**Unit-1**

**Concept of Social perspectives in education**

**Sociology -;dfhzf:q\_**

Sociology is the study of society. In other words it is the science of society. **Auguste Comte** is credited for the establishment of this discipline. So, he is called the father of sociology. Sociology is studied as a separate discipline. This subject shows the social life, social relation and social organizations. Other popular sociologists are *Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Herbert Spencer, J.S. Mill* and so on.

**Social Perspectives of Education**

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Sociologists began to think that education promotes social mobility and undermines the class stratification. After the Second World War it gained entity as separate subject of knowledge. Technological advancement and engagement of human capital(work force) in industrialization America and Europe gave rise to the social mobility .Now it is easier to move up to the upper strata (layer) of society gaining technical skills, knowledge. People who were farmer earlier became worker in factories.

Education is a process which exists within a society. Education is organized in the society by individuals who are members of a particular group, community, states and nation. So, we can understand the significance of the society in educational process and organizing curricular events.

**Concept of Sociology of education -lzIffsf] ;dfhzf:q\_ and educational sociology- z}lIfs ;dfhzf:q\_**

When we discuss about social perspectives of education , two terms are in discussion ,they are **sociology of education** and **educational sociology** .

In general, The **sociology of education** is the study of how **social institutions and individual experiences affect education and its outcome**. It is concerned with **all forms of education** i.e. formal and informal education systems of modern industrial societies. It is relatively a new branch and two great sociologists Émile Durkheim and Max Weber were the father of sociology of education. Émile Durkheim's work on moral education as a basis for social solidarity is considered the beginning of sociology of education. Let’s study some other definitions of sociology of education and educational sociology.  
1. 'The sociology of education is defined as the scientific study of the analysis of the social processes and social patterns involved in the educational system'. (W.B. Brookover)

2. 'Educational sociology is that science which explains the institution, social groups and social processes' (E.G.Payne)

3. Educational sociology is **'the application of general principles and findings of sociology to the administration and process of education**. This approach attempts to apply principles of sociology to institution of education as a separate societal unit.' (R.J. Stalcup)

4. An analysis of **sociological process involved in the educational institution** is known as sociology of education. This area of study evolved out of the field of educational sociology and emphasizes the study within institution of education. (R.J. Stalcup)

5. 'Educational sociology is the science which studies the interaction of the individual and his cultural environment and social groups­­­­­­= -JolSt / p;sf] ;f:s[lts jftfj/0f Pjd\ ;fdlhs ;d"xx¿ aLrsf] cGt/lqmofsf] cWoog ug]{ lj1fg z}lIfs ;dfhzf:q xf]\_ -Brown \_

**( Educational Sociology is the application of Sociological findings on education.)**

**Contents of sociology of education**

Content refers to the area or scope. Morris has mentioned the following areas involved in the sociology of education.

* The effect of the economy upon education
* The social forces and determinants that affect educational and cultural change
* The social institutions involved in the educational process, such as family and school
* Various problems of role structure of social system and school
* The relationship between social class, culture and language
* Problems of embourgeoisment , democratization and elitism
* Relationship between education and occupation
* Questions of curriculum building and development of subcultures.
* Problems associated with school

1. **Sociological perspectives in education**

**(Sociological theories of education)**

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Theory means different things to different people. It could be defined as a conceptual scheme designed to explain observed regularities or relationships between two or more variables. Theoretical perspectives are used to provide logical explanation for why things happen the way they do. There are always various interpretations of events in our everyday life. Similarly there are several sociological perspectives on why things happen the way they do in society. These theories result in different interpretations of the same information because they focus on different aspects.

In the behavioral sciences, no theory is absolutely true. No theory is a final formulation because new knowledge keeps on modifying.

We are going to take a look at the key aspects of the following theories which have made major contribution to the field of sociology of education:

**a.** **Structural functionalist**

**b. Conflict theory perspectives**

**c. Social Interactionism**

**Structural functionalists**

**Structural Functionalism** is a sociological theory that attempts to explain why society functions. This theory focuses on the relationships between the various social institutions that make up society (e.g., government, law, education, religion, etc).**Structural functionalists** believe that society exists in social order. They see society like a human body, in which each part plays a role and all are dependent on each other for survival. Institutions such as education are like important organs that keep the society/body healthy and well. Social health means the same as social order, and is guaranteed when nearly everyone accepts the general moral values of their society.

* Structural functionalists believe the aim of key institutions, such as education, is **to socialize children and teenagers** (bringing them in the structure/system)
* 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 not 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 **behaviour at school is regulated until they gradually internalize and accept them.**
* The other purpose of education is **to sort and rank individuals for placement in the labour market.**  Those with high achievement will be trained for the most important jobs and in reward, be given the highest incomes.

***Key principle of Structural functionalists are as below***

* Interdependency
* Function of social structure and cultural
* Consensus and co-operation
* Equilibrium

**Drawback of structural Functionalism**

* According to Sennet and Cobb, ―to believe that ability alone decides who is rewarded is to be deceived.
* Meighan agrees, stating that large numbers of capable students from working class backgrounds fail to achieve satisfactory standards in school and therefore fail to obtain the status they deserve.
* Jacob believes this is because the middle class cultural experiences that are provided at school may be contrary to the experiences working-class children receive at home.
* In other words, working class children are not adequately prepared to cope at school. They are therefore ―cooled out‖ from school with the least qualifications, hence they get the least desirable jobs, and so remain working class.
* Sargent confirms this cycle, arguing that schooling supports continuity, which in turn supports social order.

**CRITICISM OF FUNCTIONALISM**

* Functionalism fails to recognize the number of divergent interests, ideologies and conflicting interest groups in society. In heterogeneous societies each sub-group may have its own agenda to further its own interests.
* It is difficult to analyze individual interactions such as classroom dynamics of teacher-student or student-student interactions from this perspective.
* It does not deal with the ‘content’ of the educational process- what is taught and how it is taught.
* Individuals do not merely carry out roles within the structure, they create and modify them.

**CONFLICT THEORY**

Conflict theory developed by Karl Marx believes that society **is full of social groups. In this view, relations in society are mainly based on exploitation, oppression, domination and subordination**.

**Karl Marx** (1818-1883) was the great German theorist and political activist. The Marxist **conflict approach emphasizes a materialist interpretation of history**, a dialectical method of analysis, a critical position toward existing social arrangements, and a political program of revolution or, at least, reform.

Conflict theories draw attention to power differentials, such as class conflict, and generally contrast traditional or historically-dominant ideologies. Conflict theory is most commonly associated with Marxism, but as a reaction to functionalism and positivist methods may also be associated with critical theory, feminist theory, queer theory, postmodern theory, post-structural theory, postcolonial theory, and a variety of other perspectives.

Some conflict theorists like **Max Weber** (1864-1920) believe education is controlled by the state. It is controlled by the powerful, and its purpose is to reproduce existing inequalities. Education legitimizes ‘acceptable’ ideas which actually work to reinforce the privileged positions of the dominant group.

* Education maintains the status quo, where lower-class children become lower class adults, and middle and upper class children become middle and upper-class adults.
* McLeod argues that teachers treat lower-class kids like less competent students. He pacing them in lower class.
* They point out that while private schools are expensive and generally reserved for the upper classes, public schools- like Municipal schools, especially those that serve the poor, are under - funded, understaffed, and growing worse.
* Schools are also powerful agents of socialization that can be used as tools for one group to apply power over others – for example, by demanding that all students learn English, schools are ensuring that English-speakers dominate students from non-English speaking backgrounds.
* This cycle occurs because the dominant group has, over time, closely aligned education with middle class values and aims, thus alienating people of other classes.
* Teachers assume that students will have particular middle class experiences at home. For some children this assumption isn‘t necessarily true. Some children are expected to help their parents after school and carry considerable domestic responsibilities in their often single-parent home.
* The demands of this domestic labour often make it difficult for them to find time to do all their homework and this affects their academic performance.
* Few teachers deviate from the traditional curriculum and the curriculum conveys what constitutes knowledge as determined by the state - and those in power. This knowledge isn‘t very meaningful to many of the students, who see it as pointless.
* The students realize there is little or no direct link between the subjects they are doing and their perceived future in the labour market.
* Anti-school values are displayed by these children.
* With ‘education’, rich children perform better, achieve higher and obtain greater rewards. In this way, the continuation of privilege and wealth for the elite is made possible.
* 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, 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. .

People who are poor and disadvantaged are victims of a societal 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.

**BREAKING DOWN 'Conflict Theory'**

The conflict theory has been used to explain a wide range of social phenomena, including wars and revolutions, wealth and [poverty,](https://www.investopedia.com/terms/p/poverty.asp) discrimination and domestic violence. It ascribes most of the fundamental developments in human history, such as democracy and civil rights, to [capitalistic](https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/capitalism.asp) attempts to control the masses rather than to a desire for social order. The theory revolves around concepts of social inequality in the division of resources and focuses on the conflicts that exist between classes.

**Class Conflicts**

Marx’s conflict theory focused on the conflict between two primary classes. The bourgeoisie represents the members of society who hold the majority of the wealth and means. The proletariat includes those considered working class or poor. With the rise of capitalism, Marx theorized that the [bourgeoisie](https://www.investopedia.com/terms/m/middle-class.asp), a minority within the population, would use their influence to oppress the proletariat, the majority class.

The uneven distribution within the conflict theory was predicted to be maintained through ideological coercion where the bourgeoisie would force acceptance of the current conditions by the proletariat. Marx further believed that as the working class and poor were subjected to worsening conditions, a collective consciousness would bring the inequality to light and potentially result in revolt. If conditions were subsequently adjusted to address the concerns of the proletariat, the conflict circle would eventually repeat.

**Conflict Theory: Marx’s Views on Capitalism**

Marx viewed capitalism as part of the historical progress of economic systems, and believed that it was rooted in [commodities](https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/commodity.asp) — or things that are purchased and sold. For example, he believed that labor is a type of commodity. But since laborers have little control or power in the economic system (because they don’t own factories or materials), their worth can be devalued over time. This can create an imbalance between business owners and their workers, which can lead to social conflicts. He believed these problems would eventually be fixed through a social and economic revolution.

**An Example of Conflict Theory**

For example, conflict theorists view the relationship between a housing complex owner and a tenant as being based mainly on conflict instead of balance or harmony, even though there may be more harmony than conflict. They believe that they are defined by getting whatever resources they can from each other — i.e. rent payments (for the owner), a place to live and repairs (for the tenant).

**Drawback of Conflict Theory**

This perspective has been criticized as deterministic, pessimistic and allowing no room for the agency of individuals to improve their situation.

**2.6 SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM**

Symbolic interactionism, or interactionism for short, is one of the major theoretical perspectives in sociology. This perspective has a long intellectual history, beginning with the German sociologist and economist, **Max Weber** (1864-1920) and the American philosopher, **George H. Mead** (1863-1931), both of whom emphasized the subjective meaning of human behavior, the social process, and pragmatism. Herbert Blumer, who studied with Mead at the University of Chicago, is responsible for coining the term, "symbolic interactionism," as well as for formulating the most prominent version of the theory.

Symbolic interactionism is a school of thought in sociology that explains social behavior in terms of how people interact with each other via symbols; in this view, social structures are best understood in terms of such individual interactions. Mead believed that one's self develops through social interactions. Moreover, how people communicate and interact with each other depends on how they interpret factors such as language, actions, and statuses (potential symbols). For example, one might interpret a handshake as either a friendly greeting or cool farewell, depending on context (the symbolism of a handshake varies). Sometimes symbols change; long hair in males once symbolized rebellion, but now does not.

* Interactionists focus on the subjective aspects of social life, rather than on objective, macro-structural aspects of social systems.
* One reason for this focus is that interactionists base their theoretical perspective on their image of humans, rather than on their image of society (as the functionalists do).
* For the interactionist, society consists of organized and patterned interactions among individuals.
* Research by interactionists focuses on easily observable face-to-face interactions rather than on macro-level structural relationships involving social institutions.
* Furthermore, this focus on interaction and on the meaning of events to the participants in those events shifts the attention of interactionists away from stable norms and values toward more changeable, continually readjusting **social processes**.
* Whereas for functionalists socialization creates stability in the social system, for interactionists **negotiation** among members of society creates temporary, socially constructed relations which remain in constant flux, despite relative stability in the basic framework governing those relations.
* For interactionists, humans are **pragmatic actors** who continually must adjust their behavior to the actions of other actors. We can adjust to these actions only because we are able to **interpret** them,
* This approach focuses attention on interactions between groups – peers, teacher-student, teacher-principal, on student attitudes and achievement, on students‘ values, on their self –concepts and their effect on aspirations and the relationship between students‘ socio-economic status and their achievement.

Two interaction theories are of great importance in sociology of education. They are **labelling theory** and **exchange theory**. The labeling theory is concerned with how the self-identity and behavior of individuals may be determined or influenced by the terms used to describe or classify them, and is associated with the concept of a self-fulfilling prophecy and stereotyping. If a child is repeatedly told that s/he is stupid or lazy, s/he will make the ‘labe’ a part of her/his self concept and behave accordingly. Students almost always fulfill teachers’ expectations.

Exchange theory emphasizes the idea that social action is the result of *personal choices* made by considering relative benefits and costs. The theory of social exchange predicts that people will make choices with the intention of maximizing benefits. A key component of this theory is the postulation of the *"comparison level of alternatives"*, which is the actor's sense of the best possible alternative (i.e., the choice with the highest benefits relative to costs)based on the assumption that there are costs and rewards involved in our interactions. The reasons that make people to engage in a social exchange are:

1. anticipated reciprocity;

2. expected gain in reputation and influence on others

3. altruism and perception of efficacy

4. direct reward.

Reciprocal interactions bind individual and groups with obligations. From 1975 onwards, a growing number of educationists felt that a radical approach was needed to understand educational systems. As a reaction to ‘macrocosmic’ approaches which had little emphasis on interaction, they based their ideas on symbolic interaction.

Ethnomethodology is a partial offshoot of phenomenological sociology with deep roots in classical social theory and sociolinguistics. It is the descriptive study of the reporting and accounting practices (‘methods’) through which socially embedded actors come to attribute meaning and rationality to their own and others’ behavior. Ethnomethodologists study interactive, ad hoc sense making at the sites where social structures are produced and reproduced through talk and coordinated action.

Applied to education this has taken the form of studying interaction processes in classrooms, the management and the use of knowledge, the question- what is to be ‗educated‘, curriculum content etc.

Interactionists tend to study social interaction through **participant observation**, rather than surveys and interviews. They argue that close contact and immersion in the everyday lives of the participants is necessary for understanding the meaning of actions, the definition of the situation itself, and the process by which actors construct the situation through their interaction. Given this close contact, interactionists cannot remain free of value commitments, and, in fact, interactionists make explicit use of their values in choosing what to study but strive to be objective in the conduct of their research.

**Drawbacks of Symbolic interactionism**

Symbolic interactionists are often criticized by other sociologists for being overly impressionistic in their research methods and somewhat unsystematic in their theories.

1. Explain the main features of Symbolic Interactionism

2. Discuss the role of a labeling theory