

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Sociology and Social Issues

Under this introductory chapter we will address the historical involvement of Sociology in the definition and study of social problems and/or issues. We will also conduct a brief review of the role of sociology and other social sciences in resolving social problems and the theoretical perspectives involved in viewing social problems.

What is contemporary issue?

A contemporary issue can be defined as any event, idea, opinion or topic in a given subject that is relevant to the present day. Contemporary issues can be found in almost any matter of interest.

What is Social issue?

Social issues are matters which directly or indirectly affect many or all members of a society and are considered to be problems, controversies related to moral values, or both. Social issues are matters that can be explained only by factors outside an individual's control and immediate social environment which affect many individuals in a society.

Social issues are related to the fabric of the community, including conflicts among the interests of community members, and lie beyond the control of any

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

one individual. For example, a serial murderer who wreaks havoc in an area for a number of months or years is certainly a problem, but this is not a social issue; it is part of the larger social issue of crime.

A social problem is a condition that at least some people in a community view it as being undesirable. It is a situation that threatens the quality of people's lives and their most cherished values, and something should be done to remedy that condition.

Examples of social problems include crime, violence, drug abuse, murders, traffic deaths, smoking and environmental problems. Such social problems can be found at the

- local and state,
- national and
- International levels.

Social issues determine human security/the well-being of communities.

Social issues include:

- |                 |                    |                     |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| - Abortion      | - Injustice        | - Homelessness      |
| - Pollution     | -Poverty           | - Teenage pregnancy |
| - Racism        | - Environmentalism | - Prostitution      |
| - Gun control   | - Unemployment     | - Food security     |
| - Human rights  | - Discrimination   | - peace             |
| - Under age sex | - War              | - Crime             |
| - Violence      | - HIV/AIDS         | -Terrorism...etc.   |

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

-Globalization

Common social issues include poverty, pollution, violence, injustice, suppression of human rights, migration, substance use, inequality (or discrimination) crime and war, and usually revolve around conflicting viewpoints and tensions between people who take different stances. It can also be called a community problem because it is known to concern a community of people.

### **1.2 Historical Foundations of Studying Social Problems**

Sociology emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century during a time of social turmoil in the west when the industrial revolution was in full swing. Prior to this time, the pace of social change was very slow.

But in the 1800s, a revolution in agriculture and the way goods were produced through manufacturing created an urban population explosion that brought with it extreme poverty, crime, pollution and what some considered being moral decay. Thus, sociology's concern with social problems is as old as the discipline, itself.

## Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)

### 1.3 The Concept of Social Problems

Social problems have existed as long as humans began living in groups. In other words, they are as antique (old) as humans themselves. Social scientists including sociologists usually talk about social problems.

*If so, what are the conditions which must be fulfilled for a social problem to exist?*

There are some conditions which must be met for a social problem to exist. Not all social conditions become elevated to the status of "social problem." For example, here are some "objective conditions" which exist today, and as you will see, not all of them are considered to be social problems.

-  Environmental Pollution
-  Resource Depletion
-  Corruption
-  Poverty
-  War, Crime and terrorism
-  Inequality
-  Health Care

Each of the above represents an existing condition which threatens the well-being of the entire world. Also all are objective conditions that really exist. But we all realize that many of them draw relatively little public concern--- Why?

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

A social problem exists when an influential group asserts that a certain social condition affecting a large number of people is a problem that may be remedied by collective action. A problem that is limited only to the level of an individual person or to only few groups may not be regarded as a social problem. A social problem affects society or its institutions and organizations at large that go beyond mere psychological and physiological levels.

If you review a variety of social problems texts, you find that there is general agreement that four conditions must be met before an objective reality in the greater society becomes elevated to the special status of "social problem."

They are

1. The objective condition must be perceived to be a social problem publicly. That is, there must be some public outcry. People must become actively involved in discussing the problem. Public attention becomes directed toward that social condition.
2. The condition must involve a gap between social ideals and social reality. That is, the condition must run counter to the values of the larger society. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century alcohol abuse was perceived to be a very serious social problem, responsible for family breakdown, abandonment of children, accidental death at work, and violence in society.

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

3. A significant proportion of the population must be involved in defining the problem. A large proportion of the population must be concerned about the condition. It must have national attention. If only a small segment of the population gets involved you have an interest group pushing for the general public to do something about the condition-- not a social problem.

4. The condition must be capable of solution through collective action by people. If no solution is perceived possible, people will resign themselves to their fate. A good example is government bureaucracy-- If everyone takes the attitude that "you can't fight city hall", government bureaucracy doesn't emerge as a social problem. Rather, it is a part of life that everyone must live with.

So let's say that a certain objective reality exists. Also, let's agree that each of the above conditions is met. There are still other factors which will determine the degree to which something comes to be perceived as a social problem. These are all very logical-

1. if people affected by a condition are influential, or powerful, the condition is more likely to be considered a social problem than if those affected are not influential.

Example: When a condition begins to affect the white middle class; particularly those able to influence government policy or the content of the mass media, the chances of it being considered a social problem increase substantially.

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

2. A condition affecting a relatively small segment of the population is less likely to be considered a social problem than if it has adverse effects on a much larger segment of society.

Example: The poverty of Native Americans has received much less attention than the poverty of Black Americans. Why? Native Americans are a relatively small and isolated segment of the U.S. population. African Americans are a much larger minority and are much more visible. The poverty of African Americans also has a greater impact on the middle classes than that of Native Americans.

3. A rapid increase in the number of people affected by a social condition is also important- perhaps even as important as the number of people affected!

Example: People become accustomed to the prevailing levels of crime, pollution, and urban congestion-- But a sharp increase in the intensity of any of these leads to elevated public concern. One airline crash every year is grounds for concern, but not for the definition of a social problem. But, five crashes in one month will get the public's attention!

4. The mass media also plays an important role in the selection and definition of social problems. It gives selective attention to certain conditions. The liberal press will highlight certain issues while the conservative press will select others.

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

Example: A good example is the controversy over the Monica Lewinsky affair. The liberal press lamented it, but maintained that the larger issue was the quality of the job that the President was doing. The conservative press saw it as a basic flaw in the moral fabric of the presidency and counters to the values of the larger society. On this issue, the general public seems to have sided with the liberal position if public opinion ratings of the President's job performance are to be believed.

5. Finally, ideology plays an important role in determining which conditions are singled out as social problems.

Example: If the general population has adopted a Marxist ideology, then such things as corporate power, militarism, imperialism, etc. will be perceived as serious social problems in the U.S. However, if the public, as a whole, holds conservative values then "big government," "national defense," and "declining morality" will be perceived as social problems.

Ideology also determines how a social problem is defined. Conservatives and liberals agree that America has a poverty problem-- but they do not agree on a specific definition of the problem, nor do they agree on how the problem should be solved.

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

Example: Conservatives will perceive poverty as being caused by lack of intelligence, lack of motivation, lack of the ability to delay gratification, and other personal characteristics of those who are poor. Thus, they will tend to defend the system, or in the case of radical conservatives, will argue for a dismantling of the "welfare state" and a return to the free market system.

Liberals emphasize the lack of opportunity and structural factors in the system. The system must be adjusted to open up opportunity. Radical liberals will advocate overthrowing the current system of government and establishing something entirely new.

Sociologists argue that social problems are best understood in the social institutional context. Although the causes for social problems are multiple, sociologists contend that they are usually the manifestations of the failure in the social institutions themselves. When an institution fails to address the basic needs of people, social problems occur. The individual victims should not be blamed for the actions rather we need to look in to the broader sociological and cultural contexts.

### **1.4. Objective and Subjective Realities of Social Problems**

A social problem has objective and subjective realities. A social condition does not have to be personally experienced by every individual in order to be considered as a social problem.

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality** (SOC12092)

A. The *objective reality* of a social problem comes from acknowledging that a particular social condition does exist.

For example, someone does not need to be poor in order to recognize that some men, women, and children experience the consequences of living in poverty. We can confirm the realities of poverty by observing conditions in our own community, at local clothing, drives, food banks, or shelters. Objective realities of a social problem can be confirmed by the collection of data. For example, we can understand from the 2003 U.S. Census figures that 34.6 million people were poor, and among them, the numbers of children under the age of 18 were 12.1 million.

B. The *subjective reality* of a social problem addresses how a problem becomes defined as a problem.

This idea is based on the concept of the *social construction of reality*. Coined by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966), the term refers to how our world is a social creation, originating and evolving through our everyday thoughts and actions. Most of the time, we assume and act as though the world is a given, objectively predetermined outside of our existence. However, according to Berger and Luckmann, we also apply subjective meanings to our existence and experience. In other words, our experiences don't just happen to us. Good, bad, positive, or negative—we also attach meanings to our reality.

## 1.5 Sociological perspectives on social problems

The sociological understanding of social problems rests heavily on the concept of the sociological imagination. We discuss this concept in some detail before turning to various theoretical perspectives that provide a further context for understanding social problems.

### The Sociological Imagination

Many individuals experience one or more social problems personally. For example, many people are poor and unemployed, many are in poor health, and many have family problems, drink too much alcohol, or commit crime. When we hear about these individuals, it is easy to think that their problems are theirs alone, and that they and other individuals with the same problems are entirely to blame for their difficulties.

Sociology takes a different approach, as it stresses that individual problems are often rooted in problems stemming from aspects of society itself. This key insight was forwarded by C. Wright Mill's (1959).

### Personal troubles and public issues

A. Personal troubles: refer to a problem affecting individuals that the affected individual, as well as other members of society, typically blame on the

## Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)

individual's own personal and moral failings. Examples include such different problems as eating disorders, divorce, and unemployment.

B. Public issues: whose source lies in the social structure and culture of a society, refer to social problems affecting many individuals. Mills felt that many problems ordinarily considered private troubles are best understood as public issues and he coined the term sociological imagination to refer to the ability to appreciate the structural basis for individual problems.

### Theoretical Perspectives

Three theoretical perspectives guide sociological thinking on social problems:

- ✓ functionalist theory
- ✓ conflict theory
- ✓ symbolic interactionist theory

These perspectives look at the same social problems, but they do so in different ways. Their views taken together offer a fuller understanding of social problems than any of the views can offer alone.

| Theoretical perspective | Major assumptions | Views of social problems |
|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|

## Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)

|                            |  |  |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| <p>Functional<br/>ism</p>  | <p>Social stability is necessary for a society, and adequate socialization and social integration are necessary for social stability. Society's social institutions perform important functions to help ensure social stability.</p> <p>Slow social change is desirable, but rapid social change threatens social order.</p> | <p>Social problems weaken a society's stability but do not reflect fundamental faults in how the society is structured. Solutions to social problems should take the form of gradual social reform rather than sudden and far-reaching change. Despite their negative effects, social problems often also serve important functions for society.</p> |
| <p>Conflict<br/>theory</p> | <p>Society is characterized by pervasive inequality based on social class, race, gender, and other factors.</p> <p>Far-reaching social change is needed to reduce or eliminate social inequality.</p>  | <p>Social problems arise from fundamental faults in the structure of a society and both reflect and reinforce inequalities based on social class, race, gender, and other dimensions. Successful solutions to social problems must involve far-reaching change in the structure of society.</p>  |

## Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)

|                         |   |  |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| Symbolic Interactionism | People construct their roles as they interact; they do not merely learn the roles that society has set out for them. As this interaction occurs, individuals negotiate their definitions of the situations in which they find themselves and socially construct the reality of these situations. In so doing, they rely heavily on symbols such as words and gestures to reach a shared understanding of their interaction. | Social problems arise from the interaction of individuals. People who engage in socially problematic behaviors often learn these behaviors from other people. Individuals also learn their perceptions of social problems from other people. |
|-------------------------|---|--|

[Table 1.1](#) summaries the three theoretical perspectives on social problems

### Applying the Three Perspectives

To help you further understand the different views of these three theoretical perspectives, let's see what they would probably say about *armed robbery*, a very serious form of crime, while recognizing that the three perspectives together provide a more comprehensive understanding of armed robbery than any one perspective provides by itself.

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

A functionalist approach might suggest that armed robbery actually serves positive functions for society, such as the job-creating function mentioned earlier for crime in general. It would still think that efforts should be made to reduce armed robbery, but it would also assume that far-reaching changes in our society would be neither wise nor necessary as part of the effort to reduce crime.

Conflict theory would take a very different approach to understanding armed robbery. It might note that most street criminals are poor and thus emphasize that armed robbery is the result of the despair and frustration of living in poverty and facing a lack of jobs and other opportunities for economic and social success. The roots of street crime, from the perspective of conflict theory, thus lie in society at least as much as they lie in the individuals committing such crime. To reduce armed robbery and other street crime, conflict theory would advocate far-reaching changes in the economic structure of society.

For its part, symbolic interactionism would focus on how armed robbers make such decisions as when and where to rob someone and on how their interactions with other criminals reinforce their own criminal tendencies. It would also investigate how victims of armed robbery behave when confronted by a robber. To reduce armed robbery, it would advocate programs that reduce the opportunities for interaction among potential criminal offenders, for example, after-school programs that keep at-risk youths busy in “conventional” activities

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

so that they have less time to spend with youths who might help them get into trouble.

### CHAPTER TWO

#### 2. Issues in Food Security

##### 2.1 *Human Security*

Human security is an emerging paradigm for understanding global vulnerabilities. Human security holds that a people-centered view of security is necessary for national, regional and global stability. The concept emerged from a post - Cold War, multi-disciplinary understanding of security involving a number of research fields, including development studies ,international relations, strategic studies, and human rights.

Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations.

It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity.

Human security is both a system and a systematic practice that promotes and sustains stability, security, and progressive integration of individuals within their relationships to their states, societies, and regions. It allows individuals pursuit of life, liberty, and pursuit of both happiness and justice.

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

Human security is the freedom from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, and repression as well as the protection from sudden disasters. Threats to human security are varied; it may be political and military, social, economic and environmental.

Security is about attaining the social, political, environmental and economic conditions conducive to a life in freedom and dignity for the individual.

Human security is also concerned with deprivation from extreme impoverishment, pollution, ill health, illiteracy and other maladies.

The UNDP's 1994 Human Development Report stated that human security includes seven aspects:

A. Economic security: Economic security requires an assured basic income for individuals, usually from productive and remunerative work or, as a last resort, from a publicly financed safety net. The threat in economic security is poverty which is vulnerability to global economic change.

B. Food security: Food security requires that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to basic food. The threat in food security is hunger and famine which is vulnerability to disease and infections.

C. Health security: aims to guarantee a minimum protection from diseases and unhealthy lifestyles. In developing countries, the major causes of death, traditionally, were infectious and parasitic diseases, whereas in industrialized countries, the major killers were diseases of the circulatory system. Today, lifestyle-related chronic diseases are leading killers worldwide, with eighty

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

percent of deaths from chronic diseases occurring in low and middle-income countries. Here the threats are injury and diseases.

D. Environmental security: Environmental security aims to protect people from the short and long term ravages of nature, man made threats in nature, and deterioration of the natural environment. This means living in a healthy physical environment which is spared from desertification, deforestation and other environmental threats that endanger people's survival. In environmental security the threat is resource depletion and natural resource degradation which is vulnerability to pollution and environmental degradation and scarce resources.

E. Personal security: Personal security aims to protect people from physical violence, whether from the state or external states, from violent individuals and sub-state actors, from domestic abuse, or from predatory adults. For many people, the greatest source of anxiety is crime, particularly violent crime. In personal security the threat is violence which is vulnerability to conflicts, natural hazards, and long term encroaching disasters.

F. Community security: Community security aims to protect people from the loss of traditional relationships and values, and from sectarian and ethnic violence. In community security the threat is loss of the integrity of cultures which is vulnerability to cultural globalization.

G. Political security: Political security is concerned with whether people live in a society that honors their basic human rights. According to a survey conducted by Amnesty International, recently, political repression, systematic torture, ill

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

treatment or disappearance was still practiced in different countries. Human rights violations are most frequent during periods of political unrest. Along with repressing individuals and groups, governments may try to exercise control over ideas and information. Here, the threat is political repression which is vulnerability to conflicts and warfare.

Food security is a growing concern throughout the world. More than 1 billion people are estimated to lack sufficient dietary energy availability, and at least twice that number suffers micronutrient deficiencies. Because indicators inform action, much current research focuses on improving food insecurity measurement. Yet estimated prevalence rates and patterns remain tenuous because measuring food security is an elusive concept and remains difficult.

The 2008 global food price crisis which sparked riots in more than two dozen countries' political and scientific interest in food security. In their July 2009 joint statement, the G8 heads of state agreed "to act with the scale and urgency needed to achieve sustainable global food security". To direct scarce resources to where they can do the greatest good, actions must be guided by reliable information as to who is food insecure, where, when, and why. This requires improved measurement of food insecurity and its causes and greater attention to key institutional and policy lessons learned.

### Definition of food security

Among the various definitions currently in use, the prevailing definition, agreed upon at the

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

1996 World Food Summit holds that food security represents “a situation that exists when all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” This high standard encompasses more than just current nutritional status, capturing as well vulnerability to future disruptions in access to adequate and appropriate food.

### 2.2. Dimensions of Food Security

Food security is the outcome of food system operating efficiently. Efficient food system contributes positively to all dimensions of food security. There are four dimensions of food security.

#### A. Food availability

This dimension addresses supply side of the food security and expects sufficient quantities of quality food from domestic agriculture production or import. This is simple mathematical calculation whether the food available in certain territory/country is enough to feed the total population in that particular territory and calculated from the level of local agriculture production at that territory, stock levels and net import/export.

This dimension of food security at different levels can be assessed by precipitation record, food balance sheet, food market survey, agricultural production planet. Similarly, indicators of food security for this dimension at

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

different levels are fertility rate, food production, population flows, harvesting time, staple food production, food storage, consumption of wild foods etc.

### **B. Food access**

Having sufficient food at national level or at certain territory cannot be taken as the proof that all the household or individuals in the country/territory have enough food to eat. Food access is another dimension of food security which encompasses income, expenditure and buying capacity of households or individuals. Food access addresses whether the households or individuals have enough resources to acquire appropriate quantity of quality foods.

Some of the indicators of this dimension at different levels are food price, wage rate, per capita food consumption, meal frequency, employment rate etc. and the dimension can be assessed by Vulnerability Analysis and mapping (VAM), Food Access Survey, Food Focus Group Discussion, Intra- household food frequency questionnaire etc. Interventions to improve this dimension of food security are inter alia on-farm, off-farm and non-farm employment creation, school-feeding program, breast –feeding campaign etc.

### **C. Food utilization**

Food utilization is another dimension of food security which addresses not only how much food the people eat but also what and how they eat. It also covers the food preparation, intra-household food distribution, water and sanitation and health care practices. The nutritional outcome of the food eaten by an individual

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

will be appropriate and optimum only when food is prepared (cooked) properly, there is adequate diversity of the diet and proper feeding and caring practices are practiced.

Stunting rate, wasting rate, prevention of diarrheal diseases, latrine usage, weight-for-age, goiter, anemia, night blindness etc... are the indicators at different level for this dimensions which can be assessed by demographic and health survey, immunization chart etc.

### **D. Stability**

This dimension addresses the stability of the other three dimensions over time. People cannot be considered food secure until they feel so and they do not feel food secure until there is stability of availability, accessibility and proper utilization condition. Instability of market price of staple food and inadequate risk bearing capacity of the people in the case of adverse condition (e.g. natural disaster, unexpected weather etc...), political instability and unemployment are the major factors affecting stability of the dimensions of food security.

This dimension of food security can be assessed by Global Information Early Warning System, Anthropometric survey, weighing chart of pregnant women etc against certain indicators like food price fluctuation, women etc. against certain indicators like food price fluctuation, women's BMI, pre-harvest food practice, migration etc. Interventions to address this dimension are saving and loan policy, inter-household food exchange, grain bank, food storage etc

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

In summary, Availability covers whether adequate food is ready at people's disposal while Access ensures if all households and individuals have adequate resources to obtain the food they need either through production or purchase. Similarly utilization is about human body function to adequately ingest, digest and metabolize the food. Stability is about assurance of continuation of four-mentioned dimensions. For food security objectives to be realized, all four dimensions must be fulfilled simultaneously.

### 2.3. Types of Food Insecurity

#### *A. Chronic Food Insecurity*

Lack of minimum requirement of food to the people for a sustained period of time due to extended periods of poverty, lack of assets and inadequate access to productive or financial resources can be called as Chronic Food Insecurity.

#### *B. Acute or Transitory Food Insecurity*

Sudden lack of food or reduction in the ability to produce or access minimum requirement of food due to short-term shocks and fluctuations in food availability and food access, including year-to-year variations in domestic food production, food prices and household incomes can be defined as Acute or transitory food insecurity.

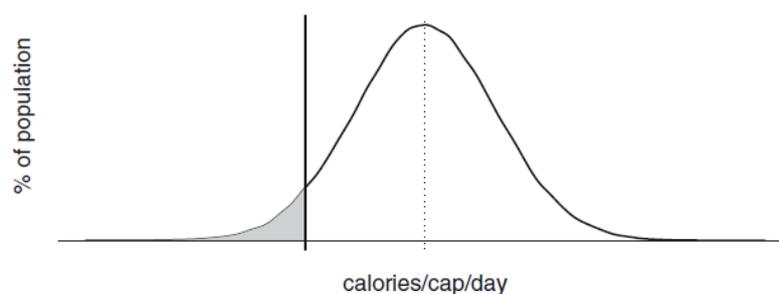
## Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)

### *Measuring Food Security*

Proper measurement of food security is of clear policy and humanitarian concern, primarily because such measures are used to both assess progress in a given region and to target assistance where needed. However, given the multiple interacting components of food security listed above, measurement of food security is both difficult and controversial. The most cited country- and global-level statistics on food security are those of FAO, who use a measure of “undernourishment” as a proxy for food security. This measure relies primarily on national level data on food supply to estimate the percentage of a given country’s population that does not have access to sufficient dietary energy. FAO’s estimation procedure, shown graphically in Fig. 2.1, is roughly as follows:

#### 2 Climate Effects on Food Security: An Overview

15



**Fig. 2.1** Schematic of FAO undernourishment calculation. *Dotted line* = average per capita calorie availability; *curve* = population distribution around that average; and *vertical black line* = calorie undernourishment threshold. *Grey shading* represents proportion of population that is undernourished (after Naiken 2002)

1. For a given country, sum up the total number of calories available for human consumption in a given year, which will be a combination of locally produced food and imported food, minus exports.

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

2. Divide by the country's population to determine average per capita consumption.
3. Determine the shape of the distribution around this mean, either from household income or expenditure surveys where available, or from imputation from other sources where not.
4. Use country-level data on average height and weight to estimate the minimum amount of energy needed to maintain light activity, and apply the distribution from(3) to determine what percentage of the population falls below this threshold. This undernourishment measure is attractive because it is both computationally simple and based on relatively available national-level data on the production and trade of agricultural products. But many criticize the measure for effectively focusing on food availability at the expense of issues of household food access and utilization.

### 2.4. Climate change and Food security

Business as usual in our globally interconnected food system will not bring us food security and environmental sustainability. Several converging threats – from climate change, population growth and unsustainable use of resources – are steadily intensifying pressure on humanity and world governments to transform the way food is produced, distributed and consumed.

On a planet with sufficient food for all, a billion people go hungry. Another billion over-consume, increasing risks from chronic diseases. The food system faces additional pressure as the global population grows, to around 9 billion by

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality** (SOC12092)

2050, and as diets shift towards higher consumption of calories, fat and animal products. Food insecurity afflicts communities throughout the world wherever poverty prevents assured access to food supplies. As well as causing widespread human suffering, food insecurity contributes to degradation and depletion of natural resources, migration to urban areas and across borders, and political and economic instability.

*Climate change* is already affecting food security. Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, wide spread melting of snow and ice and rising global average sea level (IPCC(Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), 2007a). Observational evidence from all continents and most oceans shows that many natural systems are being affected by regional climate changes, particularly temperature increases: the average temperature rose by about 0.3°C during the first half of the 20th century, and by another 0.5°C in the second half up to the beginning of the 21st century (IPCC, 2007a). Most of the observed increase in global average temperatures since the mid-20th century is *very likely* due to the observed increase in anthropogenic GHG concentrations (IPCC, 2007a).

As its effects become more pronounced, climate change will make the challenge of achieving food security even harder. Its effects on food production and distribution may increase poverty and inequality, with consequent effects on livelihoods and nutrition.

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

### 2.4.1 Food Availability and Climate Change

*The food availability* dimension of food security encompasses issues of global and regional food supply, and asks the basic question: can we physically produce enough food to feed our population?, the effect of climate change on the global food supply must take into account current realities and trends in global and regional supplies of food. We therefore highlight three particularly important characteristics of the global food supply.

The first is that on an average *per capita basis*, the world today produces more than enough food to meet caloric requirements, and that this success has been based mostly on yield gains over the last half century. Perhaps first popularized by Thomas Malthus in the early 1800s, the question of whether the world can produce enough food to feed a growing population has been a perennial concern. Thus far, technology has mostly precluded Malthusian doomsday predictions of population driven food shortages. Through the first half of the last century, the need for increased food production was met by expansion of cropped area. But beginning in about the 1950s, when population and income growth were adding increasing pressure to global food markets, large-scale sustained investment in crop productivity greatly increased yields of crops throughout the developing world. This so-called Green Revolution allows the world today to produce 170% more cereals on just 8% more cropped area than 50 years ago , – certainly an incredible achievement. Furthermore, on a global level this productivity growth has more than kept pace with the large observed increases in population, and

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality** (SOC12092)

global per capita cereal production currently stands at almost exactly 1 kg/person/day – or more than enough, on average, to feed everyone on the planet.

These global averages, however, hide large regional discrepancies, and the second important characteristic of the global food supply is that there are stark regional differences in the magnitude and source of agricultural productivity growth – differences that provide important insights into the challenge a changing climate might pose.

Yield and per-capita production trends by region over the last half-century, While most regions in the developed and developing world enjoyed somewhere between a doubling and tripling of yield since 1960, allowing them to increase their per-capita production of cereals with only minimal expansion in cropped area, Africa stands out as the continent on which progress has been most difficult. African cereal yields have grown at less the half the Asian rate, and despite an 80% increase in the amount of cropped area on the continent, total cereal production has not kept pace with population growth. As a result, the African continent is the only region where per capita production of cereals has declined over the last half century.

The potential for reversing this decline and for further boosting productivity elsewhere in world is at once promising and troubling. The promise for Africa and other low productivity regions lies in the large gulf between observed yields and potential yields – the so-called “yield gap” – much of which is explained by low adoption of modern agricultural technology and inputs. In theory, developing

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality** (SOC12092)

appropriate agricultural technology for these regions and providing the proper incentives to use it could rapidly close these substantial yield gaps and quickly raise productivity. But elsewhere in the world, particularly in the high-input systems in much of North America, Europe, and parts of Asia, yield gaps are much smaller, and achieving the sustained increases in yield observed over the past 4 decades will likely be very difficult without further increases in yield potential ceilings.

Furthermore, expanding cropped area, which is the alternative to increasing yield, is either difficult or unappealing throughout much of the world, either because of urban encroachment on agricultural land or because of the environmental costs of bringing new land into production. The FAO, which periodically assesses trends in crop demand and supply, envisages a significant expansion of cropland area in Africa and Latin America but little growth elsewhere, mainly because so little land in Asia remains uncultivated. Overall, most global assessments project that (1) crop demand will grow considerably over the next few decades, given the additive pressures of population growth (estimated to peak at 9.1 billion mid-century), higher incomes resulting in shifting food preferences, and potential development of large-scale bio fuel production and the additional crop demand it represents; (2) the rate of demand growth, however, will be slower than observed in the past few decades, as population begins to stabilize; (3) and based on existing land, water, and fertilizer resources, crop production should be able to keep pace with the decelerating demand growth, but only with a formidable and

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

sustained investment in yield improving technologies, cropland expansion, and input use.

The third important feature of the global supply situation is that food is now a truly *global commodity*, and the movement of food across borders plays an increasingly important role in meeting regional food demand. About 10% of world cereal production is traded internationally, with some regions (Oceania, North America) exporting substantial amounts of what they produce, and other regions (notably Africa) importing up to a third of what they consume. Such food trade can either buffer or exacerbate the effects of a local food supply shock. A country experiencing drought, importing nations would pay higher food prices on the world market when large exporting countries suffer similar shortfalls. In the event that such shocks happen simultaneously, poor importing nations would need to import when prices are very high, greatly increasing their difficulties in bolstering local food supplies.

But agricultural production and food availability are just one part of the food security story, and we now turn to the less frequently discussed potential effects of climate change on access and utilization.

### 2.4 Food Access and Climate Change

According to the economist Amartya Sen dominates introductory paragraphs in discussions of food access. Recalling the definition above, food access refers to the ability of an individual to acquire food, either through its production or its purchase.

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality** (SOC12092)

Sen referred to these means of food acquisition as “*entitlements*”, and he won the Nobel Prize in part for showing how famines were a result of households or entire regions periodically lacking entitlements. His basic insights hold today: for a farmer, entitlements are the means of food production available to him (e.g., *land and labor*), and his access to food is secure if he can command sufficient amounts of these factors to produce enough food. For those who don't farm, access to food is a function of *incomes and prices* – how much money one has to spend on food, and how much the food costs. Food access then can deteriorate when non-farm incomes fall, when food prices rise, or when the productivity of farm households suffers.

Determining the effects of climate change on food access for a given household therefore requires addressing the role of climate change in relation to four basic questions:

- How households earn their income, the nature of their exposure to food prices, how well integrated their local food markets are with global markets, and their broader longer-run prospects for livelihood improvement.

The first question concerns *the extent to which a given household is dependent on agriculture for its income*. If agriculture will be one of the sectors most affected by climate change, then the greater a household's livelihood depends on agriculture, the more that household is sensitive to the impacts of climate. While good systematic data on sources of household income in the developing world are

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

hard to come by, there have been multiple recent efforts to try to systematize the available survey data on household income and to discern basic patterns across the developing world.

All households are consumers of food, and as consumers benefit when food prices are low. But rural households are often producers of food as well, selling surplus in local markets. As a result, such households benefit as consumers but are hurt as producers when food prices fall. So if climate change induces changes in the supply of food that in turn affect food prices, the net impact of these price changes on food access in a given household will depend on the particular net consumption position in that household – that is, whether they spend more on food purchases than they earn from selling what they produce.

Estimating net consumption position again requires the use of household surveys, in this case surveys that have detailed information on both agricultural production and consumption behavior.

Finally, the extent to which these net consuming households are affected by changes in food prices depends on how much of their income they spend on food, and on what types of food they buy. For instance, most households in wealthy countries are substantial net consumers of food, but because they spend such a small percentage of their total income on food, they are little affected if the price of food changes. This is not the case in poorer households, who can spend half or more of their income on food, and for whom changes in food prices can have serious effects on the quantity and quality of food consumed. Because climate

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality** (SOC12092)

change might also affect the relative prices of different staples, for instance if warming hurts one cereal more than another. The particular diet composition of poor households can also be important.

The third important determinant of climate change's effects on food access concerns *how well integrated local food markets are with global markets*. The effects of climate change on agricultural productivity will likely vary by region, and so it is important whether in a given area local food prices and availability are driven primarily by local shifts in production, or whether that area is well integrated with regional or global food markets such that local prices track global price movements. This degree of integration could play a large role in the welfare effects of climate in a given region. For instance, a region that suffers large productivity losses under climate change but whose food markets are well integrated with global markets could see little change in the price of food if it is able to import food to cover losses. Conversely, a country well integrated with global markets could see food prices raise even if it doesn't experience local climate effects.

The final determinant of the effects of climate change on food access concerns *the degree to which longer-run prospects for growth in income and food security are climate sensitive*. This question is undoubtedly the most contentious of the four, because there is remarkably little agreement on the underlying causes of economic development, and thus little understanding of the relative importance of

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality** (SOC12092)

climate in determining why some countries become rich and others remain poor over the long run.

The economics literature offers perhaps three main explanations of why some countries have succeeded economically over time and others have not. The first explanation, argued prominently by *Bloom* and *Sachs* among others, suggests that *geography* is central to long-run economic success. Noting the high correlation between tropical location and underdevelopment, proponents of this explanation argue that a country's geographic location directly shapes various factors fundamental to long-run economic success – for instance the quality of the country's soils, the favorability of its climate for agriculture and habitation, the prevalence of various diseases, and the ease with which goods can be traded within and across its borders.

A second strain of thought places primary emphasis on the role of *institutions* in economic development. This explanation, promoted by *Acemoglu* and *Easterly* and *Lev* among others, argues that economic progress has less to do with a country's soils and climate and much more to do with the quality of its institutions – in particular, factors such as limited corruption and institutional respect for private property and the rule of law.

A final explanation focuses on the role of particular *policies* in explaining long run economic performance. Proponents in this camp argue that even with favorable geography and well-functioning institutions, countries with bad economic policy are destined for poor economic growth. They point to instances

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality** (SOC12092)

in which poor economic management resulted in the collapse of otherwise prosperous countries as evidence of the primacy of good policy.

A casual observer might suspect that all three explanations – geography, institutions, and policies – play some role in shaping long run economic success. But if one explanation is relatively more important than another – a possibility that each camp adamantly claims is the case – then climate change could have a greater or lesser effect on longer run prospects for the alleviation of poverty and hunger. In particular, if the climate worsens, and it is in fact geography that constrains eventual economic success, the aggregate effects of climate change on food security could be great. If on the other hand institutional quality dominates long-run success, then climate change could have little effect on long-run progress. Aside from these important questions about the long run determinants of economic progress, however, it should be clear that climate plays an important and direct role in the immediate food security of a large number of the world's poor. For households who eat much of what they produce, or who face food prices tightly linked to local agricultural production – and these households number in the hundreds of millions – the welfare effects of a negative supply shock can be large and lasting.

Various studies demonstrate the persistent welfare effects of short-term adverse climate shocks for rural households, as for instance households in crisis sell productive assets to meet immediate consumption needs. If climate change alters

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality** (SOC12092)

the likelihood of these shocks, we could expect large effects on rural household welfare in poor countries, even if the economy-wide consequences are minimal.

### 2.5 Food Utilization and Climate Change

The utilization component of food security is perhaps its, and least well-studied aspect, but generally relates to the nutritional aspects of food consumption. Supposing availability and access issues are taken care of, achieving proper food utilization requires satisfactory answers to three questions: does the food an individual eats contain all the energy, protein, and nutrients necessary for her to lead a healthy and productive life? Is the food itself safe and not likely to make her ill? And finally, is the individual healthy enough to take advantage of the food's nutritional qualities?

New evidence is indeed emerging about the potential effects of climate change on food utilization. Nevertheless, and as in the case of food access, climate will be only one component of a broader suite of issues that shapes an individual's ability to utilize food properly.

#### *2.5.1 Food Utilization and Nutrition*

Although a primary purpose of food is provision of dietary energy, and widely used undernourishment indicators such as FAO's lean heavily on estimates of calorie consumption to estimate food security trends, food is of course much more than just energy. Food also provides protein and various nutrients essential

## Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)

for bodily function, and there is increasing recognition of the important role insufficient intake of these nutrients plays in global illness and death from infectious disease. Importantly, prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies around the world is generally higher than estimates of caloric deficiencies and alleviating these deficiencies has become a major public health priority.

Table 2.3 lists major micronutrient deficiencies, some of their health effects, and the most recent estimates of their global prevalence. It reveals that estimated prevalence's for deficiencies in nutrients such as iodine and zinc are more than twice the FAO benchmark estimates for number of global undernourished. As a result, added together this micronutrient deficiencies account for one of the largest sources of global health loss (Lopez, et al, 2006).

**Table 2.3** Global prevalence of micronutrient deficiency (<http://www.who.int/vmnis>; (Ezzati 2004))

| Micronutrient | Effects of deficiency                                       | Number of global deficient (billion)       | Percent of population deficient (%) |
|---------------|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| Iron          | Child and maternal mortality, reduced cognitive development | 1.6  | 25                                  |
| Iodine        | Reduced cognitive development, deformation, goiter          | 1.9  | 31                                  |
| Vitamin A     | Blindness, immune deficiency                                | 0.6 (children <5 yrs)<br>0.1 (women 15–44) | 20<br>6                             |
| Zinc          | Immune deficiency   | 1.9  | 31                                  |

Most poor households receive what micronutrients they do get through the consumption of plants, with vitamins sourced largely from fruits and leafy greens, and minerals from cereals. For instance, some estimates suggest that 80% of African and Southeast Asian intake of vitamin A comes through fruit and

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality** (SOC12092)

vegetable consumption. Meat and dairy products are a primary source of many nutrients in the developed world, but are often too expensive for poor households, and are thus a minor source of micronutrients throughout much of the developing world.

Climate change could directly affect micronutrient consumption in three main ways: by changing the yields of important crop sources of micronutrients, by altering the nutritional content of a specific crop, or by influencing decisions to grow crops of different nutritional value.

There is little published evidence on the effects of climate change on micronutrient content of crops, and also much less evidence on the potential effects of climate change on fruits and vegetable yields compared to that available for cereals. Some studies show that higher CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations can lower protein content in various food crops, particularly in the context of low nitrogen inputs. While the estimated reductions could be relatively modest in magnitude – 10–15% decrease in grain protein content by around the end of century – such declines would be amplified by any yield losses, and would hit hardest in poor areas where nitrogen application rates are low and where crops constitute a primary source of dietary protein.

Beyond direct effects on yields, climate can also shape the decisions farmers make about what crops to grow, and thus could potentially alter planting decisions in ways that alter micronutrient availability. For instance, in the poor soils and highly variable climates of much of central and western Africa, starchy

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality** (SOC12092)

tubers such as cassava and yam often dominate cropping systems, in no small part because of their ability to achieve at least some yield in the worst weather years. Unfortunately, such crops are also very poor sources of both protein and micronutrients, and to the extent that they are favored in future climate relative to cereals as a source of dietary energy, nutrient consumptions could decline.

### *2.5.2 Disease and Food Utilization*

Food utilization also concerns the ability of individuals to make use of the nutrients available to them, and is thus closely linked to both the overall safety of the food and to the individual's health. While not all unhealthy people are necessarily food insecure, health status can be a primary contributing factor to food security. Of particular concern in poor countries are the strong feedbacks between malnutrition and disease, in which under nutrition leads to increased infection and a higher disease burden, which in turn leads to energy loss, reduced productivity, and further diminished access to food. And while the underlying determinants of health and food safety are complex and clearly extend far beyond narrow climate issues, most possible manifestations of climate change (e.g. Warming, drought, or floods) have the potential to negatively affect health in ways that compromise food utilization.

Growing evidence indicates the significant role climate can play in the safety of food, as pathogens enjoy warmer climates. For instance, warming temperatures have been shown to increase the incidence of *Salmonella*-related food poisoning

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

in Europe and Australia, and warming ocean temperatures have been shown to increase the incidence of human shellfish and reef fish poisoning.

Perhaps more importantly, climate change has the potential to affect health status directly, in ways that alter an individual's ability to utilize food. In areas with limited access to clean water and sanitation infrastructure, diarrheal disease is a leading killer, and contributes directly to child mortality and poor food utilization by limiting absorption of nutrients. Extreme rainfall events, drought events, and warming temperatures have all been shown to increase the incidence of diarrheal disease, often significantly.

Warming temperatures will likely also expand the range of important vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue. Similarly, changes in rainfall patterns could also affect disease incidence, for instance with increasing drought heightening the risk of meningitis outbreak, or increased extreme rainfall events increasing the likelihood of cholera outbreaks.

Unfortunately, all available evidence suggests that the health effects of climate change will hit hardest where disease burdens and susceptibility to disease are already high, and where public health infrastructure is poorly developed – that is, in the poorest countries of the world. And since diseases such as malaria and diarrheal disease disproportionately affect younger ages, the health burden of climate change will be borne primarily by children in the developing world. The broader food security impacts of these climate-related health losses have not been well quantified, and are a topic in immediate need of attention by researchers.

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOCI 2092)**

In summery there are clearly many pathways through which climate change will impact food availability, access, and utilization. Climate induced changes in agricultural productivity will likely affect the incomes earned and the food prices faced by poor households, with the net effect on food security a function of each household's particular set of livelihood strategies. In addition, health impacts associated with climate change could hamper the ability of individuals to utilize food effectively. These multiple potential impacts will occur in the midst of broader trends in global and regional food security, which include rapid recent progress throughout much of the developing world, but little improvement across most of the African continent, much of which remains desperately poor and food insecure.

### CHAPTER

### THREE

Food

security

strategies

#### 3.1 Food security strategies

- As a global community, we need to navigate toward a 'safe operating space' that provides adequate food and nutrition for everyone without crossing critical environmental thresholds.
- Plotting a course towards this space will require innovative technologies, institutions and policies, and will severely test our social, technological and agricultural ingenuity.

## Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)

- In all circumstances, we will need governance at multiple levels that accommodates participation, learning and the ability to correct course.
- 
- To be successful we will need a robust, widely shared appreciation of agriculture as a multifunctional enterprise that delivers nutritious food, rural development, environmental services and cultural heritage, through and beyond the 21<sup>st</sup> c.
- Without a global commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from all sectors, including agriculture, no amount of agricultural adaptation will be sufficient under the destabilized climate of the future.
- Given the already intolerable conditions for many livelihoods and ecosystems, and the time lag between research and development and widespread application, we need to take urgent action.

## Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)

- The transition to a global food system that satisfies human needs, reduces its carbon footprint, adapts to climate change and is in balance with planetary resources requires concrete and coordinated actions, implemented at scale, simultaneously and with urgency.
- Based on robust scientific evidence, the Commission on Sustainable Agriculture and Climate Change has identified critical leverage points and high-priority policy actions.
- The Commission proposes the following evidence-based actions to achieve food security in the face of climate change. By taking these steps we can deliver long-term benefits to communities in all countries.
  1. Integrate food security and sustainable agriculture into global and national policies
  2. Significantly raise the level of global investment in sustainable agriculture and food systems in the next decade
  3. Sustainably intensify agricultural production while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other negative environmental impacts of agriculture
  4. Develop specific programs and policies to assist populations and sectors that are most vulnerable to climate changes and food insecurity
  5. Reshape food access and consumption patterns to ensure basic nutritional needs are met and to foster healthy and sustainable eating patterns worldwide
  6. Reduce loss and waste in food systems, targeting infrastructure, farming practices, processing, distribution and household habits
  7. Create comprehensive, shared, integrated information systems that encompass human and ecological dimensions

## Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)

1. Integrate food security and sustainable agriculture into global and national policies

✓ Establish a work program on mitigation and adaptation in agriculture in accordance with the principles and provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), based on Article 2, as a first step to inclusion of agriculture in the mainstream of international climate change policy.

✓ Make sustainable, climate-friendly agriculture central Green Growth and the Rio+20 Earth Summit.

2. Significantly raise the level of global investment in sustainable agriculture and food systems in the next decade

✓ Implement and strengthen the existing programs and commitments to sustainable agriculture and food security, including long-term commitments for financial and technical assistance in food production and to empower smallholder farmers.

✓ Enable UNFCCC Fast Start funding major development banks and other global finance mechanisms to prioritize sustainable agriculture programs that deliver food security, improved livelihoods, resilience to climate change and environmental co-benefits.

3. Sustainably intensify agricultural production while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other negative environmental impacts of agriculture

## Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)

- ✓ Develop, facilitate and reward multi-benefit farming systems that enable more productive and resilient livelihoods and ecosystems, with emphasis on closing yield gaps and improving nutrition.
  - ✓ Empower marginalized food producers (particularly women) to increase productivity of a range of appropriate crops by strengthening land and water rights.
4. Develop specific programs and policies to assist populations and sectors that are most vulnerable to climate changes and food insecurity
- ✓ Develop funds that respond to climate shocks, such as 'index-linked funds' that provide rapid relief when extreme weather events affect communities, through public-private partnerships based on agreed principles.
  - ✓ Moderate excessive food price fluctuations by sharing country information on production forecasts and stocks, strengthening market databases, promoting open and responsive trade systems, establishing early warning systems and allowing tax-free export and import for humanitarian assistance.
5. Reshape food access and consumption patterns to ensure basic nutritional needs are met and to foster healthy and sustainable eating patterns worldwide
- ✓ Address chronic under nutrition and hunger by harmonizing development policy and coordinating regional programs to improve livelihoods and access to services among food-insecure rural and urban communities.

## Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)

✓ Promote positive changes in the variety and quantity of diets through innovative education campaigns

6. Reduce loss and waste in food systems, targeting infrastructure, farming practices, processing, distribution and household habits

✓ In all sustainable agriculture development programs, include research and investment components focusing on reducing waste, from production to consumption, by improving harvest and postharvest management and food storage and transport.

✓ Develop integrated policies and programs that reduce waste in food supply chains, such as economic innovation to enable low-income producers to store food during periods of excess supply and obligations for distributors to separate and reduce food waste.

7. Create comprehensive, shared, integrated information systems that encompass human and ecological dimensions

✓ Sustain and increase investment in regular monitoring, on the ground and by public domain remote sensing networks, to track changes in land use, food production, climate, the environment, human health and well-being worldwide.

✓ Support improved transparency and access to information in global food markets and invest in interlinked information systems with common protocols that build on existing institutions.

3.2 Food Security Program of ETHIOPIA  
Food Security Program(FSP)

✓ FSP is a special arrangement, which focuses on addressing vulnerability, which exists in different parts of the country.

✓ Records shows that before the past 2- 3 decades in a worst year's millions of people in the drought prone areas of the country could face food shortage, which are either chronic or transitory in nature.

✓ Cognizant of the level of vulnerability in the country the government of Ethiopia, in close collaboration with development partners, has prepared the New Coalition for Food Security in Ethiopia.

✓ Since 2003, the program has been under implementation in 319 chronically food insecure woredas/districts

## Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOCI 2092)

Core objectives of the Food Security Programme



Enabling chronically food insecure people attain food security



Significantly improve the food security situation of the transitory food insecure people

Component of the FSP

1. Resettlement program

2. PSNP (Productive Safety Net program)

3. HABP (Household Asset Building Program)

4. CCI (Complimentary Community Investment

Objectives of each of the components

1. The main objective of the resettlement program is to enable chronically food insecure households attain food security through improved access to land.

2. The objective of the PSNP is to provide transfers to the food insecure population in chronically food insecure districts in a way that prevents asset depletion at the household

## Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)

level and creates asset at the community level.

3. Household Asset Building Program contributes to achievement of the FSP's expected Outcome of "improved food security status of male and female members of food insecure households living in chronically food insecure woredas."

4. CCI is an intervention which is designed to create community assets and complement household investment through creating an enabling environment.

### Area Coverage

✓ Covers food insecure woredas/districts in drought prone areas  
- 8 regions  
- 319 woredas/districts

✓ Covers chronically food insecure households- > 6.88 million beneficiaries

### Targeting

✓ Targeting is the process by which chronically food insecure households are selected to participate in public works or receive direct support.

✓ A combination of administrative and community targeting systems will be applied in the selection of eligible participants

## Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)

### Target Groups

- ✓ CFI – HH residing in PSNP districts are eligible to participate in the program

### Criteria for selection of beneficiaries

- ✓ HH that have faced continuous food shortage (3 month of food gap or more )
- ✓ HH that have suddenly become more vulnerable as a result of a severe loss of assets and are unable to support themselves

### Key interventions

The key interventions designed to attain household food security are :-

- ✓ Building the household asset through on farm activities
- ✓ Undertaking a resettlement program
- ✓ Implementing a Safety Net Program which bridge food gaps while building community
- ✓ Introducing non –farm activities

## Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)

### Household Asset Building Program (HABP)

- The major causes of food insecurity in the country is the depletion of household assets
- Multiple causes can be cited in this regard
- Drought has been the major factor causing loss of crop and livestock
- Repeated food shortages have also forced many HH to sell their assets to address their immediate needs
- Building sustainable household assets is therefore the major solution to the problem of food insecurity

### Interventions for HABP

- Introduction of appropriate technologies which helped improved production and productivity
- Preparation and dissemination of different menu of technological packages through the extension service
- packages includes :-
  - provision of improved inputs to increase livestock's and crop production,
  - Moisture conservation and utilization,
  - Natural resource development,
  - Trainings
  - Support for additional income generating activities , and
  - Provision of market information

## Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)

Intervention for the resettlement program

- Resettlement is purely on voluntary basis
- Each settler household is guaranteed assistance of packages that includes provision of fertile farm lands, seed, oxen, hand tools, and food ration for the first eight months
- The settlers are also provided access to essential infrastructures (clean water, health post, feeder roads)

Interventions for PSNP

- PSNP is intended to serve as a dual purpose of helping bridge the income gap of the CFI-HH
- PSNP has two components
  - Labor intensive public works
  - Direct Support
- The able bodied will be engaged in public works for which they are paid a minimum amount while the labor poor are paid same amount free
- A key feature of the Safety net program is its household focus.
- It is linked with the HABP and PSNP beneficiaries are getting priority in getting access to the HABP resources

Non Agricultural Income interventions

- As the food insecure households are resource poor, living in drought – prone and degraded areas ,focusing on crop and livestock production alone may not entirely solve

## Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)

the problem of food insecurity

- For these areas income diversification through non –agricultural activities is important
- To this effect, the food security program considers complementary income sources in non– farm activities

### Graduation

- Graduation is a key goal of the Food Security Programme to which the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) contributes
- The term ‘graduation’ describes the movement of a HH From food insecurity to the level of food security
- There are two levels of graduation. (graduation from PSNP and graduation from FSP )
- Every year an assessment is done to check whether the HH is reached to the level graduation or not

## Chapter Four

### 4. Poverty and Inequality

What is meant by ‘poverty’?

Clearly, the starting point must be an understanding of what poverty means – what is its definition, and how do people see it?

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

At the *World Summit on Social Development* in Copenhagen 1995, the international community adopted and endorsed a multidimensional definition of poverty.

Poverty can be defined in very precise technical terms that facilitate its measurement. Poverty can also be characterized in a more multidimensional – yet less precise – manner that helps see poverty in relation to its causes, its context, its consequences and the ways it is related to phenomena that can be influenced. In the following are examples of various approaches.

A. Income poverty: refers to Incomes below a “minimum subsistence” or 50% or 60% below the median.

The World Bank “absolute” poverty level is based on minimum incomes needed for basic necessities in a number of low-income developing countries. It is equivalent to 1.25 USD/day.

In the European Union, relative poverty is defined as 60% of the median income. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) uses the threshold of 50%.

B. Basic needs approach: Poverty is scarcity of resources and opportunities to satisfy basic needs. The ILO introduced the “basic needs” concept in the 1970s and 1980s. This concept allowed for taking into account the availability in the community of public goods and services when defining and assessing poverty. The Bristol Study (2003) on basic needs UNICEF has since applied and further developed this multidimensional concept for measuring and describing poverty and deprivation of children. Poverty is described by measuring a number of individual and household level resources children need and have a right to in order to grow and develop.

C. Capabilities approach: poverty and deprivation are a lack of prerequisites for self-determined life, “lack of capabilities” to manage one’s life.

Capabilities are means for achieving good life, to avoid and escape from deprivations, and to realize one’s potential. Development is a widening of choices and freedom. Capabilities refer to both external resources and options and human capital embedded in the person her/himself.

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

Prevention and reduction of poverty calls for expanding opportunities, empowerment and security, so as to enable people to manage their lives

The OECD multidimensional poverty concept is also an application of the capabilities approach. The capabilities that enable people to avoid poverty, escape poverty and achieve their life goals are: economic, human, political, socio-cultural and protective capabilities. Gender and environment cut across these dimensions.

D. Well-being approach: poverty is the flipside of well-being, it is bad life, it is ill-being. Poverty is seen as a multidimensional lack of resources and conditions to achieve satisfaction of physical, social and psychological or self-actualization needs. The Finnish sociologist Erik Allardt (in the 1970s) referred to these dimensions of well-being as "Having", "Loving" and "Being". Well-being is a product – not a sum – of these components. More of one cannot replace scarcity of the others. The increasing Western wealth has already for decades failed to create more well-being and happiness.

Poverty analyses have tended to fail to account for the social and psychological dimensions of poverty and deprivation as they are difficult to measure. Thus qualitative analyses are important to improve understanding of the essence and causes of and solutions to poverty and deprivation. The three dimensional concept of poverty is adequate but challenging to apply empirically. In the case of children it is clear that some material standard of living is necessary – but not a sufficient condition for them to grow and develop.

E. Inequality approach: poverty is a process. Its essential root causes are embedded in inequality, insecurity, vulnerability, discrimination and exclusion. Thus the ways to attack poverty are related to more equal opportunities, decent work, economic and social security, non-discrimination, empowerment and making social and economic institutions more fair and accountable.

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

F. Human Rights Based Approach: Poverty is a violation of basic rights and fundamental freedoms. It is a multidimensional and comprehensive perspective.

The human rights approach anchors the criteria for poverty and deprivation into the non-attainment of universally agreed, unalienable human rights standards and principles as the ultimate benchmark to be attained for all. However, norms and legislation alone are not enough to make rights materialize. Equality-oriented comprehensive social policy and good governance are the necessary instruments for creating enabling environments for people to avoid poverty and for moving out of poverty.

### *The dynamic nature of poverty*

Understanding poverty as a static state of affairs and the poor as a stable and identifiable group of people is often misleading. Poverty is often very clearly seasonal. Poverty can result from normal life events when there is no social security. Qualitative studies such as the World Bank “Moving Out of Poverty” and the studies of the Chronic Poverty Centre, have shown how people fall into chronic poverty as a result of quite common lifecycle events that turn catastrophic when there is no ways of managing even minor economic shocks. On the other hand, there is considerable flow out of poverty as people strive to escape poverty and many manage to do it. Social institutions are often the insurmountable obstacles that block the way.

Conventionally, poverty is represented in two main models:

*Absolute poverty:* It is based on subsistence, a minimum standard needed to live. Absolute poverty or destitution is a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. About 1.7 billion people are estimated to live in absolute poverty today. It depends not only on income but also on access to social services.

*Relative poverty:* This is based on a comparison of poor people with others in society. Here, poverty is defined as the absence of inadequacy of those diets, amenities, standards, services

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

and activities which are common or customary in society. That is, it refers to lacking a usual or socially acceptable level of resources or income as compared with others within a society or country.

Poverty, like all need, is defined in terms of the society where it takes place: what people can eat, and where they can live, depend on the society they live in.

### Theories of Poverty

#### Structuralism or not

Marxism (conflict structuralism) attributes poverty to the existence of class divisions in society. Poverty helps to maintain the domination of the bourgeoisie; it serves the interest of this wealth owning class.

Needless to say there are other sociologists of a “right-wing” persuasion who would disagree. They attribute the persistence of poverty to the poor themselves, arguing that as individuals they are to blame for their own poverty, or as groups they develop a culture of poverty that perpetuates their poverty.

It is not necessary to be a Marxist in order to agree that poverty is rooted in the structure of society rather than in the individual. Also, it is possible to adopt an interactionist approach, arguing that the structure of society creates a culture of poverty among the poor, which perpetuates the structure of society, and so forth.

#### Individualistic theories

The 19thC sociologist, Herbert Spencer, blamed poverty on the poor. He claimed that the poor were lazy, and those who did not want to work should not be allowed to eat.

He attributed poverty to bad moral character. He argued that the State should intervene as little as possible. It was he that coined the phrase, “the survival of the fittest”.

This attitude still prevails today, and Golding and Middleton claim that newspapers regularly report benefit claimants as “scroungers”. However, this attitude seems to be in some decline.

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

According to a survey conducted by the European Commission into attitudes in 1976 43% of British people blamed poverty on laziness compared to 18% in 1989. Furthermore, Britain was the country where people were most likely to blame poverty on the individual characteristics of the poor.

According to American writer William Ryan this individualist theory is an example of “blaming the victims”.

The Thatcher and Conservative regime was associated with the “New Right”, who claimed that the benefits system created a culture of dependency. The sociologist David Marsland typifies this approach, arguing that low incomes are caused by the generosity of the state; additionally, public expenditure on income support withdraws money from investment in industry. He argues that benefits should be targeted at only those in “genuine need”, such as the disabled.

On the contrary, these are the foremost victims of erroneous ideas and destructive policies imposed on them by paternalists, socialists, and privileged members of the professional New Class.”

However, Bill Jordan opposes Marsland, claiming that poverty is caused by a welfare system that is means-tested and too mean. The way to tackle poverty is to have “universal provision, which brings everyone up to an acceptable level. Far from creating dependence it frees people from dependence.”

### **The Culture of Poverty**

The concept of a culture of poverty was introduced by American anthropologist, Oscar Lewis, as a result of studying the urban poor in Mexico and Puerto Rico. The culture of poverty constitutes a “design for living” that is passed on from generation to the next. Individuals feel marginalized, helpless and inferior, and adopt an attitude of living for the present. They are fatalistic. Families are characterized by high divorce rates, with mothers and children abandoned; they become matrifocal families headed by women.

## Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)

People adopting this culture of poverty do not participate in community life or join political parties; they make little use of banks, hospitals and the like.

According to Lewis the culture of poverty perpetuates poverty: It “tends to perpetuate itself from generation to generation because of its effect on children. By the time slum children are aged six or seven, they have usually absorbed the basic values and attitudes of their subculture and are not psychologically geared to take full advantage of changing conditions or increased opportunities which may occur in their lifetime.

However, Lewis regards the culture of poverty as applicable to Third World countries, or countries in the early stages of industrialization, and claims that it is not prevalent in advanced capitalist societies. But sociologists such as American Michael Harrington (*The Other America*) do argue that the culture of poverty can apply to advanced industrial societies. American anthropologist, Walter Miller, also argues in this way, claiming that the American lower class has its own set of focal concerns that emphasize masculinity, living for the present, and luck rather than effort as the basis of success. He regards this class subculture as self-perpetuating. He also claims that it is an adaptation to low-skill occupations. For example, people with this attitude have an increased ability to tolerate boring work and to find gratification outside work. Some critics of the concept of a culture of poverty claim that their own studies do not provide evidence of it.

### The Underclass

#### *Charles Murray – the underclass in Britain*

The idea of an underclass was first developed by right-wing, American sociologist, Charles Murray. He applied the concept to Britain during a visit in 1989. His idea is linked to theories that blame the individual for his poverty, and also to the concept of a culture of poverty. He writes, “When I use the term ‘underclass’ I am indeed focusing on a certain type of poor person defined not by his condition, e.g. long term unemployed, but by his deplorable behavior in

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

response to that condition, e.g. unwilling to take jobs that are unavailable to him.” Other kinds of “deplorable” behavior include committing crimes and having illegitimate children.

So being a member of the underclass in this sense means having a deplorable subculture linked to not wanting to work. He primarily blames illegitimacy for this condition. In 1979 Britain has an illegitimacy rate of 10.6% but by 1988 this had risen to 25.6%. Illegitimate children are more likely to be born to women of lower social class. He claims that illegitimate children “run wild” because they lack father role-models. He claims that the underclass is responsible for rising crime – property crime and violent crime. These damage communities and make people withdraw into themselves. He claims that young men do not want to work and this causes a breakdown in community life.

### *Frank Field – Losing Out*

A different concept of the underclass is put forward by British Labour MP Frank Field. He claimed that poverty is increasing in Britain, and that there is a growing underclass made up of (1) the long-term unemployed, (2) single-parent families; (3) elderly pensioners. This group is characterized by being reliant on state benefits that are too low to give them an acceptable living standard, and have no chance of escaping from reliance on state-benefits. The causes of the development of this “underclass” are rising levels of unemployment, changes in government policy under Thatcher, which have widened the gap between the rich and the poor, and changes in the public attitude to poverty, with an increase in the tendency to blame the poor for their poverty. In general he argues that Thatcher reversed the long-term trend in British social history towards the development of rights, and that the underclass are trapped by the lack of rights.

Conflict Theories of Poverty

Department of sociology

Page | 60

## Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)

### *Poverty and the Welfare State*

Conflict theorists claim that poverty is caused by the structure of society. Since most of the people who are poor receive state benefits, it can be argued that the existence of poverty can be attributed to the inadequacy of these benefits. It is not in fact true that taxes generally redistribute wealth from the rich to the poor. Direct taxation is progressive and the rich pay more, but indirect taxation, such as VAT (Value Added Tax) is regressive, that is, the poor pay more proportionately. Also, the poor spend proportionately more of their income on alcohol and tobacco, on which the heaviest duties are levied, than the rich. In fact, since 1978/9 the tax burden on the poor has increased, whilst the tax burden of the rich has been reduced.

### *Poverty and the labor market*

A good proportion of the poor are employed, but receive wages insufficient to meet their needs. The unemployed and low-paid tend to be those who are unskilled.

Increasing mechanization has reduced the demand for unskilled labor. Narrow profit margins in labor-intensive industries, such as catering, force wages down. Large families push people into poverty. However, this is not due to profligacy, as Coates and Silburn in their report on their study of a low-income group in Nottingham report:

“For most families living on the borderline of poverty, it was the second or third child, rather than the fifth or sixth, who plunged them below it.”

This analysis is supported by the dual labour market theory, which is the view that there are two labour markets: (1) the primary market for skilled labour, which offers relatively high wages and job security; (2) the secondary market for unskilled labour, where there are low wages and little job security.

### *Poverty and Power*

## Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)

The poor lack political power. The employed are represented by trade unions. The lack of income of the poor means that they do not have the resources to organize effective protest. They also have no economic sanctions – the employed can strike, but the poor cannot. The employed do not identify with the unemployed, and members of the working class have prejudicial attitudes to the poor, seeing them as “scroungers” and “layabouts”. The poor are also handicapped by the shame of poverty – the poor are largely unseen. Ralph Miliband states that “economic deprivation is a source of political deprivation; and political deprivation in turn helps to maintain and confirm economic deprivation.”

### *Poverty and Capitalism*

Marxists argue that the existence of poverty is beneficial to the ruling class. Poverty increases the motivation of the working class to work. Those in work also receive unequal rewards for work. The existence of low wages reduces the wage demands of the workforce as a whole.

Marxists claim that the capitalist system creates poverty.

Herbert J. Gans has identified a number of functions that make poverty “useful” to capitalists.

(1) Temporary, dead-end, dirty, dangerous and menial jobs are undertaken by the poor. (2) Poverty creates jobs and careers for middle-class people. Gans writes, “poverty creates jobs for a number of occupations and professionals that serve the poor, or shield the rest of the population from them.” These include the police, probation officers, social workers, psychiatrists, doctors and civil servants. There is a “poverty industry”. These workers may be idealists, but they have a vested interest in the continuing existence of poverty. (3) Poor people make everyone else feel better.

“Poverty helps to guarantee the status of those who are not poor.” He also says, “The defenders of the desirability of hard work, thrift, honesty and monogamy need people who can be accused of being lazy, spendthrift, dishonest and promiscuous to justify these norms.”

Poverty, condition of having insufficient resources or income. In its most extreme form, poverty is a lack of basic human needs, such as adequate and nutritious food, clothing, housing,

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

clean water, and health services. Extreme poverty can cause terrible suffering and death, and even modest levels of poverty can prevent people from realizing many of their desires. The world's poorest people—many of whom live in developing areas of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and eastern Europe—struggle daily for food, shelter, and other necessities. They often suffer from severe malnutrition, epidemic disease outbreaks, famine, and war. In wealthier countries—such as the United States, Canada, Japan, and those in western Europe—the effects of poverty may include poor nutrition, mental illness, drug dependence, crime, and high rates of disease.

Extreme poverty, which threatens people's health or lives, is also known as *destitution* or *absolute poverty*. In the United States, extreme poverty is traditionally defined as having an annual income that is less than half of the official poverty line (an income level determined by the Bureau of the Census). Extreme poverty in developing nations, as defined by international organizations, means having a household income of less than U.S.\$1.25 per day. *Relative poverty* is the condition of having fewer resources or less income than others within a society or country, or compared to worldwide averages. In developed countries, relative poverty often is measured as having a family income less than one-half of the median income for that country.

The reasons for poverty are not clear. Some people believe that poverty results from a lack of adequate resources on a global level—resources such as land, food, and building materials—that are necessary for the well-being or survival of the world's people. Others see poverty as an effect of the uneven distribution of resources around the world on an international or even regional scale. This second line of reasoning helps explain why many people have much more than they need to live in comfort, while many others do not have enough resources to live.

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

### 4.2. Inequality:

#### Defining social inequalities

*Social inequalities are differences in income, resources, power and status within and between societies. Such inequalities are maintained by those in powerful positions via institutions and social processes.* (Naidoo and Wills, 2008)

#### Marxist Perspectives on Social inequalities

##### A. How Social Class Is Defined.

In order to understand how both Marx in particular and Marxist writers in general have attempted to define and theorize "social stratification" we must first look briefly at the historical background and context of Marx's view of social stratification.

##### B. How Social Order is Created and Maintained.

Given that, according to Marx, class conflict is inevitable, we need to understand how social order maintained in class stratified societies.

In order to do this we need to look at how Marxists generally understand the basic structure of social systems.

1. As noted above, social systems can be classified in terms of two basic divisions:

- a. Their economic base (the system of production that gives rise to two basic classes - those who own the means of production and those who sell their labour power).
- b. Their political and ideological superstructure that surrounds and "rests upon" the economic infrastructure.

In simple terms, the economic base of a social system consists of the various forces of production which produce particular types of social relations to the production process.

2. The superstructure of a social system consists of two related spheres:

- a. The State (which involves things like a system of government, judicial systems, a Civil Service and the like). This is the political sphere.

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

b. Ideological institutions (which involves things like religion, the mass media, education and so forth). This is the ideological sphere (the realm of ideas about the nature of the social world).

Marx argued that the economic infrastructure was the most important division in society because:

a. It involved the production, distribution and exchange of the essential requirements for living (beginning with basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter and ending with all kinds of "necessary" consumer goods - televisions, cars, videos and so forth).

b. Systems of government, communication and the like are dependent upon the way in which a society organizes itself to provide these essential requirements.

Social Inequality:

Social Inequality Perspectives: Weber

While, in common with Marx, Weber argued that "class stratification" had a clear and important economic dimension, he believed that two other related dimensions of stratification, namely:

a. Status and

b. Party (or political power) needed to be included if a full analysis and understanding of the rich social variety of different forms of social stratification was to be obtained.

Thus, as has been suggested above, in order to understand the relative significance of Weber's "three dimensions of stratification":

1. Class

2. Status and

3. Party

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

### a. The possession of power:

According to Weber, the ability to possess power derives from the individual's ability to control various "social resources". These resources can be anything and everything and might include things like:

Land,

Capital,

Social respect,

Physical strength,

Intellectual knowledge, etc

In basic terms, the definition of a "social resource" is simply something that is both socially desirable and in some sense limited (that is, it can be possessed by some but not others).

### b. The exercising of power:

The ability to exercise power takes a number of different forms, but all involve the idea that it means the ability to get your own way with others, regardless of their ability to resist you.

In terms of understanding the relationship between power and social stratification, Weber theorized the various ways in which societies are organized in hierarchical systems of domination and subordination using the following major concepts:

#### 1. Class Power (Class):

This was theorized by Weber on the basis of "unequal access to material resources". For example, if I possess something that you want (or, better still from my point of view, need) then this makes me potentially more powerful than you. I am in a dominant position and you are in a subordinate position because I control access to a desired social resource.

A classic illustration here is the relationship between an employer and employee. Explain this relationship on the basis of control of resources / power.

#### 2. Social Power (Status):

Department of sociology

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

If you respect me or view me as your social superior, then I will potentially be able to exercise power over you (since you will respond positively to my instructions / commands).

In this respect, social status is a social resource simply because I may have it while you may not...

### 3. Political Power (Party):

This form of power is related to the way in which the State is organized in modern social systems (involving the ability to make laws, for example). If you can influence this process of law creation then you will be in a potentially powerful position. Thus, by your ability to influence a decision-making process you possess power, even though you may not directly exercise that power personally. "Political parties" are the organizational means to possess power through the mechanism of the State and they include not just formally organized parties, but any group that is organized to influence the way in which power is exercised legitimately through the machinery of the State. For example:

Status groups (political organizations that exist to protect the social status of a particular group within society - for example: The British Medical Association)

Interest groups (political organizations that exist to advance the interests of a particular section of society by attempting to influence the way decisions are taken by government).

## CHAPTER FIVE

*Substance abuse as a contemporary social issue*

### Introduction

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

The magnitude and pattern of youth substance abuse are becoming critical issues in the contemporary world. According to the United Nations office for drug control (UNODC) estimates, 149 to 172 million people (3.3 - 6.1 percent of the population) aged 15-64 use illicit drugs at least once in the previous year across the world, and half of which are current drug users. The regional proportion of Africa in the report is between 25.7 million and 80.8 million among the same age group (World Drug Report, 2011).

### Defining Substance Abuse

Understanding how phenomena such as drug and alcohol use and abuse are defined is important in helping us to discover explanations and creating social policies. Thus, it is important to note that sociologists utilize a somewhat different approach in defining drug use and abuse than scholars from the fields of biology, pharmacology, and psychology. Sociologists tend to focus more on the social meaning of drugs and alcohol, norms and patterns regarding their consumption in certain settings, and consequences resulting there from.

One widely accepted definition of substance describes that substances are compounds that, because of their chemical structure, change the functioning of biological systems (Levinthal, 1999). While the term substance abuse applies only to instances in which people take substances purely to change their moods and thus, they experience problems in behavioural and social functioning (Wallace & Fisher, 1997). This suggests that substance abuse is pathological that causes impaired social and occupational functioning. Because substance dependence is addiction, it is understood that people who consume drugs on regular bases in a greater proportion and more heavily often develop dependence thereby the emotional state of the abuser changes. The abuser needs the drug to function appropriately (Okoza, 2009).

### Substance Use and Abuse: The Dilemma

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

Substance abuse is used to describe a pattern of substance use leading to significant problems or distress such as failure to attend work/school, use in dangerous situations (driving a car), substance-related legal problems, or continued substance use that interferes with friendships and/or family relationships. Substance abuse, as a disorder, refers to the abuse of illegal substances or the abusive use of legal substances. Alcohol is the most common legal drug of abuse, among others.

Cultural and societal norms influence acceptable standards of substance use. Public laws determine the legal use of substances. The question of whether there is a normative pattern of substance use remains controversial.

Even though, each individual may experience symptoms differently, the following are the most common behaviours that indicate an individual is having a problem with substance abuse. Symptoms may include, getting high on drugs or getting intoxicated (drunk) on a regular basis, lying, especially about how much they are using or drinking, taking risks, such as sexual risks or driving under the influence of a substance, depressed, hopeless, or suicidal feelings (Gayla, 2001).

In instances of illegal drug use, any use is equal to substance abuse; however, substances such as alcohol or prescription drugs can be used without being abused (Brecher, 1992). Alcohol use, in particular, becomes abuse if the user is a minor or attempts to drive while intoxicated. Alcohol abuse also occurs when drinkers become abusive to themselves or others, through continuing to drink when negative consequences to their alcohol use make it obvious that the drinker has become a problem drinker or alcoholic (Eneh & Stanley, 2004).

### Theories of Substance Abuse

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

Various risk factors have been identified that precede, and increase the likelihood of developing substance use problems. The various factors can be described and conceptualized as interpersonal and environmental/contextual. Complexity of factors that are found to influence the likelihood of adolescent substance misuse has created difficulty to determine intervention and control strategies. However there exist a number of theories suggesting the possible factors initiating the use of substances, here, effort is made to take a bird's eye view of the major theories.

### **Social Control Theory**

Social control theory assumes that violations of society's norms are natural, understandable, and not in need of an explanation. What needs to be explained, its proponents argue, is why people conform to society's norms. If left to our own devices, we would all break the law and indulge in any manner of criminal behaviour and normative violations. And what explains law-abiding behaviour and conformity to society's norms, they say, is attachment to conventional people, beliefs, institutions, and activities (Hirsch, 1969).

To the extent that we are bonded to our parents, to an education, to marriage and children, to a legal job and career and to mainstream religion, we do not want to threaten or undermine our investment in them by engaging in deviant or criminal behaviour—and that includes recreational, especially illicit, drug use. Drug use is contained by bonds with or adherence to conventional people, institutions, activities, and beliefs. To social control theorists, it is the attachment of people to conventionality that explains abstention from drugs; it is the absence or weakness of such attachments that explains drug use (Good, 2006).

### **Social Learning Theory**

Social learning theory is a comprehensive theory that offers an explanation of the acquisition, maintenance, and change in deviant behaviour, like substance abuse, that embraces social, non-

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

social, and cultural factors operating both to motivate and control criminal behaviour and both to promote and undermine conformity. According to social learning theory, an individual learns to take drugs in small, informal groups. It is in these intimate settings that people are taught, through imitation and reinforcement, to hold attitudes that are favourable or unfavourable to drug use (Reed & Rountree, 1997). The theory is based on four major elements – differential association, definitions, differential reinforcement, and imitation.

*Differential association:* refers to direct association and interaction with others who engage in certain kinds of behaviour or express norms, values, and attitudes supportive of such behaviour, as well as the indirect association and identification with more distant reference groups. The groups with which one is in differential association provide the major immediate and intermediate social contexts in which all the mechanisms of social learning operate. The most important of these groups are the primary ones of family and friends. In Sutherland's differential association theory, for instance, learning takes place according to the frequency, duration, intensity, and priority of social interactions.

*Definitions:* are one's own orientations, rationalizations, justifications, excuses, and other attitudes that define the commission of an act as relatively more right or wrong, good or bad, desirable or undesirable, justified or unjustified, appropriate or inappropriate. Specific definitions orient the person to particular acts or series of acts and to define given situations as providing opportunity or lack of opportunity for taking substances. The greater the extent to which one has learned and endorses general or specific attitudes that either positively approve of or provide justification for the substance use, the greater the chances are that one will engage in that behaviour.

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

Differential reinforcement: refers to the balance of anticipated or actual rewards and punishments that follow behaviour. Whether individuals will refrain from substance use at any given time depends on the balance of past, present, and anticipated future rewards and punishments for their actions.

*Imitation:* refers to the engagement in behaviour after the direct or indirect observation of similar behaviour by others. Whether or not the behaviour modelled by others will be imitated is affected by the characteristics of the models, the behaviour observed, and the observed consequences of the behaviour (Bandura, 1997). The observation of salient models in primary groups and in the media affects both pro-social and deviant behavior (Donnerstein and Linz, 1995).

### **Substances of Abuse: The Contextual Analysis of Khat, Cigarette, Alcohol, and Marijuana**

As with other substance use problems in the rest of the world, the prevalence and incidence of adolescent drug use is also becoming critical in Ethiopia. The few existing data show a steady increase in the use of most drugs. The study document by the world drug report indicated that the national prevalence rate of drug use across the nation is 2.6 percent (WDR, 2006). However, there is acute shortage of up-to-date national figure across the country. In its study, the UNODC (WDR, 2009) indicates that out of the 1,531 respondents

Of substances commonly abused in Ethiopia, Alcohol, Khat and tobacco are the most frequent substances of abuse, followed by cannabis, including Marijuana, and solvents (Abebe, Atalay, Hanlon, 2006). Thereby, the four major substances are presented as follows.

## Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)

### 1. Khat

One of the most prevailed drugs in Ethiopia is Khat (*catha edulis*). Khat is defined as an ever green shrub native to tropical east Africa, having dark green opposite leaves that are chewed for their stimulating effects. The stimulating effect of Khat is related to the cathinone content of the leaves.

Modern users report that chewing Khat gives increased energy levels, alertness and confidence, a sense of happiness, better thinking capacity and creativity, facilitation of communication ability, enhanced imaginative ability and the capacity to associate ideas. For some others, chewing Khat is a method of increasing energy and elevating mood in order to improve their work performance.

#### *1.1. Determinants of Khat use*

In Ethiopia, Khat is commonly used for social recreation. Occupational groups such as motor vehicle drivers, truck drivers, who chew Khat during long distance driving, to keep awake, also use it under a variety of other conditions. A significant number of students chew Khat to be alert especially during examination periods. There is also specific usage of Khat by the special sections of the community: craftsmen and farmers use Khat to reduce physical fatigue and traditional healers to heal ailments.

#### *1.2. Effects of Khat*

Although Khat has an extreme social nature and individual feelings of sociability in social gatherings, it influences physical and psychological functions. Its psychic influence depends on its active ingredients that have a stimulating and euphoric effect. And the medical and psychosocial effects of Khat chewing depend on its capacity to lead to dependency, addiction,

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

and to specific physical and behavioural effects, including socioeconomic consequences for individuals and the community.

### *Health Effects:*

A common effect of Khat use is insomnia, a condition that the users sometimes try to overcome with sedatives or alcohol. The withdrawal symptoms after prolonged Khat use seem to be limited, however, to lethargy, mild depression, slight trembling and recurrent bad dreams. An important consideration is that, Khat use may endanger health in that the resulting anorexia leads to malnutrition and thereby to increased susceptibility to infectious diseases.

There is also evidence of increased risk of periodontal cancer associated with Khat consumption. Recent reviews of the evidence suggest however that there are numerous complications with the evidence. Pennings et al., (2008) suggest conflicting evidence regarding periodontal disease, a findings supported by the WHO. Al-Hebshi & Skaug, (2005) suggest that there is only weak evidence that Khat chewing is a risk factor for oral cancer. However the ECDD (WHO, 2006b) and ACMD (2005) suggest that there is a growing evidence that oral cancer may be a significant issue related to Khat chewing due the widespread development of pre-cancerous growths in the mouths of regular Khat chewers (ACMD, 2005).

In a pharmacokinetic study, diastolic and systolic blood pressures were elevated for about 3 hours after chewing (Toennes, Harder, Schramm, Niess & Kauert, 2003). The rise of blood pressure already started before the rise of alkaloid plasma concentrations, indicating an initial study engagement effect. The dose used was about one quarter of a traditional Khat session dose and chewing was for 1 hour.

### *Socio-economic effects:*

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

Considering the social and economic challenges related to Khat use, whilst there have been more specific data gathered and there have been improvements in research into the social impacts of Khat, there still remains a lack of data demonstrating clear deleterious social effects associated with moderate Khat use.

From other point of view, according to Pantelis, Hindler & Taylor (1999), the recent sharp increase in Khat consumption has serious socio-economic consequences for the countries involved. The potential adverse effect is diversion of income for the purchase of Khat, resulting in neglect of the needs of oneself and the family. Furthermore, in countries where its use is substantial, it may negatively affect the economy since productivity is reduced in quantity and quality as the result of absenteeism and after-effects of the drug. The taxes imposed on Khat are also an important source of revenue to governments (Kennedy, 1997). In Yemen, for example, estimates in the early 1980s – before the production of oil – attributed 30% of the gross domestic product to Khat.

### Legal Uncertainty towards Khat

Khat is not under international control at present, even though, two substances that are usually present in Khat, cathine and cathinone are, since in the early 1980s were placed under international control.

Khat has varied legal status throughout the world – in some countries it has been declared illegal while in others it is completely legal. And this act of different country has brought respective consequences. In Kenya, Yemen, Uganda, and Madagascar, for instance, prohibition has resulted in increased illegal importation. When prohibition was replaced in Somalia by import duty, Khat chewing becomes a very common habit within a few years. Today, Khat

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

circulates freely in all of East African regions. In some countries even, Khat chewing is allowed, in other it is officially banned but there is no law enforcement.

Indeed, the case of this plant is an equivocal one and international law on this issue is ambiguous. In Ethiopia, it is accepted as non-controllable substance and the view of the current government, as some suggests, is intermingled with its immense and highly growing contribution towards the Gross domestic product of the nation.

### Religious and Socio-Cultural Uncertainty towards Khat

Khat chewing has a deep-rooted socio-cultural tradition, its pleasure-inducing and stimulating effects seemingly having a strong influence on the social and cultural life of the communities who indulge in it. The most important aspect of Khat sessions is their function as a medium for the exchange of information; participants meet friends, exchange news, take part in discussions and debates and make plans and decisions.

Khat sessions often have a cultural function as well. At festivities, feasts and rituals, including birth, circumcision and marriage, adult guests often chew Khat, which heightens their enjoyment of the occasion.

A study conducted in Butajira, Ethiopia, where Khat usage is legal, showed that 80% of chewers used Khat to gain a good level of concentration for prayer, to facilitate contact with God and to discourage them from criminal activities.

## 2. Alcohol

The production and consumption of alcohol pre-dates modern civilization. It is claimed that the mountainous areas of Ethiopia, for instance, were among the first seven countries in the world where plants were grown for alcohol production (Acuda, 1988). Alcohol is a drink containing

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

ethanol which damages the liver and pancreas in particular. Liver damage can also lead to the chance of bleeding unnecessary.

Besides the fabricated drinks, home - brewed traditional alcoholic drinks, with their varied alcohol content are becoming part of day to day life of most of the Ethiopian people (Desta, 1977). *Tella* and *Araki* are the most commonly used drinks among other. World Health Organization report shows that *Tella* is home brewed alcoholic beverage with alcohol content of 2-4%. *Araki* is a spirit distilled from fermented cereals with an alcohol content of up to 45 % (cited in Assefa, Damen& Alemayehu, 2005).

### Determinants of Alcohol Use

Adolescent alcohol abuse is associated with drinking by peers (Botvin et al. 1998), parents (Brook et al. 1986), and siblings (Rittenhouse and Miller 1984). Together these findings demonstrate that family and peers exert similar influences on adolescent smoking and drinking.

### Effects of Alcohol

The damage that long-term heavy alcohol consumption can do to the health of adults is well documented. Some research suggests that, even over the shorter time frame of adolescence, drinking alcohol can harm the liver, bones, endocrine system, and brain, and interfere with growth. Adolescence is a period of rapid growth and physical change; a central question is whether consuming alcohol during this stage can disrupt development in ways that have long-term consequences.

The medical consequences of chronic alcohol abuse and dependence have been well documented in adults. They include liver disease, lung disease, compromised immune function, endocrine disorders, and brain changes.

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

In general, the existing evidence suggests that adolescents rarely exhibit the more severe chronic disorders associated with alcohol dependence, such as liver cirrhosis, hepatitis, gastritis, and pancreatitis.

Many people consider alcohol a stimulant because it releases an individual's inhibitions. Actually, alcohol is a powerful depressant of the central nervous system (the brain and spinal cord). The effects of alcohol on the central nervous system depend on blood alcohol concentration (BAC). Alcohol's effects include impaired memory, a decreased ability to concentrate, mood swings, and, once a high BAC is reached, passing out. Chronic (long-term) alcoholism can result in brain damage, memory loss, sleep disturbances, psychoses, and heart disease, ulcers of the stomach and gastrointestinal system, and liver diseases such as hepatitis and cirrhosis of the liver.

### 3. Cigarette/ Tobacco

Nicotine, the primary psychoactive chemical in cigarette, has been shown to be addictive. In average each cigarette smoked shortens the user's life span by 11 minutes. About half of cigarette smokers die of tobacco related disease and lose on average 14 years of life. Besides active smokers, passive smokers are also victims of cigarette related health problems.

As statistical figure revealed by WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic in 2008 shows, tobacco kills one person every six seconds. Tobacco kills a third to half of all people who use it, on average 15 years prematurely. Today, tobacco use causes 1 in 10 deaths among adults worldwide – more than five million people a year. By 2030, unless urgent action is taken, tobacco's annual death toll will rise to more than eight million. Out of all these smokers the share of youth is very huge (WHO, 2008).

Effects of Cigarette Abuse

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death, and is estimated to kill more than 5 million people each year worldwide. Most of these deaths are in low- and middle-income countries. The gap in deaths between low- and middle-income countries and high-income countries is expected to widen further over the next several decades. If current trends persist, tobacco will kill more than 8 million people worldwide each year by the year 2030, with 80% of these premature deaths in low- and middle-income countries. By the end of this century, tobacco may kill a billion people or more unless urgent action is taken.

The severity of problems related to Cigarette smoking is further facilitated through second-hand smoking. Second-hand tobacco smoke can spread from one room to another within a building, even if doors to the smoking area are closed. Toxic chemicals from second hand tobacco smoke contamination persist well beyond the period of active smoking, and then cling to rugs, curtains, clothes, food, furniture and other materials. These toxins can remain in a room weeks and months after someone has smoked there (Singer et al., 2002) even if windows are opened or fans or air filters are used. Filters can become a source for deposited chemicals that are then recycled back into the air of a room rather than removed. Tobacco toxins that build up over time, coating the surfaces of room elements and material, and smokers' belongings, are sometimes referred to as "third-hand smoke" (Winickoff et al., 2009). Globally, it is estimated that about one third of adults are regularly exposed to second-hand tobacco smoke.

Regarding smoke-related disease in Ethiopia, cancer mortality report in 2000 indicated that trachea; lung, bronchus, lip, oral cavity and pharynx cancer accounts for most of tobacco related deaths. Trachea, lung and bronchus cancer together accounted for 5.9 death rates and lip, oral cavity and pharynx cancer together accounted for 20.1 death rates due to tobacco (Abebe, Atalay, Hanlon, 2006).

### 4. Marijuana

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

Marijuana comes from the plant *cannabis sativa*, produces delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the active ingredients associated with intoxication. The drug is usually smoked, but it can also be eaten. Its dose varies greatly depending on how it is prepared. Its smoke irritates lungs more and contains more cancer-causing chemical than tobacco smoke (Gayla, 2001). Marijuana perceived by some as a purely recreational drug. Just like that of Khat, such perception fails to acknowledge the danger of using the drug. The likely danger in using Marijuana is higher than the above three drugs.

### Determinants of Marijuana Abuse

Marijuana use is, after all, a deviant and criminal activity, as long as the drug is among the controlled substances in the country. Deviant behaviour can flourish when “people are emancipated from the controls of society and become responsive to those of a smaller group” (p. 60), that is, a subculture or, in Becker’s words, a “sub cultural group.”

### Effects of Marijuana

Short-term effects of marijuana use can be rapid heartbeat, bloodshot or glassy eyes, loss of coordination or poor sense of balance, difficulty in listening or speak and so much more. Consistent use of it affect individual user seriously. It directly affects academic achievement in affecting their problem solving capacity and memory level. Long-term use may also lead to a decreased ability to deal with stress because it affects the central nervous systems, severe delivirm- seeing or hearing things that are not there. The more severity of marijuana is still conceptualized as it is a gate way drug in facilitating taking other high level drugs like heroin and cocaine (Brecher,1992)

### Substance Abuse and Youth

## **Contemporary Social Issues: Food Security, Poverty and Inequality (SOC12092)**

Being a teenager and raising a teenager are individually, and collectively, enormous challenges. For many teens, illicit substance use and abuse become part of the landscape of their teenage years. Although most adolescents who use drugs do not progress to become drug abusers or drug addicts in adulthood, substance use in adolescence is a very risky proposition. One of the most telling signs of a teen's increasing involvement with drugs is when drug use becomes part of the teen's daily life.

There is no single cause of adolescent substance problems. Substance abuse develops over time; it does not start as full-blown abuse or addiction. There are different pathways or routes to the development of a teen's substance problems. Some of the factors that may place teens at risk for developing substance problems, include - insufficient parental supervision and monitoring ; lack of communication and interaction between parents and kids ;poorly defined and poorly communicated rules and expectations against drug use ;inconsistent and excessively severe discipline ;family conflict; favourable parental attitudes toward adolescent alcohol and drug use, and parental alcoholism or drug use among other individual factors like psychological distress; difficulty maintaining emotional stability; perceptions of extensive use by peers ; Perceived low harmfulness to use.

