

# Caribbean islands essay sample

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Examine three measures that Caribbean countries can implement to minimize the danger posed to coral reefs in the region. Coral reefs inhabit many coastal regions around Caribbean islands. These reefs are at once magnificently beautiful yet very fragile and sensitive to even the slightest variation in the waters around it. Coral reefs perform a vital socio-economic and sociocultural function in the Caribbean. Apart from it being important to human society for its aesthetic appeal, the reefs are also important because of its functions as a tidal break, fish nursery and part of an economic thrust in attracting tourists to the Caribbean. In recent time though, because of human activity, these reefs have come under enormous threat. Many would suggest that development does incur an environmental cost, whether it be in the effluence in the seawater or silting of the coastlines and beaches due to building beach hotels.

It is indeed imperative that measures be put in place to minimize the dangers posed to the reefs. As a single measure, education and educational campaigns to sensitize and raise public awareness on the importance of the reefs can be the most comprehensive method of preservation. This measure would require a good deal of government intervention since it may be a costly and large scale effort. The benefit though is that, through education all levels of the population can be made aware of both the threats to the reefs as well as what needs to be done to ensure longevity of these. What is particularly good about an education campaign is the fact that within organized institutions such as schools it need not be a lesson in itself. Instead the lessons can be linked to national identity issues, social studies and geography. In effect then, sensitizing about the reefs can become a

curriculum point that would last a life time in the student while building national identity and inculcating loyalty and patriotism.

Another effective method of preservation can come in the form of government legislation. Since this term is broad there can be sub categories that deal with fishing, reef usage, penalties and fines etc. In the Caribbean there are very loose, outdated and unenforced environmental laws. These laws do not only concern the reefs but rather, the entire environment. Should a Caribbean government be proactive, the establishment of legislation that deals with maritime features in particular is essential. A model can be adopted from other developed reef nations such as Australia, where protection goes hand in hand with usage of the reef. Legislation creating protected areas can be done. Whole areas of endangered coastline or reefs can be made reserves, just as areas of sensitive forests are made reserve on land. Along with protection there will necessarily be enforcement via legislation to deal those who disregard the sensitivity of the areas: Fines, penalties and some form of re-compensation could be actuated in this instance.

Regarding fishing, legislation needs to address how close fishing vessels can come to the reef banks and also what type of fishing is permitted so as not to physically damage the area. Again if these measures to be meaningful enforcement is essential. Lastly as an on-land means more careful monitoring through a government or non government agency can be done in addition to planning works done by environmental impact agencies such as the EMA in Trinidad. Monitoring of the coastlines and what actually gets into the sea can be done. Apart from rainfall and natural runoff, more attention

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has to be address upon industrial runoff. Here the issue is the toxic content both solid and in suspension entering the sea that would become hazardous to coral organisms. Coastal excavation projects also require attention as many of these mega projects have never even been assessed by the relevant agencies. Deforestation and clearing of coastal wetland and mangroves is another area of urgent concern. It is well known that by removing the mangrove, the first line defence for corals are removed. The problem lies not in lack of knowledge but in lack of planning and enforcement of already existing laws.

Examine THREE ways in which the justice system, as a social institution, impacts on society and culture. A social institution is an intangible construct that stems out of the realm of values and ideas. These ideas are associated with what people envision an ideal society to be. A social institution advances a way in which society is made more organized and beneficial to the people who comprise the society. Any social institution is based upon consensus and adherence. Whether it deals with peoples' values and desires to become socially mobile as in education, to be physically well as in health, or to be awarded a level of justice in society, all of these require that the population ascribe to the value systems presented. In the first instance, from a functionalist perspective, the justice system is a manifestation of peoples' desire to live harmonious and peaceful lives within an arranged system of rules that govern behaviours and holds sanctions for transgressions. It is an element that seeks to ensure that society remains civil, based upon a shared desire.

There are several ways that the justice system impacts upon Caribbean society and culture, many positive as well as negative. The justice system in the Caribbean is a hybrid of the colonial master's model. In this manner there is an inherent distrust that is established within the workings of the justice system; a mistrust that sees the law and the justice system as being biased in favour of the wealthy, and oppressive of the under-classes. This mistrust can be engaged better if the Marxist theory of money, power and the law are applied in the way that justice is dispensed to society. There is a belief that the justice system is designed by the rich to serve the rich— an echo of the colonial paradigm. Additionally, while the laws etc serve to favour the rich it simultaneously serves to make the lower class more dependent upon the elite class. This belief serves to cast a shadow over the citizens' ability to entirely adhere to whatever justice is dispensed by the courts of law. In some Caribbean territories the law and justice system are highly stereotyped as ' Babylonian' constructs.

That is, inequity and oppression of a biblical nature rather than tranquillity and equity of a social nature. This mistrust can further divide the already divided Caribbean society. Another way that the justice system impacts upon society and culture is in terms of our sense of autonomy in the Caribbean. Many Caribbean states still rely upon the British Privy Council as our final court of appeal. Even with the advent of the CCJ there is still the tendency of Caribbean territories to adhere or desire the jurisprudence of this court in favour of a Caribbean court. From the cultural imperialistic perspective, this reliance upon an English standard does not advance a sense of national or even Caribbean identity.

This dependence constitutes, perhaps, yet another way that the idea of independence is a mere myth. This permeates society and our cultural beliefs to perpetually idealize all things foreign and consequently enshrine an inferiority complex into the Caribbean psyche. The laws that are constructs of the constitution and legal system are in many cases archaic and irrelevant to a Caribbean reality. One such law in Trinidad applies to the population's ability to protest. Protesting or lobbying is a constitutional right of the population; it is a social justice vehicle for many. In Trinidad however there are laws that seem to negate this right upon a technicality that suggest legal proceedings should activities become too boisterous. Herein lies an anomaly that at once promotes civic mindedness and at once refutes it. From the perspective of a social institution, consensus and values come into conflict as what one group may want comes into confrontation with the objectives of the justice system. Effectively, though many may want to change what society is and reform a cultural norm, the justice system itself may become an obstacle. In these and in many other ways the justice system can impact upon society and culture. Describe how education, as a social institution, impacts on Caribbean society and culture

A social institution can briefly be described as method or pattern of organization that people use to structure their lives. Social institutions are very powerful but seemingly latent forces in society that can actually influence the behaviour and aspirations of a people and this stems from a deeply embedded and highly cherished value system. Education as a social institution lies at the very core of Caribbean society and culture because it is perceived as a foundation for what the next generation is going to be, and

herein is the value or idea that makes education important. The impact of education on Caribbean society and culture can be studied from several perspectives, among these are; from the cultural, social, economic and cultural imperialistic. Each one of these has relation to the other as they will inevitably be interconnected, however for the purpose of descriptive analysis each shall be treated as a category.

Education impacts upon the culture of the Caribbean from both the real and ideological standpoint. Ideologically, this is so as primary and secondary socialization that is a form of socio-cultural education engenders academic education as a core value that every person should emulate, so from this cultural standpoint education becomes an influence in the way that people structure their lives, how they behave and what is desirable for them.

Socialization as education facilitates a sort of indoctrination for the young into the other social institutions of the country's culture thereby promoting cohesion and adherence to an acceptable pattern of conduct. From the real point of view, that is, how education actually works or is manifested in society, the hidden curriculum is effective in transmitting necessary values education that can go into social harmony and national identity but moreover, education is a superstructure of social mobility, status and a vehicle for the attainment of wealth.

Education is also the appropriate avenue that a nation seeks to advance itself in terms of human and economic development. Consequently the 'value' of education bears direct application to the lives that a nation and people want for themselves and is a means to attain this. From a

Functionalist perspective the theory of social mobility put forward can be <https://assignbuster.com/caribbean-islands-essay-sample/>

validated as the ‘ lower classes’ of a previously alienated and ostracized people have now risen to hold powerful status positions in society through the empowerment of education. Afro-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean men and importantly, women, are now world recognized because of their intellectual ability. I mentioned women as an important factor principally because education can be seen as a tool of empowerment and the achievement of a sense of social equity to a subjected social group.

But the very fact that education is associated with status, stratification and occupation also allude to a very contrary and opposing view put forward by the Marxist thinkers: This bears importance for how society is structured. If we consider that education is a tool to achieve status then we also accept that it is the initiator of even further strata in society that, unlike the historical notion, is not based upon colour or race, but now it is based upon educational attainment. In this manner then, education creates a hurdle in society that further divides and stratifies. It is now a social mobility factor with its own set of rules just as colour or race. The Marxist theorists put forward that education is the main tool of the oppressor that continues the separation of economic and cultural society. The position states that education is a means of continuing the ‘ false consciousness’ scenario, thus it is the perpetuation of an inferiority complex directed toward the ‘ lower classes’ . Historically, the education system in a colonial society advocated the importance and superiority of the metropole and its social and cultural institutions and this structural element ties in with the cultural imperialism concept that brain washes the masses into accepting their roles as lesser entities than the master.



Historically too, even the curriculum was based upon a metropole or European ideal and this is no better illustrated than in the study of geography and literature where the entire content of those subject syllabuses were European in nature. This reflected a colonial agenda that was a transition from physical bondage to a mental one, that is, the colonial master used education as a tool of oppression rather than liberation. The poem ‘ Colonial Girls School’ nicely illustrates this. With the advent of the CXC as the examining body for the Caribbean by the Caribbean there seems to be an inversion of that cultural imperialistic notion. This arguably represents one way that the Caribbean is asserting its own sense of identity in a declaration of academic competence. That is, the Caribbean loudly professes through the CXC that it is now able to adequately manage its own academic qualifications and will no longer depend upon the yard stick of a foreign construct. Education in the Caribbean thereby has the slant of identity creation through a syllabus and curriculum structure that attempts to inculcate a sense of place, pride and autonomy among a Caribbean people; effectively, education enforces and enhances other identity creating social institutional ideologies.

This effort can be seen to work against cultural imperialism from the metropole while instilling a sense of pride in Caribbean people. The ‘ Caribbean Studies’ syllabus, this very essay is a verification of that effort that may affront the idea of cultural Marxism, neo Marxism and intellectual subjugation. In the Caribbean setting the ideology and culture of education is quite noticeable even at the highest levels of society and this becomes culturally relevant as it seeks to adjust how the Caribbean perceives itself. In

recent times, there has been much emphasis upon the role and place of the indigenous tertiary institutions in society namely the UWI. The UWI is a source of pride and recognition in the global sphere of education~ this is emphasized by valuable governmental subsidization of higher education across the Caribbean as a form of individual governments' and CARICOM initiative to boost development in the region.

Advocating this type of academic attainment attempts to concretize a cultural norm and identity into the society~ that is to propagate higher education not as the exception but the rule. Added here can also be the emphasis that is currently being placed upon vocational and skills training that like the UWI is also being subsidised to allow access and entry to as many persons as possible. There is a realistic understanding and this is very Functionalist, that everyone in society cannot be doctors scientists, but people to fix a car or to drive a truck or to operate a machine are equally important. From this developmental situation of investing in the human capital and promoting other social institutions such as the economy, a region is placed in a powerful position since it now possesses the necessary skills and expertise to expand the productive sector and diversify its economic base. Indeed the more diversified the economy the more flexible it becomes along with an adequate capacity to absorb those who are entering the workforce.

From this perspective then of investing in education, the Caribbean is placing itself into a better position to sustain its own development. The trend of globalization can be inserted at this point as education, especially technology education, is emphasized now. Education in the Caribbean is also <https://assignbuster.com/caribbean-islands-essay-sample/>

heavily associated with the institution of religion. This is true from a historical reference and it is still true today. In many Caribbean countries the ‘prestige’ secondary schools are all denominational schools of some Christian sect. Effectively education became a guarded domain of secular enterprise of a religious body and this bears ramifications for how religion and education were perceived. There was and perhaps still is the notion that the ‘board schools’ as they have come to be known are also the good schools, and those of the Christian faith will also automatically be academically inclined.

The relevance of this can be seen in the uncomplimentary self perception that persons have of themselves when they are unable to attain their first choice to one of these schools but rather to another not so well recognized school. There is pressure to perform that makes the parents go to extreme lengths such as extra lessons and evening classes for their children and this is linked to the extreme importance that academia holds in society. Indirectly the stigma of underachievement is conferred upon unfortunate students just by passing the qualification exam but not for the prestige schools. This is an echo of the Marxist position on examinations as a means of segregation and subjugation that dispenses education as a class feature.

What can be observed here is that while education is socially important, it is also powerful enough to influence how society works. Even though there is an ambivalent spectra surrounding the ideal, workings and impacts of education as a social institution in the Caribbean I assert that education bears more positive features and opportunities than detractors to it. Indeed it is hoped that the Caribbean continues to grow in academic and intellectual

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prowess and such bodies as the CXC and the UWI must play a vital role.

Perhaps the one feature that stands out about education is the empowerment that it endows to anyone who has the willingness to work in pursuit of it; just as the Caribbean must work at its own development so too must its people, and education is the vehicle for this.

For a named Caribbean country, describe the factors that may be hindering the process of development

For this discussion upon the factors that may be hindering the process of Development, the country that I have chosen is Haiti. I have chosen Haiti primarily because this nation presents a worst case scenario in terms of nearly all factors that can either promote or hinder development. As it stands Haiti is among the poorest nations in the Caribbean, the hemisphere and the entire world. Economic hardship is coupled with human developmental inadequacies and Haiti's position in this regard is an unadmirable one. It does however bear academic importance if one is to study how the factors of development can or may not work in the Caribbean. Before any attempt to analyze the Haitian case is made, the parameters of the analysis must first be established.

There are several factors that can promote or hinder development, among the ones that this discussion will target and most relevant to Haiti are; political stability and ideology, natural resources, natural disaster, social justice and human rights issues and level of education and educational opportunities. Perhaps the most outstanding of all of Haiti's developmental challenges is its political system and this has linkages to every other area of

society. Haiti's political dispensation is one that has historically witnessed much turmoil and upheaval ever since the Haitian revolution at the beginning of the 19th century. In more recent time there has been further upheaval to Haiti's democratic system as the elected president, Aristide, was ousted from power in 1994 but soon after restored to power via US intervention. The issue is not so much 'who' is in power or 'who' is backing the government at all, the problem rather that Haiti is experiencing is the perception that the investing world has of Haiti's political stability. All Caribbean nations share one major developmental challenge in common and this has to do with the lack of capital of its own to kick start any acceptable level of production or development that requires capital spending.

The Caribbean, in this constrained condition then looks toward the developed nations, the multilateral lending agencies as well as the mega industries known as multinational or transnational industries to set up in the island states and hence promote development via jobs and spending. Under the factor of global perception however, a country's political stability can mean the attraction or repulsion of FDI, tourism, lending or even humanitarian aid from international agencies. Indeed Haiti runs the risk of a negative investment potential and stigma because no company or business ventures in the likes of : MNCs or TNCs desire a loss of its investment and no lender wants to write off bad debts. Obvious then, one major challenge of development for Haiti is the acquisition of a stable system of government that would promote development and encourage investment..•

The discovery of natural resources is a main factor in the ways that a nation may boost development. This can be validated if we consider the transition <https://assignbuster.com/caribbean-islands-essay-sample/>

that Trinidad and Tobago was able to make when the mono crop agricultural sector began to diminish. Through resources, especially those of a mineral extraction nature, a country may attract investors, secure jobs, earn taxes and branch off into downstream and upstream manufacturing sectors. In Haiti's case however, there are no known natural resources to be harnessed that may provide an adequate basis for development. In fact, Haiti, like most Caribbean countries depends heavily upon the traditional agricultural sector and exportation of basic agricultural raw material for the bulk of its GNP. The problem with this dependence lies in the crops themselves and with the international competition.

Crops such as sugar cane and bananas are common and highly inflexible on the world market therefore these do not fetch good returns. Coupled with this, the cost of production is high since Haiti and the Caribbean do not utilize mechanization but is rather labour intensive. A linkage also exists between the productive sector and the political situation of Haiti. It seems that due to the deterioration of the political situation all other areas of the society are falling apart; the farms that are state managed are suffering because of the political turmoil. There is no one to manage or pay salaries. Agriculture then as a basis of the economy does not promote development in this case and the lack of natural resources to aid in industrialization are lacking. Natural and manmade disaster also holds severe influence upon Haiti's social and economic development. From one unavoidable perspective, Haiti lies in the Atlantic hurricane belt and so the potential for loss and damage through natural disaster is magnified.

When a nation is struck by natural disaster, development usually becomes stagnated until that nation is able to rebuild and restructure. In the recent past however Haiti has been so severely damaged and so often that rebuilding seems to be futile since year after year the hurricanes pass over Haiti. Disaster preparedness is one recommendation that may be easily suggested, however the situation in Haiti is so dire that the bulk of the population exists below the poverty line and are therefore unable to provide for themselves any level of disaster preparedness measures and reliance upon the government also proves futile. Even further repercussions occur because of the degradation of the natural environment in Haiti. Mudslides, landslides and flooding are the riorm even when there is mild rainfall and this is due to the stripping of vegetation that has occurred to access fuel by the population.

Thus added to natural disaster the problems are compounded by human activity. From the perspective of social justice, equity and socio-economic advancement opportunity, Haiti is far behind the rest of the Caribbean. Social stratification is a reality of Caribbean existence where there are those in society who are the holders of the capital factors of production and there are those who are dependent upon the wealthy. In Haiti though, the situation is extreme as the strata of Haitian society are rigidly upheld by the elite groups themselves and social mobility opportunities such as higher education or professional development for the lower rungs are absent. The sects such as the ‘ grand blancs’, ‘ petite blancs’ and ‘ affranchis’ all portend social and economic division in Haiti that contribute to devdopmental stagnation. Included here too, the situation with governmental provision of

the basic amenities that allow a level of empowerment and social mobility opportunities to the masses are also missing.

Even the basic services such as health and education are missing. The developmental potential of education, that is, an investment in the human capital to promote development is not the norm in Haiti. For those who do achieve some level of educational advancement, the prospect of migration is strong resulting in a brain drain situation. This therefore witnesses a heavy dependence upon foreign intellect to provide Haiti with a level of developmental capacity. Of course, outsourcing\_ for professional services is an additional cost to an already decrepit economy. It seems that without a major upheaval in Haitian society the status quo is going to be perpetuated and the development of the Haitian society will always be elusive. What obtains in Haiti, as mentioned before is an extreme worst case scenario of the developmental paradigm and it is indeed regrettable that our Caribbean neighbour may not find the social and political stability to come out of such terrible stagnation and challenges to development.