EDUCATION AND SOCIETY: A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines education and society from a sociological perspective. It highlighted the different definitions of education and society with relation to education enhancing the development of any society at large. The social institutions that make up the society was mentioned and the types of society we have, like the tradition or closed society which is mostly in the rural areas which possess a more intimate relationship with members and conclusion drawn that education is the bedrock of every society as it enhances meaningful development in society. Education has some social responsibilities to the society like provision of adequate relationship to the environment amongst others.
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Introduction

Education is the social institution responsible for the systematic transmission of knowledge, skills, and cultural values within a formally organized structure, Kendall, (2003). Education is a powerful and influential force in contemporary societies. As a social institution, education imparts values, beliefs, and knowledge considered essential to the social reproduction of individual personalities and entire cultures.

Bourdieu and Paaseron, (1990) in Kendall, (2003), education grapples with issues of societal stability and social change, reflecting society, even as it attempts to shape it today, education is such a significant social institution that an entire subfield of sociology the sociology of education is devoted to its study. Education serves an important purpose in all societies.

At the micro level, people must require the basic knowledge and skills they need to survive in society. While at the macro level, the social institution of education is an essential component in maintaining and perpetuating the culture of a society across generations.

Thus, cultural transmission which is the process by which children and recent immigrants become acquainted with the dominant cultural beliefs, values, norms, and accumulated knowledge of society, occurs through informal and formal education. However, the process of cultural transmission differs in preliterate, pre-industrial, and industrial nations.

People across the country are asked their reason for getting education and the answers were "to get a better job or a better paying job" (425). In fact, 57%

believe that schools are not doing enough to develop job skills. Only very few people think the reason to attend school is "to acquire knowledge (10%), "to learn basic skills" (30%) "to develop an understanding and appreciation for culture" (1%) (The Gall up Report, 1994), in Tischeler, (2002). Lester F. Ward believed the main purpose of education was to equalize society, while Herbert Spancer, believed education was only important if it had practical value and prepared people for everyday life.

Zander in Dienye (2012) referred to society as "an adaptive mechanism, a social vehicle for adjusting to and transforming the environment and coping with the perennial problems of life" Wilkins in Dienye (2012) also identified a difference between the general term "society' and the more particular concept "a society" she pointed out that, a society refers to a number of people who are bound to each other by relationships and patterns of behaviour which make them different from other people who do not share the same way. As Ezewu (1983) puts it, certain conditions regulate the behaviour of people in society towards one another which help people to interact freely in society.

Education and Society: A Sociological Perspectives

Education is an activity that proceeds in a society; as such the aims, objectives, methods, strategies and so on depend largely on the nature of the society, where it functions. It is concerned with the aims, methods, institutions, administration and curricular issues in education as they relate to the economic, political, ideological, social, religious, family, cultural, etc. force of the society in which they take place, Okujagu (1993).

Society can also be used to refer to a definite constellation of human beings living in a certain geographical setting. To be more precise, we can refer to society as a group of socially conscious people in terms of their mode of life who are bound together by common government, land area, set of social relationships, Collingwood, in Okujagu (1993).

Onokerhoraye in Peretomode, (1993) sees society as "a group of people who have lived together, sharing common values and general interests, long enough to be considered by others and by themselves as a unit.

Ocnnor in Nwaenyi and Egbezor, (2001) view education as an elaborate mechanism designed by society to instill in individuals certain skills arts, attitudes that are judged to be useful and desirable in that society. This means that Oconnor sees the business of Education as a developer of an individual as a person and prepares him to function effectively in society.

Castle, in Dienye, (2012) says, education is what happens to us from the day we are born to the day we die. It means education is a lifelong process. It is seen by Castle as dealing with person, society, things and ideas. Fafunwa in Elekwa (2013:8) describe Education as the process by which young child or young adult develops the abilities and other forms of behaviour which are of positive or acceptable value to the society in which he lives.

Dewey in Ezewu, (1983), views Education as a reorganisation of experience which increases the knowledge and awareness in the society. So Dewey at this point, sees education as a continuous process of growth having its aim at every stage an added capacity of growth. Okujagu opined that education is a prerequisite (for a number of things). Without well paid job, good service, privileges, valued positions and rewards are rare.

As for Ajere (2013:82), society is the web of socio relationships amongst people or groups living within a socio cultural territory, it is well structured with a collection of human beings whose ways of communication and interaction are more regular amongst themselves than with members of other people, who share a belief that they are co-members, share beliefs about the standards of good or appropriate behaviours and interact in terms of their beliefs. The teacher responsibility is to ensure that as part of the school programme, the students are initiated into the adult world of work and of leisure as well as into the total society with aims, goals and purposes.

According to Williams (1993) in Dienge (2012:6), a society refers to a number of people who are bound to each other by relationships and patterns of behaviour which make them different from other people who do not share the same way. Society could be seen as people who share relationship and have the same behavioural patterns that distinguished then from others, Elekwa (2013:40). Society refers to people interacting within a limited territory, guided by their culture. Society exist together with cultures, neither society nor culture can exist without the other, Macionis (1994:27). It is a kind of community (for part of a community) whose members have become socially conscious of their mode of life, and are united by a common set of aims and values. It can be said that a society is the fully social part of a community and the special nature of society is judged by the behaviour of those members with full social consciousness. A society is never static but is a collection of people who look towards the future.

Ottaway in Elekwa, defines society as an organized group of people with common ties operating through its interacting systems of institutions established to ensure nature, defense and survival of its members, Dienge (2012).

Okoh (2004) in one of the his definitions sees society as a group of people held together by common traditions, customs and ways of life, or a common culture and in which there exist among the members constituting it, an awareness of belonging to it.

A society is the system of social relationships in and through which we live, Okoh (2014). A society can be seen as large group of people who share the same geographical territory and are subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations, Hart in Elekwa. The survival of society depends on how well it addresses fundamental social needs, which sociologists using the functionalist perspective, called the "functional imperatives".

Conclusion

The social structure possessed by known societies fulfills these fundamental social needs are called institutions. The society is made up of five social institutions which are; the family, education, religion, economy and government. We have different types of society; the traditional or closed society which is friendlier in nature, the modern society or open society and the post-mod era society; neither society nor culture can exist without the other. Also the institution of education has the primary duty to socialize pupils, students and the members of the society at large. Education enhances the development of any society through the socialization of members. Without education, there will be no society.

Education is the bedrock of every society at large and it makes for meaningful development of a society.

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