



## **“EMILE DURKHIEM’S CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS SOCIOLOGICAL EDUCATION: A META ANALYSIS”**

Dr. Prakash S Ragi, Assistant Professor,  
Dept. of Sociology, Davangere University, Davangere, Shivangottri

### **Abstract:**

Emile Durkhiem is a giant philosophical giant in the field of moral education. This paper compares and contrasts the respective visions on education and contextualizes the comparison in the profound intellectual and social changes modernity was casting throughout the world. So he was called as a father of the sociology of education. Durkheim proposed that educational reforms reflect the general cultural context and illustrate the way in which the school attends to emerging needs that are not yet institutionalized in political society as a whole. Many sociologists have criticized his ideas and work on sociological of education. In this regard the author has made an attempt to highlight the major contribution of Emile Durkhiem in the field of education. The author has reviewed many articles from different web sources such as Google Scholar, research gate, academia.edu, e-journals, e-books etc. Thus to conclude we can say that, Emile Durkhiem’s works on sociological education with a scientific approach to educational facts as social functions.

**Key words:** sociological education, Emile Durkhiem, philosophical and formal education

### **Introduction:**

Emile Durkhiem was a pioneer sociologist and his contributions were paramount importance. He himself taught education and social science at Bordeaux and at Paris. Aside from teacher training responsibilities, Durkheim’s preoccupation with educational theory is repeatedly manifest in the course of his major writings. Since the time many philosophers have speculated upon the aim of education. In modern period many thinkers have regarded education as primarily a device for human self-betterment. A sound educational curriculum, calculated to effectuate human improvement, would be universally applicable.



The outcome of the process of instruction in formal education depends heavily on the teacher's attitudes in relation to their pupils. Pedagogical models must take onboard an understanding of psychology which helps us grasp that the child is innately neither selfish nor altruistic but 'naturally enters into communication with others'. This quality the teacher must know how to use. He also mentions that Teachers must also have an understanding of how individuals in association with others (a group) spontaneously develop a collective psyche. A knowledge of group psychology is of particular importance. A class is a miniature society and not merely an agglomeration of individuals which are independent of each other.

Durkheim relates the teacher/pupil relationship as not dissimilar to the relationship between a hypnotist and the person hypnotized. In this he emphasizes the double edged nature of the relationship and the potential dangers. Durkheim was opposed to the libertarian educators of his time who, like Tolstoy, describing his experience at Yasnaya Polyana, claimed that 'the right to educate does not exist and that school must leave pupils' full freedom to learn and to work things out among themselves as they see fit'. The problem confronting the teacher is not to have to conceal this power relation by means of permissiveness, but to be fully aware of the violence inherent in it and to be able to control it.

### **Method and materials:**

The present study has a different nature and scope in realizing the ideas of sociological education of Emile Durkheim from time immemorial. The paper also highlights the educational contribution in the fields of morality, democratic values, personalities, psychological ideas etc. Durkheim thus considered education and pedagogy from a sociologist's point of view. In that view school is a scale model in which both social relations and the relations of individuals with society are mediated through the teacher/pupil relationship and broadly speaking in the relationship to knowledge.

Durkheim's work on the 'sociology of education' engendered a 'scientific' approach to educational facts as social functions. This gave rise to an extensive body of literature in various



countries which dealt with the study of the relationships between school and society, unequal opportunities and the functioning of the classroom group.

The author has used secondary data from different web sources like Google Scholar, research gate, academia.edu, e-journals, e-books etc. Also reviewed some of the articles related to the topic most of the authors mentioned that Durkhiem has a dynamic character.

### **Discussion of the study:**

Emile Durkhiem proposed that educational reforms reflect the general cultural context and illustrate the way in which the school attends to emerging needs that are not yet institutionalized in political society as a whole. This attempts an explanation of how the subjects of study which constitute the ‘content’ of education at any given time give rise to ‘categories of thought’ which thus inform the development of a society’s collective representations. Following are some of the studies reviewed and highlights the ideas of Durkhiem towards education.

**Mark S Cladis (2006)** A condition for a flourishing liberal society, I believe, is a public education similar to that recommended by Durkheim. Its heterogeneous character, embracing critical thought and shared traditions, autonomy and community, human diversity and social unity, provides a powerful support for and challenge to liberal, democratic institutions. Durkheim mingled standard liberal and communitarian values- - values supporting individual rights and critical thought, on one hand, and values supporting the common good and tradition on the other. On my reading, Durkheim forged a middle way between liberalism and communitarianism, thereby rescuing us from the forced option that is often erected- - defend “the individual” or protect “the community”. He championed various authoritative perspectives from society's shared understanding as a means to cultivate, in students, dispositions for social criticism. Tradition and critical thought go hand in hand, in Durkheim's view, because social critics, faced with changing circumstances, draw deeply from their social inheritance as they forge new paths and criticize some old ones.

**W Pickering (2006)** Although he saw his major task to be the establishment of sociology as an academic discipline which would be taught in French universities, he was obliged to spend



much of his time lecturing on education. This was required by the wording of his university appointments; first in Bordeaux, then in Paris. His interests in education covered large areas, including the purpose of education, the social qualities of the group who were taught in the classroom, punishment and the history of higher education. What, however, concerned him most was moral education which he saw as the key to education as a whole. With him, as with all of France at the time, the burning issue was the teaching of secular morality to the young. This was the subject he covered in *L'Education morale* (1925). A lecture, recently discovered and translated here, reflects in a sharper way than in the book the issue of secular, moral education. The questions he raises can be seen to be relevant to the teaching of morality in schools today.

Durkheim's thinking explores the influence of what he calls the 'school environment' on the social and civic education of the pupil; and the importance for the teacher to strike a balance between directionless permissiveness and their own abuse of power. He explains the 'school environment' as being both the classroom and the establishment in which it is located. He saw it as an 'association', one that is more extensive than the family and less abstract than political society. Here is where the pupil develops 'the habit of life in common in the class, attachment to that class and even to the school of which the class is but a part' (*L'éducation morale*, p. 195).

Amman Madan (2010), Durkheim has moulded the way we look at our social context. He distinguished a sociological level of analysis from a psychological one, arguing that there was a realm of human existence which could not be understood through introspection or the study of an individual. The social, he argued came not from an inner source, but through a combination of relationships that put together, stood conceptually outside the individual. Opposing the individualism of several liberal thinkers and economists, he argued that it was not possible to understand humans without moral education.

**Robert Prus (2011)**, Although often overlooked in sociological circles, Emile Durkheim's *Moral Education* provides an important cornerstone in the quest to understand community life. Not only does *Moral Education* give a vibrant realism to the sociological venture in ways that Durkheim's earlier works fail to achieve, but in addressing discipline, devotion, and informed reasoning as humanly engaged, collectively accomplished fields of



activity. Emile Durkheim also provides an exceptionally consequential baseline analysis of human knowing and acting. Notably as well, focusing on the organizational, inter subjectively achieved features of elementary education, Durkheim's Moral Education lays bare the interactional nature of the moral order of community life. Indeed, as a sustained analysis of the way of life of a group of people collectively participating in the educational process, this text addresses the most basic features of people's relations to one another and the broader society in which they find themselves. Much more than an account of childhood socialization, Durkheim's Moral Education also presages the more thoroughly humanist sociology that Durkheim develops in *The Evolution of Educational Thought*.

### **Conclusion:**

Durkheim thus considered education and pedagogy from a sociologist's point of view. In that view, school is a scale model in which both social relations and the relations of individuals with society are mediated through the teacher/pupil relationship and broadly speaking in the relationship to knowledge. Durkheim's work on the 'sociology of education', engendered a 'scientific' approach to educational facts as social functions. This gave rise to an extensive body of literature in various countries which dealt with the study of the relationships between school and society, unequal opportunities and the functioning of the classroom group. In Durkheim's view, the sociologist should be motivated by the desire to contribute to changes leading towards greater social cohesion and the promotion of 'great moral ideas' which were synonymous with 'personalist' and democratic values. The teacher of the future is thus one who will manage to live out the pedagogical wish of the sociologist

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