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## ROLE OF SOCIETY IN EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

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### *Abstract*

*Society is defined as the whole range of social relationships of people living in a certain geographic territory and having a sense of belonging to the same group. The relationships between the two concepts are so strong that it is not possible to separate them because what happens to one affects the other. Educational institutions are micro-societies, which reflect the entire society. The education system in any given society prepares the child for future life and instills in him those skills that will enable him to live a useful life and contribute to the development of the society. Education as a social phenomenon does not take place in a vacuum or isolation; it takes place in the society and this normally begins from the family, which is one of the social institutions responsible for the education of the child. This paper focuses on the relationship between education and society. It acknowledges a strong relationship between the two concepts. Education is seen as a means of cultural transmission from one generation to another in any given society.*

**Keywords:** Education, Development, Society, Relationship.

### INTRODUCTION

There is a strong relationship between education and society. This observation is borne out of the fact that it is not possible to separate. This is because of the fact that what happens to the educational system undoubtedly affects the society, and whatever occurs in the society influences or shapes the educational system in all its ramifications. **Durkheim (1956)** was one of the first sociologists to

appreciate the relationship between education and society. He saw education as a social phenomenon through which a society assumes its own continuity by socializing the young in its own image. The components of the educational system that constitute perfectly defined facts and which have the same reality as another social fact are inter-related. They are inter-related internally, so that a given education system has unity and consistency, and also

externally so that the education system reflects a society's moral and intellectual values. **Ottaway (1980)** defined society as the whole range of social relationships of people living in a certain geographical territory and having a feeling of belonging to the same kind of group. In every society, whether developing or developed, complex or primitive, there is always an education system. Education systems are not the same, as no two societies are identical. Therefore, education systems differ from society to society and their aims, contents and techniques also differ from one society to another. From the foregoing, one might postulate that educational institutions are micro-societies, which mirror the entire society. This is one of the reasons why societies try to evolve education systems and policies that would meet the needs, beliefs, attitudes and the aspirations of their people. **Havighurst (1968)** observed that the way to understand a society's education system is to understand how it is related to the other basic institutions of that society, in particular the family, the church, mosque, the state, the polity and the economy.

#### **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATION AND SOCIETY**

We have seen education in particular as a means of cultural transmission from one generation to another. The parents are the first teachers of the child and they still maintain an educative function throughout the early and formative years of the child. In most of the developing nations of the world, including Nigeria, parents are responsible for sending their children or wards to school. Since these nations are undergoing rapid socioeconomic and political changes, they witness special problems in evolving the appropriate education system, which will be able to produce the adequate manpower needs in all the segments of the society. Schools are established in many societies of the world so as to instill in the

pupils those skill's which will afford them the opportunity of taking their rightful positions in the society; but this function cannot be adequately accomplished without the assistance of the home because both the home and the school perform complimentary functions in the moral and intellectual development of the child. This means that the child cannot be educated in a vacuum or in isolation. Therefore, for a child to be educated there must be interaction between him and his physical and social environment. By this we mean that education is the development of personality. It is something which goes on both inside and outside the home and in the school. In other words, education is an activity of the whole community. This means that education is used in the transmission of the cultural values. One important implication of looking at education as the transmitter of cultural values is the fact that education can be influenced by the culture of the society in which it takes place. For this reason, one may infer that for a child to be educated, he must be influenced by his environment and, in turn, be capable of influencing it. And it is only by the concept of the continuous interaction of the individual and his society that the development of personality can be properly understood. We have noted above that education is a means through which the cultural values of a particular society are transmitted from one generation to another. Through this process, the society is able to achieve basic social conformity and ensure that its traditional values, beliefs, attitudes and aspirations are maintained and preserved.

**Clarks (1948)** observed that a general knowledge and acceptance of the ideals and aims of our society is essential for all its citizens, and it must be achieved through education but in a form, which makes it compatible with freedom. So he reconciles the double purpose by saying that admittedly, the purpose of the educative society may be to make men conformable. But overmastering that must

be the purpose to make men free. A society needs a stable and dynamic set of values and a, unified purpose. It is when this is ascertained that meaningful economic, political and social programmes can be embarked upon for the overall benefits of the citizens. To be a fully developed person in such a society implies full and creative membership of it with powers to change it.

### TRANSMISSION OF CULTURE

**Ottaway (1980)** contended that the transmission of culture still remains a vital function, and is not to be dismissed as merely conservative in the sense of being old-fashioned. He further observed that our children are potentially the society of the future, which still belongs to the non-social community, and education in this respect can be regarded as a socialization of the young. Education depends on the total way of life of a people in a society. This suggests that the type of education provided will differ from society to society. Besides, each society has her own norms, values and her own ideal persons who stand out clearly for the younger generations to emulate. Since all these societies are not the same, then it means that a man regarded as a hero in one

society because of his contributions to educational development of the society may not be regarded as such in another society where education is not given priority in the scheme of their daily activities. It, therefore, implies that children have different people to emulate in different societies. It is logical to expect that the type education given in each society will change from time to time as the society changes. Many writers have argued that education is one of the causes of social change in the society, but another school of thought is of the opinion, that educational change tends to follow other social changes, rather than initiate them.

**Ottaway (1980)** observed that ideas of change originate in the minds of

men; often in the mind of a single man. Exceptional individuals invent new techniques and propound new values for their society. These ideas arise from the impact of men on his culture, but do not change the culture until they are shared and transmitted by a social group. In his own submission, **Boocock (1972)** noted that societies undergoing rapid social change or modernization have special problems in adapting the educational system to the manpower needs of the world. They often suffer shortages of persons with special kinds of learning in engineering and other technical fields and may have difficulty in keeping persons with valuable skills once they have completed their education. Another area of the relationship between education and society is through the arrangement of the entire society into a hierarchical order that is, through the social structure in which education plays a prominent and significant role in fixing educated individuals into social classes.

**Ottaway (1980)** observed that education is the process of preparing people to fit into this complex social structure and to play particular social roles as members of more than one institutional group. Individuals have to learn to be fathers or mothers, school teachers or civil servants, shopkeepers or priests. They have to learn to keep the law, to understand how they are governed and to be prepared to try and change the social moves when they see that they can be improved. Education as a social phenomenon is also concerned with the preparation of the child for his future occupation in life. This is one of the main economic functions of education and this is in the interest of both the nation and the individual. Through education an individual knows the structure of the society and the different types of relationships that exist among those structures in the society. The child is taught how to perform different roles within the social structure in the society.

These roles are inter-related. For example, the role of a father is a relational role; a father could be a son to, another person. So education allows the child to perform his role adequately within the social structure in the society. In addition, the child is able to understand the network of inter-relationships among the different social institutions that make up the society. Also of importance are the different functions that are performed by each social institution in the society. Like an individual, each institution has definite functions to perform in the society and the functions of each institution differ from one to another even though they are complimentary. Another aspect of the relationship between education and society is in the area of social interaction. Social interaction may be defined as any relation between people and groups, which changes the behaviour of the people in the group.

#### **FAMILY AND PEER GROUP:**

There is a need for social interaction by the child before he could acquire the culture of his society. This interaction in the society is therefore part of the child's education, provided that, that type of interaction brings about positive changes in the child's behaviour in a right direction as required by the educational system. One important point here is that the child has been taking part in group interaction long before he starts to attend school and the most common among these group interactions are within the family and the peer group. These groups in which the child interacts give him the opportunity to learn from the wider circles in the society. From his social contacts, he learns his roles in different groups and this influences his personality development.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Many sociologists have appreciated the relationship between education and society and have concluded that the two are so interrelated. That one cannot draw any line of demarcation between them. It has been observed that the educational system of any nation must be based on the needs and demands of the society and that any educational system that fails to meet the needs, aspirations and ambitions of the society is not relevant and is bound to fail. The educational system of any nation is concerned with, the transmitting of the cultural values of today to those who will live in the world of tomorrow, and contents of education must somehow strike a balance.

**Dubey et. al. (1984)** observed that a good educational system, in all its full substance and ramifications, is related to the level of culture, industrial development, rate of urbanization, political organization, religious climate, family structure, stratification and other institutions of the total social system. Finally, education has to fulfill both the individual's needs and those of the society and must keep pace with other sub-systems in the society, as both variables are inter-related.

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