

Social Studies Elective WORK

3 Definitions of Work:

Paid work: paid, not done for pleasure, employer, wage or salary

Unpaid work: unpaid eg working in the home, lack of status/ credit for work, unrewarding, eg cooking, cleaning, childcare, looking after the elderly etc.

* no chance of promotion, no fixed finishing time, no holiday or health benefits

Voluntary work: type of unpaid work, can be charity based or helping the disadvantaged.

The Importance of work:

Is it important for people to work?

Work influences the following areas of a persons life:

1. **Social class & status: people are categorised according to their jobs**
2. **Life opportunities: lifestyle is affected by the amount of money a person earns eg can't go on holidays if you can't afford to**
3. **Social life & friendship: work determines the amount socialising we do**
4. **Values, attitudes & beliefs: influenced by work**
5. **Family life: your job will determine how much time you have to spend with your family.**
6. **Leisure pursuits: the more time spent at work the less time available for leisure**

Attitude to Work:

Your attitude to work will have an impact on your overall happiness

- most of our time is spent working if we are not happy in our work this will have a negative impact on our life.
- Commuting long distances can impact on a persons happiness
- Alienation occurs when an employee gets no job satisfaction – Karl Marx said that this was when workers said they hated going to work

The impact of a negative view of work:

1. Poor quality production, inferior, faulty goods
2. Unofficial lengthening of breaks, unofficial breaks taken
3. Absenteeism in work
4. Giving up jobs

5. Conflicts within the work environment
6. Damage caused to the workplace

What can be done to change the negative attitude towards work?

1. Developing teamwork initiatives, & job rotation – makes work more interesting
2. Workers have a greater involvement in management decisions
3. Flexitime (independence & choice when to work)
4. Profit sharing schemes – make firm successful & profitable

Job Satisfaction:

2 types

(1) Intrinsic satisfaction:

Employee is concerned with getting pleasure, enjoyment, fulfilment & satisfaction from their job. Strongly associated with teaching & nursing, medical & law related jobs. High pay is not the main incentive for this type of work. The Job satisfaction is found **within** the job itself.

(2) Extrinsic satisfaction:

The most important aspect of the job is the wage it supplies. Can be often found in assembly line jobs. Satisfaction is found outside their employment eg spending wages on luxury goods.

Other factors that influence Job satisfaction :

Work ethic

Work conditions

*****Changes in work ethic & work availability:**

The main changes are the following:

1. Increased automation of industry
2. Decline in Primary & Secondary industries & increase in work in the service industry
3. Increased educational requirements to acquire employment
4. Improved working conditions & working hours
5. Decline in semi and unskilled manual work & an increase in skilled manual work
6. Casualisation of the Workforce

1. Increased automation of Industry:

eg Tesco self- service registers, computer programs & machines

Advantages:

- elimination of boring repetitive jobs
- increased demand for well-educated workers capable of understanding & operating machinery
- increase in the number of goods/ products produced
- reduction in manufacturing time
- safer & healthier work environment
- creation of new jobs

Disadvantages:

- deskilling of workers- loss of jobs to machines
- loss of pride & craftsmanship
- increase in unemployment = increase in poverty
- decrease in some wages because work has become more supervisory
- increase in the boring work of supervising the machines

2. Decline in Primary & Secondary industries & the increased work in the service industry:

Why has this occurred?

- Expansion & growth in world economies
- Development on multi-national companies
- Advances in technology

3. Increased participation of women in employment:

Why has this occurred?

- Before 1973 a woman had to give up her job if she married – in 1971 women made up 23% of the workforce they now currently make up 44% of the workforce
- Greater availability of jobs available for women
- Trend towards more flexible work patterns making it easier to balance the demands of family & work
- It has become the norm for women to remain at work after marriage & childbirth
- Women are now more educated and motivated to pursue a career
- Increase in the cost of living has made it necessary for many women to stay in the workforce.

Other points on women in the workforce:

- women tend to get lower paid jobs
- women tend to dominate jobs in the areas of secretaries and clerical staff
- a high percentage of women work in the service industry
- women tend to earn 60-70% of that earned by their male colleagues
- a small % of women work at high levels in the legal or medical profession.

4. Increased educational requirements to acquire employment:

- employers place a greater emphasis on qualifications

- Leaving certificate is now the minimum requirement for most jobs
- Large numbers now complete Masters & Doctorates

5. Improved working conditions and hours of employment:

- health regulations have been introduced in the workplace
- Health and Safety Authority** has the responsibility to promote & enforce health & safety in the workplace monitoring compliance & prosecuting when necessary.
- The Safety, Health and Welfare at work Act 1989** - this Act states employers should ensure that the health, safety and welfare of every employee is ensured. Employees should under this Act should take reasonable care of their own welfare & co-operate with all safety measures put in place.
- National Minimum Wage Act 2000**- ensure every experienced adult worker is entitled to the minimum wage €7.65 per hr applies to all employees **except** close relatives and apprentices
- Today people work less 37.8 hrs approx
- Any hours over 39hr is considered overtime
- Job-sharing, flexi-time and part-time work more common

6. Decline in semi and unskilled manual work and an increase in skilled manual work:

- decline in traditional jobs eg. Shipbuilding, mining
- some machines have taken over workers jobs
- the operation of these new machines requires highly skilled workers

7. Casualisation of the workforce:

- trend towards more people being employed casually when needed
 - more people face many job changes in their life
 - leads to a lack of job security
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*****THE PROTECTION OF YOUNG PERSONS (EMPLOYMENT) ACT 1996**

- all previous law concerning young people working is covered under this Act
- Intends to protect young peoples health
- Intends to ensure work does not damage a young persons education
- Sets out minimum age limit for working
- Sets out rest intervals (breaks)
- Sets out max hour that can be worked
- Makes it illegal to for under 18yrs to do late-night work
- 14-15yr olds can do light work
- Under 16yrs cannot be employed full-time
- Under 18yrs cannot work more than 40hrs per week
- Time-off, breaks & holidays are all specified
- The Act does not apply to close relatives or employees in fishing, shipping or the Defence forces.
- Employers must see a copy of a birth certificate before employing an under 16yr old
- Wriiten permission must be obtained from parents to employ a young person

Voluntary Organisations & Voluntary work:

- **Def:** a non-profit organisation
- Important role to play in society
- Complement & support services offered by the State (Government)
- Voluntary organisations have both salaried staff & voluntary staff
- Funded by public donations & governement grants

Role of Voluntary Organisations :

- Provide support & information
- Can act as powerful pressure groups
- Can save the State large sums of money
- Successful in focussing Media attention on disadvantaged groups/ areas

Benefits of Voluntary work to the Volunteer

1. **Rewarding**
2. **Personal development**
3. **Insight into other peoples lives**
4. **Can become experts in helping people**
5. **Improve communication skills**

Benefits of Voluntary work to the Community

1. **Freindships are formed**

- 2. Community is empowered**
- 3. Direct help can be provided quickly**
- 4. Sense of worth in a community**
- 5. Sense of purpose & belonging in a community**