

Sociological Tendency for Rethinking Teacher Education Programmes in Nigeria: The Place of Sociology of Education

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Abstract

The main thrust of this paper is to examine the place of Sociology of Education in effective Teacher Education programmes. In order to accomplish the objective of rethinking teacher education programme through sociological tendency for Teacher-Trainees, the concepts of Sociology, Education, Sociology of Education and Teacher Education were explained. Similarly, the nature and scope of Sociology of Education, Teacher Education Programme in Nigeria, relevance of Sociology of Education, the concept of sociological tendency and teacher-trainees were examined. Lastly, recommendations were proffered, for example, paucity of Sociology of Education teachers should be addressed by Government through mass recruitment of specialist teachers in sociology of education for colleges of education and universities.

Keywords: Sociological Tendency, Sociology, Sociology of Education, Teacher Education

Introduction

Sociology of education deals with the implication of socially relevant concepts to education. Understanding the sociological interpretation of socially relevant concepts (culture, social stratification, inequality, social class, background, environment, social change, social control and gender among others) and indeed sociological tendency in relation to education can be of some help to practicing teachers and therefore a pre-requisite of any teacher education programme. In line with this, Blackmore & Cooksey (1981) point out that analysis of the content of education which sociology of education does not only implies macro issues (the relation between curricular and culture of a society) but also micro issues such as face to face interaction between teacher and students or the way in which a formal syllabus is actually interested and taught in the classroom and understanding both macro and micro issues is essential in the implementation of Teacher Education Programme.

Indeed, Emile Durkheim (1858 – 1917) who was acclaimed to be the first person who indicated the need for a sociological approach to education was motivated by the immense benefit to classroom instruction he envisaged as the possible outcomes of the marriage between Sociology and Education. Durkheim as cited in Mahuta (2000) among other things endorsed that, education is something essentially social in character, in its origin and its function and as that the theory of education relate more clearly to sociology than any other social services. Consequently, if Teacher Education Programmes in Nigeria are deliberate efforts in order to initiate teachers and intending teachers into core norms, values, skills and techniques of the profession, then the place of Sociology of Education in rethinking for effective Teacher Education Programme in Nigeria is prominent. This means that Teacher-Trainees need to be exposed to aspects of Sociology of Education such as sociological tendency. The goals of Teacher Education in Nigeria are clearly spelt out in the National Policy on Education. They centre on issues such as producing motivated and efficient classroom teachers, and making them fit into social life of the community and society at large as well as enable teachers and intending teachers adapt to changing situations among other objectives. Most of the issues raised in the goals, content or syllabus of Teacher Education Programme form an integral part of the scope of Sociology of Education.

Therefore, in rethinking for Effective Teacher Education Programme in Nigeria that can pave way for effective national development, a study of Sociology of Education, a discipline which combines Sociology and Education, two separate disciplines that are highly influenced culturally, should be given more emphasis, so that teachers can imbibe sociological tendencies necessary for effective teaching and learning interaction.

Conceptual Clarification

Teacher Education

A Teacher is the heart of any educational system because the success or otherwise of any educational system largely relies on teachers. FGN (2013) for instance stressed that no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers. It is in view of such importance that Teacher Education becomes necessary in order to improve the quality of Teachers.

The major concern of teacher Education is enhancing attitudes, skills and knowledge of teachers in order to make them efficient and effective in the discharge of their duties. According to Mahuta (2009) Teacher Education simply refers to the training provided to teachers and teacher trainees to enable them practice the teaching profession effectively and efficiently. Similarly, Anikweze & Ojo (2000) explain that teacher education means a deliberate and organized effort to initiate the learner into a way of thinking and behaving, as well as into a core of norms, values, skills and techniques, considered desirable for developmental purpose on his society. Therefore, the Goals of Teacher Education in Nigeria as stated in the FGN (2013) are as follows:

1. To produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system.
 2. To encourage further, the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers.
 3. To help teachers fit into social life of the community and society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals.
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4. To provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignments and to make them adaptable to any changing situation not only in the life of their country but in the wider world.
 5. To enhance teachers commitment to the teaching profession.
 6. To achieve these goals, well planned and deliberate programmes were designed that reflect the goals. Sociology of education forms part of the curriculum content of those programmes of Teacher Education.

Sociological Tendency

The concept of sociological tendency in teacher training programmes is coined to mean the inculcation of social qualities in the trainees, so that while developing their own individualities, they also contribute their best to social welfare and advancement in the field of teaching. Sociological tendency is an aspect of sociological foundation of education that gives genesis to Philosophy of Education and Sociology of Education as sister disciplines. The aim of sociological tendency is to develop teachers' efficiency, school system and society in general.

Sociology

The word Sociology was derived from two words, namely: *Socio* which means society and *logy* meaning science. These words are put together and used by Auguste Comte (1798-1857) to mean science of the society. Other ancient thinkers like Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) developed their own scientific studies of the society and referred to them as Sociology. As a result of this, the word Sociology became the permanent name for science of the society. According to Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) Sociology is the science of social institutions. Ross & Haag (1961) defined Sociology as the study of the formation and transformation of groups and the relationship of groups and of groups' members with one another, noting that where there are groups, there are tendencies for participation, cohesion and conflict. Muhammad – Baba & Abubakar (2012) state that as literal connotation of the term suggests, Sociology is interested in enquiring into, analyzing and explaining the ways through which human beings relate with each other as well as the meanings and implications given to such relationships. A critical examination of the above definitions shows certain similarities, the different scholars only differ in their approaches. Sociology is all about man, social interaction, social institutions as well as the pattern of social relation between social institutions and between people as well as groups in the society.

Education

The word education is derived from the Latin word '*Educare*' meaning "to lead out" Education therefore literally means to lead out. Education is also the process of imparting knowledge, attitudes and skills on individual in order to lead him out of illiteracy and enable him develop his potentials. According to Sharma (2010) Education can be defined as life long process of interaction, growth and development which results in the modification of the behaviour of individual by more and more social interactions leading to the socialization of individual. It is pertinent to also mention here that sociologists of education are specifically

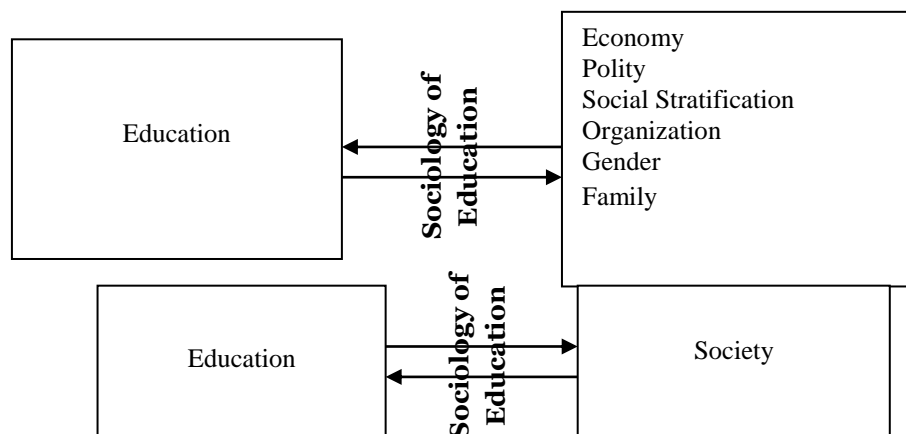
concerned with the social aspect of education. This is why education to sociologists has been described as socialization. It is on the basis of this that Mahuta (2007) viewed education as one aspect of socialization which includes the acquisition of knowledge and learning of skills. It is an instrument used in shaping beliefs, attitudes, behaviour and morals of individual.

One can go on citing various definitions of the concept of education by different scholars but one common fact agreed with is that education is aimed at the development of certain qualities of individual which are essentials in the development of his community and the nation at large.

Sociology of Education

Sociology of education developed out of the discipline of Sociology just like other sub-disciplines in Sociology like Sociology of politics, Sociology of law, Rural Sociology, Urban Sociology, Sociology of Mathematics, Sociology of Religion, Political Sociology etc. If sociologists are concerned with the scientific study of the society, then sociologists of education are concerned with the scientific study of education as one of the social institutions in the society. Sociologists try to establish the sociological stand point and show its appreciation to education. Manheim & Stewart (1980) maintained that: "Sociologists do not regard education solely as a means of realizing abstract ideals of culture such as humanism or technical specialization but as part of the process of influencing men and women. Education can only be understood when we know for what society and for what social position the pupils are being educated." Sociology of education can therefore be defined as the study of educational structures, processes and practices from sociological perspective. This means that the theories, methods and the appropriate sociological questions are used to better understand the relationship between educational institution and society, both at the micro and macro levels. Banks (1968) endorsed that Sociology of education like Sociology of the family or sociology of politics is no more but at the same time no less than the application of sociological perspectives to one of the major institutions of the society and for this reason needs no special justification as the subject matter of a text to students. In addition, Swift (1969) defined Sociology of education as the application of sociological knowledge, techniques of thinking and methods of data collection in the examination of the range of special phenomenon termed education. Similarly Mahuta (2007) observed that Sociology of education can be described as the application of sociological paradigms or perspectives to the education process.

The meaning of sociology of education can simply be presented in the diagram below:



In another way, Sociology of Education can be explained as the relationship between education and society. That is to say how does education affects society and vis-à-vis. This can be shown in a simple diagram as follows:

However, it can be noticed from the foregoing definitions and that, there is no any much difference in the approach to the definition of Sociology of education. Any sociological interpretation or an analysis of educational phenomenon and how it relates with societal phenomena, one can be said to indulge into Sociology of education. Sociology of education studies the impact of various social elements on educational system of a society. These elements may include individuals of the society, public policies for education, social structure of the society, the structure of education itself among other elements.

Scope of Sociology of Education

Sociologists of education main focus are society. In this regard, the scope of Sociology of education includes but not limited to the following:

Sociology of education deals with the relationship between the institution of education and society as well as other social institutions in the society. On one hand, Sociology of education examines the influence of education on other social institutions, such as political, economic, religious, and family. On the other hand, Sociology of education examines how social institutions influence the institution of education.

Sociology of education has special interest on school as a social institution with emphasis on the pattern of social interaction taking place therein. Different dimensions of social interaction occur in school through which children are socialized and the social values, norms, cultural heritage are transmitted and internalized. In school, there is formal form of social interaction of teacher-learner which is taking place in the classroom guided by official school manual or curriculum. There is also informal social interaction guided by hidden curriculum, where socialisation occurs unconsciously. Indeed, Sociologists have so much interest in hidden

curriculum, because of the fact that the content enshrined in the official curriculum is regarded as just a tip of an iceberg. Much of what is learnt in school is from the hidden curriculum according to Sociologists of Education.

Sociology of education is concerned with the implication of all socially relevant concepts to education. Such socially relevant concepts include community, culture, social stratification, social change, social class, social mobility, social groups, gender, minority and majority groups, social organization among others. In relation to socially relevant concepts, Sociology of Education raises issues such as, namely:

1. School and community relationship.
2. Social stratification and educational life chances or who gets what?
3. Gender differences in education.
4. Social change and education.
5. The flight of educationally disadvantaged groups.
6. The education of minority groups in society.

Sociology of education also examines the function of education in the society. Education to Sociologists of Education has various functions to the society. They include the manifest or obvious functions as well as latent or unintended functions of education. Sociology of education also examines the function of education from different perspectives. For instance, functionalists view on education focus on the positive contributions which education makes to the maintenance and the survival of the social system. Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) in Haralambos & Holborn (2004) maintains that 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 which collective life demands. On the other hand, the conflict perspective argued that education or school helps to preserve the position of the dominant class by teaching the dominant ideology whereby children learn to know and accept their place in the society so that there is no challenge to the class structure.

Another scope or area of coverage in Sociology of education is those social conditions that affect the child or pupils' capacity to benefit from what school stands to offer. Such social conditions include, parental socio-economic status, parental perception on education, teachers expectation of pupils learning outcomes, gender differences, type of social structure of the society, child abuse, begging, school leadership styles, teacher and students relationship, school distance, Rural – Urban imbalances and so on.

The study of sociological perspectives with specific reference to their implications on teaching and learning also forms part of the scope of Sociology of education.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical basis for this paper is Structural Functionalist theory which has August Comte (1798-1857), Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) as some of the major proponents. The theory views society as a living organism, made up of several interrelated parts referred to institutions like the political, economic, education among others. These institutions work collectively for the society to function. For instance, the institution of education enhances the capabilities of individuals and prepares them for different social roles

through equipping them with knowledge, attitudes, values and skills. This is done through the process of teaching by an individual who is referred to as a teacher. To ensure effectiveness and efficiency of Teachers, society designed Teacher education programme and Sociology of education forms an integral part of the content of teacher education in Nigeria. In view of this, just like an organism cannot function properly without any of his parts, so also teacher education programme rely on Sociology of Education for much of its content especially those curriculum contents that have to do with social interaction and social relationship between school-head and teachers, teachers and pupils, as well as school and community relationship.

The Place of Sociology of Education in Teacher Education Programmes

Since Sociology of education deals with the application of sociological concepts or socially relevant concepts for the betterment of education, the relevance of the discipline to Teacher Education Programme in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized. Teachers whether undergoing pre or in-services programme in Teacher education need to acquire knowledge of Sociology of Education. This is because of some of the following reasons, namely:

Sociology of education enables teachers to help pupils to enhance their academic performance. Sociology of education deals with all those social conditions that determine the success or otherwise of pupils academic performance. The study of the discipline will enable teacher to know how to handle social conditions like socio-economic status, gender, variation of cultural background, and so on.

The study of the implication of sociological perspectives to education will keep teachers abreast with sociological theories on the dynamic nature of teacher-pupils' classroom interaction. Findings of theories like labelling, self-fulfilling prophecy, self theory, looking-glass-self, are crucial for any successful teaching and learning interaction involving teacher and pupils.

Bamisiaye (1990) also identified the following as some relevance of Sociology of education to teachers which are essential pre-requisite of any Teacher Education Programme. They include:

Sociology of education is concerned with those aspects of school life which prepare the learner for meaningful social living. This way, the teacher understands that his profession entails simulation of learning in his learners and preparing them for life after school.

Since Sociology of education also studies the educational system and the nature of school as an organization, the study would help teachers a lot when they become school administrators. This is because it would help them to deal with school administration using appropriate human relation strategies.

The study of Sociology of education helps teacher to appreciate his human worth both as educator and member of the society. It helps him to appreciate his social and professional roles better and also appreciate those of other people well.

Sociology of education makes use of scientific method of arriving at information or conducting an investigation and that makes the discipline objective. This therefore helps teacher/researcher to be objective in both his roles in the classroom as well as issues relating to school organizations and administration.

To further explain the place of Sociology of Education in rethinking Teacher education programme, it is pertinent to examine the concept of sociological tendency as it relates to teacher.

Sociological Tendency and Teacher-Trainees

Sociology of education came into relevance to teachers after sociological tendency has taken effects; meanwhile sociological tendency is a foundation for teachers in training before becoming full practitioners of the teaching profession. Therefore in rethinking teacher education programme in Nigeria, sociological tendency is important due to the following tendencies:

Sociological tendency can modify the behaviour of individual teacher according to the environment.

- i. It prepares teachers for successful social life.
- ii. It develops social values in teachers.
- iii. Help teacher to understand the complexity of life.
- iv. It also help teacher to study problems connected to practical life.
- v. Sociological tendency also attaches important to social subject in the curriculum.
- vi. It develops spirit of team work because it is opposition to individualism.

The above mentioned tendencies can be briefly explained as follows:

1. **Modifying Individuals Behaviour According to the Environment:** As an act of inculcating social qualities to an individual, sociological tendency made an attempt to reshape individual's behaviour in line with the environment he lives or he/she founds him/her self. Behaviour is a psychosocial quality that tells about the quality and attitude of people in a given society. Thus, different societies may have varying behavioural characteristics. As regard to the Teacher Trainees that can find themselves under different conditions of service, either in community, school or class environments, there is need for adequate knowledge of sociological tendency in them, so that they can be able to modify and practice their profession in line with the atmosphere they found themselves after training.
2. **Preparation for Successful Social Life:** Sociological tendency can deal with social life in line with the customs, norms and values of an environment. In this respect, individuals are trained to be accepted social community members. Successful life in this regard concerns with the training of member in accordance with his interest, needs and natural dispositions that will make him happy and ready to commit his skills in teaching and development of the people he lives with. Successful social life for a teacher in training starts from his interest in the profession and ends in the proper deliverance of his subject matter in the class and peaceful living with his colleagues, principal and the general community that host him/her.

3. **Development of Social Values:** Social values are aspects of condition of society that Pestalozzi in Sharma (2010) wanted to improve through his emphasis on the development of child in accordance to his interests, needs and natural dispositions, so that he can be able to adopt a profession of his choice and live his life in respect to the social values of his community.
4. **Understanding the Complexities of Life:** Sociological tendency imparts the knowledge of understanding the complexities of life to the learner or trainee as the case may be through making him aware of the issues in Sociology, like Civic Education, human right, social stratification, social mobility, social change and other issues are that of vices and misery example war, earth quake, etc.
5. **Study of Problems Connected to Practical Life:** Practical life involves the daily interaction of people in the society, engagements, education, economy, health, polity, family, marriage etc. Any impediment to the proper execution of the above can be termed as a problem connected to the practical social life and thus sociological tendency study it and provide proper judgement in finding adequate prevention, control and management.
6. **Importance of Social Subjects in the Curriculum:** Social subjects like, sociology, political science, economics, philosophy and psychology among others are given much emphasis in the curriculum when dealing with sociological tendency in policy making, training and community development. Therefore, sociological tendency attaches more importance to social subjects especially in the curriculum planning so that teachers in training will have more knowledge of dealing with behaviour and social differences.
7. **Opposition of Individualism:** To be social is to intermingle through interaction with other individuals. Sociological tendency had the feature of saying “No to single life”, “No to living in isolation” and “No to individualism”. Although individuals are expected to be trained in this aspect based on their interest and natural dispositions, but it is assumed that those dispositions are shared qualities that promote peaceful and successful coexistence of community. The Teacher Trainees benefit here from sociological tendency, right from their workshop, Halls, conference centres and even during teaching practices, so that, they can interact with their colleagues, pupils and the community.

Teacher Education Programme in Nigeria

In Nigeria, teacher education programmes are deliberate and planned educational programmes designed in order to offer special training for teachers and would be teachers. Thus, Teacher Education programmes in Nigeria can be broadly classified into two namely: pre-service and in-service training.

Pre-service training courses are meant for the intending teachers or people who wish to practice teaching as a profession but have no teaching qualification. The in-service training is meant for those categories of teachers who are already in teaching and are qualified to practice teaching but wish to acquire additional teaching qualification in order to improve their effectiveness and efficiency in teaching.

Pre and in-service programmes enable intending teachers and those who are already on the job to undergo different training programmes namely; NCE, B.Ed, BA.Ed, BSc.Ed, Postgraduate Diploma in Education, M.Ed and Ph.D in Education. The sources of curriculum content for these programmes include educational foundations or foundation studies, general studies or basic academic studies as well as studies related to the learners' field of study. The foundation studies cover Sociology of Education, Philosophy of Education, Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, Educational Administration and Planning, Educational Statistics, Measurement and Evaluation among others.

However, despite the vital place of Sociology of Education in teacher Education programme discussed earlier, the interplay of many factors limit the impact of Sociology of Education in the curriculum content of Teacher Education programme. Some of these factors include:

- i. Subjectivity in curriculum review.
- ii. Inadequate sponsor of basic researches in the field of Sociology of Education.
- iii. Paucity of Sociologists of Education in Teacher Education programme.

These factors are briefly explained below:

1. Subjectivity in curriculum review: Subjective human tendency of some experts involve in curriculum planning and review limit the impact of the discipline of Sociology of Education in the curriculum content of Teacher Education Programme in Nigeria. Some scholars involve in curriculum review tend to over-impose their own disciplines to the detriment of others thereby limiting their presence on the syllabus and subsequently time-table.
2. Inadequate sponsor of basic research in the field of Sociology of Education: Basic Researches are those type of research carried out for the purpose of gaining new knowledge and development of new theories in the field of Education. Basic research may yield results whose benefits may not be clear immediately.

However, today, most of the emphasis in research is on applied research which is limited to finding solution to a particular problem. In developing countries like Nigeria, less emphasis is given to financing and sponsoring of Basic research in most Educational foundation studies compare with the natural sciences. Sociologists of Education see society as well as events, phenomena, people, and their needs, aspirations, interests, norms, values, attitudes as dynamic. Some established theories, ideas, axioms, information, concepts, generalizations discovered in the past may not be relevant to the 21st century learner, teacher and dynamic of classroom. Research in Sociology of Education is therefore essential to contribute to the discovery of new knowledge, theories, ideas and information regarding the dynamic of classroom as well as school community relationship that must form an integral part of the curriculum content of any meaningful Teacher Education Programme.

In the area of sponsoring researches in Nigeria, efforts of Federal Government through initiatives of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund are commendable. However, the question whether universities, colleges of education are committed to sponsor staff to conduct research in education is prone to argument.

Paucity of Sociologists of Education in Teacher Education programme: In the directorate of education, school of education or faculties of education in the Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, Universities and National Teachers' Institutes Centres where Teacher Education programmes of pre- and in-service training are undertaking, it is common problem to find a specialist in one area teaching in another discipline other than his own. Ideally, a sociologist of education by training is in a better position to teach Sociology of Education to learners on pre and in-service programmes. However, the problem of inadequate personnel left Head of Departments with no option than to assign lecturers to teach the discipline which they have no sufficient knowledge and background.

Conclusion

Sociology of Education as a discipline focuses on social interactions and social relations between individuals, group of individuals as well as social institutions in relation to education. Similarly, the concept of sociological tendency deals with those social qualities that social interaction and relationship demands and it is just like propagating teachers to germinate with the professional ethical norms and values that will also enhance their performances under varying situations. Sociology of Education is therefore important in Teacher Education programme in order to enable teachers understand the dynamics of these interactions and relationships which will equip them to help pupils enhance their academic performance. Sociology of Education therefore needs to be given special priority in Teacher Education programmes in Nigeria. However, interplay of factors such as paucity of specialists of Sociology of Education in the process of teacher Education limits the impact of the discipline in both the pre and in-service programmes of Teacher Education in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the issues raised in the paper, the following recommendations were proffered:

1. In any curriculum review for Teacher Education programme in Nigeria, there should be fair and equal representation of scholars from every relevant discipline. This can help in ensuring that curriculum content is selected based on their relevance so that human tendency of being bias whereby one subject dominates the curriculum is avoided.
2. Paucity of Sociology of Education teachers should be addressed by government, through mass recruitment of specialist teachers in Sociology of Education for Colleges of Education and Universities.
3. The Universities, Colleges of Education authorities need to give adequate priority to sponsoring basic research in the disciplines of education foundations particularly Sociology of Education through the provision of financial and other kind of assistance to their staff who wish to conduct genuine research.

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