

shame of a nation

by Riana Riana

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The shame of the nation

In his book, *The Shame of the Nation*, Kozol gives out several reasons to justify the tremendous socioeconomic and cultural differences in public schools in the educational system of America. Firstly, Kozol describes the government's allocation as one of the critical reasons for the vast inequalities witnessed in the public education system in America. Public schools majorly depend on the government for its funding despite the little fee imposition to the parents, guardians, or students that study in the schools. Additionally, public schools depend on the government for infrastructure and even provision of several items such as syllabus to be studied, the educational calendar, and even the teachers in the schools. The reason behind the allocation of funds to public schools is well described in the second chapter of *The Shame of the Nation*, where Kozol asks how can someone start quantifying something just as broad and extensive and conceptual as possessing more, providing fewer, or even getting nothing at all (Kozol, 44). This indicates how distributing funds to public schools in America is inadequate, resulting in the schools' gross socioeconomic inequities. Kozol continues to illustrate further how unequal funding of schools contributes significantly to the significant differences in the American education system when he states how a teacher in the cities receives a higher payment than teachers in the villages. Yet, the schools are of the same standards (Kozol, 45). Schools in poor areas also lacked the benefit of becoming outwardly and individually sponsored by someone who

could be in the position to donate funds for the library, infrastructure, activities, and staff, among other things (Kozol 46). Insufficient funding of these schools resulted in poor performance in the schools, which made the schools appear more unbeneficial, giving the affluent schools more advantage. Inequalities persist even when government money is utilized to partly balance financing between regions. "Equivalent money for different requirements is not inclusivity," as Kozol describes balanced funding of schools.

The second reason for the gross socioeconomic inequalities in the educational system is the imbalance in the quality of the schools. As highlighted in *The Shame of the Nation* by Kozol, many schools in America, when ranked in terms of standards, vary terribly in terms of performance, benefitting from the government and many other sectors. Kozol's observations highlighted the inequalities between schools. Students in underserved schools suffer congestion, unclean environments, and inadequate facilities whereby simple equipment and books may be lacking. Such institutions are typically found in locations with large ethnic communities, widespread poverty, and high levels of taxation. High interest rates on close to zero properties, on the other hand, don't produce enough money, and all these institutions continue to be disadvantaged. Taxes, according to Kozol, are an unfair revenue stream for education since they do not question the established norm of systemic racism.

Kozol describes the disparity of school status in two ways: the affluent schools and the poor schools. These two groups of schools differed in many ways in matters such as donations, performance, races, basic requirements, teachers' salaries, co-curricular activities such as games, music festivals and drama activities, and many more. Kozol explains that the affluent schools had additional resources, and only students from wealthier families attended the schools and were educated correctly. In contrast, those who had humble backgrounds were not adequately

educated. This contrasts with the law where all persons, especially children in government schools, should have equal access to the advanced education system. Kozol says that families gave their kids the benefits they must have sought for them (Kozol 47).

Kozol describes many social and economic differences in *The Shame of the Nation* when it comes to education matters in America. In the book, Kozol describes poverty as one of the highly witnessed economic inequality in the public education sector. The condition in which public education sectors suffer from inadequate resources varies from one school to another. Different schools have different needs, and even some schools require fewer resources than other schools. Equal allocation of resources to schools lacking a few facilities and schools with several needs results in a significant difference. Schools with fewer requirements remain with extra resources after utilizing the received funds, while those with several needs utilize the funds and even remain in an inferior condition. Kozol provides an example of fundraising in a primary school where approximately one million dollars is raised (Kozol, 48) while another fundraising at a nearby school contributes approximately four thousand dollars. Also, the condition of a school determines the amounts of payment payable to teachers in these schools. Kozol shows that a teacher in a well-developed school, especially in town, is paid almost twice the amount payable to a teacher teaching the same class but now in a poor school located in the village (Kozol, 45). The illustrations above validate that poverty is an economic imbalance between public institutions attributed majorly to the unreliable allocation of funds and differences in standards of the schools.

Another socioeconomic inequality illustrated in *The Shame of the Nation* is racism. Kozol outlines several situations where people of different races have been affected in public education sectors. He claims that racial discrimination remains life now in the American system,

owing to enormous discrepancies in the allocation of tax generated through real estate taxes and funds allocated by the government in an attempt to "normalize" education costs. According to the law, every citizen has the right to access education in any public institution in America. In many scenarios, the whites attended different schools with the blacks. Wealthier white families continued to depart cities for the suburbs in many cities, leaving minorities to make up most of the people left in the public education system. The education opportunities offered in the schools also differed due to racial discrimination. Kozol describes schools that are segregated by a predetermined range but give vastly different education programs. A predominantly white school, for example, offers drama club and AP classes, while a predominantly black school nearby needs a hairstyling course. Therefore, the white schools had an advantage in educational programs offered in the schools over black schools, which justifies the two rationales discussed above.

Lastly, the third socioeconomic inequity described by Kozol is in terms of the Location of the public schools. He explains comprehensively how schools in the cities were given more funds than those in villages. As a result, preschool access was less reliable to low-income communities than those in great-income regions. Kozol well illustrates the implications of inadequate support for low-income schools. It is challenging to disregard the role of money in equal education when discussing these concerns. Unfortunately, many people fail to understand the enormity of the injustices in public education because they rationalize them.

¹
Works Cited

Kozol, Jonathan. *The shame of the nation: The restoration of apartheid schooling in America.*

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