CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL ISSUES: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

In this age of fast technological development and globalisation, people all around the globe are facing complicated social problems that need new ways of thinking about things. This study of contemporary social issues covers a broad range of themes, including economic disparity, ethical concerns, policy implications, and the impact of literature and media on public opinion. The research utilises a variety of academic publications to demonstrate how globalisation has both exacerbated and created opportunities for socioeconomic inequality. Ethical theories like care ethics and consequentialist views could be very helpful for policymakers who want to protect vulnerable groups. Moreover, literary and artistic representations serve as powerful instruments for social critique, influencing public perception and governmental discourse. The research dives into how sociology overlaps with digital anthropology, healthcare, and environmental sociology, emphasising the need of multidisciplinary approaches in addressing modern issues. Embracing inclusive strategies that include moral reasoning, policy reform, and international cooperation is essential as societies continue to change. The study concluded that public engagement, new policies, and continuous research were essential for addressing contemporary social issues and advancing sustainable development.

Keywords: Contemporary Social issues, globalization, ethics, policy reform.

INTRODUCTION

In any particular field, anything that has happened recently or is still relevant to the here and now might be considered a contemporary issue. In practically every topic of interest, there are contemporary issues. (Kayaalp et al., 2021)
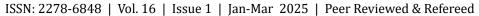
Social issues are problems, morality-related debates, or both that directly or indirectly impact a large portion of a society's population. Social issues are those that have an impact on a large number of people in a society and can only be explained by causes beyond the control of the individual. Social issues affect everyone in the society and can include competing interests. A serial killer who terrorises a community for months or even years is an example of a problem, but it's not a social issue in and of itself; rather, it's a component of crime as a whole. Environmental issues, smoking, traffic fatalities, drug misuse, violence, and murder are all examples of social problems.

1.1. Contemporary Social Issues

A period when many cultures and communities are coming into closer contact—and in some instances, experiencing rising conflict—makes the insights obtained from studying modern social issues very important (Diego, 2020). The world's cultures are still grappling with age-old questions of gender, public health, identity, class, and civil society. The links between the known and the unknown, the old and the new, the person and the collective are explored via a variety of research techniques. The overarching goal of this prerequisite is to introduce students to the social sciences so that they may build upon what they learn in their majors, electives, and/or minors. (Baikady & Gao, 2021)

1.2. Theoretical Perspectives on social issues

The study of social issues is guided by three theoretical frameworks in sociology: symbolic interactionist theory, conflict theory, and functionalist theory (Abdullahi et al., 2013). The social issues

that these viewpoints address are distinct from one another. When combined, their perspectives on social issues provide more light than any of them can provide on its own.

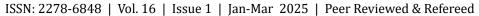| Theoretical perspective	Major assumptions	Views of social problems
Functionalism	A robust society can't exist without social stability, which in turn requires sufficient socialisation and integration (Ekta P, 2023). Important roles in maintaining social stability are played by society's social institutions. Even while gradual social change is preferable, sudden shifts pose a danger to established norms and values.	While social issues might undermine a society's stability, they do not always indicate underlying flaws in the society's structure. Instead of making drastic changes overnight, social reform should be implemented gradually to address social issues. Even if they have a detrimental impact, social issues frequently have a purpose for society.
Conflict theory	Inequality occurs often in society and is based on several criteria such as social class, race, and gender. A more equitable society, free of social disparity, can only be achieved via massive societal transformation.	As a result of inherent flaws in society's framework, social issues reflect and amplify existing gender, racial, and class disparities, among other aspects of inequality. Alterations to society's fundamental makeup are necessary for long-term success in addressing social issues.
Symbolic interactionism	Instead of just learning the roles society has assigned them, people build their roles via their interactions with others. During this exchange, people socially build the truth of their circumstances by negotiating how they understand them. Words and body language play an important role in helping them communicate effectively.	When people engage with one another, social issues emerge. It is common for individuals to pick up socially harmful behaviours from others around them. Perceptions of social issues are also picked up by individuals from others around them.

1.3. Global Perspectives on Social Issues

Economic Inequality and Poverty

Disparities in wealth distribution are becoming even wider between countries, adding to the global concerns of economic inequality and poverty. While a small number of people in industrialised economies earn huge fortunes, many in developing countries lack access to healthcare, education, and employment. Globalisation, technical advancements, and a lack of social welfare systems all contribute to this inequality (Jiang, 2023). Notwithstanding the endeavours of international agencies such as the World Bank and the United Nations to alleviate poverty, structural challenges include inequities in educational access and financial resources hinder progress. Governments all throughout the world are thinking about implementing policies like universal basic income, progressive taxes, and economic empowerment initiatives in an attempt to lessen economic disparity. (Hakizimana, 2017)

Education and Literacy Challenges

Millions of people throughout the globe struggle to fulfil their basic human right to an adequate education because of factors such as poverty, gender bias, and inadequate facilities. The persistent underfunding of education in numerous developing nations has resulted in overcrowding, a lack of resources, and inexperienced instructors. Issues such as increasing tuition costs and disparities in the

accessibility of digital learning are also being addressed in developed countries. Online learning sites and AI-powered learning tools are examples of new technologies that could help find answers. But because of the digital gap, they can't have as much of an effect on low-income areas. Investment in educational reforms, teacher training programs, and legislation that fosters fair learning opportunities is essential to tackle these challenges.

Unemployment and Workforce Dynamics

The global labour market is changing as a result of new technology, evolving economies, and shifting geopolitical forces. Automation and artificial intelligence are replacing traditional jobs, which is creating new opportunities in tech-driven enterprises while also increasing unemployment in some places. Compared to countries that rely solely on traditional educational models, those that invest in vocational training and have flexible labour legislation are better suited to address unemployment. In various regions of the globe, gender inequality and ageism further exacerbate the existing obstacles to labour participation. In response to these concerns, governments and corporations are providing funding for initiatives that promote entrepreneurship, teach individuals new skills, and allow employees to adjust to an industry that is constantly evolving.

Social Issue	Key Challenges	Potential Solutions
Economic Inequality & Poverty	Wealth concentration, lack of financial inclusion, poor social welfare systems	Progressive taxation, universal basic income, economic empowerment programs
Education & Literacy Challenges	Inadequate funding, digital divide, gender disparities	Investment in education, teacher training, online learning accessibility
Unemployment & Workforce Dynamics	Job displacement due to automation, skill mismatch, gender disparities	Upskilling programs, vocational training, flexible work policies

1.4. Governance and Policy Interventions

Governments and international organisations are essential in tackling modern social issues through policy formulation, budget allocation, and assuring successful implementation. National governments establish legal frameworks to oversee areas such as healthcare, education, and employment, while global organisations such as the United Nations (UN), World Health Organisation (WHO), and International Monetary Fund (IMF) offer direction, money, and collaboration platforms (Li, 2023). International agreements and global best practices frequently influence policies that prioritise economic growth, poverty reduction, and social justice. However, problems like unstable governments, corruption, and inefficient government agencies make it harder for these measures to work. Increasing transparency, strengthening governance systems, and encouraging the people to be involved in making policy can make these efforts much more effective.

Policy Frameworks for Social Change

Critical issues including inequality, unemployment, and public health are the targets of social policy. Legislative actions, economic plans, and social welfare programs frequently come together in such systems. Policies that promote inclusive growth include progressive taxes, universal healthcare, and gender equality laws. In many nations, governments work with private companies and civil society organisations to implement substantial and long-term changes (Tan, 2013). The efficacy of such programs relies on their adaptation to evolving societal demands, successful execution at the grassroots level, and regular assessment to pinpoint deficiencies and opportunities for enhancement. To ensure meaningful social change, policymakers must adopt evidence-based approaches, engage with stakeholders, and leverage technological advancements for efficient service delivery.

LITERATURE REVIEW

(Siegel, 2022) This study set out to examine the role of care ethics in reducing the harmful effects of social hazards on marginalised communities. For this study, the researchers combed through a mountain of literature on topics such as care ethics, social dangers, social exclusion, autonomy, justice, dignity, and human rights. In general, they sought to determine how the ethics of care may aid in preventing and shielding the socially excluded from the ill effects of social hazards and current issues. People with disabilities and other socially excluded and vulnerable groups may greatly benefit from care ethics while policy is being developed, according to the study. Care ethics offers fresh perspectives for newly developed social policies, and academics have also found a number of elements.
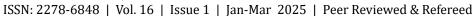
(Gopikrishna, 2023) Issues like over-harvesting of natural resources and human-induced warming, which affect everyone and need widespread human collaboration, are exacerbated by globalisation. What, however, does globalisation portend for the necessary collaboration to address such global social challenges? An easily understandable film might provide a simple response to the complicated topic. Not every artist has what it takes to depict social justice in their work. It is impossible to use films to convey moral principles and yet make money. The movie business is unique in its ability to both imagine and realise the seemingly impossible. From this vantage point, we can see how a once-icon corporation may transform into a social hero, reshaping society via the use of politics and violence.

(AL-QUTAIBI, 2016) This study outlined American modern play, a significant literary form that emerged in the 20th century and addressed pressing social issues facing American society at the time. It offers an in-depth analysis of Arthur Miller's 'All My Sons,' focussing on the play's discussion of modern social issues. The tension between national goals and individual and family priorities was the primary research question. The research illustrated the play's handling of this pressing social issue in modern America. In order to support his family during the war, the hero "Joe Keller"—a manufacturer—sends broken head cylinders to the United States Air Force. Subsequently, the dramatist broadens the perspective to reveal the authority's corruption and the subsequent exoneration and release of Keller. At the conclusion of the play, Keller takes his own life as a form of self-punishment after being made aware of his error by his son Larry's letter and his other son Chris's comments. Those who betray their nations should be prepared to face the consequences of their actions, as the play makes clear.

(Jondhale, 2012) Many modern civilisations are facing formidable problems as a result of modern social issues, including inequality, mental health, climate change, and digital revolution. If we want to understand these difficulties and find effective solutions, sociological theories may help. A more just, healthy, and resilient future may be achieved when societies undertake policy changes, strengthen support networks, promote sustainable behaviours, and tackle digital problems.

(Braun & Dreiling, 2018) Over the course of many decades, the nation-state and policy solutions within it have been the principal foci of sociological research and practice concerning social issues. We propose rethinking analytical frameworks that attempt to explain, treat, or solve social problems in order to make our case for a more global approach to studying these issues. We begin by taking a look at a number of transnational processes that provide light on how public issues are tearing nation-states apart and creating new arenas where global social problems may originate and be contested. Afterwards, we provide a concise overview of globalization's recent past, arguing that new, globally unique social issues are triggered by both the forms and effects of world-historical processes. The study provided an analytical framework for taking social issues research and practice on a global scale, drawing on social problems theory as an adaption. This international perspective on social issues is shown by two examples.

(Simmons, 2023) This study investigated three contemporary sociological issues within health professions curriculum by examining a graduate-entry medical school in rural Australia. It does so by using three extremely relevant and political examples. Sociologists are now investigating three issues:

the health of refugees and asylum seekers, sustainability, and rurality. Questions such as the relevance of sociology to health professions education, the advantages it offers to prospective students, and the most effective means of incorporating sociology into health professions curriculum were the focus of the study.
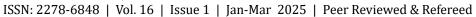
(Schnepp et al., 2022) Ethical frameworks are vital in today's complicated and linked world because they help people and communities make the right choices. People may use the ideas and frameworks provided by these ethical systems to guide their decisions about right and wrong and appropriate behaviour in different contexts. People may utilise the consequentialist approach as an ethical framework when deciding what to do. The results of an action are what establish its morality, under the consequential theory of ethics. The significance of thinking about the consequences of a choice before committing to it is highlighted by this method. The consequentialist theory of utilitarianism seeks to maximise the sum of human pleasure or utility, and it is an example of this school of thought.

(Ponmani, 2020) The social issues facing modern India were the focus of the article. Modern culture is vividly depicted in the book The White Tiger. The exploitative struggles and struggles of India's lower class are brought to light. The work addresses the pressing social issues of religion, caste, and class in a realistic way. The oppression and exploitation of society's most vulnerable members is its central theme. Many important social and cultural issues are addressed, including the plight of the Indian people, including poverty, famine, corruption, violence, and terrorism. In the novel The White Tiger, the main character Balram wants to start his own business so he can provide for his family. He stands for the working class. In seven letters, he writes to Premier Wen Jiabao of China. The contrast between India's emergence as a contemporary global economy and the very pitiful state of its middle-class working people is the basis of the novel's central topic. It depicts contemporary India in all its brutal, genuine reality. One of Arvind Adiga's main points is that the downtrodden are only waiting for their lives to be improved. Examining Adiga's The White Tiger through the lens of modern Indian social issues was the purpose of the research.

(Maharana & Acharya, 2024) New directions in social science research are embracing a wide range of multidisciplinary methods to better understand and solve the problems facing modern society. The article delved into important developments impacting the area, such as the incorporation of data science methods, the ascent of digital anthropology, and the increasing focus on environmental sociology. Topics covered include cultural studies' influence on identity formation and conventions, the effects of globalisation, and the intersectionality of many social categories. Emerging fields including health sociology, critical data studies, and diaspora and migration studies were also emphasised in the article. It sheds light on the changing terrain of social science research and what it means for comprehending social dynamics and human behaviour by analysing these tendencies.

(Fatemi & Abdullah, 2023) By analysing the impact of Iran's social and political climate on contemporary art from 1989 to the present, this paper finds that Iranian artists' artworks have been reflecting social issues with critical viewpoints since the late 90s. When artists began to give serious consideration to the ideas behind their works and art became a form of self-expression in the 1960s and 1970s, these critical perspectives emerged. This viewpoint matured and flourished during Khatami's administration. There are two primary causes for these shifts: first, the expansion and improvement of technological capabilities; and second, governmental policies that aim to foster open political and social spaces where artists may operate and criticise. Not only did artists continue to reflect social issues in their works despite increasing restrictions and censorship in subsequent eras, but these issues are also one of the primary subjects of the new generation of artists. This is a remarkable testament to the power and influence of mass media and technology.

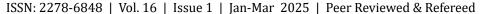**Major findings from the literature review**

Author(s) & Year	Focus Area	Findings
Siegel (2022)	Ethics of Care & Social Risks	Explores how ethics of care can mitigate risks for socially excluded groups. Highlights its role in shaping policies for vulnerable communities, particularly individuals with disabilities.
Gopikrishna (2023)	Globalization & Social Dilemmas	Examines how globalization intensifies social dilemmas like resource exploitation and climate change. Emphasizes the role of cinema in portraying social justice and influencing public perception.
Al-Qutaibi (2016)	Literature & Social Critique	Analyzes Arthur Miller's *All My Sons*, focusing on conflicts between personal and national interests. Highlighted themes of corruption and moral responsibility.
Jondhale (2012)	Sociological Theories & Modern Issues	Discusses contemporary concerns like inequality, mental health, climate change, and digital transformation. Emphasizes policy reforms and sustainable development.
Braun & Dreiling (2018)	Globalization & Social Problems	Advocates for a global perspective on social issues, moving beyond national policies. Suggests transnational cooperation to address emerging challenges.
Simmons (2023)	Sociology in Health Education	Investigates the integration of sociology in medical curricula, particularly in rural Australia. Addresses topics like refugee health, sustainability, and rural medical care.
Schnepp et al. (2022)	Ethical Decision-Making	Explores ethical frameworks such as consequentialism and utilitarianism. Discusses how these principles guide moral decision-making in complex social contexts.
Ponmani (2020)	Social Issues in Indian Literature	Analyzes *The White Tiger* to highlight socio-economic disparities in India. Focuses on themes of poverty, class struggles, and systemic corruption.
Maharana & Acharya (2024)	Emerging Trends in Social Science	Discusses interdisciplinary research trends, including digital anthropology, environmental sociology, and migration studies. Highlights the impact of globalization on social structures.
Fatemi & Abdullah (2023)	Contemporary Iranian Art & Social Commentary	Examines how Iranian artists reflect social and political changes in their work. Highlights the role of technology and media in sustaining artistic critique despite censorship.

CONCLUSION

When contemporary social issues are examined from a global viewpoint, it becomes clear that countries all over the globe are facing difficulties ranging from globalisation and changing sociopolitical environments to economic inequality and ethical issues. The literature reviewed highlights the complex
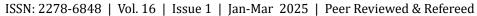
link between governance, policymaking, and social well-being, emphasising the importance of ethics, media, and interdisciplinary research in resolving these issues.

A consistent topic in several research is the influence of globalisation on contemporary social challenges. It has facilitated economic growth and cultural exchange; however, it has also exacerbated issues such as resource depletion, climate change, and social inequality. The necessity of moral responsibility in policy formulation and decision-making is emphasised by ethical considerations, as they are debated in relation to care ethics and consequentialist frameworks. Film and books, among other forms of art and writing, are strong tools for social critique that make people more aware of and willing to talk about these important issues.

The significance of multidisciplinary methods in comprehending social developments is further highlighted by the relationship between sociology and healthcare, as well as the function of newer fields like digital anthropology and environmental sociology. The instance of modern Iranian art reveals how technology and media continue to impact social narratives despite constraints. In conclusion, addressing contemporary social issues requires a holistic and collaborative approach that integrates ethical reasoning, policy innovation, and cultural awareness.

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