FACTORS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Introduction
Social change is the change in society. Due to advancement of technology and cultural value the society undergoes some changes in its traditions and culture. Such a change occurs over a broad period of time and not immediately. It has some consequences and some side effects. It takes time for the people to forget the old norms and adopt the new changes. Some changes are opposed by people and some are adopted immediately.

What is social change?
Google defines it as-

Social change refers to any significant alteration over time in behavior patterns and cultural values and norms. By “significant” alteration, sociologists mean changes yielding profound social consequences. It depends entirely on the society at large.

There are certain factors that affect a social change. To list a few are-

- Physical environment
- Demographic(biological) factor
- Cultural Factor
- Ideational Factor
- Economic Factor
- Political Factor

To discuss the other factors in details

1. **Physical environment**
Physical environment greatly affects the appearance and characteristics of and individual. Climate, storms, landslides, soil erosion, floods greatly affects characteristics of and individual and introduces a vast change in the society at large. Human life depends on earth for its sustainability. Any changes in the climatic factors will change the daily life of the people at large.
History is a witness to many civilizations that rose and fell due to the changes in environment and the catastrophes that occurred. Even our eating habits, food, sleeping patterns, dress material is dependent on the physical factors of the area we live in. any change in the physical environment brings about change in the cultural life and that of the society as well

Migration is another factor that affects social change. Migration brings in a new kind of people with their new cultures and their way of living. It also introduces new problems into the society and the society strives to counteract them. Migration cannot be held solely responsible for exciting a social change. There are many other factors too. Man in maximum cases adopts himself to suit his physical environment. But in some cases man also alters the physical environment to make it suitable for his needs. He changes the physical environment according to himself. There have been many examples where chilly ice globes have been built in deserts or water pools made on top of skyscrapers.

Bennett and Tumin (1949) aptly remarked: “It is perhaps as reasonable, if not more so to insist that man modifies his physical environment rather than the environment modifies man”

2. **Demographic or biological factor**

Even geography greatly effects the looks and characteristics of a person. The society is closely dependent on the size, composition, genes and distribution of a human population in its various parts. The size of the population is dependent upon three factors that control it—birth rate, death rate and migration (immigration and emigration).

Even the composition of population in a certain area varies. They can be broadly divided into categories like sex, age, literacy rate, marital status, employment etc. any change in the mortality rate will have a direct effect on the demographic stricture and also the society at large. There will be a change in the ratio of employed to the unemployed. Such a drastic demographic change bears consequences on the structure of family, family patterns and habits, political power, constitution and other institutions. Even the size of population affects each one of us quite personally. Whether we are born into a growing or a shrinking population has a bearing on our education, the age at which we marry, our ability to get a job, the taxes we pay and many other factors.
Population growth directly affects the poverty levels of a region. Poverty is directly related with the literacy rate, size of family, health and shelter. Nations with more capital are the countries having less population. Countries like India and China having more population are the countries that are most poverty stricken. Gender ratio imbalance also causes some changes in demography. In certain communities polyandry or polygamy system is practiced.

Population changes have occurred throughout history in the form of migration, war, famine, epidemics etc and it has continued to effect the societies through the ages ever since.

3. **Cultural factor**

It is a well known fact that there is a very close bonding or connection between our beliefs and social institutions with our values and social relationships. Values, beliefs, ideas, rituals, traditions are the basic elements of a culture. Certainly, all cultural changes involve social change.

**Cultural change in society has two major aspects:**

(a) Cultural change by discovery and invention, and  
(b) Cultural change by diffusion and borrowing

Society and its culture are very closely interwoven. When there are changes in the culture society will change and vice versa. Social institutions have to teach the coming generations about the norms and rituals prevalent in the society otherwise they cannot thrive. Cultures give rise to the different social systems. Social systems are directly or indirectly the creations of cultural values. The history of culture offers many evidences which confirm the role that culture played in shaping different societies which in turn advanced, and framed new rules and cultures of their own.

4. **Ideational factor**

Some thinkers have thought about social change at ideational level and have concluded that social change is ideational. They presented an argument that ideas could influence the course of social change. Ideational changes are important contributory factors to many or most types of social change. Ideas and ideologies together are powerful motivating forces in social change. Ideas shape our world. Our world today is running on ideas. Hence they are fully responsible for urging a social change.
5. **Economic factor**

The most adverse economic factor affecting a social change is industrialization.

Industrialization has led to rapid growth of factories, more employment and rapid capitalization of a state. Hence a region with more industrialization will be more developed and vice versa. Thus we can rightly say economic factor does effect a society. It has revolutionized the whole way of life, institutions, organizations and community life. In traditional production systems, levels of production were fairly static since they were geared to habitual, customary needs.

6. **Political factor**

The political power of a country is its most powerful ruling organization. It is the one who controls the social relationships. It has all the power to legislate new laws, amend or repel the old ones to bring social change in the society. Laws regarding child marriage, widow remarriage, divorce, inheritance and succession, untouchability are some of the examples which have brought many changes in the social structure of Indian society.

The type and nature of political body in power also has an influence over the rate and direction of social change. In many societies the political parties have a control over the economy of the society also. Scientific-technological and non-technological change are also dependent on political development which indirectly affects social change.

*For more info visit www.studytoday.net*