



A STUDY ON PERCEIVED SOCIAL PROBLEM AS OPINED BY THE INHABITANTS BELONGING TO KOLKATA CITY

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ABSTRACT The aim of the present investigation is to study the perceived social problem as opined by the inhabitants belonging to North, Central and South zone of Kolkata city. A group of 300 individuals belonging to three zones of Kolkata city were selected as sample. Perceived Social Problem Questionnaire along with a General Information Schedule were administered to the selected group of subjects by giving proper instruction. Findings revealed that the male inhabitants belonging to North versus Central zone of Kolkata city differ significantly in terms of perceived social problem. The same is true for South versus North zone of Kolkata city. On the other hand, no significant difference was observed in case of Central versus South zone. The same comparison is true for female group. Besides this, gender-wise comparison reveals significant difference between the inhabitants belonging to Central zone of Kolkata city in terms of perceived social problem. But no significant difference was observed in case of North and South zone of Kolkata city. Adequate measures may be taken to get rid of the problem.

KEYWORDS : *Perceived Social Problems, North, Central and South zone of Kolkata city.*

INTRODUCTION:

Social problem is a condition that has negative consequences. The nature of social problem has been relative to a particular environment, place and time respectively. Like all social phenomena, social problems are 'social constructs' - that is, they are social conditions, activities, attitudes and so on that at some stage may be perceived as 'problems', although they might have existed in society for some time without being seen in this way. The change in perceptions signifies a change in values, attitudes or interests, or new knowledge and awareness of a real or potential threat. On the other hand, certain phenomena that might be perceived initially as social problems but that acquire a somewhat 'permanent' character may also acquire the character of 'normalcy' and so obtain acceptance by society. Paradoxically, this change in attitude may be assisted by, and be an outcome of, the methods of intervention initially applied to control, attenuate, or solve the perceived problem (Jamrozik, 2011). Besides, the most common causes of social problem recurrent in human history from the dawn of time are war, unemployment, economic deprivation, an outbreak of diseases and its accomplice (Lufkin, 2017). All these forms the basis and the nature of the social problem from the global north to the global south. The basic causes of the social problem are structural and individual related. Social structure is the expression for relatively stable patterns of social behavior and relationships among people. It means how a society is organized. The structural cause of a social problem revolves around the way and manner the socio-economic, and political administrators' function while the individual factor can single handedly engineer some problems - by initiating a social movement (Uzodike & Maiangwa, 2012; Akanni, 2014; Aborisade, 2017). A major aspect of social structure is social stratification, which refers to inequality among people with regard to important social factors including access to education, income, property, power, and prestige. Social stratification can be a major source of social problems if inequality of access becomes too great. Social problems, due to their very nature, can be adequately explained only in the context of the society in which they occur. Furthermore, although some social problems (e.g., violence in public places) may be experienced by the whole population of a society, others (e.g., unemployment among young people) may be experienced only by certain individuals or social groupings with similar characteristics. Most social problems do not occur in, or are not experienced in, the same frequency or intensity throughout the entire social structure (Jamrozik, 2011).

Worthy of note, a social problem can also necessitate another social problem from anywhere in the world (Uzodike & Maiangwa, 2012). For instance, unemployment or underemployment in any nation can stir up the likelihood of poverty, poor standard of living, low cost of living, health issues to mention but a few. On another note, war as a significant social problem usually comes with other acquaintances - homelessness, famine, sexual assault, homicide, genocide to mention a few. Other causes of a social problem include feeble mindedness of the

individual, individual's consciousness, segregation/marginalization, globalization, industrialization, leadership aptitude, weak social structure especially the political and economic base, to mention a few (Uzodike & Maiangwa, 2012; Ijewereme & Dunmade, 2014; Aborisade, 2017). The implications of any social problem in a society cannot be left underrated for reasons concerning value consensus, continuity and development of the system in question. This is implying that the nature of social problem experienced in any living society bears a significant effect on the state of the economy, political administration and the individual members of the society regardless of their social class (Ogionwo, 2016). The consequences of social problem range from a pressing need to an unexpected and disastrous ending. In essence, social problem threatens the social and the physical world. Social problems such as underemployment, unemployment, poverty, rape, terrorism, hard drug use/abuse and host of others can impact a person's quality of life (emotions, psychology, social and medical) negatively, as well as his friends and families (Aborisade & Vaughan, 2014; Ogionwo, 2016). Considering all these the present investigation has been designed to study the social problems as perceived by the inhabitants belonging to North, Central and South zone of Kolkata city.

Objectives:

- I) To study the perceived social problem as opined by the male inhabitants belonging to North, Central and South zone of Kolkata city.
- II) To study the perceived social problem as opined by the female inhabitants belonging to North, Central and South zone of Kolkata city.

Hypotheses:

- Hypothesis I:** Male inhabitants belonging to North vs Central, Central vs South and South vs North differ significantly in terms of perceived social problem.
- Hypothesis II:** Female inhabitants belonging to North vs Central, Central vs South and South vs North differ significantly in terms of perceived social problem.
- Hypothesis III:** Male and female inhabitants belonging to North, Central and South zone of Kolkata city differ significantly in terms of perceived social problem.

Sample: A group of 300 inhabitants belonging to Kolkata city were selected as sample following the stratified random sampling technique. The pertinent characteristics of the subjects are as follows:

- a) Age: 41-50 years
- b) Gender: Male and female
- c) Educational Qualifications: At least graduate
- d) Duration of stay in the same environment: At least 10 years

Tools Used:

1) General Information Schedule: It consists of items, viz., name, address, age, educational qualification, duration of stay in the same environment etc.

2) **Perceived Social Problem Questionnaire:** It consists of 30 statements answerable in Yes/ No type.
 3) All the questionnaires are developed by the investigators.

Administration, Scoring And Statistical Treatment:

General Information schedule and Perceived Social Problem Questionnaire were administered to selected group of subjects by giving proper instructions. Data were collected and properly scrutinized. Scoring was done with the help of standard scoring key. Tabulation was done for each group and for each zone separately. Frequency, percentage and chi-square test were used.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS:

Data inserted in Table-1 reveals the comparative picture between the male inhabitants belonging to North, Central and South zone of Kolkata city in terms of perceived social problem. Analysis of data reveals that - a) rape is one of the traumatic events in the present-day society, b) gender discrimination sometimes create problems, c) marital conflict mainly based on dowry, d) too much diversity within society creates problem, e) internet access increase the amount of cybercrime, and f) the incidence of eve-teasing disturbs personal life – are the main reasons behind the findings. When comparison was made between North vs Central and also between South vs North significant difference was observed. But no significant difference was observed when comparison was made between Central vs South zone of Kolkata city.

Thus, the Hypothesis I which postulates, “Male inhabitants belonging to North vs Central, Central vs South and South vs North differ significantly in terms of perceived social problem” – was accepted for North vs Central and South vs North but rejected for Central vs South.

Table-1: Comparison Between The Male Inhabitants Belonging To North, Central And South Zone Of Kolkata City In Terms Of Perceived Social Problem.

Zone	Male		Chi-square value
	Yes	No	
North vs Central	North	1163	29.55**
	Central	1031	
Central vs South	Central	1031	1.56*
	South	999	
South vs North	South	999	44.53**
	North	1163	

*Difference is insignificant
 ** p<0.01

Data inserted in Table-2 reveals the comparative picture between the female inhabitants belonging to North, Central and South zone of Kolkata city in terms of perceived social problem. Analysis of data reveals that - a) people suffer from mental illness due to domestic violence, b) destructive pictures have negative effect upon children, c) political conflict is the main reason for antisocial activities, d) people are scared about pick pocketing, and e) internet access increases the amount of cybercrime – are the main reasons behind the findings.

The Hypothesis II which postulates, “Female inhabitants belonging to North vs Central, Central vs South and South vs North differ significantly in terms of perceived social problem” – was accepted for North vs Central and South vs North but rejected for Central vs South.

Table-2: Comparison Between The Male Inhabitants Belonging To North, Central And South Zone Of Kolkata City In Terms Of Perceived Social Problem.

Zone	Female		Chi-square value
	Yes	No	
North vs Central	North	1170	72.66**
	Central	958	
Central vs South	Central	958	3.39*
	South	1006	
South vs North	South	1006	45.00**
	North	1170	

*Difference is insignificant
 ** p<0.01

Besides this, comparison was also done between male and female inhabitants belonging to North, Central and South zone of Kolkata city in terms of perceived social problem. The findings revealed that significant difference was observed in case of Central zone of Kolkata city but no significant difference was observed in case of North and South zone of Kolkata city.

Table-3: Comparison Between The Male And Female Inhabitants Belonging To North, Central And South Zone Of Kolkata City In Terms Of Perceived Social Problem.

Zone	Male		Female		Chi square value
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
North	1163	337	1170	330	0.09*
Central	1031	469	958	542	7.95**
South	1006	494	999	501	0.07*

*Difference is insignificant
 ** p<0.01

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, it can be said that social problem as perceived by the inhabitants belonging to North, central and South zone of Kolkata city varies in many aspects. This true for male and female group also. Considering both qualitative and quantitative analysis adequate measures may be taken to get rid of the problem in the near future.

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