

Education as an Instrument of Social Change

Name

Course number

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Date

Change is a progressive process in life and has been taking place in the society for centuries. At times change may occur slowly such that people adapt without hitches or resistance, but on other occasions, it is rapid and drastic especially when triggered by unavoidable circumstances such as a change in political notions. Different spheres of life have been experiencing transformation to meet new demands. For example, for social changes to take place the existing social networks fail to meet general human needs. However, there are numerous factors in the society likely to cause social change, with education being one of the most predominant¹. Learning initiates social changes as it alters man's stance and attitude on awkward beliefs and traditions. Therefore, education changes patterns of social relationships, attitudes, behaviors, and customs in social institutions and structures, which defines peoples' style of living.

Education is a form of learning in which skills, habits, and beliefs of a group of people are transferred to the descendants through teaching and training. Educational systems spearheads change in the society by pointing out and suppressing depraved behaviors and upholding decent morals. However, in social settings, education is an instrument and also a product of social change. For this reason, despite bringing about desirable changes in the society, its structures are also affected by changes taking place in the community. Education is, therefore, necessary for social change since illiterates tend to conform to their current states as they feel destined to be that way. As an instrument of social change, education not only preserves cultural traditions but also

¹ Patil, Namita P. "Role of education in social change." *International Educational Journal* 1 (2012).

transmits them to the next generation. Also, it motivates learners to adopt new values to remain dynamic and progressive.

Education creates a desire for change by reflecting the values of those groups which support and control learning systems. Teachers and other teaching professionals impart specific values and inspire children to overcome social evils like gambling, begging, and drinking among other practices. They build an urge to fight against barbaric practices and instill a desire to improve peoples' living conditions. Therefore, education is used as an instrument used to overcome resistance to change caused by fear of uncertainty, natural, and socio-economic factors. Education emphasizes issues such as gender equality, establishing democratic governance institutions and doing away with barbarous social customs². Through education, they teach substantial philosophy aimed at changing the society. In fact, they treat education as a beam of light dispelling the darkness of ignorance.

From a sociological perspective, learning arises out of needs in the society. Therefore, education systems are not designed for individual gain but the benefit of the community. From the 1960s, during modernization period, industrialization, distributive justice, and agriculture were some of the areas which needed a change in most parts of the world. Therefore, modernization was confined to economic sphere but was only achievable through the incorporation of other fields of life. The only way people would acquire knowledge on modern development such as industrialization and urbanization was through education. In fact, nowadays schools are workshops

² Patil, Namita P. "Role of education in social change." *International Educational Journal* 1 (2012).

for social awakening and national development³. People have to learn productive ways of integrating all aspects of life for the benefit of the community. For this reason, education empowers individuals, but they cannot bring change solely as societal change is a collective task. Therefore, education is one of the ways of bringing together people who will lead the transformation process in the society.

In static cultures, educational systems just transmit cultural heritage to upcoming generations. On the other hand, in a developing society, the traditions keep changing, and educational systems are used to prepare learners to encounter future changes. For instance, through education, some cultures have created awareness on women education. However, static cultures still treat women as housekeepers and deny them access to elementary education. Therefore, through learning people have raised new values on the importance of gender equality giving women equal chances of development similar to their male colleagues. Therefore, education is used as a tool to promote equality among masses which open equal opportunities to all people regardless of color, gender or ethnicity. Initially, societies were discriminative and only gave opportunities to a selected class of individuals. However, through education, there is increased sensitization on equality without discrimination even in the political arena which was predominated by males.

³ Pérez-Jorge, David, Yolanda Márquez-Domínguez, Nayra Gómez-Galdona, Milagros De la Rosa-Hormiga, and S. Marrero-Morales. "Values Education as a tool for social change from an Educational Approach." *International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities* 11, no. 1 (2016): 91-100.

In conclusion, education is, therefore, one of the most influential instruments of social change. It destroys intellectual pride to create a society where privileged people do not look down upon less fortunate individuals. Education has produced divergent thinkers who can quickly make sound judgments to come up with a solution while encountered by strange situation despite current cultural constraints⁴. Also, through continuous learning people develop special skills essential in social development. Therefore, schools have contributed towards a desirable change of attitudes and values in the society inhibiting social transformation for the good of the community. Lastly, teaching professionals through diverse roles and activities accelerate the process of social change. They, therefore, have an obligation to suggest changes, model modernity and remove obstacles in the way of implementing social changes.

⁴ Mathur, Robert. 2012. "Education as an Instrument of Social Change." *Bed notes. BlogSpot. Co.K.* <http://bednotes.blogspot.co.ke/2012/10/education-as-instrument-of-social-change.html>

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