EDUCATION AS AN AGENT OF SOCIAL CHANGE. A RE – APPRAISAL

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Abstract
This paper is focused on education as an agent of social change. A reappraisal. It introduces to the reader the sociological study of the theoretical perspective to social change and processes of social changes. The origin of sociology as an academic discipline is the history of the social change in the 18th and 19th century. At this period the Western Europe was swept with ravaging social changes and social problems it was associated with revolutions born out of the era of enlightenment: firstly the French Revolution which started in the 1789. Education plays a very important role in molding the character of an individual. Social change refers to the alteration in the social order of the society. A re-arrangement, new patterns, new arrangement of doing things with the social system, society doing things in a new way. Social change come about as man desires to conquer the environment or society in which he lives and brings about a new innovations. As a result of rapid industrialization, growing urbanization and changes in human intellect society need to change in order to cope with the gradual changes. Education can initiate social change by bringing about changes in outlook and attitudes of people. Present education is totally mechanized. It develops the cramming power of students but curbs individual thinking. Education is the root cause of social change that takes place within the society. Education has been and is being played as an agent of social change and development and socialization of the younger generation. So as to reach the expectation of the society.
Keyword: social change, development. Education system, knowledge. Reappraisal.

Introduction
The role of education as an agent of social change is widely recognized today. Education can initiate social changes by bringing out a change in the outlook and attitude of man. It can bring about a change in pattern of social relationships and thereby it may cause social changes.

Human beings are to educate and be educated. The primary role aim of education is to sustain individual and societal improvement. This process contains both tangible and moral

dimensions. Educational programs and policies play a pivotal role in the social and individual progress.

Education has a great social importance especially in the modern complex industrialized society. It is one of the concrete source from which one gets information and knowledge. The role of education as an instrument of social change is widely accepted in the present society. Society needs change from time to time. Social change may include change in nature, social institution, social behavior, or social relations. Change means accepting new ideas leading to evolution and development. Social change takes place as a result of many types of changes that takes place in social and non-social environment. Change is inevitable in a society. Education in every sense is one of the fundamental factors of development. No country can achieve sustainable economic development without sustainable investment in human capital. Education enriches people's understanding of themselves and the world. It improves the quality of their lives Social Change is associated with transformation in various spheres of human life. Many countries, like Nigeria has undergone tremendous changes over recent decades with implications including economic restructuring, changes in societal values, the spread of media technology, changes in educational system and population compositions.

Change is an integral part of our lives and our existence has been through stages of growth and development from childhood, teenage, adulthood and old age. Likewise at various stages of our lives we attain primary, secondary and tertiary education etc. In similar vein, several changes occur in the society we live. History has witnessed the transformation of human society from preliterate to literate and modern social organization. Human societies have evolved from primitive hunting and gathering stages to horticultural agrarian, industrial, modern and contemporary post-modern society. It is generally opined that change is the only permanent phenomena, and as change occur in natural world so does change occur in our human societies. No human society is relatively static for too long, as social change is an inevitable phenomenon; likewise changes may occur in all facets of society or selected parts of social structure. Social change in societies may be as a result of the expediency needed in providing solution to specific and social problems faced in a society

Objective

The purpose of this article is to conceptualize the role of education as an agent of social change and development.

Methodolgy

The present work is solely based on secondary information, which is collected from different sources such as Books, Journals, and Websites etc.

Education and Social Change

Education as an agent of social change means how education helps people to bring social change and development. Education changes the outlook and traditional approach towards social and economic problems. It sharpens the skills and knowledge of children.

Education is a powerful instrument and agent of social change. Social change influences people positively or negatively. Education has been recognized as the most valuable tool for social change per excellence.

Uba and Agada (1988) specified how education can affect or influence social change in the society.

1. Education equip people with skills and knowledge, instill in them the competence of adaptability, flexibility of thoughts and actions.
2. Education creates in individual fertile ground for desired attitudinal change to occur. The individual minds becomes a fertile ground for new ideas to occur needed by the society. The power of education can make an individual amendable.
3. Education is an agent of social mobility. It helps the individual to move from one stage of society to another.
4. Education creates political awareness and social emancipation in people, set one free from ignorance and superstitious belief and take decisions that can accommodate individual.
5. Education can also create economic empowerment and social progress. Education brings about social stability which maintains the statuesque respecting constituted authority, being patriotic citizens and make people to be respectful to new ideas.
    Tam David West in his philosophical essay (1980) opine that any nation which fails to recognize education as an instrument or agent of social change is not only retrogressing and backward but also a nation in progressive decay, neither dead or alive
6. Education provides an elaborate manpower and elaborate bureaucratic structure of modern times. Education need to train man to fit into the complex society.
7. Education fosters independence and original thinking and becomes autonomous, it creates ideas and enables one to think independently.
8. Education is a means of modifying or changing the existing statuesque. Education can lead to agitation and revolution.
9. Education affects our modes of life positively as in the way we greet, (greetings) Religion, language, marriage, food, dressing etc. it makes one to adapt to a new mode of life.
10. In terms of Agriculture, education has brought changes in farming methods. In the olden days, cutlass, spare, hoe, were used for cultivation, but in the contemporary society, farming is now mechanized. Tractors and other modern farm tools and machines are used in cultivating crops. Crude and traditional ways of farming has improved by mechanized farming, creating mass production of food crops and other agricultural products.

Concept of Social Change

Social change refers to any significant alteration or differences that occur in any system or society over time, in terms of behavior pattern, cultural values and norms. By `significant alteration' sociologists, mean changes that is yielding profound social consequences. Examples of significant social changes having long term effect includes; the industrial revolution, the abolition of slave trade, the feminist movement, etc. Today's sociologists readily acknowledge the vital role that social movements play in inspiring discontented members of a society to bring about social change.

Ordinarily, social change is understood by comparing between things that happened in the past and present state of things. (Elekwa 2014). These comparisons could be a period of 20years, 50years, 100years, etc. as the case may be. The comparison could also be based on major events that have taken place in the society. For example, in Nigeria comparison could be on changes that had occurred between the pre-colonial and colonial period or from colonial periods down to 1960, the year of Nigeria Independence. Social changes in Nigeria could also be viewed from comparing the happened during the time of military dictatorship and the contemporary democratic

dispensation – the military government does not seek the opinion of the citizens before enacting laws but democratic government do. When comparisons are made we may find differences. Such differences found are referred to as social change.

Macionis (1994:382) as cited in Elekwa and Okanezi (2013:66) defined social change as `the transformation of culture and social institution over time'. Thompson and Hickey (1994) define social change as a process through which patterns of social behavior, social relationship, social institutions and systems of stratification are altered over time. Smith and Preston (1982) also state that sociologist define social change as any significant change as any significant shift in the material and non-material culture of a society over time. Daefleur et al (1977:177) as cited in Elechi and Ogbondah (2005:51) defined social change as `the alteration in pattern of social organization of specific groups within a society or even the society itself'. Odetola and Ademola as cited in Okujagu (1993) also defined social change as the alteration, rearrangement or total replacement of phenomenon, activity, values or process through succession of events. Emile Durkheim saw social change as progressive and irreversible. Change is a natural, constant and permanent phenomenon, because the only permanent thing in life is change, and must occur when it's expected to occur except in a static and stagnant society where there are no child birth, reproduction, marriage, war, damages, destruction of lives and properties etc. Social change could either be positive or negative.

Considering the views of several sociologists so far, social change may be defined as any significant transformation made in the existing human behavior, group behavior, cultural and social institutions of the society over time, irrespective of whether it occurred gradually or rapidly.

Theorists of social change agree that in most concrete sense of the word `change', every social system is changing all the time. The composition of population changes through life cycle, and thus occupation changes, or roles in division of labor changes, the members of the society undergo physiological changes; the continuing interaction among members of the society modifies attitudes and expectation experiences, new knowledge and ideas constantly being gained and transmitted.

When there are alterations (changes) in any social organization of a group or a society, Ekpeyong (1996:190) noted that it means – *the development of new norm, the modification of roles expectations, a shift to new types of sanctions, the development of different criteria for ranking and the introduction and use of new production.*

The activities of individuals in the society have various roles and responsibilities for the growth of the society so that when an alteration is introduced into the social system, a change is noticed.

The change in the social systems does not affect the geographical boundary, that is, boundary does not affect the political, social, economic and religious life of the people or institutions. The effect of alteration or change can also affect other institutions.

Theories of Social Change

Change is law of nature. What is today shall be totally different from what it would be tomorrow. Social structure is subject to incessant change. Theories of social change can be divided into two major areas, viz:

The Classical theories (earliest theory**) and**
The Modern theories.
1. The **Classical** theorists are of the opinion that society exists from transition to modernization. Their ideas differ but are common with that of the modern theorists. They

have a central theme. They opine that society from the pre-modern society to modern societies. Hence modernization of societies exists in transition.

Classical theories are;
a. Evolution theory of social change
b. Cyclical theory of social change
c. Conflict theory of social change
d. Structural functional theory of social change, etc.

2. **Modern** theorists believe that change occur as a result of parents, socio-economic and ethnic background. That social change has moved from traditional to modern. They posit that success means change and the individuals in the society causes social change. Modern theories are:
   a. Technological theory of social change
   b. Economic theory of Social change, etc.

These theories have been offered to explain reasons for social change. The problems of explaining social change was centered to the nineteenth century sociology. Some of the theories are explained below.

- **Evolution Theories of Social Change**

  Evolution theory of social change are based on assumptions, they assume that societies gradually change from simple beginning into more complex forms. They argued that the society is an organism. They even applied Darwin's biological principles of survival of the fittest to human societies. They saw change as positive and beneficial. To them the evolutionary process implies that societies would reach new and higher levels of civilization. According to the evolutionary theory, society moves in specific directions, they saw societies as progressing to higher levels. As a result, they concluded that cultural attitudes and behaviors were more advanced compared to the earliest societies.

- **Cyclical Theory of Social Change**

  Cyclical theory is any theory which purports to identify repeating cycles in political, social trends and other things. Cyclical theories of social change are sometime called `rise and fair' theory presumes that social phenomena of whatever sort reoccur again, exactly as they were before in cyclical fashion.

  A variant of cyclical process is the theory of a well-known American sociologist, P.A. Sorokin (Social and Cultural Dynamics, 1941), which is known as "Pendular theory of Social change''. He considered the course of history to be continuous, though irregular, fluctuating between two basic kinds of cultures, the `Sensate' and the `ideational' through the `idealistic'.

  According to him, culture oscillates like the pendulum of a clock between two points.

  The Cyclical theory of social change sees social change in form of life cycle. Oswald Spengler view social change occurs in a cycle. Where we see in nature one cycle of season takes place, winter, summer and rainy seasons comes one by one after each other, in the same way cycle of day and night, after day goes on. Similarly living beings also go through phase of life and death. We take birth, gets young, gets old and then we die and take birth again. This cycle is also found in human society and civilization.

  Human civilization and culture also undergo rise and fall, formation and destruction. (Like destruction of societies through communal crisis and civil war).

- **Conflict Theory of Social Change**

  While the functionalism emphasize on a stable society, Conflict theory emphases on change. According to the conflict perspective, society is constantly in conflict over limited resources and the conflict drives for social change. Example; the Civil Right Movement of 1960s, the Aba Women's Riot of 1929 and how activists challenged the racial unequal distribution of political powers and economic resources. In the conflict theory perspective, changes come about through conflict between competing interests, not conscious or adaption. Conflict theory therefore gives sociologists a framework for explaining social change.

  Social conflict theory sees social life as a competition and focuses on the distribution of resources, power and inequality. They view society as an area of inequality that generates social conflict and social change.

  The conflict theory derived from the Ideas of Karl Marx, who believes that society is a dynamic entity constantly undergoing change driven by class conflict. They view social life as competition, competing for limited reassures, (e.g. money, leisure, sexual partners, etc.) whereas the functionalism understands the society as a complex system striving for equilibrium.

  The conflict theorists maintain that, because a society's wealthy and powerful will ensure to maintain the status quo in which social practice and institutions have favored. To them continued change plays a vital role in remedying social inequalities and justices. Although Karl Marx, accepted the evolutionary argument that societies develop along a specific direction. He did not agree that each successive stage presents an improvement over the previous stage. Marx noted that history proceeds in stages in which the rich always exploit the poor and weak as a class of people.

- **Technological Theory of Social change**

  Technology is the application of scientific knowledge to making a tool to solve specific problem. Technological advances such as automobiles, airplanes, radio, television, cellular phones, computers, modems and fax machines, etc. have brought major changes and advancement to the world. Indeed 20th century technology has completely –and irreversibly – change the way people meet, interact, learn, work, travel, worship and do business.

  Consequently sociologists are concerned with how technological societies will be forced to adapt to social changes that improvement in technology will continue to bring. The investigation of technology is more prevalent in some sociological specialties than others, but technology is includes as a central variable. Sociologist assessed the viability of interdisciplinary instructional and professional activities with technology

- **Economic Theory of Social Change**

  Economic theory of social change focuses on economic main-stream theory in its capacity to handle basic problems such as uncertainty, social dynamics and ethics. Its ultimate aim is to develop an economic theory for socially sustainable society. Economic theory and social change analyses the foundation of market theory in relation to its social implication. It also looked at the permanent unemployment, distribution of income, financial growth, money and credit system in seeking objective value to obtain a socially sustainable society. They also viewed the economic and social thought based on some crucial feature of modern economic societies.

Characteristics of Social Change
Social change is better understood when the nature of social change is analyzed.

1. **Social change is a community change:**
   Society is a web of social relationship hence social change means a change in the system of social relationship. Social change is not in the individual change. It is a change that occurs in the life of the entire community, change which influence can be felt in an entire community.

2. **Social change is universal phenomenon:**
   Social change occurs in all societies. There is no society that remains completely static. Each society no matter how traditional and conservative that society is must constantly undergo change. Speed and content of change may differ from one society to another. Some might be rapid while others might be slow.

3. **Social change is continuous:**
   Social change is a system of social relationship and these social relationships are never permanent, they are continuous. They are subject to change over time. Society is an ever changing phenomenon, it undergoes endless process of change, an ongoing process, it cannot be stopped. Society is subject to continuous change. It grows decays and finds renewal and modernization also Accommodates itself to various changing conditions. For example, GSM Phone (Global System for Mobile Communication) and Social Media (2go, facebook, skype, whatsapp) etc.

4. **Social change is permanent:**
   Social occurs all the time, no human society is static, and every society is subject to change because human beings are dynamic. Since there are human activities going on, changes are bound to occur.

5. **Social Change has rate:**
   Social change can be fast or slow. Instability or even revolution might occur when social change becomes too fast. Example: the youth revolution against the elders in the society. When social change is too fast or too big, it might swallow the existing society and might interfere with the continuity and sanctity of the society. Social change should not be too slow either because it might lead to revolution or war or even make the society obsolete and antiquated.

Types of Social Change
Types of social change take different forms and variations, Uba et al (1990). A type or form of social change is determined by the processes and stages through which the changes occurred and the goals which it intends to achieve. Some types of social change includes:-

1. Physical Change: physical changes are associated with material things. They are social changes that are seen or experienced in the society such as the farming pattern, the media, means of transportation, etc. are referred to as physical social change.

2. Evolutionary Change: The ability of individuals to control nature and the environment through inventions, discovery, medical conquest, example: (The gradual movement change from the patronage of traditional message to orthodox medicine), science and technology, urbanization, and rural development. (the ability to control nature and environment through inventions).

3.   Population Growth and Decline: The increase in population due to early marriage, polygamy and lack of birth control causes increase in population, while late marriage, monogamy and use of birth control can cause decline in population.

4.   Educational Changes: Expansion in education, like the UPE, UBE, free education, women education, migrant education and nomadic education.

5.   Negative Changes: Negative social change can take the form of natural disaster, like famine, flood, Tsunami, earthquake, erosion, war, economic depression, unemployment, riot, etc.

6.   Social Changes in Character: changes in people's character, like variation in people's dressing, art, music, religion, marriage rites, ideas, institution, social values, attitudes, etc.

Causes of Social Change
The following may be considered as causes of social change; some of the factors includes –

* Physical environmental factor or resources
* Population growth or demographic factor
* Technology, industrialization, business, social cultural contacts
* Ideology
* Leadership
* Education
* Diffusion
* Conflict factor
* Revolutionary factor
* Mass media
* Social movement etc

Physical and Environmental Factor
Sometimes the natural environment can affect human societies, like earthquakes, flood, volcanic eruption, etc. these can lead to loss of lives, and change of relevance of affected people. Deserts can get extended as a result of human activities, such as over grazing of land by cattle.

Climatic changes can also cause social change to occur. For example, the harmattan season changes dressing mode and other activities changes to suit the season.

* **Population or Demographic Factor**

The size of population can cause social change. Either increase or decrease, in family, it can lead to migration and new settlement. For example when population was small in the ancient times, social change was not fast because there were few people to interact with, there was no formal education then, and division of labour was based on family level.

Increase in population or population explosion has led to mass production of food items and other essential commodities on the other hand increase in population might cause unemployment, congestion, malnutrition, etc.

* **Technology, Industrialization, Business and Culture**

Technology creates new occupations and make available resources, example; Before now, travelling to other parts of the world takes weeks to get to other continents but now technology has made aircraft and modern ships take few days to journey the same distance.

Industrialization has made women to leave home and their domestic role to compete with men in the industrial areas.

- **Mass Media**
  Mass media includes radio, films, television, newspaper, magazines, books, cables, etc. All these are means through which information are passed to the populace. The speed at which media houses send information, cause social change to occur and it is because of the fast means of sending out information that the vast world is now regarded as global village.

- **Social Movement**
  These are organized effort encouraging or opposing some dimensions of social change. They are peoples own initiatives where they come together to advocate for what they consider to be appropriate. For example, people organize themselves to fight for certain rights such as the Aba women riot, political parties, pressure groups, (movement for the survival of Ogoni people) MOSOP. Movements that advocate various positions like the feminism, gay rights, the environmental colonialism apartheid etc. (Elekwa and Okanezi 2013).

- **Education**
  Education has the capacity to cause things to change. Education brings about social changes in the society at large. Education brings about social changes in the society at large. Education has brought changes in politics, economic, intellectual, religion, science and technological changes, cultural changes in society, etc.

  Educational institutions are made to inculcate in the learner, acceptable moral standards, and train individuals to understand the adult role they are expected to perform in the society. Education is an agent of socializations well as an agent of social order. (Arogunadade, 1999). Education equips the people with skills and instills in them the competence of adaptability of thoughts and action. Thus, makes people receptive to new ideas and increase their willingness and determination to accept change.

Processes of Social Change

An American Sociologist William Fielding Ogburn suggests that changes occur in the culture and cultural evolution is the result of the process of social change. The processes include:
1. Discovery
2. Invention
3. Accumulation
4. Diffusion
5. Adjustment

Discovery:

Discovery is human perception of aspect of reality which already exists. It has been dormant until it is discovered and put into use. (Okujagu 1993). It is only when something is discovered that, that aspect of reality is made known to people. Nature has a lot of things in store for us to discover. For example, when Mongo Park discovered River Niger, when Isaac Newton discovered the law of gravity. `Discovery' suggests that the idea has been there dormant until those things are discovered. Discovery adds something new to the culture of the society and discovery becomes a process of social change only when it is put in use.

The process of diffusion when an invention or cultural element spread from one culture to another. Example; quick means of communication and transportation made possible an invention to diffuse a cultural element to another culture.

When culture comes into contact, some traits will be laid-off, while some will be absorbed, some will blend together. For examples, languages, dressing pattern, greetings, dishes, beliefs and idea, etc. are inventions diffused to us by other societies.

Invention:

According to Linton, he says that "invention is a new application of knowledge'' it simply means creating something that is not previously part of the culture. It is also known as combining the existing elements in a useful way that produces something which has never existed before. Invention occurs due to:-

a. Mental Ability of an individual in a society is a source of social change in the society.

b. Demand of the people for anything which are in scarcity result in an invention, which leads to social change.

c. Existence and Cultural Elements and reassures are very important in social change.

Invention can be classified into two: Material and Non-material inventions. Material inventions are things like; electricity bow and arrow, cars, telephones, computers, GSM Phone, refrigerators, etc. Non-material inventions are things like ideas, culture, songs, arts, religious beliefs, games, etc. all these can be classified into processes of social change.

Accumulation:

The result of inventions and innovations create more new elements which are added to culture. The new elements of culture combined with the old elements of culture results in the process of accumulation which makes it greater.

Diffusion:

Diffusion is when societies come together or into contact. Societies develop through diffusion which is the spread of cultural traits from group to group. It operates within and between societies. Diffusion is an important source of social change.

Adjustment:

After invention, accumulation and diffusion of cultural elements, the adjustment of individuals takes place in that culture. All the cultural elements are interrelated with one another but when a material change occurs in culture, it brings slow change in material culture. But with the passage of time the space fills and adjustment of new elements takes place in that culture. So, the invention of new elements becomes a part of the culture as a result of adjustment process of social change.

Conclusion

This paper has been able to vividly elucidate the concept of social change and processes of social change, the sociological root to the social change, processes of social change and theories of social change.

In concluding suffice, it to state that social change in any society, be it contact change in form of diffusion, acculturation or assimilation or immanent change in form of innovation or

discovery arises firstly as a response of solving a particular social problem or difficulties faced by that society.

The world today is fast evolving and changing in contemporary times as a result of the impact of globalization, industrialization and the rise in information technology usage, like the Internet, social media, satellite television, etc. Culture, tradition, norms, values are eroded and replaced with modern ones. Social and cultural changes arising from the shrinking of the world into a global village and the breaking down of cultural barriers, and dissimilarities between societies is generally begetting a simultaneous diffusion of western culture, political system, world capitalist economy, value system, etc. in the developing world of Africa, Asia and Latin-America.

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