
THE ORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The sociology of education examines how social institutions and personal experiences influence educational processes and results. In practice, it primarily focuses on the mass education systems of contemporary industrial societies, encompassing the growth of higher, further, adult, and lifelong learning. Education has always been viewed as an inherently hopeful human endeavor marked by hopes for advancement and improvement. In many parts of society, it is viewed as a way to overcome challenges, reach greater equality, and gain wealth and status for everyone. Education is viewed as an environment where children can grow based on their individual needs and possibilities. Ideally, it is regarded as one of the most effective ways to attain increased equality in society. The aim of education should be to cultivate each individual to their utmost capability and provide them with opportunities to reach as far in life as their inherent talents permit.

Keywords: Durkheim, Dewey, and Socialization, social reproduction, Education, Society, Equality, Endeavours, family, Mass media.

INTRODUCTION

Educational sociology, currently referred to as the sociology of education, is a relatively new area of study. Shimbori (1979) observed that its evolution has passed through multiple stages. The initial phase in the exploration of educational sociology, known as the sociology of teachers, commenced in the early twentieth century and continued until 1910. In this phase, the discipline lacked a research foundation; it merely utilized the discoveries of sociology and applied them to the educational institution to train teachers. Consequently, sociological literature and results from the sociology field considered pertinent to education were gathered, revised, and subsequently referred to as educational sociology. The milestone occurred in 1923 when the American academic founded a national organization for the exploration of educational sociology. This organization started to support educational researchers. The formation of the society was succeeded by the creation of the journal of educational sociology as sociology emerged as a recognized academic discipline.

While educational sociology and the sociology of education both focus on the education institution, they have numerous unique differences. Jensen (1965) states that educational sociology aims to create knowledge pertinent to the challenges of educational practice. Certain aspects may relate to the arrangement of learning contexts for achieving educational goals, the development of learning objectives, and the selection of the most effective and efficient educational techniques and technologies for fulfilling the educational targets. The educator, for instance, examines educational sociology through the lens of addressing her/his real-world issues linked to educational practice.

Conversely, the sociology of education is regarded as a field focused on exploring the sociological dimensions of educational phenomena and institutions. Jensen (1965) claims that the demands of educational practice are merely secondary to the goals of sociological

research. This type of analysis strongly implies that the sociology of education is within the domain of sociologists.

IMPORTANCE OF SOCIOLOGY

Among the different social sciences, sociology appears to be the most recent. It is slowly progressing. It has made significant advancements. Its applications are acknowledged broadly today. In contemporary society, there is an increasing awareness of the significance of scientifically examining social phenomena and the ways to enhance what Prof. Giddings refers to as human adequacy (human welfare).

The examination of sociology holds significant importance, particularly in today's intricate society. Several applications of sociology include the following.

- ❖ Sociology is very beneficial in that it informs us about current social circumstances and advancements. Sociology helps us become more aware of the changes and developments occurring in our surroundings. Consequently, we become aware of our evolved roles, expectations, and responsibilities.
- ❖ Sociology examines society through a scientific lens. Prior to the rise of sociology, there was no organized or scientific effort to examine human society along with its intricacies. Sociology allows for the scientific examination of society. This understanding of human society is essential for making advancements in different areas.
- ❖ Sociology also serves as a valuable teaching subject. Sociology is a field where technical skills yield their own benefits. There is a growing need for sociologists, particularly those skilled in research methodologies, in various fields such as business, government, industry, urban planning, race relations, social services, welfare, management, advertising, communications, administration, and numerous other aspects of community life.
- ❖ Understanding and planning for society requires sociological knowledge. Sociology has simplified social planning. Sociology is frequently viewed as a means for social change and societal restructuring. It has a significant role in societal reconstruction
- ❖ Several years back, sociologists were limited to teaching sociology in educational institutions. However, sociology has become sufficiently practical to be applied beyond academic settings, including its use in schools and colleges. Sociology now offers career opportunities beyond teaching that are increasingly available at international levels.

NEED TO STUDY SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

Every society has its own changing socio – cultural needs and requires an education to meet these needs. Today's needs are conservation of resources, environmental protection, global citizenship etc. Therefore education caters towards meeting of these different needs. Since the needs of the society change education also changes. Hence there is need for studying sociology of education. It helps in understanding:

- Work of School and Teachers and its relation to society, social progress and development
- Effect of Social Elements on the working of school and society
- Need for understanding and promoting international culture

- Development of Society through the formulation of various rules and regulations and understanding of culture and traditions
- Need for Promotion of Social Adjustment
- The effect of social groups, their interrelation and dynamics on individuals
- Effect of Social Elements on the life of individuals
- Construction of Curriculum in relation to the cultural and economic needs of the society
- Democratic ideologies present in different countries
- Need for understanding and promoting international culture

THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

The origin and development of sociology of education is associated with a number of scholars such as Emile Durkheim, Kari Mannheim, Sir Fred Clarke and John Dewey. Each of these personalities contributed significantly to the discipline.

DURKHEIM, DEWEY, AND SOCIALIZATION

(i). Views of Durkheim:

One of the contributions of sociology has been to show the degree to which we become recognizably human by being initiated into a society. As Durkheim puts it, "Man is man, in fact, only because he lives in a society". Becoming socialized is the process of being fitted into a complex social environment and in this process a certain limited set from the indeterminately large range of human potentialities is evoked and actualized. The limited set is those which are shared by other members of the society into which the child is being initiated: "Society can survive only if there exists among its members a sufficient degree of homogeneity; education perpetuates and reinforces this homogeneity by fixing in the child, from the beginning, the essential similarities that collective life demands". Social life is not merely concerned with the basic necessities of physical existence and the regulating mores of the group, but also with what we call our culture. "Of what an animal has been able to learn in the course of his individual existence, almost nothing can survive him" but human beings accumulate knowledge, skills, records of many kinds, and "this accumulation is possible only in and through society". Nor is it merely basic information that is passed on in socializing, but also how that knowledge and those skills and understandings are to be interpreted: "society frequently finds it necessary that we should see things from a certain angle and feel them in a certain way". The initiation of children by adults into society, in this general sense, is what Durkheim calls education: "education consists of a methodical socialization of the young generation".

(ii). Views of Dewey

His aim in *Democracy and Education* was to show that education was not the kind of process that could be defined apart from social experience and to show that if it was allowed to become untied from that experience one was left with "an unduly scholastic and formal notion of education". In this view, then, a society in which a distinction could readily be drawn between educating and socializing is a society in which elite will be educated and the rest socialized. The result is that which we see about us everywhere -- the division into 'cultured' people and 'workers'. Rather, what we have to do is so describe the qualities of a truly democratic society such that socialization to such a society would encompass all that

anyone might wish to include in a proper concept of education. Not only is social life identical with communication, but all communication is educative.

(iii). Education as Distinct from Socialization

The first great socializer, then, is learning a language. Those who share a language share a substantial fraction of their view of the world, which is programmed at a level of assumption in the terms, distinctions, grammatical structure given in that language. Teaching people to be functionally literate is, in this form of the distinction, to socialize, in that it teaches conventions which are shared by everyone who aims to communicate by writing. Teaching to write with style, talk with eloquence, and read with critical awareness is, then, to educate. Such things stress individual distinctness from the basic conformities which make communication possible; they stress distinctness from the current cliché and conformist forms.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The sociology of education contains a number of theories. Some of the main theories are presented below.

(a). Political arithmetic

More recent work in this tradition has broadened its focus to include gender, ethnic differentials and international differences. While researchers in this tradition have engaged with sociological theories such as Rational Choice Theory and Cultural Reproduction Theory, the political arithmetic tradition has tended to remain rather sceptical of 'grand theory' and very much concerned with empirical evidence and social policy. The political arithmetic tradition was attacked by the 'New Sociology of Education' of the 1970s which rejected quantitative research methods. This heralded a period of methodological division within the sociology of education. However, the political arithmetic tradition, while rooted in quantitative methods, has increasingly engaged with mixed methods approaches.

(b). Structural functionalism

Structural functionalists believe that society leans towards social equilibrium and social order. They see society like a human body, in which institutions such as education are like important organs that keep the society/body healthy and well.

i). Socialization

Social health means the same as social order, and is guaranteed when nearly everyone accepts the general moral values of their society. Hence structural functionalists believe the aim of key institutions, such as education, is to socialize children and teenagers. Socialization is the process by which the new generation learns the knowledge, attitudes and values that they will need as productive citizens. Although this aim is stated in the formal curriculum, it is mainly achieved through the hidden curriculum, a subtler, but nonetheless powerful, indoctrination of the norms and values of the wider society. Students learn these values because their behavior at school is regulated (Durkheim in) until they gradually internalize and accept them.

ii). Filling roles in society

Education must also perform another function: As various jobs become vacant, they must be filled with the appropriate people. Therefore, the other purpose of education is to sort and rank individuals for placement in the labor market [Munro, 1997]. Those with high achievement will be trained for the most important jobs and in reward, be given the highest

incomes. Those who achieve the least, will be given the least demanding (intellectually at any rate, if not physically) jobs, and hence the least income.

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

Conflict theorists believe this social reproduction continues to occur because the whole education system is overlain with ideology provided by the dominant group. In effect, they perpetuate the myth that education is available to all to provide a means of achieving wealth and status. Anyone who fails to achieve this goal, according to the myth, has only themselves to blame. Wright agrees, stating that "the effect of the myth is to...stop them from seeing that their personal troubles are part of major social issues". The duplicity is so successful that many parents endure appalling jobs for many years, believing that this sacrifice will enable their children to have opportunities in life that they did not have themselves. These people who are poor and disadvantaged are victims of a societal confidence trick. They have been encouraged to believe that a major goal of schooling is to strengthen equality while, in reality, schools reflect society's intention to maintain the previous unequal distribution of status and power.

This perspective has been criticised as deterministic and pessimistic, while there is some evidence for social mobility among disadvantaged students. It should be recognised however that it is a model, an aspect of reality which is an important part of the picture.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EDUCATION AND SOCIALIZATION

It has been in several ways and these concepts have also been treated by some people more or less as synonyms. Generally the distinctions hold socialization to be the process of preparing an individual to be a proficient social agent in society, and education to be something in addition to this, which might include being able to reflect critically on one's particular society or might include a range of more or less refined cultural attainments whose value to the individual might seem clear but whose value to society at large is less clear. Underlying most of the distinction is an inference though it has not perhaps been put so starkly -- that anything which may reasonably be called socializing has implicit in it the desire and tendency to make people more alike, and the contrasting impulse and tendency in education is to make people more distinct.

If one's idea of society is so encompassing that all aspects of all members of society's lives and their meanings are included within it, then education will likely be seen as only a part of a more general socializing process or as a synonym for socialization. If one's idea of society includes mainly a set of economic, industrial, legal, political, commercial transactions and a set of relationships determined by them, yet holds distinct a cultural world of knowledge, understanding, and appreciation that provides particular pleasures which transcend the relationships and transactions of particular societies at particular times, then one will likely want to distinguish initiation into "society" by "socialization" and initiation into the cultural realm by "education." One may say perhaps that the importance or otherwise of the distinction turns on one's response to what has been called the "problem of the culture-boundedness of meaning."

AGENCIES OF SOCIALIZATION:

In general, it may be said that the total society is the agency for socialization and that each person with whom one comes into contact and interact is in some way an agent of socialization. Socialization is found in all interactions but the most influential interaction occurs in particular groups which are referred to as agencies of socialization.

The Family

As the primary agents of childhood socialisation, parents play a critical role in guiding children into their gender roles deemed appropriate in a society. They continue to teach gender role behaviour either consciously or unconsciously, throughout childhood. Families also teach children values they will hold throughout life. They frequently adopt their parents' attitudes not only about work but also about the importance of education, patriotism and religion. The child's first world is that of his family. It is a world in itself, in which the child learns to live, to move and to have his being. Within it, not only the biological tasks of birth, protection and feeding take place, but also develop those first and intimate associations with persons of different ages and sexes which form the basis of the child's personality development.

School:

Schools teach sets of expectations about the work, profession or occupations they will follow when they mature. Schools have the formal responsibility of imparting knowledge in those disciplines which are most central to adult functioning in our society. It has been said that learning at home is on a personal, emotional level, whereas learning at school is basically intellectual.

Peer group:

Young people today spend considerable time with one another outside home and family. Young people living in cities or suburbs and who have access to automobiles spend a great deal of time together away from their families. Studies show that they create their own unique sub-cultures—the college campus culture, the drug culture, motorcycle cults, athletic group culture etc. Peer groups serve a valuable function by assisting the transition to adult responsibilities. Teenagers imitate their friends in part because the peer group maintains a meaningful system of rewards and punishments. The group may encourage a young person to follow pursuits that society considers admirable.

Mass media:

From early forms of print technology to electronic communication (radio, TV, etc.), the media is playing a central role in shaping the personality of the individuals. Since the last century, technological innovations such as radio, motion pictures, recorded music and television have become important agents of socialisation. Television, in particular, is a critical force in the socialisation of children almost all over the new world. According to a study conducted in America, the average young person (between the ages of 6 and 18) spends more time watching the 'tube' (15,000 to 16,000 hours) than studying in school. Apart from sleeping, watching television is the most time-consuming activity of young people.

Workplace:

A fundamental aspect of human socialization involves learning to behave appropriately within an occupation. Occupational socialization cannot be separated from the socialisation experience that occurs during childhood and adolescence. We are mostly exposed to occupational roles through observing the work of our parents, of people whom we meet while they are performing their duties, and of people portrayed in the media.

The state:

Social scientists have increasingly recognised the importance of the state as an agent of socialisation because of its growing impact on the life cycle. The protective functions, which

were previously performed by family members, have steadily been taken over by outside agencies such as hospitals, health clinics and insurance companies. Thus, the state has become a provider of child care, which gives it a new and direct role in the socialisation of infants and young children.

Relevance of Sociology of Education to the training of teachers

- ❖ Education is an institution of society. In fact it has been observed that the school is a miniature society in the sense that it reflects the wider society in every aspect. thus, it is imperative that a trainee teacher be exposed to sociology of education because sociology of education observes, and analyses education with regard to its social use and significance to any given society.
- ❖ The influence of sociology of education on society cannot be over emphasized. sociology of education helps teachers to understand the social relationships and organization in schools and classrooms, teachers and their relationship to pupils, parents and community at large; problems associated with the institution of education; relationships between various institutions of the society viz the family, political institutions, religious organizations, economic institutions, and children's social environment and culture, and their effects on learning. All these relationships affect learning either positively or negatively.
- ❖ The discipline further examines the role of the teacher in the educative process and also the teaching profession and its status in the society. Thus the discipline helps teachers to understand the goals of education and variables that influence the educational process and outcomes.
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- ❖ The discipline further examines the role of the teacher in the educative process and also the teaching profession and its statue in the society. Thus the discipline helps teachers to understand the goals of education and variables that influence the educational process and outcomes.
- ❖ Sociology of Education explores the relationships between various institutions of the society and education e.g. the effects of the church, family, government, industries and various other organizations on education. Through these organizations the society is able to deliver its services, exercise its control, show its interest in and support for schools. For instance, instability in any sector of the society is likely to cause chaos in education. Family breakdowns produce stressed children, who are often badly

behaved. Poor economy leads to inadequate learning resources and physical facilities. It may also lead to dissatisfaction of teachers because a poor economy may have no resources to pay them good salaries.

- ❖ Sociology of education also studies the child's environment and its effects on learning, for instance parents' socio-economic status, community and their economic activities, beliefs and customs. Knowledge of these areas would help the teacher to foster links between home and school in order to promote the child's education.

ISSUES IN SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

Educational institution is a good sample of society. It is a miniature form of society. You can find various group like group of learners (boys and girls), group of teacher (male and female), group of non teaching staff. Various roles are played in educational institutions like Evaluation (peer evaluation, tutor evaluation, evaluation of teacher by learner etc).

Teacher play role of Judge (evaluation), helper (help learner in achieving objective), detective (find out the law breaker), Idol (promoting values). The environment of educational institution is a complex one and various issues like gender, Social background, language technology, ideology interplay in a complex social milieu at micro (within institution) and macro (broad perspective) level. Let us go through these issues in brief. This will be useful in arranging effective learning experience.

(a). Family structure

The concept of nuclear Family is prevalent now days in India. The concept of combined family is losing its identity. The percent of family having both parents working is getting higher. They also work in shifts. Parents have very little time for their children. In this case the self study at home is not done well. As a teacher you can identify the family structure of the learner and plan learning activities accordingly.

(b). Cultural Diversity

India is a multicultural society and as a teacher and administrator you must think for your action with this perspectives. Recently we have seen lot of turmoil on the issue of text books having matters hurting some section of society. I am not judging the issue. What I want to say that you must think every action for its social consequences. Dress code (veil, skirts, saaries), ornaments (bindi, ear rings, nose rings, mehndi) etc may be the concerns of cultural diversity in educational institutions. Best practice should be to hurt no one.

(c). Language

A language is a set of visual, auditory, symbols (gesture and posture) of communication. We know that learning is a process resulting from the communication (interaction) between learner and teacher. So you can understand what importance language have in education. In a single language society where one language is used there is no concern of language of education at local level. But in a bigger social sphere (global) again language issue comes.

But in a multilingual society the issue of language selection comes at both local and global level. We can see hues and cry over the language issue in schools. In India we opt to put our children in English medium schools though our mother tongue is not English. Non English speaking student need extra effort to get the better results.

CONCLUSION

In all ages and human times ever since our erect and restless species appeared upon the planet, men have been living with others of their kind in something called societies. Prior to the emergence of sociology the study of society was carried on in an unscientific manner and society had never been the central concern of any science. It is through the study of sociology that the truly scientific study of the society has been possible. Sociology alone studies social relationships, society itself. Sociology is interested in social relationships not because they are economic or political or religious or legal but because they are at the same time social. Sociology studies how the relations combine, how they build up smaller or greater systems and how they respond to changes and changing needs or demands. Therefore the study of sociology is essentially analytical.

Sociology because of its bearing upon many of the problems of the present world has assumed such a great importance that it is considered to be the best approach to all the social sciences. Giddings has rightly pointed out, 'Sociology tells us how to become what we want to be.'

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