



# **M.P. Institute of Social Science Research**

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## **National Seminar on Social Development of Vulnerable Groups: Issues and Challenges in Contemporary India ( 28 & 29 November, 2019)**

**Sponsored by  
ICSSR, New Delhi**

### **The Context**

Social development is about improving the well-being of every individual in society so that they can reach their full potential. Vulnerable groups are those groups whose resource endowment is inadequate to provide sufficient income from any available source. People belonging to vulnerable section have some specific characteristics that make them at higher risk of falling into poverty and social exclusion. In India, there are various vulnerable sections including women without having social support, extremely excluded Scheduled Castes, Schedules Tribes especially Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG), orphaned children, disabled, beggars, homeless, migrants, senior citizens, people living with HIV/AIDS, transgender and many other groups who are failed to demand their entitlements as a Indian citizen due to their vulnerable existence.

According to 2011 Census, there are 5.6 crore widow persons in India. It is a crucial fact that 78 per cent of them are women and 0.45% of the total widows are the child widows in the age group of 10-19 years. It is a matter of concern that we still have 1.94 lakh child widows despite the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006. Widows in our society are facing specific challenges pertaining to loss of adolescence, access to employment, skill development, property rights, shelter, and access to proper healthcare.

India is the home of near about 1108 Scheduled Castes (16.6 per cent, historically Scheduled Castes are the Depressed Castes suffering from worst form of social exclusion. After independence several protective and affirmative action policies are implemented to ameliorate the condition of the Scheduled Castes. Despite the concerted efforts, still some of the Scheduled Castes still involved in demeaning activities like manual scavenging and leading vulnerable life in contemporary India.

There are 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) in India, notorious for their abject poverty and malnutrition. They have been residing in the remote forested track in different states and today facing marginalisation due to depletion of forest resources and not having alternative skill to manage their livelihood in the upcoming situation. Majority of them started migrating to urban places and facing exploitation and insecure livelihood in the place of migration.

India is home to 20 million orphans which constitute 4 per cent of India's child population. Most of these children have been abandoned by their parents. It is estimated that only 0.3 % of these orphans are children whose parents have actually died. The high proportion of abandoned children among orphans highlights the fact that poverty is a major reason behind the situation. India's central and eastern regions were found to be worse affected than the north and the south. Orphaned children are greatly in need of care in protection that is most vulnerable to poverty, child labour, sexual abuse and child trafficking.

According to 2011 Census, there are 2.68 crore disabled persons in India, which constitutes 2.21 % of the total population of our country. Persons of disability have reduced access to education, employment and other socio-economic problems which make them vulnerable. The Government enacted The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation)

Act, 1995 and strives to create skill development, employment and Accessible India Campaign for creation of accessible environment for disabled. Still a lot has to be undertaken to bring the disabled at par with the mainstream society.

Beggary is a complex socio-economic problem in Indian society. According to 2011 Census there are 4.13 lakh people depending on alms seeking activities. Beggars are most vulnerable section of society trapped in poverty, deprivation and helplessness. They lack basic livelihood opportunities and face severe forms of social exclusion. At present beggary is considered as a social evil engendering problem of public health, decency and law and order issue in India. Only punitive measure declaring them as criminals cannot curb the social menace and a deeper understanding and deliberations on the root cause of the phenomena can minimise vulnerability of the beggars in our society.

According to 2011 Census, there are 139 million internal migrants in our country (accounting for inter and intra-state movement). Seasonal migrants dominate the low-paying, hazardous and informal market jobs in key sectors in urban destinations, such as construction, hotel, textile, manufacturing, transportation, services, domestic work etc. These migrants work in unorganised and chaotic labour market. They regularly face conflicts and disputes at worksites. The common issues they face are non-payment of wages, physical abuse, accidents and even death. It is high time that proper policies are rolled out to reduce their marginalisation and exploitation.

The percentage of the elderly in India has been growing at an increasing rate. The share of population over the age of 60 is projected to increase from 8 percent in 2015 to 19 per cent in 2050. India, a significant portion of aged persons is dependent on other for their maintenance. Only minuscule persons are covered under social security scheme of formal sector. Due to rapid modernisation and urbanisation informal support and family structures is also dwindling very fast and making the older persons towards financial, social, physical and psychological vulnerabilities, therefore a proper plan of action should be chalked out to tackle the vulnerabilities of aged.

The total number of people living with HIV (PLHIV) in India is estimated at 21.40 Lakhs. The socio-economic condition of people surviving with AIDS is most vulnerable in our society. On the other hand, HIV/AIDS is a family disease, and when one member of the family has HIV/AIDS, the impact can be felt throughout the entire family. Stigma, social exclusion, threat, loss of livelihood, discrimination at health settings, and social rejection by other people can lead to physical and mental problems for the patient as well their family member. Therefore, careful support mechanism should be evolved to ease out the vulnerability among them.

The 2011 Census revealed that the total population of transgender is 4.88 lakh in our country. Transgender are often ousted by their own biological family or run away at an early age due to harassment. Being disinherited from their family property and with no means to live, transgender live under the tutelage of *gurus* (mentors) in closed communities. A blinkered and exclusionary approach towards the transgender community has been causing multiple exclusions in their daily life. Societal stigma, lack of social support, violence related stress often lead to depression and suicidal tendencies among them. Transgender also face discrimination in accessing healthcare services due to institutional and/or individual prejudices. The newly acknowledged gender category has been excluded from all facets of human rights and it is a crucial time their issues should be addressed with a right based approach.

In the Constitution of India, several provisions and measures were enshrined to minimise their vulnerabilities among these marginalised groups. Several ministries, commissions and statutory bodies have been constituted and working for easing out the constraints faced by these marginalised groups. However, these groups are still facing multifaceted constraints for their social development as compared to other mainstream social groups. The main constraints for these groups is lack of voice for their entitlements caused by their helpless position which engendering vicious cycle for their further marginalisation and social exclusion.

Keeping these facts in background, Madhya Pradesh Institute of Social Science Research, Ujjain proposes to organise a national seminar on 'Social Development of Vulnerable Groups: Issues and Challenges in Contemporary India' (28 & 29 November, 2019). The salient objective of this proposed seminar is to identify and deliberate on the vulnerability faced by the vulnerable groups in contemporary India and to suggest actionable mid-way corrections in the social inclusion policies being implemented for their social development.

## Sub-themes for the Seminar

- I. Vulnerability among women and constraints for their social development.
- II. Extremely excluded SC/ST/ PVTGs and issues related to their social inclusion.
- III. Vulnerability among children and issues for their social development.
- IV. Vulnerability among disabled, elderly and constraints for their social security.
- V. Beggars in the modern society and challenges for their annihilation.
- VI. Vulnerability among internal migrants and issues related to their entitlements.
- VII. Vulnerability among people's living with HIV and issues related their dignified life.
- VIII. Transgender in the contemporary India and issues related their social development.

Social vulnerability is determined by socio-economic factors i.e., processes of inequality, poverty, marginalisation, lack of entitlements related to food, shelter, education, health , social dignity and lack of access to assets necessary for a respectful life. The Directive Principle of State Policy of Constitution of India has laid down certain directives to ameliorate the condition of the marginalised section of society for a dignified life. After seven decades of our independence certain section of our society still excluded from the mainstream society in terms of their basic entitlements due to their vulnerable position. As a welfare state, it is the duty of the state to identify the unaddressed constraints faced by women, SC/STs; disabled, elderly; destitute; migrants, PLHIV and transgender to strive for an equitable and just society. The seminar will strive to highlight the unaddressed vulnerabilities among these marginalised groups and will suggest roadmap for providing them basic entitlements as Indian citizen.

We invite you to participate in the National Seminar on 'Social Development of Vulnerable Groups: Issues and Challenges in Contemporary India' (28 & 29 November, 2019). Research Paper (5000 to 8000 words along with an Abstract of 250 words, APA style reference in MS word) is required to be submitted for the national seminar. Needless to mention, MPISR will reimburse the railway travel cost and will arrange local hospitality for the invited delegates during the seminar.

## Important Dates

**Submission of ABSTRACT: October 20, 2019**  
**Selection of ABSTRACT and Intimation to Participants: 22 October, 2019**  
**Submission of FULL PAPER: 15 November, 2019**

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