

Education
And
Social transformation

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Education and Social transformation

History seems to indicate that human progress towards higher levels of material and cultural achievements has four basic requirements: technological development, sociocultural transformation, the accumulation of Knowledge, and man's struggle for freedom; all of which cannot and would not be accomplished without education and the social awareness it creates and fosters.

Education is the principal method through which societies transmit knowledge from one generation to another, learn how to develop and accumulate knowledge, preserve certain values and transform others, and introduce social and cultural change in the form of new, non-conventional ideas and values and attitudes, and non-traditional ways of thinking. It is through education that people learn how to become more socially and politically conscious, and how to increase their ability to acquire and use knowledge to improve the quality of their lives.

But for education to instigate the desired sociocultural transformations in society and produce the know-how needed to achieve material and cultural progress, education has to come with certain things, most important among them are the right knowledge and the right attitudes. Education that fails to instill in students the right attitudes and equip them with the proper training and expose them to right scientific facts and information can, and often does, create an obstacle to change that hinders rather than facilitates sociocultural transformation and technological progress.

Students and University

University is a social institution that provides students with an environment conducive to learning and living a unique and healthy life experience. It is the place where students get a chance to discover their particular talents, and an opportunity to develop such talents. University also helps students to get the training they need to think critically and be innovative, behave rationally and

be creative, and work systematically and be focused. Above all, university helps students learn how to learn, how to continue to learn, and how to enjoy learning and knowing for as long as they live. Any university that fails to perform these tasks wastes valuable human and financial resources; denies its students the opportunity to get the right education, and limits their abilities to succeed in life.

But, for the university to perform its tasks, students have to be ready to listen, eager to learn, willing to seek knowledge and work hard to acquire it. Students also have to regard the acquiring of the right education, not just a college diploma, the primary objective of their college life. Students who fail to get involved in university activities and shy away from seeking new knowledge may get a diploma, and most of them do get a diploma at the end of their college life; however, they are more likely to fail the test of life. While it is the university's responsibility to provide students with the tight education and training to think critically and creatively, schools and homes bear the primary responsibility for providing students with the right attitudes toward learning and living a healthy and productive life.

Students entering college for the first time are more likely to ask themselves and their families' questions about the best fields of study. No question of this nature has one satisfactory answer; every question has more than one good answer. For each field of study there is a societal need, and in every profession there are good and successful professionals, as well as bad and failed ones. A good hairdresser, for example, can and often does attract good customers, some of whom would drive across town to get the service they need and deserve. A bad physician, in contrast, would not be able to attract enough patients to give him/her the satisfaction he/she usually seeks, even if the treatment is free. The first is more likely to make good money, get self-satisfaction, be appreciated by others and enjoy life. The latter is less likely to make enough money or enjoy the self-satisfaction or social recognition he aspires for. Therefore, students should study whatever they like and enjoy most; they should follow their talents and instincts without much regard to market trends. But to succeed in life, students must work hard to discover and develop their talents, and recognize that learning is a continuous, ever challenging, never ending process that covers the span of one's life.

A college diploma, even a Ph.D. degree is, just like a driver's license, an acknowledgment of certain accomplishment that entitles its holder to certain legal privileges and social recognition. However, a new driver who just got his driver's license is usually a shaky driver who lacks experience and self-confidence; he is only good enough to damage the car and irritate other drivers on the road. A few years of driving experience are usually needed to make a new driver a better, safer driver. Lack of driving practice for a few years is certain to make any new driver a dangerous one, capable of hurting himself and others on the road.

A college graduate is a person ready to enter professional life armed with some knowledge and specialized training and skills to make a difference. A few years of work experience and further learning would be needed to make such a person a specialist in his field. But sitting back after graduation and making no effort to gain new experience and accumulate more knowledge is a good recipe for losing whatever knowledge and training was learned in the first place; it may even lead the holder of a college degree to develop unproductive habits and socially harmful attitudes that transform his education into a liability and, consequently, undermine his chances of success and his potential contribution to society.

The human brain is the most valuable asset that any person could ever have; and treating it as such will insure mental development, career advancement and personal satisfaction. People who ignore their brains and shy away from acquiring more knowledge and gaining more experience are wasting the most valuable assets they have, and upon which they have to rely to succeed in life. In the wake of the Tsunami that hit several Asian countries including Indonesia, a former Indonesian student of mine sent me an email to remind of a statement I had made in the class he attended, and to tell me that that statement was instrumental in helping him deal with the aftermath of the Tsunami crisis. The statement says, "We teach you not to make you change your minds but to help use your minds."

"Smart students do not sit back and let things happen to them; they do not wait for opportunities to come knocking at their doors. Instead, they get involved, take the initiative and make things happen for them; they are always focused on their careers and future, always able to recognize and create new opportunities to exploit. They do every task with eagerness and

enthusiasm as if they are doing it for the very first time, always striving for perfection.

People familiar with my work, always wonder about my ability to write so many books about so many diversified subjects. Whenever such a question is raised, my answer has been simple and direct: at least 90 percent of all that I know today I have learned after leaving university and receiving my Ph.D., not during or before my university years.

Education and Society

Cultural qualities and other factors that individuals as well as groups and societies need to have to make genuine progress are many; noted among them are:

1. *The right education;*
2. *The right tools*
3. *The right attitudes;*
4. *The right institutions;*
5. *The right societal systems;*
6. *Sufficient information; and*
7. *The will to act.*

The right education is probably the easiest and least expensive thing to acquire; most people today have access to good education at home or abroad. The right tools, however, are not so easy to acquire because they involve more than just buying mechanical equipment and scientific instruments; they require the acquisition of other things that demand time, money and energy to develop and utilize, such as the training of qualified technicians and the creation of environments conducive for learning and working. As for the right attitudes, they are still more difficult to develop and instill in people because they are a function of values and traditions that are most resistant to change. Such values and traditions involve social systems, ideologies, and the upbringing of children in society, which tend to control the internalization process of convictions and ethics in younger people.

Institution building in these times is a very demanding task; it requires large amounts of money, unique expertise, good understanding of the trends of scientific and global change, and deep awareness of societal needs in all fields of human endeavor. Such institutions include governmental agencies, specialized research institutes, trade organizations, banking, finance and investment companies, and quality control systems and arrangements. Developing the right societal systems, in turn, is a very complicated process that starts with the conceptualization of such systems, and moves on to design and implementation. In addition, such systems need to be continuously evaluated, updated, upgraded, and expanded; they are the systems most responsible for meeting the changing and increasing demands of people, while enabling them to maximize the benefits from the services and opportunities available to them. Sufficient information is a critical factor whose absence undermines the chances of individual, group, institutional and societal success. For example, no plan for social or economic or educational development can succeed without sufficient information regarding the needs to be addressed, the audience targeted for change, and the nature of the environments in which experts are supposed to function.

If these cultural qualities and tools were to be ranked according to their importance, the right attitudes and the right societal systems would be ranked first and second, respectively. No society or nation can hope to achieve genuine progress without developing quality societal systems to coordinate and integrate the multiplicity of functions in society, and without arming its labor force with the right attitudes to value work and work honestly and efficiently.

In most Third World countries, the intellectual and political elites are more likely to be the first generation to get an education. The parents of this generation are largely illiterates having no formal education and little knowledge to deal with modern life complexities. The elites, having more knowledge and better skills than most of their countrymen, usually develop an unhealthy sense of superiority. It is a superiority complex that most members of Third World elites acquire and use, not to help and lift their countrymen, but to rule over them and manipulate their needs and fears; they tend to do so in order to keep the masses submissive and often grounded in poverty and tradition.

Culture and Change

Traditional societies are generally more conservative and religious and therefore, tend to emphasize education that reinforces traditions and traditional values and attitudes; they also tend to give religious and historical subjects priority over most other branches of knowledge. People who are still living in pre-industrial times usually rely primarily on traditional wisdom and old knowledge, which is a function of age-old cultural values and customs and life experiences, not of modern education or scientific knowledge. Being a product of memories and certain life experiences of a long-gone past, traditional wisdom has become, especially after the dawn of globalization and the Internet, largely irrelevant, even to peoples who are still living in its times. It is an invalidated set of popular sayings and ways of thinking and doing and looking at things that defies scientific knowledge. And because of that, traditional wisdom has become an obstacle to economic change, sociocultural transformation and rational thinking. And unlike scientific knowledge, which is a liberating force, traditional knowledge and wisdom is a force of social repression and political oppression.

All traditional cultures that have their roots in the pre-industrial age tend to believe in faith and fate and accept certain myths as facts, and to have a prominent spiritual aspect to their lives capable of sustaining them even in a crisis. Because of such attitudes and convictions and psychological comforts, traditional societies in general tend to be content and inward looking, to fear the unknown and resist change. They also fear looking at the world around them using an empirical approach, because such an approach disturbs their peace of mind and forces them to question their deeply rooted beliefs in faith and fate. Employing an empirical approach to view the world, furthermore, would increase a believer's life challenges at a time when he or she lacks both the right understanding of the world around him and the proper tools to deal with the increasing life challenges facing him.

Throughout history, charismatic leaders have symbolized the ideas and convictions that left a lasting impact on the lives of societies. At the same time, no leader could claim greatness and be recognized as historic without being associated with a grand idea and unconventional

convictions. Yet, the vast decline in the sociopolitical role of ideological thought in recent decades, and the increasing societal role of institutions instead has caused the power and stature of all types of leaders to diminish. The future, therefore, is unlikely to witness the appearance of a great leader, a great idea, or a grand ideology that can change the course of history in a meaningful way. Because of such a development, no society should wait for a great leader to emerge and save it; every society should accept life challenges as they are and prepare itself to face them. One of these pressing challenges, which no nation can ignore any longer, is economic and technological development and the sociocultural and institutional transformations it requires and inspires.

Economic development, for example, emerged in the second half of the twentieth century as the most desired goal sought by Third World nation. But despite the many national development plans and World Bank programs and foreign aid, no Third World nation, with only few exceptions, has managed to achieve the desired economic goals. This failure clearly indicates that Third World societies in general lack the knowledge and the tools and the institutions to design and implement feasible economic plans. Even with the hundreds of billion of dollars spent by the World Bank to build dams, roads, schools and educational and technical training centers, economic development has remained an elusive goal for most nations. Hesitance to initiate the kind of social, cultural, political and economic changes needed to facilitate the transformation of the existing social and economic structures, has made economic development a difficult, if not a largely unattainable goal. Societies that lack the right knowledge and attitudes and societal systems to live the age and recognize its limitations and opportunities are unable to develop and climb the civilizational ladder in an orderly and timely manner.

Development, to be feasible, needs much more than traditional education, or the abundance of natural resources, or the availability of cheap labor, or a fairly developed infrastructure, or even a good supply of capital. It needs a society whose values are conducive to change, whose human resources are skilled and disciplined, and whose institutions are capable of designing and carrying out reform plans and leading change. No nation has so far managed to industrialize without experiencing profound social and cultural transformations, and no socially

and culturally developed nation has failed to enter the industrial age.

When asked about the lack of economic development in his country, former Iranian president Mohammad Khatami said in late 1999, “It is impossible to have economic development in a socially and politically underdeveloped society.” While arguing correctly that social and political development is a precondition for economic development, president Khatami acknowledged, though implicitly, that Iran under its current ideological system has failed to accomplish either social or political development. In fact, after nearly three decades of Islamic rule, it is estimated that about 40% of the Iranian people are still living at or below the poverty line; in addition, all political and social and cultural freedoms are vastly restricted.

Resources that a nation may have are useful only if people know how to evaluate them, how to use them, and how to employ them where they are most needed, or where the benefits are most rewarding. Though people can and often do learn and borrow from others, their previous training of how to learn, how to apply what is learned, and what kind of knowledge matters most, is most important to determining the usefulness of their knowledge. These are questions of culture and its value and belief systems, which by defining priorities, determines what is to be learned, how much to be learned, and how much freedom the learned should have in applying their knowledge.

Ideas, convictions and beliefs, on the one hand, and technologies, institutions and societal systems on the other, have had a competitive relationship throughout history. Wherever and whenever beliefs and traditions and convictions prevail, knowledge is usually constrained and used primarily to enhance the power of ideology and its leadership, not to enrich the lives of people. And whenever and whenever knowledge, in the form of technologies, tools, institutions, work ethics, and societal systems prevail, ideology and its leadership tend to be weak; and their adherents tend to be marginalized, allowing economic and social and political progress to be made. Thus, the undermining of the power and influence of ideology in society, particularly rigid belief and value systems, has become a precondition for economic and political and technological progress and sociocultural transformation.

In addition, the dominant forces and ideologies in society have claimed the best talent available and employed it in the service of the ideology and its leadership. During the European Middle Ages, for example, the Church claimed the best talent and employed it in the service of religion; and in the early stages of the nation state system, the state claimed the best talent and employed it in the service of nationalism and state institutions, especially the army. In the industrial age of societal development, industry and related services such as trading and banking, claimed the best talent in society and employed to produce more and better goods and develop financial and management systems to raise productivity of both labor and capital. Today, in the age of knowledge, information technologies and the infomedia claim the best talent in society and employ it to develop newer technologies to maximize returns on capital, including human capital, and improve the quality of life for all peoples. This means that underdeveloped societies tend to waste their talent in serving causes and institutions that have nothing to do with economic or scientific or technological development.

Social Transformation in the Knowledge Age

At the beginning of the twenty first century, life conditions in many countries of the world have reached a dynamic state; technologies to enhance our abilities to deal with every aspect of life are being developed at the speed of light. Countless individuals, institutions, organizations and socioeconomic forces, having varied, and oftentimes contradictory interests, are leading this development process. A “world in transition” has emerged, where impersonal, non-institutional, and non-ideological forces have assumed the leading role in instigating change, causing conflict, and producing social transformations of immense proportions and implications. As a consequence, ideologies and deep convictions and belief systems of the past have lost much of their power to initiate change and cause profound transformations in human life. Whatever change such ideologies and convictions may produce is more likely to cause people to incorrectly believe that history is capable of reversing itself, and that a future could be constructed on a vision of a glorious, yet fading and largely fictitious, past.

In the 1980s, the most advanced industrial societies, particularly the United States, began

to enter a new transitional period leading to a new age, the age of knowledge. It is an age where scientific and technological knowledge is increasingly becoming the most valuable individual as well as societal asset; and where communications and the mass media have become the most effective tools influencing the politics and sociocultural lives of people everywhere. Consequently, a new economy has emerged, much more dependent on information and communications than on any other factor of production. The new rewarding jobs that are being created by this economy are knowledge-based; they require, in the words of Peter Drucker, “a good deal of formal education and the ability to acquire and to apply theoretical and analytical knowledge. They require a different approach to work and a different mind-set. Above all, they require a habit of continuous learning.” As a result, knowledge has become more valuable than all factors of production; it enables people to produce more products and services more efficiently using less space and resources. In the US for example, it is estimated that the contribution of knowledge to the gross national product has reached 85%.

Knowledge workers in the new age are capitalists; they possess valuable social capital that consists primarily of specialized skills and unique attitudes that can be invested in several ways in many places. Knowledge workers, as a result, have become largely free, less dependent on others, less committed to national and community causes, and very individualistic. They have become modern nomads having weak or no ideological ties, and sharing no particular collective memory with others; they, as a result, do not mind wandering from one place to another, from one organization to another, and from one country to another to advance technically and succeed materially. Their primary interest in life is to make the best use of whatever knowledge they may possess, to acquire more knowledge and get the most money and recognition they can for it. People who fail to acquire the right education and the right attitudes are unable to participate in the new global economy and secure decent jobs, at a time when gainful employment has become a major source of self-satisfaction and social recognition, and a key to living a rewarding and dignified life.

The emerging knowledge society is characterized by complexity, diversity, and dynamism. Complexity causes systems to fail and thus forces them to adapt and restructure continuously;

diversity deepens sociocultural divides and socioeconomic gaps in society, creating and recreating new antagonisms and group balances continuously. Dynamism, meanwhile, makes both change and conflict in society and around the world an uncontrollable process that affects human values, interests and relationships at all levels, at all times. No ideology, no leader, no system, no plan, and no state, therefore, is able to manage change by itself; and history is no longer able to provide the tools or knowledge to explain the present or predict the future.

As the age of knowledge advances, it expands our horizons and multiplies the opportunities open to us on the one hand, and challenges our basic and most revered values and traditions on the other. In about 2-3 decades, I believe that the age of knowledge will reach maturity and everyone in the world will have felt its impact. Satellite communications are increasingly becoming cheaper and more available everywhere, and sophisticated knowledge is becoming accessible to anyone who can afford it and knows how to use it. For example, people will soon have easy access to computers capable of computing in a second what takes humans today more than 250,000 years to compute. The mapping of the human genes, which was completed in 2000, will enable us to fight many diseases and manipulate our own genes as well as the genes of plants and animals, thus enhancing our ability to influence the physical characteristics and levels of intelligence of humans and animals alike. A new, very complex society and a new, highly diversified culture will emerge, changing life's reality and people's perceptions of it drastically and irreversibly.

Arabs in the Age of Knowledge

The development of the transistor radio and the television set had come at a very unfortunate time in the life of the Arab people. The introduction of the transistor radio came when illiteracy rates were very high, exceeding 70% of the population. The transistor radio found a great market in the Arab world because it required no electricity to function and was inexpensive to buy and easy to carry. The Arab masses were happy to have it and enjoy all things it had to offer. People who could not read or write were able to get the news and be entertained without effort. Meanwhile, all radio and television stations were owned by the state, giving Arab governments'

total control over sources of information and contents of educational and entertainment programs reaching the public. Consequently, the masses were only able to get the information and entertainment that the state was willing and able to provide.

Because of high illiteracy rates and state control of the media, the transistor radio in particular affected the Arab masses in more negative than positive ways. While radio ownership enabled the masses to get the news and be entertained, state control of the media enabled the state to manipulate the masses, inform and misinform, falsify people's consciousness, and shape and reshape public opinion. In addition, the state, being in control of the major, at times, the only means of communications, was able to determine who gets access to the mass media and dictates the contents of the message to be delivered to the masses. The need to control all information reaching the public and deny the masses the opportunity to hear other viewpoints, led the state, furthermore, to isolate intellectuals and suppress them. State propaganda, as a result, replaced facts, traditional ideas and conspiracy theories spread, and non-traditional viewpoints became suspect.

The state controlled media, particularly the radio and television, gave the masses easy access to information and educational and entertainment programs without having to buy a book or read a magazine or a newspaper. The new generation, having been born and raised in homes where illiteracy rates were high and books had no place, were unable to develop curiosity for books or love for reading; they could not even think of books, magazines or newspapers as sources of information, education, entertainment or pleasure. Even when schools spread and illiteracy rates dropped substantially, the demand for books and newspapers remained low. Lack of interest in books and magazines and newspapers in general has caused traditional illiteracy to be replaced by "cultural illiteracy"; and when the knowledge age arrived, Arabs discovered that they also suffer scientific and technological illiteracy as well.

The radio and television enabled the spoken word to make a great comeback at the expense of the written world. And since the Arab educational system in general emphasizes memorization, not critical analysis or creative thinking, and because teachers at schools and universities seldom read and thus do not encourage students to read or assign to them books to

review and papers to write, the book could not gain the place it deserves either at home or at school. In fact, it is possible for a student to go through all educational phases, including higher education without reading one single book outside the basic ones required for examinations and graduation. Statistics seem to indicate that an Arab reads on the average about quarter of a page a year, while a European reads two books. Most Arab students today consider books a burden to be lightened, not an asset to be nurtured. As a consequence, most school books do not survive the last day of final exams.

Statistics indicate further that the book publishing industry in the Arab world is extremely weak, largely traditional and lacks credibility. In fact, the Arab World does not have one single academic publishing house. Furthermore, books published in the Arab World with a population that exceeds 320 million, are about 4,000 new titles a year. In comparison, books published in Holland with a population of some 15 million only, are over 44,000 titles a year. Moreover, over the last three decades, Arab book publishing has declined, and was forced to cater to the needs and whims of the religiously conservative and traditionally narrow-minded segments of the society to survive. For example, despite the fact that all Arab countries, with the exception of Saudi Arabia and Sudan, claim to be secular, religious books published and copies sold in the Arab World outnumber books dealing with all other branches of knowledge. The situation seems even more depressing when one realizes that most religious and history books tend to emphasize older interpretations of religious teachings and outdated cultural views rather than provide new, more enlightened interpretations to help the masses live the age and understand its complexities.

According to the UNESCO and other organizations, books in Arab public libraries averaged about 95 books per 1,000 people in the 1990s, making the total books in all Arab public libraries less than half of what the Library of Congress houses. In contrast to the Arabs, European countries have much larger numbers of books in their public libraries. For each 1,000 people, the number of books in Austria was 1,100; in Germany 1,630; in Holland 2,747; and in Sweden 5,544. In addition, per capita distribution of newspaper in Arab countries as compared to Europe is about 5% in Morocco, 10% in Syria and Iraq, 17% in Jordan, and 34% in Lebanon. All paper consumed by Arabs annually for printing books and magazines and newspapers are estimated to

be as much as Belgian yearly paper consumption.

While having made significant progress toward acquiring modern educational and communications systems, Arabs have made almost no progress toward acquiring the right attitudes and developing the right societal systems. They, in fact, seem unable to appreciate the importance of such factors in raising economic productivity and improving the general quality of human life. And while most Arabs feel frustrated because no real economic or political progress has been made, traditional Arab intellectuals and political elites are yet to question outdated values and bad habits and attitudes, or acknowledge the obsolescence of most traditional social systems. Since about 50% of the Arab population is still illiterate, and because cultural and scientific illiteracy is much higher and rising, the hope that Arabs will make enough progress in the near future to become socially, politically and technologically developed, and economically competitive is very slim indeed.

Intellectuals and the Poor

Equality of opportunity, which was promoted as an alternative to the utopian concept of total equality in society, can neither help the poor nor can it protect the needy. Michael Young argued in *The Rise of the Meritocracy* decades ago that equal opportunity serves to divide society into two groups: One is capable of seizing the opportunity offered to it; the other is incapable of seizing its opportunity. Because of this inability, the second group finds itself moving downward and forming a lower, largely poor and neglected class. But unlike any other class in human history, the new class is neither enslaved, nor exploited, not even officially excluded. It is rather free yet excluded, has opportunities yet poor, lives in an open society, yet cannot move upward on the social ladder. It is, as a result, permanently left behind, deprived even of a cause to rally around.

The emergence and plight of this class is not the result of certain actions taken by the state and, therefore, the life conditions and fortunes of the poor cannot be changed by state action only. Structural changes in the social, political and economic systems are needed to make it possible for this class to move upward and be included. American capitalism and democracy, for

example, has created two separate islands within the American society; one is characterized by affluence and security; the other by poverty and violence. And while both islands live side by side in most cities, they are socially and culturally separated by decades if not centuries.

The association of wealth with knowledge in modern society is probably the single most important factor contributing to creating this class and keeping it permanently behind. People with knowledge, that is, people with the right education and the right attitudes are able to seize their opportunities, make more money and move upward. In addition, people with money, that is, people with economic means, have the resources to get the right knowledge and expand the range of the opportunities open to them. In contrast, people with neither wealth nor knowledge are left behind, with nothing to enable them to compete and move upward in society. The future, therefore, is not expected to see nations divided between rich and poor. Instead, it is more likely to see people divided between knowledgeable and ignorant; the first is rich and free, the second is poor and anything but free.

In most cases in the past, voices representing the poor and the oppressed emerged and gained recognition and led often to the alleviation of the suffering of the needy and dispossessed. This was possible because societies were small, ethics were strong, and the misery of the poor was noticeable and intolerable. Helping the poor in pre-industrial times was very useful to the rich; it enabled them to atone for their sins and feel closer to God in a deeply religious environment. Helping the poor in the industrial age was also useful to the rich, particularly to owners and managers of large businesses. It enabled them to show generosity, claim superiority, and gain popularity and moral authority in a nationalistic environment. In the knowledge age, where individualism reigns supreme and ideology, religious and otherwise, is on the decline, and where globalization is the new frame of reference, neither the poor nor traditional community are seen as deserving special attention; and helping either is of little benefit to the rich.

In light of the advent of modern communications systems and the almost prohibitive cost of having access to the mass media, the ideas and lifestyles of the rich and powerful have become prominent; they color our outlook and influence our views of the other and the world around us. Dissent, consequently, has largely been barred from the media and forced to move within small

and largely closed circles. Dissenting voices, as a result, have been led to adopt an attitude and develop vocabularies that express more frustration and rejectionism than constructive engagement and optimism. In fact, forces of rejectionism in every society, on the left as well as on the right, are today, as they were in the past, more aware of what they stand against, but unsure of what they stand for.

The ever widening sociocultural and socioeconomic divides in society, are causing intellectuals and the masses to feel alienated from each other. The life experiences of the two groups are growing increasingly divergent, as are their languages and outlooks. As a result, communications between the masses and intellectuals is growing more difficult every day, causing miscommunications and mutual mistrust to spread and deepen. While the masses tend to doubt the honesty of intellectuals in general, intellectuals tend to doubt the rationality of the masses in particular. This leaves the masses with no real leadership they can understand and trust, and deprives intellectuals of their most important cause.

The poor, consequently, are increasingly being seen as a liability and largely responsible for their own misery. And because the poor can be isolated and are in fact being isolated, and since the rich can be insulated and are in fact being insulated, the poor have become largely invisible; they therefore, are being ignored and forgotten, getting neither the attention they need nor the compassion they deserve. New attitudes and cultural values, and new, unconventional societal systems are needed to deal with the increasing problems of the poor and the excluded in society. Education that emphasizes work ethics and discipline and provides students with the right knowledge and the right attitudes is a powerful tool to change the social and economic structures in society, help alleviate the suffering of the poor, enhance the security of the rich, and improve the quality of life for all.

People engaged in the development of knowledge in particular, are faced with a difficult challenge. They need to make themselves understood by those who have little knowledge, and make knowledge and the technologies they develop accessible to those with little money to buy it. They need also to make knowledge itself capable of addressing the particular needs of those who need it most but can afford it and use it least. While institutions are the tools to produce

knowledge and the right education is the means to deliver knowledge to people and make it relevant, the right attitudes are the qualities that make people of knowledge able to help themselves and others, and improve the quality of life for all members of society.

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