**Essay Question on Education**

**‘Education perpetuates rather than fights inequality.’ Comment.**

Nature of discussion

This question needs to examine the positive and negative impacts of education on the issue of inequality. Students are required to show whether education worsens or resolves the inequality problem.

Structure of discussion

There are two possible structures of writing for this type of question:

(a) ‘Do you agree’ (DYA) Structure

* Does education worsen rather the reduce inequality?
* Rebuttal – Explain why this view is wrong
* Are there cases/situations when education fights inequality?

(b) ‘Challenging the comment’ Structure

* Explain how education worsens the inequality problem
* Explain why this will not be entirely true (i.e. challenge the comment)
* Analysis of the depending factors

**Structure (a): DYA**

Introduction

**Overview:** Education has played a vital role in facilitating the advancement of the human civilisation. From an early age, individuals have received education to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to meet the demands of various industries, highlighting its beneficial impacts on humanity.

**Given View:** However, some argue that education perpetuates inequality as the unequal access to education has widened the social and economic divide.

**Contrasting View:** In contrast, educators disagree as they argue that education has always been the key approach to fight inequality, rather than worsen the issue.

**Stand:** In view of these polarising views, this essay is more inclined to the perspective that education fights rather than perpetuates inequality.

Main Body

**Part 1: [Given View] Explain how education perpetuates inequality**

**Point 1.1 – Education perpetuates economic inequality**

**TS:** For those who believe that education worsens economic inequality, their rationale stem from the observation that the uneven access to education has led to the unequal distribution of benefits, such that those who benefit from education will gain access to wider economic opportunities, while the rest are left behind.

**EL:** Unequal access to education 🡪 seen in terms of the distribution of resources 🡪 like establishment of educational institutions at the urban versus rural areas 🡪 as well as the deployment of teachers

As a result, households that have economically better off 🡪 will gain from the benefits of education 🡪 whereas those that are lacking in access to educational services 🡪 will have less to gain from this development

Example: Those with higher academic qualification will receive higher pay scale and better employment development opportunities in the public service.

**Point 1.2 – Education widens social inequality**

**TS:** In addition, education exacerbates social inequality as differences in the level of education will reinforce social perceptions towards the capability and competency of individuals, thus driving a wedge between people in various communities.

**EL:** Level of education is not only an indicator to assess a person’s capability but a reflection of his way of life 🡪 furthermore, this form of observation is used to screen individuals during their search for suitable employment during their career pursuits 🡪 as such, education has become a divider of the social group as education determines how we live and who we socialize with.

**Part 2: [Rebuttal] Prove why the above two views are incorrect**

**Connecting Sentence:** However, the views that education perpetuates social and economic inequality do not hold true if we consider the inherent obstacles that affect the distribution of its benefits to developed and developing nations.

**TS:** Although it may seem that education is the cause of inequality, underlying factors are impeding individuals from an equal social system are beyond the education divide.

TS: Education is not the cause of social divide as it is a social leveller which will create social mobility for the individual to raise their social status in the development.

**Part 3: [Opposing View] Explain why this may not be entirely true**

**Connecting sentence:** However, there are certain scenarios in which education fights, rather than perpetuates inequality.

**Point 3.1 – Education enables economic progress for all, distributing benefits in a more inclusive manner**

**TS:** While education has been blamed as a divisive force that perpetuated economic inequality, the study of new fields has broadened opportunities for individuals to capitalise on, thus closing the income gap.

**EL:** Given the on-going wave of technological advancement, educational institutions have restructured their areas of learning to keep up with the ever-changing needs of industries. In response, governments and other groups have provided individuals, both young and old, with the means to tap on this growing trend to improve their skills, thereby raising their level of education comprehensively across all sectors of economy.

**EG:** For example, SkillsFuture Festival 2018 is an event to raise awareness and promote the passion for lifelong learning and skills mastery, enabling people from being left behind as the economy progresses. This solves the problems of skills mismatch and displacement of workers which are the main causes of structural unemployment, one main reason for the cause of social inequality.

**Point 3.2 - Education is the means to eradicate discrimination and social difference to forge the platform for equity and equality**

**Through education, individuals are inculcated with the ethical and moral values to build up a fair and just view about the world. They are less sceptical and more ethical to understand the imperative of a world which promotes equality and disdain social inequality. Accepting this view by virtue of education will help to eradicate discrimination, stereotyping and anti-establishment**

**Point 3.3 – Education promotes social interaction to cultivate social cohesion**

Individuals will be enlightened and enriched to have common values to forge a sense of belonging which will create a common identity that promotes cohesiveness and a sense of belongings.

**Elaboration:**

Conclusion