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Meaning: Social Change

The concept of social change came into being with the publication of [W.F. Ogburn's](#) book '[Social Change With Respect to Culture and Original Nature](#)' in 1922

Any alteration, difference or modification that takes place in a situation or in an object through time can be called change. The term 'social change' is used to indicate the changes that take place in human interactions and interrelations. Society is a web of relationships and social change means a change in the system of social relationships. Thus the term social change is used to desirable variations in social interaction, social processes and social organization.

A society generally has two distinct tendencies. They are- conservative and progressive. People in society have their tendency to conserve or preserve the social heritage of the past. Every society is proud of its own cultural history of the past. This is what may be describing as the conservative tendency of the society. But at the same time it has the tendency to change, modify and improve the existing social heritage.



Man is never satisfied with his present situation or existing condition. He wants to make changes and improvement of the existing state of affairs. This change is the law of nature and it is inevitable in the life of an individual as well as of society. So social change and development is inevitable in human society. It is also an instinctive tendency in man to have the curiosity for new knowledge and new experiences. It leads to dissatisfaction with the existing situations that result in the changes. So, social situation undergoes changes with the changes of time that result in social progress.

According to Kingsley Davis- “By social change is meant only such alterations as occur in social organization, that is, structure and functions of society.”

M.E. Jones "Social change is a term used to describe variations or modifications of any aspects of well process, social interaction or social organisation"

Listerward: "Social change is related to change in social aims and aspirations of the individuals"



Process of Social Change

Change in the experiences of individuals



Change in the attitude of individuals



Change in the thought pattern of individuals



Change in the social interactions



**Change in social relations
(social change)**



Change in the social structure



Nature of Social Change

Social change is continuous: Society is always undergoing endless changes. Society cannot be preserved in a museum to save it from the ravages of time. From the dawn of history society has been in continuous flux.

Social change is temporal: Social change is temporal in the sense it denotes the time sequence. In fact, society exists only as a time-sequence. Innovation of new things, modification and renovation of the existing behaviour and the discarding of the old behaviour patterns take time.

Social change is environmental: It must take place within a geographic or physical and cultural context. Both these contexts have impact on human behaviour and in turn man changes them. A social change never takes place in vacuum.

Social change is human change: The sociological significance of the change consists in the fact that it involves the human aspect. The composition of society is not constant, but changing.



Social change may be planned or unplanned: The direction and tempo of social change are often conditioned by human plans and programmes of man in order to determine and control the rate and direction of social change. Unplanned change refers to change resulting from natural calamities such as- famines, floods, earthquakes etc.

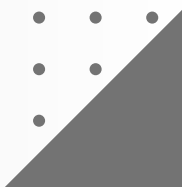
Short versus long-run changes: Some social changes may bring about immediate results while some others may take years and decades to produce results. This distinction is significant, because a change which appears to be very vital today may be nothing more than a temporary oscillation having nothing to do with the essential trends of life, some years later.

Social change may create chain reaction: Change in one aspect of life may lead to a series of changes in its other aspects. For example- change in rights, privileges and status of women has resulted in a series of changes in home, family relationships and structure, the economic and to some extent political pattern of both rural and urban society.



Some more nature/characteristics of Social Change:

- **Prediction of change is not possible**
- **Interaction of number of factors**
- **Change are modification or replacement**
- **Related to Time**



Factors of Social Change

Natural Factors:

A storm, earthquake, flood, drought, disease and similar natural events even today can disrupt the social system.

Natural calamities like floods, earthquakes, draughts, famines and other natural disasters always force changes in the social conditions and life of the affected people.

Cultural Factors:

The cultural factors also play a role in bringing about social change. Our social life depends upon our beliefs, ideas, values, customs, conventions, institutions and the like. When there is a change in these, it influences the social life. For example, let us (consider the system of marriage.

The relations between the parents and children have undergone a big change. The new love and need for working couples has acted as a source of big change in family relations and culture. Thus, socio-economic and cultural factors always act as big and formidable factors of social change.



Science and Technology factors:

In contemporary times science and technology happens to be the most important factor of social change. New scientific inventions and technologies always greatly influence social life.

"The most wonderful and universal phenomenon of modern life is not capitalism, but science and technology and capitalism is only its by-product."

Technology brings about changes in the physical environment and the material culture of each society which in turn gives birth to social change

Biological Factors:

Biological factors also affect social change. Biological factors are those factors which determine the structure, selection and hereditary qualities of generations.

The human element is ever changing. Each new generation is different from the previous generation. It is different in form, ideas and in many other ways from the one gone before.



Demographic Factors:

The Demographic factors always influence the process and nature of Social Change.

The population increase or decrease always brings social problems. When the birth-rate in a society exceeds the death-rate, population begins to rise.

A constantly rising population gives birth to poverty, unemployment, disease and several other related problems. On the other hand, a low birth rate means leads to decrease in the size of the population. When population is low, there are fewer skilled hands available and the country cannot make full use of the natural resources.

Socio-economic Factors:

The economic factors constitute an important factor of social change. Marx said that the entire social structure of a country is determined by economic factors i.e the means of production and distribution of material means of production and distribution. When there are changes in the means of production i.e the material productive forces of society, it always changes the social organization.



Geographical Factors:

The geographical conditions always affect the social system and act as factors of social change. The cultural life of the people depends upon the physical environment. Progress also depends upon the availability of natural resources, their exploitation.

The climate always affects the socio-economic activities of the people. For instance, there is little economic activity at both poles (North and South) due to intense and long spells of cold; the speed of social change remains negligible. On the other hand, there is always intense activity in temperate regions (neither too cold nor too warm), and consequently the speed of social changes is quite fast.

Educational Factors:

Education is the most important factor for creating social changes. It is education that transforms the child from a young animal into a rational human.

Education improves the quality and skill of the individuals. Thus, it modifies behaviour in a desirable way and brings about new values and ideas.



Factors of Social Change

Some more factors which effects the Social Change:

- **Psychological factors**
- **Communication factors:**
- **Political factors:**
- **Revolutionary factors:**
- **Ideological Factors**

Education as an Instrument of Social Change

Education stands as the cornerstone of societal transformation, acting as a powerful catalyst for change across multiple dimensions of human life. As an instrument of social change, education goes beyond mere literacy and academic knowledge - it encompasses the holistic development of individuals and communities. This transformative power of education operates through formal schooling systems, informal learning processes, and lifelong educational experiences that shape human consciousness and social behavior.

We cannot even imagine social change without education and in the same manner education is not possible without society.

According to Samuel, "Education a process whereby the social heritage of a group is passed on from one generation to another"

According to Francis J. Brown, "Education is a process which brings about changes in the behaviour of society".



Breaking Social Barriers:

Education plays a crucial role in dismantling social barriers and prejudices. By bringing together students from diverse backgrounds, educational institutions create environments where traditional social boundaries become less rigid. This interaction fosters understanding, tolerance, and acceptance among different social groups, contributing to a more inclusive and equitable society.

Cultural Transformation:

Education acts as a powerful force in challenging and transforming traditional beliefs and superstitions that may hinder social progress. Through scientific education and rational thinking, people develop the ability to question unfounded beliefs and adopt more progressive attitudes. This process gradually leads to cultural evolution and social modernization.



Gender Equality Promotion:

Education plays a vital role in challenging and breaking gender stereotypes. By providing equal educational opportunities to all genders, societies can work towards eliminating gender-based discrimination. Educated women are more likely to participate in the workforce, hold leadership positions, and contribute to decision-making processes.

Social Mobility:

Education helps people move up the social ladder. By gaining qualifications and skills, individuals can secure better jobs, earn more income, and improve their social standing. This process breaks the cycle of poverty, ensuring that success is based on talent and hard work, not family background.

Economic Development:

Education contributes to economic growth by developing a skilled workforce. From basic literacy to professional training, education equips people with the knowledge and abilities needed in the job market, boosting productivity and fostering innovation.



Developing Values:

Schools promote essential values such as equality, justice, and environmental care. These values help students become responsible citizens who contribute positively to society's development.

Raising Awareness about Social Justice:

Education helps people understand social justice issues, such as inequality and human rights. This awareness encourages individuals to participate in movements and campaigns that promote fairness and positive change in society.

Technology in Education:

Modern education includes technology, helping people prepare for the digital world. Digital tools and online learning make education more accessible, reducing gaps between communities and connecting them to global knowledge.



Empowering Women:

Educating women has a strong impact on society. Women with education have better control over their lives, make informed decisions about health, and actively participate in family and community matters, leading to broader social progress.

Adapting to the Future:

The future of education lies in its ability to change and meet new social needs. It must keep up with technology, address emerging challenges, and prepare students for jobs of the future. Education will need to keep evolving to remain a powerful force for social change.



Education affects every part of society—from individual growth to large-scale development. It helps people achieve personal success, challenges social norms, and promotes values like equality and democracy. As education spreads, it creates ripple effects that touch all areas of life, making it a key driver of progress and change.





THANK YOU