

# Essay on inequality in education

[Sociology](#), [Poverty](#)



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## **Research Paper Outline**

### **Abstract**

This paper discusses the social problem of educational inequality especially in the United States but also touching lightly on other parts of the world. A lot of emphasis is on the United States since it is a developed country and people expect the education model to be a win-win type yet it is merely a win-lose type. This paper is broken down into; the social implications of this issue, causes and some of the remedies that can be implemented in a bid to eradicate this social injustice. It also provides some statistics to prove that indeed the social injustices have occurred while laying emphasis on equal educational opportunities for all regarding of their backgrounds.

### **Introduction**

A social problem is one that affects the personal lives of individuals in society. These issues are the ones that individuals can't deal with themselves due to their gravity of the matter and therefore society has to work as a unit together with the government to eradicate them. Inequality in education therefore falls under the category of social issues due to the negative effects it has had on society and also because one parent cannot

just wake up one day and decide to end it, it requires teamwork. Educational inequality refers to a lack of similar educational opportunities to all students regardless of their race, gender and social class in all types of academic institutions i. e. colleges, universities and preschools. These inequalities have been brought about by factors such as racial discrimination, family backgrounds, poverty and local policies without a strong foundation.

Inequality in education can be assessed from different perspectives including; disparity in wages earned by people with different or similar level of education, performance of students in schools, attained grades, rate of drop-outs, college completion rates and access to schools.

Some of the social implications of this education inequality are; development of a wide achievement gap between students from rich families and those from poor families, those from majority races and those from minority races. Lives of children from poor backgrounds have also been destroyed by low performing teachers and pathetic educational facilities. According to Deming (1993, pp. 46-8) while the competition created by education inequalities was beneficiary, it was quite unethical with regards to social justice and destructive to the learning process. He further states that poor people are different from the rest of society due to demoralizing results of emotional, physical and academic deprivation. The win-lose model of the United States required that the success of one individual had to be countered by the failure of another a mechanism which made the poor poorer and the rich richer. Long term effects of these education inequalities include reduction of incentives for economic growth, increase in poverty and high child mortality rate.

Race has been a major player in the promotion of educational inequalities. Slave trade led to oppression of black minorities and denied them access to education for many years and even despite its abolishment later on, the stigma remains deep rooted in the education system. For instance there was the separation of black schools from white schools by law so that the black minorities would be trained to be of service to the whites in the United States of America. This separation also made biased allocation of resources to these schools a possibility. Latinos and Indian Americans also suffered the same fate at the hands of the whites as they were completely locked out of educational opportunities. This explains why the educational inequalities are inclined more towards the minorities and less towards the whites (Lareau, A., 2003).

Family background has three major elements that increase inequality in education to it. These are; stress from home, limited resources and less or no parental guidance and attention. There is also a positive correlation between the educational success of parents and that of their children especially in Brazil which has the highest number of African Americans in the Caribbean and Latin America (Lareau, A., 2003; Lam, D., 1999). Children from wealthy families are therefore more likely to perform better than children from poor families. According to a research by Orfield and Lee findings were that only 11 percent of children from poor families attained college degrees while 80 percent of children from wealthy families did the same. White parents tend to be more educated and successful than their minority counterparts and this translates down to their children. The drop-out levels of children from socio-economically challenged students were higher than those from stable

socio-economic backgrounds according to (Kozol, 1992; Gaustad, 1992).

Good health and nutrition lead to proper mental development of children and this is where the availability of resources once again comes into play.

Children in poor families don not have access to good health and nutrition therefore this puts them in a compromising situation education wise. As we have seen above most of these children from poor families in the U. S. are from minority race again a clear indication that this problem is engraved in race and racism. It is also coming out clearly that the level of education of parents is directly proportional to wealth or availability of resources in a household (Lareau, A., 2003). The minority races also experience communication barrier which brings down their performance because most of them do not originate from English speaking countries (e. g. Latinos) therefore causing them to perform badly hence increasing education inequality. Their parents too cannot offer to help them because they too most likely do not understand English (Lam, D., 1999).

Some of the solutions proposed to reduce these inequalities include provision of free or low-cost education programs for the children from low-income earning families. Some of the institutions implementing these programs include Virginia University, College of Amherst and Harvard University. This strategy has not really managed to reduce the gap significantly because students from poor families apply in small numbers, and the success rate of those who enroll is only about 17 percent (Deming, 1993).

Implementation of policies such as programs that intervene in a child's life early enough such as extending quality child care at pre-school prepare

children from poor families for success in both education and life. Such policies cause shifts in social classes regardless of economic background of the children therefore proving to be one of the best tools for achieving educational equalities (Lareau, A., 2003). Governments also need to advocate for social justice and fairness in a bid to overcome inequality. Other policies that may work include; committing to education quality, introducing incentives for girls and marginalized groups, increase public investment and abolishing basic education fees (Bowles, S. and Gintis, H., 1976). These alternatives however may attract heavy taxation and free basic education may lower the quality of education.

In conclusion, education inequality is real especially in the United States of America and therefore the government should propose even better alternative annual strategies to keep reducing it although it will not be an easy task. The current policies should be changed because this country is leading in the spending per pupil on education but narrowing the inequality gap is not improving at all (Bowles, S. and Gintis, H., 1976). It is therefore very prudent that educational opportunities are not defined by race, gender, economic background of parents, language and skin color.

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