

CONTEMPORARY SOCIETAL CHANGES

CONTEMPORARY SOCIETAL CHANGES - I

- a) Increasing Urbanisation, Problems of Housing, Health and Sanitation
- b) Changing lifestyle and Impact on Culture

UNIT STRUCTURE

14.0 Objectives

14.1 Introduction

14.1.2 Impact of urbanization on housing conditions

14.1.3 Impact of increasing urbanization on health and sanitation

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14.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the concept of urbanization.
2. To study the impact of urbanization on housing conditions.
3. To study the effects of urbanization on health and sanitation.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

Urbanization refers to a process in which an increasing proportion of an entire population lives in cities and the suburbs of cities. It is linked closely to industrialization and associated with economic development of the country. According to Kingsley Davis urbanization is a process of switch from a spread out pattern of human settlements to one of concentration in urban centers. The process of urbanization is a relatively recent phenomenon.

The modern cities are growing in a very unsystematic manner due to rapid rate of industrialization. This is primarily because of increasing trend of rural-urban migration. People migrate in large numbers to the cities daily in search of employment opportunities, desirous of a higher standard of living and better living conditions. This exploding population is putting excessive pressure on the infrastructure and amenities in urban areas giving rise to specific problems in cities.

14.1.2 Impact of urbanization on housing conditions:

Next to food and clothing, housing is one of the basic needs of human beings. Hence the housing conditions and amenities are considered as one of the key indicators of socio-economic development.

In the big metropolitan cities like Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai etc. there is a serious problem of housing. The Municipal authorities and the state governments are struggling to meet the rising housing demands of the inhabitants and the immigrants. Shortage of houses leads to over crowding and congestion as the density of population per square kilometer increases. This has resulted in the development of slums and illegal settlements in open areas around mills and industries, where the slum dwellers seek employment. Slums cropped up near village settlements and then their scatter spread to other areas eventually encroaching upon public lands.

In Mumbai they are concentrated in areas such as Byculla , Dharavi , Mahim working in the small scale or cottage industries. There is a gap in policymaking and regulations to prevent such unauthorized housing. Most immigrants, unable to find meaningful employment, get absorbed into the informal sector as rag pickers, sweepers, construction workers, masons, carpenters, domestic helps etc. or forced to become wage labourers. They are driven to destitution and get trapped in the vicious circle of urban poverty.

Furthermore the excessive housing demand has actually pushed up the housing prices in cities, making urban accommodations and life expensive. The real estate sector has experienced exponential growth in prices of apartments and spaces for offices , shops. Even rents for temporary lodging and leased flats have hit the roof, burning a deep hole in the pockets of the average city dweller. Migrants find it extremely difficult to find cheap

accommodations close to their workplace and commute tedious distances.

The problem of overcrowding has led to various social problems. The economic and class differences are becoming more prominent as reflected in the duality of city life. It is the cities which are attracting huge investments from domestic businesses and foreign MNCs. They have thriving malls, multiplexes, luxury hotels, pubs, amusement parks and other major avenues of entertainment. The skyscrapers and well equipped residential areas are reflective of a posh lifestyle. But on the other hand there are proliferating matchbox sized apartments, chawl systems, squatter settlements and cramped spaces which indicate the inability of the marginalized poor to meet even their essential needs. Other than widening income disparities between the rich and the poor, it has caused an increase in the crime rates. Instances of murders, thefts, rape and other forms of violence are on the rise, indicating extreme level of frustration and disappointment among the people. There is greater exposure to drugs, alcohol, corruption and other vices, which is corroding the moral fabric of society.

The joint family system is being replaced by nuclear families and DINKS (double income no kids working couples). People, caught in a rat race to earn more money and possess more goods of snob appeal, are spending lesser time on maintaining interpersonal relations while at the same time getting lonelier and depressed. Children and elderly are becoming the casualties of this indifferent lifestyle. Many children especially in the lower income strata are going without any basic education. Child labour is on the rise and the senior citizens are forced to rely on their own savings or live in old age homes. Relationships are getting fractured and motives turning selfish. Several millions remain jobless. Abject poverty has also pushed several into begging, prostitution, betting, drug peddling and other crimes.

As the cities grow, the costs of housing and infrastructure are also growing, With such pressure on civic amenities, municipal corporations are unable to cope with massive requirement of water, electricity, sanitation and provision of other infrastructure. People are facing acute water shortages, electricity cuts. Congestion in living spaces as well as commutation has increased stress levels. Buildings are getting taller, roads congested with traffic and trains overcrowded. The civic authorities find it increasingly difficult to

maintain cleanliness and hygienic conditions.

According to the Planning Commission (12th Five Year Plan) , the challenge of affordable housing in India can be met through policies and incentives that develop economically feasible housing model for both the government housing agencies and private builders and by encouraging rental housing for the extremely poor. Moreover initiatives need to be taken by the municipal authorities to curb high levels of pollution, control vehicular congestion and accidents. The state governments may play an active role in providing feasible alternatives to slums. It is a harsh reality that slums cannot be completely wiped out and therefore there is need for upgradation and redevelopment of slums to better the lives of slum dwellers. NGOs and employment agencies can provide support services and raise awareness about the growing urban social problems. The policymakers have a huge responsibility in allocating investment and directing industrial growth to rural areas to overcome regional disparities by generating employment and reducing migration.

14.1.3 Impact of increasing urbanization on health and sanitation:

Globalization, urbanization and migration have had a major impact on the health of people across rural and urban areas though with differing implications. Health is defined by World Health Organization as, 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.' Though genes and lifestyle choices have an important role to play in the health of an individual, the physical environment is also an important determinant of health. The phenomenon of urbanization affects environmental conditions and therefore can be directly linked to problems of health in urban areas.

Sanitation in urban areas is the responsibility of the population inhabitants but also primarily of the Municipal Corporations. Sanitation can also be linked to urbanization as access to clean and hygienic living conditions is one of the significant needs of any population. It's inadequacy is a result of a disproportionate growth in the urban population compared to that in civic facilities.

Urbanization in India has resulted from the fast pace of industrialization. Hazardous industries and poor work conditions have exposed people to rising pollution, reducing their immunity levels and increased susceptibility to various harmful diseases. The various types of pollution found in cities are :

- Air pollution : Lack of clean air and increased air pollution are predominantly responsible for spread of air borne diseases. Cold,

cough, breathing problems, pneumonia and bronchitis are becoming common. The sources of air pollution are increased levels of suspended particulate matter (SPM) in air, poisonous gases emanated by industries as well as vehicular emissions of carbon. There is reduced visibility caused by smoke and fog.

- **Water pollution :**Lack of access to safe drinking water and poor quality of available water is the chief cause of diarrhoea and other water borne diseases, affecting the life expectancy of slum dwellers as well as children under the age of five. Lack of in-built latrines and open defecation have led to contamination of pipe water and it's consumption has increased instances of gastro-intestinal infections. New diseases, like leptospirosis, are spreading rapidly. Use of such contaminated water in households is hazardous to health. During the monsoons, faecal matter and wastes get washed into slum areas rendering living unhygienic.
- **Solid wastes :**Collection of solid wastes is the duty of the civic bodies in cities but refuse disposal is one of the major problems in urban areas. Accumulated untreated wastes become the breeding ground for pests and rodents which are carriers of diseases and lead to outbreaks of epidemics like tuberculosis, dengue fever, plague .etc. Wastes are not separated into wet and dry wastes, biomedical and electronic wastes are disposed off along with other garbage and dumping sites impinge on land space that could alternatively be used for provision of housing.
- **Noise pollution :**The huge population of cities also leads to many transport problems like traffic jams, accidents, etc. Vehicular congestion, constant honking , use of loudspeakers during public occasions, bursting of noisy firecrackers add to the decibel levels that are abnormal and can lead to partial and complete deafness. High decibels levels according to scientific research lead to high palpitations, uneasiness, anxiety and blood pressure whilst disturbing the peace of the surroundings.
- **Adulteration :** Food sanitation is a major concern in the cities. Most food items in shops are uncovered, stale and prepared in insanitary conditions with impure water, which increases the probability of food poisoning. It can cause dysentery, typhoid, jaundice etc. and hence is unsafe for consumption.Even milk and food grains are adulterated and are dangerous to the health of children and adults. Malnutrition is the cause of high mortality among people in urban areas through tuberculosis and other infectious diseases.

Psychological problems are on the rise in urban areas. The

vagaries of transport, competition at work, inflationary prices, diminishing health and demands for provision of services has increased stress levels. People are growing indifferent to others. The sense of loneliness, depression and frustration at unmet goals has led to an increase in suicide rates in cities. Large numbers of urban dwellers are suffering from emotional breakdowns and disturbed behavioral patterns.

A new category of diseases is appearing in the form of lifestyle diseases like obesity. The fast pace of life means people are eating less of home cooked nutritious meals, consuming more of fatty preserved fast food and leading sedentary lifestyles without much exercise. Hence obesity and related diseases such as diabetes, heart attacks are consuming the urban population.

However there have also been some positive developments in urban health that can be attributed to globalization. Entry of private sector into health has led to the establishment of many hi tech, modern, well equipped and upgraded health centres, which cater to the health needs of the urban people albeit at high costs. The public hospitals try under various schemes to make similar services affordable to the poor. More foreigners today are choosing India as a cheaper alternative for its cost effective operations and surgeries. Medical tourism is proliferating opening doors for talented Indian doctors and medical practitioners. Pathology laboratories and diagnostic centres have cropped in every nook and corner of the cities aiding earlier detection of diseases and faster treatment.

The government of India has undertaken several health programmes and expenditure plans to alleviate many diseases such as National Tuberculosis Control Programme, National Cancer Control Programme and so on. It has also passed several laws to protect the environment, consumers rights .etc. such as Consumer Protection Act' 1986, Environment Act' 1986, Bio - Medical Waste Management Act'1998. It has implemented vaccination and immunization programmes to completely eradicate certain diseases in children. There are several agencies that work towards raising the awareness among consumers about adulteration. For. ex Consumer Guidance Society of India actually makes milk sanitation testing kits available for consumers. In keeping with the Millenium development goals of the UN the state is working towards resolving urbanization issues.

Modern housing developers are working towards increasing sanitation in housing by modeling apartments with better ventilation, sun light and more open spaces. Lot of research is drawing the attention of people towards environmental concerns.

People are getting more health and fitness conscious and trying to reconcile themselves with the burdens of urban life.

14.2 CHANGING LIFESTYLE AND IMPACT ON CULTURE

14.2.1 Objectives:

- 1.To understand the concept of culture values lifestyle.
- 2.To examine the impact of changing values and lifestyle on culture.
- 3.To evaluate the impact of media explosion on culture.

14.2.2 Introduction:

The values of mankind have been changing right from its inception. However the change in their values and subsequently in their lifestyle has been more startling after westernization in last 200 years and globalization in last 20 years or so. The change in their everyday life values brings a corresponding change in the culture of that particular society.

The concept of culture, values and lifestyles:

The term culture has an origin in the Latin word “Cultura” meaning to cultivate. Here it means the cultivation of ideas, beliefs, attitudes, rituals, customs, art, food habits, dressing habits etc in a given society over a period of time. Culture is a way of life.

As defined by E.B.Tylor “Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”.

Values are the social principles goals, or standards held or accepted by an individual, class or society. Values are generally based on morality or what is up held by society as just, good or right for its members. The Indian value system is marked with truth, honesty, tolerance, cooperation, respect, patriotism etc. Lifestyle on the other hand is the integrated way of life of an individual, characterized by his/her manner, attitudes, possessions, values etc. For e.g. when one tries to define Indian lifestyle, it refers to the mannerism, way of thinking, value system, and his /her behavioral aspect as an Indian vis-a-vis others.

With the changing socio-economic environment of the society there is a marked change in the values and lifestyle of individual members in Indian society. Materialism and consumerism has a considerable impact on the human values and lifestyle.

14.3 IMPACT OF CHANGING VALUES AND LIFESTYLE VALUES

Dishonesty- with materialism, profit oriented economy and increasing corruption has all made dishonesty a way of life. To achieve the goals and targets, individual does not hesitate to resort to any means compromising truth and honesty.

Intolerance- Indian value system upholds universal tolerance. But the selfishness and narrow-mindedness has overpowered this value. Even in the era of global identities, there is increasing localization, regionalism, communalism and fanaticism making individual intolerant towards the diversity and differences.

Lack of generosity- With the craze for possessions and tangible assets, and meaning of happiness being equated with material gain, generosity has and sharing has eloped from the society.

Lack of Justice- with increasing demands for equality on one side, there is an increasing tendency of nepotism and partiality pervasive in all spheres of life may it be political, legal, occupational or educational. Seeking justice or giving justice is no more an ideal to be achieved in life.

Lack of excellence- To compete in the global world, people now try to sail in different boats at the same and end up being 'jack of all but master of none'. Everyone wants to be successful but without putting any efforts. People often try to find shortcuts and easy ways to achieve their goals and it results in complete absence of expertise.

Lack of respect- The value of equality is been taken in a narrow sense and respect for elders, teachers and those with superior quality is not given by the younger generation.

Change in the lifestyle:

Materialism- The market oriented economic and consumerism creates pressure in the minds of people to possess as many goods as possible even beyond their limitations. The Mall and multiplex culture has ruined the spending habits in urban areas.

Rave parties- Easy and quick money earned by the youth in urban areas, have changed the spending habits and idea of entertainment for them. Partying hard with liquor and drugs have become the new means of enjoyment and entertainment.

Increase in Crimes- With privatization and globalization in India, unemployment of manual labour and semiskilled labour has indirectly increased the crime rate in urban as well as rural areas. Need for easy and quick money and weakening value system, youth get trapped in the anti-social activities very easily.

Changing family patterns- With increasing urbanization and influence of western culture, the nature of the family has changed from joint to nuclear to live in relationship. Same sex marriages, has started gaining acceptance. With equal opportunities to women and career oriented couples there is a rising number of DINK (double income no kinds) parents.

Food habits and dressing habits have also changed drastically with the advent of globalization.

14.4 IMPACT OF MASS MEDIA ON CULTURE

Mass media is a form of media where transmission and communication takes place across society to large number of people at the same time. Media can be classified as print media which includes newspaper, magazines, journals, pamphlets, leaflets, printed advertisements etc. whereas audio-visual or electronic media includes television, films, radio, computers and internet etc. Mass media in India is that part of media which aims at reach a wide audience in India. Mass media is very powerful means of influencing the masses. There has been a tremendous growth in the field of mass media after globalization. This has in turn affected the culture to a great extent.

Positive Impact of mass media on culture:

National Integration: Films and television promotes national integration to a great extent. It brings people from different caste, religion, culture together. With globalization and increase in number of channels there is one global identity over and above the regional identity reinforcing the value of 'Vasudhaive Kutumbkam'.

Increase in awareness: Mass media promotes social issues such as anti-dowry, safe sex (anti-Aids), small family norm, employment guarantee schemes etc. This helps to create informed society.

Positive image of women: Status of women is an integral part of the culture of any society. Mass media highlighting the achievements of women and portraying strong women characters change the perspective towards women.

Increase in employment opportunities: Directly or indirectly the advertisements, channels and production houses generate a huge scope for employment for creative and talented people.

Strengthening family ties: Evenings in India have now become family get to gather time with media revolution and certain good programmes. Reinforcing traditional values of eating together and living together has strengthened family ties.

Negative impact of mass media on culture:

Promoting popular culture: Media in a big way promotes the mass or popular culture. That sends a message what is popular is good. It often results in complete neglect of authentic, indigenous, classical or folk culture.

Crime and violence: Increasing amount of violence based programs and action oriented films adversely affects the mind set of children and youngsters. In course of imitating their favourite stars they end up being juvenile delinquent, or indulge in anti-social elements.

Stereotypical image of woman: Barring some good programmes, advertisement and daily soaps portray women in a very bad taste. Women on screen, when used as sex symbol the mindset of the people gets affected and treat women in the same way in real life as well.

Sensationalizing events: Due to cut throat competition amongst the news channels and newspapers, they tend to sensationalize events to grab audience or readers attention and increase their viewership or readership. Paparazzi become the vital part of our culture affecting the privacy of members of society.

Defining beauty and richness: Media has created an illusion of fantasy world amongst its viewers. Fairness and slimness of girls are the only parameters of their beauty. Larger than life houses and lifestyles create wrong perception of happiness in the minds of young generation who tend to dream of such life.

Check your progress

- 1) Explain the positive impact of mass media on culture.
- 2) Discuss how media affects the culture in a negative way.

14.5 SUMMARY

With information technology and media revolution, values, cultures and lifestyles have changed dramatically. Mass media though its strong influence has far reaching impact on the culture and there is an overall deterioration of values in society. Educational institutions can play a major role to direct mindsets of the people to use media as tool for empowering culture and strengthening the nation building.

CONTEMPORARY SOCIETAL CHALLENGES-II

- (c) Farmer's Suicide and Agrarian distress
- (d) Debates Regarding Genetically Modified Crops

Unit Structure

- 15.1 Objectives
- 15.2 Introduction and the extent of Farmers' Suicide
- 15.3 Causes of farmers' suicide in India
- 15.4 Debate Regarding Genetically Modified Crops
 - 15.4.1 Objectives
 - 15.4.2 Introduction
 - 15.4.3 Method of genetic modification of crops
- 15.5 Advantages
- 15.6 Disadvantages
- 15.7 Summary
- 15.8 Unit End Questions

15.1 OBJECTIVES

1. To sensitize the students towards the problem of farmers' suicide in India.
2. To understand and analyse the causes of agrarian distress that leads to farmers' suicide.

15.2 INTRODUCTION AND THE EXTENT OF FARMERS' SUICIDE

With all the progress and development that globalization and mechanization of agriculture has brought in last two decades, there is an increasing amount of deterioration of indigenous economy. The country has seen over a quarter million farmers' suicide between 1995 and 2010. According to the National Crime Records

Bureau (NCRB), in 2010 alone there were 15,964 farmers' who committed suicide in India. Increasing cost of production and falling price of farm commodity has been the major reason for the pervasiveness of this problem.

Maharashtra leads the list of farmers' suicide in India with 50,500 (20% of the total suicides in India) farmers killing themselves in the country's richest state from 2005-2010. The five states which accounts for almost 2/3 of all the suicides are Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. In 2006, 1,044 suicides were reported in Vidarbha alone - that's one suicide every eight hours. This also throws a light on another problem of shrinking of primary sector of economy i.e. with increasing farmers' suicide, there are less number of cultivators to produce food grains and raw material. Compared to 1991 Census, the 2001 census saw a drop of over seven million in the population of cultivators. With increasing mechanization, and corporate farming on one hand, there is a massive disguised unemployment and increasing urbanization on the other, created a dearth of new trained farmers interested in cultivating the land. All these factors have converted the positive economic significance of agriculture in our economy to a negative one.

Table 15.1

Farmer Suicides in India		
State	Total Farm Suicides Between 1995 and 2010	Average deaths per year
Maharashtra	50,481	1,155
Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh	25,565	41,062
Karnataka	35,053	2,190
Andhra Pradesh	31,120	1,945
West Bengal	19,328	1,208
Kerala	18,904	1,181
Tamil Nadu	14,864	929
Uttar Pradesh	9,368	586
India	2,56,913	16,057

15.3 CAUSES OF FARMERS' SUICIDE IN INDIA

The two major causes as discussed earlier are:

- a) Increasing cost of production

b) Falling prices of farm commodity

Following are more causes for farmers suicide:

1. Indebtedness:

The main reason for farmers' suicide is indebtedness. With increasing cost of production and dependence on monsoon, it forces farmers to borrow money from the money lenders. These money lenders often exploit the poor illiterate farmers by charging high rates of interest. This rate is generally more than 30% per year. The pressure of repaying the loans with such high rates of interest becomes almost an impossible task for them. And under the fear of humiliation to the family and distress they commit suicide. Loans from the agricultural bank are still a distant dream for most of our poor and illiterate farmers.

2. Crop failure:

In India even today majority of the farmers depend on monsoon for irrigation. Drought, irregular or incessant rains causing floods are all factors which cause massive crop failure. The new variety of seeds are prone to pest attacks, and high cost of insecticide and pesticide further make the crop vulnerable to such attacks resulting in destruction of crop..

3. High input cost:

With green revolution and intensive farming, farmers are aiming at high per hectare yield. This is possible only with chemical fertilizers, high yielding variety of seeds, huge amount of power, tractors etc. These facilities often cost a gigantic investment from the farmers. Small and medium level farmers cannot afford this amount. Also the subsidy on fertilizers and other raw material has reduced due to privatization of its production. All these lead to a high input cost on the part of farmer to produce a decent quantity of yield.

4. Lower price for farm commodity:

After this huge amount of investment, and if the crop is cultivated successfully saving it from failure, then too the return on the farm commodity is not sufficient. Several middlemen exploit the farmers, by giving them low price for their product. Government often declares a minimum support price for crops which is much lower than its input cost. To bridge this wide gap between the cost of production and the returns becomes a herculean task for the farmer and the pressure often takes away his life.

5. Lack of government aid and relief package:

Government in the run for getting away from its responsibility has privatized most of the sectors in the economy. Private owners aim for maximizing their profit ignoring the welfare of the people. Lesser agricultural banks which can give credit loans to farmers further make them vulnerable. Relief packages which are often announced for the farmers in the drought prone areas or flood prone areas never reach the real deprived group and often the local corrupt administrators misuse this amount for their petty interest.

6. Monoculture and corporate farming:

Uniformity of crops and specially cash crops has destroyed the eco-system in the fertile areas. The land due to excessive use of fertilizers and pesticides, have become barren and arid turning in a non-productive piece of land. Pressure of producing genetically modified crops apart from being an expensive affair has further increased the gap between the rich and poor farmers. Compelling the poor farmers to end their life with no resources to continue as a farmer.

Conclusion:

There is an urgent need for government intervention to tackle this issue. The solution lies in liberalizing the strict control of middlemen and money lenders on farmers. The famers will adopt the organic farming providing they are given support and subsidies for the same. They should be given direct access to market to sell their products to get the fair price for the commodities.

Check your progress

1. Discuss the extent of farmers' suicide in India.

15.4 DEBATE REGARDING GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROPS

15.4.1 Objectives:

1. To understand the meaning and the methods of genetically modified crops

2. To know the good and adverse effects of genetically modified crops.

15.4.2 Introduction:

Genetically modified crops (GM crops) are those crops whose DNA is extended from a living thing and placed in different crops by using genetic engineering techniques. The main aim is to create a food that can sustain even under harmful conditions like use of chemicals, insecticides or pesticides. Some crops are modified to protect themselves from insects. Through the process the crops with desirable qualities are obtained. It also helps the food to stay fresh for a long time.

Some of the genetically modified crops include, rice, potatoes, sprouts, sweet corn, tomatoes, soybean, poultry, wheat, juices, rapeseed plants, sugarcane, beet, cotton, canola oil chocolates, frozen food etc. certain meals like frozen pizza, canned food, baby foods, breads, soya, cotton seed oil, soya oil, soya milk, energy bars etc.

15.4.3 Methods of Genetic Modification of Crops:

Genetic modification involves the insertion of genes. In this process genes are artificially transferred between organisms that could be conventionally bred. The DNA from one organism is modified in a laboratory and then inserted into another gene of a crop. This process is called as Transgenesis. Introducing new genes into plants requires a promoter specific to the area where the gene is to be expressed. For instance, if we want the gene to express only rice grains and not in leaves, then an endosperm-specific promoter would be used. The transgenic gene products should also be able to be denatured by heat so that they are destroyed during cooking.

15.5 ADVANTAGES

Supporters of Genetically modified crops claim many advantages. Let us study them:

1. The GM crops would increase the agricultural production and crops can be grown in drought affected areas and the land with high salt content. The underground water would help crops grow where they never grew earlier. It will prove to be a boon to developing countries facing the problem of starvation and death caused by it. It will also help lower the cost of food.
2. Some GM crops contain their own pesticides for ex: sweet corn, so farmers do not have to spray the plants with

insecticides or pesticides. Some plants are developed to offer resistance to different diseases.

3. GM foods contain better nutritious value, rich in vitamin, mineral and protein content, durable as well as better in taste.
4. GM foods can boost immunity level and develop inbuilt vaccine for livestock.
5. Plants can be modified to reduce calorie content and increase fiber level.
6. GM crops help the environment by reducing the need of pesticides.
7. GM crops have anti-freeze elements that help them survive in low temperature as against the unmodified seeds and food.

15.6 DISADVANTAGES

There are several arguments against GM crops. Many people hold the opinion that they not only harm the environment but also adversely affect the health. Some of the disadvantages are discussed below:

1. One of the highest risk involved is the creation of transgenic life forms. Such organisms may give rise to unnatural gene lines.
2. Genes from genetically modified crops could be transferred to the pests in order to destroy them, however over the period the pests develop resistance to it and crop spray thus becomes useless. For ex: Scientists have genetically modified sweet corn so that it produces a poison that can kill the insects. However insects can develop resistance to the poison and if that happens then crop spray is of no use.
3. The GM plants may produce secondary metabolites which may prove to be toxic to humans and livestock and can alter the food quality.
4. Some plants can prove to be allergic to humans or livestock.
5. Such plants may contain some new protein which cannot be metabolized or absorbed properly.
6. Some vegetarian avoid eating certain foods as it may contain genes from humans or livestock. It may affect their religious belief.
7. There is a fear of growth of uncharacterized DNA which can produce various harmful side effects as may be observed due to the presence of such chemicals.
8. GM crops develop antibiotic resistance. Antibiotics are used to fight diseases. However it was observed that these genetically modified genes spread to humans and animals and doctors

had difficulty fighting infectious diseases. For ex: tomatoes, bananas, strawberries, pineapples etc.

15.7 SUMMARY

The supporters as well as opponents of genetically modified crop technology have strong views. The Gm crops have definitely solved certain problems like hunger, reducing prices. It has led to various inventions in the field of science and technology. However, the manufactures are not willing to share information about the genetic modification of their food. There should be a label stating it as GM food. The Americans highly depended upon such food and scientists claim that it will take generations to prove the ill effects on health caused by GM food. It is also interesting to note that many environmentalists and health experts are advocating the use of organic food because they are grown in complete natural conditions. But such food is expensive and hence the demand for genetically modified food continues among the people.

CONTEMPORARY SOCIETAL CHANGES-III

- E. Development Projects and Human Rights Violations.
- F. Increasing crime and suicide among the youth

Unit Structure

16.0 Objectives

16.1 Introduction

16.2 Impact on Human Rights

16.3 Increasing crime and suicide among the youth

16.3.1 Objectives

16.3.2 Introduction

16.4 Causes of Suicide

16.5 Prevention of Suicide

16.6 Unit end questions

16.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the need for development projects
2. To study the implications of development projects
3. To know the violations of human rights due to poor implementation of such projects.

16.1 INTRODUCTION

The development projects are essential for the growth of modern society and also to meet the requirement of changing times. To achieve the growth the government has undertaken certain development projects like dams, nuclear projects, thermo-electric projects, highways etc. However development projects may require displacement of some families, and can affect them adversely if proper implementation of the projects is not done. Development projects are often planned without taking into consideration its effects on health and environment. People are displaced without offering proper compensation to them. There are various incidences of total ignorance of such people on the part of government bodies.

16.2 IMPACT ON HUMAN RIGHTS

1. The development projects in many cases adversely affect the people for ex: the construction of a dam on the river Narmada has displaced more than 50,000 families across three States i.e. Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. The construction work was started without offering proper

compensation and rehabilitation of those families. The right to live freely and the right to property are violated in such cases.

2. People become homeless and landless in case the development project requires the required area for the purpose for ex: dams, highways, canals, nuclear power plants etc. besides health hazards are also numerous.
3. Non immune workers migrate to such construction sites and may cause epidemic like situation as they may catch various diseases and also new strains of germs may develop. Thus right to health is violated in this case.
4. The construction of nuclear power projects can cause serious health hazards to the people living near the site zone. The radioactive rays can cause long term diseases and lead to serious illness.
5. The decision of deciding upon the site for the development project and also offering compensation to the affected families is taken by the government without consulting the people and without taking their opinion in this matter. Hence there is gross violation of human right as the affected families are not given the choice but the decision is imposed upon them.
6. The government in many cases uses force to implement the project.
7. In many cases not so essential projects are implemented for ex SEZs.
8. There is no transparency regarding the plan, implementation of the project. People are not taken into confidence.

Hence in order to avoid massive violation of Human Rights the affected people must be given entire information and their opinion must be sorted before the implementation of such projects.

16.3 INCREASING CRIME AND SUICIDE AMONG THE YOUTH

16.3.1 Objectives:

From this chapter we can understand

1. To understand why suicide takes place know
2. To know how to deal with suicidecase
3. To be aware of warning signs of suicide

16.3.2 Introduction:

Generally, crime and suicide are related to each other only difference is that suicide takes place by our self and crime takes place by others to somebody. Crime and suicide has same cause and effects. It's cause like poverty, suddenly lapse in the business, expectation of more marks in the exams, love affairs, people take out high loan but unable to pay it, family problems. demand hopes to get better job.

Teen suicides are increasing among the Indians and globally It is growing as a kind of disease rampant among the Indian teens especially in cosmopolitan cities. India the largest democratic country, having the largest youth population in the world, has become the suicide capital of the world. It is an alarming fact that teen suicides are increasing among the Indian youth shaking the very foundations of human existence. Researchers say that out of every three cases of suicide reported every 15 minutes in India, one is committed by a youth in the age group of 15 to 24 the highest number of suicides and attempted suicides happen in cosmopolitan cities and towns of India. Studies show that for every student who commits suicide, there are at least 13 cases who attempt suicide. Most youngsters who attempt suicide do not really want to die. Actually, they are crying out for help. There seems to be universal agreement on the manner in which they act before their suicidal attempt.

16.4 CAUSES OF SUICIDE

1) Social isolation:

They show total withdrawal and non interaction with people. It is really ironical that in this age of social networking and websites teens are isolated in their societies and live a reclusive life.

2) Change in normal life:

A normal child or youth shows signs of change in life by suddenly turning quiet and withdrawn from normal life. Long silences, unexplained visits to the bathroom, or hiding behind locked doors are some of the signs of this.

3) Loss of self esteem:

Inability to accept failure or loss in self esteem leads to dejectedness and suicide. This may be expressed by aversion in eating, or loss of interest in activities.

4) Expression of suicidal intention:

Suicide is not an instant action. Usually it is premeditated and expressed in some way or other.

Reasons for teen suicide:

Three major reasons lead to teen suicide. They are academic disappointments, relationship failures and psychological imbalance. There are many socio-economic, psychological and cultural factors associated with suicide.

1) The family situation:

Family plays a vital role in teen suicide. Nucleus families running after money and comfort never think of the psychological conditions of their wards. Most mothers are employed. As Swasti Naik, a student counselor of Mumbai says, “Some decades back, the joint family system ruled supreme in Indian society and a child upset about usually came back home to sympathetic grandparents, uncles, and cousins who were always willing to pitch in with assistance.” But now, what is the situation of the family? Life in families is jam-packed and there is no time for anybody to care for the other.

Moreover, parents today are more worried about the academic performance to push them up as per their ambitions rather than the ability and condition of their children. The children are forced to study what their parents want.

2) Closed emotions of teens:

The mental condition of our younger generation is in turmoil. They are unable to outlets for their suppressed emotions. The emotions of today’s youngsters are different from that of olden days which the parents and elders do not recognize.

3) Change in societies:

Societies have drastically transformed into much more openness which has positive and negative consequences. TV and other media have become more important. They have their own negative aspects.

4) Relationship failures:

At home there is no one to care. Only stomachs are more cared than hearts. When a friendship or love affair fails, today’s

emotional mind thinks of suicide as the only relief. Even the media suggest this end as an effective solution.

5) Addiction to Internet:

Too much of addiction to Internet and self-centered approach often aggravates their isolated life. Teens become cocooned 'insects' without any interaction with anyone.

6) Negative thoughts lead to suicide:

Life seems to be nothing more than a hellish nightmare to the disappointed youth of modern emotional world. They easily lose confidence in life as their unrealistic sense of hopelessness is one of the most crucial factors in the development of their serious suicidal wish. They do not wait to analyze things. Rather they jump to the conclusion that their problems are insoluble.

7) Indian education system is more job-oriented than life-oriented:

Education system in India is more job-oriented than life. Pressure to perform well to reach higher academic qualifications is one of the major reasons for suicide. Failure in examinations and lack of family support in such situations cause depression in youth. Suicide news filling the newspaper columns after the examination results has become common in India.

Teen suicide in India is a serious problem which needs the attention of every one. Facts are alarming. We are aware of the reasons. It is our turn now to act to solve the problems.

16.5 PREVENTION OF SUICIDE

What should you do if someone your teen knows, perhaps a family member, friend, or a classmate, has attempted or committed suicide? First, acknowledge your child's many emotions. Some teens say they feel guilty — especially those who felt they could have interpreted their friend's actions and words better.

Others say they feel angry with the person who committed or attempted suicide for having done something so selfish. Still others say they feel no strong emotions or don't know how to express how they feel. Reassure your child that there is no right or wrong way to feel, and that it's OK to talk about it when he or she feels ready.

When someone attempts suicide and survives, people might be afraid of or uncomfortable talking with him or her about it. Tell your teen to resist this urge; this is a time when a person absolutely needs to feel connected to others.

Many schools address a student's suicide by calling in special counselors to talk with the students and help them cope. If your teen is dealing with a friend or classmate's suicide, encourage him or her to make use of these resources or to talk to you or another trusted adult.

Preventing Youth Suicide:

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among youth between 10 and 19 years of age. However, suicide is preventable. Youth who are contemplating suicide frequently give warning signs of their distress. Parents, teachers, and friends are in a key position to pick up on these signs and get help. Most important is to never take these warning signs lightly or promise to keep them secret. When all adults and students in the school community are committed to making suicide prevention a priority—and are empowered to take the correct actions—we can help youth before they engage in behavior with irreversible consequences.

Suicide Risk Factors:-

Certain characteristics are associated with increased suicide risk.

These include:-

- Mental illness including depression, conduct disorders, and substance abuse.
- Family stress/dysfunction.
- Environmental risks, including presence of a firearm in the home.
- Situational crises (i.e., traumatic death of a loved one, physical or sexual abuse, family violence, etc.).

Suicide Warning Signs:

Many suicidal youth demonstrate observable behaviors that signal their suicidal thinking. These include:

- Suicidal threats in the form of direct and indirect statements.
- Suicide notes and plans.
- Prior suicidal behavior.
- Making final arrangements (e.g., making funeral arrangements, writing a will, giving away prized possessions).
- Preoccupation with death.

- Changes in behavior, appearance, thoughts and/or feelings.

What to Do:

Youth who feel suicidal are not likely to seek help directly; however, parents, school personnel, and peers can recognize the warning signs and take immediate action to keep the youth safe. When a youth gives signs that they may be considering suicide, the following actions should be taken:

- Remain calm.
- Ask the youth directly if he or she is thinking about suicide.
- Focus on your concern for their wellbeing and avoid being accusatory.
- Listen.
- Reassure them that there is help and they will not feel like this forever.
- Do not judge.
- Provide constant supervision. Do not leave the youth alone.
- Remove means for self-harm.

Get help:

Peers should not agree to keep the suicidal thoughts a secret and instead should tell an adult, such as a parent, teacher, or school psychologist. Parents should seek help from school or community mental health resources as soon as possible. School staff should take the student to the designated school mental health professional or administrator.

The Role of the School in Suicide Prevention:

Children and adolescents spend a substantial part of their day in school under the supervision of school personnel. Effective suicide and violence prevention is integrated with supportive mental health services, engages the entire school community, and is imbedded in a positive school climate through student behavioral expectations and a trustful student/adult relationship. Therefore, it is crucial for all school staff to be familiar with and watchful for risk factors and warning signs of suicidal behavior. The entire school staff should work to create an environment where students feel safe sharing such information. School psychologists and other crisis team personnel, including the school counselor and school administrator, are trained to intervene when a student is identified at risk for suicide. These individuals conduct suicide risk assessment, warn/inform parents, provide recommendations and

referrals to community services, and often provide follow up counseling and support at school.

Parental Notification and Participation:

Parent notification is a vital part of suicide prevention. Parents need to be informed and actively involved in decisions regarding their child's welfare. Even if a child is judged to be at low risk for suicidal behavior, schools will ask parents to sign a Notification of Emergency Conference form to indicate that relevant information has been provided. These notifications must be documented. Additionally, parents are crucial members of a suicide risk assessment as they often have information critical to making an appropriate assessment of risk, including mental health history, family dynamics, recent traumatic events, and previous suicidal behaviors.

After a school notifies a parent of their child's risk for suicide and provides referral information, the responsibility falls upon the parent to seek mental health assistance for their child. Parents must:

- Continue to take threats seriously: Follow through is important even after the child calms down or informs the parent "they didn't mean it." Avoid assuming behavior is attention seeking.
- Access school supports: If parents are uncomfortable with following through on referrals, they can give the school psychologist permission to contact the referral agency, provide referral information, and follow up on the visit. The school can also assist in providing transportation to get the parent and child to the referral agency.
- Maintain communication with the school. After such an intervention, the school will also provide follow-up supports. Your communication will be crucial to ensuring that the school is the safest, most comfortable place for your child.

Resiliency Factors:

The presence of resiliency factors can lessen the potential of risk factors to lead to suicidal ideation and behaviors. Once a child or adolescent is considered at risk, schools, families, and friends should work to build these factors in and around the youth. These include:

- Family support and cohesion, including good communication.
- Peer support and close social networks.
- School and community connectedness.
- Cultural or religious beliefs that discourage suicide and promote healthy living.
- Adaptive coping and problem-solving skills, including conflict-resolution.
- General life satisfaction, good self-esteem, sense of purpose.
- Easy access to effective medical and me.