**Issue Discussion: Education**

**1. Why is education important and how does it affect an individual?**

*Video title: What is the role of education?*

Take video from:

<https://www.gptuitiononline.com.sg/gp-issues/jc-gp-tuition/education/why-is-education-important/individual>

A. Overview

In any part of the world, education is dealt with the highest importance after military defence. In Singapore, 17% of the government’s total expenditure is directed towards education. A very clear example would be the SkillsFuture movement introduced in Budget 2015. It is important to note that education does not refer to mere book studying within the four walls of the classroom, but also the acquisition of skills, values and beliefs. Thus, education does not stop after one graduates from school; it is a lifelong process and a pivotal factor to an individual’s development.

B. To have an enriching life

We feel bored when we keep doing the same monotonous things over and over again, but we feel excited and curious when we get to do new things. This is called the joy of learning. New topics and events interest us because we get to learn and fill our brains with knowledge and enjoy new experiences. Education hence enriches a person’s life because it improves and enhances our view of things. We get exposed to a spectrum of perspectives and most importantly, we learn what is crucial for survival. According to a study, infant mortality rates decrease significantly for women who have had education at the primary school level, and even more so if they have completed secondary school. It is estimated that the infant mortality decreases by 9% for every year of education attained. When men and women are equipped with knowledge on health issues, the cycle of poverty as well as mortality rate reduces.

Furthermore, education keeps a person’s mind healthy and active. Though it has no scientific basis, health experts believe that those who have higher levels of learning such as those who have a university and postgraduate education are least likely to suffer from Alzheimer’s or dementia.

C. To live an empowered life

Literacy refers to the ability of a person aged eight and above to read and write simple sentences. To be empowered is to be given the authority and power, and hence become stronger and more confident in controlling one’s life. Without education, one may not be able to understand their rights fully. Hence, lacking basic reading and writing skills is a great disadvantage; it not only enriches an individual’s life but also creates opportunities for people to develop useful skills for them to provide for themselves and their families.

Education allows people to acquire skills that may deem them important to the society, where they can contribute their efforts to improving the country, gain the responsibility to do more things in life and hence find employment opportunities. Furthermore, education matures a person’s mind when they learn to view matters from different perspectives and be able to consider advantages and disadvantages.

**2. Discussion Question**

How does education affect society?

[Write a response into the comments box below on societal impact of education]

**3. Answer**

**How does education affect society?**

#1: Education creates differences in us

On one hand, education promotes elitism where it only focuses on the best student. This arose from the principle of meritocracy in talent selection which has exacerbated segregation and creation of different social classes. As a result, this can create a social divide in our society where elites high up on the social pyramid may feel a greater sense of superiority and discriminate against the weak. Consequently, the cohesiveness of the society will be undermined. On the other hand, education can also function as a social leveler to help the underprivileged to move up along the social ladder, if given equal access to education. Furthermore, education will allow greater interaction between the privileged and underprivileged which will cultivate mutual understanding and tolerance. Hence, this will help narrow the social divide.

#2: Books as a source of entertainment

Nowadays, books are still popular for their recreational functions. People read for fun at their own pace to enjoy their leisure time. However, visual forms of entertainment, including televisions, videos and movies, become increasingly common, for they are more interactive and engaging.

How else can education affect society?

Education plays a large role in society. It shapes society and acts as the mould. With education, people can better understand what is right and what is wrong, as well as the impacts of their actions, and where their culture stems from and their importance.

To cultivate moral individuals

Education cultivates moral individuals because it helps to provide people with a moral compass. With knowledge, people learn the severity of certain actions, as well as how to prevent them. They understand that all actions have an impact, either good or bad. In addition, many countries make moral education classes compulsory for students, so that they learn the principles of right and wrong.

According to the most recent data from the U.S. Bureau of Justice, 56 percent of federal inmates, 67 percent of inmates in state prisons, and 69 percent of inmates in local jails did not complete high school. Additionally, the number of incarcerated individuals without a high school diploma is increasing over time.

To preserve cultural heritage

Education ensures that students learn their country’s culture so that they can understand why there are certain norms that the country follows, or festivals that they celebrate and so that the roots of the country are not lost to the globalising and increasingly homogenous world.

For example, in Singapore, we learn from our history lessons how we build our country from the kampong it was to the bustling city it is today, so that we are more appreciative of how far we have come and so that we understand that we should continue to pass down the ‘kampong spirit’ so that Singaporeans remain friendly and helpful towards one another.

To build civic order and a cohesive society

Education helps to build order and a cohesive society as it teaches people the importance of remaining harmonious. For example, in Singapore, we are taught that racial harmony is very important because Singapore is already so small and diverse, we have to stick together as the only difference between the different races are insignificant things like skin colour.

In addition, many political leaders agree, such as the Chief Minister of Punjab, Pakistan, Shahbaz Sharif, who said earlier this year that education “will help end terrorism, extremism, poverty and unemployment.” Without the displacement and economically ravaging effects of conflict, people affected by poverty are less likely to fall further down the rabbit-hole of chronic poverty and be able to escape or avoid poverty and promote further peace.

**GP Practice**

**Write two paragraphs on this not, providing one supportive and opposing view.**

**Is it the duty of society to educate the individuals?**