### **Reflective Writing: The Influence of Society on Personal Views and Behaviors**

Society is a powerful force that shapes our behaviors, values, and how we interact with others. As a member of a society, I am influenced by its norms, traditions, and collective beliefs. Growing up in Kenya, my views and behaviors have been shaped by a blend of traditional values and modern influences.

**Society’s Influence on My Views**

In my society, there is a strong emphasis on community and familial bonds. The cultural concept of “Harambee,” which means “pulling together,” underscores the importance of collective effort and mutual support. This philosophy has instilled in me a sense of responsibility towards my family and community. For instance, I feel compelled to contribute to community projects and support extended family members financially or emotionally.

However, there is also pressure to conform to societal expectations, particularly in areas such as career choices, marriage, and social status. The pressure to succeed academically and professionally is immense, driven by the desire to elevate the family’s status and meet societal standards of success.

**Approaching Societal Pressure**

One specific area where I feel pressured is career choice. There is a societal expectation to pursue stable and prestigious careers such as medicine, engineering, or law. While I respect these professions, my passion lies in computer science, which is often viewed as less traditional compared to some other fields.

To navigate this pressure, I have taken a balanced approach by pursuing my interests in computer science while also securing a career path that satisfies societal expectations. I have actively sought opportunities to showcase the value of my work in technology, demonstrating that success and fulfillment can be achieved outside conventional professions.

**Observing Others Conform to Societal Pressure**

I have observed friends and family members conform to societal pressures, sometimes at the expense of their true desires. For example, a close friend of mine pursued a career in finance due to family expectations, despite having a passion for teaching. Over time, the dissatisfaction with his job led to burnout and a reevaluation of his choices. Eventually, he decided to follow his passion and became a teacher, finding fulfillment and success in his new career. He dealt with the pressure by seeking support from like-minded individuals and gradually convincing his family of the viability of his chosen path.

**The Importance of Pro-Social Behavior and Altruism**

Pro-social behavior and altruism are deeply rooted in Kenyan culture. Acts of kindness, generosity, and helping others are highly valued and often seen as moral imperatives. The concept of “Ubuntu,” which means “I am because we are,” reflects the idea that individuals thrive through mutual support and collaboration.

Altruism manifests in various forms, such as communal labor (Harambee), supporting those in need, and volunteerism. These behaviors foster social cohesion, build trust within communities, and create a sense of belonging and security. For example, during difficult times, such as natural disasters or economic hardships, communities come together to provide assistance and support to affected individuals, exemplifying the strength of collective effort and compassion.

In conclusion, society profoundly influences our views and behaviors. While societal pressure can sometimes lead to conformity, it is essential to strike a balance between societal expectations and personal passions. Embracing pro-social behavior and altruism enhances social bonds and fosters a supportive and cohesive community.

### **References**

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