

Changing Social Challenges



At the time of Independence our population was around 37 crores which is 139 crores as of 2021. This means our population has risen by 102 crores in 75 years of independence which comes to average of 1.36 crores each year. As per the forecast made by United Nations we will reach 165 crores by 2050. After that it will settle down and start declining thereafter. This is of course as per predictive statistics but we never know. The average life expectancy which was 32 at the time of independence is now at 70.8 years as per WHO estimates while in case of USA it is average 78 years. We have certainly improved in many areas in terms of social infrastructure, education, employment, rural development, health & hygiene etc. However, we have not been able to keep pace of social development in relation to the growth in population with the result we still have about 40% who live in poor conditions. Many of them do not have still housing, safe drinking water, toilets, education, skill development or employment more so in rural and semi urban areas. We may still have a long way to go in real sense though we may like to be called as a Developed Nation by 2030 or so. We have not

been able to achieve inclusive growth of all segments of the society as yet and a lot needs to be done in this area. Probably this is the main reasons for rising social & family crimes in India.

The growth in population has created a number of social issues as we are not able to offer majority of them a good human living conditions. In terms of UN Human Development Index India ranks at 131 out of 189 countries for the year 2020 and it has slipped down to 134 in the year 2021. On account of Covid 19 lockdown until recently many manufacturing or service sector units are either totally closed or have reduced workforce drastically. There has been loss of revenue and loss of jobs more into unorganized sector which contributes to as high as 50% of GDP which employs as high as 80% of labour force. This has resulted in financial crisis for two reasons first being loss of job and the second being medical expenses due to Covid 19. The situation now appears to be under control and the things are improving on the job market and livelihood both in organized as well as unorganized sector. However, the impact is so severe that many families have been financially uprooted with mounting debts. As high as 30% of the units in unorganized sector have been permanently closed with no hopes for revival but the time will prove. Generation of school going children are the affected most as many from semi urban and rural areas have closed doors for education altogether will have multiple adverse impact in times to come. The only ray of hope left is improving business sentiments on account of Diwali and bumper crops due to good monsoon in India which will improve agriculture income and employment substantially in the near future.

All these facts have added fuel to the fire of social issues, law & order, thefts and other social crimes significantly in the recent times. Online frauds by way of luring citizens for gift from abroad, updating of bank details or cell number threatening for expiry, snatching of cell phones from walking women or senior citizens on the roads, suicides, vehicle thefts, house breaking, bank dacoities, murder for the sake of gold ornaments or cash etc. In spite of this the citizens are still not alert and every day many of the citizens are defrauded online by luring them to short gains. The list of social crimes is long and it is really a challenge for the police department to tackle and resolve so many crimes and bring criminals to justice. In a few cases those who were released on bail have continued to commit crimes. This shows there is absolutely no threat of police as well as law & order. Just imagine if the Police is absent at the traffic signal how many vehicles break traffic rules. In the recent drive carried out by Highway Safety Patrol about 70,000 motorists were fined Rs.1,000 each for lane cutting and

exceeding speed limits during August-October, 2021. Thus the mind set here is breaking rules is as if their fundamental right. There are financial crimes but in addition to this rapes, sexual harassment, cheating, loan defaults, corruption are phenomenal in number and they are rising in a geometric proportion is a matter of concern.

National Crimes Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India has published National Crimes Bureau Report for the year 2020 on 13th September, 2021. This Report gives only Statistics of the Crimes State wise but does not throw any light on the reasons, observations and the action plan to improve on the law & order in the country and reduce crimes. In fact this should also have been done. Among other things the said Report says that there has been 28% rise in crimes over the year 2019 . The total number of crimes reported in the year 2019 were 32,25,597 out of which 67.2% were charge sheeted as against 42,54,356 with a charge sheet rate of 75.8%. These higher number of crimes were reported though there was a lock down across the country during most of 2020. With this trend I am afraid that during the year 2021 and 2022 it will be alarmingly high since we are now gradually opening up and removing the lockdown restrictions. The above figure is only of reported crimes. If you add up those crimes which are not reported then situation is grim and probably beyond my imagination. If you divide the above figure by 365 days a year the per day crime reported figure is 11,655 for the year ended March 2020 for the country as a whole. This does not however include the crimes which have not been registered with the Policy authorities. I am assuming the same number of crimes as reported might have been committed which are going unreported or unrecorded. This means on an average 20,000 crimes might have been committed per day in India which may go close to 30,000 per day during 2020-21 and 2021-22. Following table shows Top 6 States/UTs total number of crimes as per report during 2020.

Rank	State	No. of Crimes Reported
1.	Tamilnadu	8,91,700
2.	Maharashtra	3,94,017
3.	Gujarat	3,81,849
4.	Uttar Pradesh	3,55,110
5.	Madhya Pradesh	2,83,881
6.	Delhi NCR	2,49,192

(Source: Crimes in India 2020 – NCRB Report Page 9)

On account of Covid 19 restrictions most of the school children were moved onto to virtual class rooms. This has paved way for substantial rise in the crimes of child abuse. Majority of such crimes include sexual abuse and sharing pornography videos and information. It has shown 400% rise in such crimes over 2019 when there were 164 crimes reported which rose to 842 in the year 2020. Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Kerala are top 4 States having reported majority of such child abuse crimes. These crimes reported are like an iceberg and we never know the actual number of such crimes which are not registered on account of concern of social stigma. This is another area where the parents and teachers need to keep watch and monitor on the usage of cell phones by children from time to time.

The above figures are eye opener and it is very important for all stakeholders in the Society to think and act fast to improve on the law & order in the country. The stakeholder include you and me as a part of this society and in addition local police administration, Government, Political parties, Education systems, Law makers, Media, Social organizations, Religious leaders, Teachers and Family as a unit. The social fabric has to change, the value system has to change, the cultural values need to change and deterrence of law & order is the only way to change this towards betterment. Judiciary alone cannot do justice to such a volume with the existing laws. If the Community in which we live is producing so many criminals then who is responsible for this? It is all collectively have to think and act together to reduce crimes in this country if you really want improvement in Human Development Index. If we all are able to work collectively in harmony it will give lot of social and economic benefits in all walks of life. We need to change laws which bring criminals to justice in a much lesser time, bring deterrence of law enforcement agencies, change laws wherever required, increase number of criminal courts to judicious and prompt disposal of cases and make the legal system transparent and efficient enough to ensure that innocent are scot free while criminals are punished adequate. It is also essential to modify IPC to introduce severe punishments against certain crimes of rape, murder, sexual abuse, money laundering, corruption etc. to drain out and punish criminal minds.

The Global Peace Index (GPI) published by Institute of Economics & Peace, from Sydney, Australia has developed this Index which takes into consideration as many as 23 social indicators. These indicators include many socio, economic and political status in each of the

country. The said Institute has rated following 10 countries as Safest in the World for the year 2021:

1. Iceland
2. New Zealand
3. Portugal
4. Austria
5. Denmark
6. Canada
7. Singapore
8. Czech Republic
9. Japan
10. Switzerland

India stands at 135 out of 163 countries in the world as per GPI for the year 2021 while moving up by 2 numbers as compared to 2020. This means we have a long way to go in this area. Bhutan is the only country which has outpaced all neighbouring countries and is among Top 20 in terms of GPI. The GPI of the neighbouring countries for the year 2021 is as under:

Sr.No.	Country	Rank out of 163 countries
1.	Bhutan	19
2.	Bangladesh	91
3.	Sri Lanka	95
4.	India	135
5.	Pakistan	150

(Source : GPI 2021)

In addition to this we need to change value systems, way of thinking and attitudinal changes in looking at various social and religious beliefs, issues and try to bring harmony to the extent possible. Give adequate publicity to those who do honest and good work for the society, reward them suitably, give dignity and status to such acts much more than what is today. Media could play a significant role of a change agent in this respect. If we do not take this situation seriously, I am afraid, we may be known as a Country of Criminals. Control of social media circulating fake videos or write ups instigating values, beliefs and sentiments is also very critical now. It is also equally important to educate the citizens to safeguard their interests on a priority basis in this respect. If this continues as it is, would adversely affect our credibility and reputation globally and bring morale down. This may also affect tourism,

hospitality, migration, investments, business confidence, employment and overall socio economic development of the country. Our country at the moment have a lots of challenges and the Government of India as well as respective State Governments are presumably doing their best whatever is possible. Central Government as well as all State Governments must come together to prepare a road map to bring crimes under control and bring criminal to justice as soon as possible. Not only this but all political parties should come together on a common platform to deal with this situation treating it as a National Calamity the way we all fought against Covid 19. But you and me both have to join the chorus in improving this social situation and mitigating social crimes in the country to make this a best and safest country in the world. We are far away from this dream but only efforts will make us reach Zero Crime Country, a dream for the generation next.

The Government of India is taking out many initiatives in the area of Digital Literacy, Mid day Meal, National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Skill Development Program Skill India, MGNREGA, Atal Pension Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana etc. However, I have not come across any project or a program by any Govt. agency as yet which will create social awareness among citizens on crime control, stay safe from crimes, precautions to be taken, legal rights and protection to women & children etc. Such a program is absolutely essential and needs to be circulated on social & print media as soon as possible by taking help of celebrities as brand ambassadors. We also need to carry out programs on financial inclusion of all segments of the society to ensure that all are provided with at least basic necessities of good human life like drinking water, sanitation, adequate food, education and employment opportunities for livelihood for all. This may, to some extent, help in containing social crimes.

Let us hope that all the stakeholders are together in reducing the crimes in this country and make it safest country in the world. Jai Hind.

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