

## Lesson-14

# Our social problems



Human beings are social animals. We all live in a society. Since ancient times people have been living in a society. We cannot survive without society. That is why we follow some rules and regulations in the society and live together. In social functions such as weddings, festivals, games and sports we all love to work together. Whenever there is a problem with our neighbours, we help each other. Each member is responsible for the smooth functioning of the area they live in or community to which they belong.

Everyone living in the society is a social animal. Social life is the state in which people need to adjust themselves and live in harmony in the society. But this social life differs from places to places, and in different ethnic groups. For example, the social life of Assamese people is different from the social life of the people of other states. In the same way, the social life of the people living in the hilly areas is different from the social life of the people living in the plains.

Society is a group of individuals. That is, a group of people is called a society where everyone lives together, interacts with each other, exchanges ideas, lives in unity, maintain rules and regulations and gets help from one another. In a society everyone fulfills their duties and responsibilities for the overall betterment of all individuals.

Family, neighbourhood, village, etc. are the units in the society. Family is the basic or primary unit of it. People learn the basics of social survival within the family and the environment. The foundation of social life become stronger with sharing, cooperation and understanding between these social groups.

In various spheres of our personal and social life there are a number of rules and regulations prevalent from ancient time in the society. Over the ages with the change, of time and environment, these rules and regulations have also changed, in fact they are modified. The rules and regulations prevalent in the society are **called social norms**. For example marriage rituals, funeral ceremonies, festivals etc.

- What are the customs and traditions followed in the society in which you live?
- Make a list of some of the common rules and regulations of your family.

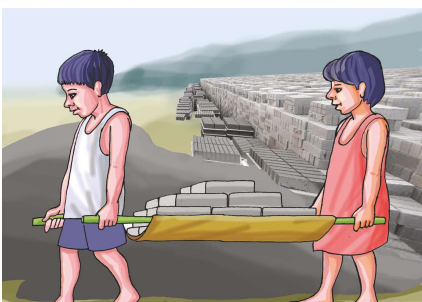
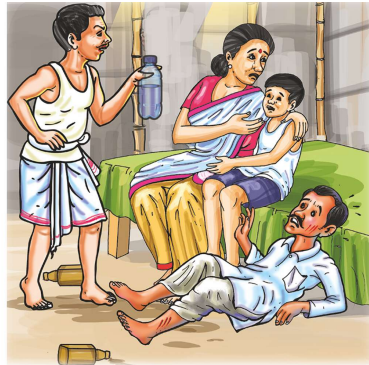
Let us try to find out through an example of a village about the issues related to the society and social life.

*The name of the village is 'Saponpuri'. Saponpuri is an ideal village. All the members of each family living in the village are very happy. Apart from the people of different religions, people speaking different languages live in Saponpuri village. All the people of the village celebrate the festivals and rituals without any distinction between high and low, rich and poor. Each family follows its own rules and regulations in a very disciplined manner. The people of the village are socially aware. Various associations, institutions, clubs, committees, educational institutions, panchayats, etc. work for the betterment of Saponpuri village. The people of the village are vigilant and aware about the practices such as child marriage, dowry, drugs, superstition so that these evil practices do not destroy the unity and solidarity of the village.*

*There is also a village headman in the village. If there is any disagreement among the people of the village for any reason, then the village headman takes the lead in solving the problem. He solves the problem by discussing the issue with the villagers. In this way, all the people of Saponpuri village have been living together for years, maintaining unity through friendship and brotherhood. For all these reasons, this village is appreciated by all as an ideal village.*

### **Discuss in group and answer-**

- Why Saponpuri village is called an ideal village?
- Prepare a note of the area in which you live.
- Is the area where you live an ideal region/village? If so, what are the facilities available?
- If not, what are the disadvantages/problems? Give a few suggestions to solve the problems.
- As a social animal, man loves to live by forming a society. A healthy social environment gives peace to the people of the society and people like to live in such an environment. But sometimes some factors affect the social life and destroy the social environment. As a result the people of the society face obstacles that prevent them from moving forward in a healthy way. Factors that destroy such environments include: poverty, illiteracy, superstition, child labour, drug abuse, domestic violence, dowry system, corruption, lack of transport facilities, long standing attitudes etc.



**Look at the pictures above and discuss in groups-**

Factors	Social problems
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What kind of inconvenience can be faced by people if the roads are broken or damaged roads?</li> <li>2. What kind of problems does flood cause?</li> <li>3. What problems can people face in case of poverty?</li> </ol>	

People can discuss some problems in groups and find a solution to those problems. Let us try to understand from the discussion given in the next page–



**The people of Saponpuri village have gathered in front of the Namghar to discuss about something—**



1

'The condition of the main road of our village is very poor. After a little rain, it becomes unsuitable for commuters. Children going to school also suffer a lot. So we have to make the road.

2

Yes, yes!



4

At present the panchayat does not have enough funds to construct roads. So the panchayat cannot do this work now.



3

Why do we have to build the road when we have our village panchayat? The panchayat is responsible for making roads, repairing bridges, supply drinking water etc.

5

So now there is no other way to improve our roads, isn't it?



7

'Respectable public, we, the members of Rupalim Mahila Samiti, are with you. All the other members of our association will also be with you.

6

The roads of the village is ours. So we will make it. We, the members of the association will work hard for this.



8

We can do a lot of community/social work together in this way. Now let us be united and do the repairing work of the road as much as we can. As soon as the panchayat gets fund we will build the road again strongly and permanently.



- Who came forward for repairing the road of Saponpuri village?
- What was the decision taken to improve the road?
- Did you see any example of people working together in your locality?

If yes, then write briefly the type of work which was done.

If the people in a locality work together most of the problems can be minimised. Saponpuri is an example of that. The unity, cooperation and awareness of the people of Saponpuri village inspired him to do such a tough work despite the lack of money. If we have this awareness, unity and cooperation in our villages then there is nothing we cannot do.

**Let us know about some of the complex social problems that have arisen in our society–**

### **Superstition-**

Superstition is the misconception of a class of people. Believing anything without a detailed and careful consideration is called superstition. For example, while travelling if a cat crosses the road it is believed to be a bad omen. Some people believe in 'Ghost'. The most unreasonable belief is the belief of '**witch**' (**Daini**). The people with a superstitious mind believe an individual of the society to be inauspicious and considers that person responsible for all the disease and trouble in the society. This is superstition.

Superstition prevails in economically backward society or among the illiterate people. Superstition stand as a barrier to reasonable and scientific thinking. Consequently, human intellect does not develop. Thus, the progress of the society is obstructed.

### **Superstitious Practices-**

There are some superstitious practices prevalent in our society. Treatment of a snake bitten person by a Kaviraj, trying to cure a sick person by performing holy rituals and mantras by kaviraj. Due to such misconceptions people die unnecessarily without getting proper treatment.

### **Gender Inequality**

Gender inequality means discrimination between girls and boys. Sometimes due to discrimination, children are not given equal benefits. In some families or societies, the boy is given more importance than the girl child. In the past girls were not even allowed to read or write.

Of course, girls got the opportunity of education after the independence in India. In addition, now that universal free and compulsory primary education has been declared as fundamental right, all children are able to receive equal access to education. The government has adopted innumerable schemes to ensure that the girl child who has become worthless in the society can survive with dignity. Now a slogan has become famous. 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao'. Like men, women have been able to enjoy equal rights in politics, society, education and the workplace.

**Chandra Prabha Saikiani cycled from village to village to facilitate the education of girl child.**

### **Child labour-**

As a result of the financial crisis of the family, the children in different region work as labourers and earn a living as well as support their families financially. These little children work as labourers in brick kilns, coal mines, building roads, carrying sand and stones, as workers in hotels, restaurants and so on. As a result, they are deprived of access to education. In the early days of childhood, they are deprived of their playful life and are forced to work hard to make a living

- Find out from your teachers, what steps have been taken by our government to eliminate child labour.

### **Dowry system-**

The things given to a bride in the marriage is called dowry. Parents or guardians send some of the necessary items as dowry so that the girl can move to a new home without any difficulty. It is a social custom. Dowry has been practised in the society since the past even although it was not a social problem. But sometimes it is seen that the demands for dowry of the bride-groom's family is too high and if the bride's family is unable to meet the demand, the girl is subjected to torture and harassment. Every one in the society should be aware of the adverse effects of this practice. This practice will be eradicated from the society only if the girl child becomes self-reliant with proper education.

- Is there a dowry system in your society or region? If so, what are the steps to be taken to eradicate it?

### **Illiteracy-**

Generally, the people who do not know how to read and write are called illiterate. Since the illiterate people do not know to read and write, they are deprived of reading books, newspapers etc. As a result they have to stay without knowing many things. Due to illiteracy they are deprived and deceived in many cases. It is a social problem. If we can't prevent this, society will not be able to move forward. Our country India currently has total population of over 134 crores. According to the 2011 census, the literacy rate in India is 74.04% where

male literacy rate is (82.14%) and female literacy rate is (65.46%). Even after so many years of independence, women could not make much progress in the field of education the way they should have.

### **Think and write-**

- What can be the problems if one does not know how to read and write?

### **Drug abuse—**

The use of drugs or narcotics has ruined the overall environment of our society. Consuming of drug is not only detrimental to health, but also has a devastating effects on the entire family. These products are- alcohol, cannabis, smoke, bidi, cigarettes etc. Currently it has been observed that the use of these products has ruined the social environment.

### **Child marriage-**

Child marriage is a social problem. Girls are married off before attaining appropriate age of maturity. If the future generations of the country become so unhealthy then the country will not be able to build a proper human society.

- Mention the names and make a list of the various social problems that are seen in your region.

If there is a society, there will be problems. So we have to work together to solve these problems peacefully. When social problems persist in the society for a long time, the discipline of the society is disturbed and an atmosphere of unrest prevails. In order to remove these problems from the society, we need human qualities like mutual cooperation, understanding, sincerity, rational attitude and awareness. Government assistance is needed to address issues such as illiteracy and child labour, domestic violence and population growth.

Currently, the government has enacted the 'Child Labour Act' to stop the practice of child labour. Special schools have been set up for them. The Right to Education Act, 2009 has been introduced in the country to eradicate illiteracy from the society. Presently government has made primary education compulsory for children aged 6-14 years.

The government has tried to address the problem by enacting laws. In addition, a number of organizations have provided support for such work. The mediums such as television, radio, newspapers, posters, slogan street plays etc. has helped in creating awareness among the people in the society to solve these problems.



### Exercise

1. Answer the following:

- a) What do you understand by social problems?
- b) What are the qualities needed to maintain unity in the society?
- c) What are the social problems?
- d) What factors contribute in creating social problems?

2. Fill in the blanks-

- a) We all live forming a \_\_\_\_\_.
- b) \_\_\_\_\_ is a kind of wrong conception of a section of people in the society.
- c) If problem persist for a long time it creates \_\_\_\_\_ in the society.
- d) No problems can be solved if there is lack of awareness and \_\_\_\_\_ among the people.
- e) People who do not know to read and write are called \_\_\_\_\_ people.

3. Match column 'A' with column 'B'

A	B
Superstition has Due to financial problem in family Superstition, gender discrimination, child labour etc. are	child labour is created. social problems no scientific foundation

4. Write the incorrect sentences correctly-

- a) Gaon panchayat and other voluntary organisation can help in solving social problems.
- b) Superstition affects the society.
- c) Gender discrimination is a social problem.
- d) Illiteracy can remove blind faith and superstition from the society.
- e) When there is scarcity of money the children should be engaged as labourers to earn money.

5. Write short notes-

- a) Superstition                      (b) Superstitious practices                      (c) Dowry

6. Write about the role of unity to solve social problems.

