

Q Discuss in brief the socio-cultural factors that may enhance and retard the process of ~~change~~ socio-cultural change in societies?

## 1) Introduction

Change is the only constant. Although some sociologists advocate radical change while others believe in natural evolution of societies. But, in each case change is inevitable. There are several socio-cultural factors that ~~are~~ accelerate change such as, industrialization, urbanization, technological advancement, and social movements etc. On the other hand, there are some factors as well that slow down the process of socio-cultural change which includes, cultural inertia, isolation, ethnocentrism, and compatibility of change with existing patterns etc.

## 2) Socio-cultural factors that enhance socio-cultural change

a) Industrialization brings about change in traditional gender roles.

In traditional gender roles, women are responsible for domestic work

whereas, men are responsible to provide financial security to the family. As industrialization creates new economic opportunities, it often affects these traditional roles. Women may enter the workforce in greater numbers leading to shift in household responsibilities and social expectations regarding gender.

Socio-cultural change factor

Industrialization → Gender roles

b, Urbanization: leads to change in family patterns and provides opportunity for social mobility.

Urbanization changes family patterns. The ~~cost~~ high-cost of living paved the way for nuclear families. There is also a shift from "collectivism" to "individualism" due to urbanization, as stated by Ferdinand Tonnies in his theory of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. According to him, the former represents rural society where social organization is based on collectivism whereas the latter represents urban society where social organization is based on individualism.

In addition to this, urbanization also provides better opportunities ~~is~~ ~~and~~ for social mobility.

c) Advancement in technology and globalization bring about significant changes in social norms.

With advanced technology and globalization, the crossing of international borders becomes easy. This leads to awareness regarding different cultures which influence human actions. For instance, the culture of wearing jeans and eating fast-food is ~~spreading~~ widespread among Pakistani society.

d) The Nature of economy determines the nature of social institutions.

The nature of economy significantly influences the direction of social institutions such as, education, politics, and religion etc. According to Karl Marx, the nature of economy (sub-structure) determines the other social institutions (super-structure) of a society known as "Dialectic Materialism".

e, Education challenges rigid societal traditions which ultimately contribute to societal change:

Education helps individuals to develop their intellect and expose them to new ideas and diverse perspectives. This helps in challenging regressive traditions. For example, with the increase in literacy rates in a conservative Iran, 81% in 2016, the contraceptive usage also increased to 70% (World Bank). This shows how education can challenge ~~rigid~~ attitudes towards rigid traditions of a society.

f, Environmental awareness influences consumption patterns:

People are becoming more conscious about environment due to the negative implications of climate change. This led to change in consumer behaviour. For instance, people are shifting from fossil fuels to renewables.

### 3, Socio-cultural factors that retard Socio-cultural change

#### a, Cultural inertia :

It can be defined as the tendency of people to continue traditional way of living and thus being resistant to major changes. The rules, norms and values of a culture get so deeply entrenched in the social fabric that no space is left for new patterns.

#### b, Isolation of some areas hinders social change :

Isolated areas can not adopt to any new changes due to technological advancement because people of such areas are unaware of the current trends. This is mainly because of geographical contiguity. For instance, rural areas of Pakistan.

#### c, Lack of education :

Lack of education is another barrier to socio-cultural change. Education, apart from providing specialized skills, is a way of changing ideas, beliefs and patterns of living. With a low

literacy rate. Societies resist major changes.

d, Ethnocentrism : a major hindrance to social change;

A large number of people are ethnocentric and they believe in the superiority of their culture over others. Many such people are less likely to adopt new changes as they think such changes are actually not required. For instance, many people in rural areas consider "jirgha" superior to legal justice system.

e, Culture of Poverty :

Poverty is another major cause impeding social change. Many people are ready to accept change but lacking basic resources like education and finance. Furthermore, culture of poverty also inhibits change as people after living in poverty for longer duration accept that change is not possible and get accustomed to their previous patterns.

f) Pressure groups acted as a barrier to social change:

Various pressure groups exert strong influence on decision-making of the government that impedes socio-cultural change. For example, the decision of providing motor-bikes ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~provision~~ was heavily criticized by religious groups in Pakistan.

g) Compatibility of change with existing patterns:

People are less likely to accept changes that are not compatible with the existing patterns. For example, people in Pakistan consider birth control measures as anti-Islam. Changes that challenge such existing patterns are not welcomed.

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Socio-cultural factors that enhance change

- Urbanization
- Economy
- Education
- Industrialization
- Environmental awareness
- Advancement in tech.

Socio-cultural factors that retard change

- Cultural inertia
- Isolation
- Lack of education
- Ethnocentrism
- Pressure groups
- Compatibility of change with existing patterns

## 5, Conclusion

In a nutshell, There are various socio-cultural factors which include, rapid urbanization, education, and industrialization which change the social fabric of society, such as change in gender roles, social norms and cultural exchange etc. However, cultural inertia, lack of education and ethnocentrism, etc also inhibit these changes.