinterpretation and Miscommunication

Probable reasons of medical errors and poor patient safety in India:

1. **Indian hospitals**—There are islands of excellence in the ocean of mediocrity. Few hospitals follow international norms and standards, whereas large chunk struggle to meet the basic standards of cure and care.

2. **Gap between the demand and supply** of Health care facilities and manpower.

3. **Shortage of doctors and nurses leads to work pressure**—They have to attend large number of patients at a time when compared with their counterparts in other countries, which leads to lethargy, and thereby medical errors.

4. **Poor infrastructure planning** of HealthCare Facilities and poor maintenance

5. **Lack of standard operating procedures** (S.O.Ps and protocols)

6. **Negligence/lack of awareness on the part of the health care professionals**—Eg-nurses and doctors hardly follow protocols like simple hand washing before and after examining/treating a patient in ward/ICU.
7. **Poor awareness among the patients** - Illiteracy/Lack of general education among the general public/patients also contributes to medical error as patients needs to be active participant in the process of care.

8. **Shortage of nursing staff and their poor quality** - As per Indian nursing council there are only around 8 lakh registered nurses in the country. Many of the small hospitals and nursing homes appoint unqualified or under qualified nurses, which can result in unsafe injection practices. In many Indian hospitals, the nursing care activities are provided by “dais” (who are little educated & untrained), which can result in errors.

9. **Errors in medication** are one another major cause of concern for patient safety. Clinical pharmacy is one of the neglected areas in India. Very few hospitals have the practice of counseling the patients regarding the effects and side effect of medicine. Effects, side effects, dosages etc are printed in English rather than in Indian languages. This also contributes to issues, as a larger percentage of Indians cannot understand English.

10. In India almost all medicines are available “Over the counter” (OTC), without prescriptions. This results in indiscriminate use of medicines including antibiotics, which has become wider public health program.

11. **Poor Medical Records maintenance in India**

12. **Lack of standard protocols for patient identification**

**Implementation of a Safety Culture**

All Health Care Organizations prior to the IOM’s report of 1999 engaged in investigation of events that caused harm to patients. Based on “name and fame” culture the emphasis of such investigations was not on prevention, but on punishment.

Any patient safety program should be based on a systems approach to problem solving – focused on prevention, not punishment.

**Patient Safety Goals**

1. Improve the accuracy of patient identification.
2. Improve the effectiveness of communication among care givers.
3. Improve the safety of using medications.
4. Reduce the risk of health care associated infections.
5. Accurately and completely reconcile medications across the continuum of care.
6. Reduce the risk of patient harm resulting from falls.
7. Encourage patients’ active involvement in their own care as patient safety strategy.
8. Identify safety risks inherent in patient population.
9. Improve recognition and response to changes in a patients’ condition.

EDUCATION- REALIZATION OF THE SELF

“Om sahana vavathu, sahanaubhunakthu,
shaviryam, karavavahai
Tejasvi, Navadhithamasttu,
ma, vidvisavahi
Om santi, santi, santi”

- Santi mantra of Kato Upanishad

This mantra is relevant for patient education also. The care provider and the receiver have to come together for learning. Their coming together will bring in synergy. Learning will bring in flow of positive energy to both the provider and receiver. This will bring down the level of hatred between the provider and patient resulting in peace (Santi).
This mantra holds significant relevance in today’s healthcare scenario where there are increased litigations, ransacking of hospitals by public, loss of trust by public.

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Seeking Health Makes People Poor- Can Something Be Done?

Prof. Denny John

Background:

I am writing this after a meeting with few community health staff of an organization. We were discussing about the planning strategies for initiating a community health program in a nearby slum. Among the discussion were aspects of community’s need in terms of healthcare services, their health and socio-economic issues, and other such aspects. During the discussion I asked the manager of the team regarding delivery of community’s outpatient needs during other times in a day or the days on which we were not operational in that area. He mentioned, “I am sure the goodwill created by our community health program would be enough for the community to visit our main hospital.” I mentioned, “Wouldn’t it be better for us to link with local providers to provide care for such times instead of making the community pay and come to our main hospital?” For the understanding of the readers the main hospital is at least 3-5 kms from the slum area and will cost a minimum of Rs 30/- (one-way) for any person from the slum to visit. The team manager was not much convinced with my suggestion.

Health Costs:

This brings us to the central point of the link between health costs and affordability. Normally, we associate costs of healthcare only to the aspect where we receive care i.e. doctor’s fees, medicines, diagnostics etc. The other aspects related to care such as transport costs, loss of wages (sometimes of the accompanying persons of patients) etc, also contribute to the costs of care. In the pretext of providing free healthcare since the last sixty years, various governments have won the hearts of the voters- and thus their votes, but failed to realize the impact of total costs of healthcare on the people. For example, the cost of cataract surgery in Thane city is around Rs. 3000/- but the overall cost to the patient is around Rs 6000/- (this includes cost of OPD, diagnostics, food of patient and relative and transport). So, even with discounted or subsidized care in public hospitals the cost to a poor person for a particular medical or surgical procedure comes to a sizeable amount and impacts his or her economic standing.

What is the impact of such healthcare costs? With only 10% of the population in the country with some form of health insurance coverage, the rest 90% of the population have to rely on out-of-pocket (OOP) expenses to pay for the healthcare costs. The only countries with higher proportions of private payments on health than India are countries that have undergone civil conflict and collapse of the public sector, like Georgia, Cambodia, Myanmar and Afghanistan. The impact of these OOPs can be seen from a recent World Bank study (2001) which estimated that 24% of hospitalized Indians fall below poverty line each year due to hospitalization costs.

Currently, medical inflation (i.e. the rate of increase of healthcare cost) is pegged at 13% annually, whereas the inflation rate is at 6-7%. This is less compared to countries such as the United States, where the medical inflation is 3-4 times the inflation rate. Hospitalized Indians
Inspiring Social Change

spend more than half (58%) of their total annual expenditure on health, thus leaving huge gaps in household spending on essentials such as food, housing and education. NSSO 60th round mentioned that around 6-8% of patients did not seek medical care because of financial reasons. Those who seek most of them had to resort to borrowings or selling of assets to pay for their health costs. This amounts to almost 40 percent of those who were hospitalized in a given year. This has resulted in depletion of their savings and/or assets further pushing many families into poverty. The World Health Report (2004) mentioned that medical care is one of the three main causes of impoverishment in our country.

Currently, available health security mechanisms in terms of social insurance such as ESIS or CGHS, is either income or employer based; and in private insurance, such as Mediclaim, is individual risk-based. In India the bulk of labour force, around 94%; are in informal sector where employer or income-based schemes will not be applicable, due to lack of formal employer-employee relationships and poor proofs of income. In a recent IIMS Study (2007), medical emergency was cited by 25% of informal sector workers for seeking loans. Individual risk-based insurance mechanisms will not be able to provide coverages with disease-prone individuals such as infants, older persons, people with HIV/AIDS etc. As per NCHM (2005), the expenses for clients on ART for HIV/AIDS treatment was Rs 18150/- per person per year, and 40-70% of households financed these expenses through borrowings.

Role of Government:

What is the government’s answer? Understanding that the rising healthcare costs are making a dent in the poverty levels of the country, government has initiated certain health security schemes for below-poverty populations. As part of the Social Security Bill, 2007, the government in October 2007 has announced the implementation of Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana covering BPL populations of unorganized sector. It is a well-known fact that in most states the BPL assessments have been poor, with most of these cards being given to known people of politicians and government, leaving the really poor in the lurch. A recent report has highlighted that 77% of populations which are in above-poverty line or APL category actually belong to BPL category. Thus, with this scheme the answer of health security to the real poor is questionable. On the onset this seems to be a political rhetoric rather than a pro-poor policy.

Solution:

Most people ask me, “Are the poor willing to pay for health services?” I mention to them that, “They are willing to pay for ‘good’ and ‘affordable’ health services”. In an urban city of Mumbai where I am involved in developing and supporting a community health insurance scheme, around 200 members from a slum area have each contributed Rs 200/- per family in 2008. This scheme provides each family a benefit of upto Rs 10000 of hospitalization costs. In February when I went to visit the areas and talk to the enrolled members, most of them mentioned that they indeed felt the benefit of such a scheme. The scheme being monitored through a team ensures that timely and appropriate care is provided to these members. They were all eager to contribute towards the scheme for the next year and were also willing to talk about this to other members as well.
What needs to be done? There is a need for comprehensive health insurance coverage for the entire population and not just for the poor. The strategy “Health for All” needs to be reframed as “Health Coverage for All”. The implementation needs a five-pronged strategy, i.e. having health accounting mechanisms to ensure resource allocations based on disease burden; establishment of extensive primary healthcare with emphasis on health education and health promotion; linkages with healthcare organisations offering care at rational costs and quality; income-based health insurance contributions; and an organisational set-up which will oversee implementation of this entire programme. This “Health Coverage for All” programme will be based on principles of local oversight, accountability, affordability and availability of health services; as a right and not on (monetary) might.

In a recent The Hindu article; Dr K S Jacob, Professor of Psychiatry, CMC Vellore, mentions, ‘there is need for a public health movement that champions the issue of basic rights’. The “Health Coverage for All” programme could be the first step towards this public health movement.

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Carpooling - A Solution to Traffic Problems

Prof. Gayatri Vivek

A typical rush-hour road scene in a metro can be characterized by traffic congestion, slow speeds, long commute times, stressed drivers and single-person occupancy. This in turn leads to wastage of petrol/diesel, excessive air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. This article throws light on traffic related problems in India and suggests car-pooling as one of the solutions.

Background

The increase in vehicular traffic on roads especially cars is highest in the metros in India. For example, traffic in Delhi is increasing at 30,000 new vehicles per month. The fuel efficiency of an average car is 10 km/l. If a car runs 50 kms per day, it consumes 150l/month and will produce 5000 Kg CO2 per year. An average mature tree can consume 4.5 kg of CO2 per year. Thus we need 1200 mature trees for absorbing CO2 emitted by ONE car.

In Bangalore traffic congestion is a cause of concern for the government and the citizens. The motorization index (vehicles per 1000 persons) best describes the high intensity of vehicular growth. Motorisation index of Bangalore increased from 59.74 (1980) to 148.92 (1990) largely due to the easing of registration controls. Early 1990's saw the economic liberalization thus increasing the purchasing powers of the consumers, which initiated the vehicular boom thus increasing the motorisation index to nearly 360 in 2006. Cars motorisation index is growing at 8.93%.

A study related to traffic congestion in Bangalore showed that a person in the city spends Rs 6.09 per Km, travels an average length of 10.57 km with an average speed of 15kmph spending approximately 91.35Rs/Hr while commuting. This can be largely attributed to the extremely high congestion levels and high cost of living in Bangalore. With the launch of cars like Nano, this condition will only get worsened.

As against this, in a workshop on Transport Demand Management, organised by MESN in 2006, it was observed that Mumbai’s car occupancy rate is only 1.8 persons per car, which means the city’s car population of five lakh has over a million empty seats every day. Raising occupancy to 2.5 would dramatically reduce the number of cars on the road, which in turn would lower carbon emissions.

Solution

Government’s solutions to transport problems have always been “supply side” that involved high capital investment solutions. But this increase in supply of infrastructure only draws more traffic onto the system. The relief from congestion is always temporary, and situation reverts to what it was. There may be macro level initiatives that are required to tackle these problems.
Carpooling is one of the solutions to these problems at the micro level, considering the under utilization of cars. Sharing a car or carpooling as it is popularly known is the shared use of a car by the driver and one or more individuals. The concept of car-pooling is catching on in India and it surely can make a difference to the traffic problem in India.

The number of cars on the road will reduce leading to less smoke and noise. It is good for the environment; automobile emissions are among the biggest pollutants today. The fuel consumption will drastically reduce. Fewer vehicles mean less congestion, and reduced stress too! In Indian cities where public transport is not always an option and the commuting distances are huge, carpools can prevent accidents which occur when too many vehicles push around for space on potholed roads. It also helps save money. Surveys show that people save an average of Rs. 1,500 per month by joining carpools.

**Different CARPOOL categories**

1. **CARPOOL with assigned driver**
   This carpool comprises of one driver with more than one passenger. The vehicle is solely owned by the driver and the passenger pays the fare monthly, weekly, or on a daily basis. This fare includes the fuel, maintenance and parking of the vehicle.

2. **Optional CARPOOLing**
   Optional carpooling in simple term means ‘pay when you drive’ and ‘ride free of cost’. In this type of carpooling driving is on a rotation basis, either daily, weekly or monthly. You are charged when you drive or else it is free of cost.

3. **CARPOOL by employer**
   Employers encourage the employees to use the company vehicle for commuting from office to residence. Employees pay the fare for fuel, maintenance and insurance cost. This type of carpooling is mutually beneficial to both the employer and employee.

**Challenges**

The barriers to adopting this method are security concerns, losing autonomy and most often it is finding the right pool partners. In order to solve the problem, then, we need a system that is easy-to-use, dynamically matches drivers and riders, offers incentives to both riders and drivers and dispels fears.

There are number of organizations that have built systems considering the above mentioned barriers. **Koolpool** is a sms based carpool system that has a concept similar to a pre-paid phone subscription: it involves an entry fee and a prepaid account. Registered Koolpool users are divided into ‘givers’ (those who have seats to spare) and ‘seekers’ (those who need a ride). Each member buys points, which are then credited or debited according to whether a ride is given or taken, and can be redeemed for petrol at HPCL petrol pumps — 500 points is worth Rs 400 in petrol. Members find their pool partners online through the website.
Inspiring Social Change

www.mykoolpool.com. They fill in their commute information and a list of members travelling on the same route pops up. On the road, members can send a text message to Koolpool stating their status and route number and they get a return text with a list of other members on the same route. For safety reasons, member’s mobile numbers are never directly used and each SMS is routed through the Koolpool system.


Traffic is worse than it’s ever been, But better than it’ll ever be. It is up to us as responsible citizens to exercise this choice.

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Woods can still be dark and deep

Prof. Gowri Joshi

Introduction:

Are you a Nature Lover? Yes, No, Thinking…? You need to think, as there are 3 levels of Nature Lovers.  
**First** level, you just like being close to nature, to see the flora and fauna.  
**Second** level, when you want to photograph nature for posterity and share the same with your children or grandchildren.  
**Third** level, you wish to do something about nature, to try and save the same from the daily plundering it receives.

All the above levels are integrated; it starts at level one at a certain age, and reaches level three at a certain age. Most of us with good values inculcated through our upbringing can relate with the three levels. You cannot reach level 3 of trying to save nature until you love nature, which is level 1 & 2.

We talk about conservation in schools and colleges; it is perhaps not the best utilization of time. If you take a five year old and tell him the tigers are disappearing from the planet, there isn't much he can do to change the situation.

**Tigers:**

Tigers occupy the pinnacle of the food chain and a healthy tiger population is an indicator of the well being of the whole forest. Throughout evolution, predators have had a regulatory influence on the population sizes of other species; it is thanks to carnivores, such as tigers, that the number of herbivores is kept in check. In turn, the populations can therefore only fluctuate between certain limits because of this "feedback mechanism". With the number of herbivores under control, but not depleted, the forest vegetation is likely to thrive provided humans do not over exploit it. Seeds will be dispersed by new growth will not be prevented by excessive grazing pressure. Healthy vegetation protects the rainwater and safeguards the water table. Many forests are important catchments areas for rivers, upon which many species, including human beings, depend.

Species at the top of the food chain are generally larger and require more space than other animals, particularly if they are territorial. Conserving such species in the wild protects the habitat of many other animals, as well as safeguarding the essential ecological processes such as water and nutrient cycling. Thus the tiger can be considered as the guardian of many other creatures.
Tiger Population in India

India holds over half the world's tiger population. According to the latest tiger census report released on February 12, 2008 by the National Tiger Conservation Authority, the current tiger population stands at 1,411 (i.e. ranging between a minimum of 1,165 to a maximum of 1,657). The results include figures from 16 tiger states and are exclusive of Jharkhand and Sunderbans. The state of West Bengal was covered only partially (i.e. North Bengal) during the census.

The Tiger Census 2008 report has classified the tiger occupied forests in India into 6 landscape complexes; namely (a) Shivalik-Gangetic Plains, (b) Central Indian Landscape Complex (c) Eastern Ghats, (d) Western Ghats, (e) North-Eastern Hills and Bhramaputra Plains, and (f) Sunderbans.

Within the Shivalik-Gangetic plain landscape, it is reported that the tiger occupies 5080 km² of forested habitats with an estimated population size of 297 (259 to 335) in six separate populations. In the Central Indian Landscape, tiger presence is currently reported from 47,122 km² (11.6 % of forests) with an estimated tiger population of 451 (347 to 564) distributed in 17 populations. The Eastern Ghat landscape complex currently has about 15,000 km² of potential tiger habitat. Tigers occupy 7,772 km² of forested habitats with an estimated population size of 53 (49 to 57). Currently tigers occupy 21,435 km² of forests within the Western Ghat Landscape comprising 21% of the forested area. The current potential tiger habitat in the landscape complex is about 51,000 km². The population estimate for this landscape was 366 (297-434) tigers. North-Eastern hills and Bhramaputra plains currently reported tiger occupancy in 4230 km² of forests. Many of the tiger populations, particularly those outside protected reserves, are fragmented, suffer from intense poaching pressure, a dwindling prey base and over-used habitat.

Protection of Tigers

The strategy for tiger conservation in India revolves around the National Tiger Conservation Authority and the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Between the mid 1970's and mid-1980's, many protected areas (66 national parks and 421 wildlife sanctuaries) were set aside, including large tracts of tiger habitat. They were later increased to 96 national parks, 510 wildlife sanctuaries and 3 conservation reserves and 2 community reserves. This resulted in an increase in tiger densities at many locations. Tragically, these conservation successes were short lived. Rampant poaching for the trade in tiger parts - all destined for markets outside India's borders - now threatens the tiger's very existence.

Prevailing conservation efforts are not geared towards, nor have they adequately addressed, the new threats with new protection strategies i.e. better law enforcement, training and support. Excellent new tiger protection measures (such as the recommendations of the ‘Subramanian Committee for the Prevention of Illegal Trade in Wildlife, 1994 and Tiger Task Force, 2005’)) have been proposed but not implemented and little effective action has been taken in the field. Few of the tiger reserves have an established intelligence network and
nearly 80% of our tiger reserves do not have an armed strike force or basic infrastructure and equipment to combat poaching. The forest guards are often out-gunned and out-manned by poachers. In December 1998, three forest staff were murdered in Manas Tiger Reserve and several cases of murder and serious assault on forest guards have been reported since.

The last meeting of the National Board of Wildlife was held on 01 November 2007. Large development projects, such as mining and hydroelectric dams, are also taking their toll on the tiger's habitat. In the past ten years, thousands of square kilometers of forest land have been diverted and destroyed to facilitate such projects. Though mostly outside the protected network, the loss of this vital habitat will have serious repercussions on tiger conservation in India.

Since 1994, WPSI has made a concerted effort to gather accurate information on tiger poaching occurring throughout India. A total of 832 tigers are known to have been killed from 1994 to 2007. WPSIs extensive database of tigers poached has detailed information on poaching figures collected by us. These figures, however, are reported cases and represent only a fraction of the actual poaching activity in India.

Recent undercover investigations by the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) and the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) revealed that the trade in tiger and leopard body parts in China continues to thrive, operating without any hindrance from the Chinese government whilst driving India’s wild tigers closer towards extinction.

Conclusion

Despite all these problems, India still holds the best chance for saving the tiger in the wild. Tigers occur in 17 States within the Republic of India, with 5 States reportedly having populations in excess of 100 tigers. There are still areas with relatively large tiger populations and extensive tracts of protected habitat. Adequate funding and international pressure will help. But probably the most effective way to implement tiger conservation action in India today is to enhance NGO participation. There are a number of dedicated organisations that are effectively involved in hands-on tiger conservation. They keep the issue energized on a national level and tenaciously try to increase political will to secure the tiger's future. The Indian conservation and scientific community is now a proven force. It needs to be strengthened.

Practical solutions, arise from individual actions, we might think what we alone can do. Well, what you can do first is to take individual responsibility, and say to yourself that you can do it. Then, do something about it. All big achievements were made possible with first small beginning. Let us make the beginning today.

References


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Impact of Population Explosion on the Environment
Dr. Saraswati Raju Iyer

Introduction

Human population growth is the number one threat to the world’s environment. Each person requires energy, space and resources to survive, which result in environmental degradation. If the human population were maintained at sustainable levels, it would be possible to balance these environmental losses with renewable resources and regeneration. With increasing population, the earth’s ability to regenerate and sustain is diminishing. Hence, we need to limit our growth voluntarily.

With an annual growth rate of over 1 percent, more than 70 million people are currently being added to the world’s population each year. In the last four decades, the world’s population has doubled from 3 to 6 billion. The high proportion of young people now entering their childbearing years worldwide guarantees that population growth will continue at a rapid pace for some time. The United Nation projects that the population for the year 2050 could range from 7.9 billion to 10.9 billion, depending on the actions we take today.

Population and Environment Linkages

Population growth taxes the earth’s natural systems. Forests and wetlands disappear so that people can grow more food. Water becomes scarce as it is diverted to urban areas and agriculture. Greenhouse gas concentrations increase as more and more people use greater quantities of fossil fuels. As the century begins, natural resources are under increasing pressure, threatening public health and development. Water shortages, soil exhaustion, loss of forests, air and water pollution, and degradation of coastlines afflict many areas. As the world’s population grows, improving living standards without destroying the environment is a global challenge.

Most developed economies currently consume resources much faster than they can regenerate. Most developing countries with rapid population growth face the urgent need to improve living standards. As we humans exploit nature to meet present needs, are we destroying resources needed for the future?

The trend can be reversed. One key measure is to increase educational and economic opportunities for women. Another is to provide universal access to a wide range of voluntary family planning services. These measures were important goals set at the 1994 International conference on population and development in Cairo, a conference where 179 countries reached an agreement on ways to slow global population growth.

Dharavi in Mumbai

Spread over 175 hectares Dharavi in Mumbai is Asia's largest slum. During the day 1 million live on the streets. Many live here and others come for work/business. Residents are from
many parts of India, driven from their villages by drought, poverty, social problems etc. Who are they? There are potters from Saurashtra, Dhobis from Gujarat, Tanners from Tamil Nadu. Push and pull factors have forced them to come to this slum. Migration, urbanization – direct and indirect consequences. There are 5000 small industries. They do business worth Rs.20 billion/year. What do they do? Industries include plastic recycling, garment making, printing, zari making, leather products, snacks production. They also export to other countries.

What is the impact of dense population on the environment like in the case of Dharavi slum? Highest density of population in the city is reflected as open drains, piles of uncleared garbage, filth and pitiful shacks. Water supply and sanitation were once non-existent, and are now poor. People suffer incredible hardships during monsoon with flooded lanes and rivers of sewage. Government’s attempt to develop the slum is not very successful.

Population – Growing Fast

Statistics given below reveals the ten most populous countries as per 2004 status. India is in the second position as far as the population is concerned which clearly indicates its impact on the environment.

Ten Most Populous Countries – 2004 Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Population (in millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>1,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>U.S</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Past and Present - an Indicator for Predicting the Future

It is said that past and the present act as an indicator in predicting the future. Similarly taking a look at the past and present figures of population the following table presents the population estimate for 2050.

Ten Most Populous Countries – 2050 Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Population (in millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>1,628</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inspiring Social Change

Expected List of 10 Large Cities in 2015

An analysis of probable large cities in 2015 is presented below which clearly indicate Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata among the ten large cities in 2015 alerting us to take precautionary measures in protecting the environment in these cities as a proactive measure.

Expected List of 10 Large Cities in 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Population Estimate (in millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Mexico city</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Sao Paulo, Brazil</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Dhaka</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Jakarta, Indonesia</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Lagos, Nigeria</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Kolkata</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Impact of Population Growth on the Society

We are crowding a small area. Not only is the population growing fast, the density of population is also very high in some parts. Land area covers only 30% of the earth’s surface and of that area, 80% is not suitable for human settlement. This includes deserts, the Polar Regions, tropical, rainforests and the like. Further most of the population lives in coastal areas, river basins and cities. Atleast 40% of the world’s population lives within 100 kms of the coast. This figure is likely to double by 2025. Half the World Lives in Cities. In 2008 it was found that 50% of the world’s population lives in cities. Again, most of the large cities are in the developing countries.

Environment Getting Worse
When the population is more we need more food, more land, more water, more houses and so on. Consumption of natural resources is at a faster rate. There is a greater pressure on the ecosystem. In the past decade in every environmental sector, conditions have either failed to improve, or they are worsening:

1. **Public Health:** Unclean water, along with poor sanitation, kills over 12 million people each year, mostly in developing countries. Air pollution kills nearly 3 million more. Heavy metals and other contaminants also cause widespread health problems.

2. **Food Supply:** In 64 of 105 developing countries studied by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the population has been growing faster than food supplies. Population pressures have degraded some 2 billion hectares of arable land – an area the size of Canada and the United States.

3. **Freshwater:** The supply of freshwater is finite, but demand is soaring as population grows and uses per capita rises. By 2025, when world population is projected to be 8 billion, 48 countries containing 3 billion people will face shortages.

4. **Coastlines and Oceans:** Half of all coastal ecosystems are pressured by high population densities and urban development. A tide of pollution is rising in the world’s seas. Ocean fisheries are being overexploited, and fish catches are down.

5. **Forests:** Nearly half of the world’s original forest cover has been lost, and each year another 16 million hectares are cut, bulldozed, or burned. Forest provides over 400 billion US dollars to the world economy annually and is vital to maintaining healthy ecosystems. Yet, current demand for forest products may exceed the limit of sustainable consumption by 25%.

**Consequences of Population Explosion**

People as consumers of natural resources have to satisfy the basic needs. There will be a greater demand for food, housing, water, sanitation, energy, healthcare, education, transport, and entertainment. In order to satisfy the different needs of the people services such as industries, roads, buildings, equipments are needed. All these activities affect many aspects of the environment.

**Offshoot of Population Explosion**

Increasing population results in many problems and issues. More land is used, higher water is consumed, there is higher consumption of fossil fuels and more forest is cut. Population explosion and its impact on the various parameters are presented below:

1. **Soil and Land:** Need for increased food production led to the green revolution in the 20th century. This method uses high – yielding seed varieties, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides. Green revolution dramatically increased grain production in countries like...
India. At the same time, however it has depleted the soils. As a result farmers have to keep increasing the inputs to get the same output.

2. **Population Explosion – Human Settlement:** More and more land is being taken over for human settlement. Expanding cities encroach into the surrounding areas, covering any kind of land including fertile fields into housing colonies. Land is also needed for infrastructure such as roads, highways, industrial, estates, ports, power plants, tourist facilities and educational complexes.

3. **Population Explosion – Water:** There is a growing need of water for irrigation, industries and domestic use. Extraction of groundwater for irrigation and industry is so heavy that water levels are dropping to very low levels. Many rivers dry and many water bodies have been polluted by industries. People in many countries are now buying water for their basic needs.

4. **Population Explosion – Impact on Forests:** Forests are being cut down for making paper, building houses for making furniture. Huge populations of poor people depend on forests for fuel wood. They use some of the wood for cooking but sell most of it in towns. It is increasingly difficult to protect even reserved forests and national parks.

5. **Population Explosion – Fossil Fuels:** As our population and consumption grow, we are using up precious fossil fuels like coal, oil and natural gas. They were formed on earth over millions of years, but we are exhausting them in a very short time. Industries and transportation are the main users of oil. The huge populations of China and India want more and more vehicles.

6. **Population Affects the Environment:** As the increasing population rapidly consumes the natural resources, society and the environment are affected. Cities in particular face severe problems.

7. **Cities and Civic Services:** Poor people from rural areas migrate in large numbers to the cities looking for employment. About a third of them end up in slums. As the city and its slum grow, its environmental problems increase.

8. **Growth of Cities:** As the city and its slum grow, its environmental problems increase water scarcity intensifies. More and more waste piles up. Air quality drops. Public transport gets overloaded. Traffic jams increase.

**Problems Faced by the Government**

Governments and municipalities are finding it increasingly difficult to provide and maintain adequate water supply, sanitation, sewage systems, housing roads, transportation, power supply and other infrastructure for citizens. Things get much worse when disasters like monsoon floods and epidemics strike the city.
Conclusion

Population explosion has a tremendous impact on the environment. Population growth has an impact on eco-system, human settlements, land distribution, stress on common social facilities & civic services and increase in consumption. Land value goes up and the common man is affected. Cost of living goes up due to population explosion. Impact is more on the marginalized groups. Deforestation resulting in no rains lead to water problem. Purchase of water, power becomes a burden. As part of corporate social responsibility industries are to be encouraged to grow trees. Skyscrapers in metropolitan cities affect the eco system because there is no ventilation, air and water. Water problem leads to fights and quarrels between states. Construction of industries, Information Technology parks, affect the middle income and low income groups. Building dams or expansion of roads again affect poor people. They are often displaced. All those concerned about human population have a vital role to play in the scenario of population explosion which has a direct impact on the environment.

References

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Child Marriage: A Social Stigma in the Land of Desert

*Prof. Shalini Gulecha*

India is an abode of rich and varied culture. Each day is a day of fasting devoted to some or the other god/goddesses. Every festival is celebrated with lot of fervor and zeal. From the beautiful seven sisters to the desert, from the scenic Himalayas to the land of temples people with different beliefs and customs and with the great sense of UNITY in DIVERSITY have made this country an example for others in the world. In spite of all this there are many social problems like dowry system, female foeticide, child marriage etc. that are of great concern as they have become a social stigma.

**Where does child marriage occur?**

[Map showing percentage of marriage per country]

Source: UNICEF, 2005

Rajasthan is a historically and culturally rich state of India, a place of palaces, hot sand and monuments. However, it is also the host of various social issues of concern. “Child Marriage” is one such issue that is highly prevalent in almost all parts of the state – rural, semi urban and to some extent in the urban areas also. This is despite the numerous endeavors taken up by the Government bodies and the various NGOs in the state.

Child/Early marriage refers to any marriage of a child younger than 18 years old, in accordance to Article 1 of the Convention on the Right of the Child. As far as child marriage is concerned there are two different aspects to it. The first social phenomenon is that of marrying a young child (generally defined as below the age of fifteen) to an adult man.
The second aspect to it is when the parents of two children from different families arrange a future marriage (a form of arranged marriage) and they fix such a marriage even before the birth of the child. The dialogue that happens between them is like if a girl is born in one family and in the other a boy they will be married together and vice versa. The custom of child marriage with the 'bride' and 'groom' still in their cradles is a culmination of this tendency. In this practice, the individuals who become betrothed often do not meet one another until the wedding ceremony. They both meet when they are considered to be of a marriageable age (this age is at or after the onset of puberty).

While child marriage affects both sexes, girls are disproportionately affected as they are the majority of the victims. Their overall development is compromised, leaving them socially isolated with little education, skills and opportunities for employment and self-realization. This leaves child brides more vulnerable to poverty, a consequence and a cause of child marriage.

Child marriage is now widely recognized as a violation of children's rights, a direct form of discrimination against the girl child who as a result of the practice is often deprived of her basic rights to health, education, development and equality. Tradition, religion and poverty continue to fuel the practice of child marriage, despite its strong association with adverse reproductive health outcomes and the lack of education of girls.

**Reasons for child marriage**

1. **Illiteracy** - There is still a large population in the state which is illiterate. As a result of which they are not able to understand the ill effects of the child marriage. They have no rational thoughts and they believe it to be a mandatory custom of the society.

2. **Poverty** - Poverty is a critical and the most common factor which is responsible for the parents encouraging child marriage. As discussed earlier, the first aspect of child marriage is where a young girl (who is considered to be a big economic burden) is married to an adult man. The main reason is to provide benefit to the child and her family both financially and socially.

3. **Large Population** - As the size of the family is large because of the ignorance of the family planning measures, it becomes difficult for the head (who is generally the sole bread earner) of the family to bring up all the children properly. In such cases also child marriage becomes a means of shedding some burden wherein the number of dependents would decrease.

4. **Economic transactions** - In Rajasthan, marriages are a grand affair where lot of money and other gifts are exchanged. The girl child is considered to be a means of such economic transactions. A girl's marriage also takes place as a perceived means of creating stability. In uncertain times, poor harvest conditions or drought, a family believes it to be necessary to ensure the economical 'safety' of their daughter and family, through marriage.
5. **Custom of Society** - As Rajasthan is culturally rich with varied customs and traditions; this social evil is also considered to be a part of their customs. Not following which is considered to be against the norms of society.

6. **Family ties** - In most of the cases especially royal families, child marriage are used as a tool for maintaining their relationships with one another. They decide the bride and groom at their tender age because they believe that once they grow up they might develop their personal choices and preferences. This concept is being put in the minds of the betrothed right from their childhood and violation of which is next to impossible.

7. **Adjustment** - There is another notion that girls at a young age, will quickly adapt to the in-laws’ environment. Thereby people propagate and practice this system of child marriage for the so called betterment of their daughters.

Consequences of this social evil

1. **Biological/Physical** - At an age when child is neither physically nor sexually mature it will have hazardous impact on its health and reproductive capabilities when forced for child marriage. Young mothers face higher risks during pregnancies including various complications which contribute to higher mortality rates of both mother and child. Girls aged 10-14 are five times and girls aged 15-19 are twice as likely to die more than women aged 20-24.

According to the census data 15 lakh girls under 15 are married out of which 20% of these close to 3,00,000 girls under the age of 15 are not only married but have already borne children at least once. Of these, a little over 1.7 lakh have borne two kids, and another 1.25 lakh have had one child. While many of these girls—just under 1.5 lakh—are from rural areas, as many as 74,082 are from urban areas, with 43,151 two-child urban mothers below the age of 15.

2. **Developmental consequences** - Child marriage acts as a great hurdle in the educational and intellectual development of the child. The low levels of education, poor health and hygiene knowledge; lack of self decision making power etc all makes it detrimental to the growth of the girl child who is a “home manager”. The cyclical nature of early marriage results in a low level of education and life skills, increased vulnerability to abuse and poor health, and therefore acute poverty.

3. **Social consequences** - Low levels of education and lack of self decisions making power results in vulnerability to abuses etc. of the girl child. Child brides also face the risk of being widowed by their husbands who are often considerably older. Early marriage has also been linked to wife abandonment and increased levels of divorce or separation. In many cases, this further leads to loss of her status or ostracizes by society and denied property rights.

4. **Psychological consequences** - Women who marry early are more likely to suffer abuse and violence; with inevitable psychological as well as physical consequences. Violent behavior can be in the form of physical harm, psychological attacks,
threatening behavior which shatters the personality of the women. Abuse can be from 
the husband himself as well as from his family. As a result of which a member of the 
family gradually becomes nothing less than a domestic slave who only lives to fulfill 
the wishes of rest of the family.

**Modus Operandi**

1. **Education**

Education is a tool to end this social problem. Education brings along with it a basket of 
benefits like decision making power, raising a voice/approaching proper authorities for the 
atrocities on women etc. This would give a respectable status for a female not only at home 
but even in the society. Management educators along with the young managers (i.e. students) 
can think of adopting a particular locality in a village/city whereby education can be imparted 
to those people. This can be a part of the course curriculum of the students wherein credits can be given to 
ensure sincerity. In due course, we are making our students socially sensitive and at the same 
time it becomes a CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) initiative of any management 
institute.

2. **Incentives by government**

The Government can provide free education especially to the girl candidates who are deprived 
of it as parents can’t afford her studies. Else there are cases, where a son would be given 
preference to be educated rather than a daughter. The notion for this is why to waste money on 
a daughter who is ultimately going to be in some body else’s house; rather accumulate that 
money for her dowry.

3. **Role of the local body**

In villages the panchayat people act as KOL’s (Key Opinion Leaders) who can every now and 
then reiterate the bad effects of “child marriage” and reinforce importance of education. There 
can be a healthy competition between villages/towns/localities wherein certain prize can be 
decided and can be given to the one in which no/least child marriages happened.

4. **NGOs**

NGOs –the non governmental organizations are actively involved in eradicating such social 
problems. They are effective to a great extent as there is more focus, more commitment, less 
red tapism etc. but one thing they lack - funds to conduct various activities. If organizations’ 
like UNICEF can provide assistance, such collaborations can work wonders.
5. Society

It is we who make the society and any custom that is detrimental to our existence is not a custom in true sense. We should make a society where a “symbiotic relationship” exist and not a “prey and predator” kind of a relationship.

6. Celebrity endorsements

Child star of the popular soap opera “BALLIKA VADHU” which is aired on COLORS channel Avika Gaur went to Jodhpur (Rajasthan) to campaign against “child marriage” where she was heard quoting “I am too young to talk about it, but I know that this is a bad thing. It is shown on my show that an eight year old is married. She has to be away from her parents, leave her studies, which are very important. She leaves her friends and was given responsibilities, which she was unable to understand. She just had to sit with her head covered. This is a bad thing.” she said. She campaigned against child marriage and made people take a pledge to neither be involved in child marriage nor let child marriages happen.

7. Self realization

Last but not the least, each individual not only the girl child but even the male members should understand the ill effects of this social evil and should take a stand against it. If the man refuses to marry a girl child or the so called care taker of society opposes such a marriage, definitely there can be a revolution in the society.
And this “World can become a better place to live in “

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Problems and Issues relating to Single Parenting

Prof. Jharna Lulla

Introduction

A parent, be it a father or a mother plays a very important role in the life of a child. Both are required for a normal growth of a child. The roles they adopt are very different and unique. A father can’t take the place of a mother and vice versa. So far as the institution of family is concerned, our society is predominantly oriented towards two-parent families. For upbringing and fostering children, the presence of both the parents is considered to be essential and fundamental. Any other scenario deviating from this norm is believed to be inherently faulty and damaging. To some extent, it is true also. Till now, human families have been built on the rock of two-parent orientation. This belief has certainly influenced the micro-intricacies involved in the process of growing up and becoming an adult. However, by stressing this norm beyond a limit, we tend to ignore the necessity and inevitability of social evolution and individual independence. For relevant reasons, people may resort to alternate trends which may not be popular or have a mass support, but are acceptable and sometimes unavoidable. Single parenting is one such trend.

Today as families become smaller and smaller, single parent households are no longer as unusual as they once were. Single parenting is not a new phenomenon in India. But there are many children who live with a single parent. A single parent is a parent who cares for one or more children without the assistance or support of another parent at home. Parenting is undoubtedly a major responsibility, more so when the mantle falls on a single parent. A single parent has to bear with added responsibilities, tensions and pressures. Single parenthood may occur for a variety of reasons. Either due to separation, divorce or death of a spouse, a single parent is left alone to deal with multiple tasks. The trend has shown a tremendous increase in urban India.

Family Life Today

Traditionally, the nuclear family was ideal and universal according to functionalists, but in today’s society there is no doubt that this is changing. With an increased divorce rate, 1 in 3 marriages now ending in divorce, there is the creation of single parent families and reconstituted families. Over the past 20 years single-parent families have become even more common than the so-called "nuclear family" consisting of a mother, father and children. Today we see all sorts of single parent families: headed by mothers, headed by fathers, headed by a grandparent raising their grandchildren.
Life in a single parent household - though common - can be quite stressful for the adult and the children. Members may unrealistically expect that the family can function like a two-parent family, and may feel that something is wrong when it cannot. The single parent may feel overwhelmed by the responsibility of juggling caring for the children, maintaining a job and keeping up with the bills and household chores. And typically, the family's finances and resources are drastically reduced following the parents' breakup. Single parent families deal with many other pressures and potential problem areas that the nuclear family does not have to face. Some of these are:

- Visitation and custody problems;
- The effects of continuing conflict between the parents;
- Less opportunity for parents and children to spend time together;
- Effects of the breakup on children's school performance and peer relations;
- Disruptions of extended family relationships;
- Problems caused by the parents' dating and entering new relationships.

**Various Reasons for Single Parenting**

In the last decade, the divorce rates have really gone up and also the rate of single people adopting kids. There has emerged a new socio-cultural revolution where attitudes have changed and a new social paradigm has been created. All this has resulted in single parenthood scenario. People in this generation have begun to express their individuality and newfound sense of independence. This is especially evident in the metros and other major cities in the country. Earlier the society did not readily approve of people adopting single parenthood. Though single parenthood has existed before, society seems to be programmed to intervene and either get the person remarried or to remain single and childless. Today people are opting for single parenthood. It has become a matter of individual choice.

**Reasons for single parenthood:**

1. **Death of a Spouse:** This is one of the common reasons why a parent is forced take the responsibility of being a single parent. The impact of death in the life of a child is devastating. Death is often just the first of many changes that will turn the child's life upside down. When a child loses a loved one, he/she feels like a part of them is gone. Death of a spouse not only has emotional but also financial impact which makes life even more difficult to live.
2. **Divorce or Separation:** When someone is confronted with legal separation from the person to whom they’ve committed their adult life, it may seem as though their whole life is disintegrating right before their eyes, especially if they’re not the one choosing the separation. The future stops existing, and only an empty present looms ahead. For some, the feelings evoked by a divorce and the issues that surround it pass relatively quickly; for others, the anguish and consequences last for years.

Like those who have just been widowed, newly divorced people may be grief-stricken, and emotionally anxious about how they’ll live from now on. They will perhaps be angry, guilty, depressed, or all three. They will almost certainly feel apprehensive about having to handle many of the daily tasks of living with which they may have little or no experience, or may have taken for granted.

Another ramification of unwanted divorce, which is often overlooked, is the effect of parental separation upon children. Long-term studies indicate that for children, divorce produces emotional trauma that often endures for life. Further intensifying the impact of divorce in our culture is the fact that more than one million children each year experience the breakup of their families. Unwanted divorce means the disintegration of a child’s fundamental security base his family which can be terribly traumatic.

These children often experience a sense of profound rejection, abandonment, fear, and anger. Many even feel guilty, somehow holding themselves responsible for their parent’s divorce. Children from disrupted households are more likely to be involved in crime, given that criminal behavior is more strongly tied to disrupted family structure than even income level. Other studies also indicate a relationship between divorce and teen suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, and poor school performance.

3. **Birth outside Marriage:** For most of the twentieth century, the percentage of births outside marriage has begun to increase gradually. Marriage and re-marriage are increasingly being preceded or replaced by cohabiting unions. The proportion of single women in cohabiting relationships doubled, which has led to an increase in birth outside marriage.

4. **Adoption:**

Adoption is the legal act of permanently placing a child with a parent (or parents) other than the birth parents. Adoption begins with the severing of the parental responsibilities and rights of the biological parents and the placing of those responsibilities and rights onto the adoptive parents. After the finalization of an
adoption, there is generally no legal difference between biological and adopted children in most jurisdictions.

In India too a lot of single parents are adopting children. Every unique situation of parenting has its own traits and so does regular or natural parenting and adoptive parenting. Some of the typical questions and challenges that adoptive parents have to face are are locating or finding more about birth parents, siblings and other relatives of the child and find the medical, psychiatric or school/learning history of the children to help them deal with specific problems. When you adopt older children, parents may have to protect their privacy. While there are no right answers to many adoptive parenting issues just like normal parenting issues, being supportive and free and open communication with everyone such as relatives, friends and children might help you to solve many of the doubts in others’ minds.

**How Children of Single Families are affected?**

The Family structure has changed significantly in the last fifty years. With higher percentages of marriage ending in divorce, and higher rates of childbearing out of wedlock, single parent families are increasing rapidly. “Seventy percent of all the children will spend all or part of their lives in a single-parent household.” (Dowd) Studies have shown that the children of these families are affected dramatically, both negatively and positively.

Women head the majority of single-parent families and as a result, children experience many social problems from growing up without a father. Some of these problems include lack of financial support, and various emotional problems by not having a father around, which may contribute to problems later in life. At the same time, children of single-parent homes become more independent because they learn to take care of themselves, rather than rely on others to do things for them.

Let’s see the various problems faced by the children of single families:

**Are more likely to live in poverty and deprivation?**

- Children living in single parent households are twice as likely to be in the bottom 40% of household income distribution compared with children living in two-parent households (75% versus 40%).
- Even after controlling for low incomes, children growing up with never-married single mothers are especially disadvantaged according to standard scales of deprivation.
• After controlling for other demographic factors, children in single-parent households are still 2.8 times as likely to forego family outings.

**Are more likely to have emotional or mental problems?**

• After controlling for other demographic factors, children in single-parent households are 2.5 times as likely to be sometimes or often unhappy. They are 3.3 times as likely to score poorly on measures of self-esteem.
• Among children aged five to fifteen years, those from single-parent families were twice as likely to have a mental health problem as those from intact two-parent families (16% versus 8%).
• A major longitudinal study of 1,400 American families found that 20%–25% of children of divorce showed lasting signs of depression, impulsivity (risk-taking), irresponsibility, or antisocial behaviour compared with 10% of children in intact two-parent families.

**Have more trouble in school?**

• Children from single-parent families are more likely to score poorly on tests of reading, mathematics, and thinking skills.
• After controlling for other demographic factors, children from single-parent households were 3.3 times more likely to report problems with their academic work, and
• 50% more likely to report difficulties with teachers.

**Tend to have more trouble getting along with others?**

• After controlling for other demographic factors, children from single-parent households are three times as likely to report problems with friendships.
• Children from single-parent households are more likely to have behaviour problems or engage in antisocial behaviour.
• Boys from single-parent households are more likely to show hostility to adults and other children, and be destructive of belongings.

**Have higher risk of health problems?**

• It has been estimated that parental divorce increases children’s risk of developing health problems by 50%.
• In England and Wales during 2000, the sudden infant death rate for babies jointly registered by unmarried parents living at different addresses was over three times greater than for babies born to a married mother and father (0.66 per 1,000 live
births as compared with 0.18). Where the birth was registered in the sole name of the mother, the rate of sudden infant death was seven times greater than for those born within marriage (1.27 per 1,000 live births as compared with 0.18).

- After controlling for other demographic factors, children living in lone-parent households were 1.8 times as likely to have psychosomatic health symptoms and illness such as pains, headaches, stomach aches, and feeling sick.

Are more likely to run away from home?

Children from lone-parent families are twice as likely to run away from home as those from two-birth-parent families.

It is ideal for a child to be living with both parents for many reasons that will affect the child’s emotional development. Even if the parent living away from the child visits often, it does not make up for times where the child might have needed the parent. Lack of parental involvement can harm the child in many ways. With less parental influence in single parent homes the children might experience difficulty in school. With a grasp of a healthy marriage of their parents, children might have problems later in life with holding a job and having strong healthy relationships themselves. Some studies have shown from disrupted families have problems achieving intimacy. A social scientist named Nicholas Zill notes that:

“While coming from a disrupted family significantly increases a young adult’s risk of experiencing social, emotional or academic difficulties, it does not foreordain such difficulties. The majority of young people from disrupted families have successfully completed high school, do not currently display high levels of emotional distress or problems behavior, and enjoy reasonable relationships with their mothers.”

Even though the ideal family is a dual family, children living in a single-parent home might face problems financially and economically which doesn’t mean they can’t fare off as well rounded adults later in life.

How are single Mothers affected?

Being a single mother is probably the most difficult aspect of life. Whether a woman is a single mom by choice or because of getting divorced or by God's will, it is very hard to play the role of both the parents. A child always wants love and attention from both parents. Being a single mom means that responsibilities of both the parents fall on her only. To fulfill these
responsibilities, single mothers must make themselves strong and learn to face the harsh realities of life with poise.

The single mothers are affected in many ways; some of their problems are discussed below:

**Are poorer?**

- Single mothers are twice as likely as two-parent families to live in poverty at any one time (69% of lone mothers are in the bottom 40% of household income versus 34% of couples with children).
- They have twice as much risk of experiencing persistent low income (spending three out of four years in the bottom 30% of household income) as couples with children – 50% versus 22%.
- They are more than twice as likely as couples with children to have no savings (68% versus 28%).
- They are eight times as likely to live in a workless household as couples with children (45% versus 5.4%).
- They are over twelve times as likely to be receiving income support as couples with dependent children (51% versus 4%). They are 2.5 times as likely to be receiving working families tax credit (24% versus 9%).

**Are more likely to suffer from stress, depression, and other emotional and psychological problems?**

- At the age of 33, divorced and never-married mothers were 2.5 times more likely than married mothers to experience high levels of psychological distress. Even after accounting for financial hardship, prior psychological distress, and other demographic factors, single mothers were still 1.4 times more likely to have psychological distress.
- Single mothers are seven times as likely to report problems with their ‘nerves’, even after controlling for other demographic factors.

**Have more health problems?**

- Single mothers still have significantly poorer health than partnered mothers for four out of five health variables.
- Divorced women have death rates which are 21% higher on average than those of married women. Death rates for divorced women aged 25 and older range from 35%-58% higher than those of married women of the same age.
May have more problems interacting with their children?

- Young people in single-parent families were 30% more likely than those in two-parent families to report that their parents rarely or never knew where they were.
- After controlling for other factors, single parents were 2.25 times more likely to report their child’s behaviour was upsetting to them.
- 30% more likely to report significant arguments with their children.
- 60% more likely to expect too much or have too high expectations of their child.

Effects of Single- Parenthood on the Society and Social Get up

Disruptions in family life certainly have had an impact upon the men, women and children directly involved. However, it is increasingly the case that changes in patterns of family structure also have an effect on the larger society. It is difficult to disentangle which are causes and which are effects, but it is possible to explore some of the social changes associated with changes in family life that have occurred over recent decades.

Increased crime and violence

Over the past several decades, rates of crime have increased at the same time as rates of divorce, non marital childbearing, and single parenthood have increased. The relationship between crime and family environment is complicated, especially when the role of poverty is also considered. To say that one has caused the others would be too simplistic. However, many scholars and policy makers who study crime have identified family breakdown as one among a cluster of disadvantages which are associated with criminal activity and with chronic re offending.

An American study found that juvenile offending was affected not just by whether a particular child’s parents were married, but also by the prevalent family structures in his neighbourhood. It has been suggested that this might be the case because two-parent families are better able to monitor anti-social behaviour which often leads to more serious crime.

A review of 17 developed nations indicated that nations with higher rates of births outside marriage, teenage parenthood, and divorce also had higher rates of child homicide. Many prisoners lack strong family ties, which makes rehabilitation and re-integration into the community more difficult. For example, prisoners have twice the proportion of divorce as the general population (9% versus 4%). And,
although only 9% of all women in the general population are lone mothers more than twice that proportion of women prisoners were lone mothers when they were imprisoned.

**Decreased community ties**

Recent research has identified community involvement as a good measure of social capital, a term which encompasses the many resources available to people through their social networks. Analysis of General Household Survey data shows that two-parent families are more likely to be involved with their local communities than single-parent families. Even after controlling for education, socio-economic group and employment status, two-parent families are 25% more likely to be neighborly, and 50% more likely to have people willing to help them if they are ill, need a lift or need to borrow money compared with lone-parent families. This relative lack of reciprocal care in single-parent households occurs despite the finding that they actually are likely to have more friends and relatives living close by compared to two-parent families.

**A growing divorce culture**

There is disagreement as to whether liberalization of divorce laws caused increased rates of divorce, or whether legal reform was a response to increased demand for divorce. The truth probably is some combination of these hypotheses. However, the fact that divorce has been firmly established as an option for married couples can actually have an impact on people’s behaviour.

Studies have indicated that married couples who adopt favourable attitudes toward divorce end up experiencing reductions in the quality of their marriage (which can then lead to divorce). This means that, more often, the acceptance of divorce as an option precedes erosion of marital quality, rather than following it as a response. The increase in rates of cohabitation, both for first-time partnerships and for re-partnerships, has been linked in part to a desire to avoid divorce by having a ‘trial’ marriage or by avoiding legal ties altogether.

**Add to the problem of unemployment**

Men from disrupted family backgrounds were twice as likely to be unemployed and 1.6 times as likely to have experienced more than one bout of unemployment since leaving school.
Again, the reasons for the differences in these risk levels are complicated. Some of the difference seems to be due to poverty and behaviour problems that existed before the divorce and persisted or deepened afterward. However, even after controlling for these factors, men whose parents divorced were still 1.4 times as likely to be unemployed and 1.3 times as likely to have experienced more than one bout of unemployment during adulthood.

**Cycle of fatherlessness**

There have been many historical periods in which children lived part or all of their lives without their fathers. These fathers were absent due to work or military obligations or died before their children reached adulthood.

A more recent trend involves more fathers deserting or being pushed out of their families, or their influence being reduced due to non-residence. In some families, this pattern has reproduced itself over several generations and has become the norm. Often, these families also live in areas of economic deprivation, high crime rates and low expectations. Within this environment, it has become easier and more acceptable to avoid integrating fathers into family life. These families have been described by some as ‘the underclass’ and by others as the ‘socially excluded’

**Conclusion**

The weight of evidence indicates that the traditional family based upon a married father and mother is still the best environment for raising children, and it forms the soundest basis for the wider society.

For many mothers, fathers and children, the ‘fatherless family’ has meant poverty, emotional heartache, ill health, lost opportunities, and a lack of stability. The social fabric – once considered flexible enough to incorporate all types of lifestyles – has been stretched and strained. Although a good society should tolerate people’s right to live as they wish, it must also hold adults responsible for the consequences of their actions. To do this, society must not shrink from evaluating the results of these actions. As J.S. Mill argued, a good society must share the lessons learnt from its experience and hold up ideals to which all can aspire.
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Generation Next

Prof. Sujatha Desikan and Prof. Swati Kulkarni

We often come across people saying that there has been a drastic change in the attitude of our youngsters especially more in the upcoming generations. Is our perception about the younger lot really true? There have been instances where the youth have proved worthy of themselves but the bitter truth remains that the majority of them have proved otherwise in their attitudes, behaviour, cultural commitments and social living. Let us analyse the reasons that have attributed to the mindset of the younger generation.

How was it a few decades back?

The earlier generation was very much different from the present one. Our fathers and mothers had a totally different upbringing in comparison to us. They were educated, yet valued our rich cultural values, had reasonable income but were contended and simple, were ambitious but not unrealistic, had fewer inheritances but were never hesitant to share among each other and above all knew the art of maintaining healthy relationships, however distant it maybe.

They were taught to respect elders and the focus remained on strengthening the bond among people. The moral values and ethics were the order of the day. We can still witness the elder generation being a role model for the self confidence and the mental strength and patience always exhibited by them in overcoming any trying situation. Where has this attitude towards life diluted? What factors have contributed to the deterioration in our thought process?

The present day youth

Often we meet young people living in a highly imaginary world with unrealistic goals and a general tendency of hastiness. Patience once considered a virtue finds no place in the current scenario. The advice of elders is no longer seen as words of wisdom. It is rather perceived as thrusting of their ideas. What has once been described as generation gap has now taken the form of disparity in the outlook of the younger generation.

There are two extremes which we witness in the present youth: the ones who consider themselves as superior and most knowledgeable when compared to others and the other category suffering from inferiority complex. Balance of mind has become a rarely seen quality in them. We quite frequently hear news about youngsters behaving in weird ways like losing temper resulting in an outbreak of emotional violence.

Increase in the number of suicidal cases for various reasons like failing in exams, break in relationships, losing a job indicates the emotional imbalances in our children. It clearly reflects on the lack of confidence and courage to face life in them attributed to several factors, the basic reason being the absence of congenial family atmosphere and improper upbringing by the parents.
Let us look at some of the major problems faced by the youths of today and what factors have contributed to such a situation.

**Troubled Teens**

**Drug abuse**

One of the most common problems we encounter with young adults is the problem of drug addiction. Adolescents who use drugs and alcohol often take risks that endanger their health and the health of others. Neglect on the part of parents has been a major cause for this situation. Studies have shown that kids who enjoy more time with their parents on a normal basis are less likely to become involved with drugs. Newer concepts like single parenting, nuclear families, and both parents working has contributed more to this social problem. The sharp rise of drug abuse in the state can be gauged from the fact that 4,464 cases were recorded under 1Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act in 2005 as compared to 1,741 cases in 1999. Drugs have no rightful place anywhere in society; more so in academic environments where teens are living in their most formative years. Still we find these places more prone to such activities.

**Cyber crimes**

There is no doubt about the fact that we have reached great heights in the technological world but not without serious repercussions. With youngsters becoming Internet savvy in the rapidly emerging world of computer technology, cyber crimes and misuse of Internet have also taken an upward curve. Quite often we read in newspapers about these crimes and more so involving younger minds. There has also been a tremendous increase in browsing of porn sites. Youngsters are more interested to know about such sites. Another glaring fact which cannot be ignored is the increase in websites like orkut etc which has provided the base for cyber crimes.

There are always news related to hacking, child pornography, breach of confidentiality and privacy etc. This has also resulted in a greater number of cases on sexual abuses. It is saddening to find that the youth who are supposed to work for the cause against cyber crimes are the ones initiating these crimes.

Cybercrimes produces a dangerous generation of corrupt people who would continue to abuse the entire society. What have we really done to put an end to this? Where have the moral and ethical values gone? Who has to be held responsible for the perversion in ideas? Has the ambition in achieving one’s goal within a short span of time resulted in this situation?

**Phony crimes**

There have been days when having a telephone at home was rare. Today, we see youngsters carrying mobile phones to schools and colleges, result being gross misuse of the facility. Technological up gradation has helped us positively but has also paved way for shortcuts and deceptive practices. There have been more instances of mobile phones being misused. Most
of the cases are pertained to threatening women, forwarding obscene pictures and messages as well as clicking photos of women without their permission.

This has raised the question in the mind of many whether use of mobiles is really required by school goers and college goers. It has become more of a hazard in the hands of these people. There have been more number of such crimes so much so that the Government has been forced to intervene in such matters and put a ban on use of mobile by school goers. But the problem does not end there. It has equally become the responsibility of the parents to monitor the activities of the young ones in order to ensure that such crimes don’t happen.

**Factors that have contributed to this state of affairs**

In fact, our children are given the best part of life right from education to every activity they are involved in. But the question still remains unanswered. Are we moulding our children in the right way? Are we not party to the adamant mentality that is set in our children? Have the complexities in our own life led to this situation where we are unable to control the attitude difference in the younger mind? Is this the result of nuclear family concepts where relationships have very less value?

The term independence has been grossly misunderstood both by the parents as well as the younger ones. Independence without responsibility does not make any sense. Pampering the children with pocket monies, filling them with valuables rather than values, encouraging them to make decisions on their own has been more disastrous rather than giving healthier results. Our children get carried away by the lifestyles adopted by their friends.

2Pubs, bars, discotheques - some of the societal elements not acceptable to majority of the Indian families are the regular hangouts for almost every teenager and college goers. They are more exposed to the fashion trends, thanks to our media updates and fast food joints facilitate their meeting points. Is it the result of the society being too lenient on them?

Adolescents’ problem of maladjustment has been the result of the family’s social and educational background, and their incapacity to comprehend the constructive aspects of modernism. It has brought about wide conflict of values, and has created frustration among youth as well as the elders. Parents neither have the time to inculcate the values nor have the patience to counsel their children bringing about a major disparity in outlook between generations.

One more factor that has played a major role in this scenario is the fact that women have more portfolios to manage than what was happening earlier. In order for a child to be both physically and emotionally healthy, it is our primary responsibility to provide a safe and positive environment which is absent in many of the cases; the reason being the lack of sharing of responsibility equally between the parents. Both the husband and wife have to work in harmony to balance work and personal life.
Yet another factor which we cannot ignore is the impact of media. It has been a very powerful tool. If implemented in the right way, it can be a source of information. The media has provided complete exposure of the problems related to sex, violence, drugs resulting in imitating such things in one’s real life. The children of today hardly mix with other children of their age and prefer to remain glued to the Internet and television sets. The element of creative thinking has become very minimal. Even the culture of reading good books and literature is hardly seen among children.

**Conclusion**

As we march towards a world characterised by uncertainties in the social, economic and political front reinforced with rapid progress in globalisation, information technology and also in the field of communication technology, it becomes imperative on the part of the youth, the family members and the society as a whole to provide adequate resources, knowledge to use these resources in a healthy way and imbibe ethical values from childhood.

The widening gap between the youth and the elders and members of the family has to be consciously bridged so as to create a close bonding and friendship that is very much missing in families today. This can prove to be a preserving as well as a transforming factor for several questions like why some youth take to drugs, why some youth engage in violence and why today’s youths always search for more affection and satisfaction than their counterparts in the past. It has to be a joint effort by the individual members of a family with the society as a whole to develop a healthier nation.

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Role of Women on Food and Health

Dr. Chitra Ramanan

In the 21st century, when women compete with men in almost all areas, it is very important not to neglect women’s core responsibility of food and health. Women are the heart of development.

Women have two roles to play, around the home and outside the home. The role women play as a mother in all societies form the nucleus and back bone of the family. Women in the developing countries have few choices in life outside marriage and children. They tend to have larger families which are anticipated of them. In appreciation of her role in the survival of the species, nature had made female, the biologically stronger sex. In the society with equal opportunities, female should enjoy a higher survival rate but is being ill treated to a position of subordination from birth, girls are over worked, undereducated and made to prove their worth by bearing many children from an early age. Women in developing countries suffer from malnutrition, parasitism and chronic ill health due to lack of personal attention and adequate health care, especially during pregnancy and child birth. Women’s special needs have often been ignored by health planners.

Nutrition plays an important role in human’s health and more so in a woman’s life. Nutrition education is important for women because they shoulder such a heavy task starting from the pre-natal period which continues during the breast feeding of the infant, the significant early childhood years and passes on until the young person leaves the family or home. So it is important for the women to select the most nutritious food and know how to prepare it, so that it retains the nutrients and is harmless and healthy to eat. It is high time we took serious note of health disorders in women arising due to age old dietary habits, coupled with changing life styles and static mindsets.

It is important to prepare a proper health/nutrition profile for women by (i) identifying the problems related to non communicable diseases like diabetes, hypertension, obesity and high cholesterol, (ii) developing region specific and cost effective strategies for primary prevention and management of these diseases. Urban women more than rural women suffer from obesity and over weight. Stress and overburden are the main causes of diabetes and hypertension in women of the 21st century. Prevalence of anaemia was also found to be very high in women. Of course, there were a lot of regional variations/imbalances, with the women folk of Ballabhgarh (a rural site in Haryana) being overall healthier than others and the respondents from the urban site of Kochi coming at the bottom of the ladder. Chance of cardiovascular risk factor is very high in women.

Major contributory factor for the poor health scenario could be the sedentary life style of 48% of the urban and 44% of the rural womenfolk, coupled with a faulty and imbalanced diet. Another important point brought out by the study was that rural women consume more tobacco than urban women and this was also one of the main causes of various diseases and ill health.
It is very clear that there is a heavy burden of Multi Risk Factors of metabolic syndrome which leads to non communicable disorders amongst the middle aged and elderly women in the urban as well as rural areas. The high prevalence of obesity, hypertension, diabetes and high cholesterol levels in these women calls for sincere and cost effective interventions. Till now, very little attention has been paid by the health agencies on prevention of these diseases in this segment of the Indian population. As it is, a woman’s health has always been of little consequence in our society. She is traditionally supposed to be the last to have a meal in the family and the first to neglect her health in the zeal to keep others fit and fine. This gender disparity is more pronounced in women who are above 35 years of age. They are taken more for granted by the family (their reproductive functions being almost over by then) and also by themselves (as health and well being of their children is of greater priority to them). Along with this are the various physiological changes which they undergo during this period of life. So it becomes utmost important that women be specifically targeted with health education and be encouraged to practice healthy dietary and life style habits.

According to health specialists, intake of Trans fatty acids generated from hydrogenated fat, should be avoided completely. Mustard oil, taken along with safflower/sunflower/soybean oil is the safest amongst all other available cooking medium. Dr Anoop Misra, of Fortis Hospital, cautioned that one should not consume more than half kilogram of oil in a month.

Food industry must label the contents of the nutrients in their packaged products, especially that for Trans Fatty Acids. Dr Vinita Sharma, Advisor to DST, Delhi strongly advocated the revival of ‘Indira Aahar Yojana’, which was initiated by late Dr. Sukhatme, in Pune (World Health Day 2009).

It entailed the marketing of simple and healthy lunch packs and snacks for the benefit of consumers. Today fast food has become increasingly popular and available and there is a need to counter the fast food with availability of healthy food products. In fact, DST is trying to initiate the marketing of tasty and wholesome food products in attractive packaging to woo the overburdened working women of today, whose health problems are compounded by irregular and/or long working hours. In fact, it will be a very good idea for some housewives to start a business venture by supplying ‘wholesome tiffins’ to working women at their work place. This will be a twin advantage to the women. For the housewives, it will be a source of income and for the working women, it will provide the much needed relief and also healthy food. Employers should also provide balanced meals in the office canteens at affordable prices as part of employee welfare scheme.

All the women should resolve that they will take good care of their bodies (and souls) and not depend on the men folk and carry forward the movement initiated by DST for meaningful prevention of non communicable disorders, by timely nutrition related interventions, which are based on region specific food items, targeted at both, balanced nutrition and improving the status of health of women of all strata of society and of all ages.

It is not only important to improve health delivery but many other aspects of living that would benefit the larger community such as absence of safe water and sanitation which has a direct impact on poor pregnant women. Even if they survive the pregnancy and childbirth, they risk infection and even death because of the conditions in which they live and deliver. It is very
important to create a supportive environment for the pregnant women, the mother and the new born.

This will however require challenging the social, economic and cultural barriers that propagate gender inequality and discrimination. Several key actions will have to be taken. Foremost among them is educating women and girls by providing free education up to matriculation level, protecting them from abuse, exploitation, discrimination and violence, empowering them and soliciting their participation and involvement in household decision-making. Also adequate employment opportunities must be created for women to take up employment. Greater involvement of men in maternal and newborn health care and in addressing gender discrimination and inequalities is also critical to establishing a supportive environment.

In the present scenario, another important factor affecting women’s health is the sexually transmitted diseases, especially the viral epidemics, AIDS. This disease could just erase whatever progress had been made in women’s health over the past decade. It is estimated from the latest WHO figures that by the end of 2010, AIDS kill 2.3 million to 4 million women of reproductive age in central and East Africa, producing a number of million orphans. Education, economic and self independence can only save the women from sexual exploitation as well as sexually transmitted diseases like AIDS.

It is very important that sustainable and not one time action must be taken to improve women’s health and success cannot be achieved without full involvement of women concerned. For the past decade, international NGO’s and associations have advocated successfully on women’s health issues to bring about governmental action. These organisations have vowed to promote health education activities among women in the rural areas. Health awareness is now being accompanied by environmental attentiveness, a factor which women are going ahead to be acquainted with.

**Conclusion:** Women of today must take care of themselves and also their families by taking proper diet and nutrition. Women must involve themselves in decision making at home as well as at the work place. Government and various organisations must create the right environment and provide opportunities for women to flourish by providing free education and initiating various welfare schemes. Capable women are much sought after for community development projects. These are positive signs that women’s critical contribution has been and is being recognised and valued. Investing in women will not put an end to poverty, remedy the gross inequalities between people and countries, slow the rate of population growth and rescue the environment or guarantee peace. But it will definitely make a critical contribution towards all those ends. It will have an immediate impact on women and will help to create the basis for future generations to make better use of both resources and opportunities.

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The nuances of being a Post Graduate Homemaker

Prof. Susen Varghese

“True generosity must benefit both parties. No woman can control her destiny if she doesn't give to herself as much as she gives of herself”.

Suze Orman - Woman - Generous - Philanthropy

This dilemma of being ‘today’s woman’ or rather ‘super woman’ plagues every post graduate housewife today. Year after year, thousands of women are thrown into the society all dressed in their post graduate attires to attend to the call of the corporate world. The early 2000 saw many women across the state of India surging towards higher education in various capacities of a business school education and many other post graduate professional courses. Eight years down the line on July 24, 2008, The Times of India reported “Across the US, women in their prime earning years, struggling with an unfriendly economy are retreating from the workforce, either permanently or for long stretches. The bureau of Labor statistics reports that, “for the first time since the women’s movement came to life, an economic recovery has come and gone and the percentage of women at work has fallen not risen”.

On October 15, 2007, Hillary Clinton, candidate for US Presidential Election 2008 said, “Women voters could shatter America’s highest glass ceiling and make her its first female president”. But the Democratic Party’s presidential candidate and ultimately the winner was Barack Obama, an Afro American male. Clinton’s supporters claim that Senator Hillary Clinton here failed because she could not shatter the proverbial glass ceiling. As quoted in the Tribune dated May 19, 2002, only 3% of the senior positions within the Indian private sector companies are filled by women.

No doubt, women are on the move as never before in history, thanks to the process we loosely call “globalization” especially in the developing countries which are trying to confront the forces of tradition through the tools unleashed by the process of social change. This trend, topped by the legal favors granted to the female species only thrusts this issue further.

The human rights of women in India include the right to privacy, right to economic empowerment, right against sexual harassment and right to abortion etc. Therefore, these human rights of women have been recognized globally and also by the National Constitution and Organic Laws. The different reasons substantiating this change also credits itself to the growing desire to live better, consequent liberalization of traditional social norms, development of means of communication, increased awareness of rights due to spread of education, earning status of urban females etc. All though numerous efforts have been taken and will be taken to improve the status of women, the constitutional dream of gender equality is still ages away from becoming a reality.

Now, the million dollar question is after all this where are these post graduate female population? Taking into account their net worth in the market, it has been proved that a major 44% professional labor which can bestow a fairly good contribution to the GDP of a developing economy is wasted, is lying completely dormant and passive.
The Managers, the Doctors, the Chartered Accountants, the Engineers, the Architects, the Fashion Designers, The Dietitians, The Programmers, The Lecturers these professionals?..Have they vanished into thin air?. The obvious answer is no. We can find them struggling to find out the true essence of being ‘a woman’ in this life.

Where on one side they are saddled with the privileges of a developing and changing society, on the other side lethargic and patriarchal mindsets chain them to a hollow rust ridden custom of carrying ahead ‘the cross of being woman’.

Let us delve into the rewards of being a post graduate home maker. She is the one who is well informed about the strategies to run the most complex organization, her home. She is the best manager to the employees of this organization like the newspaper vendor, the milkman, the house maid, the courier guy, the plumber, the driver, the mechanic, the drycleaner, the electrician, the watchman, the nanny and all those associated to make the home run smoothly. She is also the finest in her culinary skills ensuring that all the requisites of a hygienic habitat is met with prudence and at the same time ensuring a lavish throw of the best cuisines in town when needed for your corporate friends. She is immaculate in all the meetings with the School Principal and up to date on the requisites of a teacher’s needs regarding her ward in the school. She is a well informed mother where her children need her expert advice on their academics or future career. She is the undisputed friend, guide, consultant and counselor to her teenage children regarding taking decisions on their personal as well as professional lives. This woman also surpasses the man in settling with tact, patience and diplomacy all the errands which constitute her moving out of the comforts of her home, then whether its being in the queue for submitting the electricity bills or it means registering and sorting out personal grievances in a typical government setup. She is always well dressed in the latest trends of fashion clothing and an ‘English speaking modern wife’ to the urban top level executive, not to mention the extensive efforts she takes to sport her looks in line with the current trends then whether it means her hair, skin, complexion, figure, accessories etc. Finally, after all this, she is the woman in her man’s life juggling her roles of a girlfriend, fiancé, wife, sister, mother and most of all a ‘soundboard’ for all the members in the family.

Being an educated and postgraduate homemaker has its flipside too. Increased education resulting in increased awareness of rights, financial dependence on the spouse’s income and spending wishes, clubbed with the feeling of equality has given rise to an intense feeling of independence and high levels of self esteem in these women. Hence, the men who are psychologically bound by custom norms of being ‘the sole decision maker’ in every matter related to the family, since time abound, find it complex to adjust to this need of the women to be treated as a executive homemaker. The conventional minded but the ‘modern career man’ of today, is blissfully contended with the fact that he is working 24/7 to make both ends meet. He believes if not anything else he is the ‘Supreme Financial Head’ of the family. And, this complex drives him to the unquestionable and arrogant ‘attitude’ of planning and deciding all crucial matters related to the family by him ONLY, though this may be intentional or unintentional. In this process, goes unnoticed a figure in the home who is vying for the attention, care, concern, emotional security and importance she deserves being the ‘passive head’ in the family. She has all the comforts of life but she is emotionally thirsty. She is rich
and intelligent but she yearns for small and little notes and words of appreciation. She has abundance in relations in form of friends and relatives but she is lonely. She is the best listener in the house but craves for a good and understanding listener. Her heart pains when she sees the pain of her family but it aches her to realize that she is all alone during her visits to the doctor. She spends her entire lifetime behind sorting and taking care of her dear ones lives but she longs for someone who can give her that much needed aspirin when she experienced that severe headache.

Instances of divorce and severe mental trauma are gone up in the past few years. Counselors and doctors across are combating with psychosomatic and psychological cases of women suffering from depression, frustration, insomnia, bulimia, obsessive compulsive disorders, lack of self worth, aggression, unexplained anxiety, dementia, mood swings, etc. These ailments also further deteriorate into blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, thyroid, obesity etc.

W.J Goode (1963) in his monumental World Revolution and Family Patterns, described the growth of egalitarian beliefs about proper relations in the family between older and younger people and between women and men. He described many changes that included increasing freedom to choose a mate, rising age at marriage, and more egalitarian relations between husbands and wives. His review covered major cultures in the world: the West, Arabic Islam, sub-Saharan Africa, India, China, and Japan. The economic explanation for a trend to egalitarian beliefs is that mutual respect and trust is necessary for the smooth functioning of any highly complex society. The ideal of equality serves as an integrative force to unite people with diverse interests as they pursue technological advancement and economic growth. The historical account focuses on worldwide modernization of markets, kinship, and political systems and documents the growth of egalitarian ideas over time.

A full time or a part time employment could be the fastest solution to this problem. But, if under varied complex circumstances in the family and against all the support and understanding derived from the family, this is not possible, then, this trepidation can be taken care to a reasonably good extent by following some of the following modes and practices.

- **Encourage**: Encouraging her to undertake any entrepreneurial venture which gives vent to her creativity and subdued cravings. Financial independence will go a long way to pep up her battered ego.
- **Persuade**: Persuade her to chase her hobbies wherein she finds an outlet to exhibit her prized collections and creations, in the open market.
- **Include**: Include her equally in all the minor as well as major family decisions especially pertaining the spouse and the children.
- **Consult**: Prominently make her a crucial part of all financial decisions affecting every member in the family especially the external ones which men usually preside over single handedly, considering it their birth right privilege and luxury.
- **Share**: This goes to all the members of the family. Put in conscious efforts to keep her posted on all the little details of the happenings of their lives outside the home in its ‘true undiluted’ form. Then, be it the school, college or office. Discussing friends, college and office parties, office work, colleagues and board meetings keep them charged up and boost their self esteem.
• **Ensure**: Ensure she has a strong, vibrating, lively and mature set of friends with whom she can always connect, ventilate and enjoy those special times with them. Make sure she finds the time to pamper her own self and fulfill her personal wishes and fantasies, all on her own, without making her conscious of the spouse’s time and money spent.

• **Genuine appreciation**: Last, but not the least, comes genuine appreciation. Praise, admire, commend, honor, applaud, acclaim her selfless efforts and her indisputably priceless role in the family. She may not, necessarily be expecting any valuable gifts or monetary appreciation. The two important words ‘Thank You’ coming from the bottom of one’s heart can make mountains move. A small worthy note of ‘thanks’, a real heartfelt smile of gratitude, a tender hug, and loads of repeated assurances (on all the important occasions and in the routine of one’s daily life), of the importance of her place, in the family, will keep her ticking for a lifetime.

Statistics, surveys, medical professionals and the deteriorating family system in India has proved that, this rampant and rapidly growing concern of professional homemakers need to be urgently addressed. In spite of the endeavor of the HR departments of organizations, across the globe to make ‘Work Life Balance’ work out, for their personnel, ‘*Employee Engagement*’ is passé today. ‘*Homemaker Engagement*’ seems to be finally dawning.

“I suppose I could have stayed home and baked cookies and had teas, but what I decided to do was to fulfill my profession which I entered before my husband was in public life”.

*Hillary Rodham Clinton - Life - Politicians - Woman*

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Senior Citizens: Yesterday-Today-Tomorrow

Prof. Sharu S. Rangnekar

Origin of Concept of Senior Citizens

In any society the young people always have advantage of physical strength. “Balabhogya Vasundhara” (the world is ruled by power) is the rule in the uncivilised world. The idea of giving a special regard to the older people was the sign of a civilized society. The senior citizens provided the “organizational memory” which was very important when the ideas had to be memorized and transferred orally – in the absence of written records. Before the human being became civilized, man used to get up in the morning and start running to get some food or not to be food of some other creature. At that time, human being was a loner and would not desire to be tagged on with anybody not physically fit.

In the era where written expression was not available, the information about the technology was passed on from generation to generation orally. This gave a great importance to older people who were the links in passing technology from one generation to the next. So the world came to respect the senior citizen for their “organizational memory” to take technology forward.

In fact, the vocation of most people depends on acquiring and using some technology. The source of acquiring this technology was the older generation and so everybody regarded older generation as source of their vocational knowledge requirement.

Tsunami Change

20\textsuperscript{th} century has been a tsunami century where the situation changed drastically. New technologies came in rapidly and learning these technologies was made accessible to almost anybody and everybody. Before the 20\textsuperscript{th} century the vaidya’s son became vaidya, carpenter’s son became carpenter; dacoit’s son became dacoit – acquiring the necessary technology from the father. But 20\textsuperscript{th} century the doctor’s son became carpenter, carpenter’s son became goldsmith, goldsmith’s son became doctor. This tsunami change made the old generation increasingly redundant. The printed word (and now the computer) has made storing of knowledge very much easier as knowledge does not have to pass by word of mouth.

In the beginning of 20\textsuperscript{th} century the old generation was still important as the majority of people followed traditional vocations based on technology passed from one generation to another. By the middle of 20\textsuperscript{th} century the majority of people were into technologies which were not either known to their parents or were not learned from the parents. Now the only exceptions are two technologies dominated by the women: Cooking and bringing up children-but in these areas also non-traditional persons are making their mark.
By the advent of 21\textsuperscript{st} century we are in a situation where technology is not a monopoly of any cast, community, sex, state or religion but has become widely available. Adam Smith, who wrote the famous book “Wealth of Nations” described the monopolistic acquiring of technology. He said Switzerland has the technology of clocks and watches which will take other countries 8 generations – i.e. 200 years to acquire to compete. However, the watch and clock industry in Switzerland has virtually collapsed in the middle of 20\textsuperscript{th} century – it was taken over by Japan within 10 years. Now Switzerland is making jewelry in the form of watches and clocks.

**Senior Citizens Today**

Senior Citizens are a very confused lot in the present generation, mainly because of a feeling of redundancy. At one time we could not think of the civilized society without the old people taking the leadership. It was said: “na sa sabha yatra na santi vrudha”. (It is not a meeting where elderly people are not present). It was considered the “age of aged”. Increasingly the center of gravity for industrial entrepreneurship and development is shifting towards the younger generation. In fact for all new technologies the youth is a source.

Those who are unable to adjust to this change are destined to live a very frustrated life. They feel that the whole world is unfair to them. After all they have done to their children; they are not guaranteed support at their old age. Recently in India law has been passed to make children compulsorily take care of their old parents. This is obviously a stupid law for “taking care” is mainly a matter of emotional sustenance and not just providing physical requirements. Emotional relationships cannot be enforced by law.

**Senior Citizens Tomorrow**

Given this situation, the Senior Citizens must evolve an alternate system which is practical. It will essentially involve a “second career”.

The talented senior citizens can consider the life they have led so far as the first phase and plan on starting on the second phase. This is the “Dwija” concept which has been applied by the Brahmins and women. In the good old days the Brahmins were the people chosen for acquiring education. A Brahmin boy was brought up like anybody else with a lot of pampering in the family up to the age of 8. Then he had his thread ceremony and was sent to the Guru’s place for the next 12 years. He returned at the age of 20, got married and proceeded with his career. The person who came back from the Guru’s place at age of 20 was a different person from the boy who went to the Guru’s place at age of 8; so this was considered the second birth.

Similar system is used in the USA when children at the age of 18 enter the colleges and break away from the family.

A wider group is the group of women who after marriage leave the parental house for in-laws place which ultimately becomes their house. All these changes are difficult changes but they
take place at an age when people are optimistic about the future. Such people can take this step of second career and lead a meaningful life different from an earlier career. However, many senior citizens are physically, mentally and economically not prepared to take this step. They often make up the second alternative which is called “spiritual”. They consider they have so far spent life in a materialistic world as a first phase of their life, and hope to get spiritual solace in second career.

The Indian culture is replete with advice about spirituality. In practice, this seems to be a very slippery route as very few people seem to have achieved the spiritual goal.

In the alternate career, one may plan to get a different type of happiness from the usual happiness through money, status and power (as in the first career). If the person is able to get a feeling of fulfillment in the second career (probably through autonomy-creativity-integrity) then that can be a feasible alternative. Finding such career is a matter of experimentation and that is the need for dealing with the future for senior citizens.

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Development: Can do without me, right?
Inspiring Social Change

Prof. Pranoti Chirmuley

Background:

Over the past couple of weeks any and every medium of public expression, be it the visual media, advertisements on television or radio and the print media are all talking about the Lok Sabha elections. And I am really wondering as a simple citizen of this country as to whether such stylized and untiring propaganda can really change public opinion, opinion that you and me have about this country, the state political machinery, its way of handling policy level issues, its dedication to providing for basic amenities of food, education, health care and shelter, it still remains unanswered…does this bother you too? One clear thought that might occur to your mind is that as an individual, whether a student, a budding professional or a teacher or mentor; why should at all this discussion be taken up here and why should all such things bother us at all? Every individual has a right to question all that is unbelievable, wrong and confusing. However what is equally important is what we make out of that information that is provided, do we dump it in one corner of our minds or do we really stop and ponder over it a bit.

As a budding scholar in the field of social sciences I was trying to get a hold over this idea that my peers were moving abroad to pursue further studies and I did not. Many in my department, in my school (at the university), my teachers and also friends advised me that I should do the same and not waste time in India. ‘Waste time in India?’ I was wondering what kind of a statement that was. It may not spell out in words but it was a straight statement, a judgement on the educational, socio-economic and infrastructural state of India. Honestly speaking do you ever ask yourself that question as to really if India as a country has been so incompetent to provide for any of your needs? I don’t think so. Once one of my students asked me that ‘for how long India is still going to be referred to as a developing nation. It a valid question and all I could think was, posing another question and that is: we want this country to be in the ranks of the developed world; but we as its citizens how much do we contribute to its nation building, what do we do for it at all? We want certain rights and privileges, be at school, college or at work, but do not wish to take to notice that we have certain obligations too…towards this nation that gave us the privilege to be educated and competent enough to stand still in a rat-race. However there are some important concerns for all us irrespective of what we are, we intend to become in life or what we want to pursue, and that is to contribute to something to this country’s workings.

What is Development?

If the concern is all about development and the state of this country in the global scenario, let me start with posing a common yet often confusing question about: what essentially development means to every individual? For some it is about better infrastructure, or about just better amenities like electricity and better roads, or it is about cheap yet highly equipped transport facilities. However one fails to come to terms with the fact that often there is no one particular definition of what development really should entail. And this is the crux of the
debate that because there are differing viewpoints there are differing, contrary and at times opposing outcomes that are generated. What do I mean, right? Well there are just three simple things I am trying to bring onto the forefront, and they are: firstly if we should realize this rather problematic relation between the urban and rural, the developed and the developing worlds, the city vis-à-vis the town. The relation is problematic only because one excels, develops and advances at the cost of the impoverishment of the other. As individuals too, we get opportunities over someone else who was deserving or at times the common debate about reservation that everyone gets a feel of in their life, about the unworthy getting a job, a seat at the cost of the deserving. Often this relationship is considered as parasitic where the advantageous group bears the fruits of the nourishment, the opportunities with the other totally being ruined and left undeveloped or undernourished. Take the examples I gave, city and town and the developed and developing worlds. Cities like Mumbai for instance, continue to get the share of investments, revenue, the infrastructure: power/electricity being a major resource. However the peripheral areas are still in dark, with several hours of load-shedding. Ask anyone who stays in the suburbs of Mumbai or the in district of Thane. Have you ever asked why should they face power-cut anything between 2-16 hours of power cut? If we are living there, surely this thought occurred to us, but we chose not to do anything about it? why, only because we feel what can I, a lay, sole person do to bring about any change? This same debate is applicable to the developed and developing nations, isn’t it. For all those in the professional sector a similar but often invisible analogy is the whole crisis after the melt down or the recession. Half a million people in India have lost their job, and here too you see a similar crisis. Has the developed nation fallen apart like all those developing? Perhaps not. Every adolescent or youth is now worried about what next? if no job in hand?

Secondly, the attitude of us in the new generation is either we are destined for this or a small group, or a minority cannot raise its voice and bring about change. Everyone watched Rang de basanti, and hailed it as a movie for the youth, a movie that expressed the guts that this generation has. Do we really do so? perhaps not, we continue to procrastinate, to not take a stand and then blame the government for lack of efforts. I read an article in the Indian Express¹ where the ex President of India, APJ Abdul Kalam strongly believes that youth are the makers of tomorrow. He said, I quote: ‘I can get the youth to dream. They have fewer biases.’ The hope that the new generation brings at times is lost when there is no action, or response. And this is closely associated with the third point I wanted to raise is that every person can bring that change. I once told a friend of mine about why I could not wait until the polling of my university elections, but I will always remember what she said: ‘okay you cannot wait? I cannot convince you enough, you think one vote not put in can have no harm….but we could loose the elections because of one vote right, and with that one vote some one else will be in power for a year, and anything can happen, ruin or change! the choice is yours…!’ Yes, I agree with her. We continue to believe that development can occur without me doing anything about it. But ask yourself this question again and also ask what do we give back in return for the amenities the country provided to us.

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¹ Indian Express, 2009
Conclusion:

This article intends to ask a few questions and create that critical reasoning capacity in all of us. No one wants to listen to gyaan at this age, because we believe we are mature, sane, independent and capable to make decisions. But then as the new generation, the Gen X, we should use our right to vote, to vote for our own benefit and then also keep in mind that we have an obligation to provide for the country, in terms of human resource, intellect and ideas. We cannot continue to harp on the fact that change does not occur, India is backward so on and so forth, we should pay back for what we got, even if less, there are many others who are struggling to survive. Development can occur only if each individual contributes meaningfully, who does not harm either by not investing, or not paying our taxes on which survives the countries future.

Reference:
Sunday Indian Express, 22 March 2009, Idea Exchange with APJ Abdul Kalam

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Introduction

India is characterized as an emerging economic super power due to its huge demographic dividend, the high quality engineering and management talent, the powerful Indian culture and the emerging NRIs. In contrast, there is another profile of India which is rather gloomy. This is the country with the largest number of the poor, illiterates and unemployed in the world. Indians constitute about 17 per cent of world population. But we account for about 35 per cent of the poor and 40 per cent of the illiterates in the world. Our infant mortality is still about 60 per 1000 live births, which is one of the highest in the world. More than 50 per cent of Indian women and children are anaemic due to acute nutritional deficiency

India suffers from acute economic and social disparities. Addressing four dimensions of such disparities, viz. regional, rural-urban, social, and gender therefore becomes very important. There is empirical evidence to indicate that during the last two decades all these disparities have been increasing.

As a result of economic reforms, the southern and western States experienced accelerated economic and social development as compared to northern and eastern States. This has led to widening gap in income, poverty and other indicators of development between the two regions. Rural-urban divide also widened in the wake of reforms. While large and medium cities experience unprecedented economic prosperity, the rural areas experience economic stagnation. As a result, there is widespread agrarian distress which results in farmers’ suicide and rural unrest.

Socially backward sections, especially scheduled castes and tribes (SCs and STs) have gained little from the new prosperity which rewards disproportionately those with assets, skills and higher education. STs have often been victims of development as a result of displacement.

India also experiences a high incidence of morbidity and mortality on account of various waterborne diseases, tuberculosis, diabetes, etc. A decent society cannot be built on the ruins of hunger, malnutrition, illhealth and illiteracy. Children who are the bridge between our inherited past and the aspirations for the future are neglected beyond limit.

Interdependence of economic development and social development has resulted in widespread disparity in the nation. The economic development helps in developing the social skills of only a part of the society which has resulted in uneven growth. The approach paper to the Eleventh Plan stresses the importance of more inclusive economic growth. Unless these are achieved in a time-bound manner, there could be serious adverse implications for the Indian economy, society and polity.
Regional disparities

The government initiated several measures to reduce disparities in the form of economic reforms like deregulation, liberalization, and globalization. Private investment became the principal engine of economic development. The year wise and state wise private investment proposals since August 1991 regularly published by the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion clearly indicate that the major share was accounted for by Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Only recently some of the backward States like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Orissa started attracting large private investment proposals mainly in mining and industries based on mineral extraction.

Differential economic performance of the last two decades has increased the regional disparities in the country. Broadly speaking, while the western and southern States have experienced faster economic growth, the northern and eastern States lagged behind.

Another dimension of the same problem is that while more and more employment opportunities are created in the developed regions of the country, the labour force growth is much higher in the backward regions. This will necessarily imply that large scale migration in search of employment will take place from the backward regions to the developed regions. This will have adverse implications socially as well as economically.

During the period 1983 to 2004-2005 the share of the poor in the population at the national level came down from 45 to 28 per cent. However, in terms of absolute numbers the decline was only marginal from 324 million to 315 million. While all the major States experienced reduction in the percentage of the poor to varying degrees, five major States experienced increase in the number of poor during this period. These are Bihar (from 46.4 to 50.5 million), Madhya Pradesh (from 27.3 to 33.0 million), Maharashtra (from 28.5 to 31.7 million), Orissa (from 16.2 to 18.4 million) and Uttar Pradesh (from 55.2 to 63.9 million).

In terms of social development also the regional divide has aggravated during this period. Traditionally, the levels of literacy and health indicators, and other social amenities have been better in the economically progressive States.

Rural-urban divide

There always existed a rural-urban divide in terms of economic and social development. But this divide has also been widening in the recent past. Ratio of urban income to rural income which was just about 1.6 in 1951 and continued to remain within reasonable limit during the first three decades of development planning to reach 2.1 in 1980-1981, worsened during the last two decades to record a level close to 4.5. While large and medium cities are experiencing unprecedented economic prosperity, the rural areas have been experiencing economic stagnation. While the share of agriculture in the national income declined from about 30 per cent to almost half, the share of population dependent on agriculture remains almost the same over the last two decades.
With the withdrawal of the State from critical support services for agriculture, global competition and higher risk of commercial cultivation, farmers especially those with small holdings, have been experiencing unmitigated misery. The reports of rampant farmers’ suicide from various States, is only one of the symptoms of the current rural distress.

A manifestation of the increasing rural distress is the growing influence of Naxalites in different parts of the country especially in the backward regions. More than one-fourth of the districts in the country have been declared as ‘naxalite –affected’ by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Naxalism is not just a law and order problem; it is basically a development problem. Oppressive and exploitative behaviour on the part of the rural power elite and the un-helpful government machinery drive the powerless, especially the tribals and the dalits to the naxalite camp. An effective land reform could be the most powerful antidote against naxalism.

Social discrimination

Indian society has been traditionally, highly hierarchical in nature. The caste system practiced by the Hindu society did not allow social mobility across the classes. Though other religions are supposed to be casteless, in the Indian context all religious groups covertly practice caste-based discrimination. 

Dalits who are outcastes are the worst victims of caste discrimination followed by the adivasis who are outside the caste hierarchy. Our Constitution has special provisions to protect the interests of these groups who are characterized as scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs). All the affirmative action in favors of them so far has helped only a small proportion of them.

The SCs who account for over 16 per cent of the population, remain backward in economic and social development. Mostly landless and asset less being largely agricultural labor in rural areas, their living conditions and access to basic amenities of life are pathetic. As a result, the incidence of poverty, illiteracy and ill health among the SCs is significantly higher compared to the rest of the population. Though untouchability has been abolished by the Constitution more than 50 yrs ago, still they continue to be victims of various forms of discrimination.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau of the Ministry of Home Affairs the incidence of crime against the SCs has been on the increase in recent years. Three States viz. Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh together account for almost two –third of such reported cases. A sad aspect of such crimes and civil rights violations is the fact that they are often perpetrated by other backward castes and communities who themselves are victims of various forms of discrimination by higher castes. Scheduled tribes account for about 8 per cent of the population of the country. But their share among the poor and illiterates is more than double their population share. The STs are concentrated in the central and north - eastern parts of the country. Unlike SCs, landlessness is not a major problem for the STs. But most of the land owned by them is of inferior quality and less productive. Another important problem is their isolation from the mainstream on account of geographical location. This is especially true of the north-east where STs are in a majority in several small States.
Gender disparity

The fourth major divide in terms of economic and social development is between the genders. Varying levels of male domination exists in most societies. Indeed, the superiority of men was legitimized by the code of Manu in the 8th century and there was never a looking back. Despite the Directive Principles in the Constitution, we continue to practice gender discrimination in all spheres of life.

Gender discrimination is evident even in the demographic indicators of the country. While most of the major countries have a sex ratio favorable to women, our sex ratio continues to remain favorable to men. Not only that, child sex-ratio has been moving inexorably against the girl child in the recent decades. Of course, this is not a biological phenomenon. It is the result of sex-selective abortions and the blatant violation of PNDT Act, 1994. The 2001 census figures indicate that illegal sex-selection is more prevalent in some of the most prosperous parts of the country, like Punjab, Haryana and Delhi. Studies based on hospital statistics in South Delhi indicate that sex-ratio at birth is as low as 500 females per 1000 males. This truly reflects the frightening gender discrimination of the middle class and elites in Delhi. Though the gender gap in literacy has been declining over the decades, still there exists considerable difference.

According to 2001 census while male literacy is 76 per cent, female literacy is as low as 54 per cent at the national level. In States like Bihar, UP, Rajasthan, MP and Orissa, the gender gap in literacy is even more. Indeed, this gap could be taken as an indicator of the level of gender discrimination in these societies. Low level of female literacy is often associated with poor access to health and family planning facilities, poor awareness of proper child care and other hygienic practices which adversely affect the welfare of the whole family. Lower literacy and educational attainments result in lower earning capacity. The ratio of estimated female to male earned income in India at 31 per cent is one of lowest in the World. Though women constitute a third of the labor force in India, they account for less than one-fifth of the employees in the organized sector.

Participation in the functioning of the Panchayats and Municipalities as elected representatives and office bearers has contributed significantly to empowerment of women over the last decade. The reluctance of the male politicians to allow similar representation for women in Parliament and State Assemblies is a clear indication of the sense of male insecurity.

Conclusion

It is clear that various dimensions of economic and social disparity- regional, rural-urban, social class or gender have aggravated in the recent period. That too during a period when India has been achieving accelerated economic growth and has been emerging as a global player. This trend, if not arrested and reversed fast, will have serious adverse implications for the Indian economy, society and polity. As of today, a majority of Indians have been bypassed by the process of economic development either are able to contribute to the growth process or
receive any tangible benefits. How can we make the economic growth in India inclusive covering the backward regions, the rural areas, the marginalized social classes and the women? Indeed, this is the principal theme being addressed in the 11th Five Year Plan with an appropriately titled approach paper “Towards Faster and more Inclusive Growth”.

Currently only 7 per cent of the young Indians in the age group of 18-23 yrs attend University or other higher educational institutions. Once opportunities are created for those currently left out some 20 per cent of young Indians can join the global workforce as knowledge workers helping reduce social and economic disparities in the country.

Finally, those who believe in trickle down theory argue that poverty is coming down and no one is worse off as a result of high growth. Then why worry about increasing disparities? But in a vibrant democracy, even illiterate people are aware of the highly iniquitous sharing of the benefits of development. They expressed their resentment against the India Shining Propaganda 3 years ago. Unless things improve significantly they will express their resentment again through the ballot box.

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Students In Free Enterprise……Catalysts for Change

Prof. Pratibha Pai

Critics of Business Education say that B-Schools have become too scientific and too detached from real-world issues….Others say that students are taught to come up with hasty solutions to complicated problems. Most critics, however, agree that students graduate with a focus on maximizing shareholder value and only a limited understanding of social and ethical considerations, so essential to business leadership more so in today’s times with the economy in disarray.

While it is universally accepted that education will be the vehicle to bring about change, if our academic institutions churn out money-minded automatons, we could end up in a mess like our Western counterparts. Nobody wants to take moral responsibility of what has happened in the U.S., considering most of the concerned people are from some of the finest B-Schools.

Corporates Today

Corporates must look at CSR as something beyond a mere PR effort. CSR must come not from the desks of HR Managers but from the hearts of ALL Managers….and this will only happen if these managers are continuously exposed to “real” situations right from the time they are students. Instead of the narrow focus on the bottom line, which shrinks business activity into short-term profit making, the concept of the triple bottom line has become a useful tool for integrating sustainability into the business agenda – balancing traditional economic goals with social and environmental concerns, and so creating a new measure of corporate performance.

India Today

Indifferent governments and an inefficient bureaucracy have ensured that the poor are deprived of the benefits of development and growth that India has experienced in the last decade or so. A large part of India’s population is stuck in unemployment, illiteracy, poverty and lack of medical care. In the past, NGO’s took it upon themselves to make a difference in the lives of the less fortunate. But the lack or paucity of funds kept the process slow, showing only localized, small-time results.

Enter – the Social Entrepreneur, an individual who is willing to take upon himself the risk and revolutionize things. A Social Entrepreneur is an agent of change, who questions the status quo, and grabs yet untapped or overlooked opportunities that will change the world for the better. Social Entrepreneurs are different from NGO’s…..as they aim to make broad-based, long-term changes instead of a few immediate and localized small-time results. Social Entrepreneurs detect resources where others see problems, and consider affected people as a part of the solution rather than passive beneficiaries. They are also different from Business Entrepreneurs…..while business entrepreneurs aim to generate profits, social entrepreneurs aim to improve social values.
Social entrepreneurship in India is about creating business models revolving around low cost products and services to resolve social inequities. It is about realizing that social progress and profits are not mutually exclusive. With the global meltdown and the impact on India, the shine is off urban, higher income target markets. Organizations focusing on “bottom of the pyramid” audiences have become a reality. Hi-tech social startups are banking on “smart” models to bring services to people at affordable costs.

**SIFE HRC Today**

It is on these principles that the SIFE HR College model works. Our aim was to stoke these fires in the youth and make them look around and understand

- how fortunate they are and hence more content, and
- how they need to help others around them who are less fortunate.

Most of us have blanked out all images around us that in any way disturb us. How many of us drive through or past slums and really get stirred into action? How many of us realize that charity is more than just tearing a cheque? How many of us understand that the “real” world lies not in industry but in the world around us that transcends industry?

While accepting that Commerce can be a catalyst for social change, we felt that the youth can and must be the vehicle to bring about that change. The much required social transformation that is the need of the hour in India, cannot emanate from the wave of a magic wand….it can only be the result of well-planned, sustainable, and long-term efforts. What is required is Commerce that is economically profitable, ecologically regenerative, and very importantly, socially empowering…..where the benefits are shared by all. We must think of becoming powerful catalysts for change and create a world of fairness, hope and sustainable abundance.

**Change at the bottom of the pyramid**

SIFE HRC combines social needs with business practices, making students the agents of social change. This helps satisfy dual objectives – enabling communities to enhance their quality of life sustainably while facilitating student learning on social entrepreneurship. Marketing Gurus talk of marketing to the bottom of the pyramid. Why don’t we think of a change at the bottom of the pyramid by bringing them up higher, thus resulting in socio-economic transformation at the bottom of the pyramid.

Ideas come from many angles…community-needs-driven, tech-inspired, business opportunities. There is no dearth of ideas among the youth. The true challenge is to translate these ideas into social benefit in a sustainable manner. While we have many groups & clubs in college that engage students in social service, we were fortunate to be invited to form a group under Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE). SIFE is an international organization that works through university students in more than 45 countries. Students are given very clear parameters including sustainability, business ethics, market economics and the like to design projects to impact communities.
At SIFE HRC we agreed that education is a necessary leveler, and decided that our major thrust would be towards designing a literacy program for the less privileged. We launched Bharat Empowered, a literacy project to teach school dropouts Conversational English, Soft Skills, Financial Literacy, and IT, and try and place these students. The student team at SIFE HRC, guided by a Faculty Advisor, designed the curriculum and conducted the sessions. They organized placement talks and connects for those interested in jobs, while some of the participants who were self-employed as vegetable vendors, plumbers, etc. went back far more confident and enthused! To make this project sustainable, our students had to prepare a business plan with budgets and even raise sponsorships. The success of this led to an opportunity to work with the Rotary Club of Bombay in their literacy project “Bhavishyayaan” at the Ambedkar Municipal School, Worli. Here our SIFE group has designed and is running a Conversational English and Soft Skills module for Class 8 and 9 students of the Marathi, Urdu and Hindi medium students at the municipal school. We have thus far impacted 94 students in the community through Bharat Empowered.....but more importantly, we have sensitized & trained 120 SIFE HRC students to become managers with a heart!

A majority of our participants were from neighboring slums and shanties, so we decided to adopt the Colaba Machimarnagar as our focus group. SIFE HRC students meet with heads in the community, understand the needs of the community as well as their core strengths, and design relevant projects for them, keeping in mind at all times the SIFE International’s criteria. What has come out of these deliberations is a need for working capital for the womenfolk to purchase fish from the larger trawlers and sell (their core competency) in the market. We are now helping them get micro-finance to be able to do this. Students, in this process, have gained knowledge about how to set up self help groups, what are the regulatory requirements of Banks, and are an integral part of the fisherfolk families! Realizing that during the monsoons their business is down, our students hope to train them with simple vocational skills to make products which our students will help market. The men in our target group are very good at weaving fishing nets, so we are looking at a product extension for them to make net carry-bags which can be sold in the markets.

It is an accepted fact that India’s population is an asset, a classical resource of production. However, what makes them an asset is not merely numbers but the quality of their skill sets. And we believe that at SIFE HRC we are harnessing the energy of the youth to contribute in some way towards enhancing the skill sets of our people, and so bring about social transformation. We create opportunities for our students to get exposed to the “real” world, which for students of business and commerce is not just the corporate world…it is the reality around us. SIFE HRC provides opportunities to students to become leaders and social entrepreneurs. They get to work at the Bottom of the Pyramid and impact the lives of many less fortunate than them, and in the bargain come out truly enriched by the experience. They will not just be the agents of change who will bring about socio-economic difference, but more importantly, they will be the true leaders of tomorrow who will follow the dictates of their conscience and make India proud!
Prof. Pratibha Pai
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Leaders of Tomorrow (Students’ experience with an NGO)

Ajin Abraham & Neha Thadani

Leadership is a common word. Everyone uses it. Many books have tried to capture some part of its essence. Some think leaders are born and that one either has it in him to be a leader or does not. Others think great necessities call forth great leaders. In the words of Warren Bennis, the management writer, “Leadership, like love, is something everybody knows exists, yet is difficult to define”.

Ralph Waldo Emerson used to greet old friends with, “What’s become clear to you since we last met?” Writing this article, is an opportunity to reflect on that question and what’s become clear to me is how much one can learn just from observing other lives. Our experiences at the “Leaders of Tomorrow” program served to some extent, to manifest how young people can be trained to take charge; of their lives, their careers and their futures. In the following description, we have tried to explain what difference this training, provided at a young age to students, who otherwise may never have such an opportunity, made to their lives. “Leaders of Tomorrow” is a program conducted by Dr. P.N. Singh’s Foundation. The training is imparted to students at Rameshwar, Patuck and other schools in the city of Mumbai.

Mumbai – the land of dreams and maddening paradoxes. Sprawling highrises and heartwrenching poverty. Children at international schools preparing for the opportunities offered by the globalized world and those who work the streets, just to earn their next meal. In this city that never turns anyone away, our 2 week experience at the foundation, opened our eyes to one of the selfless efforts made by determined people to bridge some of the opportunity gaps.

The Foundation launched its “Leaders for tomorrow” project in 1998 for under privileged school children. It is a one year part time program in class ninth where trainers teach students skills like goal setting, time management, mind control, motivation and public speaking. The project aims at developing self-confidence and improving self-worth in participants so that they are prepared to assume leadership positions in the professions they choose. The course is free of charge and is conducted in various languages like Marathi, Hindi and English. The project has about 33 trainers, all professionals from H.R and other fields. For this project, 30 students, on an average are selected from Class IX by the principals of the respective schools. The students selected are financially backward and are academically inclined. At the end of the program the students are awarded with a certificate by the foundation. Various aspects of personality development such as self esteem, concentration, habits, memory development, speed reading, communication, creativity, goal setting, time management, attitude, values, stress management, mind control and social behavior are covered by the foundation.

On 16th January, 2006 the foundation initiated the India scholar awards. These are handed out every year to well deserving students selected on the basis of merit, which provide them with financial assistance to pursue their graduation.
We also managed to meet some students who had attended this program in the years 2003 and 2004. Most of them stay in the slums and needless to say, have not been exposed to any kind of training in terms of personality development and language. We wanted to find out the impact this unique initiative has had on these young students and how it has influenced the career choices they made or were planning to make. On our journey, we were led around by one of the students, Jitendra, who wove in and around the slums, tirelessly introducing us to people. One of the things that moved us was the courteous treatment given to us. These were poor people, who did not hesitate in offering us food, being short of it themselves. On interacting with students who were trained by the foundation, we were left with no doubt as to the effectiveness of the training and the positive difference it made to their young aspirations. There were those students, who wished the workshop stayed in longer touch with them but they seemed glad to answer our questions and remembered all the training sessions and their trainers with gratitude. The choices they were equipped to make prepared them for their work lives and contributed in enabling them to choose their careers. Surprisingly, not many were keen on choosing that coveted area of higher education – MBA. What interested them more, were fields of engineering; one student, being particularly fascinated by aeronautical engineering, and refreshingly, some wanted to know how to gain an entry into the UN.

It was heartening to see wings being provided to the dreams of these young children. These kids are marginalized, like so many in our city. It gave us particular joy to hear the case of a young girl, trained by the foundation, who competed at the national level for a public speaking title, with students from well-heeled schools; and won. These were students who learned just for the joy of learning. They could not afford to take education and a good career for granted, unlike many of us. They had a genuine desire to know more, to make something of themselves and they were clay in the hands of those who wished to mould them.

We could sense their joy from the bright glint in their eyes and their happiness from the words they said. The children were glad that someone cared and their enthusiasm glowed from their faces. Much of the effectiveness of the training arises from the fact that these students are caught young; trained when their beliefs are still being crystallized and taught while they still dared to dream.

Even as we applaud those at the foundation, we realize, certainly, more of such selfless efforts are needed. How can someone like you and me contribute to such initiatives? We’d say: Time, Money and Support. Any of these, would be investments in the future of such children that will earn rich dividends in the days to come. Along with us, they can also be leaders, learning to take charge of their situations, instead of b’eing pushed around by circumstances. The times we spent with the children served as an eye-opener and to be a part of their happiness, we consider a joy and a privilege.

Ajin Abraham and Neha Thadani
Students
SIES College of Management Studies
Prerna 2008

Prerna Banner

Inauguration of the exhibition

Rush hour: Students queuing at the NGO stalls

A Skit by students on importance of voting

1 minute fun games
A unique Post Graduate Program in Social Enterprise Management offered by SIES College of Management Studies aims to create NGO professionals and company managers trying to make a difference in their social environment. The objective is to learn to be a successful social entrepreneur through a blend of social issues and internalise management concepts to create a change in the world we live.

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Post Graduate Program in Social Enterprise Management

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